

The MYSTIC World



Dean Shomshak

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The Mystic World

A Setting Book for *Champions*

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DEDICATION

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INTRODUCTION



THE GM'S VAULT

Unlike most other setting-related books published by Hero Games, *The Mystic World* does not include a "GM's Vault" of information that only the GM should know, for two reasons. First, given the nature of the book's contents, separating the "secret" information would make the text much less enjoyable to read. Second, in most campaigns the sort of mystic characters whose players are likely to read this book closely either know the "secret" information, or can find out about it with the right spells, Skills, or Contacts; therefore it makes sense to keep it all together.

As always, the GM can forbid players to read sections of the book he doesn't want them to know about. In particular, players should not read Chapter Four, which contains descriptions and character sheets for many villains.

ARCANE ADVERSARIES

The Mystic World refers to many villainous super-mages, occult threats from other dimensions, and other mystically-powered enemies the PCs may face. Three of the most powerful are described in Chapter Four. You can find many others in *Arcane Adversaries*, a companion volume to *The Mystic World* which contains more than 50 villains with mystic abilities.

Comic books have included magical and mystical characters from their earliest days as a medium. While all superheroes are special in their own ways, mystic characters have always seemed particularly unusual and intriguing because of the aura of mystery which surrounds the arcane arts... and those who practice them. The Champions Universe reflects this tradition with heroes like Witchcraft (from *Champions*) and villains like Takofanes, the Crowns of Krim, and Zorran the Artificer (all found in *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*).

But mystical characters do not exist without a context. Super-sorcerers must learn their magic somewhere; demons, gods, and spirits come from realms of their own; ancient relics need someone to make them. *The Mystic World* offers that context for *Champions*. It's a guide to the realm of the mystic and arcane in the Champions Universe and other Champions campaigns. It provides resources for players who want to make mystical characters, and GMs who want to make the supernatural an important part of their game.

Chapter One, *Worlds Upon Worlds*, describes the dimensions beyond Earth. Mystics frequently interact with these supernatural realms: they visit other dimensions, or encounter beings who come from them. This chapter explains the structure of the Multiverse, and details the five dimensions most closely associated with Earth.

Chapter Two, *The Shadow World*, explores the mystical subculture on Earth. Mystics gather in factions and occult conspiracies; this chapter describes the most important groups and individuals, and how they interact with each other. It also describes locations of occult power that mystics exploit.

Chapter Three, *The Book Of Wisdom*, covers magic itself from a superheroic perspective. In addition to a distinctive style of comic-book sorcery, this chapter describes several potent magic items heroes or villains might own or seek. It also has a few notes about game elements frequently used to create mystic characters or their powers.

Chapter Four, *Mystic Master Villains*, describes three of the greatest evils to confront mystical heroes: Tyrannon the Conqueror; Skarn the Shaper; and the enigmatic Dragon. Each master villain comes with an assortment of henchmen... or hench-creatures.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

Players and GMs can find inspiration for characters, villains, settings, and stories in *The Mystic World*. For GMs, this book provides a complete mystical Multiverse for their campaign. Want to bounce characters through a series of weird dimensions? This book supplies more than a dozen. Need a cosmic villain to threaten the world? Take your pick from three intriguing ones.

The Mystic World isn't just for GMs, though — players want to know about the secret world their mystical characters inhabit. A PC might come from an occult dynasty like the Vandaleurs, or fight an arcane conspiracy like the Circle of the Scarlet Moon. He could even come from one of the dimensions described here: mythic races from Faerie, tall-tale heroes from Babylon, and exiled rebels against transdimensional tyrants are only a few possibilities.

The Mystic World ties these characters and factions together through several ongoing conflicts. The plots and counter-plots range from a conspiratorial battle over Washington, D.C. to a billion-year struggle by malign elder gods trying to free themselves. What looks like a simple robbery or murder might actually be a move in a conflict centuries old. Gamemasters can build their own adventures around these ongoing conflicts; PCs may be motivated by their allegiance or opposition to one side or another of a supernatural struggle. The deeds and choices of the heroes may well decide the outcome of these conflicts.

Gamemasters and players can also find this book useful simply as a resource for designing their own characters. *The Mystic World* describes dozens of spells, of various power levels, you can use for your own characters. You may even want to rewrite one of the sample villains as a hero instead: just change the character's personality and you can use his character sheet with only a few modifications (assuming he fits into the campaign's parameters, of course!).

As always with *HERO System* sourcebooks, *The Mystic World* is meant to inspire your creativity, not replace it. Its dimensions, factions, mystical places and secret struggles are frameworks to help you design your own adventures. You can use them as-is, or adapt them as you see fit.

chapter one:



CHAMPIONS UNIVERSE MULTIVERSE WORLDS UPON WORLDS

THE FOUR WORLDS



Continued from page 4

OTHER BOOKS

Besides *Arcane Adventures*, several other Hero Games books provide details about the Mystic World, or offer resources for GMs and players with mystical characters. *Champions Universe* and *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks* mention or describe several mystic characters and organizations. This book does not repeat the information from those other publications in detail, but neither work is necessary to read and use *The Mystic World*.

Similarly, in many ways *The Ultimate Mystic* is a companion book to this publication, but you do not need it, either. *The Mystic World* and *The Ultimate Mystic* look at supernatural adventure and magical characters from quite different perspectives — the former covers only superheroic mysticism, while the latter examines arcane powers and characters in any genre.

The Champions Universe extends beyond Earth's space-time continuum into countless other spaces, realms, and dimensions. As a whole, these form the *Multiverse* — the totality of existence. Mystics interact a great deal with the realms beyond Earth. Priests and cultists worship gods who dwell on other planes of existence. Sorcerers summon demons and other minions from a variety of spirit-realms. Heroic mystics battle invaders from other dimensions, while evil mystics ally with such invaders in hopes of gaining power.

This chapter describes what Champions Universe mystics know about their Multiverse... or think they know. The bulk of the chapter describes the "Imaginal Realms," or spirit-realms tied to Earth. Naturally, mystics interact most with these local dimensions. The chapter concludes with brief descriptions of several more exotic planes GMs can develop as they choose.

THE BASICS OF THE MULTIVERSE

The Multiverse contains more dimensions than anyone can count. Mystics try to make sense of it all by classifying dimensions into some sort of structure. The structures imposed by these schools of thought often differ based on culture, species, or other factors.

Western mystics use the language of Kabbalism to describe the general arrangement of the Multiverse as they perceive it (many other human occultists have adopted this scheme as well, but some use other methods, or perceive the dimensional structure differently). They divide reality into four levels of being, which they call *the Four Worlds*. At the bottom comes ASSIAH, the Material World. Next comes YETZIRAH, the Formative or Astral World; BRIAH, the Creative or Mental World; and finally ATZILUTH, the Archetypal World. The myriad dimensions fit within these four layers.

Assiah contains the universes that run by the purely material principles of natural law. Earth's cosmos is a typical example. Inhabitants of Assiatic planes may *use* magic, but their worlds don't *run by* magic.

The planes of Yetzirah *do* run by magic. On these dimensions, symbols and beliefs control matter and energy. An ASTRAL PLANE links the myriad dimensions of Assiah and Yetzirah. (That's why mystics call Yetzirah the "Astral World.")

The worlds of Briah are completely spiritual. They embody concepts, states of mind, and abstract aspects of Reality such as Time, Death, or Number. They aren't made of matter at all. Conceptual entities — the truly cosmic beings — dwell on these dimensions.

Atziluth contains the ultimate aspects of Reality, beyond time, space and even separation into distinct entities. Only the most powerful and enlightened mystics can even perceive Atziluthic planes in visions, let alone travel there physically.

THE SEPHIROTHIC TREE OF LIFE

Mystics superimpose a more detailed scheme called the Tree of Life over the general plan of the Four Worlds. The Tree of Life consists of the ten "Sephira" (emanations from God) cascading down from Kether ("the Crown") through various concepts to Malkuth ("the Kingdom"). Western occultists use the Sephiroth to subdivide the planes into various groupings of "related" dimensions. Mystics endlessly argue details about which planes belong in which sephiroth, but they agree on the general classification scheme. The layers of Atziluth, Briah, and Yetzirah each contain three of the sephiroth; Assiah receives just one.

Assiah

The bottom of the Tree of Life holds MAL-KUTH, the Kingdom or material world. Earth's universe is a Malkuth dimension, but this sephira contains many other worlds as well. If a world resembles Earth in important ways, mystics describe it as a Malkuth-world. Assiah also includes dimensions whose systems of natural law make them very unlike Earth and its cosmos. Every Malkuth-world is in Assiah, but not every Assiatic realm is in Malkuth. Careless mystics sometimes mix up these divisions, though.

Some mystics also confuse the Hebrew *Assiah* with the Greek *Asia* (from *Askia*, "Place Without Shadows," originally a reference to southern Turkey). Mystics' narratives of "travels in Asia" may have caused those old stories about India and Central Asia being inhabited by cyclopes, dog-headed men, and other strange creatures.

Because Assiatic realms don't run by magic, or usually feature common or widespread use of magic, they're rarely the home of dimension lords like Tyrannon the Conqueror or Skarn the Shaper. The closest equivalent is Istvatha V'han, Empress of a Billion Dimensions, who can travel through the dimensions by non-mystical means, and whose territory is mostly Assiatic. However, some Assiatic planes possess great power or potential for power, making them desirable acquisitions for dimension lords; Earth's plane seems particularly valuable to many such beings.

Yetzirah

The Yetziratic World holds most of the dimensions mystics visit. First come the Imaginal Realms (or Inner Planes) that accompany the Earth. Beyond them lie the Outer Planes, whose variety has no end.

The Astral Plane contains several sections of its own. Most importantly, mystics divide it into a Lower, Middle, and Upper Astral Plane. The Lower Astral Plane connects the Imaginal Realms to Earth and each other. The Lower Astral also contains the Dreamzone, a psychic realm composed of all the dreams being dreamed at any given moment.

YESOD: THE IMAGINAL REALMS

YESOD, the Foundation, is the first division of Yetzirah. Yesod holds the Astral Plane and Earth's psychic "Imaginal Realms," so called because human imagination creates them from the Astral Plane. Mystics also call these realms the Parterres (the "Lands To The Side"). The chief Imaginal Realms are *Faerie*, also called the Land of Legends; *Babylon*, the City of Man; the *Netherworld*; and *Elysium*. Some mystics refer to the Parterres and the Astral Plane as the "Inner Planes" because they are easily reached from Earth.

Faerie embodies the myths and legends of the ancient world — and some modern myths, too. Elves, nature spirits, mythological beasts, and pagan gods dwell in this Land of Legends. Such creatures tend to act amorally, following codes that pay little attention to good or evil. See page 19.

Babylon, on the other hand, embodies the social settings humanity builds for itself. For better or worse, it is the epitome of cities. See page 35.

The Netherworld contains all the Hells ever imagined. It's dismayingly easy to enter... but much harder to leave. See page 25.

The syncretic Heaven of Elysium, in contrast, is the most difficult Parterre to reach. This dimension of self-proclaimed pure Good can be as dangerous to visit as the Netherworld, for many lords of Elysium do not tolerate mortal imperfection. See page 30.

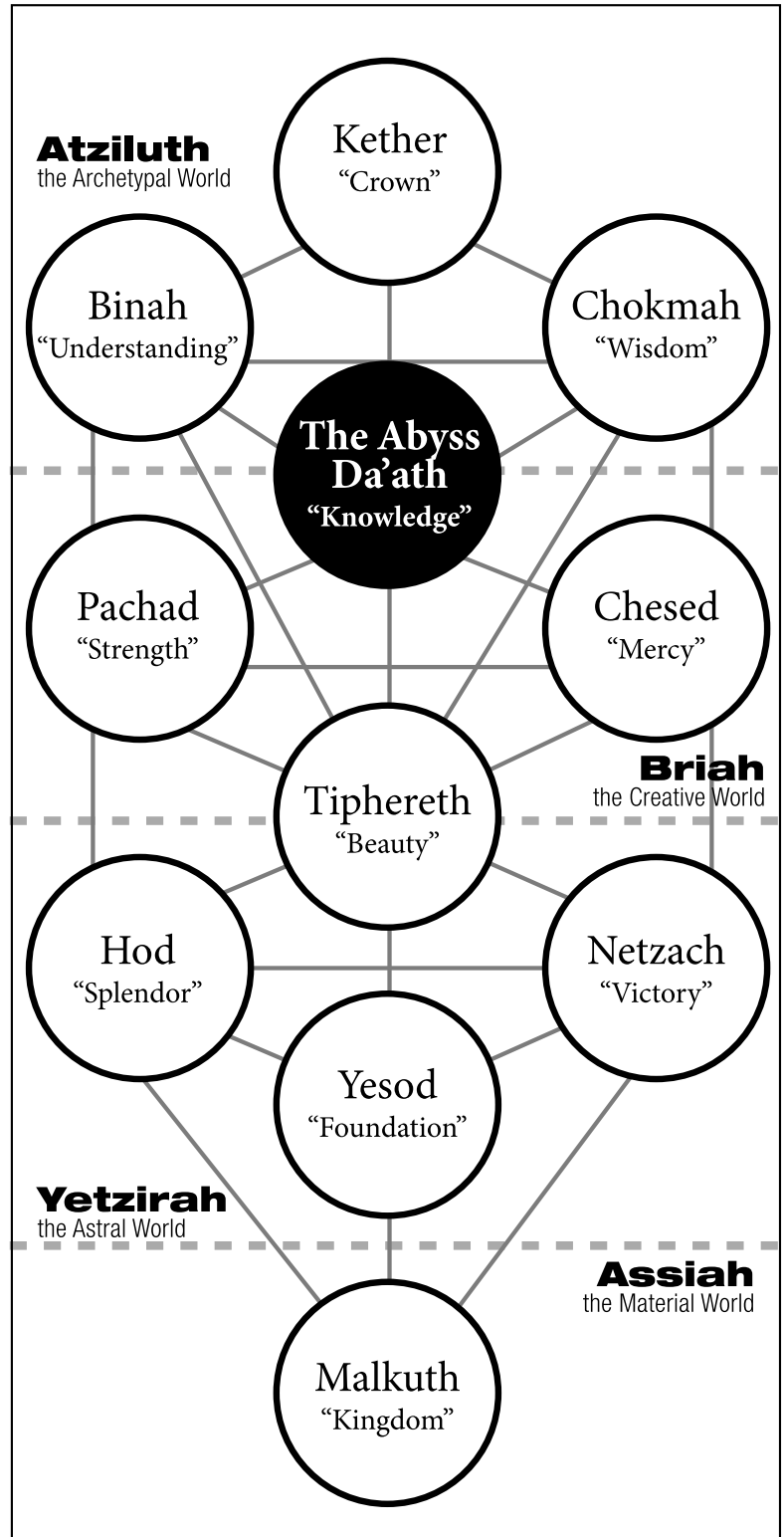
Humanity is not the only species to shape the Astral Plane. Animal life on Earth creates its own Parterre called the Blood Tide. Even plants get into the act, creating the astral realm of Yggdrasil (page 42). Humans find these dimensions extremely alien, dangerous, and hard to enter, even though they count as Inner Planes.

HOD AND NETZACH: THE OUTER PLANES

From Yesod, the Tree of Life ascends to the sephiroth HOD (Glory/Splendor/Fame) and NETZACH (Conquest/Victory/Permanence). These divisions of Yetzirah contain magical worlds with no connection to Earth or humanity. To reach them, mystics must pass through the Middle Astral Plane. Because of their greater "distance" from Earth, astrally speaking, mystics call these dimensions the Outer Planes.

Mystics generally assign to Hod planes that run by magic but still run by themselves. In Hod-

The Sephirothic Tree Of Life



realms, magic acts like a system of natural law, with rational, quasi-scientific rules that anyone can follow. Each Netzach plane, on the other hand, holds a controlling intelligence who may unite with the whole substance of his dimension. There is no natural law, only the ruling entity's will. Thus, Netzach planes are also called "Dominions."

The inhabitants of the Outer Planes use magic in their daily life and may possess innate supernatural powers. Outer Planes are often ruled by a "dimension lord," a spirit or sorcerer who wields absolute power over the realm's inhabitants. The dimension lords called Skarn the Shaper and Tyrannon the Conqueror both want to add the Earth to their realms. Tyrannon seems far more tightly bound to his home dimension than Skarn is, but both are powerful, dangerous, and insane.

Many Outer Planes owe allegiance to the cosmic abstractions of Order, Chaos, Artifice, and Nature. The dimension lords of such planes are called "Lords of Order," "Lords of Nature," and so on.

DEMI-PLANES

The Yetziratic World contains countless tiny demi-planes with simple structures and contents. For instance, the Trefoil Plane consists of nothing but golden trefoil shapes floating in a cubic mile of otherwise empty air.

Mystics don't agree where to file the demi-planes. Some say they belong in Yesod by default. Others suggest Hod, because the demi-planes seem fully supernatural but lack any spiritual aspect or a ruling intelligence. Still other mystics just list them under "Miscellaneous Yetzirah," and leave it at that.

SMALLER GROUPINGS

Just as Earth and the Parterres form a cluster of linked dimensions, various Outer Planes may have special connections to each other. The largest such cluster consists of the many worlds ruled by Tyrannon the Conqueror. This mighty entity conquers dimensions faster than he can merge them into his native plane. Until then, he links his demesnes through interdimensional portals.

Other dimensional clusters occur naturally. Earth's mystics know of a federation of dimensions called the *Storlian Realms*, whose senators travel to parliamentary meetings using a spell called the Vapors Of Vata, now famous throughout the Multiverse. Earth is not the only Malkuth-world to bud off a set of astral realms for its gods and spirits, too. *Champions* GMs can define such dimensional groupings as they please.

Briah

Anyone can reach the planes of Assiah or Yetzirah by magic — he merely needs to know how to find his destination. The planes of Briah are different. Before someone enters Briah, he must pass through a realm called *the Veil of the Temple*, the "highest" division of the Astral Plane (see page 43). Passing the Veil takes wisdom, and no mortal is exempt, no matter how great his power. Those who fail the test are hurled back to the realms of matter, or succumb to dangerous monomanias. Those who succeed pass to the realms of the gods — the Upper Planes.

No corporeal being perceives the Brialic planes as they really are. Human visitors perceive these realms as material, because human senses and minds cannot perceive pure Spirit. Brialic realms also sometimes carry emotional auras.

The three sephiroth in Briah are TIPHERETH (Beauty), PACHAD (Strength/Justice) and CHESD (Greatness). The Veil goes in Tiphereth, the lowest sephira. The Prime Avatars of Order, Chaos, Art, and Nature, the highest of the Brialic powers, keep their realms in Chesed. Other notable Upper Planes include the Garden of Earthly Delights, where all physical desires find satisfaction; the Plane of Numbers, a realm of mathematical concepts; the City of Pyramids, a place of perfect knowledge and intellectual despair; and Death's Dominion. Some of these planes can entrap visitors.

Even the mightiest deity or dimension lord remains a finite creature, but in Briah mystics encounter entities that personify universal concepts. Mystics call these conceptual entities the Archetypes or Avatars. Some of the more famous of these beings include Death; the Trickster; the Triple Goddess; and Kryptos, the Lord of Secrets. The mightiest of these entities are the Four Zoas, or Prime Avatars. Urizen, the Archetype of Order, rules the starry wheels and labyrinths of Ulro. Urthona, Prime Avatar of Artifice, dwells in the cosmic city of Golgonooza. Tharmas, master of all Nature, commands a realm simply called Generation: things have no names in nature, so neither does his dimension. Luvah the Anarch, the Zoa of Chaos and passion, occupies an ambiguous Eden called Beulah.

Although dwellers in the material worlds have great difficulty reaching Briah, the Brialic powers can send emissaries into the lower worlds. Sorcerers may summon such emissaries, though they run the risk of angering the spirits' masters. The Avatars themselves may send anthropomorphic personifications of themselves, of great but finite power, or they may possess the gods known to mortals. For instance, the Native American god Coyote is usually a minor deity in Faerie — but when the Trickster possesses him, he gains nigh-infinite powers of transformation, deception, and illusion. Only the most powerful sorcerers try to summon or control the Avatars, and few of them succeed.



Atziluth

Beyond the realms of the Four Zoas lies *the Abyss*, the edge of space, time, and division into discrete entities. The Abyss is an even more difficult barrier than the Veil of the Temple. Anyone who tries and fails to cross the Abyss is annihilated, body and soul, or warps into something monstrous beyond recognition. Those who succeed pass into Atziluth.

Atziluth contains three sephiroth, each considered a single plane by mystics. They call BINA (or Understanding) the Dark Sea of Being. It is an infinite reservoir of power for creation or destruction. CHOKMAH (or Wisdom) is called the Bright Sea of Forms. It contains every possible archetype of objects, actions, ideas, structures, or any other category you could name. Mystic tomes say the light of Chokmah shines on the dark waves of Binah — form combines with substance — and the sparkling reflections off the waves forms the Multiverse.

Even the distinction between form and substance breaks down in KETHER, the Crown, the most inaccessible of the planes. Kether, also called the Primum Mobile, the Mundane Shell, or the Aleph, is the ultimate realm of indivisible being. In Kether, everything becomes One. Someone who reaches Kether will see everything, in fact *be* everything, the whole multiversal expanse of time, space, and dimension.

Reaching Kether isn't a feat for a mystic, because anyone who could reach Kether wouldn't be a mystic anymore. He'd be God — Supreme Being of the Multiverse. What's more, to those on

the lower levels of reality he has always been God, because Kether stands outside Time. (Everyone else who ever has or ever will reach Kether is God too — but don't think about this too hard, you'll hurt your brain.)

The Atziluthic World also includes a fourth element, the "lost sephira" called DA'ATH: the link between Wisdom and Understanding, balanced in the Abyss between timeless Atziluth and the realms below. Archimedes said, "Give me a lever long enough, and a place to stand, and I will move the Earth." Da'ath is that place. From Da'ath, a mystic can call on the limitless power of Binah, shape it with the archetypes of Chokmah, and cast his creation into the realms of Time. Only the mystic's intelligence, patience, and skill limits what he can create, from a flower to a galaxy. What's more, since Da'ath exists outside time, the mystic can insert his new creation at *any point in history* — past, present, or future. Da'ath's nature renders it, rather understandably, one of the greatest secrets in sorcerous lore.

The Qliphothic World

Some sorcerers add a fifth level to the kabbalistic scheme, the QLIPHOTHIC realm — either resting below Assiah, or as a sort of dark "back side" to the Tree of Life. The Qliphothic World contains ancient dimensions whose energies decayed into forms inimical to all normal sorts of life and existence. No mystic has ever explored more than a few dimensions in the Tree of Death. Seeking knowledge of the Qliphothic Realm is morally and physically dangerous: the mystics who study the Tree of Death tend to die messily, or they develop a sick fascination with destruction and oblivion.

Just as the Atziluthic world holds the fountainhead of all existence, the Qliphothic world holds the drain down which all existence eventually runs. At the absolute limit of negative existence lurks the Solipsist or the Decreator — the Anti-God. The Decreator itself is unknowable: Just as anyone who reached Kether would become one with the Creator and Creation alike, anyone who reached the Solipsist would join its total Unbeing and suffer annihilation.

The closest any being can come to the Solipsist is the entity called Quemetiel, the "Crowd of Gods." Quemetiel is a churning, chaotic fusion of long-defunct cosmic entities. It mindlessly sucks in anything that comes near, like a supernatural black hole. Anything eaten by Quemetiel is gone forever.

AN ANCIENT WARNING

Step not down, therefore, to the darkly-shining world: beneath is spread the Deep, forever formless, lightless, foul, joying in illusion, irrational, precipitous and sinuous, ceaselessly whirling around its own maimed depth, eternally wed to a shape inert, not breathing, and void.

—*The Chaldean Oracles*

SPECIAL DIMENSIONS

The Tree of Life isn't a perfect or total model of the Multiverse (in fact, perfectly or totally modeling the Multiverse is probably impossible, even for the likes of Tyrannon and Istvatha V'han). The GM can treat any location that's not accessible by normal travel through space as another dimension; and characters can reach such locations using Extra-Dimensional Movement. Some of these "dimensions" are well known to mystics, but are too small or localized to count as complete planes of reality. The Superheroic Age also exposes mystics to realms and aspects of reality they never imagined, such as microverses, parallel worlds, and cyberspace.

POCKET WORLDS

Pocket worlds form a notable exception to the Tree of Life model. A "pocket world" is a space entirely tucked within some object — for instance, a painting you can step into and it becomes real. A djinn bottle is another example: the interior of the bottle is a "dimension" whose defining property is that once once you enter, you cannot leave until someone uncorks the bottle.

Mystics cannot normally reach pocket worlds by Extra-Dimensional Movement through the Astral Plane. Instead, they must find the object that contains the pocket world. Extra-Dimensional Movement works at that point. Often, the object itself carries the magic to bring people to the pocket world (in game terms, an Extra-Dimensional Movement power is built into the object itself, so that anyone, not just mystics, can access the pocket world).

MINDS AS DIMENSIONS

A person's mind and memories form an entire world of their own. Mystics may enter another person's mind, perhaps corporeally, to explore memories or hidden thoughts. Normal astral travel can take a mystic into a person's dreams, but not into other areas of the mind: mindscapes count as their own class of dimension, distinct from astral realms.

MICROVERSES

Superbeings with shrinking powers sometimes report worlds that exist on the scale of bacteria, atoms, or subatomic particles. Mystics believe such characters find natural portals to other dimensions. Reported "microverses" seem to follow strange but consistent natural laws, so most mystics think they must be Asiatic realms. Some microversal explorers, however, tell stories of talking bacteria, a Quantum Casino where God plays dice with the universe, and other oddities. Mystics speculate that these super-shrinkers may find their way into strange Yetziratic or even Brialic realms.

Some mystics also believe that *macroverses* may exist — zones of reality only perceived and entered by creatures the size of planets, solar systems, or galaxies. A few mystics actively research hyper-Growth spells in hopes of discovering macroverses before the likes of Skarn or Tyrannon find and exploit them.

ALTERNATE HISTORIES

Mystics have long experience with magic that seems to change history, such as a demon who grants a pacter's wish to occupy high office, or spells to pull the *It's A Wonderful Life* trick of showing how the world would change if a person never lived. You can represent such magic as a form of Extra-Dimensional Movement into an alternate history. Until the Superheroic Age, however, mystics never imagined that such "Alternate Earths" could maintain a permanent existence, as "real" as the mystic's own world.

Mystics still don't know what to make of parallel worlds. Does every dimension have alternate histories? Is there an infinite number of alternate Skarns and Tyrannons? The mystic masters of the Outer Planes don't seem to have heard of parallel worlds; so far, travel between alternate Earths is mostly limited to time machines and rare, innate superpowers (such as those of Istvatha V'han).

Spells for time travel or changing history call power from Brialic dimensions such as the Stream of Eternity, or cosmic entities like Los the Smith, an aspect of Urthona. Because of this, some mystical theorists speculate that parallel worlds exist in a hitherto-unknown Brialic plane where all possibilities become real. Other mystics caution, however, that the Tree of Life model may be incomplete: perhaps mystics flat-out cannot access certain aspects of the Multiverse. Only the GM knows for sure.

CYBERSPACE

Cyberspace falls completely outside mystics' experience. The virtual worlds within computer networks count as a sort of dimension, but no mystic in the Champions Universe has invented a spell to access them. That doesn't mean it *couldn't* happen — only that no one has done it yet.

Some mystics believe, however, that humanity's machines generate an astral realm of their own. This hypothetical realm of "machine consciousness" would not be cyberspace, exactly, but it might enable a mystic to enter such virtual realms. The Brialic Plane of Numbers might also provide a key to entering cyberspace by magic.

THE ASTRAL PLANE



Of all dimensions, the Astral Plane has the closest connection to Earth. Every point on Earth touches part of the Astral Plane. Human souls touch the Astral Plane as well, and may travel to that dimension in dreams, or sojourn there after death. Mystics consider the ability to see the Astral Plane one of the most important occult arts. Advanced mages may even learn to leave their bodies and travel through the Astral Plane as “living ghosts.” The Astral Plane provides access to all the other Inner Planes, too. Mystics who visit the Astral Plane soon learn, however, that it can be an interesting — and dangerous — place in its own right.

GENERAL NATURE

The Astral Plane doesn’t have geography. It has various divisions, each with its own distinctive nature and appearance, but they’re not arranged according to north or south, up or down, or other normal conceptions of space. “Here” may connect to “there” because they look like each other, or because they have a similar emotional aura.

The ability to reach one section of the Astral Plane by Extra-Dimensional Movement does not automatically grant a character the ability to reach the other divisions: in some ways, the Astral Plane actually consists of several loosely-connected dimensions. Each section contains access routes to other divisions, though.

Mystics divide the Astral Plane into the Lower, Middle, and Upper Astral.

VISITING AND PERCEIVING THE ASTRAL PLANE

If a character wants to travel to any part of the Astral Plane, he needs to buy Extra-Dimensional Movement to “a related group of dimensions”; travel to a single dimension has to be defined as taking him to either the Lower, Middle, or Upper Astral. From there they may be able to go elsewhere, as described in the text.

On the other hand, if a character just wants to perceive the Astral Plane, it counts as a “single dimension” for purposes of the Dimensional Sense Modifier and the like.

See page 96 for suggested rules for using Transdimensional attacks against or within the Astral Plane.

The Lower Astral Plane

The Lower Astral Plane impinges directly on Earth and its dimension (or any other Malkuth realm). It includes various divisions of its own, such as the realm of dreams. Dimensions in other “levels” of the Multiverse have their own Lower Astral zones, but these tend to be rudimentary: Outer Planes realms conserve their innate magic, instead of spilling it out to form astral shadow-realms. Only the fully material worlds of Malkuth seem to generate complex Lower Astral Planes. When mystics speak of the “Lower Astral” without other qualifiers, however, they mean the Lower Astral Plane of Earth.

The Lower Astral Plane has several “divisions,” discussed below.

The Middle Astral Plane

The Middle Astral Plane (*a.k.a.* Limbo) enables mystics to move between all the worlds within Assiah and Yetzirah. An astral voyager moves from Earth’s Lower Astral, to the Middle Astral, to the Lower Astral of the other plane, and from there perhaps to the dimension itself.

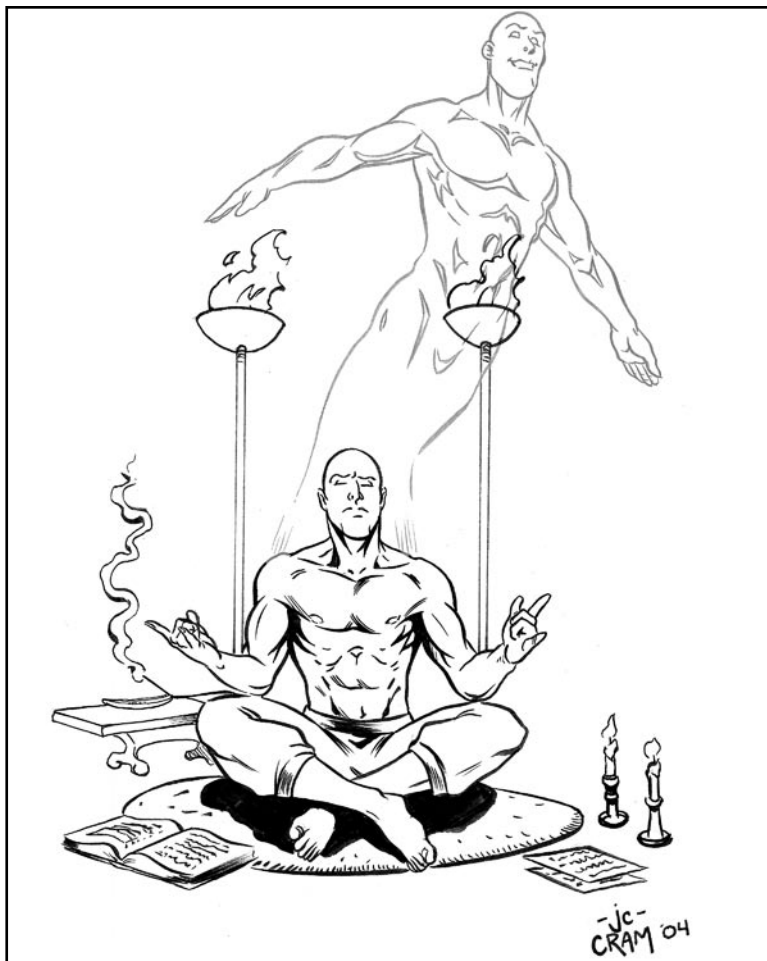
The Middle Astral Plane connects the Outer Planes. Travel through the Middle Astral looks like flying through a kaleidoscope. Glittering, rainbow-hued circles, ellipses, and other shapes swirl in an endless, multi-dimensional vortex. Countless smaller gyres spin within Limbo; a traveler who enters one of these vortices finds it explodes outward, revealing another level of whirling motion with its own smaller gyres.

From close up, each colorful fleck within the Middle Astral provides a view into another dimension. An astral traveler seeks the proper gyre for his target plane, then selects a portal for a specific region. The portals to a plane share a similar shape and color. Finding the right portal in the ever-changing swirl is entirely a matter of intuition and force of will, like any astral journey. A portal grows large enough to accommodate any creature who wants to pass through it. Astral voyagers constantly see strange denizens of other planes pop out of distant portals or dive into them again.

Most mystics don’t spend much time in Limbo. Whenever a mystic uses Extra-Dimensional Movement to go to or from an Outer Plane, however, he glimpses the fractal swirl of the Middle Astral.

The Upper Astral Plane

The Upper Astral Plane grants access to the higher, spiritual dimensions of Briah, but mortals do not easily make the passage to the Upper Planes.



Ectoplasm

None of the Astral Planes are made of normal matter. Instead, they and their denizens are made of *ectoplasm* — a substance that bridges the gap between ideas and matter. On the Lower Astral, thought can create objects all by itself. That's how ghostly pirates get ghostly ships to sail, for example. Buildings, objects, or places that become the focus of great thought and emotion for a long time can endure on the Lower Astral long after their material form was destroyed. For example, on the Lower Astral Plane Stonehenge and the Parthenon stand undamaged. In fact, thoughts can create quasi-living beings on the Lower Astral Plane. Such spirits form a significant fraction of the Lower Astral's population.

CONNECTIONS TO OTHER PLANES

The Lower Astral Plane connects to several other dimensions that grew out of it. A character can reach the many districts of Faerie, the Netherworld, Elysium, or Babylon from the Astral Plane by normal astral movement, without using any sort of additional Extra-Dimensional Movement power. Once characters enter these realms, however, they can leave only through some sort of EDM or by pre-existing nexus points.

Human life and thought created the Lower Astral zones known to most sorcerers, but mystics know that animal and plant "consciousness" bring their own astral planes into existence. Currently, the most popular names for these dimensions are the

Blood Tide and Yggdrasil. Only masters of astral travel can locate and enter these strange, inhuman dimensions.

If a mage travels in the right direction through the Lower Astral — "into the Fourth Dimension," as mystics sometimes say — he leaves Earth for the colorful, swirling chaos of the Middle Astral. From here a mystic can reach countless other dimensions. Again, this doesn't require any sort of additional Extra-Dimensional Movement power. It's just a matter of knowing which route to take — in game terms, of using the *Navigation (Dimensional)* Skill. (Characters who buy EDM powers to take them to other dimensions don't need this Skill; buying such a power confers proper knowledge of how to use it.) If anything dwells permanently on the Middle Astral, it remains unreported so far. Some mystics call this dimension Limbo, or the Void, because nothing exists there except a way to someplace else.

Beyond the Middle Astral lies the Upper Astral Plane, also called the Veil of the Temple. Because of the Upper Astral Plane's importance and unusual properties, it receives a separate description (see page 43).

PERCEIVING EARTH

A person traveling in the Lower Astral sees the point on Earth (or whatever other world he's on) corresponding to his location in the Lower Astral. However, colors are washed out and everything has a silvery cast, as if it shone with a faint greyish light. This "astral glow" does not provide any real light; it's just an odd effect of normal light as seen from the Astral Plane. If there isn't enough light to see at that point on Earth, a character in the Lower Astral can't see anything, either. An astral traveler in a pitch-black cave would be just as blind as a normal person.

The Lower Astral mutes all other sensations, too. Sounds made in the material world come thinly, as if from a distance. Astral entities suffer a -2 penalty to PER Rolls for hearing sound from the material world. Taste and smell don't exist on the Lower Astral. The astral counterparts of Earthly objects can be felt only faintly (and cannot be picked up, thrown, or manipulated unless the character has a Transdimensional power enabling him to do so). Texture and temperature hardly exist at all. Even pain from attacks diminishes, though damage stays just the same.

Astral Awareness

As discussed on page 92, characters can apply a *Dimensional Sense Modifier* to various Senses or Sense Groups (primarily Sight) to see into other dimensions. For the most part, this Sense Modifier has only one one application on Earth: to see and hear the Astral Plane (primarily the Lower Astral). Mystics sometimes call this "second sight." The most precise term, however, is *Astral Awareness*. Most people cannot see or hear astral travelers and spirits, because these entities exist in another reality. People with Astral Awareness, however, see and hear astral entities that are in the Lower Astral location corresponding to that person's location on Earth (or whatever other world he's on). Spiritual entities look transparent and almost colorless, like

a stereotypical ghost, and speak with a thin, hollow voice. People with Astral Awareness also see “ghost” buildings that no longer exist in the material world, and other such “objects.”

The other Inner Planes impinge on Earth in a few places. A person with the appropriate *Dimensional Sense Modifier* could see through these nexus points to the various Inner Planes, but few mystics bother to develop such talents. Nexus points leak onto the Lower Astral as well, so a person with Astral Awareness can spot a nexus anyway, and probably guess where it leads: Netherworld portals reek of evil and dread, while Faerie portals carry an aura of mystery and allure. Nexi to Babylon feel exciting, while portals to Elysium radiate peace and holiness.

DIVISIONS OF THE LOWER ASTRAL

Travel between the various divisions of the Lower Astral sometimes may be difficult, but it requires no special powers once a character gets to the Lower Astral. In other words, in the Champions Universe setting, Extra-Dimensional Movement to the Lower Astral provides a character with access to various other dimensions “for free,” due to the fact that the Lower Astral “links” to so many other planes. These include: the “astral realms” described below; and the Quaternions Planes (Faerie, the Netherworld, Elysium, and Babylon).

Reaching the appropriate nexus point or “link” in the Lower Astral to a plane the character wants to visit may entail some travel within the Lower Astral itself. This may be dangerous — the fact that characters can use these nexi without paying Character Points for the privilege doesn’t mean they’re exempt from what goes on in the Lower Astral as they travel it. That’s why some mystics (and other characters) buy better forms of Extra-Dimensional Movement that allow them to travel to such planes directly, bypassing the Lower Astral in game terms. (In setting terms, they still pass through the Lower Astral; they’re just guaranteed to do so safely.) See *Travel On The Astral Plane*, page 16, for general rules about this “free” astral travel.

This list is not meant to be exclusive. The GM can add other astral territories as desired.

ASTRAL EARTH

An astral traveler can merely skim the edge, as it were, of the Astral Plane. He exists astrally, but can still see and hear the material world, and move through material objects like a ghost. (In game terms, this means buying an Astral Form power such as the one on page 80, which has Desolidification and other powers.)

Places that no one thinks about “thin out” or compress in the Astral Plane. The Lower Astral oceans, for instance, fade into grey limbo a few miles from shore, because nobody pays much attention to any particular part of, say, the mid-Atlantic. Antarctica hardly exists at all on the Astral Plane. The same fading occurs if a traveler moves up into

the sky of Astral Earth, or down below the surface. An unwary traveler might stray in the trackless silver glow, and end up in another division of the Lower Astral.

Mystics call this zone of interface “Astral Earth.” Astral projectors begin on Astral Earth. From there, they can travel to other divisions of the Astral Plane — all the way to Briah, if they possess enough skill and courage.

IMAGINARY PLACES

The Lower Astral includes locations with no physical counterpart at all — they grow from the imagination. To locate most of these places, characters must abandon the guide of Earthly geography. Some imaginary places are archetypes, generalized examples of locations. The ghost city of Windyburg, for instance, grows from memories and stories about the “age of gangsters.” Windyburg doesn’t correspond to any particular city in 1920s America, but it contains the classic elements of any city from a tale of cops, gangsters, speakeasies, and bootleggers. Other imaginary places grow from common dreams, such as the Spooky Empty House, the High School Where You’re Naked, or the Sky Where You Fly.

THE DREAMZONE

Most of the time, people’s astral selves stay safely connected to their bodies. When humans dream, however, their spirits enter a special section of the Lower Astral called the Dreamzone.

An astral traveler can enter the Dreamzone just by finding a person who sleeps and dreams. That person’s astral self now exists in the Dreamzone. A skilled astral traveler can follow the link from body to spirit, and so enter the person’s dream. (In game terms, this typically requires the *Navigation (Astral)* Skill.) Mystics enter dreams to learn about people, to deliver messages, or sometimes to torment sleeping victims.

Similar dreams tend to overlap, enabling a mystic to move from one person’s dream to another. In fact, ordinary dreamers sometimes stray into other people’s dreams without knowing it.

A mystic can leave a dream and return to Astral Earth, but other destinations are possible, too. If a dreamer wakes up suddenly, astral intruders are cast into a dark space studded with countless transparent, silver-glowing sacs of various sizes. Each womblike sac holds a transparent human form, curled in fetal position — the astral selves of everyone on Earth. The tiny sacs of unborn children glow with fierce brilliance. As people grow up, their sacs enlarge but most of them dim. When a person is awake in the material world, his astral form sleeps and becomes faint almost to invisibility. When the person dreams, his astral form’s eyes open and the dream plays out in a soap-bubble shimmer across the shining surface of the sac.

Astral projectors do not have such a Dreamzone womb; they birthed themselves into the wider Astral Plane. Either they keep their astral bodies safely locked within their bodies when they dream, or they wander the dreams of all humanity. That’s not entirely a good thing for astral travelers,

because the dream-womb provides nearly indestructible protection for a soul. Astral projection means abandoning this protection from demons and other malign astral forces. Freedom, as always, has its price.

CYSTS

Powerful magic or strong, weird thoughts may create pockets of the Astral Plane with incredibly strange properties — *Astral Cysts*. No one could catalogue all of these pockets of strangeness. They appear and disappear without warning in the remote, unfrequented areas of the Lower Astral. Some powerful enchantments can create an Astral Cyst and shape it to order.

Sample Regions

Here are some example locations astral voyagers might visit.

THE GHOST HOUSE

This house in what is now a slum district existed for almost a century. It acquired three ghosts. The real house burned down a decade ago; its lot remains vacant. The astral house still exists, though, maintained by the ghosts. The spirits are friendly in most ways, but they protect their phantom home fiercely.

PUERTO MUERTO

This ramshackle port consists of old-fashioned, run-down buildings of wood and stucco on the shore of a Caribbeanesque bay. Clumsily-built docks reach out from the sandy shore. Dilapidated boats with rotting sails are tied up at the docks or rest at anchor further out in the little bay. The whole town is totally quiet. At first, characters see no one except a fisherman mending a net out on the dock. His shabby clothes drip water. He's missing an eye, the flesh has fallen away from his bones in a few places, and he's slightly translucent. Welcome to Puerto Muerto, a real ghost town.

Visitors see the other inhabitants of Puerto Muerto only after they meet the net-mending fisherman. The village features all the people of an old-time waterfront: fishermen, floozies, sailmakers, carpenters, tradesmen and their wives, even a few guttersnipe children. Everybody is a translucent specter. Some look quite lifelike. Other ghosts range from the merely drowned or knifed, through various stages of decay, to skeletons in seafaring garb. The people don't like "breathers," as they call the living, but fear or a good bribe in booze or Spanish gold can overcome their surliness.

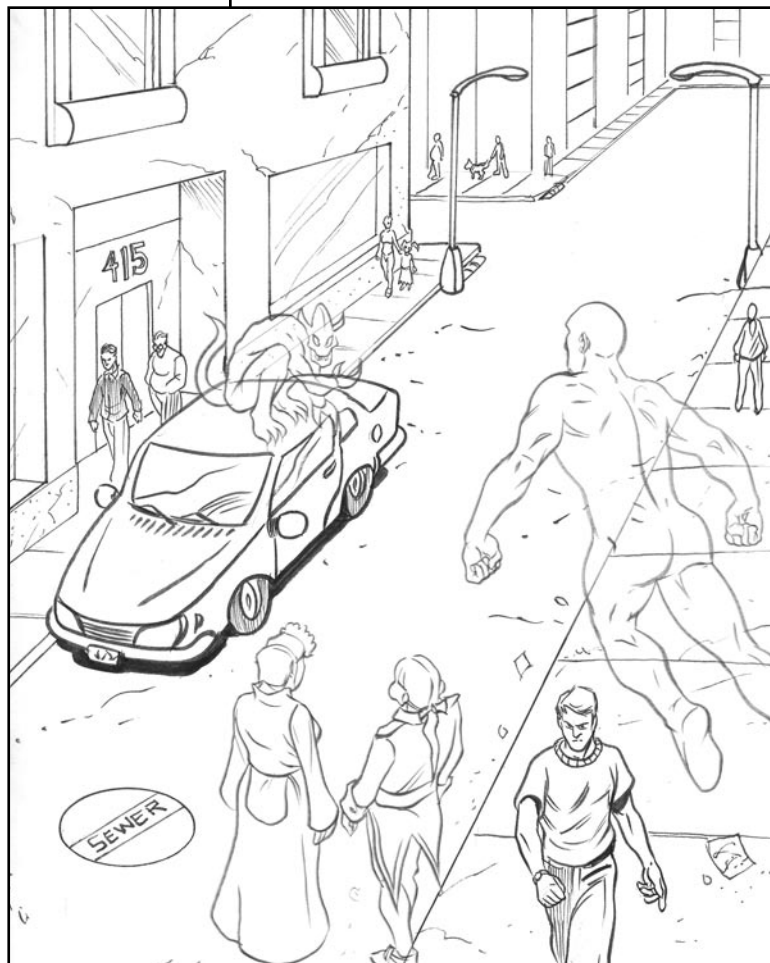
The best place in Puerto Muerto to meet people and get information is a sleazy waterfront dive called Cutthroat Carl's. You can see how it got its name: Carl the bartender has a slit throat. Lurly the barmaid is downright gorgeous. The way her damp, low-cut gown clings to her body could make any man ignore the seaweed in her hair. Lurly flirts with visiting men but she's a dangerous girl to romance, for her kisses literally drown men. "Lurly" is actually *Lorelei*, the ghost of a woman who drowned herself in the Rhine because of a faithless lover, and subsequently lured men to a watery doom. What she's doing in Puerto Muerto is anybody's guess.

A few miles up the shore from Puerto Muerto, another inlet holds a small, ruined fort occupied by ghost pirates. The skeletal pirates roister in Puerto Muerto now and then, or they sack the town. Fortunately, none of the people in Puerto Muerto can really die because they're already dead (or imaginary). The pirates occasionally sail their ghost ship to Earth's waters, though....

Half a mile from shore, the grey sea fades away into the grey space that lies between astral locations. The same happens only a quarter mile inland. Puerto Muerto thus consists of a strip of coastline a few miles long, fading out on every side into nothingness.

THE SPOOKY EMPTY HOUSE

This zone grew from nightmares about being chased by unseen monsters through an endless house. Once you enter the Spooky Empty House, the nightmare begins. If you let the nightmare run its course, the monsters (which you never see, only hear) chase you for several minutes. Eventually you open a door and fall down an endless precipice back to the general Dreamzone, or back to Astral Earth — wherever you encountered the Spooky Empty House. A character who succeeds with an



EGO Roll can break out of the dream's storyline and change its course, such as turning and facing the monsters. The monsters turn out to be less terrible than he imagined.

NEW GOLGOTHA

This Cyst consists of a few distorted, nightmarish city blocks. It folds back on itself: moving four blocks in any direction brings you back where you started. New Golgotha grew from a paranoid's fantasies of power and persecution. He believed he was Jesus and that the CIA was after him with pain-ray projectors. As a further complication, the paranoid died long ago but his ghost keeps the fantasy running. To escape, characters must confront the paranoid's ghost and make a convincing effort to counter his delusions. Not only do the CIA Men in Black stalk the lost characters, the paranoid responds to challenges by calling blue bolts from Heaven.

ASTRAL INHABITANTS

Many sorts of beings visit the Astral Plane. Some creatures dwell there permanently. Normally, everyone on the Astral Plane is visible and solid to everyone else, though astral beings may be harder to damage than physical creatures.

GHOSTS

Large numbers of ghosts dwell on the Lower Astral Plane. Most ghosts spend only a short time (if any) on the Lower Astral before they evaporate and the person's soul moves on to its eternal reward, but Earth's vast population ensures a steady supply of new ghosts. A few ghosts endure for decades or even centuries. Ghosts usually stay in Astral Earth, but some of them move to imaginary places or other astral regions.

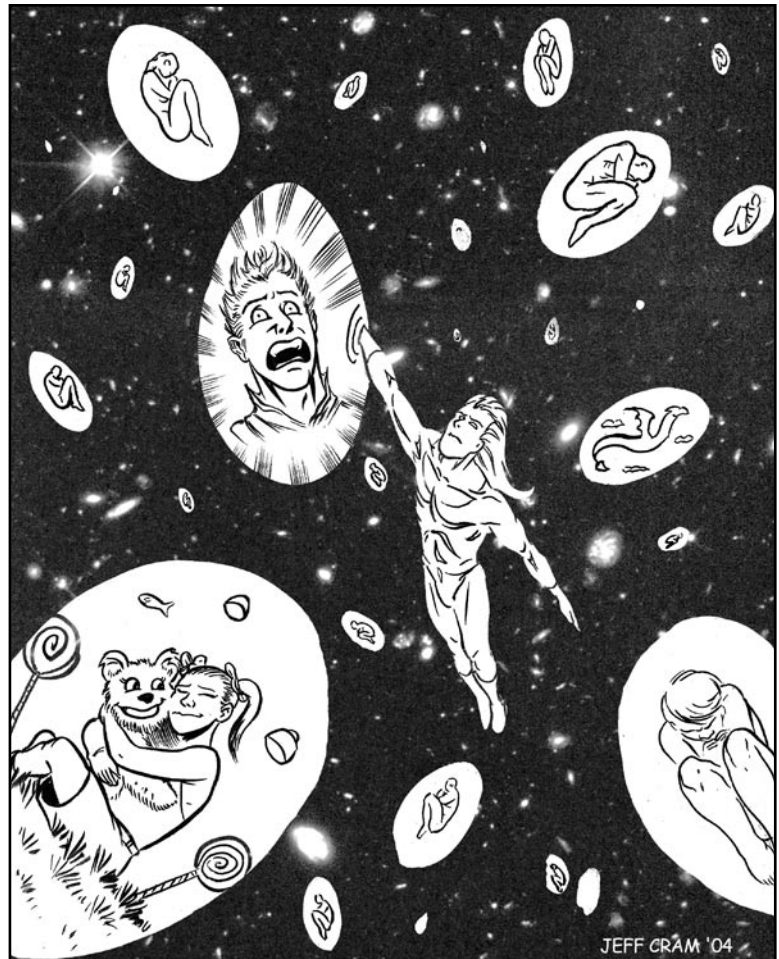
DREAMERS

Dreamers stay within the Dreamzone, but occasionally they venture into the general Lower Astral without realizing it, as spontaneous astral projectors. Dreamers can also enter the Lower Astral through dreams that become so common they achieve independent existence and generate locations in the Astral Plane. Common nightmares like the Spooky Empty House, for instance, can act as portals from the Dreamzone to the rest of the Astral Plane.

People who die while dreaming may endure as ghosts. Some move from the Dreamzone to Astral Earth, while others remain caught in a dream that never ends.

IMAGINARY PEOPLE

Many of the imaginary locations come with imaginary people to complete the scene. The Spooky Empty House has its elusive monsters, while Puerto Muerto boasts a complete population of imaginary fishermen, sailors, and tradesmen. Most of these imaginary people seem like ordinary humans except they never really die and they cannot leave their assigned roles. For instance,



Cutthroat Carl cannot leave his bar in Puerto Muerto, while characters can never persuade New Golgotha's Men In Black to stop pursuing the paranoid who dreamed them into existence.

ATAVISMS

When humans experience strong, visceral emotions such as rage, pain, ecstasy, or terror, they create a grotesque little spirit on the Lower Astral — an *atavism*. These spirits might evaporate in a few days, or hang around for centuries. Most atavisms are not actually evil, but they embody raw emotions and drives most good magicians prefer to restrain. Some evil magicians deliberately create and control atavisms.

A creature who kills and eats an atavism experiences the sensation or emotion that created the spirit. Since most atavisms owe their creation to very unpleasant feelings, spirits leave most atavisms alone. On the other hand, atavisms from sex and other strong pleasures seldom survive long before someone eats them. The massed thought of religious ceremonies can create strong positive atavisms. In particular, spirits flock to ceremonies in which an animal is killed, cooked, and eaten, because that lets the ghosts smell and taste food again. Demons, on the other hand, feast on the most negative atavisms.

VISITORS FROM OTHER PLANES

Spirits from Elysium and the Netherworld enter the Lower Astral to observe human affairs

and prompt good or evil thoughts. Entities from Babylon or Faerie may visit the Lower Astral too. For instance, an astral traveler might encounter a mythological god moping around a shrine where mortals once worshipped him, or a demon whispering temptations into a mortal's ear. Rare astral travelers from the Outer Planes visit as well. Not all the visitors from other planes are friendly... some are indifferent to humans, and some are astral predators.

THE DRAGON

The Dragon is the most powerful dweller in the Astral Plane. It falls in a class by itself, as a god to the gods. The Dragon ceaselessly watches the Dreamzone's myriads of silver bubbles from across the Void of Dreamless Sleep, and it watches every bubble at once. Its belly holds the Netherworld and Faerie rests on its back. Men give the Dragon many names — Tiamat, the Midgard Serpent, Satan — but these myths capture only a fraction of the Dragon's awful reality. (For more information about the Dragon, see page 138.)

TRAVEL ON THE ASTRAL PLANE

Distance doesn't mean the same thing on the Astral Plane as it does on Earth. Places can be "near" or "far" based on their similarity. To an experienced astral voyager, the grainfields of Kansas are nearer the grainfields of the Ukraine than to the mountains of Colorado. Astral Colorado, in turn, is not far from Astral Chile or Astral Switzerland — they are all lands of high, rugged mountains.

Characters have three options for astral travel. First, they can travel through Astral Earth by following landmarks on Earth. Second, they can travel more quickly, using "astral shortcuts," if they have enough will and skill. Third, a skilled traveler may be able to travel instantly from one point on the Astral Plane to another.

MUNDANE TRAVEL

A traveler on Astral Earth can follow the material world's geography using his normal movement abilities. All the freeways, road signs, and cities remain visible from the Lower Astral. Many of the most interesting parts of the Astral Plane are purely imaginary, however, and do not correspond to any specific place on Earth. A character cannot reach them unless he uses the *Navigation (Astral)* Skill.

FAST TRAVEL (SHORTCUTS)

Characters may want to bypass normal geography, or reach imaginary locations such as Puerto Muerto. To do this, a character thinks about the desired location as strongly as possible, and keeps moving. It doesn't matter whether he walks, flies, or rides an astral train. Eventually he arrives. A character taking an "astral shortcut" like this can lead other characters with him.

How quickly the scenery shifts depends on the character's mental discipline (*i.e.*, his EGO)

ASTRAL SHORTCUTS

Modifier	Time Chart Adjustment Factor*
+1	Destination resembles starting location (example: desert to desert, city to city)
+1	Destination is a mystic site
+1	Destination is a focus of great emotion and attention (example: the Statue of Liberty)
+1	Willing to spend an hour reaching destination
+1	Familiar with target location (example: the character's best friend's home)
+2	Intimately familiar with target location (example: the character's own home)
+1	Maintain a Mind Link or a basic Mind Scan lock-on to a person at the target location
+2	Maintain an EGO +10 Mind Scan lock-on to a person at the target location
+3	Maintain an EGO +20 Mind Scan lock-on to a person at the target location
-1	Target is in another section of the Lower Astral (Dreamzone, Astral Earth, or the like)
-2	Target is an imaginary location or astral cyst
-3	Character is lost and lacks the <i>Navigation (Astral)</i> Skill

*: The base time for an astral shortcut is 20 Minutes. A "+" indicates to take a step or steps up the Time Chart, which reduces the time needed; a "-" to take a step or steps down the Time Chart, which increases the time needed. The GM can vary the time as desired instead of sticking rigidly to the Time Chart steps if he prefers (for example, he could rule that a "5 Minutes" result is actually 6.5 minutes, or 8 minutes, or the like).

and experience (*i.e.*, his *Navigation (Astral)* Skill). A successful shortcut requires nothing more than a successful EGO Roll, but the character may use *Navigation (Astral)* as a Complementary Skill Roll. The GM may rule that some shortcuts aren't possible at all unless the character has *Navigation (Astral)* as a Skill.

A "shortcut" journey never takes more than one hour, or less than one minute. A trip between similar locations takes less time than a trip between very different locations. A character can move quickly and easily reach a familiar location than one he knows little about. If people travel in a group, they all travel at the rate set by the person with the highest EGO. A character who succeeds at an *Navigation (Astral)* skill roll automatically beats anyone who didn't, even if he doesn't have the highest EGO.

Gamemasters who want some more precise system can start by assuming that an astral shortcut takes 20 minutes, and adjust the duration up or down the Time Chart based on how well the character succeeded at his EGO Roll, the similarity or familiarity of the regions, and other factors. See the accompanying text box for modifiers.

Characters can never leave the Lower Astral through shortcuts. Reaching other Inner Planes or the Middle Astral always requires use of the *Navigation (Astral)* Skill.

If two characters would make an astral journey in the same time, as indicated by the chart, use the differences between their EGO scores, *Navigation*

(Astral) rating, and target familiarity to determine who arrives first. If he prefers, the GM can ignore such complexities and simply decide who arrives first. As a genuinely supernatural place, the Astral Plane does not have to follow consistent, scientific rules.

If a character fails the EGO Roll to take an astral shortcut, he can try again, and again if need be — but he cannot be sure he failed until an hour has passed. A character with MegaScaled movement may find it quicker and easier to eschew astral shortcuts, at least if he stays on Astral Earth.

INSTANTANEOUS TRAVEL

Some spirits and experienced astral voyagers can move anywhere in the Astral Plane at the speed of thought. A character who succeeds at a Navigation (Astral) roll can disappear from one place and appear at another. The character does not need any special Power to perform an “Astral Jump.” Such instantaneous travel is a property of the Astral Plane. A character using instantaneous astral travel cannot take other characters with him, or lead them to where he’s going.

For instantaneous travel within the Lower Astral, modify the Navigation (Astral) Skill Roll using the same chart as for astral shortcuts, applying the modifiers to the Skill Roll rather than the Time Chart. For instantaneous travel to another dimension or division of the Astral, such as reaching the Middle Astral or one of the Parterres, a character simply has to make an unmodified Navigation (Astral) roll to find the appropriate “link” or “nexus” (or just to cross over into the next “layer” of Astral space).

The catch with instantaneous travel lies in arriving at the right place. If the character fails his Navigation (Astral) roll, he does not appear where he wants. Failing the roll by 4 or more guarantees the character becomes utterly lost: He isn’t even in the same zone of the Lower Astral. He might find himself in an astral cyst, in the Dreamzone, or shunted to one of the other Inner Planes.

MegaScaled Teleportation on the Lower Astral follows the rules for instant travel, unless the character moves to a Fixed Point on the Astral Plane. The entire Lower Astral counts as one dimension for purposes of Teleportation, but remember that some locations (such as dreams) may cease to exist after a time.

Of course, a character can buy an Extra-Dimensional Movement power that takes him directly to a plane such as the Middle Astral or Babylon. In game terms, that lets him bypass all the Skill Rolls and other such difficulties. In setting terms, he still travels through the Astral Plane to get there, he just does so unerringly and without difficulty (unless the Limitations on the powers expose him to difficulties...).



GETTING LOST

As long as a character remains in the same division of the Lower Astral, such as Astral Earth or the Dreamzone, getting lost does not present serious problems. He can “shortcut” back to a familiar location and start over. Occasionally, however, characters run into problems.

Astral cysts and other weird and disorienting locations that lack connections to Earthly geography can be hard to leave. A character cannot just attempt Skill or EGO Rolls over and over. Characters must wait a while between attempts, which means they must interact with the new environment.

The GM decides how long characters wait before they can try again to escape. As a suggestion, however, the character’s condition must change and he must experience a dramatic scene of some sort. At its simplest, this scene could consist of the character(s) exploring the location and discovering a route back to the normal Astral Plane. To raise the drama level, perhaps the character must experience some emotion or perform some action before he can escape. In such cases, the GM should provide plenty of clues about what the character should do. After all, this is an interruption, not an adventure of its own.

Some locations may include inhabitants who help or hinder lost characters. Lost travelers may need to face some danger or gain the help of a local spirit to escape. Strange locations may sport equally strange inhabitants. Indeed, some bizarre pockets of the Astral Plane can be intrinsically damaging in physical or mental ways.

ASTRAL VERSUS DESOLIDIFICATION

Anyone on Astral Earth is effectively Desolidified to anyone in the material world, and Invisible to anyone who lacks Astral Awareness. Any attack with the *Affects Desolidified* Advantage can affect entities in Astral Earth, however; so can Mental Powers and other abilities that can affect Desolidified beings.

Characters who are astral beings, or who have “Astral Form” powers or the like, have to pay Character Points for these abilities (Desolidification [affected by magical attacks or the attacks of astral beings] and Invisibility). Some, like certain ghosts, have such strong connections to Earth that they don’t buy any sort of Extra-Dimensional Movement power — they simulate their “astral-ness” with just the Desolidification and Invisibility (and possibly other powers reflecting aspects of those abilities, adding *Affects Physical World* to attacks so they can hurt solid beings). Others have Extra-Dimensional Movement so they can place themselves fully in the Astral Plane, then use powers with the *Transdimensional* Advantage to affect the world (such a character would even need *Transdimensional Images* just to allow people on Earth to see him).

Normally, everyone on the Astral Plane is solid to each other, whether they dwell permanently in that dimension, reach it through Extra-Dimensional Movement, or have Desolidification defined as “astral form.” Characters with suitable special effects for Desolidification may interact with astral entities, too, but they cannot leave Astral Earth or employ shortcuts or instant travel: they remain too bound to the material world.



ADVENTURE USE

Mystics most often use the Astral Plane as a route to other places, but the divisions of the Lower Astral may themselves become the site of adventures.

Astral Earth’s chief value for mystics lies in surveillance. From the Astral Plane, a character can spy on people in the material world with no chance of discovery... unless the target is another mystic (who may have Astral Awareness) or has mental powers (in which case the subject may feel that someone is watching).

The Dreamzone provides a somewhat unreliable view into other people’s memories and motivations. For instance, the dreams of a supervillain may provide clues to his current activities as well as his past and his Psychological Limitations. The GM may rule that a character who wants to obtain information from dreams needs PS: Dream Interpretation.

Astral cysts and imaginary locations provide unusual locations for adventures. For instance, characters could try a little swashbuckling in Puerto Muerto. If no one in a group of mystics can reach the Outer Planes, astral cysts and imaginary places offer a second-best substitute as unearthly, magical environments.

Both heroes and villains can come from the Astral Plane. Ghost characters, for instance, normally exist on the Astral Plane (even if the character sheet uses Desolidification to represent walking through walls and similar abilities). Characters with “dream powers” typically have some connection to the Astral Plane, whether they are trained mystics or not. For instance, a character could merge with his “dream self” to become a superhero. You could even create a “Haunted Hero” campaign in which all the characters are ghosts, mediums, or astral-projecting mystics.

FAERIE: THE LAND OF LEGENDS



Faerie, sometimes called the Land of Legends, is the home of nature spirits and pagan gods — beings born when people imagined everything in Nature possessed a human will. For millennia before the “ethical religions” pushed the Godhead beyond the sky, every stream, mountain, and forest grove had its ruling spirit. Greater gods spoke in the crash of thunder and the ocean waves. These gods and spirits were not abstract or symbolic. Few people did *not* encounter a god, elf, or spirit sometime in their lives. Faerie and Earth intertwined.

Did human beliefs change and push the gods and spirits from the world? Or did Faerie pull away from Earth, and mortals responded by inventing new faiths? The gods themselves do not know. By around 500 B.C., however, Faerie became a recognizable dimension of its own and the “legends” became legendary. Spontaneous nexus points from wilderness areas still cast the occasional human into Faerie, or let an elf or satyr visit its former haunts. As humanity cut the forests, plowed the land, and bound the world in concrete and steel, such nexus points became more rare. Century after century, the Ban on travel between worlds became tighter.

But gods now walk the Earth again — mortal gods, bound by no mystic law or covenant. The ancient Ban crumbles in the new Age of Heroes. Ancient powers wake, eager to reclaim their empires, unwilling to sleep again.

GEOGRAPHY

Faerie has forests, seas, meadows, deserts, mountains, and all the other landscapes of the natural world. Nexus points to Faerie always lead from an Earth location to a very similar region in the Land of Legends, so a person could walk through Faerie for hours without knowing it.

The Land of Legends, however, is a “good bits” version of the mortal world. Large, homogeneous, *boring* regions such as oceans, deserts, or steppes are smaller in Faerie than on Earth. Faerie holds nothing the size of the Atlantic Ocean, Sahara Desert, or American Great Plains. A few days by boat or horseback suffices to cross any district of the Land of Legends.

Faerie geography does not make sense on the large scale. Landscapes flow into each other in impossible ways: mountain into swamp, jungle into desert. Different regions can experience different seasons.

Connections between regions aren’t consistent, either. For instance, suppose two travelers set out from the same location in Faerie. One traveler goes 100 miles north, then 100 miles east. The other traveler goes 100 miles east, and then 100 miles north. They do not arrive at the same place! Connections between regions can change depending on the time of day, the weather, or other factors.

Faerie does, however, possess structure on the largest scale. It is flat, not a sphere. The sky is a dome of unbreakable blue glass during the day, star-spangled black glass at night; the Sun and Moon move along their tracks by hooks hanging from the dome.

The Land of Legends also has a bottom. It rests on the back of an immensely, impossibly huge dragon, *the* Dragon, chained beneath Faerie until the end of the world. Beneath the Dragon lies Chaos — the Astral Plane.

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

Certain elements occur again and again in Faerie landscapes. The most wondrous, unearthly regions are set on islands, mountains, or underground. The Land of Legends has no modern cities, but spectacular, fairy-tale castles dot some regions. These castles can be made of gold, or perch on clouds or pillars, or spin like tops. Other traditional elements include fountains, jewels, caves, and gardens with miraculous trees or flowers. Many regions seem caught in perpetual spring or early summer. Evil regions look ugly and frightening. Faerie includes nightmare forests of twisted, dead trees and deathly fungi, and wastelands inhabited by slinking abominations.

PANTHEON REALMS

The lesser spirits, such as the elven-folk, hold most of Faerie in common. Old (and not so old) pantheons such as the Greco-Roman, Celtic, Norse, Yoruban, and Shinto gods rule pockets of the Land of Legends.

The pantheons once kept to themselves and closed the borders of their demesnes. In recent centuries, however, the pantheons have communicated more. Even if humans stopped believing in some of them, they could believe in each other and live off the immense reserve of stored belief that is the Land of Legends itself.



Sample Regions

Here are a few notable locations within Faerie.

ACHAEA

The demesne of the Greek gods takes as its name the most ancient appellation for Greece. Zeus, Hera, and the other Olympian gods rule over a realm of nymphs, centaurs, satyrs, and other sylvan creatures, as well as thousands of humans. Every “city” (actually, fortified villages) has a patron god. Half-divine kings, heroes, and warlords battle monsters and each other for glory, revenge, lust, or booty. The gods themselves live atop Mount Olympus, in the middle of the realm. Achaea is much smaller than the historic Greek realm, but shows Greece’s characteristic landscape of rugged mountains and an island-studded sea.

THE ONYX KINGDOM

A cave in the Dragon Mountains leads through miles of passages to a huge cavern hung with gigantic stalactites. Equally huge stalagmites squat about the cavern floor. All the cavern, however, is made of black onyx. Dim light shines from huge jewels hung from the stalactites on silver chains. The largest stalagmites bear delicately carved little onyx palaces. This is the Onyx Kingdom, principality of the svartalf Clan Ectol, and the original home of Vilsimbria the Dark Elf (see *Arcane Adversaries*). The Dark Elves devote their immortal lives to endless, tangled intrigues for prestige. They try to ensnare mortal visitors into these plots and counter-plots.

WONDROUS ISLANDS

Many islands dot the seas of Faerie, and they tend to be quite strange. A few have useful or dangerous features or inhabitants; most are just colorful bits of scenery to pass by. For instance, a spike-topped brass palisade carrying a brass fishnet encircles one island. The wind in the net makes a menacing hum. A dense forest of wild shrubbery and gloomy cypresses covers most of the island. The center holds a natural fountain of water perfumed with bittersweet myrrh. This “Water of Death” repairs any damage to a corpse, but infallibly slays any living creature that drinks it. The magic water also acts as a 15d6 Dispel against magic when sprinkled on something or someone.

For inspiration, see accounts of the voyages of Maeldun, St. Brendan, or Sinbad the Sailor, all of whom clearly spent much of their time sailing Faerie’s seas.

THE EVEN WILDER WEST

North American Indians once had their own large section of Faerie — but even here, the white man invaded. A flood of dime novels and movies created a surge of old-style mythic belief about the Western Frontier. That belief grounded in the section of Faerie most like the mortal West. The Native American mythic realm swelled.

Native Americans themselves became the first inhabitants of the changing realm. Sometimes, the Ghost Dance really worked. Hundreds of Native Americans transported themselves to the Land of Legends, where the buffalo roamed and the white man did not. As the myth of the West grew, however, Faerie insisted on players to fill *all* roles. Nexus

points sucked in cowboys, homesteaders, outlaws, Ambrose Bierce, and anyone else convenient. Within a few decades, the Even Wilder West took shape.

The land itself encourages mortal visitors to act like cowboys, sheriffs, prospectors, schoolmarm, and other classic roles. It even supplies clothing and other necessary props through outrageous coincidence. Visitors and residents interact with Native American tribes, but also with Native American-styled elves, gods, spirits (“manitous”), and monsters. The whites have guns (which hardly ever need reloading); the Native Americans have magic and the friendship of the supernatural powers. Unlike the real world’s history, the two sides are quite evenly matched.

INHABITANTS

Faerie’s inhabitants are as diverse as mythology itself. In some parts of Faerie, legendary creatures now live all mixed together, without regard to their mythology of origin. Visitors might encounter North European elves, Greek satyrs, the Russian Baba Yaga, and Japanese tengu in the same forest. In other parts, beings remain strictly segregated by culture and the like. Fortunately, in Faerie everybody (including visitors) speaks the same language. The inhabitants fall into six general categories.

FAIRY-FOLK

Cultures around the world believe in a humanoid but supernatural race. Europeans called them Sidhe, Tylwyth Teg, or Fays (among many other names). The Persians call them Peris. Cherokee legend describes the Nunnehi — and that’s only the beginning of the roster. For convenience, they can all be called by their most familiar name: elves.

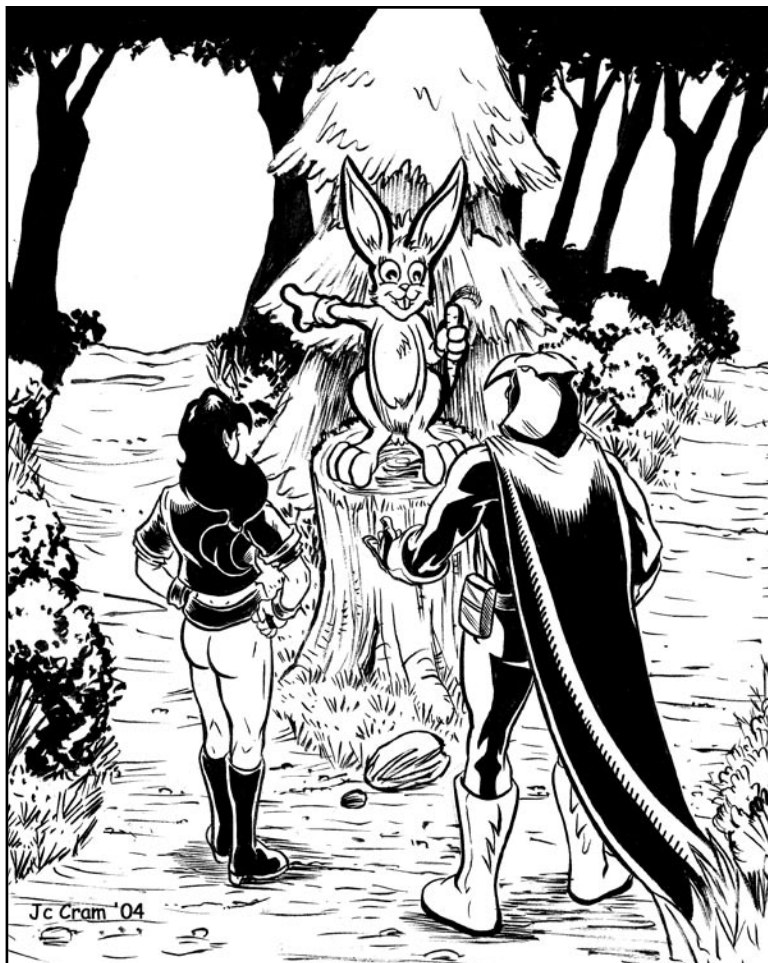
Some traditions divide the elves into “good” and “bad” tribes, such as the Gaelic Seelie and Unseelie Courts or the Norse Light Elves and Dark Elves. None of the fairy-folk, however, are truly “good” in a human sense. Some races of elves simply do not actively seek to harm humanity. The careless immortals of folklore are capricious, deceptive, and dangerous. Elves are amazingly generous when it suits them, but they can just as easily wreck a mortal’s life for sport.

Elves live in forests, grottoes, or palaces under hills. Variant races live in other environments. Undines, for instance, reside in lakes or beneath the sea; the sinister svartalfar, the Dark Elves, dwell in caverns deep underground and fear the Sun.

The ranks of the faerie-folk also include numerous intelligent but distinctly nonhuman races, such as Greek centaurs and satyrs, Norse giants and dwarves, and Japanese tengu. As with the elves, these are flesh and blood creatures like humans, rather than spirits. Some of these races have magical powers; others do not.

TRUE NATURE SPIRITS

The fairy-folk often show strong connections to the powers of Nature, but the Land of Legends also holds spirits who embody specific natural phenomena. Dryads, for instance, are the spirits of the trees; they wield magic powers over vegetation.



Air-spirit Sylphs dwell in the clouds. Naiads live in rivers, lakes and fountains.

Nature spirits wield great magical control over their own home, and some count as low-powered gods. For instance, the Wild Huntsman or the supernatural hag Baba Yaga are powerful enough to fight whole superhero teams with a good chance of winning.

MYTHOLOGICAL MONSTERS

Many cultures tell tales about monsters. All of them now live in Faerie. Listing all the mythological monsters possible would take a very large book, but *The HERO System Bestiary* and *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* are good information sources about such creatures.

GODS

Not every godling or tribal spirit survives. Lots of people must believe in a god for hundreds of years before it coalesces out of the Astral Plane and takes up residence in Faerie. The gods of small tribes are usually just different names for the same spirits held in common by a wider culture.

Some pantheons command more power than others. The old European and Middle Eastern gods barely scrimp by after two millennia of Christianity and Islam. Still-worshipped pantheons such as the Japanese and West African gods remain powerful and active. The gods of weakened pantheons, however, still wield much greater power than most superhumans — at least within their own



demesnes. The mightiest mythological gods can overpower even the most formidable mortal.

The different cultural pantheons don't like each other, any more than different human cultures like each other. The common threat posed by the "ethical religions," however, prompted an indefinite truce between most pantheons. The unprecedented contact between pantheons results in inter-cultural amours, and even a few children — new godlings unknown to mythology. These nascent demigods have power comparable to powerful superhumans.

TALKING ANIMALS

Faerie includes Earthly wildlife. Some animals can talk or display other remarkable powers. In fairy tales and legends, talking animals help the hero in return for some favor the hero did for them. But talking animals seldom fight — they're advisors, wish-granters, and givers of gifts, not another notch on the sword.

HUMANS

Humans still slip into Fairyland now and then. Not all of them get out again. Mortals who live in the Land of Legends must find roles for themselves suitable for a myth or fairy tale. Faerie accepts humans who become hermits, consorts to elfin lords or ladies, peddlers, knights, poor but honest woodcutters, and the like. Some regions, like the Even Wilder West, come with their own set of archetypal roles. A human who finds a place among the mythic races — with the satyrs, centaurs,

dwarves, or tengu, for instance — transforms into a member of that race after a few days.

The elves eventually capture humans who refuse any sort of assimilation and place them in an enclave with other stubborn humans. This little village of exiles lies within the Sullen Country. Treacherous, viper-infested bogs completely surround this drab moor. As long as the exiles don't try to leave, the faerie-folk let them farm in peace. The exiles have a hard life, with the dubious compensation of immortality.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Faerie is not just Earth with magic — its fundamental laws of reality change in far-ranging ways. Representing these differences in terms of game mechanics is often difficult, and usually pointless. Fortunately, GMs can simply treat them as plot devices, as much a natural part of the world as air or gravity on Earth.

FLEXIBLE TIME

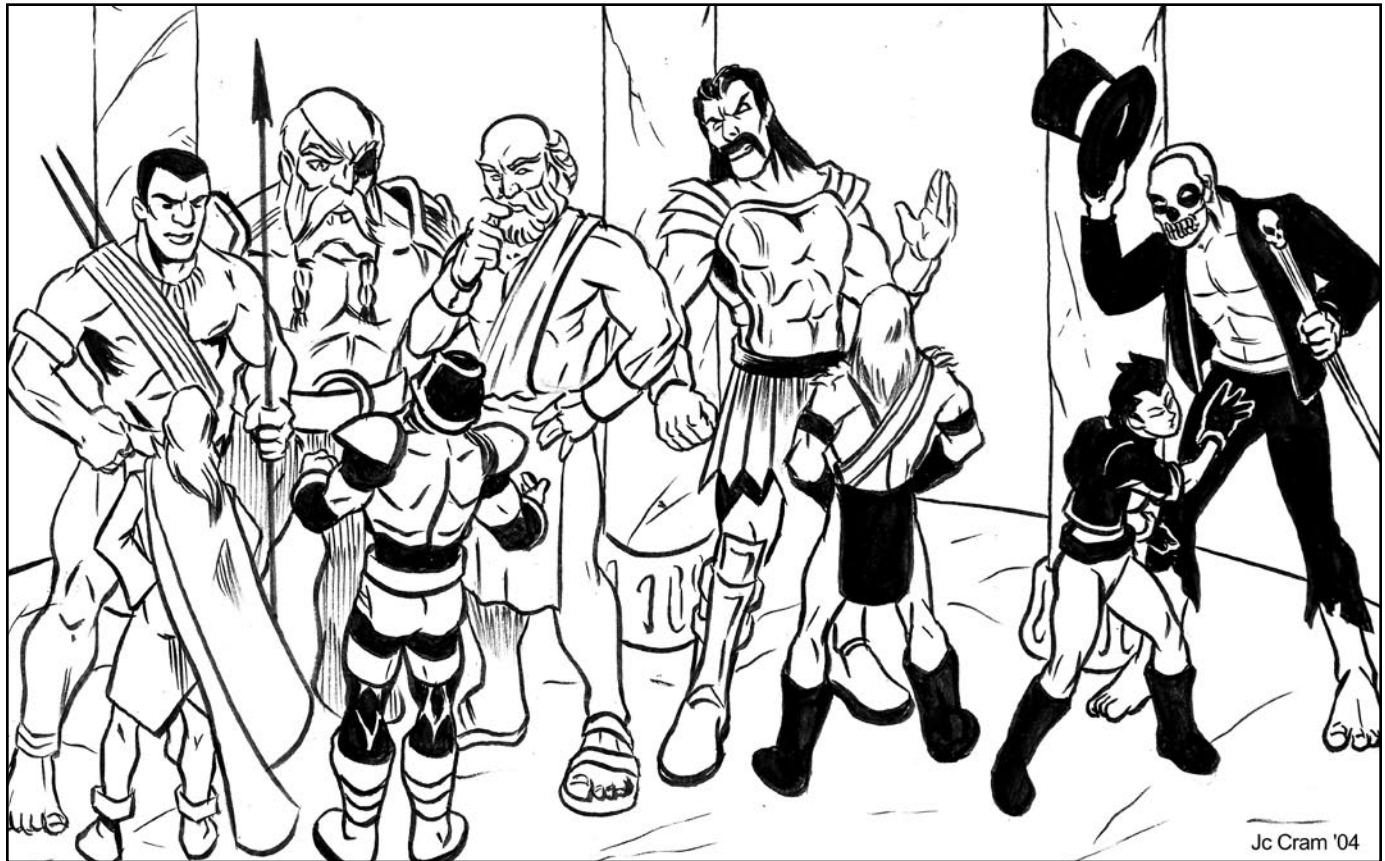
The passage of time in Faerie bears little relation to time on Earth. A person can spend months in Faerie, yet return to Earth mere hours after he left — or he can return from a night's revels in Faerie and find that decades passed back home. The difference between Earth time and Faerie time is usually less extreme (in game terms, only 1 step difference on the Time Chart either way) — but you never know. Time remains consistent only within a group of visitors. If anyone leaves the group for more than a few minutes, time might go funny for him.

The GM should not impose severe time differentials arbitrarily or often. Minor time differentials simply emphasize how the heroes passed "beyond the fields we know." The threat of more severe time distortion gives heroes an added reason to stay together in Faerie: characters will think twice about striking off on their own if they know they could come back a day later and find the rest of the group gave them up for lost and returned to Earth weeks ago.

On the other hand, if circumstances separate one hero from the group, a time differential can create mind-blowing effects. The separated PC might experience an adventure lasting weeks or even years (narrated in summary by the GM) — then rejoin the other PCs and find he was gone only a few minutes! In short, the GM should use time differentials to enhance a story, not just to make the characters' lives more difficult.

Gods and the greater faerie lords can control the time differential. For instance, if the heroes please the elf-king Oberon, he might make their two-week quest through Faerie take only two hours on Earth. Conversely, if the PCs visit an elf-mound and give offense, their host might make their night in Faerie last a century on Earth... but only if the GM wants to do a time travel adventure next.

The time distortions become especially severe in the Australian section of Faerie, called the Dreamtime. Here, time hardly exists at all. Events replay themselves, and even death is not perma-



nent. Mortal visitors to the Dreamtime soon feel like they were always there, and always will be. Perhaps, in some sense, they are. Even other faerie-folk find the Dreamtime uncanny.

RETARDED AGING

The natives of Faerie remain one age forever. Human residents and visitors may gain the same benefit in some regions, or if a powerful spirit or faerie lord wills it. In most realms, humans age slowly but consistently, equal to 1 to 4 points of Longevity. The exact amount depends on the gods or creatures who dominate a demesne. In Achaea, the district of the Greek gods, mortals receive two points of Longevity. The Egyptian gods' demesne grants 4 points of Longevity: the Egyptians placed great store on an immortal afterlife. The Even Wilder West grants just one point of Longevity. The Sullen Country makes all residents completely immortal... but Faerie's agelessness carries a curse as well as a blessing.

In the Land of Legends, mortal fertility drops as lifespans lengthen. Mortals completely exempt from time cannot have children. Any children who enter Faerie remain children forever, like Peter Pan. Gods or elf-lords can suspend this effect if they choose, at least long enough for a child to be born or grow up. Pantheon leaders typically extend this benefit to their realms, so that their mortal subjects can breed more of themselves.

Sometimes aging is merely deferred, not avoided completely. On returning to Earth, a person might gain back lost aging — based on the passage of time on Earth rather than Faerie. If the deferred aging amounts to decades, returning home can be a shock, as Rip Van Winkle found out! Leg-

ends speak of gods or elf-lords storing the deferred aging in a small box they give to a returning mortal, with instructions never to open it. Unfortunately, the human never receives an explanation of why the box should remain closed... so eventually someone opens it, and the person instantly grows old.

FIXED PATHS

The Land of Legends tries to ramrod visitors into its ancient story motifs, and sometimes it isn't at all subtle. A danger foreshadowed becomes a danger unavoidable: if the PCs learn the route to their goal holds certain hazards, Faerie might not let them bypass those hazards. For instance, if a hermit says you must face a monster to get through a mountain pass, it's no good trying to fly, teleport, or tunnel past the monster. The pass just goes on forever, and when you finally stop, there's the monster again, waiting to ask its riddle, demand its tribute, or issue its challenge.

This doesn't mean a whole adventure in Faerie must run on rails. Characters can always choose how they deal with a foreordained situation. The Land of Legends even adjusts itself to reflect the characters' choices. For instance, if visitors insist on fighting every adversary, Faerie reacts by casting them as warrior-heroes like Beowulf, and supplying more monsters to battle. If the characters try to outwit opponents, Faerie offers riddles, illusions, and other chances for heroes to show off their cleverness.

GMs can reflect this "story reality" by applying bonuses to Skill Rolls if the characters actively try to play out legendary roles and storylines. In Faerie, what *Champions* refers to as "appropriate unlikely actions" (i.e., dramatically, if not realistically, proper

conduct) become more likely to succeed than they would on Earth. The Land of Legends seldom, if ever, imposes penalties for refusing to follow a *particular* style or story, however. Heroes who refuse to follow one plot create a new story of their own — a new legend for the Land of Legends.

CURSES

Any permanent resident of Faerie can curse anyone who deeply wrongs him. Typical situations for laying a curse include: a dying person, upon his killer (if he didn't die in a fair fight); a host, against a treacherous guest; a guest, against a treacherous host; a parent, against an ungrateful child; or on yourself, as a penalty if you break an oath. People can also lay a "whoever" curse, linked to a place or item, such as the curse Alberich placed on the Rhinegold when Wotan robbed him. A person must possess a genuine grievance for a curse to work, such as murder, theft, or betrayal of trust. Merely disliking someone does not suffice.

Game mechanics cannot represent a proper Legendary Curse because its effects are so complex and far-reaching. If GMs absolutely must represent a Legendary Curse as an attack, treat it as a Major Transform: Person to Cursed Person. Since this power operates only within Faerie, however, the GM can leave it as a plot device. The curse's effects, however, can hound a victim through the Multiverse.

A Legendary Curse does not involve direct attacks. Instead, it manipulates future events to the victim's detriment. Curses can wait for *years* to act. No one can avoid a Legendary Curse: the very actions the victim takes to block a curse can set its effects in motion.

Legendary Curses often backfire, making the curse a hollow vengeance. A classic case forms the plot of the *Iliad*. The Greek hero Achilles asks his mother (a goddess) to make the Greeks lose battles until the Greek leader Agamemnon apologizes for an insult. The curse works: the Greeks suffer a crushing defeat and Agamemnon grovels... but Achilles's best friend Patroclus dies in the battle.

The person who set a curse can revoke it. A few extremely powerful persons — pantheon heads and the mightiest faerie monarchs — can lift *some* curses. So can most cosmic entities. Persuading someone to break or revoke a curse usually requires some difficult and/or dangerous act of atonement. Some curses come equipped with atonement loopholes: "Henceforth, you will suffer [fill in the torment] until you [fill in the task]."

The GM should use Legendary Curses with caution. Curses are a threat to prevent PCs from charging through Faerie as if it were a shooting gallery or a monster-filled dungeon crawl. One good curse from an elf they beat up should convince most PCs to mind their manners in the future.

A Legendary Curse can drive an adventure, even when the heroes aren't the target. A really big curse can start wars, manipulate kingdoms, propagate through generations, and drag in the gods themselves.

ADVENTURE USE

Faerie can easily become an important part of a campaign, since a GM can work with all of mythology and folklore. A quest through the Land of Legends can make an uncommonly memorable adventure. The goal of the quest matters less than the striking characters the PCs meet along the way: tricky elven nobles, helpful talking animals, pagan gods, wicked witches in gingerbread houses.... Mythic quests often include contests where things are not as they seem (perhaps because an opponent is disguised through illusion, or because of some danger a hero did not know about).

Questing heroes can seek many useful things and people in Faerie. If a recipe for a magic potion calls for dragon scales or centaur blood, characters must go to the Land of Legends. What's more, some of the Land's inhabitants know much that is hidden, or have special magic powers. The trick is getting them to help. Gods or wizards of long ago might hide powerful magic items in remote corners of Faerie.

Faerie makes an excellent source for heroes and villains. In the Champions Universe, superbeings create new legends every day. What could be more natural than for some of the old legends to join them? *Arcane Adversaries* describes three characters from Faerie (the dark elf Vilsimbra, the fairy-tale hag Mother Gothel, and the god Tezcatlipoca) who bring their evil to Earth. Gods can project avatars or empower mortals; the new generation of demigods may seek adventure on Earth as well. Mortals cast into Faerie may return with magic weapons or powers.

A daring GM can even set campaigns in Faerie — after all, it's a place built on stories. The characters could be anything from mortal children cast into Faerie to aspiring demigods hoping to make new legends. For a twist on an old story, maybe the characters are Heroic-level Faerie denizens hurled to a disbelieving Earth, who must complete a quest to go home before they end up shot, in jail, or in an insane asylum. A sneaky GM could even start a campaign that seems to be set in mythic Greece, a Weird Wild West, or some other fantasy setting — and let the players gradually discover the setting is actually much wider and much stranger.

THE NETHERWORLD



The Netherworld is the Imaginal Realm built from human ideas of evil. Here dwell the demons — incarnations of hate, fear, rage, and all other negative emotions — in a chaotic landscape as hostile as themselves. The Netherworld isn't just Hell: it's every Hell ever imagined, mashed together.

GEOGRAPHY

The Netherworld has no consistent, large-scale geography. It can seem completely different from visit to visit. Particular regions are locally stable, but the connections between them remain fluid. Large sections of the Netherworld seem to follow some overall plan, but different visitors can find completely different geographies. On one visit, heroes might land in the nine descending circles of Dante's *Inferno*. On a return visit, they might find the city of Pandemonium from Milton's *Paradise Lost* instead. If a visitor travels long enough, though, eventually he can find any Hell he wants.

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

The Netherworld's landscape varies widely but it is all unpleasant, composed of elements that people find ugly or frightening. There's lots of traditional fire, smoke, lava, and barren stone. Most of the Netherworld is dimly lit and the air reeks. Other traditional features for Netherworld scenery include: sandy desert; glaciers and plains of ice; pits and trenches; swamps; rivers and lakes of fire, boiling blood, pitch, slime, or icy black water; garbage and offal; dark, trackless forests; reptiles; vicious beasts; insects, worms, and maggots.

CULTURAL HELLS

The Netherworld includes more than the Judeo-Christian-Islamic ideas of Hell. A Hindu visitor arrives in that religion's demon-realm of Naraka. A Taoist or Buddhist encounters the Chinese Hells. Even the Greek Hell of Tartarus and the Norse Hell of Niflheim survive, although visitors probably would not appear in them spontaneously. In fact, no matter what Hell a character appears in, he can enter other cultures' Hells — for instance, he could descend a crevasse in the icy ninth circle of Dante's *Inferno* and end up in equally chill Niflheim.

DEMON LORD FIEFDOMS

The more powerful demon lords shape stable, personal desmesnes according to their tastes. Here they torment the souls of former pacters and people whose ruling passion placed them in the

demon's jurisdiction. The tortures of the damned often show a certain rough justice... or would if they were not infinite punishment for finite crimes.

PERSONAL HELLS

The Netherworld also tucks in very personal Hells. Everyone has "personal demons" — private fears, feelings of guilt, situations they dread facing. A visitor to the Netherworld can turn a corner and step into his private Hell. Personal Hells need not be confined to a single location: they can take the form of a subplot or a sequence of characters threaded through other sections of the Netherworld.

The GM should design a "personal Hell" scene for at least one character on any adventure to harrow the Netherworld, using the character's personality and history as a guide. Encountering a personal Hell might be no more than a jab at a character's Psychological Limitations, or it might put a hero in deadly peril.

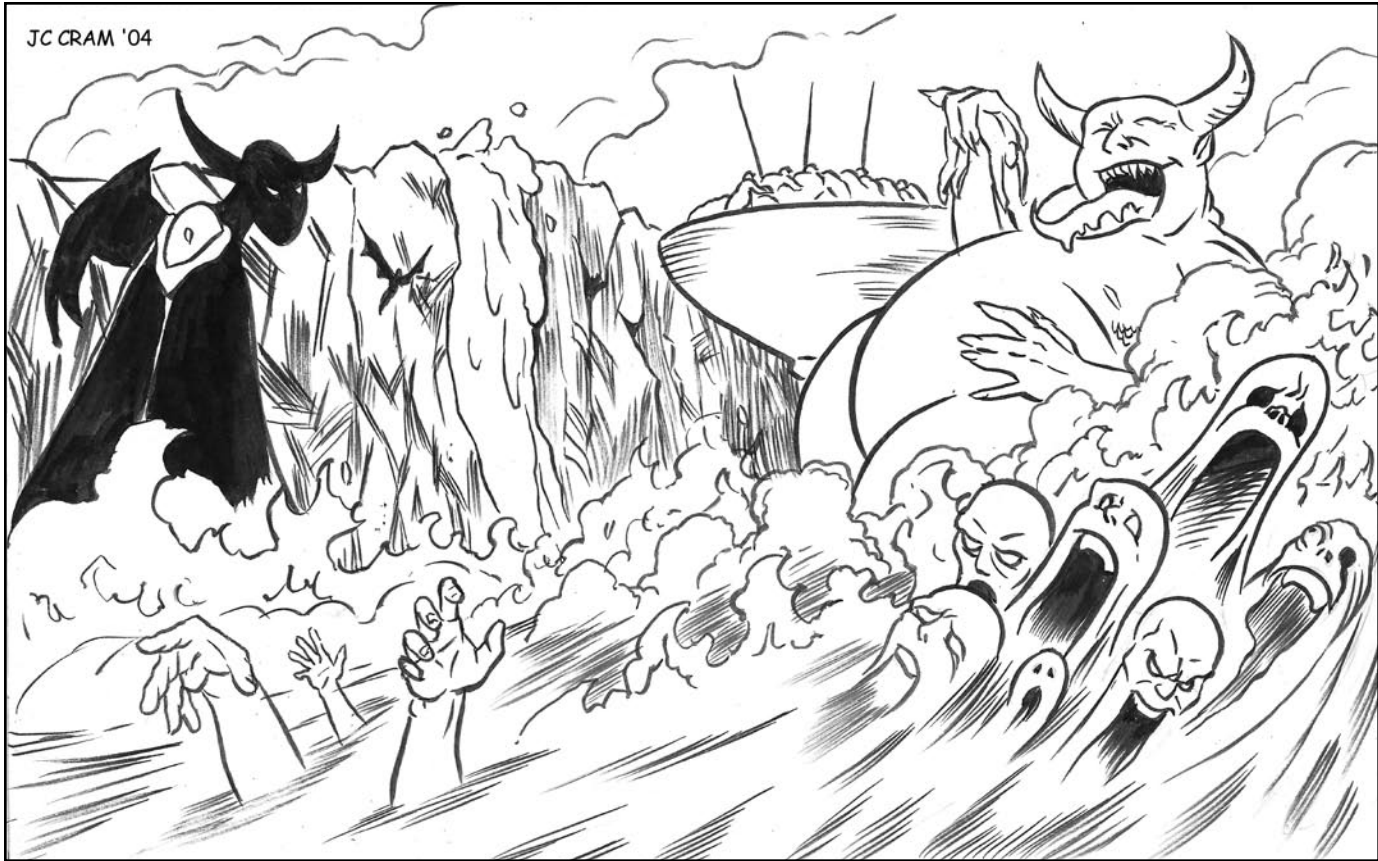
Of course, everything that heroes hear and see in their private Hells is a lie: all the characters they encounter who accuse them and play on their guilts, fears, hatreds, and desires are demons in disguise or illusions, and they're lying their heads off. One seldom finds *truth* in the Netherworld.

Sample Regions

Here are a few regions characters might find in the Netherworld.

PANDEMONIUM

The town-sized palace of Pandemonium is the seat of government for the Descending Hierarchy. Here Mephistopheles, the Emperor of Pride, files the pacts between devils and mortals and coordinates the ceaseless war against God for human souls. All the demon lords of the Descending Hierarchy keep apartments at Pandemonium, and the palace forms the principle setting for their intrigues. Pandemonium is built entirely of gold and jewels; mortal visitors describe it as gaudy and tasteless, but with a certain grotesque grandeur from its sheer size. The palace-city is built on the shore of a lake of all-destroying fire. According to Milton's *Paradise Lost*, the rebel angels fell into this lake of fire and emerged as devils. According to the Book of Revelations in the Bible, at the Last Judgment God will consign all the devils and the damned to this lake. The fire shall destroy them instantly and utterly, but the smoke of their burning shall rise forever.



THE WAR ZONE

Baphomet, Emperor of Wrath, receives the souls of people who lived by anger and violence. His desmesne is a patchwork of battlefields from humanity's dirtiest wars, from the jungles of Vietnam to the trenches of Gallipoli. Here damned soldiers and terrorists fight and re-fight their wars for eternity, against each other and against the gangs of thugs and brigands who revelled in brutality. Superhero visitors to Baphomet's war zone will certainly meet a few deceased supervillains — and maybe a former hero or two.

MOUNT MULCIBER

Mulciber, Hell's greatest smith and artificer, maintains a very small desmesne. The Demon-Smith keeps his forges and workshops in the cavern-riddled depths of a barren, black volcano. Since very few people fall into evil through a passion for craftsmanship, Mulciber buys damned souls from other demon lords. But they are raw materials, not slaves — Mulciber does his best work in soul-alloyed metal.

THE LABYRINTH OF GREED

The Lord of Avarice, Lucifuge Rofocale, owns a spectacular desmesne of twisting, jewel-studded caverns. Magical darkness shrouds the caverns, however, because Lucifuge Rofocale is so greedy that he can't stand the thought of anyone but him even *looking* at his possessions. Here avarice demons oversee chain gangs of pirates, con men, industrial robber barons, petty thieves, bankers, and princes — all people whose lives were ruled by greed, slaving for eternity among unseen riches.

NIFLHEIM

Niflheim is the Norse Hell, the destiny of those who died "straw deaths" as cowards. (The *Prose Edda* says this included all men who died of sickness or old age, but other epics tell of men who died peacefully yet achieved Valhalla. The GM can decide the truth of the matter.) Hela, daughter of Loki, rules Niflheim. She is normal flesh color on one side of her body and the blue-black of dead flesh on the other.

Icy fog wreathes dark Niflheim. The fortress hall of Hela is named Sleet-Cold; its threshold, Falling To Destruction. Hela's dish is Hunger; her knife, Famine; her servant, Idler; her maid, Sloven; her bed, Disease; and her bed cover, Unhappiness. A gigantic dog called Garm, whose breast is sprinkled with blood, guards Hela's hall.

Niflheim includes a special hall for the very worst sinners, set apart on Nastrand, the Shore of the Dead. As the *Prose Edda* explains, "It is all woven of serpent backs like a wattle house; and all the snake heads turn into the house and blow venom, so that along the hall run rivers of venom; and they who have broken oaths, and murderers, wade those rivers."

BU JING SUO

The Chinese possess hundreds of Hells, each specializing in its own punishment for particular malefactors (see the text box on page 29). These are arranged in ten tribunals, overseen by the Yama-Kings and a bureaucracy as large (and bribeable) as the old Imperial government. Unlike the Abrahamic Hells, most Chinese Hells are temporary. Sinners expiate their crimes, then have their memory erased before reincarnation.

Bu Jing Suo, in the first tribunal, punishes lazy Buddhist priests, monks, and nuns who did not perform the prayers and devotions that other people paid them to, and so endangered their clients' souls. These dishonest clerics must copy the prayers and scriptures they neglected, over and over, in a cold and windy schoolroom, with no light except a tiny, flickering oil-lamp.

INHABITANTS

All the Netherworld's inhabitants are spirits. They fall into two main groups: the demons and the damned.

DEMONS AND DEVILS

The dominant inhabitants of the Netherworld, of course, are the demons. Gamemasters can get a lot of gaming mileage from demons based on Judeo-Christian-Islamic mythology, but a little research in mythology and folklore can turn up fascinating demons from other cultures, such as Hindu Rakshasas or the plague-causing Maskim from Mesopotamian myth. Several gods of evil or death from defunct mythologies remain active as demon lords. In fact, famous demons like Beelzebub and Astaroth started as the gods of nations competing with the ancient Hebrews (most notably the Phoenicians and Syrians).

Mystics sometimes call the demons of the Abrahamic traditions "devils," to distinguish them from the evil spirits of other mythologies. The lords of devilkind hold feudal ranks such as Earl, Marquis, Prince, and King, in an infernal Descending Hierarchy. Some devils also claim titles such as Chancellor or Knight Commander. Devils even boast their own order of knighthood, the Order of the Fly, whose members compete in deeds of awfulness. The Descending Hierarchy is not very orderly: Devils may hold multiple ranks, and their intrigues for power surpass the Borgias for ruthless treachery. The mightiest archdevils call themselves the Sin Emperors — supreme exemplars of one particular brand of evil. Mephistopheles, Prince of Lies, claims the title of Emperor of Pride; Baphomet styles himself Emperor of Wrath; Beelzebub, leader of the cohort of fallen Middle Eastern gods, became Emperor of Envy through jealousy of the God who supplanted him.

Demonic Animals

In some parts of the Netherworld, animals assist the demons. Many demon lords ride some sort of beast: the grimoires describe demons riding horses, wolves and crocodiles. Infernal "hell hounds" are traditional, too. (*The HERO System Bestiary* describes both hell hounds and demon steeds.) Dragons, vipers, and other vicious beasts also help the demons torment their charges.

DAMNED SOULS

Damned human souls form the largest bloc of the Netherworld's inhabitants. The damned usually look just as they did at their time of death — aside from any damage inflicted on them by

their torments. Depending on what punishment they receive, the damned might be naked, dressed in tattered clothes they wore in life, or something more exotic. In Dante's *Inferno*, people who sold holy offices had to walk in immensely heavy cowed robes of gilded lead. In some cases, the damned might be altered in strange and horrible ways. In Dante's Wood of the Suicides, for instance, the damned are turned into bleeding, speaking trees.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

The Netherworld and its denizens follow a number of special rules. The GM doesn't have to represent these special conditions in terms of game mechanics, any more than he needs to write up Earth's gravitational field as Telekinesis — these conditions are intrinsic features of the dimension itself.

INDESTRUCTIBLE SPIRITS

None of the Netherworld's inhabitants can truly die or lose consciousness no matter what torture or mutilation they endure, because they're already dead. Conditions that would spell death for a living person (sufficient negative BODY) merely incapacitate a damned soul. Given time, the demon or damned soul regenerates at a rate of 1 BODY per Turn. Likewise, negative STUN simply means a damned soul cannot act. The person remains aware of what happens around him, or to him, as if





he were continually Stunned. This lets the demons do truly horrible things to their charges... and the damned stay conscious through it all.

On their home turf, demons share these immunities. They can't be dispelled, and they ignore pentagrams and magic circles. Certain special methods can, however, truly destroy a demon or a damned soul. Being eaten is one method: demons and devils feed upon damned souls. The more refined demon lords have their own version of gourmet cooking. Lesser demons who fail in their assignments may end up on the dinner table, too.

Some kinds of magic might permanently destroy a soul or spirit. These should be fairly exotic attacks, such as AVLD Killing Attacks or Adjustment Powers. A Killing Attack whose only defense is a Mental Defense Force Field, a Penetrating BODY Drain, or a strong enough Dispel once a demon or soul is incapacitated by BODY loss *might* suffice. Avarice demons Transform the damned into metal and stone, then break them up for raw materials for their craftsmanship; this is pretty final, too.

Any method chosen to kill a Netherworld inhabitant should be somewhat difficult. Christian theologians call Hell "the Second Death." Delivering a third and ultimate death to a spirit should be a momentous event that holds serious consequences — not something a character does lightly.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

The highest ranks of the Netherworld's lords, the true Arch-Devils and Demon Kings, wield special power over their personal demesnes. This is really a power of the demesne itself, to respond to its master's desires. A demon lord's large Variable Power Pool can generate these effects. In most cases, though, GMs do not need exact numbers. They are plot devices. None of these environment-control effects cost any END.

Change Environment

A Netherworld demesne's master can produce any environmental condition that has no significant combat effect (*i.e.*, no more than a single -1 penalty) and is even remotely appropriate for the master's territory. This can cover as much of the demesne as the demon lord wants. Typical effects include greater light, gloom, wind, rain, heat, cold, or odors.

Topographic Control

A demon king can change its demesne's landscape at will to create or destroy hills, valleys, rivers, gorges, and other landforms. The demon cannot use this by itself as an attack, though topographic control may serve as the Special Effect of an attack (see below). Changing the landscape can still inconvenience intruders. For instance, a demon king might fracture the land with a network of canyons to hinder someone who tries escaping on foot.

Illusions

A demon king can create wide-area, virtually undetectable illusions in its demesne. Archdevils use illusions to deceive intruders about where they are, who they face, and what sort of danger they're in. Any combat automatically breaks the illusion. Illusions are especially popular with the subtler sort of demon lord, who would rather trick and seduce the heroes.

Limited Omniscience

The master of a Netherworld demesne has great awareness of local events. The demon king effectively has Clairsentience with all its Senses, enabling it to look anywhere in its demesne that it pleases. The demon king can also Mind Link with any of its minions at will. Fortunately for heroes, archdevils don't spend all their time spying on their fiefdoms — they do so only if they have reason to suspect a threat, or once in a while just to keep their minions paranoid.

Environmental Attacks

Demon lords can evoke and control features of the environment as attacks. In a volcanic demesne, for instance, a demon king can create small eruptions (RKA Explosion) and streams of lava (RKA with Area Of Effect [Line]). In a swamp, a ruling spirit can lay down belts of quicksand (Entangle with Area Of Effect and Limitations) and animate the plant life to clutch and strangle (Nonselective Area Telekinesis).

If the GM doesn't want to create environmental attacks through a Variable Power Pool, simply set the Active Point cost of such attacks at about the same as

the demon king's main attack powers, but give them the following Power Advantages for free: Continuous, Uncontrolled, Indirect, and No Range Modifier.

The GM should give long-distance environmental attacks a fairly low OCV: It's no fun for a player to have his character exterminated by an enemy he never sees. Environmental attacks should also come with fair warning, such as a small earth tremor and wisps of smoke a Phase before a volcanic eruption, or a light sprinkling of acid rain a Turn before it becomes a deadly downpour. Environmental attacks serve to weaken and hinder heroes, not kill them outright, and to demonstrate a demon lord's power on its home ground.

Once the heroes face the demesne's master directly, though, GMs can suspend this gentlemanly code. A demon lord can use its environmental attacks simultaneously with its personal attacks (remember, the land itself attacks, not the demon), and the demon uses these powers to maximum effect in combat. Doubling a demon lord's attack capability is not in the *least* bit fair to the players... but what sort of idiot expects fair play in Hell?

SAMPLE TORMENTS OF THE DAMNED

In the unlikely event that a GM lacks a suitably sadistic, perverted imagination, here are some typical punishments for the damned. They come from that excellent guide to the Netherworld, the *Inferno* of Dante Alighieri, and from traditions about the Chinese Hells.

THE INFERNO

THE LUSTFUL are blown about like leaves in perpetual storms.

HOARDERS AND WASTERS, natural enemies, spend eternity trying to smash each other by rolling huge rocks around.

HERETICS are sealed into tombs of red-hot iron.

MURDERERS wade through a river of boiling blood. Centaur archers on the banks prevent them from getting out.

FLATTERERS march through excrement that comes from their own mouths.

FORTUNETELLERS march with their heads twisted backwards; nevermore will they see where they're going.

SOWERS OF DISCORD get sliced up by demons, over and over.

TRAITORS are frozen into a lake of ice.

CHINESE HELLS

Here are some examples of the hundreds of colorfully-named Chinese Hells; see page 14 of *Ninja Hero* for many more.

Prison of Scooped Eyes
Prison of Forced Drinking of Medicine
Severing Kidney and Rat-Biting Prison
Small Prison for Amputating Limbs
Barbed Netting and Leeches Prison
Hand-Baking Small Prison
Carrying Stone Slab and Crouch-Walking Prison

ADVENTURE USE

Heroes can find many reasons to harrow Hell. In fact, a trip to Hell is practically obligatory for heroes in mythology. While modern heroes (mage or otherwise) might simply be stranded in the Netherworld by accident and have to escape, mythic heroes go to Hell deliberately. Many legends tell of heroes who go to Hell to obtain something they need. A demon lord might own an artifact the PCs require, or one of the damned might have knowledge the heroes cannot obtain any other way. If a demon lord or evil god holds a hero's DNPC captive, the hero must go to the Netherworld to free him.

A demon lord's plot to wreak havoc on Earth could also draw heroes to a personal confrontation in the Netherworld. Heroes should be warned, though, that attacking a high-ranking demon lord in its own fortress is extraordinarily dangerous. Foolhardy, even. And in the Netherworld, there really are fates worse than death.

The Netherworld is, of course, an unlimited reservoir of villains ranging from feeble minion imps to evil gods like Beelzebub and Mephistopheles. Other villains might be mortals who sell their souls for power. Heroes from Hell take more work to justify, but some Eastern traditions stress that demons exist to punish sin, not encourage it. Buddhism describes an especially large panoply of such "righteous demons." A mortal might be fused with a demon or discover partial diabolical parentage, and strive to use his powers for good instead of evil. Such characters find themselves torn between their human morals and demonic passions — good for some angst-ridden roleplaying.

ELYSIUM



The realm of Elysium formed from human ideals of Goodness; more specifically, the ideals set by the so-called “ethical” religions. Elysium coalesced out of the Astral Plane around the fifth century BC. The previous 400 years saw a remarkable wave of religious reformers, prophets and mystics. In China, Lao Tzu revealed the mystic vision of Taoism; Confucius proposed a more worldly philosophy of good conduct and social contracts. In India, Siddhartha Gautama became the Buddha — the Enlightened One — and set forth a path of inner peace and transcendence. Vardhamana, founder of Jainism, preached a doctrine of total nonviolence and reverence for all life. In Persia, Zoroaster proclaimed the duty of every person to choose the right side in the eternal war of Good and Evil. The Jews in Palestine reformed the Torah after their captivity in Babylon, and so laid the foundations for Christianity and Islam as well. In Greece, philosophers like Thales and Pythagoras explored rational inquiry and humanism.

All these thinkers rejected the capricious, all-too-human gods of their time. They created new moralities based on higher laws than mere tribal custom and the whims of fickle deities. They intended their new laws for all people and all circumstances. New beliefs created new spirits and new spirit-realms that gradually pulled away from the Land of Legends, even as Faerie pulled away from Earth.

GEOGRAPHY

Elysium is the most difficult Imaginal Realm to reach from the Astral Plane. Without an invitation from a resident or a total religious commitment, all attempts to reach Elysium suffer a -5 penalty on Navigation (Astral or Dimensional) rolls. The GM may even want to require a roll from characters whose Extra-Dimensional Movement powers normally work automatically.

It's not easy to go from one section of Elysium to another, either. In the other Parterres, connections between regions are easy and visible: it's just a matter of traveling the right path. In Elysium, however, the regions did not grow together tightly. To pass from one region to another, a traveler must locate hidden nexus points, or use Extra-Dimensional Movement powers. As a general rule, the Heavens of the Abrahamic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) have pretty good access to each other. The Taoist, Confucian, and Buddhist Heavens also enjoy good connections, and even admit each other's existence. Between the Eastern and Western Heavens, however, there is no direct

contact. A traveler from one set of demesnes to the other must find paths through small, marginal regions of Elysium.

On the other hand, nexus points link Elysium to the other Imaginal Realms — even its enemy, the Netherworld. The Abrahamic Elysians carefully guard all nexus points from the Netherworld and Babylon, but the zones of the Eastern religions maintain strong, even promiscuous, connections to regions within the Netherworld and Faerie. Taoism, for instance, is only half an ethical religion: popular Taoism retains its ties to older, animistic beliefs in gods, nature spirits, and ancestor worship. The Celestial Emperor's court in Elysium rules the Chinese sections of Faerie and exchanges diplomatic missions with the Yama-Kings in Chinese Hell.

LANDSCAPE ELEMENTS

Many cultures imagine Heaven in terms of gardens and palaces. Even when the abode of the blessed features mountains and forests, these are stylized, well-behaved landscapes, with terraces and pavilions from which characters can enjoy the view.

All the symbols of ease and pleasure show up repeatedly in Elysium. Palaces, fountains, and even trees are made of silver and gold. Jewels appear as gravel in streambeds, or form the pavement of halls. Fruit trees and flowers abound. The blessed wear clothes of costly fabrics and dine on the finest food and drink, but no one has to do laundry or go to the bathroom.

The regions where the Great Powers themselves dwell, however, go for grandeur instead of luxury. Here the scenery runs to mammoth temple-palaces of gold, marble, and jewels, with rivers of fire, blazing light, and hosts of spirits singing praises.

RELIGIOUS HEAVENS

Most regions of Elysium derive from the Heavens or Paradises envisioned by a particular religion. Here you find the luxurious Seven Heavens of Islam, the paradisaical island of P'eng-lai from Chinese mythology (and many more — popular Taoism and Buddhism have invented dozens of Heavens). Since human ideas of Paradise are often quite fuzzy, many regions in Elysium merely echo general ideas of what a Heaven should be, without following specific myths too closely.

The Jewish, Christian, and Muslim demesnes form the most isolated bloc of Elysian regions. These regions communicate somewhat because the three religions share their God (even if they disagree on His message). The Abrahamic spirits, however, refuse to admit the existence of the other Heavens. In fact, the angels are under orders not

to tell the blessed of each religion that believers in other Abrahamic faiths made it to Heaven. The Eastern-bloc spirits (Buddhism, higher Taoism, and higher Hinduism) think this is funny.

Ironically, the region that gave Elysium its name is small and isolated from the rest of the dimension. The original Elysium was the Paradise envisioned late in the history of Greek religion, when Pythagoras and other mystics created an ethical religion on a mixture of Greek, Middle Eastern, and even Hindu ideas. Pythagoreanism lasted until at least the second century AD, but the triumph of Christianity stifled it.

POPULAR HEAVENS

Several of Elysium's regions were never formally defined by dogma. These Paradises grew from the popular imagination. Here, for instance, one finds the Heaven of folk Christianity, all fluffy white clouds and harp music. Specialized Heavens for particular occupations fall into this category too, such as Gourmet Heaven (all dining room) and Doctor's Heaven (a golf course). There's a Lawyer's Heaven too, but it's completely empty.

Sample Regions

Here are some examples of Elysian demesnes. Some come from "official" religious doctrines (with descriptions drawn from various scriptures), while others come from popular mythology.

THE HEAVENLY JERUSALEM

"It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels... The wall was built of jasper, while the city was pure gold, clear as glass. The foundations of the wall of the city were adorned with every jewel... and the twelve gates were twelve pearls, each of the gates made of a single pearl, and the street of the city was pure gold, transparent as glass... And the city had no need of sun or moon to shine upon it, for the glory of God is its light, and its lamp is the Lamb" (*Revelations* 21:12-23).

The Christian districts of Elysium all connect to the Heavenly Jerusalem. The most devout of the blessed dwell within. The Book of Revelations says that after the final defeat of Satan, this divine city shall manifest on a transformed Earth. Until then, anyone who seeks a face-to-face meeting with the saints must dare the city's golden streets. The truly righteous and redeemed may enter in safety, but any mortal who is less than perfectly devout and penitent commits blasphemy just by passing the city gates. The Heavenly Jerusalem's guards punish such blasphemy with death and consignment to Hell.

The Garden Of Eden

"And the Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east... And out of the ground the Lord God made to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight and good for food, the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil" (*Genesis* 2:8-9).

Four rivers spring from the hill where the Tree of Life and the Tree of Knowledge grow. Eden



never sees rain, but a mist periodically rises from the ground to water the plants. All kinds of animals dwell in peace within the Garden, except the accursed serpent.

Unlike most paradises, Eden looks relatively natural. The trees and plants bear flowers and fruit continuously, and the animals are all vegetarians, but the plants are still just plants and the animals are just animals (they aren't made of gold or anything like that). Even the Trees of Knowledge and Life look like regular fruit trees — an apple and a peach, as it happens.

Although Eden connects to other Abrahamic Heavens, access is forbidden. Angelic guards with flaming swords stand at Eden's access points with orders not to let any human enter for any reason.

Pop Heaven

Countless movies, cartoons, and TV commercials portray Christian Heaven as a realm of puffy clouds inhabited by white-robed men and women with white wings and tinsel haloes. Some of them carry little harps. Pop Heaven is entered through a gate of golden filigree. The gatekeeper, St. Peter (or at least someone who *says* he's St. Peter) owns a book listing who's due to arrive.

JANNAT

The Koran describes Jannat ("Garden"), the Heaven of Islam, thus: "This is the similitude of Paradise which the godfearing have been promised; therein are rivers of water unstaling, rivers of milk

unchanging in flavor, and rivers of wine — a delight to the drinkers; rivers, too, of honey purified; and therein for them is every fruit, and forgiveness from their Lord” (Sura 47:16).

Other stanzas mention the *houris*, the beautiful, dark-eyed and perpetually virginal maidens who wait to pleasure the faithful Muslim man when he wants a change from drinking water, milk, honey, and the wine that was forbidden to him in life. The Koran is a little fuzzy about any corresponding rewards for faithful Muslim women. Muslim theologians say the rewards of Jannat are symbolic, and therefore gender-neutral. As always, however, the popular imagination stays firmly literal.

P'ENG-LAI SHAN

These three islands form the Eastern Paradise of popular Taoism. Here life is all ease and pleasure. The houses are built of gold and silver, and the trees bear coral and pearls. The snow-white birds and animals drink, like the inhabitants, from the Fountain of Life. Flowers scent the breeze with delicious perfumes, and their seeds grant immortality to whoever eats them. P'eng-lai's most famous inhabitants are a group of deathless sages called the Eight Immortals.

Legends claim that P'eng-lai is hard to reach even for an Earthly paradise. The water around the islands has no buoyancy, so ships sink; the three islands can only be reached by magic. Actually, P'eng-lai never existed on Earth at all, but it's still true that no one can sail or swim in the waters around these blessed isles.

AMITABHA

Amitabha is only the most well-known of the Buddha-land Heavens. Amitabha features lotus ponds, avenues of trees decorated with jewels, birds that sing in tune with spirit musicians, perfumed air, and jewels strewn like gravel. Buddhas, *bodhisattvas* (Buddhist “saints”), angelic spirits, and minor gods dwell in Amitabha along with other blessed souls.

Unlike most religions, the Heavens of Buddhism are not places for permanent residence after death. They merely serve advanced souls as pleasant way-stations between incarnations. The real goal of Buddhism is *nirvana* — dissolving the self into the Cosmic Mind that is the only true reality. The wise inhabitants of Amitabha are just a few steps from this goal, or have done so but resumed mortal limitations to teach the rest of humanity. The blessed who attain Amitabha learn how to take those final steps, and the Buddha-land's sages know many great secrets of the Multiverse.

ROCK CANDY MOUNTAIN

“Oh, the buzzing of the bees in the peppermint trees, and the soda water fountain....” The modern version of the garden of luxury, as envisaged by a hobo, features candy growing on trees and other tasty surprises. A fellow can loaf to his heart's content, or tease the ineffectual, wooden-legged cops and the dogs with rubber teeth. Rock Candy Mountain gets boring after a while, though.

No supernatural powers have yet claimed this

pagan bit of Paradise. Rock Candy Mountain is one of the safest parts of Elysium to visit. It also contains hidden nexus points to other folk Heavens, and the Land of Legends.

INHABITANTS

The inhabitants of Elysium lack the diversity of Earth's other Parterres, but they include some of the most powerful of spirits. Billions of people actively worship the gods of Elysium, so they receive abundant magical energy to share with their subordinates.

Some of the Elysian spirits have roles in more than one religion. The Archangel Gabriel, for instance, is an important figure in Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. Gabriel must hop between demesnes and pretend in each one that the other Heavens don't exist; he is not a happy archangel.

All Elysians are good, by the standards of the religions that spawned them. They are not necessarily gentle, merciful, or in other ways “nice.” Most religious codes of morality place a strong emphasis on punishment... or at least most believers think so, even if the official doctrine centers on forgiveness or renunciation of violence.

ANGELIC SPIRITS

Each of the ethical religions defines its own classes of servitor spirits. The Abrahamic traditions call them angels. The *amschaspands* and *yazatas* of Zoroastrianism are very similar. Hinduism and Buddhism share the *devas*. Popular Taoism describes assorted fairies and genies called *shen*. Confucianism propounds no spirits of its own, but advises followers to revere their ancestors and the gods of Taoism, because they are part of tradition.

The Abrahamic angels are currently the most active and militant Elysian spirits. Most of them are not warm and fuzzy benefactors of mankind. Only the Angels of Mercy fit that modern, watered-down conception. Older lore says that angels punish as often as they reward or assist.

BLESSED SOULS

Just as notably evil souls go to the Netherworld, the souls of notably good people go to Elysium when they die. Elysium's population of former mortals is considerably smaller than the Netherworld's.

Saints And Sages

The mightiest among the blessed are the saints. Their god delegates power to them. Some saints developed magic powers of their own, before their death; some even receive significant worship on their own. The term “saint” here refers not just to Christian figures, but also to Hebrew prophets such as Elijah and Isaiah, Muslim imams and Sufi *mulahs*, great Hindu gurus and yogins, Buddhist *bodhisattvas*, and Taoist and Confucian sages. Even a few secular people whose virtues brought them reverence become saints in Elysium, including rare, saintly wizards such as Apollonius of Tyana.

Having been mortal themselves, saints feel

more sympathy for the problems of ordinary people than the great lords of Elysium ever do. The Ban (page 61) seldom permits saints to help people on Earth directly. They may help the faithful through visions, however, or through subtle miracles on behalf of mortals who are themselves holy.

GODS AND DEMIGODS

The gods of the various religions dwell in Elysium. Their ranks include Jehovah/Christ/Allah, Shang Ti the Celestial Emperor, and deified founders of religions such as the Buddha and Lao Tzu. These powerful figures tell the angelic spirits what to do, and bear the responsibility for their actions.

Worship by billions of mortals makes the gods of Elysium tremendously powerful by mortal (or even super-mortal) standards. There's no point in writing up such powerful characters (even if doing so would not be deeply offensive to believers). In most case, the GM can treat the gods as plot devices: they talk, and if need be can do pretty much anything they want, but heroes and villains chiefly interact with the saints and angelic spirits.

For all their power, however, the rulers of Elysium are not the cosmic figures that official doctrine claims. They merely embody mortal ideas about gods. The Jehovah who rules the Heavenly Jerusalem is not the Supreme Being and Creator of the Universe; neither is the Buddha found in Elysium the actual, historic Buddha. The gods of Elysium are not all-knowing or truly all-powerful. They make mistakes and have temper tantrums. Kabbalistic mystics refuse to call the God in Elysium by the name of Jehovah. Instead, they call him the *Shekhinah*, or "Countenance" — the mask of God. Most Christian and Muslim sorcerers also follow this practice, while Eastern mystics refer to Elysium's gods and Buddhas as avatars. The Elysians may help simple folk approach the divine, but the wise treat them as conduits for worship rather than the subjects of worship in their own right.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Like the other Parterres, reality in Elysium follows certain rules that visiting characters must keep in mind. Some of these rules echo the conditions in the Netherworld.

INDESTRUCTIBLE SPIRITS

Like the demons and the damned of the Netherworld, the blessed spirits of Elysium cannot be destroyed by any normal means. "Death" on other planes just dispels them back to Elysium, and "death" in Elysium itself just forces a temporary discorporation. The spirit eventually forms again. Certain terrible magic spells can bring true death to an Elysian — but if giving the final death to one of the damned is a thing not done lightly, think how portentous it must be to kill one of the blessed!

IMMORTALITY

In all the districts of Elysium, there is no sickness or death (at least, no natural death). While in Elysium, mortals become immortal: all diseases are healed and aging stops for the duration of the visit. Visitors easily become permanently immortal (*i.e.*, they can buy Life Support [Immunity and/or Longevity]), if one of the Great Powers concurs; stealing immortality is more difficult and a character can make powerful enemies that way. In fact, some districts of Elysium contain items that cure disease and prolong life even if taken to Earth, such as the Peaches of Immortality from Chinese mythology.

ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

Just as the chief powers of the Netherworld can control the environment or their personal demesnes, the Great Powers of Elysium can manipulate the Heavens under their control. (See the Netherworld description for details.)



ADVENTURE USE

With all the enemies heroes have, they'd like a few powerful friends. Elysium would seem to offer such allies. Actually, Elysium offers fewer friends than characters might expect.

The Great Powers of Elysium are not especially cordial. Some gods won't offer anything but advice. Others expect a complete religious commitment from anyone who asks for help. Elysians may demand that characters prove they deserve any help, and they have very high standards. The Elysians certainly insist on favors in return.

What's more, misery on Earth is not necessarily bad for Elysium. Secularism presents as great a threat to the gods of Elysium as any evil power of the Netherworld. Religion — all religion — flourishes in times of trouble. As long as a menace doesn't directly threaten to reduce their worship, Elysium's gods might not care.

Desperate characters may try to *steal* some aid from Elysium. For instance, a person with a DNPC dying of cancer or AIDS might try to steal an all-curing apple from the Tree of Life in Eden. This would lead to conflict with Elysian spirits, either in Elysium or on Earth afterward.

Since the religions that created Elysium do not all tolerate each other, neither do the Elysian powers. Religious conflicts on Earth may invite supernatural intervention — for example, heroes who try to stop a “holy war” may find themselves fighting against Elysian spirits. After that, one of the Great Powers might put them on a hit list. Elysians may also be deceived, deluded, or misguided, or just in the wrong place at the wrong time..

Elysium makes an excellent source for heroes, though. An angel or bodhisattva could decide his duty lies on Earth, among mortals. Such a hero probably suffers a form of exile for placing mortals above doctrine, but sets an example of virtue second to none. Wizard-saints like Albertus Magnus or Lao Tzu could also give superpowers to people of great moral courage, to help humanity fight the Netherworld's minions.

Supervillains may come from Elysium as well, but these villain are not so much evil as inflexible. For example, a warrior angel exists to destroy the enemies of God. He wasn't created to make moral judgments of his own. Left unsupervised, he might attack pornographers, “infidel” (*i.e.*, Hindu or Buddhist) temples, or people who work on the Sabbath.

BABYLON: THE CITY OF MAN



Babylon completes the Great Quaternion of the Inner Planes. This dimension was once very small, but it exploded in size and power as the human race multiplied and bound the Earth in railroads, highways, and cities. The lords of Elysium and the Netherworld view Babylon's rise with both hope and fear, for it tips the ancient balance of power. An alliance with Babylon could give either realm a final victory... or Babylon might conquer all the Parterres and make Man truly the measure of all things.

Babylon echoes all the great cities of the past and present, real and imagined — perhaps even cities to come. Mere size does not confer greatness: a city must radiate its image into men's thoughts, so it became a thing of symbol as much as of wood and stone and steel, before Babylon reflects its qualities. The London of Queen Victoria is more real than the London of today — at least in Babylon. Hiroshima, whose famous cherry groves bloom a short walk from humanity's most terrible feat of destruction, echoes more powerfully in Babylon than does Osaka, a sprawling megalopolis that exists only because it is useful.

Babylon thus resembles every great city on Earth, only more so. Its skyscrapers tower impossibly high. Its freeways sprawl wider than football fields; its back alleys form a cramped and tangled maze. It is built on a bay, a river, a crossroads, and an oasis. Like Rome and San Francisco, it has seven hills. In its malls, department stores, arcades, and bazaars you can buy anything possible to human art or fancy — but some things cost more than money.

Babylon is, above all, the realm of secular ambition. Power, money, and skill rule affairs in Babylon. True, the world's great religions often place their hearts in cities: Jerusalem, Rome, Mecca, Benares. Babylon holds many a temple, cathedral, and mosque. But the cities find so much more to occupy men's minds; so many ways to distract people from religion. St. Augustine advised Christians to renounce the City of Man for the City of God. As fewer and fewer people take his advice, Babylon grows. What happens to the gods when humanity realizes it can build a new Heaven and new Earth all by itself?

GEOGRAPHY

Characters can journey to Babylon directly, or approach it from the Astral Plane. From the Astral Plane, Babylon looks like a tightly bounded blur of towers. Once you enter the city gates, however, Babylon explodes outwards and you stand in the thick of the city. From the inside, in fact, Babylon doesn't seem to have an outside: whichever way a character goes, he finds more city. Babylon's main streets seem to go straight but actually form closed loops. You can find the city gates again and leave for the Astral Plane, but you must know the proper route.

The city contains many districts, each with its own character. The districts interpenetrate, appearing and disappearing like overlaid mirages. A flight of steps might connect imperial Beijing to a Middle Eastern bazaar or a modern mall. Walking down a single road, a character might see examples of the architecture and customs of cultures separated by thousands of miles and thousands of years standing side-by-side, or just across the street from each other. Somewhere in Babylon — it's not shown on any map — a subway leads to the city of Pandemonium in the Netherworld, and an elevator reaches the New Jerusalem in Elysium.

Characters can buy guides to the mazy, shifting streets of Babylon, but interpreting the multi-dimensional maps is a task fit for an Einstein. Inexperienced visitors should hire expert help, such as a cabby or a street urchin.

HISTORICAL DISTRICTS

Most districts of Babylon mimic the great cities of the past and present, from ancient Athens to modern Los Angeles. Some of the oldest districts are fading, though. Only fragments remain of cities more than 2,000 years old.

IMAGINARY DISTRICTS

Babylon also contains hints and fragments of imaginary cities such as the Emerald City of Oz or the sky-piercing spires of the traditional science fiction city, complete with monorails and hovercraft pads. Visitors may see these districts in the distance, but it's quite difficult to actually reach them.

ABSTRACT DISTRICTS

Some districts are based on abstract, stripped-down aspects of cities. Babylon includes a neighborhood where only the plumbing of the buildings stands; a huge, tangled cloverleaf where it's always rush hour and the traffic is always jammed; and a district entirely composed of funeral parlors and tombs.



Sample Locations

Here are a few of the unusual or important places within Babylon.

FUTUROPOLIS

This classic sci-fi movie city features mile-high, Art Deco skyscrapers and aircars flitting about. Everyone is Caucasian and wears a silver jumpsuit. Fins make buildings, vehicles, and machines look aseptically high-tech, in a quaint and clunky sort of way. There's no sign of plant or animal life, wild or domesticated.

BYZANTIUM

Artifice shows itself most beautifully in the administrative district of Babylon. Byzantium features broad streets and plazas lined with stately public buildings and villas, with lots of white marble, columns, domes, mosaic floors, and carved friezes. Even the apartment buildings, shops and taverns on the district's fringe show a crisp, Classical dignity (regardless of what cultural or architectural style they embody).

In the middle of Byzantium stands the palace compound of the Emperor. The vast, labyrinthine place includes gardens and barracks. The huge throne room features a vaulted roof of dark blue lapis lazuli set with jeweled constellations. Absolutely everything in the palace is beautiful, or at least not ugly. The palace contains enough Greek statues, Ming vases, Japanese scroll paintings, jeweled Fabergé knicknacks, and Persian carpets to pay off the debts of every nation on Earth. Whole businesses in Byzantium work full time creating more

objets d'art to divert the Emperor and his court.

In some ways, the Imperial Palace is a microcosm of Babylon, just like Babylon is a microcosm of Earth. The Palace extends into several districts of Babylon, where it takes the form of celebrated palaces from history and legend. In the Old China districts, the Palace resembles the Forbidden City. In Istanbul, you enter it through a copy of the Topkapi Palace. In Victorian London, the Palace looks and feels like the Tower of London.

THE LIBRARY

The Library's hushed chambers hold copies of nearly every book or magazine ever formally published on Earth, and a lot that weren't. It is the greatest repository of information in the Parterres. A character with a borrower's card can read newspapers, novels, or magazines in languages he doesn't actually know: everyone within the Library's walls receives the *Universal Translator* Talent for purposes of reading the Library's contents.

The most amazing materials reside in the closed stacks. The Library boasts extensive collections of works lost to Earth, such as the plays of Sophocles that burned with the library of Alexandria, or the histories that the first emperor of China burned so people would know nothing from before his reign. Special vaults hold scrolls, tablets, and tomes from lost civilizations, all the way back to the Turakian Age and beyond, though these collections are far less complete.

The Library's acquisitions program extends to books that might never exist. One endless room in the Library's basement holds millions of automated printing presses churning out every

book that could ever be written. For centuries, the presses simply printed pages of random letters, on the theory that eventually they would print out everything. In 1973, however, the master wizard Archimago gave the Library a spirit of Artifice that sifts meaningful information out of random processes. The spirit ensures that the presses print *syntactically meaningful* statements — real words in real languages, not gibberish. Archimago's gift vastly accelerated the Library's program, though the librarians still face the problem of finding out what stuff is actually true. The spirit knows nothing but grammar; it can't sort truth from falsehood.

A borrower's card for the Library of Babylon is a 1-point Fringe Benefit. This lets a character use the Library's reference services at a low level. Effectively, the Library has at least an 11- rating in every conceivable Knowledge Skill. Reference searches take hours to days, at GM's whim, with no benefits for extra time. A card-holder cannot consult the closed stacks, however, without special permission from a librarian or various city officials.

A privileged membership costs 5 Character Points. This raises the Library's effective knowledge rating to at least 13-, and lets the character use the closed stacks (though he still cannot check out these special books). No PC can start as a high priority user. The Library grants this Fringe Benefit only in return for a bequest as magnificent as Archimago's information-spirit.



THE ROOKERIES

The name comes from Victorian London, but most major cities contain these noxious, violent, crowded slums — the favelas of Rio de Janeiro, the ghettos of modern American cities, and more. Babylon's Rookeries are the worst of all. The slab-like public housing high-rises of concrete jostle smaller tenements of decaying red brick. Streets and alleys between buildings have been roofed over and divided into rooms. Shanties perch on the rooftops; improvised bridges, tunnels, and ladders connect the various structures. The chief industry is crime; the inhabitants see all intruders as targets for robbery and murder. If a criminal escapes into the Rookeries, nothing short of magic can locate him or drag him out again.

INHABITANTS

A city is made of people as much as streets and buildings. The people of Babylon are as remarkable as their home.

HUMANS

Most inhabitants of Babylon are just ordinary humans, gathered from all the great urban civilizations. Most Babylonians live with their own kind in their own districts, but they travel through the city freely. Walking down a street in Babylon, visi-

tors see a Chinese rickshaw dodge an elephant bearing a sumptuous Indian howdah, a medieval bishop arguing theology with a Greek philosopher, pinstriped Chicago mobsters eyeing Los Angeles gangbangers strutting in their colors, a French courtier dripping with lace and jewels, Victorian streetwalkers, spacers from future cities in the asteroid belt, and merchants of Timbuktu.

Every native of Babylon speaks at least three languages fluently. This usually includes English. More people live on Earth now than in all of history put together, so the languages that are most popular on modern Earth are also the most common languages in Babylon.

CONURBITES

This magical race is analogous to the elves of Faerie. The conurbites live TV-commercial lives of glamor and conspicuous consumption. They look *mostly* human; some of them sport "cyborg" machine parts, and their skin has a plastic sheen.

Like the faerie-folk, conurbites possess innate abilities. Conurbite powers usually deal with controlling or reshaping matter. Each one also has a special attack form based on an appliance, such as “morphing” a hand into an electric carving knife (HKA) or a super-powerful blow dryer (EB with Double Knockback). The conurbite race is very new, and hasn’t found its final form yet.

POP ICONS

People, real or imagined, can materialize in Babylon if enough people think about them. John F. Kennedy and Elvis live in Babylon. So do Sherlock Holmes, Bugs Bunny, and Ronald McDonald. Watch out for Jack the Ripper: Babylon’s version is as lethal and unstoppable as people *imagine* Jack to be, making him far nastier than the real Ripper. Iconic real people never appear in Babylon until they die.

THE EMPEROR

The Emperor of Babylon might be human, but then again he might not. Nobody knows what the Emperor looks like, because he always goes masked or in disguise. The Emperor often moves about Babylon incognito. He is reputed to be an extremely powerful magician or spirit: this would explain how he balances the many competing factions of Babylon and keeps the city from self-destructing.

The Emperor does not care about good or evil; he simply tries to keep Babylon from tearing itself apart. He is The Man — authority without a face. Anyone who wants his help must show some respect for procedure, and explain why a course of action benefits the city. Still, the Emperor is a bit of a trickster, too. Petitioners sometimes find the minor functionary they badgered for an audience was actually the Emperor himself.

INTELLIGENT ANIMALS

Just like cities on Earth, many animals live in Babylon. The city’s rats, pigeons, and roaches, however, are sometimes intelligent. The sentient animals set up their own communities outside the view of most humans.

LIVING MACHINES

Everybody treats the machines in their lives as though they had thought and will... so in Babylon, some of them do. Earthly cities have problems with packs of stray dogs; Babylon has problems with packs of stray cars.

LIVING ART

People in Babylon encounter the occasional living statue, store mannequin, or gargoyle. Even if these creatures can’t move, they can talk. Talking paintings are common, too. In Babylon, anything that counterfeits the human form tends to come to life.

REALLY WEIRD THINGS

Babylon now generates strange creatures worthy of the wildest urban legends. More than one hook-handed serial killer stalks Babylon’s streets. You really don’t want to meet the mutant alligators

in Babylon’s sewers, or the elementals of smog and toxic waste. This is final proof, if any were needed, that Babylon has come of age as a dimension: it generates places, creatures, and images of its own, instead of merely copying directly from human imagination.

SPECIAL CONDITIONS

Except for its geographic peculiarities, the dimension of Babylon has few physical conditions that could affect adventures. In many ways it is the most Earthlike and “human” of the Parterres. Most of Babylon’s “special conditions” are social or economic. For instance, how does Babylon feed its population? It’s magic... and anyone who wants more of an explanation must discover the truth for himself.

FINDING YOUR WAY

All movement within a district follows normal rules. Travel between districts, however, becomes more problematic.

Like the Astral Plane, distance in Babylon depends on the traveler’s will and how much the destination resembles the starting-point. Use the rules for astral shortcuts to find how long a character takes to find a particular district: such travel takes a base time of 20 minutes and involves crossing several districts. You can attempt a quicker, more direct journey, but at less chance of getting where you want to go. But Navigation (Astral) doesn’t Complement the EGO Roll to reach the desired location; instead, characters can buy CK: Babylon and use it as a Complementary Skill. See the accompanying text box for additional modifiers; as with astral shortcuts, these indicate steps up or down the Time Chart from 20 Minutes, not dice roll modifiers.

For every 2 points by which a character succeeds with his EGO Roll, the duration of his journey improves by one step up the Time Chart (minimum of 1 Minute). Failing the roll means he ends up somewhere he didn’t plan, but carries no worse penalty.

A character’s actual movement rate does not affect cross-district travel. A character who flies at 100 miles an hour, for instance, arrives no sooner

BABYLON TRAVEL

Modifier	Time Chart Adjustment Factor
+1	Destination comes from the same time period as the starting district
+1	Destination comes from the same culture as the starting district
+1	Destination is a major city landmark (example: Acropolis of Athens)
+2	Destination is Byzantium
-1	Destination is a city more than 2,000 years old that no longer exists
-1	Destination is a non-historical district (example: Futuropolis)
-2	Destination is an abstract district (example: Plumbing District)

than a person who simply walks: he moves faster, but passes through many more districts.

Teleportation does not work between districts unless the destination is a Fixed Point or the character can actually see his target location. If a character looks down a cross-street and see another district, he can Teleport there. Characters who want to travel instantly to locations in other districts must use Extra-Dimensional Movement *and* succeed at a CK: Babylon roll, with the same modifiers as normal movement. The character may use Navigation (Astral) as a Complementary Skill Roll.

LONG-RANGE SCANNING

Babylon's twisted, interwoven, many-folded space makes it both easier and difficult to locate things at a distance (as by Mind Scan or Telescopic Enhanced Senses). For purposes of scanning, nothing in Babylon is more than 1 kilometer (500") away. After that, range modifiers stop. On the other hand, characters cannot register the *direction* of anything more than 100 meters (50") away. A scan beyond this range registers a shimmer of readings from all directions, appearing and disappearing as the districts rearrange themselves. Babylon is a great place to hide.

Mind Scan In Babylon

Characters can still use Mind Scan to form a mental link across districts of Babylon, or to target Mental Powers. (Similarly, they can maintain a Mind Link across districts, unless the GM rules otherwise based on special effects, dramatic sense, or other considerations.) To target other characters across districts, however, requires that the Power used have the Advantages *Indirect* (at least +½) and *Transdimensional* (to or within Babylon; +½). The character still doesn't know his target's actual location, no matter how good a Mind Scan lock-on he obtains.

Most districts have a population in the thousands. Mind Scanning such districts suffer a penalty from -6 to -8. If a character does not know what district his Mind Scan target occupies, he must scan the entire dimension at a -14 OECV penalty — equal to scanning the largest cities on contemporary Earth.

MONEY

Babylon accepts all forms of currency, from all periods in history. You may have trouble finding a shop that accepts stone disk money from Yap, but the banks can handle it. You can pay for something in florins and receive change in a mixture of dollars and denarii.

None of the money in Babylon, however, is quite like any on Earth. Archaic money looks *new*. An Earthly numismatist might pronounce it a fair copy of an old coin, but worthless except for the metal it contains. Contemporary paper money isn't even a convincing fake. A Babylon dollar, for instance, looks like "Monopoly" money.

You can spend Earth money in Babylon. In fact, it's worth more in Babylon than on Earth — about five times as much! The Babylon government, however, frowns on people tossing Earth money around freely. Any honest citizen directs visitors

from Earth to the nearest bank, where they can exchange their cash or (in modern districts) withdraw money from their Earthly checking accounts in Babylon currency. Dishonest citizens accept the Earth money, but lie about how much it's worth, or do not offer the full exchange rate.

Money from Earth has such value in Babylon because money is concentrated secular power — a talisman carrying the power of the State, and that's big magic. The Netherworld takes power from damned souls; Babylon takes power from money. As more money from Earth lodges in Babylon, the city-dimension becomes more real and gains a tighter connection to Earth.

SECRET SOCIETIES

Politics turns bizarre in Babylon. The diverse population holds no consensus about how to rule the city. To make things worse, beings from other dimensions — demons, gods, and dimension lords — lobby and conspire for influence. The result is a plethora of scheming secret societies. A major fraction of Babylon's population belongs to one society or another. Mystics often lead these societies, and the Emperor personally infiltrates most groups. Here are two of the largest conspiracies:

The Shadow Cabinet

The Shadow Cabinet serves the cause of Order. It seeks to subvert the government of Babylon and create a regimented society, as prelude to taking over the Earth itself. Many rich and powerful



people in Babylon belong to the Shadow Cabinet. The supreme leaders, however, all serve various Lords of Order, such as Bromion (see *Arcane Adversaries*). The Shadow Cabinet offers group solidarity and protection, a religious experience of the Great Unity, and the promise of power and influence in the New World Order.

The Shadow Cabinet controls an array of spirits with strange powers and even stranger appearances. These include the War Pigs, large hogs with self-working machine guns mounted on their backs; the Futures Traders, two-faced men in suits who talk backwards and forwards and remember the future as well as the past; and the Young Pioneers, truculent boys in coonskin caps, armed with oversized hatchets and paralyzing squirt-guns.

The Fool's Parliament

The Shadow Cabinet's chief enemy promotes Chaos through a program that outsiders describe as "political surrealism" but which the leaders describe as "Jell-O wrestling with penguins." Order-lovers often deride individuality and impulse as foolish. The Fool's Parliament replies that if freedom is folly, they are glad to be fools — and dress the part, too.

Membership in the Fool's Parliament offers some practical benefits. The secret society acts as a labor union of sorts, helping workers deal with management injustice or financial problems. Those who want a pietistic religious experience can find one with a Lord of Chaos. Some people join for a chance to strike back at society, or for a chance to

wear a silly outfit. A few people even join for serious philosophical reasons.

The Parliament's greatest weapon is Carnival. By declaring Carnival, the Fools can paralyze whole districts of Babylon as revelry draws people from work to jam the streets. Carnival can force business leaders to take the Parliament's demands seriously. The Fools can also cause or provoke sabotage, walkouts, and other labor actions. Against politicians, they prefer weirder methods such as guerilla home redecoration.

The Fool's Parliament controls its own strange creatures and agents. These include living toys, the insidious Men In Plaid with their hypnotic googly-eye glasses, and the enigmatic Balloon Man.

ADVENTURE USE

Babylon's merchants can obtain just about anything (if the price is right). Its library infinitely surpasses anything on Earth. Finding an object or consultant in Babylon, however, can be an adventure in itself — especially if someone else doesn't want the PCs to succeed. Of course, mystic villains can exploit Babylon, too. Villains find Babylon especially useful as a hideout, since location spells and powers are nigh-useless in the City of Man.

Both real and imaginary celebrities manifest in Babylon. The City of Man gives PCs a chance to team up with Sherlock Holmes or superheroes from their favorite comic books. On the other hand, heroes might have to fight Al Capone's gang or Jack the Ripper — or both!

Heroes and villains themselves could come from Babylon. The City of Man could produce urban analogs to "tall tale" characters like Paul Bunyan or Pecos Bill. Such characters could have adventures both in Babylon and on Earth. Babylon also permits characters who seem to come from other periods in history, without the need for actual time travel. On the other hand, urban legends could inspire some very grim villains, too.

You could even create campaigns set in Babylon. For instance, a "Cops in Babylon" campaign could combine the police of all ages, from Roman city guards to futuristic "science police" — with equally diverse perps. For a lighter campaign, "Be Prepared" takes on new meaning for the young heroes of a Babylon boy scout troop.



MISCELLANEOUS DIMENSIONS



Not all dimensions call for the detailed treatment suggested for the Astral Plane and the Parterres. These brief sketches illustrate the sorts of worlds found in the various divisions of the Multiverse. If a dimension isn't meant to become an important setting within a campaign, you don't need more than a few striking images and important characters. If the players enjoy their characters' visit to a dimension, or want to create PCs from that world, you can invent more details. Some dimensions could become the settings for major story arcs or whole miniature campaigns.

MALKUTH: LOEZEN

A dying green star gives this ancient world a tenth as much light as Earth receives from its sun. Bright stars remain visible even during the day. Life persists on Loezen thanks to magical megaliths that boost the sun's light for miles around them, giving light equal to a heavily overcast day on Earth. The

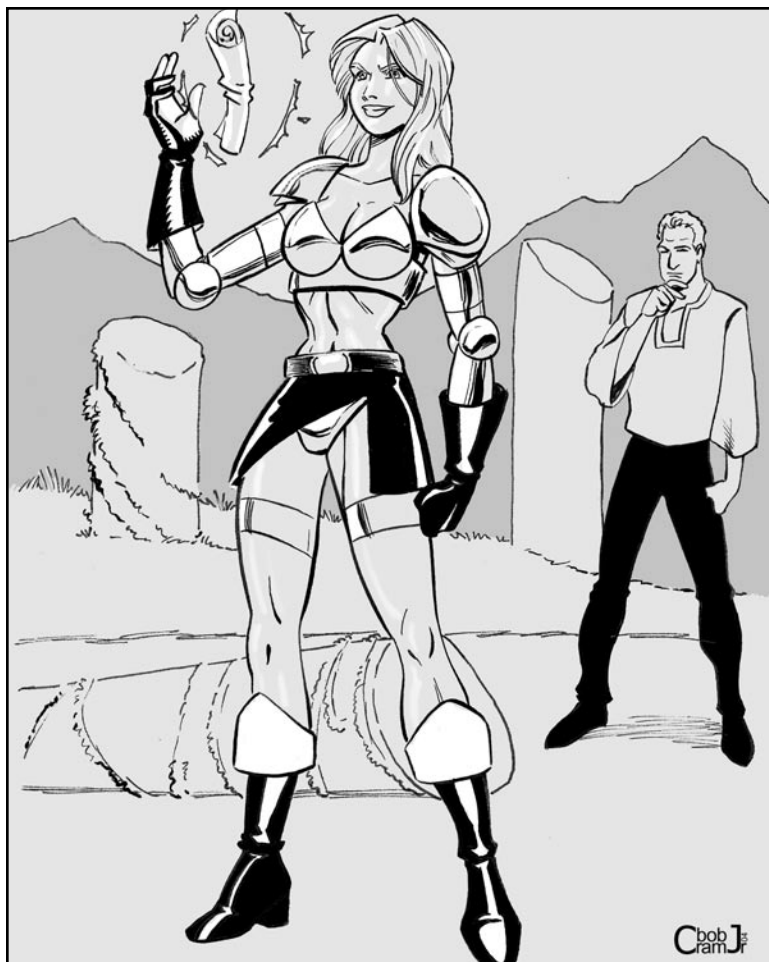
civilized folk of Loezen dwell near the megaliths. Beyond the areas of full effect, the light gradually dims and the land becomes colder and wilder.

Humans, or beings much like humans, form a majority in the civilized regions. Loezen also holds human-animal hybrids, such as the pterodactyl-like rhamphors, and wholly alien intelligences. About half a million years ago, Loezenian mages explored other planes and imported numerous species from them, including some that were sentient. Other things came too, unbidden — subtle forces that the wizards did not detect until it was too late to control or dispel them. One of these caused the sun's decline: a Qliphothic entity entered the heart of Loezen's sun and has grown larger for hundreds of millennia, draining away the sun's energy.

Long ago, Loezen's mages created the megalith network to delay planetary death and hold back the monsters. Since the Time of the Blazing Star, however, the greatest magical knowledge has been lost. As the emerald sun weakens and erosion and mischance take their toll, a megalith falls every few cen-

turies; less often, a Loezenian mage repairs one. The wild regions grow, and the monsters become bolder and more powerful. By now, some former settlements couldn't be restored even if someone drove away the monsters. Ancient spells mixed and decayed there, producing perils to the soul as well as the body.

The perils of the wildlands include many terrifying monsters: "They Who Laugh and Leap," degenerate hyena-like humanoids; Spidertrap Vines, which telepathically lure victims to the deadly heart of their nets of tendrils; the three-headed Slow Howlers; and the Specter Groves, where bizarre mutilations of the spirit take place. Some of Loezen's more prominent sorcerers include: the Sacred One, who wields incredible telekinetic powers from within the sarcophagus that holds his aged body in suspended animation; Norom Barcaldine, the Prince Who Never Was, who erased his kingdom from history



through an ill-considered experiment with time magic; and Queen Charsadda of the city of Olm, whose eternal youth and beauty may have some connection to the Talisman of Invulnerability she inherited from her late husband, Olm's last king.

Loezen stands out from most worlds in having almost no astral extension. The planet's Lower Astral Plane is dark and wracked with fierce spiritual winds. Anything caught in the wind blows further and further from Loezen until the astral storm carries it into the sun. Loezen's gods all tie their spirit realms to the planet as pocket worlds so they don't blow away. No ghosts haunt this ancient world: the astral storm takes any deceased spirit who lacks a god to offer refuge.

Clearly, Loezen is a doomed world. The ancient wizards understood this. They intended the megaliths as a stopgap measure. In time, they folded Loezen's god-realms into the Blazing Star and most Loezenians departed for another world, leaving the planet with its maimed Astral Plane. Some people, however, stayed behind. Rescuing Loezen from its slow doom would be an impressive quest for Earthly super-mages. Many powerful mystics still live on Loezen, but they are all too jealous of their own power and independence to work together. Most of them would rather flee to another world, such as Earth, and leave the rest of their world to die.

YESOD: YGGDRASIL, REALM OF PLANT LIFE

Yggdrasil is most simply defined as the Astral Plane created by plant consciousness, but this requires some explanation. Plants possess no consciousness in any human sense, but they react to their environment and to each other. An individual plant's "mental" field is much weaker than a human's, or even an animal's, but there are an awful lot more plants in the world than there are sessile creatures! Yggdrasil, the ash tree supporting the world in Norse myth, supplies the most popular name for the dimension created by these massed "mental" fields.

Unlike Faerie, which grew from human ideas *about* Nature, Yggdrasil is truly a realm apart from humanity. A wizard who enters Yggdrasil — physically, astrally, or clairvoyantly — finds nothing comprehensible in human terms. Sight and sound do not exist in Yggdrasil. Something like touch, taste, and smell exist in this dimension, since plants react to tissue damage and chemicals, but even these senses register in ways alien to human minds. Just learning to interpret the sensations of Yggdrasil can take years.

Yggdrasil is deadly. Humans who think plants are placid and gentle don't know much about the vegetable kingdom. Plants compete with each other, as individuals and as species. The trees in a forest strive to overspread each other and claim a greater share of precious light. Different species secrete chemicals to attract or repel insects, or to boost or inhibit another species' growth, a vegetable diplo-

macy known to every master gardener. Parasitic plants slowly, vampirically feed upon their hosts. Forests and fields are places of silent, ruthless war.

Yggdrasil reflects this war. Human visitors to Yggdrasil encounter the psychic equivalent of chemical warfare, parasites burrowing into their bodies, and even less comprehensible attacks, all driven by passionless, relentless hunger. Yggdrasil doesn't ignore animal intruders: to the spirits of Yggdrasil, animals are fertilizer that needs to stop moving. Visitors must leave quickly or go mad... or maybe not leave at all.

HOD: THE CITY-STATES OF YONG

On the plane its inhabitants call Yong, the largest bodies of matter are no more than a few miles in diameter. These planetoids have surface gravities comparable to Earth, but the gravity fades quickly with altitude. Yongese animal life looks reasonably Earthlike as well, though the plants resemble giant mushrooms and fungi. The inhabitants look like Caucasian humans, except for catlike eyes and hair colored black, green, blue, or purple, fading to grey or white as they age. Orbiting rings of glowing, yellow-white rocks illuminate these small worlds. Meteor streams of such rocks occur naturally.

Groups of these planetoids form the City-States. A cluster has just one city. Notable city-states include Yelbock in Pinchwell cluster, Vimpstead in Skartaven, and Pelferlost (cluster and city have the same name).

A council of each cluster's leading merchants elects an Autocrat. To cement the election, the new Autocrat receives superhuman magical powers. The Autocrats are all intense rivals, though the physical nature of the plane makes real war and conquest impractical. Espionage is an accepted part of inter-city relations, and has a code of professional ethics of its own. Most of the Yongese are farmers, but a sizable minority lives in the cities as tradesmen and artisans. Pirates raid the remote clusters.

The entire plane is filled with air. Pterodactyl-like riding beasts and magical flying boats carry people and goods between planetoids. The little worlds within a cluster are only a day or so apart, whereas travel between clusters can take up to a month. Of course, Yong doesn't actually have "days" or "months." Instead, Yongese tell time by "oscillations" of the rings, which last from 16 to 48 hours.

The Yongese accept magic as a normal part of life. Yongese magic always requires lengthy rituals, so sorcerers prefer to craft magic items for ready use. All magic items incorporate *yongspar*, the glowing mineral that makes up the rings.

Autocrats gain their powers through a somewhat risky magic ritual, but few are themselves sorcerers. No two Autocrats receive exactly the same powers, but physical enhancement and energy projection are common results. The ritual is kept a great secret, because it strains the fabric of Yong's reality and can have unpredictable side effects. For instance, the ring around Pelferlost City is pale



green instead of yellow, because the empowerment ritual was used three times in a single day.

Yongspar retains some of its magical value on other planes. In terms of game mechanics, incorporating yongspar into an Independent magic item contributes 1 Character Point to the item's Real Cost. The very rare yongspar crystals act as 10 point Variable Power Pools that add to a sorcerer's existing spellcasting, but these crystals never hold more than 6 Charges of this effect, and cannot be recharged.

NETZACH: THE MILLWORKS OF BROMION

A Lord of Order called Bromion (see *Arcane Adversaries*) rules a plane called the Millworks. This dimension consists of two interpenetrating spaces. The first space is a vast foundry and machine shop full of gears, lathes, furnaces, triphammers, and conveyer belts, lit by gas jets and vats of molten metal. The second space is mostly empty and lit by sourceless, clear white light. Huge, silvery spheres ranging from 100 to 200 feet in diameter hang in the void. Irregular, rounded holes in the spheres give access to the second space. Occasionally a conveyer belt, chain, or curving bridge of silver metal reaches between spheres.

The machine space has normal gravity and lots of catwalks to walk upon. The sphere space seems to have normal gravity — a fixed “up” and “down”

— but a person can walk around in empty space as if there was a floor. Effectively, a character's Running becomes an equal amount of Flight. If a person wants to move up or down, he walks up or down an imaginary stairway. If a person stands still for more than a few seconds, a disk of silvery metal two meters in diameter grows under his feet. Such disks vanish shortly after people leave them.

A race of bizarre humanoids tends the Millworks. These creatures have the legs and head of a horse and a four-armed humanoid torso, but are covered in shiny black chitin and have large compound eyes, like an insect. These workers never tire and obey Bromion without question. They are also completely devoid of original thought: they do only what Bromion commands, even to the point of letting someone kill them because Bromion did not order them to defend themselves.

Bromion and his workers try to capture all intruders and “reprocess” them in the machines to turn them into loyal servants of Order. This involves melting captives down in special furnaces and casting a new person from the resulting soul-metal.

TIPHERETH: THE VEIL OF THE TEMPLE

Beyond the Middle Astral lies the endless, rippling greyness that every visitor first sees on entering the Upper Astral — the Veil of the Temple. Actually, the Upper Astral Plane is a very important dimension, but by its nature, very little about it can be defined in advance. What characters encounter in the Veil of the Temple depends entirely on them and the GM.

The Upper Astral Plane is almost infinitely responsive to thoughts — so responsive that it externalizes and makes real any hopes, fears, or expectations a visitor has. A character can materialize whole phony dimensions from the Veil of the Temple. On the Upper Astral, all gods and beliefs become true, because the dimension shapes itself to fit.

The great challenge of the Veil, in fact, is to stop projecting onto it. The Upper Astral can copy *anything*. Does the character keep on his guard against attack? The Veil obligingly creates enemies. Does a character seek Enlightenment? God Himself appears to give it... but this God says nothing the character did not think already. Within minutes



of a character's arrival, the Upper Astral Plane cocoons him in a pocket dimension patterned on his personality.

Mystics call this plane the Veil of the Temple because it blocks access to the Brialic Planes of pure Spirit. To enter the realms of the cosmic conceptual entities, characters must confront their own minds. Successfully passing the Veil is one of the greatest initiations a wizard can undergo.

Pocket dimensions created by the Veil have any attributes the GM wants. Anything can happen in them, for essentially the characters are subjected to a Mental Illusion of unlimited power. Characters can revisit their own past, meet omnipotent gods (or experience godhood themselves), die and be reborn — anything. But none of it is real; none of it has any effect outside the astral pocket, except for what the characters may learn about themselves and each other.

Adventures in the Veil tend toward psychodrama. The Veil of the Temple chiefly responds to the unconscious minds of visitors: It isn't an Instant Magic Wish-Fulfilling Dimension. The Veil builds its pocket dimensions based on visitors' memories, deep-seated attitudes, and mythic archetypes. Visitors to the Veil often find painful memories replaying themselves, perhaps in disguised form. Phobias, obsessions, and other neuroses find expression. In short, the Upper Astral Plane wrenches characters by their Psychological Limitations.

Visitors to the Veil may even become more than one person. The Veil often externalizes suppressed aspects of a person's psyche. A macho, tough-guy character might encounter his Anima, the suppressed feminine side of his personality. A character much concerned with virtue might meet his Shadow, a compilation of amoral drives he never wanted to face. Conversely, a cynical villain might be shocked to encounter his own lost idealism in the person of his younger self... and if this sounds a lot like "A Christmas Carol," well, *it is*. Dickens wrote an excellent model for adventures on the Upper Astral Plane.

All this psychological wrenching has its rewards, though. An adventure in the Upper Astral gives characters a great excuse to buy down a Psychological Limitation that has become too much of a nuisance. Cosmic entities may use the Veil of the Temple as a testing ground for PCs, to see if they deserve a boon.

Anyone who wants to gain access to the Brialic dimensions must run the gauntlet of the Upper Astral. Characters can pass the Veil in two ways. The usual way is to show spiritual progress in a psychodrama. A character could encounter an "other self" and reconcile with it in a convincing display of roleplaying; or he might triumph over an important Psychological Limitation. Instead of Experience Points, the character receives the Fringe Benefit *Access To Briah* (3 Character Points).

Alternatively, however, a character might pass the Veil by totally, dismally *failing* the Veil's challenges. Every Psychological Limitation challenged in the psychodrama gains 5 points of effect — either the character becomes more fanatical, or becomes more sensitive to circumstances that could trigger the Limitation. (The character does not receive any extra Character Points because of this.) For instance, a character with the Psychological Limitation, *Vengeful* (Common, Strong) could have his obsession become Total (he *cannot* keep himself from seeking revenge), or Very Common (*any* insult or defeat becomes grounds for considering revenge). Only a few Brialic planes become accessible to a person who becomes crazier in the Veil — the ones belonging to the cosmic entities most related to one's obsessions.

TIPHERETH: DEATH'S DOMINION

Everyone has his own image of Death's Dominion. For one person, Death might be a desert under starlight. Another person might see the realm of Death as an endless graveyard, while a third person might imagine Death's Dominion as an infinite slaughterhouse where the dead hang on hooks like so many slabs of beef.

Whatever form it takes, Death's Dominion is cold, still, and dark. The dead wait, buried or not, patient and unmoving as a trunk of forgotten magazines in the attic. Nothing moves, for this is where all stories end.

Only the living can bring change to Death's Dominion. Living visitors, who cast no shadows here and leave no footprints, can briefly rouse the dead. In most cases the dead merely speak for a few seconds but do not move. The specters of family, friends, and loved ones can be roused to movement and speech for a few minutes, but no more. Visitors find the dead who matter to them more easily than they find strangers, but there's no rush. It's too late for Time.

Sooner or later, a visitor comes to the one fixed part of Death's Dominion, a palace of ebon stone. The doors stand always open. A tall, vaulted passage leads to Death's throne room. Light comes from torches on the walls, their heatless white flames

caught in mid-flicker forever. Death's stark, angular throne looks empty... but anyone who looks upon it somehow knows that it is occupied. To speak for Death, a visitor's deceased relative or loved one stands at the foot of Death's huge throne. The living cannot see or hear Death itself, no matter what their power.

Aside from being creepy, Death's Dominion follows several rules of its own.

The GM picks one character to supply the image for Death's Dominion. This might be the character with the highest EGO, or the GM can choose randomly. Ask the player how his character imagines Death.

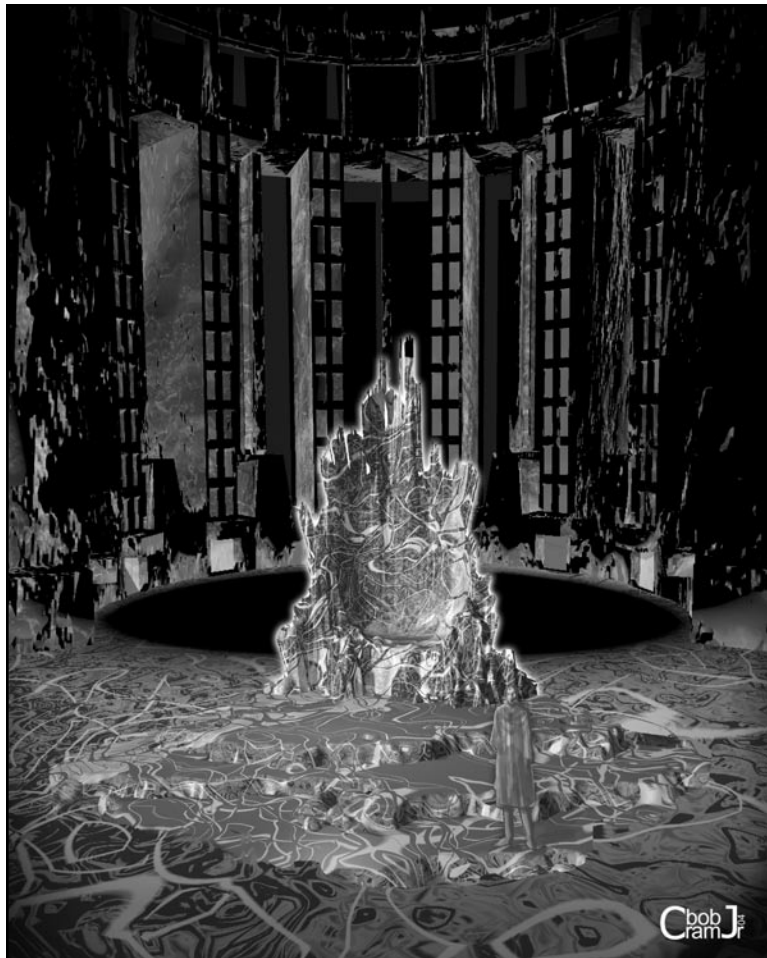
Everything in Death's Dominion is absolutely indestructible, except visitors. What visitors do to each other is their own business. Characters have no way to harm the dead, or even to take a souvenir from this plane.

Time in Death's Dominion is an illusion. No matter how long a visitor stays in Death's Dominion, he returns to the worlds of time and matter at the same moment he left. Visitors do not need to eat, excrete, or sleep, and nothing in Death's Dominion could cause them harm except Death itself, who usually won't bother. Heroes may fight Death's avatars — mere gods of death, the “masks” it wears to make itself seen and heard by mortals in the lower worlds — but on its home turf, Death wears no mask and cannot be fought. No one can even target Death, no matter what Enhanced Senses

the character might possess.

Characters can bargain with Death to restore someone to life, but Death always demands a life in return: If someone lives beyond the span of years allotted by fate, someone else must take their place in Death's Dominion. Sometimes, Death demands that heroes fetch to its Dominion someone who cheated Death and lived too long, such as by becoming undead or by stealing other people's bodies.

The true measure of Death's power comes with the restoration to life if a bargain is fulfilled. This is no vulgar opening of tombs. Death simply rewrites the past so the person didn't die: the fatal bullet missed, the heart attack wasn't quite so bad, or the medics arrived sooner. Only the people who went to Death's Dominion know that history changed; even the person restored to life won't remember. The resurrection, however, is not a rejuvenation. If the person died when old, he remains old when he comes back.





Alternatively, Death can restore a person through transmigration. Someone must offer to die so the other person can live again — to sacrifice all his remaining years. In this case, Death puts the resurrected person's soul in the selfless person's body, to live out that person's destined lifespan. Death never says how long that will be.

The final mystery of Death's Dominion concerns its relationship with the lower astral realms such as the Netherworld and Elysium. How can the deceased exist in both Death's Dominion and whatever afterlife his religion decrees, or as a ghost on the Astral Plane? Some mystics propose that people have multiple souls, with multiple destinies after death. Others say that Death can fetch souls out of any "afterlife" whenever it pleases and lodge them in its Dominion for visitors to meet, or that the solid specters in Death's Dominion are mere "records" of the dead, like a photo album equipped with memories. No one knows for sure... except Death, and he isn't telling.

PACHAD: THE GARDEN OF EARTHLY DELIGHTS

At first, visitors to the Garden of Earthly Delights might think they landed in a section of Elysium. The Garden is just that — a lush, fantastic garden or park filled with fruit, flowers, and brilliantly colored birds. This dimension's magic surpasses Elysium, however. In the Garden of Earthly Delights, anything a visitor wishes for, becomes real.

Anything.

That is, anything *physical*. The Garden cannot grant knowledge or wisdom. It can, however, satisfy any desire for pleasure, possessions, power, or nearly anything else. It materializes whatever objects, people, or other "props" it needs. Want to be Emperor of the World? The Garden of Earthly Delights create a whole phony Earth if it must.

So what's the catch? Simply this: nothing that happens in the Garden is real. It seems real by any test that any visitor could attempt, but nothing created by the Garden can pass beyond it. The luxuries, the perfect friends and lovers, the powers given by the Garden vanish the moment you try to take them from the Garden to another dimension. The Garden is the sweetest, most seductive trap imaginable: everything a character could want, with no responsibility, forever. But a gilded, upholstered, perfumed cage is still a cage.

The ultimate futility of the Garden's pleasures is best shown by two visitors trying to fight. The Garden accommodates them both by tracelessly substituting a fake for each opponent. That way, both people can win — and yet neither of them really achieved anything. They both received private fantasies of victory, and the Garden keeps them separate to preserve the delusion.

The Garden is limited by the visitor's imagination — the one thing this dimension *can't* create is a surprise. By the time the Garden becomes boring, though, a visitor might lack the will and discernment to leave: he wants to go, so the Garden makes him a Gate... that leads to another simulation conjured from his memories.

CHESED: REALMS OF THE FOUR ZOAS

Chesed holds the four highest astral realms, the domains of Order, Chaos, Art, and Nature — the four great abstractions that contend in the lower worlds, personified by the cosmic entities called the Prime Avatars, or the Four Zoas. Each of these dimensions flickers between a set of images. In fact, mystics say the realms of the Four Zoas are really just one dimension, viewed four different ways. The best evidence for this view comes from the dark forest called Entuthon Benython, which exists in all four realms.

Ulro

Ulro is the realm of Urizen the Prince of Light, Prime Avatar of Order. Ulro shows four faces to the visitor. First a visitor sees the Forest of Entuthon Benython. The entire forest grew, banyan-like, from the Tree of Mystery that sprang up under Urizen's heel as he sat writing his books of laws. The tree trunks rise like pillars; the leafy branches interlace in a dense web, creating dark, vaulted spaces like caves, the second image of Ulro.

In this view, Ulro becomes a labyrinth of caverns, with the peculiar property that every path, from every point, leads downhill. You cannot backtrack, because the caves change behind you. Crystals in the walls and ceilings glitter with points of light like stars in the night sky, the third image.

Ulro becomes a huge void holding layer on layer of slowly turning, concentric rings bearing stars and planets, like an old armillary sphere model of the Solar System. The rings themselves are made of crystal, only visible by an occasional glint of reflected light. The sky of Ulro is full of clockwork.

Each star or planet is an entrance to a shining, crystalline space, the fourth face of Ulro, where dwell the spirits who serve Urizen. The "sun" in the center of the starry wheels is Urizen's palace of marble and crystal, blazing with light to illuminate all the space around it. Around the palace are Urizen's garden and orchard, including the Tree of Mystery, which easily expands and darkens to become the Forest of Entuthon Benython again.

Urizen is not always found in his palace. Sometimes he explores the cave and forest with a globe of fire in his hands, seeking he knows not what. Sometimes he makes adjustments to his starry wheels. He often goes to the Tree of Mystery to argue fruitlessly with Orc — one of the forms taken by the Prime Avatar of Chaos.

Beulah

The demesne of Luvah, Prime Avatar of Chaos and emotion, is a moonlit realm of summer nights and perfumed bowers. It also manifests as the wilderness of Entuthon Benython in its fiercest aspect. Beulah changes to echo the mood of visitors. The Realm of Chaos can become a maudlin romance-land, a garden for play, a hellish waste of hate and violence, or anything in between — but the moonlit, summer garden of love and the wilderness of tortured, twisted passions are its most common forms. In the latter form, Luvah takes the form of Orc, a young giant wrapped in flames, chained to the Tree of Mystery. In the romance-land version of Beulah, Luvah and his feminine aspect Vala appear as young lovers. Luvah and Vala take many other forms as well, one for every passion ever felt by mortals.

Generation

The realm of Tharmas, Prime Avatar of Nature, has no proper name. Names do not exist in Nature. "Generation" describes what Tharmas does: he creates and maintains the blind cycles of birth, life, and death.

Under the influence of Tharmas, Entuthon Benython becomes wild and tangled, almost a jungle, with spirits resembling wild animals. The forest can change without warning to other images, such as a forest-like kelp bed (but visitors can breathe underwater), or the tangled jungle of veins, nerves, and tissues inside a vastly magnified living body.

The central image of Generation, however, is a wild and rocky shore. Entuthon Benython surrounds a dark and bitter lake called Udan Adan. This lake can expand in a moment to a seashore, with Tharmas rising from the water like a tidal wave.

Golgonooza

Golgonooza is the city of Urthona, Prime Avatar of Art. The forest of Entuthon Benython completely surrounds the city, with the farmlands of Allamanda as a buffer zone. Golgonooza is a square, fortified city with castellated, golden walls, four gates in each wall, and four massive statues by each gate. Golgonooza's walls are low but the interconnected buildings within tower thousands of feet into the air.

Golgonooza lacks most of the features of a real city, like shops or vehicles. This architectural fantasy of towers, terraces, streets, and courtyards is more an idea of city-ness than a city itself.

In the middle of Golgonooza stand the twin citadels of Luban and Cathedron. Luban holds the great forge of Los the Smith, one aspect of Urthona. Cathedron holds the looms of Enitharmon the Weaver, Los's wife and another aspect of Urthona. There do Los, Enitharmon, and their children create spaces and times for other beings to inhabit. Anyone can see that Luban and Cathedron have a top, but no one can ever reach it, no matter how far or how fast they travel.

The character of Golgonooza changes to suit the visitor's mood. The buildings of Golgonooza can be made of gold like the walls, or silver, iron, or brick and stone. The city may hold crisp, Art Deco spires like something from an old science fiction illustration; or lush palaces with carved walls, onion domes, and minarets; or the grim, forbidding skyscrapers of an urban nightmare. Golgonooza shows all the faces of Artifice, from the best to the worst.

QLIPHOTHIC: THE SHINING DARKNESS

Nearly everything in this mystical cosmos is black, in a multitude of shades and hues. Darkness itself becomes a form of radiation in this dimension. Human eyes do not like to see the Shining Darkness. Many sorts of Qliphothic entities dwell in this plane; you cannot say such creatures live....

In the Shining Darkness, huge, angular masses rise from vast, warped planes in utter disregard for gravity. Indistinct *things* flop and writhe between them. Every few miles stands a loose cluster of humanoid statues, like huge, squatting fetuses made of compacted grey ash. Qliphothic horrors nest in the empty eyesockets of their oversized heads.

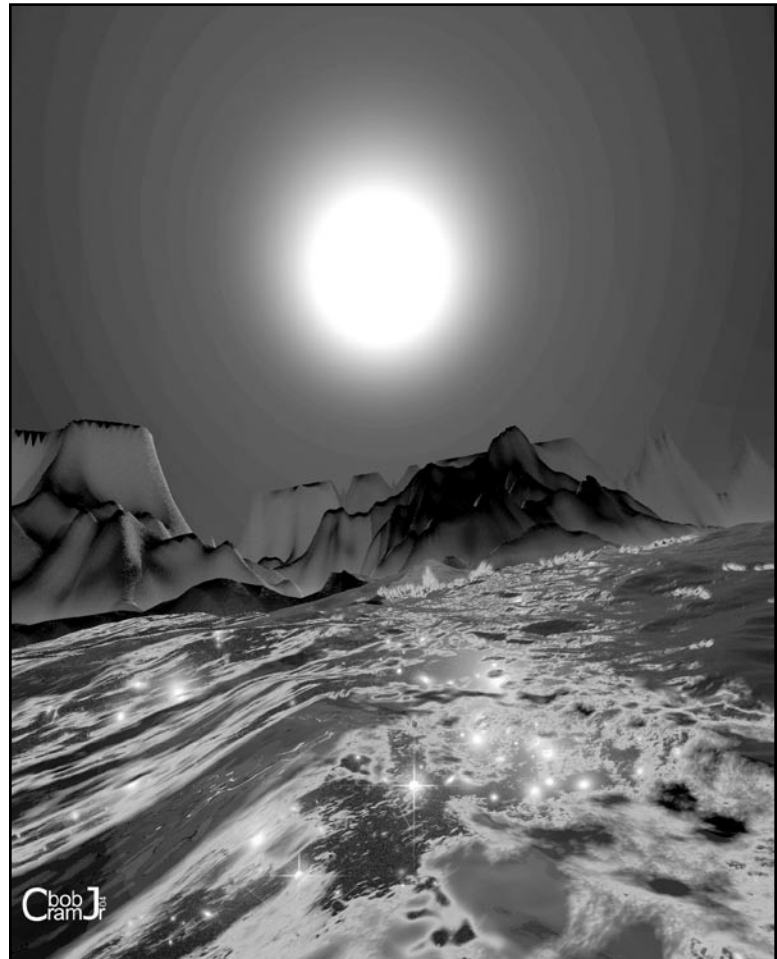
Humans and other organic beings face danger just from being in this realm. The darkness slowly leeches away life energy and replaces it with the plane's own mysterious energies. In game terms, mortal visitors suffer a Major Transform 1d6, Penetrating every 10 minutes. As the Transform proceeds, a visitor's skin darkens. When the Transform is three-fourths complete, the character's body turns completely black and starts to glow with the Shining Darkness's radiance. When the Transform completes, the being's body crumbles and the victim becomes a Qliphothic entity.

If the victim returns to Earth before the Transform is complete, he radiates a 1" radius field of Sight Group Darkness for one minute for every point of Transform damage taken over the victim's BODY. (This would make a great mystical "radiation accident.")

Mundane light sources such as flashlights or matches *explode* the moment someone activates them in the Shining Darkness, as the dimension rips out their stored energy. A simple kitchen match becomes an RKA ½d6 Explosion; a flashlight or cigarette lighter full of fluid becomes

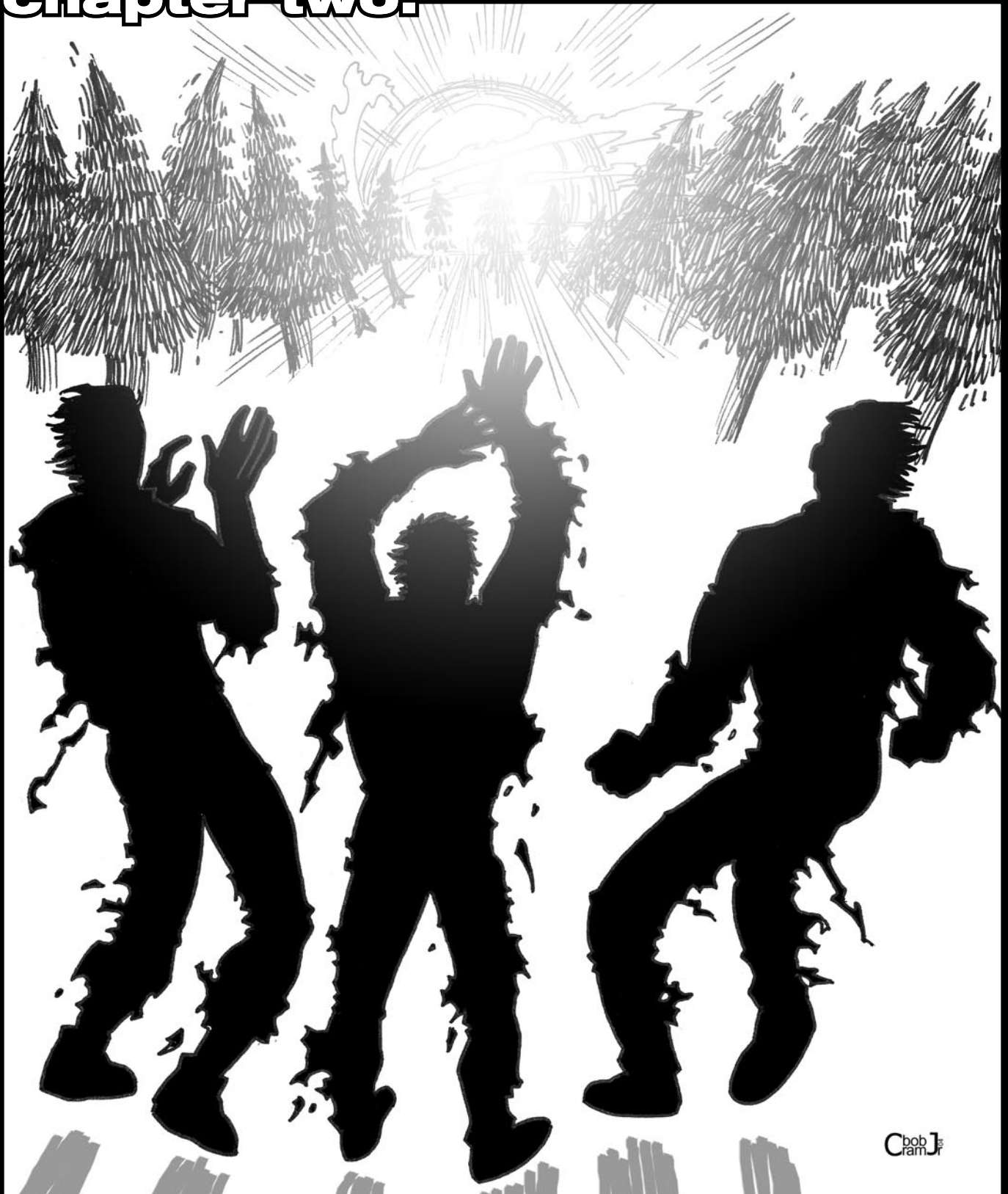
an RKA 2-3d6 Explosion; a more powerful light source produces an even more powerful blast. Other energy-emitting Powers and devices suffer a similar effect, turning into RKA Explosions of 1½ x the Active Points of the Power, and using up triple END or Charges.

Within the Qliphothic planes, devices and many types of powers don't work properly at first; they have to "adjust." Characters must roll every Phase to determine whether an ability has adjusted; the GM should make these rolls out of sight from the player (so the character doesn't know if he succeeded until he uses the ability). For technological devices and weapons, the character must succeed with an Inventor roll at -3. Characters with spell-casting ability must make a Spell Research (Inventor) roll at -3. Characters with innate energy projection powers must make both an INT Roll and an EGO Roll, both at -3. Other abilities are usually unaffected, though the GM may impose rolls on other characters as he sees fit.



Bob
Cram Jr.

chapter two:



Cbob
Cram

MYSTIC PEOPLE AND PLACES THE SHADOW WORLD

MYSTIC PEOPLE



OTHER OCCULT DYNASTIES

The Chunhu: The “Tiger Lords” began during the Boxer Rebellion, when a Chinese rebel leader became a weretiger. After the rebellion failed, the rebel became a warlord, and his children ruled part of southern China until the Cultural Revolution. Since then, the Chunhu have sought to bring other Eastern shape-shifters into their small but growing family. Few family members practice sorcery, but the therianthropic dynasty holds an influential position in the eastern Mystic World. Hong Kong’s hero Tiger-Man comes from the Chunhu family.

The Kayvanzadi: This Middle Eastern lineage claims descent from the alchemist Zarrindokht (see page 56) by way of her reputed grandson Kayvan (“Saturn” or “Universe”), a sorcerer who flourished in the fourteenth century. The Kayvanzadi specialize in alchemy and a Middle Eastern form of ritual magic much like Hermetic theurgy. They also have family connections to certain peri nobles and djinn. The “Saturn-Born” currently include sorcerers like the alchemical menace Solvent, who works with Hezbollah and other radical Islamist groups, and the Iranian supermage Dr. Saturn.

The Mystic World has its own values and conflicts. Its arcane geography extends from occult architecture to portals to other planes. Ordinary people seldom see the Mystic World’s power, but sometimes the rivalries of wizards can shape the destiny of nations.

The real movers and shakers in the Mystic World often hide themselves, even from other mystics. Prestige comes not from high visibility, but from being known as a rumor, a shadow, a mystery whose power is guessed but not tested. Above all, the Mystic World scorns publicity in the everyday world. For some dwellers in the Mystic World, such as scheming vampires or murderous Satanists, public exposure means death or imprisonment. All serious mystics understand, however, that supernatural power becomes most effective when least suspected — so enemies cannot take precautions against it.

Mystics who become superheroes or villains, therefore, do not win much favor in the Mystic World. Open spell-battles are... well... gauche. Other mystics may respect super-sorcerers for many reasons, but appearing on the front page is not one of them. Actually *seeking out* publicity — writing books, appearing on talk shows, issuing outrageous supervillainous demands — almost guarantees scorn from the Mystic World.

Raw power does not bring as much prestige as outsiders may think, either (though it’s undoubtedly something mystics pay attention to). Until the start of the Superheroic Age, mystic power depended almost entirely on knowledge. No amount of raw talent let a would-be wizard bypass years of arcane study and difficult initiations. That’s no longer true: several young “wild talent” mystics display power far beyond their training, while mystic artifacts, potions, and rituals occasionally confer great power on people with little or no occult knowledge. Senior mystics call such characters “dabblers” and speak of the need to guide them onto the true path. Super-mages themselves often suspect a case of sour grapes.

Knowledge, above all, determines who gains respect from other mystics. A true adept knows many spells and prodigious amounts of lore. So what if it takes him an hour to cast a spell? He’s still a greater mystic than the masked moron who knows only a few spells, even if he casts them with a wave of his hand.

MYSTICS AND SUPER-MYSTICS

In the Champions Universe, most self-styled mystics have no real power. They may believe they can divine the future, expel evil spirits, or curse their enemies; they may convince other people, too. At most, they possess minor arcane talents such as a bit of Mental Defense or the ability to see astral creatures. These minor mystics may function as Contacts or Followers for superhuman mystics. They can also lead a seeker to more skilled adepts who do not advertise their powers.

Most true spellcasters are Heroic-level mystics. Their magic may lack the ease and power of true superpowers, but Heroic-level mystics can still overpower a superhero if they have time to prepare and take him by surprise — especially when the mystics act in groups. Mystical characters typically have Heroic-level teachers.

True super-mages are quite rare in the Champions Universe. They inspire admiration, fear, envy, and sometimes outright hatred from Heroic-level mystics. Lesser mystics want to know why some students of the Arts Arcane cast spells with ease, while the rest need elaborate rituals.

Flat-out genius is one factor. Many super-mystics could excel at anything they tried. They happened to try magic. Some of the greatest mystics actually came to the Arts Arcane from successful careers in medicine, law, science, business, or other fields.

Other mystics receive supernatural help. Any mystic can gain super-spells if he sells his soul to a demon. Contacting a demon doesn’t take much magic, either — occult knowledge and a great deal of wickedness suffices to attract the notice of the infernal. Other super-mages obtained help from a god or dimension lord. Supernatural patrons tend to expect service in return, so some mystics caution students against accepting help from gods. Powerful magic artifacts can also elevate a mystic to superheroism or villainy. Prudent mystics use an artifact as a springboard to develop power of their own, in case an enemy takes the artifact away.

Some super-mages have parents or other relatives who practice mysticism. Two families, the Vandaleurs and Sylvestris, produce a significant fraction of the super-mages in the Western world. Other such families, including the infamous deMorphants, died out or were destroyed long ago.

Some mystic scholars claim, however, that the most common factor is destiny itself. Just like other sorts of superbeings, super-mages often come to

their power through amazing coincidences, lucky breaks, or tragic accidents. Instead of a nuclear accident or a glowing meteor, though, they find a grimoire, an artifact, or merely a rumor that leads them to a teacher.

Whatever their “origin,” most mystics study just one arcane tradition, such as Hermetic ritual magic or Taoist alchemy. Not uncommonly, however, super-mages studied two or more mystic traditions. The cross-fertilization of ideas and magic styles seems to confer greater power.

FACTIONS

Super-mages probably cannot avoid the petty politics and vendettas of the Mystic World. Mystics love to gather in little secret societies with grandiose names. Few mystic cabals grow very large or last very long, though. Intellectual vanity and jealousy tends to splinter mystical groups, as members jockey for leadership or take offense at each other. The truly enlightened try to drop out of the Mystic World’s squabbling, but other mystics may not leave them a choice. Super-mage characters may find other mystics assuming they support one side or another in a conflict, based on their deeds or past associations, and treating them as friends or enemies based on that presumption.

Mystic societies that achieve significant size, longevity, or power tend to have strong and stable leadership, or a clear and definite goal. Cults, for instance, can last for centuries: the god supplies both the leadership and the goal. Most mystic societies, however, don’t exist for more than a few decades before they schism or dissolve.

Occult Dynasties

Family connections hold some mystical factions together. The Vandaleur and Sylvestri lineages, for instance, have spawned many learned occultists and powerful sorcerers over the centuries. No one penetrates very deeply into the Mystic World without learning about these two great families and their immortal founders. Giacomo Sylvestri, perhaps the Dragon’s most powerful servant in the Western world, rules his clan of Satanists with an iron hand. Adrian Vandaleur makes few demands on his descendants and spends most of his time incognito, but inspires great fear and obedience when he chooses to exercise his authority. (See *Arcane Adversaries* for details about these two rival aristocracies of the Mystic World.)

The Vandaleurs and Sylvestris are not the only occult dynasties in world history. In medieval France, for instance, the Faussesflammes and the de Morphants both earned powerful and evil reputations for sorcery. The Sylvestris and Vandaleurs absorbed most of Europe’s older or smaller lineages, however, and no more recent Western dynasty has become so prolific, or shown such potential for power. Other parts of the world boast their own mystic lineages (see sidebar).

The occult dynasties squabble and scheme

much like Europe’s old royal families. Now and then, their leaders seek a truce through marriage alliances; these never last very long. Occult dynasties are far from monolithic, though. Without an external threat to draw them together, the Sylvestris and Vandaleurs indulge in petty vendettas against each other.

The Sylvestris and Vandaleurs are deeply inbred. The patriarchs of both lineages interbreed with their descendants, for reasons of their own. Unions between cousins frequently occur, whether from snobbery about “lesser blood” or just because it’s hard to find a spouse who accepts the weirder family customs.

Scions of an occult dynasty enjoy great advantages in studying magic. Sheer propinquity matters just as much as hereditary talent: it’s easier to become a mystic if your relatives already own grimoires and can provide training. A mystical career also looks more feasible when you have living examples before you.

The Circle of the Scarlet Moon

The largest and most powerful occult society in the Western world finds a degree of stability through the simplicity of its goals. The Circle of the Scarlet Moon exists to gain and wield power. Even the perpetual infighting between the Circle’s leaders serves this goal: the High Coven holds the most skilled and seasoned mystic conspirators in the world, and they know it. They also know that if they carry their rivalries too far, their enemies will destroy them all. The Circle has aspects of an occult dynasty, in that members tend to marry other members and induct their offspring in turn.

The Scarlet Moon dates back two centuries. It accumulated vast financial and political power, as well as mystic acumen — too much to remain completely hidden from the everyday world. People who hear rumors about the Circle usually dismiss it as a crazy conspiracy theory. The few who take it seriously think the Circle is a cult of Satanists. The truth is a bit more complex; see page 108 *Champions Universe* for how outsiders view the Scarlet Moon, and *Arcane Adversaries* and page 140 of *Champions Universe* for the inside story.

The Trismegistus Council

The Mystic World knows the Trismegistus Council as the leading group of “good” mystics. For almost two centuries, the Council has fought to contain the Circle of the Scarlet Moon and destroy other occult menaces. The Council survived so long because it kept its goals simple and it chose its members with great care. No one becomes a member of the Council before proving his competence and devotion to protecting the world from supernatural evil. Council members practice any sort of magic, or simply know a great deal of arcane lore. The rivalries between members seldom escalate too far because most members possess unusual

The Magambo: This family or cult came to the attention of the rest of the Mystic World only recently, but it appears to have spread throughout Central Africa, especially the eastern Congo region. The local people fear the Magambo as witches who foster the horrific warfare and brigandage afflicting the region, and gain power from it. Outside investigators do not yet know if the Magambo are demon-worshippers, necromancers, vampires, or some combination, but their power seems to grow at an alarming rate. Their name gives no clue: it’s an ordinary Central African family name, with no ominous meaning.



wisdom and moral fortitude.

Just because the Trismegistus Council is “good” does not mean all members are “nice.” The Council can be as secretive and ruthless as the Scarlet Moon in protecting humanity. Few members would sacrifice ordinary people to thwart a supernatural evil, but superbeings and other mystics are fair game: they knew the job was dangerous when they took it. Council members try to help mystical heroes, but do not always tell everything they know until they feel sure a hero has the dedication and knowledge to match his power. See pages 104-05 and 139-40 of *Champions Universe* for a more detailed look at the Trismegistus Council.

Other mystics vary widely in how they view the Trismegistus Council. Many call the Council “a bunch of self-important do-gooders.” Privately, many mystics view Trismegistans with caution: over the decades, the Council has amassed more arcane knowledge than any group except maybe the Scarlet Moon, and they possess considerable political acumen as well. Mystics who affect to scorn the Council still ask for its help when they encounter occult danger too great for them to handle.

Shamballah And Agharti

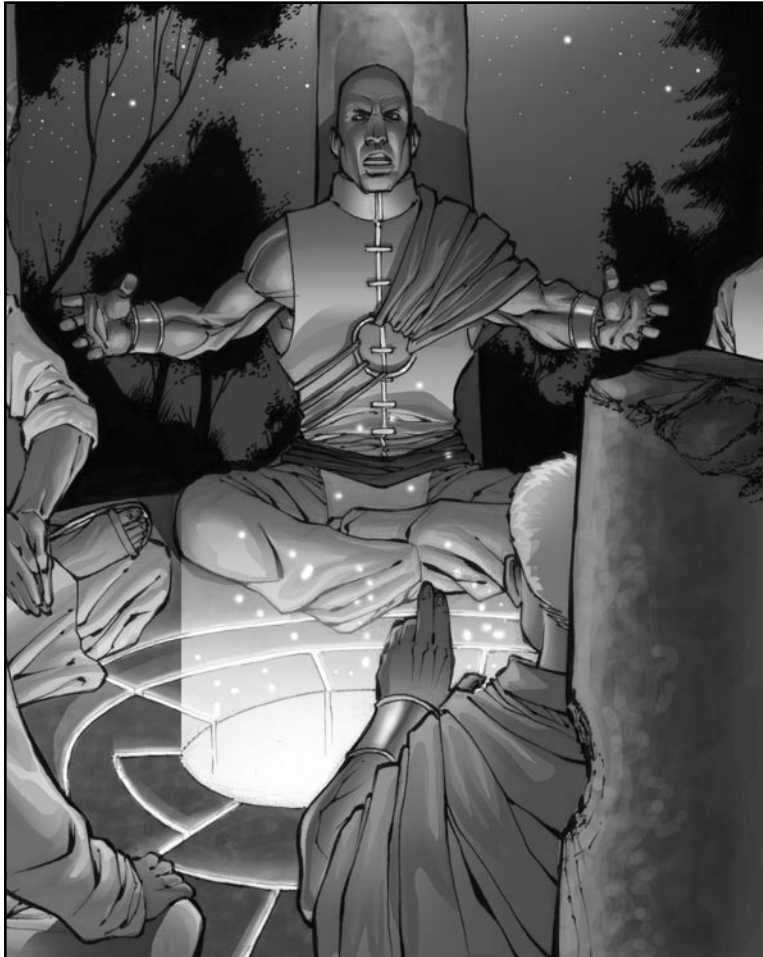
In Asia, the secret cities of Shamballah and Agharti fill opposing roles like the Trismegistus Council and the Circle of the Scarlet Moon. Legend says both cities are older than recorded history, and lurk in a vast cavern network beneath the Tibetan Plateau. Eastern mystics view Shamballah as the acme of wisdom and benign magic, and Agharti as the wellspring of evil sorcery. The reach of Agharti and Shamballah extends to all the regions surrounding Tibet, particularly India and China. Legend says the mystic masters of both cities reincarnate and preserve memories and lore from civilizations before recorded history. Some mystics believe the masters of Shamballah are actually the secretive nagas (see page 149).

Few mystics claim they have actually visited these cities of wizardry, though. Eastern mystics also don't believe the cities' ruling magi engage in the same political machinations as the Circle or Council. Western mystics aren't so sure. The Scarlet Moon, at least, finds every attempt to gain power in Asia blocked by sorcery as subtle and powerful as its own, and sometimes as ruthless. The Scarlet Moon's leaders see Agharti as a rival to the Circle's global ambitions. The Council and a few heroic mystics hope they may persuade Shamballah to ally with them.

Cults

Cults play an important role in the Mystic World and may form part of a character's background. Many gods and other supernatural beings recruit mortal worshippers to work their will. In addition to pagan gods from Faerie, known cults serve arch-devils from the Netherworld, dimension lords from the Outer Planes, and the Kings of Edom. Some cults split off from public religions such as Christianity or Hinduism, but they strive as hard as any other cult to hide from the everyday world. Cults range from groups of benign mystics who seek enlightenment through meditation, to gangs of murderous mages who commit crimes as sacrifices. Any sort of cult might help empower a superpowered avatar to further their god's interests on Earth, or hunt the servants of rival gods.

The Dragon boasts the largest single fraction of humanity's cultist population. The Cult of the Red Banner is the biggest Draconic cult in the East, and possibly in the world. This cult emphasizes martial arts as well as dark magic. Some mystics fear that the crime syndicate VIPER might be the front for a powerful and secret cult of the Dragon. (See *VIPER: Coils Of The Serpent* for the inner mysteries of the global crime cartel, and decide for yourself.)



DEMON

Most people think DEMON is a Satanic cult turned to high-profile crime. That's just what DEMON's leaders want the world to think, and the deception worked for several decades. DEMON even fooled the Descending Hierarchy into helping it gain power. In the last ten years, however, DEMON's true secret escaped to the rest of the Mystic World. DEMON actually serves the Kings of Edom. Even those mystics who never heard of the Edomites know that DEMON serves something worse than demonic — something so monstrous and alien that Hell itself recoils.

When they can avoid doing so, devils no longer repay DEMON's sacrifices: the cult's Morbane leaders must wrest power and aid from the Netherworld by raw force (including, simply, summoning spells that devils cannot resist, regardless of their personal opinions). Other evil cults and mystical villains have generally cut their ties to DEMON. Increasingly, the cult must create its own superpowered agents, such as the supervillain Morningstar (see *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*), or call upon the Kings' monstrous minions when they can.

Rumors have spread that other mystic factions plan a grand assault on DEMON to destroy these servants of cosmic madness.

Some mystics say the Trismegistus Council leads the harrowing, others suspect the Circle of the Scarlet Moon, and a few whisper that *both* societies have set aside their differences for a joint assault. Just about every other powerful faction or individual has also been nominated as the leader of this hypothetical war. Less excitable mystics suggest that any grand alliance is more likely to pursue Takofanes as the more immediate threat to the Mystic World.

For more information about DEMON, see the *DEMON: Servants Of Darkness* sourcebook.

DIABOLICAL RIVALRY

“Dork Seraph? A cheap-jack charlatan wielding borrowed power. Without the Iron Crown, he’s nothing. A true master needs only his own knowledge and will — and he doesn’t submit to demons or gods, they submit to *him*! Work with me, and I will show you true magic and true power.”

—The Demonologist, to a group of Satanists he recruited for a scheme

“This self-styled Demonologist whom you served? A rash and deluded fool. He seeks to wield the darkness. I *am* the darkness, and he shall feel the same torment and despair as the rest of you mortal cattle when the world becomes my abattoir! Now worship me — worship me! And I will let you live to tell the tale of what happened here.”

—Dark Seraph, to the lone survivor of the cultists

The Dark Renaissance

A few mystics always reject the secrecy of the Mystic World and try to go public. Not only do they flaunt their magical powers, they try to make sorcery more common. The super-mage Demonologist recently gave voice to this dissenting view and named it the Dark Renaissance. With entities like Dark Seraph and Takofanes rampaging in full public view, he says, what’s the *point* of staying secret? But the Demonologist wants more: he sees the current surge in magic as a chance for sorcery to overthrow the reign of science and technology.

The Demonologist has gathered a number of like-minded discontents into a supervillain team called the Devil’s Advocates (described in *Arcane Adversaries*). Few mystics openly support his call for a Dark Renaissance, but more may agree with him than admit it to their peers. DEMON, of course, seeks its own sort of Dark Renaissance based on freeing the Kings of Edom to ravage the world, while Takofanes apparently wants to enslave all humanity, living or dead. So far, at least, these three sides do not work together. Each of them has come terribly close to seizing global power, however, and other mystics fear the result if any two of these factions should team up.

IMPORTANT INDIVIDUALS

Mystics themselves have difficulty identifying the movers and shakers in their esoteric subculture, since secrecy is, after all, part of their stock in trade. All the characters listed here, however, have achieved some degree of fame or notoriety for their power or knowledge. This section describes how other mystics regard these characters, whether the public knows of them at all. See also Chapter Four and *Arcane Adversaries* for descriptions of several evil mystic masters and how their fellows view them.

Archimago

When the mystical villain John Fulten dared take the name of Archimago, many mystics feared his assumed title was no idle boast. In 1950, Fulten was already one of the mightiest mystics in the world. He kept getting more powerful as he escaped each pact by pledging himself to even fouler entities, until he served the Solipsist itself. When Archimago died of a simple heart attack, the Mystic World breathed a collective sigh of relief. A group of mystic masters burned his body and cast every spell and rite they knew to bind and exorcise his soul, to make sure he wouldn’t come back in any form.

When Takofanes erupted into the world a few years later, many mystics feared Archimago had returned. They soon learned their double mistake. Takofanes is not Archimago... but John Fulten remains active beyond death. Through books, magic items, and enchanted minions, Archimago still works to fulfill his many debts and destroy the world — and many mystics fear he may succeed. Unwary mystics and would-be sorcerers treasure

Archimago’s notebooks and tools as sources of easy power, guaranteeing that the master wizard remains an active player in the Mystic World.

Dark Seraph

Sir Dennis Walthingham once enjoyed a certain respect from other evil mystics. He knew a great deal about the occult for one who came to mysticism so recently. Then he summoned the Iron Crown of Krim in an awful rite of murder and betrayal, and transformed himself into the mighty Dark Seraph (as described in *Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks*).

Sir Dennis actually lost prestige from that deed. As many mystics like to say, Dark Seraph doesn’t have *real* power — just an artifact. So what if he can wreck a skyscraper? Ordinary mortals do that without magic. Sir Dennis only dazzles the sicker wannabe-wizards; the masters scorn him... though in the case of other evil mystics, this disdain sometimes comes from envy. It isn’t fair, either. Dark Seraph still knows a great deal about dark magic, and works impressive feats using the power locked in artifacts, relics, mystically-charged places, and secret rituals. Were he to develop true spellcasting abilities, the Mystic World would tremble in fear.

The Iron Imam

Among the servants of Light, few on Earth equal the mystic called the Iron Imam. This Muslim sorcerer dwells in Mogadishu, Somalia, and remains vigorous despite being over 80 years old. He practices a form of theurgy that calls on angels and the secret names of God. From Morocco to Pakistan, the Iron Imam hunts the minions of Hell and guards the world against supernatural invasion.

The Iron Imam seldom looks beyond his chosen bailiwick, however, and he does not work with infidels. Muslim mystics call him the Iron Imam in admiration of his unyielding war against evil. Other mystics wish he would yield a little on other matters. The Iron Imam particularly insists that mystics must never interfere with mundane problems. For instance, when a group of low-powered mystical heroes tried to succor the starving people of Somalia, the Iron Imam told them civil war and famine were Man’s choice and God’s will, and drove them out. Heroes are glad to see the Iron Imam rain holy fire on demons while he shouts, “In the name of Allah, the Merciful, the Compassionate!” — but few mystics like him.

Nyssa Tarchaniotes

Not everyone in the Mystic World is alive. Nyssa Tarchaniotes claims that in life, she was an oracle at Delphi — and although Apollo withdrew his gift of prophecy when a vampire raped her into undeath, Hecate replaced it. Nyssa’s diary, the *Chronicles Of Antioch*, became a standard reference

for supernatural events in the Near East from the third century through the First Crusade.

Nyssa still has a high reputation as a seer. Stories say she dwells in Istanbul, Athens, or still in Antioch. Only a true sorcerer can track her down and penetrate the illusions that cloak her dwelling. In addition to cash, Nyssa charges each client a pint of his blood. She uses a bit of the blood to seal a contract binding the client never to harm her, and to defend her from harm on one occasion. Nyssa sees her visions in the rest of the blood, which she drinks at the end of the session. Many potent mystics are said to owe Nyssa favors and bear her *geas*.

Rumor says Nyssa avoids killing the mortals she feeds upon so heroic mystics won't decide she is too evil to consult. But she does not discriminate in her clients: good, evil, or neutral mystics may all seek her help. The vampire-seer never issues false advice, though at times she cannot answer a question to her client's satisfaction — and her prophecies are sometimes Delphically ambiguous.

Takofanes The Archlich

The “King of the Throne of Human Ivory” terrifies other mystics. Sorcerers have gleaned some information about the Archlich's identity, power, and goals through potent divinations and queries to spirits of knowledge — that's how anyone even knows Takofanes's name and self-assumed titles. The Undying Lord's origin lies so far in the past, however, that even the gods can't find much information about him.

Takofanes has no allies, only slaves, as the few mystics who have tried to cut deals with him learned to their very brief and painful regret. Most mystics want the Archlich destroyed as much as everyone else does. Then some of them want to loot his sanctums for the enchanted artifacts he seems to produce without effort. Wiser heads suggest the Archlich's toys are best destroyed too, lest they call him back from oblivion.

The Eternal Tulku

Of all the world's masters of thaumaturgy, the greatest teacher is surely the Eternal Tulku. Legend says he's a former Archmage who stepped down from the position but retained great longevity. Tulku is over a thousand years old... and looks it. He's also been senile for centuries. He lives at the



DETECTIVE AND SEER

When Witchcraft took us to see this supposed vampire oracle, I expected... I don't know. A hag-witch with fangs. A glamorous Mistress of the Dark. Not a plump, middle-aged-looking Greek woman. Matronly, I'd call her.

Then she greeted us all by name. Our real names, which we hide behind the masks. I don't know what I felt more: fear at her power to penetrate secrets, or sheer envy. I spend weeks tracking down a criminal's identity, and this woman just knows at a glance.

She told us exactly where Takofanes took the children, so we rescued them and stopped his plan in time. After watching this Nyssa Tarchaniotes slurp down our blood, though, I don't envy her anymore.

—from the private logs of Nighthawk

WHO IS KRIM?

Every mystic on Earth now knows the name of Krim, thanks to Dark Seraph and his allies in the Crowns of Krim. Before Dark Seraph, however, Krim was an elusive figure known only through a few prophecies and books of secret lore. Several mystics now seek information about this obscure demon-god.

Mystics know Krim once possessed terrible power. Some sources call Krim “the first child of the Dragon.” Others say the Dragon is a child of Krim. He was a king of demons, and in some times and places a god of destruction and evil, during the Turakian Age. Some dark books of lore even hint at a connection between Krim and the modern-day “one who has twice defied death” (Takofanes?).

Krim's heyday passed tens of thousands of years ago, it seems. So far as anyone knows, the demon-god now exists only through the Crowns and their wearers. Presumably, Krim wants to turn the world into a Hell ruled by itself, through the person of Dark Seraph and the other crown-wearers. As long as the Crowns exist, so does Krim; destroying the Crowns would end his evil at long last, but no one yet knows how to accomplish this feat.

For more information on Krim, see *The Turakian Age*.



PROFESSIONAL REGARD

"The latest stories? I heard one that movie stars enslave themselves to Zarrindokht in return for renewed youth and beauty. I remember that movie and do not think the story is true.

"I also heard a claim that Zarrindokht uses her potions to give people superpowers... but she hides this from them, so the people think their powers come from lightning bolts, glowing meteors, and such, or that they are simply mutants. These heroes and villains serve as her dupes in secret plans. This story I cannot dismiss so easily.

"I would like to meet this remarkable woman, yes. Whatever she asked for the secret of the Elixir of Life, I would be glad to pay."

—Overheard conversation between Cornelius Liefeld and Bocal McFarlane

Lamasery of the Silver Hand, a secret temple once located in Tibet, where the mystics cared for him and helped him become lucid when a worthy pupil arrived. Tulku did not teach novices: his precious hours of clarity were saved for thaumaturges who already proved their skill and were ready for greater mastery.

When the last Archmage died, the Trismegistus Council hoped the Eternal Tulku could tell them how to appoint a new one. His answer was apparently not helpful. The Mystic World thought it lost Tulku in 1959, when the Lamasery of the Silver Hand vanished during Communist China's violent suppression of Tibetan Buddhism. The next year, however, the lamas restored contact with Eastern mystics. As the Chinese army closed in, the lamas finally roused Tulku and he moved the entire lamasery onto the Astral Plane. Since then, the Lamasery of the Silver Hand has wandered through the Inner Planes, appearing in Faerie, Babylon, Nepal, Switzerland, the Scottish Highlands, and Eveleth, Minnesota. The lamas sometimes take sabbaticals to train mystics who are not yet ready for Tulku's lessons.

Zarrindokht

This daughter of ancient Persia has a reputation as the world's greatest living alchemist. Romantic legend calls her the daughter of a shah. More prosaic stories say her father was an apothecary in twelfth-century Qum. At that time, Persia was a center of scholarship, including sorcery and alchemy. The apothecary's daughter studied with the greatest alchemists of the age and surpassed them all by making the Philosopher's Stone and the Elixir of Life. For this she gained the name of Zarrindokht, "Daughter of Gold."

Over the centuries, Zarrindokht is said to have devised potions for every purpose, raised the dead, taught Paracelsus and Pasteur, inspired Shakespeare's sonnets to a "Dark Lady," seduced and borne children to kings of men, faeries, and djinn, and generally lived as an immortal, mystical *femme fatale*. Rumor says she now lives in Babylon, but keeps residences in Ispahan, Monte Carlo, and Los Angeles (where her alchemically-enhanced beauty bewitches every man who sees her). More skeptical mystics suspect these stories owe far more to overheated imagination than to reality: How could such a flamboyant figure avoid the public eye, even in Babylon? Every year, though, inquiring mystics find people who believe they encountered a powerful and attractive woman with seemingly magical powders, pills, or potions.

THE ARCHMAGE

The Archmage is not a person, but an office — the most powerful mystic on Earth, blessed with sorcerous gifts surpassing all others. (Other homeworlds of sentient species, and some other planets as well, may have their own Archmages.) At the death or retirement of each Archmage, his chosen successor gains the office's awesome power, no matter where in the Multiverse either person is at the time.

The Archmage's chief power is an effortless facility with spells. An Archmage does not need the chants, talismans, potions, magic circles, or other paraphernalia used by most sorcerers. He casts spells by will alone. At present, only supermages such as the likes of the horrific Takofanes perform magic with such effortless ease.

An Archmage also gains an extended lifespan. Archmages live for centuries, until they encounter something able to kill them or they voluntarily step down and once more age at a normal rate. (The Eternal Tulku may have become immortal before he became an Archmage.)

The Archmage wields tremendous authority over the spirit world. He may call on any power within the Inner Planes. He can invoke the light of God to burn and banish demons, or the fires of Hell to chastise angels. He can borrow a pagan god's mastery of nature, or the urban magics of Babylon. Ghost, ghou, and god all find the Archmage summoning the power most baneful to them. Invaders from the Outer Planes encounter an even greater threat: the Archmage can curse them through the power of Earth's four great spirit-realms, to render the Inner Planes deadly to them.

Over the centuries, the Archmages accumulated many of Earth's greatest mystic artifacts and relics. They employed some of these magical treasures; others, too dangerous for human use, they locked away to keep them from unwary hands.

According to occult legend, a being called Thanoro Azoic initiated the line of Archmages, longer ago than anyone now can say. "Azoic" means "no life": some mystics believe Thanoro Azoic came from another plane before life existed on Earth, and guarded the planet for eons until the first human wizards became powerful and wise enough to assume his burden. Other mystics believe the First Archmage bore some connection to the mysterious nagas who taught mystics and heroes long ago. Most sages opine, however, that "Azoic" must be a mistranslation of some other word or name.

After Thanoro Azoic, the line of Archmages has broken twice that mystics know. The first time happened in antiquity. This interregnum lasted more than a century. The Hellenistic magus Thestor restored the line of Archmages after a quest to find Kryptos, the cosmic personification of secret knowledge. Thestor's grimoire, the *Krypticon*, became the most treasured possession of succeeding Archmages.

Seven more Archmages followed Thestor: four men and three women, from all around the world. The office returned to Europe in the seventeenth century with the accession of the Russian mystic Bohdan Stanislavski. The Circle of the Scarlet Moon murdered Stanislavski in 1908 in a magical cataclysm such as the world had not seen in millennia — and Stanislavski lacked an heir, his first apprentice having died fighting an Edomite horror in Africa. (The Circle's attack likewise destroyed most of the arcane artifacts the Archmages had collected for centuries.)

Many contemporary mystics dearly want to restore the office of Archmage and regain humanity's greatest safeguard against supernatural danger. Unfortunately, everyone who definitely knows the secret of doing so can't or won't talk. The serpentine nagas, whose knowledge of the mystic arts has no equal on Earth, remain silent for their own inscrutable reasons. Perhaps they think it's useful for humanity to lack one clear mystic authority... or perhaps, as some mystics whisper, these ancient entities no longer care what happens to the world. The retired Archmage called the Eternal Tulku once knew, but he slipped into senility long ago. Most of the time, Tulku doesn't know his own name. Perhaps someone can learn the secret of anointing a brand-new Archmage during one of Tulku's rare moments when his intellect returns.

Regardless of the general mystery surrounding the process of accession to the position of Archmage, mystics know the following:

- A future Archmage shows great mystic mastery even before his anointing. Specialists and dabblers need not apply. Documented Archmages followed every major style of sorcery — Hermetic ritual magic, Taoist wizardry, shamanism, and more — except for alchemy.

- Moral requirements seem lax. Although an Archmage's duties include refereeing conflicts between the spirit powers and defending the Earth from supernatural invasion, not all of them have been exactly heroic. A few mystics quite seriously believe that Takofanes the Undying, considered by some the most evil and powerful villain on Earth, is an Archmage from remote antiquity who rose from the dead and reclaimed his power.

- A prospective Archmage must learn the spell that curses invaders from the Outer Planes. Any sorcerer could learn the *Quaternion Banishment*, but the mystic must first receive gifts of power from the gods of Faerie, Babylon, Elysium, and the Netherworld. For more than a thousand years, no one except apprentice Archmages ever filled this requirement. Mystics who hope to anoint a new Archmage — or take the office themselves — strive to rediscover the *Quaternion Banishment* and obtain the necessary gifts of power.

- On the other hand, a nascent Archmage may not bind himself to any single god or spirit. The Archmage speaks for all humanity in the quarrels and councils of the gods. To do this, he must remain neutral — receiving power from gods, but not becoming beholden to them.

COUNSEL OF CAUTION

"Beware the immortals, lass. Mystics who cheat death for centuries don't think like you or I. Their plans are long and slow and subtle. They justify present evil with future good, and hide future evil with present good. They see us as mayflies, and sacrifice us without regret.

"The trouble is, by the time you realize you're a pawn in an immortal's plan, it's probably too late. Yes, I found that out the hard way — I'll tell you that story some other time. At least don't you go looking for them! Sure, and it's a foolish mayfly who seeks a chat with the spiders."

—Dweomer, to Witchcraft

SO, WHO BECOMES ARCHMAGE?

Readers familiar with *Galactic Champions* know that in the year 2020, Witchcraft is the Archmage of Earth. However, that's not necessarily the whole story.

First and foremost, GMs using the *Champions* Universe setting may choose not to follow the "official" take on things described in Hero Games books. If the GM prefers another candidate (particularly a PC), he should make whatever changes he wants to for his own campaign.

Second, the fact that Witchcraft holds the office in 2020 doesn't mean she's the *only* one to hold it between now and then (nor does it establish when she got the job). Given the danger posed to mystic superheroes by villains, dimensional invaders, and the like, it's entirely possible one or more of the other candidates became Archmage before her and was slain by his enemies or had to give up the position.

Beyond these minimal requirements, everything else is conjecture. Skilled astral voyagers search the Upper Planes for the elusive Kryptos. Scholarly mystics seek letters from old Archmages, memoirs by mystics who knew them, and any other text that might give more hints. The reclusive loremaster Tobias Vandaleur, *a.k.a.* the Toad, is particularly active in this global manuscript hunt. Some mystics curry favor with the Toad because they think he already knows the secret, and merely waits until he likes someone enough to divulge it... or someone offers him a large enough bribe.

Leading Candidates

Here are a few people whom other mystics think might become the next Archmage, or who actively seek the position for themselves. Player characters could easily join the list. At present, no clear "front runner" candidate for Archmage has yet emerged.

Some of the names *not* on the list are telling — several of Earth's mightiest mystics seem to be out of the running. For instance, Giacomo Sylvestri cannot become Archmage because he sold his soul to the Dragon, while the Iron Imam will not treat with any realm except Elysium. The few Western mystics who know the power of Dr. Yin Wu believe the reclusive Chinese magus could seize the Archmage's office if he chose — but he has already outlived at least three Archmages. So has the founder of the Vandaleur dynasty. Either these immortal masters don't want the office, or some other commitment forbids them.

ROBERT CALIBURN

The "Magnum Mage" of Vibora Bay is not as obvious a candidate as other heroes such as Witchcraft or Dweomer. This less-than-public hero possesses formidable skill at Hermetic theurgy, but he still needs lengthy rituals to cast most of his spells. Caliburn fights his supernatural battles using magic items he enchants in advance. He says Azrael, the Angel of Death, and the Hindu god Shiva blessed his two guns, however, and if so that gives him a start on divine gifts of power.

THE DEMONOLOGIST

Not all the candidates are heroes. The villainous Demonologist presents himself as a potential Archmage. He points to his prodigious knowledge and undeniable power. Though he chiefly calls on the Netherworld, he has never sold his soul and exploits powers from Babylon and Faerie, albeit not on a divine scale. Through partnership with his Devil's Advocates, he gains unique experience with many schools of sorcery. The Demonologist suggests it's only a matter of time before he wrests power from gods of all four Parterres — and the sooner other mystics help him in this quest, the sooner Earth receives protection from dimensional conquerors. A faction within the Circle of the Scarlet Moon supports this former member. Several lesser evil mystics also pledge their readiness to accept the Demonologist as the next Archmage, chiefly from fear that he really will seize the office.

DWEOMER

Some Trismegistus members suggest the Irish hero Dweomer could become the next Archmage. This latter-day druid's command of natural phenomena has few equals; he holds the respect (and fear) of many intruders from the Land of Legends. His own powers draw on Faerie, where Queen Mab granted him increased power for a battle against the demonic fomorians. Dweomer has not received gifts of power from other gods so far as anyone knows, but he survived a visit to New Jerusalem and a raid into Pandemonium, and that's a start. Dweomer now seeks gifts of power from the other Parterres, and his skill at dealing with spirits may win him through.

RASHINDAR

Not all potential Archmages come from the Western world. The Indian hero Rashindar presents himself as a candidate. The six-armed sorcerer is one of the world's greatest living masters of thaumaturgy, a school of magic that calls on power from dimension lords and other denizens of the Outer and Upper Planes. Rashindar believes he can obtain most of the needed gifts of power from the Hindu pantheon, which has representatives in Elysium, Faerie, and the Netherworld. Beyond that, he suggests the power he already wields, and his experience with the Outer Planes, make him the mystic best qualified to take the Archmage's office. Most Indian mystics (including some of his enemies) support Rashindar's bid because of the glory he would bring to the region. Several Third World mystics think it would be grossly unfair for the Western world to claim the Archmage's office twice in a row.

STINGRAY

The Atlantean supervillainess Stingray (see pages 90-92 of *Champions Universe*) nominates herself for Archmage. Other mystics who've met her concede she knows a great deal of Atlantean and Lemurian occult lore, but her practical magic does not impress anyone with its versatility or power. She is also blatantly insane. "The Toad has a better chance," Talisman once said.

WITCHCRAFT

Many members of the Trismegistus Council believe the hero Witchcraft could become the next Archmage. She shows remarkable power at a comparatively early age. More importantly, she shows remarkable *range* of magic through her witcheries, and she casts spells by will alone. Trismegistus mystics who perceive spiritual forces also cite the remarkable brilliance and complexity of her aura, a feature noted in descriptions of past Archmages. Other mystics suggest the Council's advocacy of Witchcraft owes more to her close ties to that organization. Although Witchcraft shows potential for great power, she has not yet developed that potential in full. Her occasional crises of confidence also seem unsuitable for Earth's supreme mystic authority.



OTHER MYSTICAL CREATURES

Not all the Mystic World's denizens are living humans, or fit neatly in the roles of hero or villain. The Mystic World also includes ghosts, vampires, and other formerly-living persons; werewolves and other shapeshifters; spirits and mythic creatures who dare live on Earth permanently, or at least make regular visits; and occasional oddities such as mummies, stray cars from Babylon, or people reincarnated as talking animals.

See *The HERO System Bestiary* for *HERO System* character sheets for many typical mystic creatures.

GENIUS LOCI

Elementals, demons, and other spirits cannot easily exist on Earth. They belong in the Parterres, not the material world. Nevertheless, some locations — usually the sorts of mystic power sites described later in this chapter — can sustain a spirit so that it doesn't slip back to its home dimension. Spirits who dwell in such locations are called *genius loci*, a Latin phrase that simply means “the spirit of a place.” (Mystics use the term as both singular and plural.) Mystics value *genius loci* as Contacts for their powers, knowledge, and help in learning magic related to the spirit's special field of expertise.

Elementals and other spirits of natural phenomena form the most common sort of *genius loci*. Such a spirit may haunt a patch of woodland, a lake, a mountain, or some other landscape feature. Demonic *genius loci* are more rare, and may be trapped by magic. Urban *genius loci* — elementals of smog and plastic, metal and glass — are increas-

ing in number now that more than half of humanity lives in cities and Babylon gains stronger ties to Earth. Angels and other Elysian spirits seldom become *genius loci*, though the angels called Ophanim specializes in guarding holy locations.

A *genius loci* can exert some degree of control over its home ground. For example, it may be able to cause the vines and plants in its grove to reach out and grab people who threaten it, or change the color and coolness of local water.

GHOSTS

Every serious mystic encounters ghosts. Most spirits of the dead haunt fixed locations, but the few ghosts who travel often become closely involved with local mystics wherever they “visit.” Interaction with the living helps the dead retain their memory and sanity, but few ghosts can manifest at will to ordinary mortals. They prize those living souls who see and hear the spirit world, whether because of inborn talent or occult training.

Large or old urban areas may accumulate enough ghosts to form a community of their own. Every “ghost town” is a unique case, since they form in isolation and seldom communicate with each other.

THERIANTHROPE

Werewolves, weretigers, and other shapeshifters are collectively called *therianthropes*. They tend to remain solitary or gather in small, insular packs. Beyond that, shapeshifters vary widely in their customs and attitudes — before the twentieth century, few *therianthropes* ever met more than a few others of their kind. The Chunhu family of China hopes to change this.

Some people become therianthropes by contagion from another were-creature; other shape-shifters come from family lines of their kind; still others are the victims of curses, or deliberately use magic on themselves. But no matter how a person becomes a shapeshifter, he cannot avoid interaction with the rest of the Mystic World. For one thing, some mystically-savvy mortals hunt therianthropes who prey on humanity. Not all were-creatures are ravening monsters, though. Some therianthropes use their animalistic power to become bodyguards to mystics, or other sorts of mystical mercenaries. A few even become superheroes.

VAMPIRES

The undead do not easily dwell near each other for long: every other vampire is a competitor for their mortal prey. Now and then, however, a senior bloodsucker leads a gang of vampiric offspring. Such master vampires may recruit mortals through promises of immortality, but they often treat their scions as expendable thralls.

Few vampires become sorcerers, but their longevity and innate supernatural powers make them formidable creatures. Mortal mystics are more likely than other folk to recognize a vampire moving among unsuspecting humans. Vampires and evil mystics sometimes form alliances, but this is not common. The harsh necessity to feed off the living turns most vampires quite evil, but beyond that, the undead possess motives as complex and idiosyncratic as the living.

SAMPLE SUPERNATURAL CONTACTS

Lieutenant Mark Gentry, Deceased: This police lieutenant died when his partner accidentally shot him in the line of duty. His partner didn't admit his mistake, and blamed the shooting on the escaped perp. Gentry now provides investigative services for mystics who can perceive him in return for favors to the city's less mobile ghosts, such as passing messages to loved ones and protection against astral predators.

Dr. Ibrahim Khalseran: When the Nazis unearthed this Egyptian priest-magician's tomb, they awoke the mummified priest, who expressed his dislike of graverobbers quite forcefully. He eventually created the identity of Dr. Khalseran and found work in the Egyptian National Museum. Khalseran doesn't look for trouble, but he protects the museum — and the legacy from his era — with a terrifying array of curses. Mystics who need to learn about ancient Egypt's magic, including the mysterious Dr. Ka of Vibora Bay, can find no better teacher than Dr. Khalseran.

Slash: A family curse turned Sam Lupescu into a werewolf when his grandfather died. Sam already had military training; he coped with his new abilities by becoming a professional bodyguard for mystics. Slash works for anyone who pays, good or evil, but does not himself commit crimes.

Charles Torres: The romantic glamour of this young artist's "Night Scenes" and "Night Portraits" attracted a female vampire's notice. First, she hired him to paint her portrait, and then she made him a vampire. She thought his artistic soul would find glory and beauty in nocturnal unlife... and in her. Undeath revolted Charles, however, and he found the strength of will to flee. Now he paints grim, dark visions of night life, tries to obtain blood without killing, and wishes he could find the strength to destroy himself.

The Paper Lady: Most people think the Paper Lady is just a mad old woman who lives in an abandoned building, surrounded by stacks of old newspapers. Actually, she's a genius loci, and the building is a minor mystic site drawing power from Babylon. The Paper Lady's body is made of yellowed, wadded-up newspapers. She can animate and control all paper around her. She also has a flawless memory for everything ever published in her city's newspapers.

GODS

The gods are the most powerful inhabitants of the Mystic World. To mystics, a “god” can be any powerful spirit dwelling in the Parterres. Zeus is a god under this nomenclature; so are the archdevil Mephistopheles, the Emperor of Babylon, and the Buddha of Compassion. These “gods” did not create the world, much less the Multiverse, and have no power beyond Greater Earth. (They also differ from “space gods,” a term for certain cosmically-powerful beings such as the Galaxars or the Corelords; see *Galactic Champions*.)

The gods of Earth possess plenty of power by mortal standards, though. A god’s power waxes and wanes based on the worship he receives, but even the weakest, most forgotten god wields more power than most mortal superbeings. Gods who receive the active worship of hundreds of millions of people, such as the Afro-Caribbean, Indian, or Chinese pantheons, can overpower the mightiest mortals.

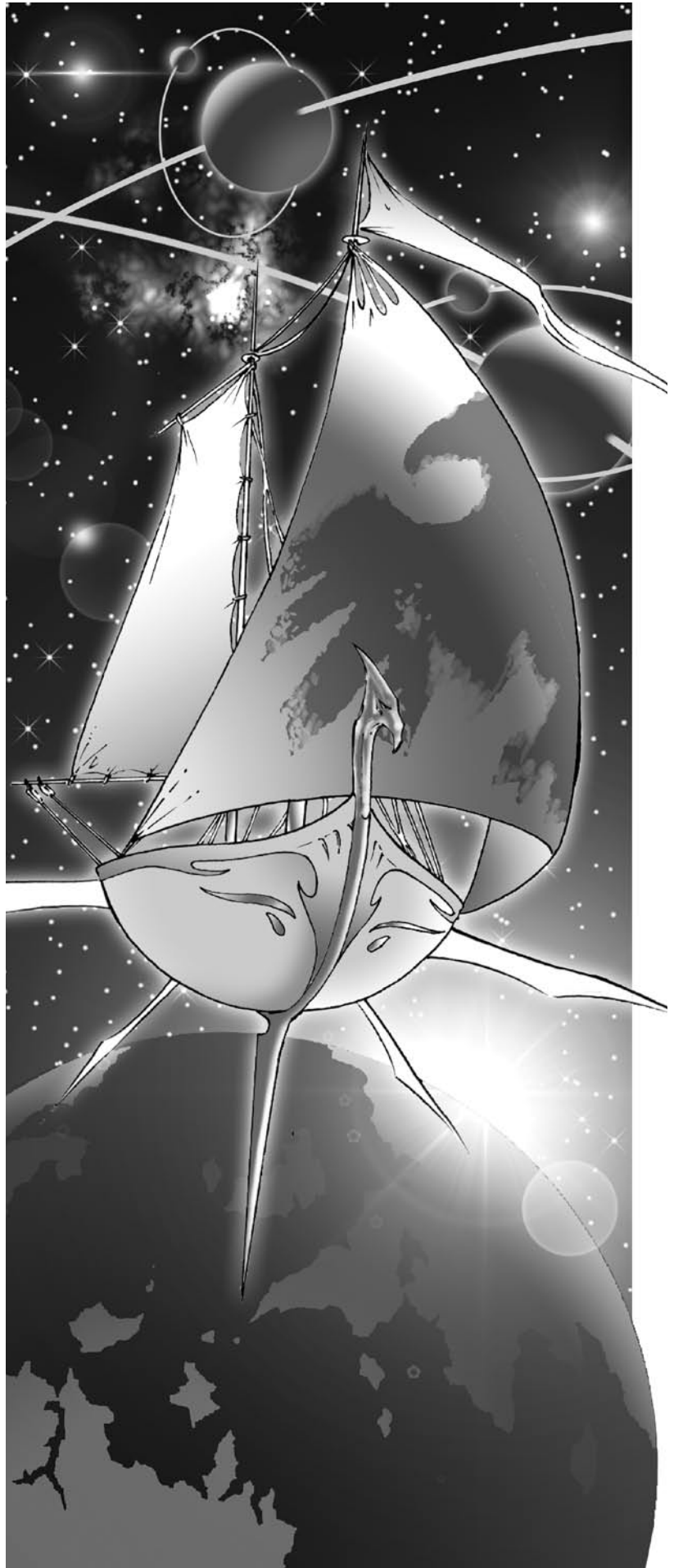
Mystics typically encounter gods only if they travel into the spirit realms. Gods suffer a supernatural Ban against entering the mortal world. Gods can evade the Ban in a few very specific ways, for short times. Overall, though, gods cannot work their will on Earth through raw power.

Earth’s gods suffer a more terrible restriction against creatures from the Outer Planes. Human belief sustains the gods, and so their supernatural power does not directly affect anyone or anything beyond the Inner Planes. The gods cannot protect the Earth from dimensional conquerors such as Skarn or Tyrannon. The Irish supermage Dweomer, for instance, reports that when Skarn invaded Faerie in 2001, he handily defeated the war-gods of six pantheons: Skarn’s magic worked against them, but they could fight him only with raw strength.

The Ban

Long ago, gods and spirits walked the Earth freely. That started to change around 700 B.C. Prophets like Zoroaster and the Buddha taught mortals to worship truth, virtue, and law instead of parochial gods with all-too-human failings. As the new “ethical religions” spread and multiplied, the gods found it harder to manifest on Earth. When a preacher in Judea declared that men need not sacrifice to gods because God would sacrifice himself for Man, the Ban locked shut completely. No god walked the Earth for almost 2,000 years. Gods recruited mortal worshippers through persuasion instead of displays of power. Even the lesser spirits found the mortal world turned deadly, and they kept their visits brief.

The Ban weakened in 1938, with the start of the Superheroic Age, but gods still cannot visit the mortal world with ease. Most gods continue to guide or command their followers through dreams, the inner voices of conscience and temptation, or other subtle means. Gods who want to act more directly have several options.





AVATARS

A god can materialize a body on Earth with a fraction of the god's full divine power. The weaker the avatar, the longer the god can remain on Earth. An avatar of no greater power than a standard superbeing can stay in the mortal world indefinitely. More powerful avatars might vanish if they suffer unconsciousness or damage that would mortally wound a human; many of the "demon lords" encountered by mystic heroes are actually such projections. While his avatar is active on earth, a god's true self remains in a trance — just like a mortal mystic during astral projection.

A god can send more of his power to Earth, and avoid the need for a trance, if he fuses his power to a mortal host. Such a deified mortal receives a weaker version of the god's powers, perhaps along with some or all of the god's personality traits. Some avatars overwhelm their mortal hosts, who think they actually become the god. Other gods simply grant some power and ask the mortal to act as their agent. Mortal avatars usually fall in the same power range as other superbeings.

HALFBREEDS AND DEMIGODS

A more patient god can gain a divinely-powered agent in the person of a half-mortal child. Before the Ban, the Greek gods became notorious for their mortals by-blows, some of whom became gods themselves. Unless a mortal corporeally enters a Parterre, however, gods now have few opportunities to breed with mortals. A male

god's projected avatar can father a child who may develop superpowers, but a male human needs to supply mortal seed as well. The greatest and ghastliest attempt to breed half-divine children happened in 1989, in the "Zodiac Working" of the master wizard Archimago. The evil sorcerer summoned twelve devil princes to rape kidnapped women so their hell-tainted offspring could become vessels for their sires' power. Heroes thwarted the plan before its completion... but there may be several demon-children out there who don't know their dark heritage.

The Ban also applies only to full-powered gods. Since the Ban closed, some gods had children of considerably lesser power. These demigods can live on Earth as long as they want. The golden-skinned, winged hero Chrysaor, for instance, says he is the son of a warrior angel and the goddess Aphrodite; he comes from the Land of Legends to win fame through heroic deeds.

SACRIFICE

A sacrifice of sufficiently great spiritual energy enables a god to enter the mortal world for a few minutes and wield its full power. The death of hundreds of ordinary humans can supply the necessary force to defy the Ban; so can the ritual murder of a superbeing. The ceremonial destruction of a powerful magic item may suffice as well. Of course, powerful magic items are exceedingly rare, and only the most evil gods bid their followers to arrange a mass human sacrifice.

NEXUS POINTS AND GATES

Some locations naturally intersect with a Parterre, and powerful mystics can create such portals between worlds. A god can stand in such a portal and use his full power on nearby areas, because he has not yet left his own realm. When the portal closes, the god remains in his own realm.

DIVINE RELICS

Before the Ban closed, a few gods created magic items to channel their power. In some cases, a god can act in the mortal world as long as he stays near his relic. Relics usually need some extra source of power to activate them, such as the death of mortals or lesser spirits, or being struck by powerful magical attacks. Experienced sorcerers tell their apprentices to cast their spells cautiously around a god's relic, or they may receive a very powerful visitor.

MASSIVE MAGIC

Other sorts of very powerful magic may grant a god free access to a limited territory. For instance, Tezcatlipoca once transformed a Mexican village to its appearance in pre-Columbian times. The people believed they lived under Aztec rule, and worshipped Tezcatlipoca as he dwelled among them. When a group of Mexican heroes convinced the people of the truth, Tezcatlipoca's spell broke and he vanished. Few creatures except a god can work magic on such a large scale, though.

NOTABLY ACTIVE GODS

Hundreds of gods and demigods dwell in the four Imaginal Planes. Here are a few who are unusually active on Earth in one way or another. See also Tezcatlipoca in *Arcane Adversaries*.

St. Albertus Magnus: In life, St. Albert of Ratisbon was a pioneering chemist as well as an alchemist, mage, and a leading theologian of the Roman Catholic Church. St. Albert now serves as the patron of Christian sorcerers, in addition to his recognized role as patron saint of scientists and scholars. As a saint, Albert does not try to evade the Ban, but devout mystics who ask God for his help often receive advice in dreams. His greatest regret is that the Ban prevents him from joining in mortal scientific research.

Anubis: The Egyptian god of mummification and passage between worlds is not happy. His evil uncle Set — or someone posing as Set — gave a mortal a perverted imitation of Anubis' powers. The Jackal at Death's Gate seeks access to Earth so he can "clear his name" — but he also wants to punish the modern world for despoiling the tombs dedicated to him.

Dionysus: The Greco-Roman god of intoxication and sacred frenzy sometimes projects an avatar of himself to Earth. As "Dion Bach," he's a rock megastar. People die from drug overdoses and dance-induced exhaustion at Dion Bach's concerts, but the god of wine receives worship every time someone listens to his CDs.

Hecate: The Greek goddess of witchcraft, crossroads, and portals has long patronized the Circle of the Scarlet Moon from afar. She also now finds worshippers among lycanthropes, neo-pagans in search of the roots of their faith, and seekers of vengeance. She also visits Witchcraft and other mystic heroes now and then to ask how far they'll go to win — she wants to hedge her bets.

Mara: The Buddhist supreme power of evil acts throughout south and east Asia. Mara has no physical power, but he can whip passions into dangerous monomanias. He tries to tempt new superbeings into mad obsessions so they become supervillains, and goads heroes toward self-destruction.

Marduk: The Mesopotamian god of kingship and cities wants every city to have a resident superhero. From his temple in the Mesopotamian district of the dimension of Babylon, Marduk mentally nudges new heroes to go where they're needed, and draws heroes into teams when one hero isn't enough — new pantheons for the mortal world. In the long term, Marduk wants a world of city-states and empires ruled by superheroes, the way divine kings like Gilgamesh ruled the city-states of Sumeria.

Mephistopheles: The most active archdevil in the Descending Hierarchy walks up and down the world seeking mortals who offer their souls for power, revenge, or other goals. "Old Harry" cannot affect anyone who does not grant him permission to do so — but his powers of illusion are almost as dangerous as his truly diabolical sense for the hopes, fears, and desires of humanity. Mephistopheles can grant people superpowers; see Hell Rider in *Arcane Adversaries* for one of Mephisto's pacters.

Ogun: Most people think the West African superhero Ogun wears a suit of powered armor and controls metal using magnetism. Hardly anyone realizes that the hero received his powers from the real Ogun, the Yoruba god of blacksmiths. Ogun granted his powers to a West African engineer beaten near death for trying to expose corruption in a construction project. Not only does Ogun's avatar fight supervillains and brigands, he digs wells, builds roads, and does other construction projects to improve the lives of ordinary people.

BEYOND EARTH

Beyond the realms of Greater Earth, the Multiverse holds a plethora of powerful entities: dimension lords, the Kings of Edom, the conceptual entities of Briah, and more. They, too, interact with the Mystic World.

Some mystics invoke dimension lords in their magic. Many dimension lords long ago invented powerful spells and taught them to disciples on other planes. But calling on a dimension lord's power does carry a few risks. Some dimension lords may demand a service as repayment for years of using their signature spell, or may block its use from mystics who displease them. No prudent mystic invokes the Kings of Edom, because their magic invariably leads users to horror, madness, enslavement, or death — but some mystics are not prudent.

Mystics rarely encounter the conceptual Avatars in their own persons, because few mystics achieve sufficient will and enlightenment to visit the Brialic realms. On occasion, some Avatars send visions of themselves to great mystics, as a way to impart wisdom or warn of truly cosmic dangers. Avatars can also possess gods, the same way demons possess mortals, as a way to manifest in other realms. A god possessed by an Avatar wields even greater power than usual, and with no restrictions. For instance, the Native American totem-god Coyote is normally a god of relatively modest power, dealing mainly with illusion and transformation. Coyote, however, is also one culture's name for the cosmic Trickster. When the Trickster puts on the mask of Coyote, the god can transform the world. Fortunately for mankind, the Avatars seldom exercise this cosmic power... but they are the gods to whom gods pray.

OTHER DIMENSION LORDS

In addition to Skarn, Tyrannon, and Bromion (see Chapter Four and *Arcane Adversaries*), here are brief descriptions of a few more dimension lords who may help or hinder Earth's mystics. In some cases, GMs can easily modify villains from *Conqueror*, *Killers*, and *Crooks* as “quick and dirty” character sheets for dimension lords.

Balthus: This relatively minor dimension lord feeds on fear. It tries to lure dimensional travelers into its small Netzach-realm, and then terrorize them for sustenance. Balthus specializes in magic of darkness, entrapment, and fear, typically using grotesque special effects to maximize the horror felt by its victims. Anyone who bungles an attempt at interdimensional travel in the Outer Planes might find himself in Balthus's realm. The Baleful Bonds Of Balthus (page 73) are often used by sorcerers.

[Use Eclipse for Balthus, but remove the villain's Focus, or replace it with some other Limitation. Also, replace Eclipse's Energy Blast and Ranged Killing Attack with the Baleful Bonds and a spell to evoke the target's fears.]

Cassai: This minor dimension lord covets greater magical energy and tries to steal it from other dimensions. He is paranoid and suspects all visitors to his realm of trying to rob his stores of mystical power. (Admittedly, his fear is often justified.) Cassai is also one of the Multiverse's best crafters of magic items. Mystics who offer Cassai large amounts of mystical energy can hire him to design and build powerful enchanted objects.

[Thunderbolt I makes an adequate Cassai. Convert his Electricity Attacks Multipower to a suite of Adjustment attacks against STUN and magic effects, plus a Transform for creating magic items. Recast the electrical Elemental Control to spellcasting effects and add suitable Skills.]

Fuzon: According to legend, the Prince of Fire is a child of Urizen who rebelled against his sire and became a Lord of Nature instead. Fuzon rules a realm called the Burning Sky; the Fuzonic Flames spell (see page 74) calls on the power of this realm. The Prince of Fire despises the servants of Order and sometimes attempts large feats of fiery destruction to force people into facing the “natural” exigencies of life and death.

[Use Firewing, but add a 40-point Magic Pool for dimensional travel, special defenses, and other minor effects. Also add a Multipower slot to Summon fire-creatures from the Burning Sky.]

Koriol: This immortal Archmage lived on the world of Loezen (see page 41) some millennia ago. He left his homeworld to explore the Multiverse, and now rules a small dimension. Koriol transformed the folk of his dimension into living crystal to save them from their increasingly hostile realm. In return, they made him king. Koriol isn't evil, but he's extremely protective of his adopted people and suspicious of mystic intruders: careless sorcery can rouse the destructive forces that once threatened the realm. Koriol also imposes dangerous tests on anyone who comes seeking his help.

[Use Binder for Koriol, but replace his Glue Gun with a rod that casts the various Crimson Crystal spells, and remove the Focus Limitations from all his defenses. Also, add a 94-point Magic Pool with the Cosmic (+2) Advantage, and suitable Skills.]

Thiralatha: The “Lady of the Dreamful Caves” is well known for teaching mystic servants of Artifice. In her realm, everything constantly changes its form and substance, and whatever people imagine becomes real, to the degree allowed by their will. Thiralatha herself possesses vast power to Transform matter, energy, and magic. She does not discriminate between good and evil mystics, but treats all courteous visitors kindly.

[Start with Gravitator, but replace her Gravity Powers Multipower with Transforms, transmutation effects such as an Entangle (changing the air into bonds), and Adjustment attacks against magic. Recast her Gravitic Mastery Elemental Control and Gravitic Defense Power with sorcerous or transmutative special effects, and replace her Skill Levels with a small Magic Pool with the Cosmic (+2) Advantage for miscellaneous divine powers. As a goddess, she also has total Life Support, including immortality.]

MYSTIC PLACES



Mystic sites vary widely in form and power; this discussion can describe only the more common types of mystic sites, and how sorcerers use them. See *Champions Universe* for more examples of Earth's most magically potent locations, and *Vibora Bay* for a detailed look at one of them.

MAGICAL POWER SITES

Some locations become important to mystics because their arcane power assists spellcasters in some way. The weakest mystic sites do not carry intrinsic power for sorcerers to tap — they merely satisfy a precondition for certain feats of ritual magic. For example, mages can cast some spells only on holy ground, a gravesite, or at a natural spring. Other sites actually enhance a mystic's spells, or provide raw magical energy anyone can tap through rituals, special tools, and sufficient occult knowledge. Some locations even give access to other planes, for the wise who know how to open such portals. Although some power sites appear naturally, most exist because mystics created them.

POWER SITE ORIGINS

Not all mystic power sites exist for an obvious reason: Some places carry magic and no one knows why. Many mystics suspect these “enigmatic” sites mark unrecorded magic spills, or sites constructed by lost civilizations.

These examples merely describe the more familiar sorts of power sites. GMs may define other sorts, too.

Architecture: The geometry and materials of a building may concentrate mystical forces. An entire field of mystical study, called sacred geometry, deals with using architecture to shape supernatural power. Most ancient monuments incorporate sacred geometry; so do most mystical sanctums. Edomite cultists employ a weirdly twisted, non-Euclidean geometry in some of their magic.

Astronomy: Structures aligned to the cardinal directions and significant astronomical phenomena attract supernatural power. Mystics call these “calendar sites” because many cultures used special monuments to tell the seasons. For example, on the spring equinox the sun rises over a certain megalith at Stonehenge, perhaps the world's most famous calendar site. Calendar sites often incorporate sacred geometry as well.

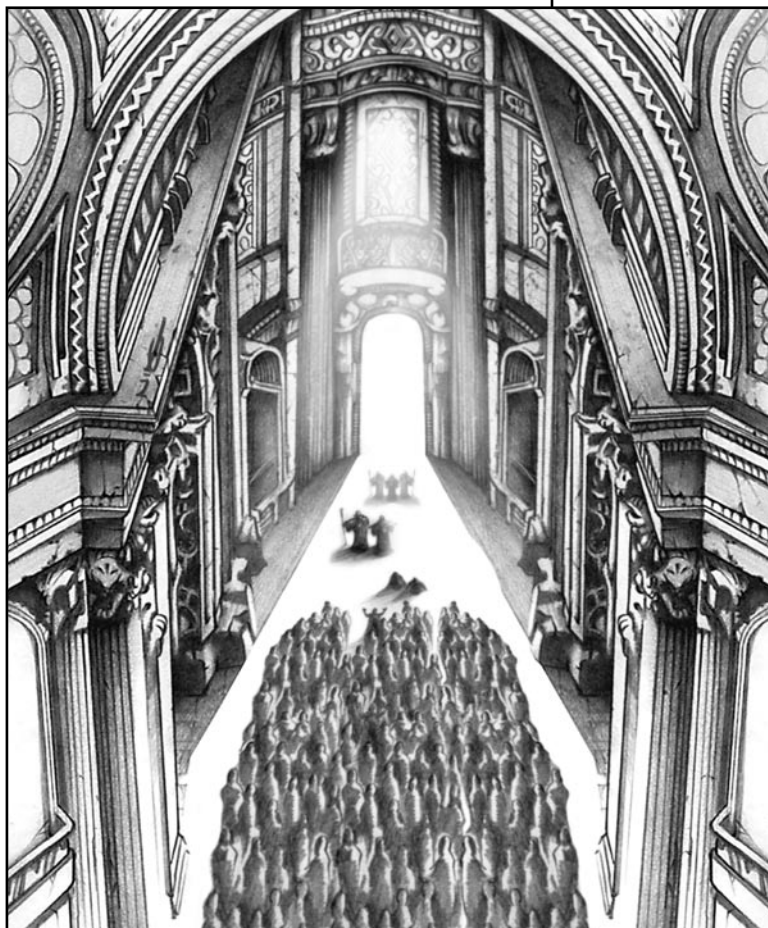
Death: Mass death may charge a location with dark power suitable for necromancy or demonology,

particularly if the deaths are especially sadistic. The Trismegistus Council and a number of heroic super-mages and holy orders work to exorcise death sites, but locations such as Auschwitz and the killing fields of Cambodia are so deeply corrupted they defy cleansing. The Circle of the Scarlet Moon favors death sites as the easiest sort of mystic power site to create — it just takes murder and cruelty, repeated long enough.

Geology: Natural power sites most often occur at unusual geological formations, such as geysers, balancing rocks, limestone caves, and meteor craters.

Geography: Natural alignments of mountains, valleys, rivers, tors, and other landscape features may create zones with mystic potential. Volcanoes are often slightly magical.

Magic Spills: Large, uncontrolled discharges of magic may taint a region with supernatural power. Magical battles can leave such “magic spills”; so may the death of a powerful supernatural creature, such as a demon prince or a dragon, or shedding the blood of a god.



Trees: Very old trees may draw power from Yggdrasil. Mystics sometimes transplant trees from Faerie or Elysium to draw power from those realms. Trees also tend to absorb and preserve magic spills.

Natural Sites

Cheiron's Oak: Country folk around Mount Pelion, in Greece, say that the mythic centaur Cheiron planted a certain immensely large and aged oak. The legend is in fact true. Cheiron's Oak grew from an acorn brought from Faerie, and it augments any magic related to fertility or vegetation.

Cheiron's Oak: *Aid Magic 3d6, any fertility or vegetation-related Magic spell one at a time (+¼), Trigger (any such spell use; +¼) (45 Active Points); Independent (-2). Total cost: 15 points.*

Mount Fuji and Mount Rainier: Mount Fuji is one of Japan's most famous sights. Mount Rainier, another snow-capped volcano, similarly dominates the horizon of western Washington state. Japanese immigrants arranged a marriage between the ruggedly masculine Rainier and the goddess of Mount Fuji — and linked two powerful mystic sites across the Pacific. The Circle of the Scarlet Moon and the Trismegistus Council both suspect a plan by Shamballah.

Magic Enhancement: *Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 22 base + 11 control cost; Only To Augment Existing Spells (-1), Independent (-2), Requires A Magic Skill Roll (-½), Variable Limitations (requires -2 worth of Limitations suitable for a mystic ritual; -1). Total cost: 24 points.*

Ley Line Travel: *Teleportation 10", MegaScale (1" = 1,000 km; +1) (40 Active Points); Only Between Fixed Locations (-1), Independent (-2), Requires A Magic Skill Roll (-½) (total cost: 9 points) **plus** two Fixed Locations (Mt. Fuji, Mt. Rainier). Total cost: 11 points.*

Yellowstone Park: America's first national park occupies the maw of an immense volcano called a caldera. The park's geysers and hot springs draw mystic energy from deep underground. None of Yellowstone's mystic sites are very powerful, but the park contains more than a dozen of them. Sometimes the air veritably hums with arcane power — the eerily musical "Yellowstone Lake Whispers," which scientists explain as steam whistling from geysers, groans from bending rock strata, or wind blowing over the valley like the mouth of a giant soda bottle. The early hero MeteorMan, of course, found his power-granting stone in Yellowstone Park.

Death Sites

Manaos: Rubber tycoons built this city deep in the Amazon basin. African and Native American slaves did the work and died in droves. One particular rubber tycoon lit his garden parties by dipping Indians in rubber latex, tying them to stakes, and burning them alive as torches. That garden is now the vilest mystic site in Brazil.

The House of Xander O'Riordan: One of the most horrific serial killers of modern times, Xander O'Riordan kidnapped nearly fifty young women between 1995 and 2002 and ritually butchered them at his home in the wilds of Pennsylvania, hiding or burying the remains of the corpses at various places around his property. No one knows why he did this, since he was killed resisting arrest. Even after the authorities located and removed all the bodies, the death-energy of the place remains strong.

Calendar Sites

Literally hundreds of these sites dot the world, some of them older than recorded history. Mystic legend says a lost civilization — perhaps Atlantis, perhaps someone else — built the first calendar sites. Some modern mystics build calendar sites of their own, but none can equal the power of mighty monuments like Stonehenge or the Great Pyramid of Giza.

Chaco Canyon: The lost Anasazi culture built the world's most powerful collection of calendar sites in the American Southwest, in Chaco Canyon.



These “cities” and “fortresses” were not built so people could actually live in them. They existed only to concentrate cosmic energy through their alignments to the sun, moon, and each other. The Anasazi priests and rulers used the celestial power to control the weather and fertilize the land, and their civilization flourished for centuries. When the priest-magicians strove to master time and death and turn themselves into gods, the rebellious population wrecked the mighty calendar-cities as best they could, ending Anasazi civilization. The ruins remain powerful but erratic. Mystics who tap the power of Chaco Canyon risk their lives by doing so; surviving observers report involuntary journeys through time, loved ones erased from history, aging nigh unto death (or infancy), and even stranger or more horrible effects. At present, the main factions in the Mystic World leave Chaco Canyon well alone.

Chaco Canyon Sites: *Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 40 base + 20 control cost; Only To Augment Existing Spells (-1), Independent (-2), Requires A Magic Skill Roll (-½), Side Effects (if the Magic Roll fails, the GM inflicts the most sadistic effect he can imagine on the magician and anyone nearby, Active Point value unlimited; -1¼), Variable Limitations (requires -2 worth of Limitations suitable for a mystic ritual; -1). Total cost: 43 points.*



Forest Swastika: During the 1930s, a Nazi mystic in the RSvKg planted trees in a swastika shape in the middle of an East German forest. This giant swastika is only visible from the air in the fall, since the leaves turn a different color than the surrounding trees. The swastika was originally a solar symbol, and the forest swastika's alignment to the cardinal points makes it a weak calendar site. The Circle of the Scarlet Moon now controls this place.

History Of A Power Site: The Roche Building

Special care and repeated use can increase the power of a mystic site. The Roche Building, an office tower the GM can locate in any city he wants, illustrates the origin and growth of a site devoted to dark magic.

On October 3, 1924, an ambitious young mobster named Joey Sisto murdered his boss, the capo Leo Corone. He did this at a restaurant called Marco's, in the presence of Corone's mother, wife, and daughter. A low-ranking member of the Scarlet Moon noticed the maiden-mother-crone element in the murder. This suggested the ritual killing of a vegetation king as the year turned from summer to winter. The Circle member also noted that “Leo” means “lion,” and the lion is one of the traditional

symbols for St. Mark the Apostle. He reported a possible power site in the making.

Six months later, the local coven arranged for Leo's younger brother Berto to murder Joey Sisto in the same restaurant, completing the cycle of king-killing. Additional props at the scene reinforced the connections to lions, astrological signs (Scorpio for Leo's murder, Aries for Joey's) and the Triple Goddess. The restaurant became a weak mystical site.

In 1936, a Circle member with Nazi sympathies turned the restaurant's basement into a Satanic chapel. Here he summoned demons (well, imps) to assist his Bundist allies. The mystery-man Black Mask disrupted one ceremony and shot their demon. The restaurant caught fire in the brawl and burned to the ground, but the Bundists' sacrifices and spilled demon blood strengthened the site's power.

After World War Two, a block of shops and apartments covered the location and the power site lay fallow for decades. The block retained an uncanny aura,

though. Its value stayed low as business after business failed or moved away. Six murders took place over the years, three of them directly above the onetime Satanic temple. The building gained a justified reputation for ghosts.

In 1968, the wizard Archimago built a secret sanctum in the now dilapidated building and sacrificed the ghosts in a ritual to contact the Kings of Edom. Pursuit by the Trismegistus Council persuaded Archimago to mothball his sanctum, but not destroy it. The Trismegistans found Archimago's sanctum, but the site's dark energies were now too powerful to exorcise completely.

By 1980, the whole neighborhood was a decrepit, violent slum. DEMON took over the buildings and expanded Archimago's sanctum into a Demonhame. Superheroes thwarted DEMON's plot to destroy the city with a demonic invasion, and the brawl left the entire building a pile of rubble.

Ten years later, the city razed the neighborhood to make way for new construction. The Roche Building's architect was Jeff Sisto... Joey's grandson. Jeff Sisto redesigned the skyscraper three times in the middle of construction before he fell to his death. The Circle arranged Sisto's hiring, knowing the malevolent site would affect his mind and use him to reconstruct itself. The Circle also arranged Sisto's fatal "accident" to complete the working.

The geometry of the Roche Building's walls, girders, and wiring channels the site's evil power up the core of the building, to the top floor. The local Scarlet Moon coven claims the top floor and central basement area as its demesnes; various businesses occupy the rest of the building. Sensitive people instinctively dislike the Roche Building but can't give any reason except, "It's ugly," or "It has a bad vibe."

The Circle's best wards can't entirely hide the Roche Building's fell power. Several powerful groups in the Mystic World keep their eye on it, most notably DEMON and the Trismegistus Council. The blighted tower's magic is easily detected from nearby, and enough of its history is public record that a learned mystic such as Dark Seraph could guess at its importance.

The Roche Building offers the following benefits to mystics. Discovering each aspect of its power requires a separate Analyze Magic Roll.

Unholy: The entire building counts as unholy ground.

Dark Fountain: *Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 22 base + 11 control cost; Cosmic (+2); Only To Augment Existing Spells (-1), Only For Witchcraft Or Satanic Magic (-½), Side Effect (Major Transform 1d6, BOECV [mystic turns evil if he isn't already]; -½). Total cost: 31 points.*

Dark Magic Is Easy: *+3 to Magic Skill Rolls (15 Active Points); Only For Witchcraft Or Satanic Magic (-½). Total cost: 10 points.*

LEY LINES

Mystic power sites become especially valuable if they fall along a line or form a regular geometrical shape. The intersection of two lines of power sites can become a power site of its own. Mystics call these alignments *ley lines*.

Societies such as the Scarlet Moon and the Trismegistus Council devote considerable effort to securing control of power sites. Mystics can use a ley line to combine their power, and the power of the sites themselves. Arcane geographers map ley lines around the world: some lines stretch only a few miles, while others cross continents. The powerful St. Michael Line, for instance, reaches from Skellig Michael in Ireland, through Mont St-Michel in Brittany, all the way to Mt. Carmel in Palestine. The Circle and Council have fought full-scale mystic wars over the St. Michael Line; the Trismegistans hold it at present. During World War II, the RSvKg occupied dozens of mystic sites and linked them into a ley line net for the dreadful Walpurgisnacht Working that initiated the Superheroic Age.

A mystical character might build his own sanctum on a mystic power site to claim its benefits... but enemy mystics may try to seize the site from him, of course. Characters may also receive offers (or threats) from mystics who want to link their site into a ley line. On the other hand, they may strike their own bargains when they need to muster extra power against a foe such as Tyrannon... inconvenient, when the only ley line they could tap belongs to the Scarlet Moon...

NEXUS POINTS

Mystics particularly value locations where Earth, or at least its astral shadow, intersects with the Parterres. Most of these "nexus points" lead to Faerie; some of them even reach into the material world at certain times, enabling mortals to enter Faerie without using magic. They also grant Faerie creatures access to Earth. Nexus points to the Netherworld are fortunately rare, and generally appear only where great evil has been done for a long time. Portals to Babylon occasionally open in cities, but these seldom remain stable. Nexus points to Elysium occur least frequently of all.

The Taj Mahal: When Shah Jahan built this monument to his dead wife, he created a vision of Heaven on Earth. On the Astral Plane, the Taj Mahal is a nexus point to Jannat, the Muslim district of Elysium. Few locations equal the holiness of this monument to love. The very dust swept from the Taj Mahal's floor burns demons. (In game terms, the dust acts like holy water or a holy symbol with regard to the Susceptibilities of demons or the undead.)

Fairy Stones and Wells: The British Isles hold dozens of standing stones and wells that local legend paints as haunts of fairies. Many of these legends are true: on certain nights, nexus points open at the stone or well. Brave (or careless) mor-

tals may wander into the Land of Legends, or faerie-folk may visit Earth. Ireland alone holds more than a dozen of these nexus points. Fairy stones and wells also assist any magic that draws on nature-spirits or pagan gods, making them greatly valued by the Circle of the Scarlet Moon.

Alexander's Gate: According to legend, Alexander the Great defeated the savage tribes of Gog and Magog. He drove them behind an impassable mountain range in Central Asia, and built a massive gate across the one pass through the mountains. Someday, the legend says, a fox will dig its way under the gates and release the savage hordes to overrun the world.

Alexander's Gate isn't quite what the legend says. This great barrier blocks a portal to Loezen, opened by a wizard who sought an army from that world. The savage hordes settled down long ago and became decadent esthetes, but a re-opened Gate to Loezen might still endanger the Earth.

WEIRDNESS MAGNETS AND DESTINED LANDS

Sometimes a wide region — a city or part of a county — possesses a subtle mystic aura that attracts other magic. Mystics move there; spirits visit from other realms; cults appear and all manner of strange events take place. The city of Vibora Bay (see the eponymous book, or *Champions Universe*) is perhaps the largest such “weirdness magnet” in the United States, but hardly the only one.

Cities, counties, and whole nations may possess special importance in the Mystic World in other ways, too. For instance, London became a center of mystical events during the nineteenth century, just as it ruled the British Empire and the financial world. Mystics who meddle in worldly affairs like to go where they can meddle most effectively.

Regions may acquire darker destinies. Some parts of the world seem cursed to draw out the worst of human nature through centuries of war and chaos. For instance, some mystics think there's something deeply wrong with the former Yugoslavia. Nowhere else in Europe do people seem to nurse such fanatical and murderous grudges over events from centuries ago.

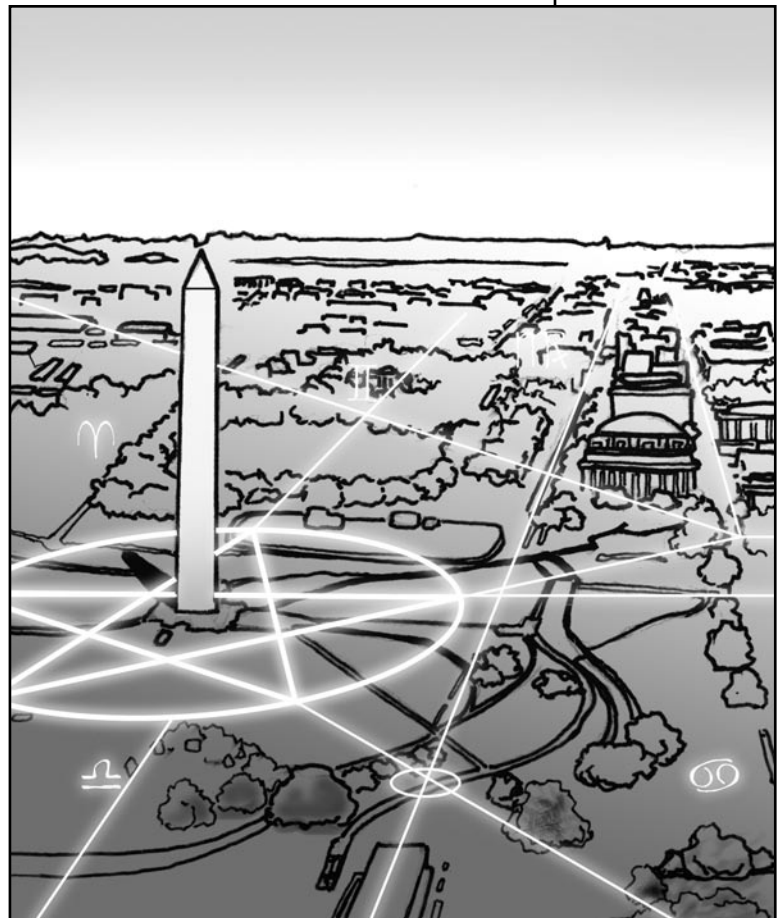
The mystical significance of a city or nation eventually wanes. The British Isles still hold many mystics and power sites, but the magic slowly fades. The United States, on the other hand, dominates the Mystic World almost as much as it dominates military, political, and economic affairs. The vampire-oracle Nyssa Tarchaniotes recently told a client that American mystic hegemony would likewise fade in a century or two, and then... “Watch Botswana,” she said.

Washington, D. C. And The American Occult Republic

The nascent Trismegistus Council and Circle of the Scarlet Moon each saw that the fledgling United States of America carried the potential for great mystical and temporal power. Both organizations set out to shape the new nation into their vision of an ideal state to dominate the world. The Trismegistans want to build a republic of the wise, where power defers to law and prosperity comes to all. The Scarlet Moon seeks a tyrannical Occult Empire, ruled by itself through magic and conspiracy, and ruling the rest of the world through armed terror and economic exploitation. The Circle always thinks it's about to win, but never quite succeeds.

The nation's capital became one of the chief battlegrounds. Not only do both conspiracies seek to influence government officials, they try to shape destiny itself by creating mystic power sites in alignment with the streets, utilities, and public buildings. As usual with magic of time and destiny, this involves calendar sites — from the star map of the Einstein Monument to the cut-glass zodiacs that surround light fixtures in the Federal Reserve Building. Each new site alters the city's ley lines of power, focusing them to the advantage of one side or the other.

America's prophesied mystical hegemony takes an unexpected form. In most parts of the world, the local mythology ordains (or was ordained by) a



limited range of spirits and supernatural creatures. Djinn visit the deserts of the Middle East and Central Asia — not Australia. Satyrs stalk the forests of Greece — not Japan. Rakshasas stay in India; were-leopards stick to Africa. But any and all of them can appear in the USA (or nearby parts of Canada and Mexico), and some of them take up permanent residence. The Occult Republic attracted mortals from every culture in the world, and their spirits, gods, demons, and monsters came with them.

The Valley Of The Nagas

Most of the time, the nagas (see page 149) dwell in a valley hidden in the mountains of Central Asia. The most obscure lore of the nagas calls this valley Avalon. It inspired the legend of an otherworldly island for dead heroes. “Avalon” means “Apple-Land,” for wild apple-forests cover these mountains. The nagas’ valley also holds hundreds of monuments to great mystics and heroes, all the way back to the Turakian Age and beyond. Each memorial holds an account of that hero’s life. When ancient evils rise again, the nagas consult the records of the heroes who defeated them — or the ones who failed, to learn what won’t work. A few times in a millennium, human champions are privileged to visit the First Avalon as well.

Do some of these structures hold more than memories? Do the souls, or even the bodies, of long-forgotten heroes sleep amid the ancient apple-trees, until the nagas shall rouse them for a final battle? Perhaps. Only the nagas know.

One thing is for sure: the Dragon’s servants seek this valley. They have sought it for tens of thousands of years. Once, they sent waves of fierce nomads through the apple-mountains, seeking knowledge of the nagas’ lair. Now they pore through satellite photos. The nagas hide their valley well, however, and the Dragon is denied.

But for how long? The nagas know nothing lasts forever. The rise of Takofanes, fresh gambits by the Dragon, the powers of magic unexpectedly surging to create a new generation of heroes and demigods — these herald a great change in the world. This could be the start of a new age, when the nature of reality itself shall change. Perhaps a Dark Renaissance of sorcery is truly at hand, when the Ban falls and everyone shall dwell in a Mystic World. Or perhaps the Superheroic Age is just the last gasp of magic before the end, and the forces of science and the Machine shall reign unchallenged... at least until the next turning of an age.

Only time will tell.

chapter three:



CHAMPIONS UNIVERSE GRIMOIRE THE BOOK OF WISDOM

HEROIC AND SUPERHEROIC MAGIC



A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE...

“Mystical power is not impersonal or ethically neutral. A gun does not care who pulls the trigger. The gods and spirits who dominate the supernatural world, however, care a great deal who uses their power. Those who attempt sorcery without proper training and discipline become unwitting puppets — controlled by forces with their own passions and goals, that do not care about human life, happiness, or freedom.

“I would sooner hand out loaded pistols on a playground than publish the true secrets of magic. The results would be less bloody.”

—Alajos Veszprem,
Trismegistus Council member

This chapter describes the sort of magic used by mystical superheroes and villains in the Champions Universe (and which you can use in other settings if you like). It includes many examples of super-spells mystics can cast, and also provides several magic items, ranging from magic weapons to cosmic artifacts of high wizardry. Of course, the spells and items described here are just a few of the ones developed by mystics during recorded history (and sometimes before), so you can easily make up more if you like.

SUPERHEROIC AND HEROIC MYSTICS

Heroic-level and Superheroic-level mystics differ in more than the Active Points of their spells. Other *HERO System* products describe Heroic-level magic in depth. (See especially *The Ultimate Mystic*, *Fantasy Hero*, and *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire*.) In brief, however, Heroic-level spells tend to carry lots of Limitations, such as Charges, Concentration, Extra Time, Focus, Gestures, Incantations, or a Required Skill Roll. Different styles of magic (called “arcana”) may favor particular Advantages and Limitations. For example, an alchemist’s magic always carries the *Focus* Limitation, in the form of various potions (and similar items).

Super-mages, on the other hand, apply few, if any, Limitations to their spells. In terms of game mechanics, at least, very little separates a super-shaman from a super-kabbalist — or a mutant, for that matter. The differences between mystic traditions become mere details of special effects or visual style. For instance, perhaps an image of the Thunderbird flashes around the shaman when he casts a lightning bolt, while the sigil of an angel briefly glows before the kabbalist. Mechanically, though, their lightning bolts differ not a whit from that of any other superhero. Similarly, even though they may gesture and incant when they cast spells, that’s just done for effect — it’s not necessary, so it entails no Limitation.

The distinction between Heroic-level and Superheroic-level magic is not absolute. Novice super-mages, in particular, may apply significant Limitations to their spells. But even in such cases, magic remains as quick and easy to use as any other superpower. A super-mage defines his Focus as a wand, while a Heroic-level mystic might need a wand, a magic circle, and a brazier of incense.

To create Superheroic-level versions of spells described in other *HERO System* products, just strip away Limitations and adjust the Active Points

to the level of the campaign. You can also place spells in Power Frameworks — super-sorcerers routinely know lots of different spells. Multipowers with many slots and Variable Power Pools are particularly common for such characters.

MAGIC STYLES

In the Champions Universe, mystics practice several forms of magic besides Thaumaturgy (see below). These many forms of magic group into a few broad categories, though:

Theurgy emphasizes complex occult theories and rituals. Theurgists often invoke gods, but as symbols of power instead of objects of real worship. Most civilizations develop their own style of theurgy. European ceremonial magic, for instance, is called Hermetic Theurgy. It draws upon Hebrew kabbalism and demonology, astrology, and the Hermetic and Neoplatonist magic of late antiquity. Hermetic mystics often work their magic using talismans consecrated in occult rituals. The Taoist Theurgy of China uses the I Ching and the Five Elements as its mystical theory. Tantric Theurgy, from India, uses meditation, repetition of mantras, and other ascetic practices to confer magic powers on a mystic. Many other forms of theurgy exist.

Alchemy exploits the magical properties of minerals, plants, animals, and other substances. The laboratory processes of alchemy serve as mystic rites to concentrate and direct the inherent magic of the ingredients, and store them so they can be used later. Alchemical products are often called “potions,” but alchemists also package their magic as powders, pills, crystal, and other forms. Europe, India, and China all have ancient traditions of alchemy.

Witchcraft blends together a little of everything. “Witches” craft talismans like theurgists, but invoke gods and spirits in a more overtly religious fashion, and draw upon folk traditions more than the abstract symbolism of theurgy. They also use herbs, potions, and other mystical substances, such that their art overlaps with alchemy.

Most schools of magic fall into one of these categories. For instance, a necromancer like Dr. Teneber (see *Arcane Adversaries*) practices a form of witchcraft, while the Demonologist (also found in *Arcane Adversaries*) uses Hermetic theurgy to extort power from devils.

See *The Ultimate Mystic* for a more in-depth discussion of the various styles of magic.

THAUMATURGY



Mystics in the Champions Universe refer to the stripped-down, flashy, combat-oriented style of magic used by super-mages as *thaumaturgy*. To cast a spell, a super-mage just waves his hands. He might pronounce the name of the spell, such as, “I call on the Scintillant Suns of Saravane!” or “Let the Baleful Bonds of Balthus ensnare you!” Balls and beams of light appear from the mystic’s hands to strike at his foes, deflect attacks, and do whatever else he wants. The alliterative names often refer to powerful mystics or dimension lords who invented the spells.

Hog-tying and gagging a super-mage may prevent him from casting spells, but nothing less will do. Despite appearances, super-mages do not actually use Gestures and Incantations: a super-mage can fire off spells while being slammed with attacks that would ruin any Gestures, and he doesn’t have to call out the spell’s name. Restrained, at $-\frac{1}{4}$, may be appropriate to represent how an enemy could prevent a captured super-mage from casting spells, but even it’s not worth taking in most cases. The greatest masters, including dimension lords, perform magic with no Limitations at all.

Thaumaturgical spells tend to come in many variations. A super-mage might cast a mystic bolt to strike one target, or an area; one time, the spell might blast apart brick walls, yet leave not a mark on another occasion. Shared special effects, or a common origin, link other spells. Therefore, many spells are represented as Multipowers instead of single Powers.

A character doesn’t need to buy every variation of a spell, or place every spell within its own Multipower. A Multipower or Variable Power Pool with many seemingly “unrelated” spells is perfectly appropriate. For example, a mystic might buy a Multipower with two slots of *Koriol’s Crimson Crystals*, three *Sorcerer’s Stars*, and a *Hypnotic Helix*. A second Multipower or Elemental Control could hold spells for defense, movement, or other purposes — or you could simply give the character a Multipower reserve large enough for him to use two slots at once. See below, and the characters in Chapter Four, for some examples.

ATTACK SPELLS

Sorcerer heroes often fight mystical villains. They possess a wide range of spells with which to attack each other. Thaumaturgy may employ unusual combinations of Powers and Modifiers, but even a simple Energy Blast or Entangle becomes wondrous if you give it a suitably mystical special effect.

THE BALEFUL BONDS OF BALTHUS

Effect:	Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Stops A Given Sense (Sight and Hearing Groups)
Target/Area Affected:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	300"
END Cost:	6

Description: This spell materializes a horde of black, sticky, sluglike creatures, each about a foot long. These viscous creatures wrap around the target’s limbs, eyes, and ears so that he cannot see, hear, or move. Although the slugs seem quite tough, they dissolve into stinking, black vapor if they take any damage. Any Light Of Luathon instantly destroys the Bonds, so experienced sorcerers prefer to use other spells of restraint. (See page 64 for a brief description of Balthus.)

Game Information: *Entangle* 4d6, 4 DEF, Stops A Given Sense (Sight and Hearing Groups) (60 Active Points); *Entangle* Has 1 BODY ($-\frac{1}{2}$), Cannot Form Barriers ($-\frac{1}{4}$), Susceptible (to any of the Lights Of Luathon; $-\frac{1}{4}$). Total cost: 30 points.

Options:

1) **Strong Bonds I:** Increase to Entangle 6d6, 6 DEF. 80 Active Points; total cost 40 points.

2) **Strong Bonds II:** Remove Entangle Has 1 BODY ($-\frac{1}{2}$). Total cost: 40 points.

THE BINDINGS OF BROMION

Effect: Mind Control 12d6/10d6;
Entangle 2d6, 3 DEF, BOECV;
Telekinesis (20 STR), BOECV

Target/Area Affected: One character

Duration: Instant/Instant/Instant/
Constant

Range: LOS

END Cost: 6

Description: The dimension lord Bromion, one of the Ordainers of Urizen the Lawgiver, began the use of these potent spells. Bromion hates free will in other beings; he calls it “rebellion.” He shared his Bindings with sorcerers on other planes who also served Urizen, to help them quash “rebellion.” From them the knowledge spread, not always with their blessing. Centuries later, sorcerers of whom Bromion would never approve use the Bindings, too. (See *Arcane Adversaries* for more information about Bromion.)

Game Information:**Cost Power**

- 62 *The Bindings Of Bromion:* Multipower, 62-point reserve
- 6u 1) *First Binding:* Mind Control 12d6
- 6u 2) *Second Binding:* Mind Control 10d6, Telepathic (+¼)
- 6u 3) *Third Binding:* Entangle 2d6, 3 DEF, BOECV (+1), Takes No Damage From Physical Attacks (+¼), Works Against EGO, Not STR (+¼)
- 6u 4) *Fourth Binding:* Telekinesis (20 STR), BOECV (+1)

Total cost: 86 points.

THE CERULEAN SPELLS

Effect: Ego Attack 5d6

Target/Area Affected: One character/1" Radius
Nonselective

Duration: Instant

Range: LOS

END Cost: 2/6

Description: These psychic bolts are a very common mystic attack. Even minor sorcerers often know lower-powered versions of the Cerulean Spells. These attacks appear to the victim, and anyone with Mental Awareness, as sparkling beams of blue light.

Game Information:**Cost Power**

- 62 *The Cerulean Spells:* Multipower, 62-point reserve
- 6u 1) *Cerulean Spear:* Ego Attack 5d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)
- 6u 2) *Cerulean Spray:* Ego Attack 5d6, Area Of Effect Nonselective (One Hex; +¼)

Total cost: 74 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Spells:** Increase reserve to 75 points and both slots to Ego Attack 6d6. Total cost: 89 points.
- 2) **Weak Spells I:** Decrease reserve to 37 points and both slots to Ego Attack 3d6. Total cost: 45 points.

3) **Weak Spells II:** Decrease reserve to 25 points and both slots to Ego Attack 2d6. Total cost: 29 points.

4) **Expanded Spell:** Some mystics also use a Cerulean Spell that's not a bolt of psychic force, but a sort of field that envelopes the victim and lasts as long as the mystic maintains it (*i.e.*, pays END for it). Add a third slot, Ego Attack 3d6, Continuous (+1). Total cost: 80 points.

THE FUZONIC FLAMES

Effect: RKA 2½d6-4d6, with various
Advantages

Target/Area Affected: One character (or 1" Radius)

Duration: Instant/Instant/Instant/
Constant

Range: 300"/300"/300"/310"

END Cost: 6/6/6/6

Description: These spells evoke the awesome, fiery energy of the dimension called the Burning Sky. That dimension's ruler, Fuzon, apparently never objects to anyone tapping the energies of his realm. (See page 64 for a brief description of Fuzon.)

Game Information:**Cost Power**

- 62 *The Fuzonic Flames:* Multipower, 62-point reserve
- 6u 1) *Raw Flames:* RKA 4d6
- 6u 2) *Bursting Flames:* RKA 2½d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½)
- 6u 3) *Focused Flames:* RKA 2½d6, Penetrating (+½)
- 6u 4) *Devouring Flames:* RKA 1½d6, Continuous (+1), Penetrating (+½)

Total cost: 86 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Spells:** Increase reserve to 90 points and the slots to RKA 6d6, 4d6, 4d6, and 2d6+1, respectively. Total cost: 126 points.
- 2) **Weak Spells:** Decrease reserve to 40 points and the slots to RKA 2½d6, 1½d6, 1½d6, and 1d6, respectively. Total cost: 56 points.
- 3) **Fuzonic Manipulations:** Some sorcerers learn other ways to invoke the Fuzonic Flames, which they buy as additional slots for the Multipower. Here are several examples, each costing 6 points:

Field Of Flames I: RKA 2½d6, *Explosion* (+½)

Field Of Flames II: RKA 2d6, *Area Of Effect* (3" Radius; +1)

Agonizing Flames I: *Energy Blast* 6d6, *NND* (defense is *Power Defense* or *Life Support* [*Safe Environment: Intense Heat*]; +1)

Agonizing Flames II: RKA 2½d6, +2 *Increased STUN Multiplier* (+½)

Unavoidable Flames I: RKA 2½d6, *Indirect* (always comes from caster, but can strike target from any direction; +½)

Unavoidable Flames II: RKA 2½d6, *Line Of Sight* (+½)

4) Hellfire: Some mystics learn a similar set of spells that involve working with Hellfire, a type of mystic flame that originates in the Netherworld. Hellfire is intended to cause pain as much as lethal injuries. To create a Hellfire spell, substitute the equivalent DCs in Energy Blast for the RKAs listed for the Fuzonic Flames.

HYPNOTIC HELIX

Effect: Mind Control 12d6/6d6
Target/Area Affected: One character/7" Cone
Duration: Instant
Range: 4"
END Cost: 6/6

Description: The glowing spiral of multicolored light created by this spell makes people extremely suggestible. Sorcerers throughout the Multiverse have used the Hypnotic Helix, or spells just like it, for thousands of years. Many variations exist: The slots given here are just the two most common versions of the spell.

Unscrupulous sorcerers often use a *Hypnotic Helix* to force people to serve them. Champions of Good prefer to use the *Helix* to make bystanders forget traumatic supernatural events. For most people, forgetting they had a supernatural scare is an action they want to do anyway, so a mystic does not need much Mind Control.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 34 *Hypnotic Helix:* Multipower, 60-point reserve; all slots Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Limited Normal Range (4"; -½)
 3u 1) *Focused Helix:* Mind Control 12d6; Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Limited Normal Range (4"; -½)
 3u 2) *Expanding Helix:* Mind Control 6d6, Area Of Effect (7" Cone; +1); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Limited Normal Range (4"; -½)

Total cost: 40 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Spells:** Increase reserve to 90 points and the slots to Mind Control 18d6 and 9d6, respectively. Total cost: 61 points.
 2) **Weak Spells:** Decrease reserve to 40 points and the slots to Mind Control 8d6 and 4d6, respectively. Total cost: 27 points.

THE ISKARINE COLORS

Effect: Various Attack Powers
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant
Range: 300"/300"/300"/310"
END Cost: 6/0/6/6

Description: The mage Iskari, sometimes known as Iskari the Prismatic or Iskari the Artist, was fascinated by the artistry of thaumaturgy — the interplay of colors, shapes, and effects created by the release of mystical energy. He devised several spells that are as well known for their bright and wondrous displays of color and light as they are for the effects they accomplish.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 62 *The Iskarine Colors:* Multipower, 62-point reserve
 6u 1) *The Scintillant Shackles:* Entangle 5d6, 5 DEF, Stops A Given Sense (Sight Group)
 6u 2) *Iskari's Invoked Iridescence:* Sight and Hearing Group Flash 7d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
 6u 3) *Iskari's Prismatic Stars:* RKA 2d6, Area Of Effect (3" Radius; +1)
 6u 4) *Iskari's Intense Iridescence:* Energy Blast 5d6, AVLD (defense is Sight Group Flash Defense; +1½)

Total cost: 86 points.

KORIOI'S CRIMSON CRYSTALS

Effect: Entangle 4-6d6, 4-6 DEF; Force Wall (10 PD/10 ED)
Target/Area Affected: One character/Varies
Duration: Instant/Instant/Instant/Constant
Range: 300"/300"/300"/310"
END Cost: 6/6/6/2

Description: Koriol, a mighty sorcerer from the world of Loezen (see page 41), invented this spell ensemble a few millennia ago, and it soon became popular on other worlds. Swirls of light coalesce into shards of red glass to envelop the target or form a protective barrier. (See page 64 for a brief description of Koriol.)

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 62 *Koriol's Crimson Crystals:* Multipower, 62-point reserve
 6u 1) *Crystal Shell:* Entangle 6d6, 6 DEF
 6u 2) *Crystal Bonds:* Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+½)
 6u 3) *Reflective Crystals:* Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Backlash (+½)
 6u 4) *Crystal Wall:* Force Wall (10 PD/10 ED), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)

Total cost: 86 points.

THE LIGHTNINGS OF LARETHIAN

Effect: Various Attack Powers
Target/Area Affected: One character (Slot 4 is Explosion)
Duration: Instant
Range: 300"/225"/375"/375"
END Cost: 6/7/14/7

Description: Larethian (or "the Loyal Larethian," as he's most often described) was the apprentice and assistant of two different Archmages from the alternate Earth dimension of Kalvrezon. He's often held up to other apprentice mystics as a model of loyalty, diligence, and respectfulness. But Larethian was a skilled wizard in his own right, for all that he spent most of his long life helping even more powerful mages. He created several spells, but one suite of his magics — a group of attack spells based on mystically-created lightning bolt-like blasts — has become popular with super-mages in many dimensions, including Earth's. The caster can control the color and general appearance of the lightning bolts if he wishes; most casters make them a single color, such as red or black.

Game Information:
Cost Power
75 *The Lightnings Of Larethian:* Multipower, 75-point reserve
6u 1) *The Lucent Lightnings:* RKA 2½d6, Armor Piercing (+½)
6u 2) *The Livid Lightnings:* RKA 3d6 plus Sight Group Flash 6d6; Linked (-½)
5u 3) *The Lethal Lightnings:* RKA 5d6; Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½)
7u 4) *The Labyrinthine Lightnings:* RKA 3d6+1, Explosion (+½)
Total cost: 99 points.

THE LIGHTS OF LUATHON

Effect: Various Attack Powers and other abilities
Target/Area Affected: Varies
Duration: Varies
Range: Varies
END Cost: Varies

Description: Mystics throughout the Multiverse use this set of eleven spells, which provide both attacks and a variety of useful effects for knowledge, concealment, and deception. The Lights range from a laser-like beam to dramatic lighting that makes the user appear powerful and impressive. These spells create globes of light around the caster's hands, which radiate beams or glows to accomplish a particular effect. Each caster manifests a unique pattern of colors, so the Lights are as good as a fingerprint to identify a particular mystic.
According to legend, Earth's first Archmage, Thanoro Azoic, learned these spells directly from Luathon. In other words, the *Eleven Lights* are so old no one can say what name Luathon now uses, or if this entity still exists.

Game Information:

Cost Power
63 *The Lights Of Luathon:* Multipower, 63-point reserve
6u 1) *The First Light Of Luathon:* Sight Group Flash 8d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½)
6u 2) *The Second Light Of Luathon:* Energy Blast 8d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½)
6u 3) *The Third Light Of Luathon:* Energy Blast 5d6, AVLD (Sight Group Flash Defense; +1½)
6u 4) *The Fourth Light Of Luathon:* RKA 2½d6, Penetrating (+½)
6u 5) *The Fifth Light Of Luathon:* Dispel Invisibility 21d6
6u 6) *The Sixth Light Of Luathon:* Dispel Magic Powers 16d6, any Magic power one at a time (+¼)
6u 7) *The Seventh Light Of Luathon:* Sight Group Images, -6 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (4" radius; +½), Invisible to Mystic Sense Group (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
3u 8) *The Eighth Light Of Luathon:* Telepathy 6d6
3u 9) *The Ninth Light Of Luathon:* Invisibility to Sight and Mystic Groups (but not including the Tenth Light), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)
3u 10) *The Tenth Light Of Luathon:* Detect Invisibility (Mystic Sense Group), Ranged, Sense, Targeting
1u 11) *The Eleventh Light Of Luathon:* +30 PRE; Only For Making Presence Attacks (-1), Visible (dramatic lighting effects; -¼)
Total cost: 115 points.

THE SAFFRON SPHERES

Effect: Sight Group Flash 4d6; Energy Blast 2d6, AVLD; Sight Group Images
Target/Area Affected: 1" Radius/1" Radius/16" Radius
Duration: Instant/Instant/Constant
Range: 150"
END Cost: 3/3/0

Description: Beginning thaumaturges often learn this spell, though versions that are more powerful exist. A glowing yellow ball darts out and explodes in a blinding yellow flash or a strobing, disorienting burst. Another form simply radiates bright yellow light; it's sometimes known as "Witchlight."

Game Information:
Cost Power
33 *The Saffron Spheres:* Multipower, 33-point reserve
3u 1) *First Sphere:* Sight Group Flash 4d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½)
3u 2) *Second Sphere:* Energy Blast 2d6, AVLD (defense is Sight Group Flash Defense; +1½), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½)
2u 3) *Third Sphere ("Witchlight"):* Sight Group Images, +4 to PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only To Create Light (-1)
Total cost: 41 points.

Options:

1) **Strong Spells:** Increase reserve to 45 points, Slot 1 to Sight Group Flash 6d6, Slot 2 to Energy Blast 3d6, and add to Slot 3 the Advantage Increased Radius (4" radius; +½). Total cost: 55 points.

THE SCINTILLANT SUNS OF SARAVANE

Effect: Sight Group Flash 4-6d6
Target/Area Affected: One character or 8" Cone
Duration: Instant
Range: LOS
END Cost: 6/6

Description: The starlike bodies in the dimension of Saravane radiate a "psychic light." By calling upon the light of Saravane, a sorcerer can blind a foe no matter how carefully shielded the foe's eyes might be (but psionic defenses provide protection). The Scintillant Suns don't work very well against other mystics, but can blind many other foes.

Game Information:**Cost Power**

60 *The Scintillant Suns Of Saravane:* Multipower, 60-point reserve
 6u 1) *Narrow Beam:* Sight Group Flash 6d6, BOECV (Mental Defense applies; +1)
 6u 2) *Broad Glare:* Sight Group Flash 4d6, BOECV (Mental Defense applies; +1), Area Of Effect (8" Cone; +1)

Total cost: 72 points.

Options:

1) **Strong Spells:** Increase reserve to 90 points, Slot 1 to Sight Group Flash 9d6 and Slot 2 to Sight Group Flash 6d6. Total cost: 108 points.

2) **Weak Spells:** Decrease reserve to 45 points, Slot 1 to Sight Group Flash 4d6 and Slot 2 to Sight Group Flash 3d6. Total cost: 53 points.

SORCERER'S STARS

Effect: Energy Blast 4-12d6, with various Advantages
Target/Area Affected: One character or 1" Radius
Duration: Instant
Range: 300" (Slot 4 is 310")
END Cost: 6/6/6/6/6

Description: This flexible spell — whose name comes from the fact that each version of it fires a many-pointed ball of light at the target — provides a wide range of basic mystic bolts. It's one of the most common thaumaturgical spells; many other variations of it exist.

Game Information:**Cost Power**

62 *Sorcerer's Stars:* Multipower, 62-point reserve
 6u 1) *First Star:* Energy Blast 12d6
 6u 2) *Second Star:* Energy Blast 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½)
 6u 3) *Third Star:* Energy Blast 8d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½)
 6u 4) *Fourth Star:* Energy Blast 5d6, AVL D (defense is Power Defense; +1½)
 6u 5) *Fifth Star:* Energy Blast 4d6, AVL D (defense is Power Defense; +1½), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½)

Total cost: 92 points.

Options:

1) **Strong Spells:** Increase reserve to 75 points, Slot 1 to EB 15d6, Slots 2-3 to EB 10d6 each, Slot 4 to EB 6d6, and Slot 5 to EB 5d6. Total cost: 110 points.

2) **Weak Spells:** Decrease reserve to 45 points, Slot 1 to EB 9d6, Slots 2-3 to EB 6d6 each, Slot 4 to EB 3½d6, and Slot 5 to EB 3d6. Total cost: 65 points.

3) **Many Stars:** Here are several examples of other types of Stars, each costing 6 points:

Shattering Star I: *Energy Blast 8d6, Explosion (+½)*

Shattering Star II: *Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (3" Radius; +1)*

Slumbrous Star: *Energy Blast 6d6, NND (defense is Power Defense; +1)*

Arcing Star: *Energy Blast 8d6, Indirect (always comes from caster, but can strike target from any direction; +½)*

Unavoidable Star: *Energy Blast 8d6, Line Of Sight (+½)*

THE VIPERS OF VORKILL

Effect: Dispel Magic 18d6; Drain Magic 4d6; Suppress Magic 9d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Duration: Instant/Instant/Constant
Range: 250"
END Cost: 0

Description: This spell, named for its extradimensional creator, summons the magic-eating entities called "necheshiron" in astral form. Necheshiron, which look like black silhouettes of snakes, can weaken or destroy spells. Unfortunately, sometimes the necheshiron escape the caster's control and swarm on the caster (at the GM's option, the Side Effect may continue against the caster or random mystics in the vicinity in later Phases). Sufficient energy might enable necheshiron to manifest physically — a prospect that terrifies any sane mystic, since necheshiron reproduce when they eat magic.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 31 *The Vipers Of Vorkill:* Multipower, 70-point reserve, Activation Roll 15- (-¼), Side Effects (caster suffers the full effect himself, see text; -1)
- 3u 1) *First Viper:* Dispel Magic 18d6, affects any Magic power one at a time (+¼); Activation Roll 15- (-¼), Side Effects (caster suffers the full effect himself, see text; -1), Limited Range (250"; -¼)
- 3u 2) *Second Viper:* Drain Magic 4d6, affects any Magic power one at a time (+¼), Ranged (+½); Activation Roll 15- (-¼), Side Effects (caster suffers the full effect himself, see text; -1)
- 3u 3) *Third Viper:* Suppress Magic 9d6, Affects any Magic power one at a time (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Activation Roll 15- (-¼), Side Effects (caster suffers the full effect himself, see text; -1), Limited Range (250"; -¼)

Total cost: 40 points.

ZYTO'S SOLID SEEMINGS

Effect: Images in various configurations
Target/Area Affected: 1"/4"/1" Radius
Duration: Constant
Range: Varies
END Cost: 0

Description: No one could be sure what was real around Zyto of Bohemia. The notorious wizard enjoyed stunts such as making a goose seem to pull a heavy wooden beam, or making his own leg fall off. Zyto created illusions people could touch and heft. He even evoked simple, solid-seeming illusions that could continue for a short period of time without him maintaining them at all. A mystic who fakes out his opponent with Zyto's illusions — for instance, sending an illusory double of himself to fight while studying his enemy's spells — can gain a crucial advantage.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 62 *Zyto's Solid Seemings:* Multipower, 62-point reserve
- 6u 1) *Incomparable Illusion:* Sight Group, Normal Hearing, Normal Touch, and Detect Magic Images, -10 to PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)
- 6u 2) *Expansive Illusion:* Sight Group, Normal Hearing, and Normal Touch Images, -6 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (4" radius; +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)
- 6u 3) *Enduring Illusion:* Sight Group, Normal Hearing, and Normal Touch Images, -5 to PER Roll, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Uncontrolled (lasts for up to 1 Hour, or until someone uses violent force against Image; +½)

Total cost: 80 points.

DEFENSE SPELLS

Unlike mutants, gods, victims of lab accidents, and most other sorts of superbeings, super-mages remain as fragile as ordinary people. Battling mystics need potent spells to shield themselves from damage — or prevent themselves from getting hit in the first place.

DEFLECTING DISK

Effect: Force Field (10 PD/15 ED); Missile Deflection, +5 OCV
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 1/0

Description: One of the most common defensive spells creates a disk of light that darts in front of attacks and actually pulls mystical attacks into itself. The disk (sometimes called a “Wizard’s Shield”) expands to shield a character from area attacks, too. Some forms of Deflecting Disk merely reduce the damage from attacks, while others try to deflect ranged attacks.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 31 *Deflecting Disk:* Multipower, 31-point reserve
 3u 1) *Shielding:* Force Field (10 PD/15 ED), Reduced Endurance ($\frac{1}{2}$ END; $+\frac{1}{4}$)
 3u 2) *Deflecting:* Missile Deflection (all Ranged attacks), +5 OCV

Total cost: 37 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Spells I:** Increase reserve to 44 points, Slot 1 Force Field (15 PD/20 ED) and Slot 2 to +15 OCV. Total cost: 52 points.
 2) **Strong Spells II:** Increase reserve to 56 points, Slot 1 Force Field (20 PD/25 ED) and Slot 2 to +15 OCV. Total cost: 61 points.
 3) **Weak Spells:** Decrease reserve to 20 points, Slot 1 to Force Field (8 PD/12 ED) with no Reduced Endurance, and remove the +5 OCV from Slot 2. Total cost: 24 points.

MANTLE OF MASTERY

Effect: Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
END Cost: 0

Description: This spell, one of the most powerful arcane defenses known, manifests as a halo of prismatic light around the caster. For the good of heart, the Mantle Of Mastery sparkles brightly; for the evil, it shines in dark and murky hues. A magus can sustain the Mantle as long as he remains conscious, and it protects against most forms of mystical and mundane attack.

Game Information: *Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense), Reduced Endurance (0 END; $+\frac{1}{2}$) (60 Active Points); Side Effects (coloration of Mantle reveals caster’s generally Good or Evil nature, always occurs; $-\frac{1}{2}$). Total cost: 40 points.*

Options:

- 1) **Strong Spell:** Increase each category of defense to 15 points. 90 Active Points; total cost 60 points.
 2) **Weak Spell I:** Decrease each category of defense to 8 points. 48 Active Points; total cost 32 points.
 3) **Weak Spell II:** Remove Reduced Endurance ($+\frac{1}{2}$). 40 Active Points; total cost 27 points.
 4) **Disguised Spell:** Some casters have such control over this spell that they can control its color, making it impossible to judge their intentions from it alone. Remove Side Effects ($-\frac{1}{2}$). Total cost: 60 points.

THE SHADOWS OF SHALDUS

Effect: Darkness to Sight Group, Personal Immunity
Target/Area Affected: 1” Radius
Duration: Constant
Range: No Range
END Cost: 0

Description: This spell wraps a mantle of impenetrable darkness around the caster. This doesn’t stop attacks, but it does make the caster harder to hit (since most attackers can’t perceive him with a Targeting Sense). The caster, on the other hand, can see out of the Shadows perfectly well. Since the spell has No Range, the Darkness field moves with the caster as he moves.

Game Information: *Darkness to Sight Group 1” radius, Personal Immunity ($+\frac{1}{4}$), Reduced Endurance (0 END; $+\frac{1}{2}$) (17 Active Points); No Range ($-\frac{1}{2}$). Total cost: 11 points.*

WIZARD WALLS

Effect:

Force Wall (various configurations)

Target/Area Affected:

Varies

Duration:

Constant

Range:

Varies

END Cost:

0

Description:

Sorcerers use these spells to defend an area, or for all-out defense with their other defensive powers. These barriers of force look like vertical disks of pastel light hanging in the air, connected by arcs of light; attacks are drawn to strike the disks. Wizard Walls that are transparent to some forms of damage also allow for tactical flexibility if a mystic has an attack that bypasses the wall, and his enemy does not. Mystics have invented many other sorts of Wizard Walls besides the versions listed here.

Game Information:

Cost

Power

68

Wizard Walls: Multipower, 68-point reserve

7u

1) *Corporeal Wall*: Force Wall (10 PD/10 ED, 3" long), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)

7u

2) *Arcane Wall*: Force Wall (10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense, 3" long), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)

7u

3) *Energy Wall*: Force Wall (0 PD/14 ED, 3" long), Transparent (physical; +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)

7u

4) *Psychic Wall*: Force Wall (20 Mental Defense, 3" long), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)

Total cost:

96 points.

SENSORY, MOVEMENT, AND MISCELLANEOUS

Mystics require more than attack and defense. Much of their power depends on sources of information denied to other mortals. They also often possess special means of travel, and a wide range of spells for strange and unexpected effects that help them work their will without a fight.

AKASHIC EYE

Effect:

Telepathy 12d6

Target/Area Affected:

One character

Duration:

Constant

Range:

4"

END Cost:

0

Description:

Eastern mysticism holds that humans can develop a "third eye" for psychic perception. This spell creates an eye of glowing light on the mystic's forehead that enables him to probe a person's thoughts and memories. The Akashic Eye works only on nearby targets, though.

Game Information:

Telepathy 12d6 (60 Active Points); Limited Normal Range (4"; -½). Total cost: 40 points.

Options:
1) **Strong Spell:** Remove Limited Normal Range (-½). Total cost: 60 points.

ASTRAL FORM

Effect:

Duplication (create one 350-point Duplicate), Altered Duplicate (100%)

Target/Area Affected:

Self

Duration:

Persistent

Range:

Self

END Cost:

14 to activate

Description: The character can create an "astral form," a second self composed of pure mystic energy that leaves his body and can act on its own. While the astral form exists, the character's physical body remains helpless, incapacitated, and unable to act, with 0 DCV (comatose, essentially). However, because the two are both just aspects of the same being, any damage inflicted upon one is inflicted on the other as well (thus, killing either form kills both). Additionally, the two can only remain separate for up to 24 hours; if they do not recombine within that time, they both die.

The astral form possesses all the character's mystical powers, all of his Intellect and Interaction Skills, and all of his memories (similarly, the character retains the astral form's memories after the two rejoin). It may or may not possess his physical abilities, but typically does not. Even if it does, it can only use them on other astral forms and like characters, for it is intangible (it must buy Desolidification, Reduced Endurance (0 END), Persistent, Inherent, Always On, and thus must apply the *Affects Physical World* Advantage to any powers, magical or otherwise, it wishes to use to affect the

solid world). Most astral forms can fly (they buy Flight); many can cross the world in the blink of an eye (MegaScaled Flight or Teleportation).

The write-up below assumes the character is built on at least 350 Character Points and that he builds his astral form on exactly that many points. It further assumes that at least 51% of the points in the astral form are spent on abilities different from those of the original character.

See Chapter One for more information about the Astral Plane in the Champions Universe.

Game Information: *Duplication* (creates 350-point astral form), *Altered Duplicate* (100%; +1) (140 Active Points); *Costs Endurance* (to activate; -¼), *Original Character Is Incapacitated And Helpless While Duplicate Exists* (-1), *Extra Time* (must enter trance and meditate to allow astral self to leave its fleshy prison, 1 Hour; -1½), *Feedback* (-1), *Both Characters Die If They Do Not Recombine Within 24 Hours* (-½). Total cost: 27 points.

Options:

1) Recombination Mastery: The astral form can recombine with the character easily and from a distance. Add Easy Recombination (Half Phase Action at half DCV), Ranged Recombination (+½). 187 Active Points; total cost 36 points.

2) Astral Projection: The character can quickly and easily unleash his astral form. Remove Extra Time (-1½). Total cost: 37 points.

3) Astral Brother: The character remains awake, alert, and able to act while his astral form exists. Remove Incapacitated (-1). Total cost: 33 points.

4) Astral Form Variant: The character can only use his astral form for reconnaissance and spying; it cannot attack others, move things, or perform any other actions but observation. Change to:

Cost Power

33 *Astral Form (Variant):* Multipower, 67-point reserve, all Character Is Incapacitated And Helpless While Using Power (-1)

2u 1) *Local Remote Viewing:* Clairsentience (Sight and Hearing Groups), 16x Range (2,400"); Character Is Incapacitated And Helpless While Using Power (-1)

3u 2) *Distant Remote Viewing:* Clairsentience (Sight and Hearing Groups), MegaScale (1" = 1,000 km, can scale back to 1" = 1 km; +1¼); Character Is Incapacitated And Helpless While Using Power (-1)

Total cost: 38 points.

FADA'S FAR SEEKINGS

Effect: Mind Scan and Clairsentience in various configurations

Target/Area Affected: Varies

Duration: Constant

Range: Varies

END Cost: Varies

Description: These classic spells enable a mystic to locate people far away, or even on other planes. Once a mage knows a target's general location through the Mind Scan, and travels to that region, he can use the Clairsentience to pinpoint the target's location. Typically the Transdimensional Mind Scan slot only reveals which dimension the target occupies (at best). The Clairsentience with the Dimensional Sense Modifier views a swath of that dimension so the caster knows what environment he can expect when he goes there. The standard version used on Earth scans the Quaternion. Other versions scan groups of Outer Planes.

The spell creates a spinning disk of iridescent light. Threads of light radiate out to infinity from the disk; only the caster and mentally aware people can see these threads as they sweep through the world or beyond, seeking their target. When the caster uses the Clairsentience options, the center of the disk opens into a view of the desired region. *Fada's Far Seekings* demand most of the user's attention, so mystics prefer to use the spell only when they know they're safe.

Game Information:

Cost Power

60 *Fada's Far Seekings:* Multipower, 90-point reserve; all slots Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½)

6u 1) *Search The World:* Mind Scan 18d6; Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½)

6u 2) *Search The Planes:* Mind Scan 10d6, Transdimensional (Inner Planes; +¾); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½)

6u 3) *View The Region:* Clairsentience (Sight Group), 16,000x Range (1,600,000", or about 2,000 miles); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½)

6u 4) *View The Planes:* Clairsentience (Sight Group), Dimensional (Inner Planes), 1,000x Range (200,000", or about 250 miles); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½)

Total cost: 84 points

PAX ARCANA

Effect: RKA 1d6, NND, Does BODY, Trigger
Target/Area Affected: 1" Radius
Duration: Instant (see text)
Range: No Range
END Cost: 25

Description: Quarreling or suspicious mystics use the Pax Arcana to secure truces. If two sorcerers agree to a Pax Arcana, they cannot magically attack each other (or take any other agreed-upon action) without risking their own lives: the attacker suffers hideous pain as red lightning plays about his body. The effect lasts for a time period agreed upon by the participants; beyond that its effects dissipate, allowing the participants to attack one another freely.

When cast, the spell evokes a ball of red lightning. All the participants thrust a hand into the lightning and pledge not to attack each other. If anyone pledges falsely, he immediately suffers the spell's effects; all others have the effect "attached" to them waiting to be Triggered, as described below.

Pax Arcana is so useful that every major mystic tradition has its own version; the one described above is the standard thaumaturgic form. Alchemists create a *Pax Arcana* potion that participants drink, while Hermetic theurgists write their name or monogram in a special magic circle.

Clever mystics can find ways to work around a *Pax Arcana*, from associates primed to rush in and attack a foe, to a magical illusion of the spell. Faking or betraying a *Pax Arcana* guarantees no mystic will trust that sorcerer again, though, so even the most evil mages usually honor the spell-enforced truce.

In game terms, the *Pax Arcana* is an RKA 4d6, NND, Does BODY, Trigger that affects a One Hex area and takes effect over a Turn (Gradual Effect — 1d6 per 3 Segments). All the participants (including the one chosen to cast the spell) stand in the hex when it's invoked. At that point the Triggered effect "latches onto" each of them so that they'll suffer the spell's attack if they break the pledge. The as-yet un-Triggered effect can be Dispelled, but every Pax includes "attempting to Dispel the Pax, either by myself or with the assistance of another" as one of the conditions for breaking the pledge. Therefore the only way to take advantage of this would be for a participant to accidentally be caught in a Dispel or Adjustment Power that affects all Magic spells and powers (a powerful one, given the spell's effective Active Points for such purposes).

This spell requires the GM's permission to buy or use, since it defines an unusual condition as the defense for the NND. However, given the spell's high cost, usually only NPC super-mages know it, thus allowing the GM to control its use anyway.

Game Information: RKA 4d6, NND (defense is not attacking anyone else involved in the pledge; +1), Does BODY (+1), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Trigger (participant attacks another participant using magic, or otherwise breaks the pledge; +¼), Difficult To Dispel (x4 Active Points; +½) (255 Active Points); Caster

Must Be In Hex Affected (and thus be affected by spell as well; -¼), Gradual Effect (1 Turn, 1d6 per 3 Segments; -¼), No Range (-½). Total cost: 127 points.

TENG WEI'S TRANSLOCATION

Effect: Teleportation 20-25" in various configurations
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
END Cost: 6/6/6

Description: The ancient Chinese magus Teng Wei developed several spells of teleportation, which he taught to a few other sorcerers in his travels around and off the Earth. In the 2,800 years since Teng Wei's apparent death in a teleportation accident, other sorcerers created more variations on his spells. These are only a few variations.

Game Information:

Cost	Power
62	<i>Teng Wei's Translocation:</i> Multipower, 62-point reserve
6u	1) <i>First Translocation:</i> Teleportation 25", Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)
6u	2) <i>Second Translocation:</i> Teleportation 20", x4 Increased Mass, x8 Noncombat
6u	3) <i>Third Translocation:</i> Teleportation 20", MegaScale (1" = 10 km; +½)

Total cost: 80 points.

TONGUE OF ENITHARMON

Effect: Universal Translator, Usable Simultaneously
Target/Area Affected: Up to 8 characters
Duration: Constant
Range: Touch
END Cost: 0

Description: Mystics often call this "a simple spell of comprehension," which is bragging in the guise of modesty: gaining the magical ability to speak other languages is easy, but passing the gift to a large group of people is impressive magic. The spell invokes Enitharmon, one aspect of the Prime Avatar of Artifice, to transform the recipients so they can speak any language they encounter. The spell lasts until a recipient hears and speaks his native tongue again. When a mystic casts the spell, a shimmering net wraps around each recipient while he hears a myriad voices whispering at once.

Game Information: *Universal Translator (INT Roll), Usable Simultaneously (up to eight characters at once; +1) (40 Active Points); Only Applies To Speech, Not Writing (-1), Recipient Loses Power If He Speaks/Hears Own Tongue (-½). Total cost: 16 points.*

THE UNSPEAKABLE ENCHANTMENTS OF ULTOR

Effect: Shape Shift (any shape), Major Transform 2d6 (anything to anything)
Target/Area Affected: Self/One character
Duration: Constant/Instant
Range: Self/375"
END Cost: 5 to change shape/7

Description: The extradimensional Archmage Ultor created these spells to alter the form and substance of objects, oneself, or other people — or he stole them; reports differ. Whatever their origin, the Unspeakable Enchantments surpass many previous spells of transformation. The spell creates a swirling fog around the target; when the fog clears, the target has changed.

The spell has an unusual, but severe, restriction: the caster must cast them in absolute silence... while resisting a powerful urge to speak. Succumbing to that urge (by failing an EGO Roll) induces temporary idiocy. Ultor built this flaw into the *Enchantments*: the lost brainpower flows to him, and he stores it for when he feels the need for extra cunning. Ultor himself does not suffer this flaw when he uses the *Enchantments*.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 37 *The Unspeakable Enchantments Of Ultor:* Multipower, 75-point reserve; all Requires An EGO Roll (assumes EGO Roll of 14; -½), Side Effects (Drain INT 4d6; -½)
- 3u 1) *Change Self:* Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, Smell/Taste and Touch Groups, any shape), Imitation, Costs Endurance Only To Change Shape (+¼); Requires An EGO Roll (assumes EGO Roll of 14; -½), Side Effects (Drain INT 4d6; -½)
- 4u 2) *Great Change:* Major Transform 2d6 (any physical change, heals by the casting of this or any similar spell with the intent of reversing the change), Improved Results Group (anything; +1), Partial Transform (+½); Requires An EGO Roll (assumes EGO Roll of 14; -½), Side Effects (Drain INT 4d6; -½)

Total cost: 44 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Spells:** Increase reserve to 112 points, Slot 1 stays the same, Slot 2 increases to Major Transform 3d6. Total cost: 65 points.

THE VAPORS OF THE VATA

Effect: Extra-Dimensional Movement in various configurations
Target/Area Affected: Self
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
END Cost: 7/7/5

Description: Mystics use the Vapors Of The Vata to travel between dimensions. One version transports the caster and one other normal-sized person to any dimension; another lets the caster return another person to that person's home dimension (the caster doesn't have to know what or where the home dimension is; the subject merely has to think of home while the spell's being cast). The third version creates a magical trap: the eerie, violet Vapors erupt around a person who touches a trigger object and send the victim to a particular dimension, which a caster must select when he learns this spell.

"Vata" isn't a person, place, or thing — it's a title held by the mages who rule a group of small dimensions called the Storlian Realms. The Vata use this spell to travel between their demesnes and the Realms' capital in the dimension of Corravanta.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 70 *The Vapors Of The Vata:* Multipower, 70-point reserve
- 7u 1) *First Vapor:* Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location in any dimension), Increased Weight (3,200 kg)
- 5u 2) *Second Vapor:* Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location in a related group of dimensions [the home dimensions of the target of the spell]), Usable As Attack (defense is having Extra-Dimensional Movement or dimension-manipulating powers; +1); Only Works Against Beings Not Native To The Dimension They're Currently In (-½)
- 5u 3) *Third Vapor:* Extra-Dimensional Movement (single location in a single dimension, chosen when character learns the spell), Usable As Attack (+1), Trigger (victim touches trapped object; +¼)

Total cost: 87 points.

WINDS OF THE ZEPHIRIM

Effect:	Flight 10-15" in various configurations
Target/Area Affected:	Self or up to eight characters simultaneously
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self/Touch
END Cost:	4/4/4

Description: This spell of transportation calls on the spirits who dwell in a dimension of clouds, winds, and storms. Swirls of light lift the magician, and perhaps other people, and carry them through the air or around the world. Many mystics only learn the Tireless Wind form of this spell (perhaps buying it in an Elemental Control with other spells).

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 45 *Winds Of The Zephirim*: Multipower, 45 point reserve
- 4u 1) *Tireless Wind*: Flight 15", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
- 4u 2) *Shared Wind*: Flight 10", Usable Simultaneously (up to 8 people at once; +1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)
- 4u 3) *World-Spanning Wind*: Flight 15", MegaScale (1" = 1 km; +¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)

Total cost: 57 points.

Options:

- 1) **Strong Spells:** Increase reserve to 60 points, Slot 1 to Flight 20", Slot 2 to Flight 13", and Slot 3 to Flight 20". Total cost: 78 points.
- 2) **Weak Spells:** Decrease reserve to 30 points, Slot 1 to Flight 10", Slot 2 to Flight 6", and Slot 3 to Flight 10". Total cost: 39 points.

ESPECIALLY POWERFUL SPELLS

Mystics may encounter spells with significantly higher Active Points than usual for the campaign, and effects that stagger the mind. These aren't just spells with extra dice of damage: the greatest of them trespass on the powers of gods. A GM could build an entire story arc around one world-shaking spell, and make learning it a high point of the campaign.

Characters cannot buy or use any of these spells unless they have the GM's permission. Not only are they expensive and unbalancing, they have the potential to completely disrupt the campaign. Additionally, some of them use NND defenses or the like which require the GM's approval.

THE QUATERNION BANISHMENT

The gods cannot defend against dimensional conquerors, but mortal mystics can if they know this spell. The *Quaternion Banishment* hurls the life-force of all humanity against an Outer Planes intruder. A flaming symbol, the Quaternion Seal, appears around the target. The target suffers a Transform that only affects beings from the Outer Planes; conversely, those beings cannot defend against it. When the Transform completes itself, Earth and its whole panoply of Imaginal Realms become deadly poison to the invader. Henceforth, the target suffers a Susceptibility (3d6 STUN per Phase) from being in any dimension of the Quaternion. A mystic can cast the spell only once per day. The spell's effects cease at the end of the Phase if the caster is Stunned, Knocked Out, or flees the Inner Planes; they end immediately if the target voluntarily leaves the Inner Planes before the Transform completes itself. (However, the Transform "damage" remains in effect until healed as specified; if the invader returns before being healed, it's easier for the caster to complete the Transformation.)

The *Quaternion Banishment* has reversal conditions. First, the curse lifts if a spirit from any of the Inner Planes of its own free will invites the target to return. The target can also evade the curse by possessing the body of a human, elf, or other creature from a Quaternion plane. Finally, the caster's death ends the banishment.

Before a mystic can learn the *Quaternion Banishment*, he must receive power from spirits of all four Parterres. For instance, the caster might at some point be healed by an angel, extort a magic power from a devil, have a curse removed by the Emperor of Babylon, and wield the magic weapon of a pagan god. Only someone who meets this condition may invoke the power of the entire human race. For centuries, the *Banishment* was handed down from Archmage to Archmage. Unfortunately, since the death of the last Archmage, no one in the Champions Universe knows how to cast the spell or has fulfilled its preconditions.

The *Quaternion Banishment* also carries a terrible cost. All the Imaginal Realms draw their power from humanity... so the curse's power ulti-



mately comes from human life. As the *Banishment* burns into an invading entity, the spell's caster feels people die. He sees them. He knows them. The sick and old die first, but within two Turns, the spell draws upon the fragile lives of infants too. Each person knows why he dies, and accepts it. Some mystics call this spell the Masada Curse, for in casting it a magus declares humanity's intent to die rather than submit to an invader's rule.

Quaternion Banishment: *Major Transform 2d6 (Outer Planes native to Outer Planes native with Susceptibility: to being in the Inner Planes [takes 3d6 damage per Phase], heals as described in text), NND (defense is being a Quaternion native; +1), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (97 Active Points); Limited Target (Outer Planes beings; -½). Only Works In The Inner Planes (-¼), Can Only Be Cast Once Per Day (-0). Total cost: 55 points.*

THE LOOM OF SPACE

This spell creates a new dimension from scratch. The caster projects raw power into Limbo, creating not just the matter of his new plane, but space and time for it to occupy. A mystic can design the new cosmos any way he wants, to the limits of his imagination. A new universe always holds a few surprises, though, and a mystic wields no intrinsic control over its destiny.

In game terms, the Loom Of Space is the

special effect for a character's being able to buy an entire new dimension of his own design as a Base, using the standard rules for purchasing the *Base* Perk. Of course, most such Bases are going to be incredibly expensive, given their size and contents; the character may also have to buy lots of Followers or other Perks to properly fill his dimension. (Of course, the character could restrict himself to creating a small "pocket dimension," one that costs far fewer Character Points.)

As always, special effects are important. The GM should not allow a mystic to buy a dimensional Base and justify it by saying, "I know the Loom Of Space." The *Loom* is an *extremely* rare spell, one that few mages can learn. Casting it is a long and arduous task, involving whatever difficulties or prerequisites the GM sees fit to impose ("To cast the Loom, first you must make a three foot tall jade incense burner by hand from a block of raw jade..."). At the very least, casting the *Loom* should

be incredibly tiring, and perhaps even pose a risk of permanent physical injury. Furthermore, the dimension-creation process is not absolutely predictable; the mystic expresses what he wants as part of the casting, but may not get exactly what he has in mind. Differences both subtle and gross may make their way into the weaving of a dimension, with results even the most powerful mystic cannot plan for.

Most importantly, creating a dimension with magic doesn't lead to exactly the same result as allowing one to evolve naturally. Many mages believe that *Loom*-created planes are "fragile" — it's easy for them to break apart (or be broken by an attacker), or even for them to have Achilles's heels that make them easy to disincorporate back into the stuff of Limbo.

THE WORD OF UNMAKING

This attack calls upon the Solipsist, the Avatar of Unbeing, to de-create the target. Not only is the target destroyed, it *never existed!* The "retroactive" aspects are gradual and unreliable, though: memories and records of an unmade thing take several days to disappear, and a few strong-willed people might remember its existence. Gathering those records and people might suffice to restore a de-created target.

In game terms, the *Word* is three Linked effects. The first is a massive Continuous/Persistent RKA, NND, Does BODY that keeps working until it has destroyed the target (in the case of really

large targets, such as planets or dimensions, this can take some time). The second and third are enormous Transforms that remake Reality to erase the traces of the target (it's assumed that a +10 value for MegaScale is enough to encompass an entire dimension). The Transforms (which also keep working until they complete their task) do not start working until the RKA has "slain" the target.

Most sorcerers regard the *Word Of Unmaking* as a crime against reality. Even many villainous mages would seek to destroy a user of the *Word* — as self-preservation, if for no other reason. The *Word Of Unmaking* requires great precision, as well. Any disruption of the spell's casting turns its effects against the magician.

Unmaking things can have far-reaching consequences. Reality tries to accommodate, but the greater the causal ties between a target and the rest of the world, the more seriously the spell wrenches reality. Unmaking an ordinary person or a patch of desert probably won't affect the rest of the world much. Unmaking a world leader or the Empire State Building would severely twist reality: many

people would remember the change, and all sorts of weird disruptions of time and matter could occur. Some mystics think that careless use of the *Word* unmade whole civilizations, or pushed them into the prehistoric past. Perhaps Atlantis was contemporary with Athens, like Plato said... in a history now erased.

Once the *Word* is spoken, it runs until it annihilates its target. Only the *Loom Of Space* can stop a *Word Of Unmaking*. The *Loom* is cast as if it were a Dispel being used to "interrupt" an attack, but casting the *Loom* automatically succeeds in stopping the effect — though it doesn't heal or reverse effects that have already occurred.

Cost Power

- 400 *Word Of Unmaking (Destroy Target)*: RKA 20d6, NND (defense is the protection of the Solipsist; +1), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (1,200 Active Points); No Range (-½), Side Effects (any disruption of the spell automatically turns the spell's full force against the caster; -1), Loom Of Space Automatically Stops Effect (-½)
- 1,264 *Word Of Unmaking (Erase Physical Traces)*: Major Transform 20d6 (Reality into Reality with no physical traces of target, heals back through intervention of the Solipsist), NND (defense is the protection of the Solipsist; +1), Continuous (+1), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), MegaScale (1" = Reality; +10), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (4,425 Active Points); No Range (-½), Side Effects (any disruption of the spell automatically turns the spell's full force against the caster; -1), Loom Of Space Automatically Stops Effect (-½), Linked (to RKA; -¼), Only Starts Working After RKA "Slays" Target (-¼)
- 1,371 *Word Of Unmaking (Erase Memories)*: Major Transform 20d6 (Reality into Reality where no one has memories of target, heals back through intervention of the Solipsist), NND (defense is the protection of the Solipsist; +1), BOECV (Mental Defense applies; +1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼), Continuous (+1), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), MegaScale (1" = Reality; +10), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½) (4,800 Active Points); No Range (-½), Side Effects (any disruption of the spell automatically turns the spell's full force against the caster; -1), Loom Of Space Automatically Stops Effect (-½), Linked (to RKA; -¼), Only Starts Working After RKA "Slays" Target (-¼)

Total cost: 3,035 points.



MAGIC ITEMS AND ARTIFACTS



Enchanted items vary widely in power. The least of them supply some modest, low-key power, such as a few points of Power Defense. The mightiest mystic artifacts can shape the destiny of worlds. Artifacts are further distinguished from ordinary magic items in that they always have the *Independent* Limitation.

In the great ages of sorcery before recorded history, perhaps magic items were common enough that one could speak of *a* magic sword or *a* blasting rod. But by the Superheroic Age, every significant magic item has a name and a body of legends. The most powerful artifacts also tend to be the oldest. In the last two millennia, few mystics wielded enough power to enchant truly powerful items. Since the unblocking of magic, however, many of the old items seem to have gained power. Owning a single magic item may suffice to qualify a person as a superbeing; and indeed, items of power now seem to carry a subtle enchantment that raises their wielder's reflexes and stamina to the level of other heroes and villains. It certainly worked for the members of the Crowns of Krim.

PERSONAL MAGIC ITEMS

BELT OF STRENGTH

Many gods and heroes of legend possessed items — typically pieces of clothing — that augmented their strength. The most famous of these is Megingjord, the belt worn by the Norse god Thor, and it's on that belt that this item is based. It affects not only the wearer's STR but Figured Characteristics derived from STR, since the *OIF* Limitation applies to all of them.

Belt Of Strength: +40 STR (40 Active Points); *OIF* (-½). Total cost: 27 points.

BLASTING ROD

The *Blasting Rod* comes from the Western tradition of ceremonial magic. The *Grand Grimoire* promises to tell how to make "the dreadful Blasting Rod, which causes the spirits to tremble; which God also used to arm his Angel when Adam and Eve were driven out of the Earthly Paradise; where-with finally, he smote the rebellious Angels, precipitating their ambitions into the most appalling gulfs by the power of this very Rod — of this Rod which collects the clouds, disperses tempests, averts the lightning, or precipitates each and all upon any portion of the Earth at the pleasure of its director."

Well, not quite. Maybe God's own *Blasting Rod* can do all this, but mere mortals must settle for a less awesome instrument. The *Blasting Rod* remains a formidable weapon, though. It raises or calms storm winds in areas small by natural standards but big enough to humans, throws lightning bolts and bolts of supernatural force, and both compels and dispels spirits. The *Grand Grimoire* describes a *Blasting Rod* made of hazelwood with caps of magnetized steel. The procedures to enchant a Blasting Rod are so convoluted, however, that no one has made one in centuries.

Cost Power

- 32 *Blasting Rod:* Multipower, 65-point reserve; all slots OAF (-1), 16 Charges for entire Multipower (-0)
- 3u 1) *Lightning:* Energy Blast 13d6; OAF (-1)
- 3u 2) *Concussive Force:* Energy Blast 7d6, Double Knockback (+¾); OAF (-1)
- 3u 3) *Mystic Force:* Energy Blast 5d6, AVLD (defense is Power Defense; +1½); OAF (-1)
- 3u 4) *Raise/Disperse Tempest:* Change Environment 1" radius, +/-4 Temperature Levels, Multiple Combat Effects, Varying Combat Effects, Varying Effect (alter the weather; +1), MegaArea (1" = 1 km broad and wide; +¼); No Range (-½); OAF (-1)
- 2u 5) *Chastise Spirits:* Dispel Summon 21d6; OAF (-1), Only Affects Spirits (-1)
- 2u 6) *Command Spirits:* Mind Control 13d6; OAF (-1), Only Affects Spirits (-1)

Total cost: 48 points.

THE TARNKAPPE

The dwarf Alberich and his brother Mim created the original Tarnkappe. The giant Fafnir used it to turn himself into a dragon. Later, the amnesiac Siegfried used the *Tarnkappe* to impersonate a fellow called Gunter. (See *The Ring Of The Nibelungs* for the full sordid tale, although Wagner changed the cape into a helmet — the *Tarnhelm*.)

Alberich's *Tarnkappe* is lost, but the dwarves of Faerie created an inferior copy for the giantish sorcerer Jormunrek in the eighth century, who was not long after defeated and slain by the Archmage of that time when he (Jormunrek) made a mystic bid to rule Scandinavia. Jormunrek's *Tarnkappe* changes size to fit the wearer. Its wearer can turn invisible or adopt the superficial form of any living creature with the same mass. A human could use the *Tarnkappe* to take the shape of a dragon, but would not gain a dragon's size, bite, flight, or flaming breath. The Tarnkappe itself disappears when the wearer changes shape, but a person who

grappled with the character could feel the magic cloth and pull it off. The more powerful, original *Tarnkappe* could form the basis of a formidable character all by itself.

Cost Power

- 35 *Tarnkappe*: Multipower, 52-point reserve; all IAF (-½)
- 2u 1) *Change Form*: Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, and Touch Groups, any living creature), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); IAF (-½)
- 3u 2) *Walk Unseen*: Invisibility to Sight Group and Detect Magic (including targeting versions), No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); IAF (-½)

Total cost: 40 points.

MAGIC ARTIFACTS

The greatest artifacts often pose dangers to their users. Their magic might be too powerful for humans to use safely. Worse, black magic artifacts often enslave their wielders — a very deliberate curse built into the artifact by its evil creator.

Earth's last Archmage owned all these artifacts. Some he used; one, the Scepter of Night, he owned to keep it from evil hands. Neither the Trismegistus Council nor the Circle of the Scarlet Moon found any of them in the area where the Archmage's sanctum once stood. While they may have been destroyed, rumors of at least some of them (not to mention many other artifacts the Archmage once owned) have surfaced in many parts of the world in the century since Bohdan Stanislavski's murder.

Personal Artifacts

These are examples of artifacts that a magus might use out in the field. They are small enough to be portable, so a mystic might carry them into battle.

THE KRYPTICON

The *Krypticon* is Earth's greatest tome of thaumaturgy. The ancient Greek magus Thestor wrote the book tome based on what he learned from the cosmic entity Kryptos, god of secrets. The *Krypticon* tells fabulous secrets of magic dealing with space, time, and dimension.

Subsequent owners added their own magical discoveries to the *Book Of Secrets*, making the *Krypticon* very long but also an excellent research aid. The *Krypticon* not only raises its owner's effective rating in all magic-related Knowledge Skills, it greatly increases the chances of successful Spell Research.

A sorcerer must be able to read Greek to use the *Krypticon*. In game terms, the book is defined as a Multipower; each slot represents some power or ability the book confers due to the wisdom its pages contain. To learn to use a slot, a character must study the book for a week, then succeed with a Spell Research roll at a penalty of -1 per 10 Active Points in the slot. Once he makes this roll, he can use the slot whenever he wants without having to make more Spell Research rolls, subject to the rules below. If he fails, he can try again after another week's study.

The primary magics of the *Krypticon* (i.e., the ones bought as Multipower slots, and the *Cloud Memory* power) are so powerful a character's mind cannot encompass them all at once. A character must spend 1 Hour studying and "memorizing" a spell he wants to use. Once he's done that, he can keep the spell in his mind until he casts it. Once it's cast, it fades from his memory; he cannot cast it again unless he spends another hour studying it. (In game terms, this is represented as 1 Recoverable Charge for the Multipower.)

None of the book's primary magics are really intended for combat use; they all take time and other requirements to cast. Furthermore, they generate such magical energy that anyone with the appropriate mystic senses near the caster ("near" being defined as "within one planetary diameter of") can perceive their use. That may cause trouble for the possessor, for the *Krypticon* is valuable — *too* valuable. Other wizards and mystic entities will try to take the *Book Of Secrets*, by force or stealth. In effect, the possessor becomes Hunted by many beings of great power.

The *Krypticon* also enables the book's owner to contact entities on other planes. The Mind Scan component of this spell is not strong enough to *force* contact with most cosmic entities, but dimension lords will notice and probably allow contact anyway: everyone who's anyone in the Multiverse recognizes a call from the *Krypticon*.

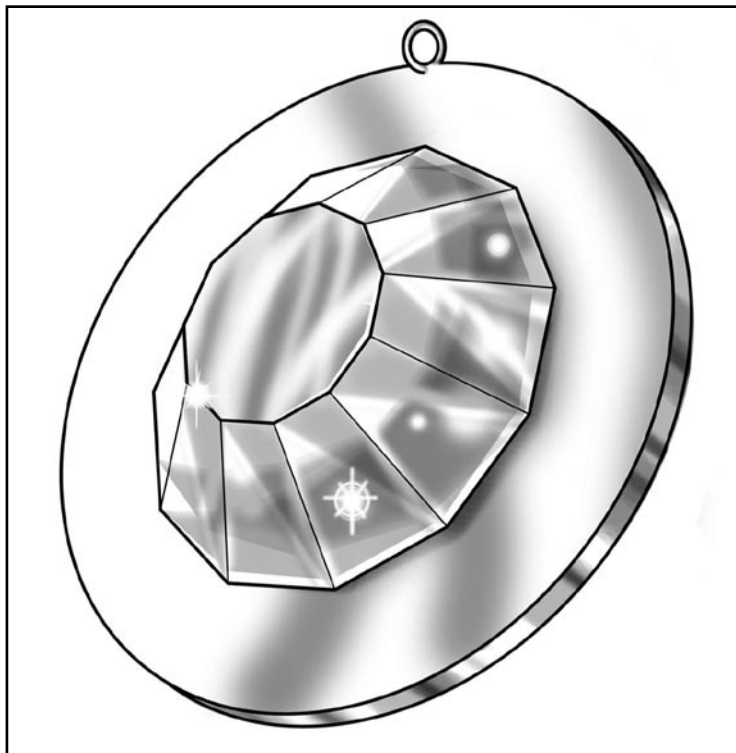
In fact, dimension lords and cosmic entities keep their eyes on whoever uses the *Krypticon*. Whether he wants it or not, the book's owner becomes entangled in the intrigues of the Great Powers, all the way up to the Zoas themselves.

The *Book Of Secrets* is unique: no one ever succeeds in hand-copying Thestor's text. Copy machines short out. Photographic film burns if it catches the image of a *Krypticon* page. Mystic scribing-spells fail to work if used to copy its words and diagrams.

Cost Power

- 12 *The Krypticon*: Multipower, 150-point reserve; all slots OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour to prepare; -3), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½), Visible (noticed by anyone with mystic senses, see text; -¼), 1 Recoverable Charge for entire reserve, (-1¼), Costs Endurance (-½)
- 1u 1) *Open Dimensional Gate*: Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in any dimension), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Continuous (+1), Usable By Other (+¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour to prepare; -3), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -1¼), Extra Time (Extra Phase to close; -½), Gate (-½), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½), Visible (noticed by anyone with mystic senses, see text; -¼)
- 1u 2) *Banish I*: Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location in a related group of

- dimensions [target's home plane, whatever that is]), Usable As Attack (defense is interrupting the casting of the spell in any way; +1), x64 Mass (+1½), Ranged (+½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour to prepare; -3), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½), Visible (noticed by anyone with mystic senses, see text; -¼)
- 1u 3) *Banish II*: Dispel Summon 50d6; OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour to prepare; -3), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½), Visible (noticed by anyone with mystic senses, see text; -¼)
- 1u 4) *Mass Banish I*: Dispel Summon 25d6, Area Of Effect (8" Radius; +1); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour to prepare; -3), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½), Visible (noticed by anyone with mystic senses, see text; -¼)
- 1u 5) *Mass Banish II*: Dispel Summon 25d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), MegaScale (1" = 10 km wide, deep, and tall; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour to prepare; -3), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½), No Range (-½), Visible (noticed by anyone with mystic senses, see text; -¼)
- 1u 6) *Spellbreaking I*: Dispel Magic 40d6, any one Magic power or spell one at a time (+¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour to prepare; -3), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½), Visible (noticed by anyone with mystic senses, see text; -¼)
- 1u 7) *Spellbreaking II*: Dispel Magic 25d6, any four Magic powers or spells at once (+1); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour to prepare; -3), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½), Visible (noticed by anyone with mystic senses, see text; -¼)
- 1u 8) *Spellbreaking III*: Dispel Magic 10d6, all Magic powers or spells simultaneously (+2); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour to prepare; -3), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½), Visible (noticed by anyone with mystic senses, see text; -¼)



- 53 *Cloud Memory*: Major Transform 8d6 (sentient beings into sentient beings without a specified memory, heals back by re-experiencing the subject forgotten or being told about it by someone who was subjected to this spell but not affected, or if character who cast the spell voluntarily restores the memory), BOECV (Mental Defense applies; +1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼), Area Of Effect (48" Radius; +1), Indirect (+¼), MegaScale (1" = 1 km; +¼), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour to prepare; -3), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½), Limited Target (sentient beings; -¼), No Range (-½), Visible (noticed by anyone with mystic senses, see text; -¼)
- 15 *Contact The Great*: Mind Scan 12d6, Trans-dimensional (any dimension; +1); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting time; -1), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Gestures (throughout casting time; -½), Incantations (throughout casting time; -½)
- 28 *Contact The Great*: +14 OECV with Mind Scan
- 4 *Contact The Great*: Mind Link, any one mind at a time, any distance, any dimension; OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Concentration (0 DCV throughout use; -1), Only Works Through Mind Scan Lock-On (-1)
- 4 *Reference Source*: +8 with Spell Research; OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 4 *Reference Source*: +5 with Mystic Knowledge Skills; OAF (-1), Independent (-2)

Total cost: 128 points.

ULTIMATE POWER

Mythology describes several enchanted items whose power transcends all others. Such power corrupts: heroes do not use these ultimate magics except in the most dire emergencies. More often, villains seek these artifacts so they can rule the world.

Here are a few examples. The GM can try defining these objects in game terms as he likes, but it's easier to leave them as plot devices. An artifact sets a story in motion (and is a great excuse for origins), but its power is not suited for one-on-one confrontations.

The Book of Thoth: Egyptian tales tell of a grimoire written by Thoth, god of magic. The spells in this scroll make its owner the master of all the powers of nature, gods, and the dead; he incidentally understands the speech of birds and beasts. A terrible curse protects the Book from mortal hands, though. The last person to seize the Book, the priest Na-nefer-ka-ptah, lost his entire family to the curse, and ended up as the grimoire's ghostly guardian.

The Holy Lance: The spear that pierced Christ's side is one of the four great relics of Christianity, along with the Holy Grail, the Crown of Thorns, and the Cross itself... and the Lance, also called the Spear of Destiny, is the only weapon on the list. Legend says the Lance makes its owner invincible. Reputed owners include the Roman emperor Constantine, Charlemagne... and Adolph Hitler. The gods of Faerie, Babylon, and the Netherworld all fear

THE SCEPTER OF NIGHT

This artifact is much older than humanity. In fact, it predates life on Earth. The Kings of Edom created the *Scepter Of Night* so lesser beings could tap their incredible power. Like all Edomite artifacts, however, the *Scepter* presents peculiar dangers to its wielder — in this case, an involuntary Psychic Bond to the Kings of Edom. Each time a character uses the *Scepter*, he must make an EGO Roll. If he succeeds, nothing happens to him. If he fails, he forms a Psychic Bond (see the *HERO System 5th Edition* rulebook, pages 132-33) to a King of Edom (see *Arcane Adversaries* for more information on the Kings). The owner of the *Scepter* can have Psychic Bonds to more than one King.

The character who possesses the *Scepter* and has a Psychic Bond with the Kings receives dreams from them, and those dreams are always weird and frightening. Some of them tell how to use the functions of the *Scepter*, or teach him more Edomite magic. As time goes by, the King deepens the link, gaining more power over the *Scepter's* wielder and eroding his sanity.

Getting rid of the *Scepter* does not break the Psychic Bond(s); that requires a Major Transform of the Mind ("psionic surgery"). Thus, anyone who uses the *Scepter Of Night* almost always eventually becomes a gibbering madman or a fanatical slave of the Kings, if not both.

The *Scepter* does, however, provide many useful powers. It can warp space for instantaneous travel or access to worlds once ruled by the Kings, slow time, drain life energies, or project stunning mental force. It can summon certain lesser Edomite entities, and also lets the wielder communicate with such creatures (alas, the communication is one way: the wielder can send thoughts, but not receive them). Edomites recognize the *Scepter* as a tool of their masters, so they probably obey the wielder for a while, but the *Scepter* provides neither real control over Edomite horrors, nor any way to banish them.

The *Scepter* can even grant people superpowers. What powers and what side effects are left to the GM's fevered imagination, but they should be thoroughly grotesque and leave the augmented person open to control by the Kings.

Physically, the *Scepter* is a slender rod of pitted black stone, about four feet long and an inch wide, bound in a web of shiny black metal. At the end, a claw grip holds a globe of crystal that seems full of dark, swirling clouds. The stone, the metal, and the crystal are all unknown to science. Nothing less than a cosmic entity or a supernova could destroy the *Scepter Of Night*.

Cost Power

- 23 *Scepter Of Night:* Multipower, 125-point reserve; all slots OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)
- 2u 1) *Mental Bolt:* Ego Attack 10d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side

Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)

- 2u 2) *Slow Time:* Drain SPD 7d6, Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)
- 2u 3) *Life Drain:* Drain Characteristics 4d6, affects STR, CON, BODY, and STUN at once (+1), Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼), Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)
- 2u 4) *Mass Life Drain:* Drain Characteristics 2d6, affects STR, CON, BODY, and STUN at once (+1), Area Of Effect (875" Radius; +2¾), Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼), Personal Immunity (+¼), Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)
- 2u 5) *Cast Gloom:* Change Environment 250" radius, -4 to Sight Group PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Uncontrolled (ends after 1 Hour or if "attacked" with any Light Of Luathon; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)
- 2u 6) *Call Edomites:* Summon up to 16 Edomite monsters built on up to 300 Character Points each, Expanded Class (Edomite monsters; +¼); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)
- 1u 7) *Send Thoughts:* Telepathy 5d6 (Edomite class of minds); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Broadcast Only (-½), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)
- 2u 8) *Empower:* Major Transform 3d6 (person to person with superpowers or like abilities related to Edomites, heals through another application of this power), Continuous (+1), Improved Results Group (can grant a wide range of powers; +½); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), No Range (-½), Limited Target (willing sentient beings; -¼), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)
- 2u 9) *Gate Within Dimension:* Teleportation 10", x2 Increased Mass; MegaScale (1" = 10 billion km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +3);

OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)

- 1u 10) *Gate Between Dimensions*: Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location in the Qliphothic planes), x2 Increased Weight; OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Requires An EGO Roll (assumes an EGO Roll of 14-; -½), Side Effects (involuntary, nigh-unbreakable Psychic Bond to a King of Edom; -1)
- 2 *Gate Within Dimension*: 2 Floating Fixed Points for Teleportation (defined by each possessor when he takes possession of the *Scepter*); OAF (-1), Independent (-2)
- 2 *Creeping Madness*: Mental Defense (8 points plus EGO/5); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), Does Not Work Against Edomites' Attacks (-1)

Total cost: 45 points.



THE STAR OF URIZEN

The Prime Avatar of Order created this talisman for his favored servants. Many such talismans exist, but Urizen assigns only one *Star* per dimension. Not only does a *Star Of Urizen* provide several useful powers to its wielder, it can enhance the power of any spell its wielder already knows.

Urizen does not permit a *Star* to stay long in the hands of a mystic who does not serve his cause. As long as a *Star's* owner uses it to seek out and destroy the minions of Chaos, Urizen asks no more, but if a *Star's* owner uses it too much for personal causes, eventually the Prime Avatar sends one of his spirit minions to take the artifact away. Such minions can deactivate the *Star* or even make it attack its owner.

A *Star Of Urizen* is a golden disk about four inches in diameter, with a band of geometric engraving around the rim, and a spiky, multifaceted crystal about two inches wide in the center.

The crystal glitters with white light when the *Star* is in use. A character could wear a *Star Of Urizen* as a necklace or a brooch (for instance, as the clasp for a cloak).

A *Star Of Urizen* does not take the *Focus* Limitation so its possessor can use it while in astral form: a *Star* does its own astral projection along with its wearer. Since the *Star* is Independent, however, it can still be stolen or lost.

Cost Power

- 18 *Star Of Urizen*: Multipower, 54-point reserve; Independent (-2)
- 1u 1) *Appeal To The Servants Of Order*: Mind Scan 7d6, Transdimensional (to Ulro; +½); Independent (-2)
- 1u 2) *Augment Spell*: Aid Magic 4d6, any one Magic spell or power at a time (+¼); Independent (-2)
- 1u 3) *Command To Depart*: Dispel Summon 18d6; Independent (-2)
- 1u 4) *Demand Obedience*: Mind Control 10d6; Independent (-2)
- 1u 5) *Inquisition*: Telepathy 10d6; Independent (-2)
- 4 *Commune With The Servants Of Order*: Mind Link to any one minion of Order, any distance, any dimension; Independent (-2), Costs Endurance (-½), Concentration (0 DCV throughout use; -1)
- 5 *Sense Chaos*: Detect Chaos Magic (Sight Group), Sense; Independent (-2) **plus** Telescopic (+10 versus Range Modifier for Sense); Independent (-2), Costs Endurance (-½), Visible (beam of white light shines from the *Star* to the source of magic; -¼)

Total cost: 32 points.

Continued from last page

the Holy Lance. They believe that since the Spear already tasted the blood of a god, it can deliver true and total death to other gods.

The Rhinegold: The Ring of the Nibelungs, from Norse/Germanic myth, was forged from magic gold guarded by spirits of the Rhine. That gold is nothing less than the sparkle of the sun on the river... an echo of the cosmic light of Form shining on the dark sea of Substance, in the Atziluthic realm. Whoever takes the Rhinegold and forges it into a ring gains mastery of the world, but he must renounce love to do so, and can only become a villain.

The Tablet of Destiny: The primal chaos-dragon Tiamat was the first owner of this tablet that ordains the laws of the universe and the social order. When the Mesopotamian gods defeated Tiamat's army of monsters, they took the Tablet as well. When the storm-bird Anzu stole the Tablet, the gods lost their power. Perhaps the Tablet controls the relations between gods and the mortal world, in which case it could overthrow the Ban at a stroke. The tablet's power comes from the Dragon, however, making it perilous in the extreme for mortals to wield.

CHARACTER CREATION



For the most part, building a character who's a super-mage, a divine avatar, a therianthrope, or any other denizen of the Mystic World is no different than designing any other *Champions* superhero. Mystic characters often tend to favor unusual Power-Advantage combinations, and rely on Power Frameworks, a bit more than other character types, but the same basic character creation rules apply. Here are a few additional or expanded rules addressing matters of interest to mystics.

SKILLS

NAVIGATION

Chapter One mentions two types of Navigation common to super-mages. The first is Navigation (Astral), which allows characters to move through the Astral Plane with comparative ease.

The second is Navigation (Dimensional), which helps a character travel from one dimension to another by the most efficient course. It does not help a character journey within a single dimension — for that, a regular specialty like Land or Space might suffice, or the character may need a dimension-specific specialty like Astral. But for finding one's way home across the myriad planes, or tracking a villain who's fled into uncharted areas of the Multiverse, it has no equal.

POWER

While most mystics in *Champions* can cast their spells effortlessly, without the need for the Skill Rolls so common in Heroic genres (such as Fantasy), some do have the *Requires A Skill Roll* Limitation on some or all of their spells (this is particularly common for apprentice super-mages, weak spellcasters, and the like). In that case, they usually buy a form of the *Power* Skill to use to cast their spells. In most campaigns, they can simply call this form of the Skill *Thaumaturgy* and have it apply to any type of spell. They don't have to buy a different Skill for each spell or type of magic they can use.

PERKS

ACCESS

With the GM's permission, characters can use this Perk to represent the fact that they have the right and/or power to enter certain dimensions (such as the Brialic planes) that most characters cannot. The cost depends upon the difficulty of entering the dimension, and how useful or important it is to the character to be able to enter that dimension.

FRINGE BENEFIT: DEITY

At the GM's option, some mystic characters might be able to buy the Fringe Benefit *Deity* for 50 Character Points. This means some group of sentient beings worships the character as a deity (the GM may adjust the cost if he feels that the character has only a small number of worshippers, or otherwise isn't as influential as the average deity; see *The Ultimate Mystic* for more information).

However, this Fringe Benefit confers no powers. The character's worshippers aren't Followers; if he wants them to obey him implicitly, he must pay Character Points to buy them as such. Nor does he gain the ability to access Elysium, to Transform water into wine, to sanctify people and places, or anything else of the sort — he has to pay Character Points for any such divine abilities, just like any other god.

POWERS

The following options and expansions for Powers were used in the construction of the spells and enchanted items described earlier in this chapter.

ENHANCED SENSES

Two aspects of Enhanced Senses apply particularly to mystics.

The Mystic Sense Group

For ease of game play, and to better define the special effect of "magical senses" and spells that affect them, the GM can allow mystic characters to define Senses as belonging to the Mystic Sense Group. (Or, he may consider all Senses deriving from magic, particularly Detect Magic and the like, as belonging to it as well as any other Sense Group they belong to.) The Mystic Sense Group grants no Sense Modifiers to a Sense, and has no standard Senses that belong to it. Any Senses in the Mystic Group can be affected by Sense-Affecting Powers specifically designed to

affect them (it's considered a Targeting Sense Group, since so many mystics buy Targeting for their Detect Magic spells and the like).

The Dimensional Sense Modifier

Mystics sometimes need to perceive into other dimensions. One way to do this is by buying Clairsentience with its own Dimensional modifier — but it's also possible to expand Dimensional into a general Sense Modifier that can apply to any Sense.

A Sense with Dimensional can perceive into one or more dimensions in addition to the one the character's currently occupying. It doesn't grant any extra range to the Sense; the character merely perceives whatever he can at the point in the other dimension that physically corresponds to his location in his current dimension. If appropriate, the GM may apply the "Dimensional Range Modifier" described under *Transdimensional*, below, so that it's much harder for characters on Earth to perceive into the Brialic or Atziluthic dimensions than into Assiatic or Yetziratic ones.

Cost: To perceive into a single other dimension: 5 Character Points for a single Sense; 10 Character Points for a single Sense Group.

To perceive into a related group of dimensions: 10 Character Points for a single Sense; 20 Character Points for a single Sense Group.

To perceive into any dimension: 15 Character Points for a single Sense; 25 Character Points for a single Sense Group.

EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT

This Power is extremely important for super-mages; they're more likely to use it than just about any other type of character. However, there are some gaps in the existing version of it in the *HERO System 5th Edition* rulebook, and these may cause problems. The GM should consider using this expanded version of the Power:

EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT

Type:	Movement Power
Duration:	Instant
Target:	Self Only
Range:	Self
Costs END:	Yes
Cost:	See Extra-Dimensional Movement Table

A character with this Movement Power can travel from one dimension to another, or can travel through time. Some examples of Extra-Dimensional Movement include wizards who can open gates to other planes, starships capable of breaching dimensional barriers, and time travel machines. Extra-Dimensional Movement costs END to use.

When buying Extra-Dimensional Movement, a character must first pay a base cost of 20 points. That allows him to travel to a single physical location in a single other dimension — for example, only to Odin's Hall in Valhalla, or only to the Infernal Gates in Hell. (The character may, of course, also return to his native dimension.) If a character wants to travel to more locations in that one dimension, or to more than a single dimension, he has to pay Character Points for additional modifiers to the power (see text below, and the Extra-Dimensional Movement Table).

Using Extra-Dimensional Movement takes a Full Phase. It does not involve acceleration, deceleration, or a Turn Mode. Traveling to another dimension, or through time, breaks Line Of Sight for the purposes of maintaining Constant Powers, Usable By Others powers, Mental Powers, and the like.

Normally, a character with Extra-Dimensional Movement can only move himself, his clothing, and his personal equipment (including any Foci). To move more weight, the character must buy an Adder (see below) for his Power.

DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL

The standard use of Extra-Dimensional Movement is to travel to other planes and dimensions. This is a separate ability from traveling through time (see below). See Chapter One for descriptions of many dimensions characters can travel to (though that "list" is *far* from exhaustive).

Number Of Dimensions The Character Can Travel To

To travel to a related group of dimensions (such as the Nine Hells or the Four Elemental Planes) costs +5 Character Points. The GM determines what constitutes "a related group"; there's no specific numerical limit.

The ability to travel to any dimension costs +10 Character Points.

Regardless of how many dimensions a character can travel to, he can only travel to a single physical location in each one, and he must define the specific location in each dimension when he buys the power.

Physical Locations The Character Can Reach

As noted above, the default with Extra-Dimensional Movement is that a character can only travel to a single physical location in any dimension he

ASTRAL AWARENESS

One of the most common uses for the *Dimensional Sense* Modifier is to create *Astral Awareness*, the ability to perceive astral beings and things:

Dimensional for Sight and Hearing Groups: 20 Character Points.

can travel to, and he has to define that location when he buys the power. (Once he reaches that single location he can, of course, travel freely under his own power, unless some outside force or circumstance prevents him from doing so.) A character may expand the number of locations he can travel to with additional modifiers.

If the character can only travel to a single dimension, the ability to travel to any location in that dimension costs +5 Character Points.

If the character can travel to a related group of dimensions, the ability to travel to any location in any of those dimensions costs +10 Character Points.

If the character can travel to any dimension, the ability to travel to any location in any of those dimensions costs +15 Character Points.

If a character can travel to “any location” in a target dimension, but is restricted to only traveling to physical locations in other dimensions corre-

sponding to the physical location he occupies in the dimension he’s currently in, that costs -3 points.

Generally speaking, Extra-Dimensional Movement does not give a character any enhanced movement in his home dimension; a character in New York cannot transport himself to Valhalla and then back to Tokyo. A character either returns to his home dimension in the same location from which he left it, or he only travels as far as he travelled in the alternate dimension. At the GM’s option, if the character has paid the points to be able to travel to any location in any of the dimensions he can travel to, he can likewise return to any location in his home dimension.

TIME TRAVEL

“Time” counts as a single dimension for purposes of Extra-Dimensional Movement, but it’s separate from all the other dimensions — a char-

EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT TABLE	
Cost	Effect
20	Travel to a single location in a single dimension
Number Of Dimensions Modifiers	
+5	Travel to a single location in a related group of dimensions
+10	Travel to a single location in any dimension
Dimensional Location Modifiers	
+5	Any physical location in a single dimension
+10	Any physical location in a related group of dimensions
+15	Any physical location in any dimension
-3	Character can only travel to the physical location in the other dimension corresponding to his physical location in the dimension he’s currently in
Time Travel Modifiers	
+20	Travel through time to a single moment in time
+5	Travel to a related group of discrete moments in time
+1	Travel forward or back in time by up to 1 Turn in either direction; +1 point for each additional increment on the Time Chart; if character can only travel to the past <i>or</i> to the future, halve this cost
Time Travel Location Modifiers	
+0	No change in physical location; character remains in the physical location he occupies when he activates the power
+2	Any single physical location in the same dimension the character occupies when he uses the power, defined when the power is bought, regardless of where the character is when he activates the power
+5	A limited group of physical locations, in the same dimension the character occupies when he uses the power, in the moments in time the character can travel to
+10	Any physical location, in the same dimension the character occupies when he uses the power, in the moments in time the character can travel to

EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL MOVEMENT SUMMARY TABLE	
Cost	Travel To A Single Dimension
20	A single location
25	Any physical location
22	Any physical location corresponding to his physical location in the dimension he’s currently in
Travel To A Related Group Of Dimensions	
25	A single location in each dimension
35	Any physical location in each dimension
32	Any physical location in each dimension, corresponding to his physical location in the dimension he’s currently in
Travel To Any Dimension	
30	A single location in any dimension
45	Any physical location in any dimension
42	Any physical location in any dimension, corresponding to his physical location in the dimension he’s currently in
Travel In Time: Physical Location Same As Starting Location	
40	Travel to a single moment in time
45	Travel to a related group of moments in time
67	Travel to any moment in time within 50 Billion Years, future or past
Travel In Time: Single Physical Location Other Than Starting Location	
42	Travel to a single moment in time
47	Travel to a related group of moments in time
69	Travel to any moment in time within 50 Billion Years, future or past
Travel In Time: Limited Group Of Physical Locations	
45	Travel to a single moment in time
50	Travel to a related group of moments in time
72	Travel to any moment in time within 50 Billion Years, future or past
Travel In Time: Any Physical Location	
50	Travel to a single moment in time
55	Travel to a related group of moments in time
77	Travel to any moment in time within 50 Billion Years, future or past

acter cannot travel through time by buying Extra-Dimensional Movement to travel to “all dimensions,” he has to buy time travel separately.

To travel in time, a character must pay +20 Character Points (in addition to the base cost of 20 Character Points for Extra-Dimensional Movement). For that total base cost of 40 Character Points, the character can travel to a single moment in time, defined when the power is bought. Time travel occurs only in the physical dimension the character is in when he uses the power. For example, a character on Earth cannot time travel to Hell or Valhalla (though he could have two Extra-Dimensional Powers, one physical and one temporal, that in combination allowed him to do that).

If a character wants to travel to more than a single moment in time, he must pay more Character Points. The ability to travel to a related group of moments in time, in the past or the future, no matter how far removed in time from the present moment, costs +5 Character Points. The GM determines what constitutes a “related group”; examples typically include all instances of a particular date (e.g., any July 4 in any year), or any date within a specific, limited span of time (e.g., one specific year).

Some characters may want to travel to any moment in time within a particular timeframe, such as “within my lifetime” or “within 500 years, past or future, from the present moment.” To do this, they spend points to buy the range across which they may travel. For +1 Character Point, the character may travel forward or backward in time by up to 1 Turn (12 seconds). Thus, if he were in Segment 6 of Turn 2 of a combat, he could travel to any Segment up to Segment 6 of Turn 3 (but no further into the future), or to any Segment back to Segment 6 of Turn 1 (but no further into the past). For each additional +1 point, he may expand his range of travel by one step down the Time Chart (see the accompanying Expanded Time Chart). Thus, to travel to any point in time within 50 Billion Years in the future or 50 Billion Years in the past costs +27 Character Points (for a total cost of 67 points for the power). If the character can only travel one direction in time (backward in the past, or forward to the future), halve this cost.

Regardless of how many moments in time a character can travel to, he can only time travel to a single physical location in the dimension he’s in when he uses the power. By default, this location is defined as the location he’s in when he activates the Power — if he starts in Chicago in 2002, he can travel back to 1636 or forward to 3312, but he’ll still be in Chicago (or whatever it used to be/will become — which may prove hazardous for him!). For +2 Character Points, he may define his time travel as always taking him to the same location, no matter where he is when he uses Extra-Dimensional Movement — he always time travels to London, no matter where he is when he activates the Power. For +5 Character Points, he can go to a related group of physical locations in the same dimension (say, any place in England). For +10 Character Points, he can go to any physical location

in the same dimension. However, characters cannot use this as a cheap form of worldwide Teleportation (e.g., “I’ll travel to two seconds from now in Tokyo!”) — they must engage in what the GM considers legitimate time travel.

Caveat

Extra-Dimensional Movement is a “stop sign” power, and time travel doubly so. The time travel method outlined above is not intended as a combat ability, or a way for a character to go back and “re-do” the actions of the past few Segments or Turns just because they didn’t turn out the way the character wanted. If a character wants to have time-manipulation powers that work in combat, he should buy those as specific Powers with a “time manipulation” effect. Gamemasters should carefully monitor all uses of Extra-Dimensional Movement in general, and time travel in particular, to prevent abuse or loss of game balance; as always, the GM should forbid any use of a power he considers improper or harmful to the game.

OTHER USES

Characters can create “gates” to other dimensions or times by applying the rules for Gates under *Teleportation* (see page 149 of the *HERO System 5th Edition*) to Extra-Dimensional Movement.

You can also use Extra-Dimensional Movement to simulate any situation in which a character is in a different state of being, cannot interact with the “real world,” or is any place which is inaccessible to others. For example, a character with Shrinking could, theoretically, buy enough Shrinking to get inside molecules (the “microverse,” so to speak). However, it’s easier to buy this ability as Extra-Dimensional Movement to the microverse “dimension.” Other such uses include stopping time (the character “travels to the dimension” where he is the only thing in the world not frozen in time); granting wishes (the character “travels to the dimension where he has received whatever he wished for”); the “virtual dimension” of cyberspace; creating an “impenetrable ward” to protect some place or object (the place or object is in another dimension, and thus generally cannot be affected by characters in this dimension); and the like. It may be necessary for a character to purchase special Senses or other Powers for use only in the dimension(s) he travels to; if so, he can usually purchase these with a -1 (or greater) Limitation.

This Power is extremely tricky, and can be difficult to use in a campaign setting. The GM should consider regulating Extra-Dimensional Movement in some fashion; otherwise characters will use it every time they get into trouble. For example, perhaps characters have to buy it in such a way as to make it unreliable — if the character misses a Skill or Activation Roll, he goes off course, to another dimension (or time). This Power is best used by the GM when it fits into his plans; otherwise it should be strictly controlled.

TIME CHART (EXPANDED)

Time Period/Duration

1 Segment
1 Phase
1 Turn (Post-Segment 12)
1 Minute
5 Minutes
20 Minutes
1 Hour
6 Hours
1 Day
1 Week
1 Month
1 Season (3 months)
1 Year
5 Years
25 Years
1 Century
5 Centuries
2,500 Years
10,000 Years
50,000 Years
250,000 Years
1 Million Years
5 Million Years
25 Million Years
100 Million Years
500 Million Years
2.5 Billion Years
10 Billion Years
50 Billion Years

MEETING YOURSELF IN THE PAST

The *HERO System* rules do not offer or suggest any particular theory as to how time travel works, what effects characters traveling to the past can have on their present (or future), or any of the many other thorny issues related to the subject. Each GM must determine for himself how time travel works in his game. There are plenty of books and science fiction stories about the subject for readers interested in doing some research.

ADVANTAGES AND ADDERS

Increased Mass: For each +5 Character Points, the character can transport 2x normal human mass (100 kg) when using Extra-Dimensional Movement.

Safe Blind Travel (+¼): If a character uses Extra-Dimensional Movement and travels to a dimension where there's a solid object occupying his arrival point, roll on the Teleportation Damage Table. However, if the power has this Advantage, the character instead appears in the open space nearest to his target location large enough to hold him (though this isn't necessarily a *safe* location; the nearest open space may be right next to an angry dragon).

POWER ADVANTAGES

TRANSDIMENSIONAL

Mystics sometimes have to fight targets in other dimensions. This requires the *Transdimensional* Advantage for an attack. In addition to the rules in the rulebook, the following apply:

Applying Transdimensional to a power doesn't grant a character the ability to perceive targets in the other dimension for free. If a character doesn't have a Sense that can perceive into the target dimension (such as Clairsentience or an Enhanced Sense with the *Dimensional Sense* Modifier), then he's at 0 OCV when attacking with the Transdimensional power.



DIMENSIONAL RANGE MODIFIER

"Range"	OCV Modifier
Each level difference between the Four Worlds (Assiah, Yetzirah, Briah, Atziluth)	-4
Attacking the Qliphothic Realm from anywhere	-4
Another dimension in the same sephiroth (e.g., attacking another Malkuth dimension from Earth)	-0 or more*
Another dimension in the same level but a different sephiroth (e.g., attacking another Assiatic dimension from Earth, but not one in Malkuth)	-2 or more*
Another layer of the Astral Plane (Lower, Middle, Upper) while in the Astral Plane	-1 per step

For example, if Witchcraft uses an Energy Blast, Transdimensional to attack an entity on a Brialic plane, she suffers a -8 OCV penalty — -4 for each of the two steps between Assiah and Briah. If she used the same spell against a target in a Qliphothic plane, she'd suffer a -4 OCV penalty. If she were in the Middle Astral Plane and used the spell to attack a target in the Lower Astral Plane, she'd suffer a -1 OCV penalty.

* Depending on how "nearby" the GM judges the target dimension to be

A character can use a Transdimensional power against a target in the same dimension he's in if he wants to. He still has to pay END for the Advantage, allocate reserve points to it if it's in a Multipower, and the like, but he's not restricted to attacking only dimensions other than the one he's currently in.

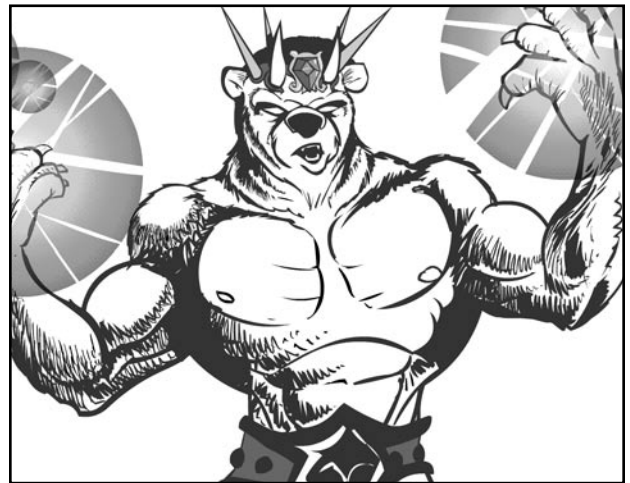
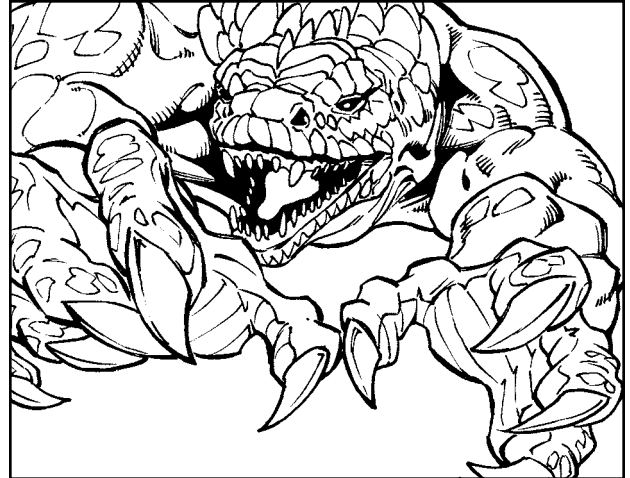
Characters can apply Transdimensional to non-Ranged powers if they want to. However, the vast majority of Transdimensional powers are Ranged.

As noted on page 135 of the *HERO System 5th Edition* rulebook, the normal Range Modifier applies to Transdimensional attacks. There's no additional "Range Modifier" just for attacking through a dimensional barrier, or for crossing multiple "dimensional layers" between the character's current dimension and the target dimension, or anything of the sort.

The Dimensional Range Modifier

Notwithstanding the above, GMs interested in adapting the general *Transdimensional* Advantage to the Multiverse of the Hero Universe (as described in Chapter One) should consider imposing a *Dimensional Range Modifier* for attacks made against distant dimensions. The accompanying table lists suggested penalties based on the "distances" between dimensions.

chapter four:



MYSTIC MASTER VILLAINS

SKARN THE SHAPER



MYSTIC MASTER VILLAINS

This chapter describes three beings whose incredible power is equalled only by their evil. These mystic master villains want to conquer the Earth and enslave humanity. But unlike Dr. Destroyer and his ilk, these master villains are not human and do not act from human motivations. They seek to conquer or corrupt humanity because they must; they are incarnate forces of will.

The master villains described here are:
Skarn the Shaper
Tyrrannon the Conqueror
The Dragon

Background/History: Many mystics acknowledge the sinister Skarn, Shaper of Worlds, as one of the most dangerous dimension lords. Skarn has existed for over two thousand years. In that time, he's conquered hundreds of dimensions and added them to his insane, patchwork realm — the Congeries.

Superficially, Skarn does not seem to occupy the apex of power. The Shaper is stronger than any would-be conqueror who's smarter than him, however, and smarter than anyone who's stronger than him. Whereas other dimensional conquerors rely on their own power, or on hordes of soldiers, Skarn combines raw power, abundant minions, and a large cadre of lieutenants who wield considerable power in their own right. Chief among these minions are his two sons, the cunning sorcerer Arthon and the brutal warrior Torvost; most people forget about Skarn's comparatively weak daughter Brell.

The Shaper became a dimensional conqueror by accident. Originally, he was merely a sorcerer from a little dimension called Orom. The Oromians ruled themselves through a collective presidency of sorcerers called the Triumvirate. Skarn was a Triumvir.

The other two Triumvirs hated each other beyond party rivalry — indeed, beyond sanity. Their hatred led them to invite possession by cosmic entities. Each Triumvir hoped to crush his rival and make his own party supreme. One became a Lord of Nature called the Beast, devoted to razing Orom's cities and making its people live simple lives in harmony with their environment. The other became the Lord of Art called Nomarch Phase, equally determined to let everyone shape their part of the world however they wanted.

The battles between the Beast, Nomarch Phase, and their followers devastated Orom. Skarn vowed to save his world by destroying both cosmic entities. After great effort, he learned a spell that could link their life-forces into a vicious circle of mutual destruction. Skarn had no idea if he himself would survive.

Skarn tricked the Beast and Nomarch Phase into casting bolts of destruction at him at the same instant. He caught both attacks and bounced the power back, changed into spells of life-draining. The Beast sucked the life out of Nomarch Phase; Nomarch Phase drained the Beast, with Skarn in the middle. Both cosmic entities struggled against the curse, but neither would let the other one go. They dragged each other into death, evaporating like an evil dream.

But what of Skarn? He served as the conduit for the life forces of two gods as opposite as night and day. When they died, their power and souls

crashed together into Skarn — and merged. Skarn became more than mortal, a living paradox of contrary cosmic forces. Worse, the three minds shattered as they came together. A new mind coalesced from the fragments of memory and passion, a mind that called itself Skarn but certainly was not the sorcerer who risked everything to save his world.

From Nomarch Phase came a passion to change the world. From the Beast came an equally strong will to force people to live in harmony with their environment. The original Skarn provided a messianic streak. All three had an iron determination to see their will done, no matter what the cost.

The new Skarn quickly conquered Orom; the war-exhausted populace had little will to resist. Many people welcomed a return to order at any price. Once Skarn reshaped Orom to his satisfaction, he turned his attention to nearby dimensions. Rallying his power, Skarn merged the smaller dimensions with Orom so he could “improve” them in turn. Over the centuries, Skarn spliced dozens of little dimensions together with Orom, producing a composite universe called the Congeries. Now he's ready to tackle bigger game. Earth, with its billions of inhabitants, sets Skarn drooling with anticipation. Ultimately, Skarn wants to merge the entire Multiverse into the Congeries, with himself as “benevolent” despot leading everyone to universal Utopia — no matter how much death and destruction he must cause along the way.

Personality/Motivation: Skarn is a fanatical Utopian reformer as well as a megalomaniac. He wants to create a perfect universe full of perfect people. Skarn's notions of perfection, however, have little to do with what anyone else wants. If he thinks a region needs rains of acid every Thursday, he reshapes the region to fit. If the people are lucky, he remembers to reshape them to withstand the acid. Skarn's subjects know him as a capricious god who sends blessings and curses almost at random.

Since Skarn firmly believes he does *everything* for the best, he's very hard to turn aside from any course of action. Nothing is too vicious for him, because “the end justifies the means.” Anyone who disagrees with him proves himself an enemy of reality (or at least a victim of false thinking) whom he must destroy for the good of the Multiverse. Even if a hero can out-fight Skarn, the hero wins only a brief reprieve. Skarn can, however, be tricked into renouncing his claim on a world — at least for a while.

Skarn takes godhood very seriously, in his fashion. He justifies his conquests through his own supposed perfection, and refuses to show any sign he is less than perfect. Thus, he must keep any promise he

makes because as a god, he can't show such "merely mortal" failings as lying or treachery — though he can split hairs and twist meanings to find a way around inconvenient promises, given time.

The Shaper also shows godlike generosity in repaying his debts or rewarding "offerings." To place Skarn in your debt; however, requires doing him an extraordinary favor that comes as a complete surprise. For instance, Skarn would not offer to spare the Earth in return for the heroes fetching a powerful magic artifact. Hagglings is not very divine. On the other hand, if someone surprised Skarn with something he greatly desired or enjoyed — a powerful artifact, the life of an enemy, or the best laugh he's had in centuries — the Shaper might offer to grant that person anything within his power. (Abdication is not within Skarn's power, because the fundamental nature of reality is to be ruled by Skarn.)

The Shaper also likes a good fight. His love of sport can temporarily override his messianic complex. Skarn especially loves to hunt sentient prey (such as PCs) through special "game preserves" in the Congeries, using only his physical powers. Skarn always expects to win, and so he may rashly accept side bets... such as relinquishing his claim to the Earth. If he loses, he also asks for a rematch: "Same thing next year?"



Quote: "Rejoice, puny mortals! I, Skarn, have come to transform your worthless, insignificant lives!"

Powers/Tactics: Even without magic, Skarn is a strong and skillful brawler (part of his heritage from the Beast). He can make himself nearly impossible to damage by transforming himself into a living hole in space (part of his heritage from Nomarch Phase) — if he wishes, things can fall through him into endless Limbo. In this state, Skarn gains the powers listed under the *Living Hole In Space* heading, plus Hardened defenses, and his claw or bite attacks become Armor Piercing and Penetrating. Skarn keeps his *Living Hole In Space* active most of the time, but he drops it for non-magical duels. He (temporarily) loses these Powers if Stunned or Knocked Out.

Skarn is also a sorcerer of nearly limitless flexibility. He was quite skilled even before his apotheosis. Becoming a god, and the cosmic knowledge gained from Nomarch Phase, raised his power even more. As long as Skarn stays in the Congeries, his link to its manifold mystic energies lets him cast whatever spell he wants, instantly. On other planes, where he doesn't know the mystical conditions so well, Skarn must spend a brief period (a Phase) changing the roster of spells in his Power Pool. Unlike some mega-sorcerers, Skarn can apply

his *Cosmic Thaumaturgy* to augment his other Powers, or to increase his physical prowess. He usually produces a 100-Active Point attack spell, and then assigns the remaining 20 points of the VPP to a movement, defensive, or sensory power. If he must, Skarn uses further Limitations (such as a Focus; his crown serves as an OAF) to reduce the final cost of his spells so he can pull more of them from the Pool. But Skarn prefers not to rely on tools in a brawl, since that impugns his omnipotence.

Skarn fights fair, at least in formal combat. One on one, he restricts himself to his opponent's SPD unless he's clearly losing; then he goes one SPD higher. If Skarn still loses — why, he *meant* to lose, as a reward for a gallant foe. At the start of a combat, Skarn doesn't use tactical subtleties such as Held Actions.

The Shaper would rather lose than violate the conditions of a duel, but woe betide any outsider who intrudes on a fight,

CHARACTER SHEET NOTATION

Generally, the text of the character sheets in this book should be pretty straightforward and easy to understand. Consult the Glossary in the *HERO System 5th Edition*, and the example powers in that book, if you have any questions about abbreviations, terms, or notations. The *Writer's Guidelines*, available on the Hero Games website (www.herogames.com), also provide some information about character sheet formatting.

In a Multipower, a "u" next to the cost indicates a Fixed (or "ultra") slot, and an "m" a Flexible (or "multi") slot.

Under the END column, a number in brackets indicates Charges (however, the bracketed number next to STR is an END cost).

SKARN PLOT SEEDS

The heroes find themselves in a horribly disastrous situation. Skarn opens a portal and offers to solve their problem if they release him from a promise not to attack the Earth. By accepting Skarn's offer, the heroes can save many lives — at cost of endangering the future of all humanity.

A female hero impresses Skarn during a confrontation, so he decides to marry her. Skarn's idea of courtship is to send "gifts" such as a dozen slaves to serve the heroine, or the severed heads of her enemies. He also conquers a dimension in her name. Eventually Skarn abducts the heroine to the Congeries... and he won't take no for an answer to his proposal.

Skarn sets up an interdimensional Great Tournament for sorcerers. The winners of the early heats receive impressive magical gifts. A foe of the PCs wins one of these prizes and uses it to defeat them, drawing the heroes into the contest. Skarn promises the tournament's victor a prize greater than all his other gifts put together. Only once someone wins the tournament (a PC, perhaps?) does Skarn reveal that the great "prize" is a chance to fight Skarn himself, for no reward but the glory of the battle.

even to help him! The Shaper can devise quite horrible punishments. If an enemy insulted him, or did not negotiate any formal rules, Skarn uses all his power to annihilate his opponents as quickly as possible, with whatever backup he has available.

Resources: As the god-king of a fairly large dimension (as magical dimensions go, anyway), Skarn can muster thousands of magical warriors, hundreds of thousands of relatively mundane soldiers, and whatever magical Vehicles and superweapons he can imagine. A large and diverse cadre of super-powered officers also serves the Shaper. (Use characters from this book, *Conquerors*, *Killers*, *And Crooks*, or other *Champions* supplements, but change their names and appearance to give them a "magical" style.) Skarn's chief restriction is that he cannot bring all his forces to bear at once: most of his military stays on guard against Tyrannon (and, to a lesser extent, Istvatha V'han). Thus, Skarn attempts quick conquests using limited numbers of elite troops (including his cadre). If Skarn secures a strong beachhead on a world or dimension, he can open a massive Gate to bring in reinforcements, and finally merge the world with the Congeries. Once Skarn brings a world into the Congeries, he can devote his military to a full-scale conquest.

Relations With Others: Now and then, sorcerers and lesser dimension lords hear of Skarn's power but not his madness, and ask for his help. Sometimes it pleases Skarn to grant the request, if his petitioner grovels well and offers him a great gift of magic, lore, or lives. Sometimes Skarn solves the petitioner's problem by annexing his world.

The Shaper loathes any spirit, sorcerer, or mystic entity who rivals his power. He and "that upstart" Tyrannon constantly scheme to undercut each other, and each one hopes to destroy the other and absorb his realm and power. Skarn might oppose Takofanes the Archlich or other powerful villains from a similar desire to prove his own superiority and thin the competition.

Skarn has a tempestuous relationship with Istvatha V'han, the self-proclaimed "Empress of a Billion Dimensions." On the one hand, she rules a lot more than he does. On the other hand, she also opposes Tyrannon, and she shows little interest in conquering magic-rich dimensions. Their encounters range from skirmishes over dimensions they both covet to romantic trysts when one of them hopes to manipulate the other.

Campaign Use: The Shaper shows neither the impenetrable malevolence of Takofanes, nor the blind megalomania of Tyrannon — multiple passions drive the mercurial Shaper. Victory over Skarn may depend less on raw power than on exploiting his personality, such as leading Skarn to accept a challenge the heroes can win. On the other hand, Skarn plans with considerable strategic subtlety once he realizes raw power cannot achieve his objectives. He can practice deeper deceptions than his chief rivals, or try to subvert heroes instead of destroying them. Skarn's cadre also enables him to pursue more than one scheme at a time, and attack from more than one angle.

If Skarn needs to be more powerful for your campaign, increase his Characteristics, give him a few more *Innate Magic* attacks better suited to counter the PCs' defenses, or increase Skarn's defenses. Keep in mind, however, that although Skarn is meant as a powerful foe, he is *not* meant to swat PCs without effort: heroes of normal power can defeat Skarn in a straight-up fight, *if* they manipulate him into accepting certain limits on his own power. To make Skarn less powerful, reduce his SPD and VPP, and decrease the damage of his Energy Blasts.

Skarn is quick to Hunt heroes who thwart him, but not to the extent he would violate the letter of a promise. He may let other dimension lords and mystic mercenaries know how much the PCs' death would please him, without baldly putting out a contract on them. On the other hand, if Skarn believes he lost honorably, he may "Hunt" the heroes by trying to recruit them. For instance, he might place heroes in difficult positions and then offer to rescue them in return for their fealty, or solve some vexing problem for a hero (such as Aunt Mary's medical problems), and then demand a "favor" in return — or he withdraws his "gift."

Appearance: Skarn is a 7' tall, bearlike humanoid. When his *Living Hole In Space* power is active, he seems to be made of star-flecked space, with indigo reflections off body contours. He still shows his luminous, yellow-orange eyes and his short, ivory horns, claws, and teeth. If Skarn wishes, he can return to physical form, in which case he has a sleek auburn pelt over a formidably muscular body. He wears a golden loincloth and a spiky golden diadem that hooks over his horns, with a glittering jewel in the center. Skarn's spells look like typical thaumaturgical globes, beams, and other shapes of light.

SKARN THE SHAPER				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
50	STR	40	19-	Lift 25 tons; 10d6 [5]
30	DEX	60	15-	OCV: 10/DCV: 10
50	CON	80	19-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
30	INT	20	15-	PER Roll 15-
30	EGO	40	15-	ECV: 10
40	PRE	30	17-	PRE Attack: 8d6
12	COM	1	11-	
31	PD	21		Total: 31 PD (31 rPD)
31	ED	21		Total: 31 ED (31 rED)
7	SPD	30		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
25	REC	10		
100	END	0		
70	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 373

Movement: Running: 16"/32"
Swimming: 7"/14"
Teleport 20"/40"

Cost	Powers	END
260	<i>Cosmic Thaumaturgy:</i> Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 120 base + 60 control cost plus Cosmic (+2) for VPP; Does Not Work Outside The Congeries (-½)	var
150	<i>Innate Magic:</i> Multipower, 150-point reserve	
13u	1) <i>Sorcerer's Star:</i> Energy Blast 18d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
14u	2) <i>Sorcerer's Star:</i> Energy Blast 10d6, AVLD (Power Defense; +1½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	6
13u	3) <i>Missile Of Mystic Mastery:</i> Energy Blast 12d6, Variable Advantage (+½ Advantages; +1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	6
13u	4) <i>Spellbreaking Bolt:</i> Dispel Magic Powers 30d6, any Magic spell or power one at a time (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	5
8u	5) <i>Power Boost:</i> Aid Magic Powers 2d6, Can Add Maximum Of 22 Points, all Magic spells and powers simultaneously (+2), Ranged (+½), Indirect (+½), Transdimensional (any dimension; +1); Others Only (-½)	12
9u	6) <i>Reshape Area:</i> Major Transform 2d6 (complete change to anything or anyone in area, reversed if Skarn driven away within 48 hours or if he wills it so), Improved Results Group (any physical alteration; +1), Partial Transform (+½), Area Of Effect (256" Radius; +2¼), Selective (+¼); Extra Time (Extra Phase; -¾)	15
7u	7) <i>Reshape Person:</i> Major Transform 5d6 (person to anything Skarn wants, healed back by touch of any Earthly "god" or Skarn willing it so), Improved Results Group (any physical alteration; +1); Extra Time (Extra Phase; -¾), Limited Target (sentient beings; -¼)	15
6u	8) <i>Create Dimensional Gate:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical	

	location in any dimension), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼), Usable By Other (+¼); Gate (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn to activate; -¾)	6
6u	9) <i>Gate Snatch:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (to Congeries, Skarn's own location), x4 Increased Mass, Usable As Attack (does not work on anyone with Desolidification, Extra-Dimensional Movement, or dimension-warping powers; +1), Ranged (+½), Indirect (+½), Transdimensional (any; +1); Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼)	14
50	<i>Link Dimensions:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (to Congeries, any location), Usable Simultaneously (+½), Area Of Effect (144" Radius; +2), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Uncontrolled (ends when Skarn defeated or another Gate created within it; +½); Gate (-½), Extra Time (1 Minute to activate; -¾), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼)	0
55	<i>Shields Of Skarn:</i> Multipower,	
5u	1) <i>Mental Shield:</i> Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Mental Defense), Hardened (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
5u	2) <i>Mystic Shield:</i> Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Power Defense), Hardened (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
5u	3) <i>Stability Shield:</i> Force Field (10 PD/10 ED), Hardened (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) plus Knockback Resistance -8"	0
5u	4) <i>Shield Wall:</i> Force Wall (8 PD/8 ED, 3" long), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	2
53	<i>Living Hole In Space — Attacker Falls In:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (one location in Limbo), Usable As Attack (does not work on anyone with Desolidification, Extra-Dimensional Movement, or dimension-warping powers; +1), Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Affects Attackers Who Grab, Use Move Through, Or Haymaker On Skarn (-½)	0
20	<i>Living Hole In Space — Ranged Attack Falls In:</i> Missile Deflection (all Ranged attacks)	0
10	<i>Living Hole In Space — Ranged Attack Falls In:</i> +5 OCV with Missile Deflection	0
60	<i>Living Hole In Space — Shunt Away Damage:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%	0
56	<i>Claw/Bite:</i> HKA 3d6 (up to 6d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	2
30	<i>Cosmic Claw/Bite:</i> Armor Piercing (+½) and Penetrating (+½) for <i>Claw/Bite</i> ; Linked (to <i>Living Hole In Space</i> Damage Shield; -½)	4
10	<i>Cosmic Resilience:</i> Hardened (+¼) for 31 PD/31 ED; Linked (to <i>Living Hole In Space</i> Damage Shield; -½)	0
26	<i>Cosmic Resilience:</i> Damage Resistance (31 PD/31 ED), Hardened (+¼); Linked (to <i>Living Hole In Space</i> Damage Shield; -½)	0

10	<i>Godlike Eyes</i> : Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)	0
15	<i>Godlike Ego</i> : Mental Defense (21 points total)	0
10	<i>Spiritual Substance</i> : Power Defense (10 points)	0
5	<i>Skarn Has No Weakness</i> : Lack of Weakness (-5) for Normal Defenses	0
50	<i>Eternal As Reality Itself</i> : Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)	0
40	<i>Pounce Between Dimensions</i> : Teleportation 15", Increased Mass (400 kg)	3
5	<i>Pounce Between Dimensions</i> : One Floating Fixed Location for Teleportation	1
20	<i>Predatory Speed</i> : Running +10" (16" total)	2
5	<i>Predatory Speed</i> : Swimming +5" (7" total)	1
22	<i>Keen Mystic Perceptions</i> : Detect Magic (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Ranged, Sense	0
10	<i>Keen Mystic Perceptions</i> : N-Ray Perception (Sight Group; blocked by magical Force Field/Force Wall)	0
5	<i>Keen Mystic Perceptions</i> : Mental Awareness	0
20	<i>Astral Awareness</i> : Dimensional (Astral Plane) for Sight and Hearing Groups	0
5	<i>Animal Senses</i> : Discriminatory for Normal Smell	0
5	<i>Animal Senses</i> : Tracking for Normal Smell	0
5	<i>Animal Senses</i> : Nightvision	0
3	<i>Animal Senses</i> : Ultrasonic Perception (Hearing Group)	0

Perks

3	Access: The Brialic Planes
50	Fringe Benefit: Deity
10	Reputation: can do <i>anything</i> (in the Outer Planes; 11-) +5/+5d6 All the Followers, Vehicles, and Bases he could possibly want

Talents

3	Bump of Direction
15	Combat Sense 15-
20	Universal Translator 15-

Skills

20	+2 Overall
3	Acrobatics 15-
3	Analyze Magic 15-
3	Breakfall 15-
3	Climbing 15-
3	Concealment 15-
3	AK: The Congeries 15-
2	Navigation (Dimensional) 15-
3	Oratory 17-
15	Power: Thaumaturgy 21-
21	Spell Research (Inventor) 24-
3	Stealth 15-
3	Tracking 15-
3	Scholar
2	1) KS: Cosmic Entities And Dimension Lords 15-
2	2) KS: Empowerment Magic 15-
2	3) KS: Magical Military Strategy 15-
1	4) KS: Magic Styles 11-

2	5) KS: Thaumaturgy 15-
2	6) KS: Transformative Magic 15-
1	7) KS: Ultimate Cosmic Secrets 11-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 1,325**Total Cost: 1,698****200+ Disadvantages**

30	Enraged: Berserk when humiliated (Uncommon), go 14-, recover 11-
25	Psychological Limitation: Demands Respect And Submission (Very Common, Total)
25	Psychological Limitation: Never Lies Or Breaks A Promise (Very Common, Total)
15	Psychological Limitation: Devoted To Reshaping All Existence (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Loves A Good Fight Or Contest (Common, Strong)
15	Reputation: messianic, lunatic conqueror, 14- (Extreme, Limited Group [Outer Planes and Mystic World])
15	Susceptibility: to being gated/Teleported by surprise, takes 3d6 damage instantly (Uncommon)
15	Susceptibility: to dimension-warping attacks, even if Deflected, takes 3d6 damage instantly (Uncommon)
10	Susceptibility: to Affects Desolidified attacks, even if Deflected, takes 2d6 damage instantly (Uncommon)
15	Unluck: 3d6
1,318	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 1,698**EXAMPLE POWERS FOR COSMIC THAUMATURGY POWER POOL**

Send Earth Into The Congeries: By adding his Power Pool to his innate power to link another dimension to his own, Skarn can move an entire planet into the Congeries. (This requires the GM's permission, since it involves buying a naked Advantage through a VPP.) Skarn creates the planet-sized Gate ahead of the planet's orbit so it sails through. Because a planet has so much mass, it takes many Phases to pass through the gate. If the heroes can break Skarn's concentration, the planet returns unharmed to its normal orbit.

MegaScale (1" = 1,000 km wide and broad; +1) for Link Dimensions power (9 Active Points); OAF Bulky (five huge, glowing jewels; -1½), Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½). Total cost: 3 points.

Strobing Bands Of Skarn: This spell evokes bands of glaring, flickering light that wrap around the target to dazzle and stun him. If Skarn spots a gap in a foe's defenses, he might craft a spell like this to take advantage of it.

*Energy Blast 6d6, NND (defense is Sight Group Flash Defense; +1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (67 Active Points); Restrained (-½) (total cost: 45 points) **plus** Sight Group Flash 5d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (31 Active Points); Restrained (-½) (total*

cost: 21 points). Total cost: 66 points.

Sun Of Submission: Skarn could use a magical superweapon like this to conquer a city or small dimension. The swirling, magical light of this crystalline orb saps the will of everyone who sees it, until they become drones willing to obey any command. Because the spell is Uncontrolled, Skarn can launch the *Sun* and then switch his VPP to something else.

Drain EGO 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼), Ranged (+½), Area Of Effect (9" Radius; +1), Continuous (+1), MegaScale (1" = 1 km wide and deep; +¼), NND (defense is Sight Group Flash Defense; +½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Uncontrolled (until orb is destroyed or surrounded by a Mental Defense barrier, or Skarn voluntarily ends it; +½) (110 Active Points); OAF (crystal orb; -1), Restrained (-½). Total Cost: 44 points.

Spiritual Strength: If Skarn wants to fight an astral spirit (or some other Desolidified opponents), he magically adjusts his *Living Hole In Space* power so he can affect the foe with his normal Strength. (This requires the GM's permission, since it involves buying a naked Advantage through a VPP.) The spell creates a ghostly shimmer about half an inch thick over Skarn's body.

Affects Desolidified (+½) for 50 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½). Total cost: 37 points.

THE ROYAL FAMILY

Skarn's a family man, of sorts. At least three of his many wives and concubines lived long enough to bear him children. Arthon and Torvost are Skarn's most trusted lieutenants. The Shaper dotes on Brell, his youngest child, but she does not seek power. Skarn may have other children, too, not yet revealed or perhaps even unknown to their father.

SKARN'S CADRE

Other important minions of the Shaper include:

Commander Klek-T-Kak: The commander of the palace guard looks like a humanoid praying mantis made of living crystal. He is a devastatingly quick and powerful martial artist, enchanted to see and strike spirits as well as material foes.

Exalted Delth/Clavarn: The High Priest/Priestess of Skarn is a two-headed hermaphrodite made by fusing male and female acolytes. Delth/Clavarn is a skilled thaumaturge.

General Kirth: Skarn gave this devoted soldier super-strength and toughness, an extra pair of arms, and enchanted gauntlets. General Kirth leads from the front and readily brawls with superpowered opponents.

Herald Gand: Skarn's herald looks like a middle-aged woman's head floating in the air, with a cluster of tentacles instead of a body. Gand can go nearly anywhere, and is nigh-invulnerable, but has no other powers.

Major-Domo Frask: The chief of staff for Skarn's palace (and Gand's husband) looks like a middle-aged man's head with tentacles instead of a body. Frask constantly frets about his budget and palace maintenance. His touch can inflict stunning pain.

Spymistress Tharlis: Skarn's chief of spies is a leather-clad woman with a magic whip. She hides her hopeless love for her master, but becomes insanely jealous if any heroine catches the Shaper's eye.

ARTHON PLOT SEEDS

A new sorcerer appears in the Mystic World. He's arrogant, but seems powerful, learned, and willing to trade mystic secrets. The sorcerer invites Earth's other mystics to a symposium where he will give away copies of a grimoire thought long-lost. The sorcerer is actually Arthon in disguise; the symposium is a trap to capture as many of Earth's potential mystic defenders as possible.

Torvost leads an invasion of another dimension. Arthon contacts the PCs and offers to sell them the invasion plans in return for some magical secret in their possession. Is Arthon really willing to betray the Congeries, or is it a trap?

Tyrannon captures Arthon, but the Son of Skarn manages to send a message through the dimensions — to the PCs, the most competent group of sorcerers he knows outside the Congeries. Arthon doesn't call his father because that would make him look bad. Since he's no fool, Arthon forges his message so it seems to come from someone the PCs actually *would* rescue. (Not that they can expect any gratitude from Arthon afterward.)

ARTHON				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
25	STR	15	14-	Lift 800 kg; 5d6 [2]
21	DEX	33	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
23	CON	26	14-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
23	INT	13	14-	PER Roll 14-
21	EGO	22	13-	ECV: 7
25	PRE	15	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
10	COM	0	11-	
20	PD	15		Total: 20 PD (5/20 rPD)
20	ED	15		Total: 20 ED (5/20 rED)
5	SPD	19		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	0		
46	END	0		
40	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 183
Movement:		Running: 6"/12"		
Cost	Powers	END		
93	<i>Improvised Thaumaturgy:</i> Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 75 base + 37 control cost; Maximum 25 Real Points Per Power (-1)			
101	<i>Practiced Thaumaturgy:</i> Multipower, 101-point reserve			
6u	1) <i>First Sorcerer's Star:</i> Energy Blast 12d6	6		
6u	2) <i>Second Sorcerer's Star:</i> Energy Blast 8d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½)	6		
6u	3) <i>Third Sorcerer's Star:</i> Energy Blast 8d6, Armor Piercing (+½)	6		
6u	4) <i>Aura of Élan:</i> Telekinesis (32 STR), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3		
6u	5) <i>Aura of Élan:</i> Telekinesis (24 STR), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3		
6u	6) <i>Gate Attack:</i> Teleportation 12", Usable As Attack (does not work on anyone with Teleportation, Extra-Dimensional Movement, or dimension-manipulating powers; +1), Ranged (+½)	6		
10u	7) <i>Soul Binding:</i> Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, BOECV (+1), Takes No Damage From Physical Attacks (+¼), Works Against EGO, Not STR (+¼)	6		
3u	8) <i>Deflecting Disk:</i> Force Field (12 PD/12 ED), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1		
3u	9) <i>Shared Deflecting Disk:</i> Force Field (9 PD/9 ED), Usable Simultaneously (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1		
3u	10) <i>Dimensional Contraction:</i> Shrinking (.25 m tall [about 10 inches], .2 kg mass, -6 to PER Rolls to perceive character, +6 DCV, takes +9" KB)	3		
3u	11) <i>Dimensional Expansion:</i> Growth (+30 STR, +6 BODY, +6 STUN, -6" KB, 6,400 kg, -4 DCV, +4 PER Rolls to perceive character, 8 m tall, 4 m wide)	3		
7u	12) <i>Gate:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location in any dimension), Continuous (+1), Usable By Other (+¼); Gate (-½)	10		
53	<i>Living Hole In Space — Attacker Falls In:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (one location in Limbo), Usable As Attack (does			

	not work on anyone with Desolidification, Extra-Dimensional Movement, or dimension-warping powers; +1), Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Affects Attackers Who Grab, Use Move Through, Or Haymaker On Skarn (-½)	0
20	<i>Living Hole In Space — Ranged Attack Falls In:</i> Missile Deflection (all Ranged attacks)	0
60	<i>Living Hole In Space — Shunt Away Damage:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%	0
5	<i>Mundane Resilience:</i> Damage Resistance (5 PD/5 ED)	0
10	<i>Cosmic Resilience:</i> Damage Resistance (+15 PD/+15 ED); Linked (to <i>Living Hole In Space</i> ; -½)	0
7	<i>Cosmic Resilience:</i> Hardened (+¼) for 20 PD/20 ED; Linked (to <i>Living Hole In Space</i> ; -½)	0
3	<i>Cosmic Resilience:</i> Hardened (+¼) for Damage Resistance (total 20 PD/20 ED); Linked (to <i>Living Hole In Space</i> ; -½)	0
12	<i>Godlike Ego:</i> Mental Defense (16 points total)	0
5	<i>Divine Eyesight:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (5 points)	0
5	<i>Divine Heritage:</i> Life Support (Longevity: Immortality)	0
5	<i>Divine Heritage:</i> Power Defense (5 points)	0
25	<i>Slide Between Dimensions:</i> Teleportation 10", x2 Increased Mass	2
22	<i>Keen Mystic Perceptions:</i> Detect Magic 14- (Sight Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Ranged, Sense	0
20	<i>Astral Awareness:</i> Dimensional (Astral Plane) for Sight and Hearing Groups	0

Perks

5	Fringe Benefit: Upper Nobility of Congeries
6	Reputation: Skarn's viceroy (in the Outer Planes, 11-) +3/+3d6

Skills

6	+2 with <i>Practiced Thaumaturgy</i> Multipower
3	Analyze Magic 14-
3	Cryptography 14-
2	AK: The Congeries 11-
15	Power: Thaumaturgy 20-
3	Spell Research (Inventor) 14-
3	Scholar
2	1) Cosmic Legends 14-
2	2) Dimension Lore 14-
2	3) Dimension Lords And Cosmic Entities 14-
1	4) Empowerment Magic 11-
1	5) Magical Military Strategy 11-
2	6) Thaumaturgy 14-
1	7) Transformative Magic 11-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 568

Total Cost: 751

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Hunted: Skarn 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Demands Respect And Obedience (Very Common, Strong)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Devious And Treacherous (Very Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Greedy For Magical Power (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Fear/Dislike Of Close Combat (Very Common)
- 15 Reputation: Skarn's son, 14-
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (with Torvost, for Skarn's favor; Rival Aware of Rivalry)
- 10 Susceptibility: to being gated/Teleported by surprise, takes 2d6 damage instantly (Uncommon)
- 10 Susceptibility: to dimension-warping attacks, even if Deflected, takes 2d6 damage instantly (Uncommon)
- 10 Susceptibility: to Affects Desolidified attacks, even if Deflected, takes 2d6 damage instantly (Uncommon)
- 421 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 751

**EXAMPLE POWERS FOR IMPROVISED
THAUMATURGY POWER POOL**

Transfixion Sigil: Arthon throws a small tablet engraved with a spiky rune at his target while he shouts a magic word. The tablet fires hundreds of spines of mystic force that paralyze anyone they impale. The victim can overcome the paralyzing effect through either sheer strength or force of will. The tablet reappears in Arthon's hand after discharging, but can be taken away.

Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+½), Area Of Effect (5" Radius; +1) (75 Active Points); OIF (sigil plaque; -½), Cannot Form Barriers (-¼), Susceptible (removed by successful EGO Roll at -3; -1), Requires A Thaumaturgy Roll (-½), 4 Charges (-1). Total cost: 18 points.

Noose Of Nioko: This spell conjures a noose of mystic force that strangles its target. Physical force cannot remove the *Noose*, but the victim can banish it by effort of will before the END invested in it runs out (it costs 1 END per Phase of effect). This version is an example of a spell that Arthon might improvise in the middle of a fight; if he prepared, his *Noose Of Nioko* would probably be more powerful and channeled through a talismanic Focus.

Energy Blast 2d6, NND (defense is Self-Contained Breathing; +1), Continuous (+1), Uncontrolled (ended by victim succeeding with an EGO Roll, may roll once per Turn; +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (37 Active Points); Requires A Thaumaturgy Roll (-½). Total cost: 25 points.

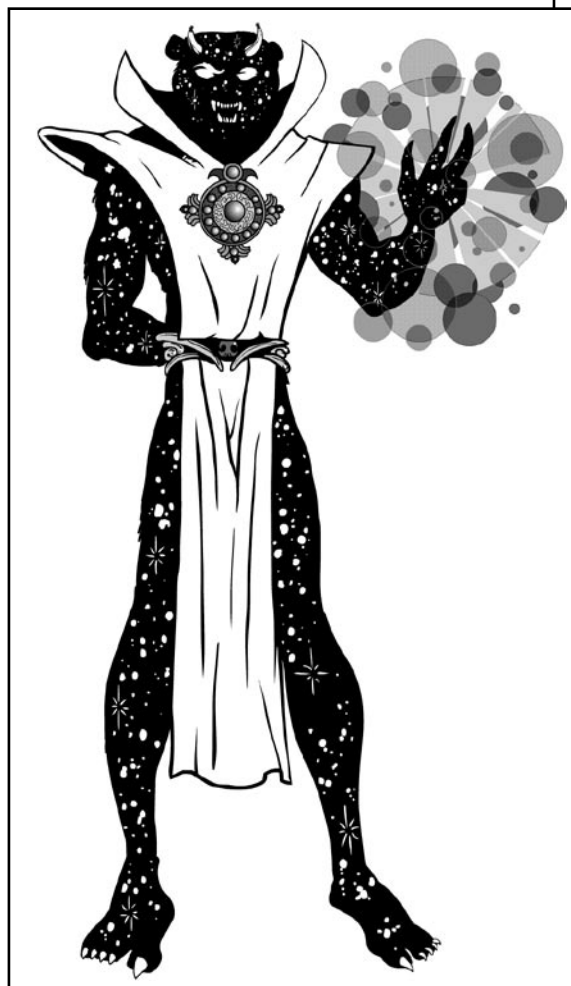
Varthian Veil: Sorcerers throughout the Multiverse know this standard invisibility spell. Streamers of colored light briefly wrap around the caster before he vanishes from view. The spell also shields the user from all magical senses, including targeting magical senses. If Arthon expects a fight, he uses a small amulet (IAF) to further reduce the total cost.

Invisibility to Sight Group and Magical Sense Group, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (37 Active Points); Requires A Thaumaturgy Roll (-½). Total cost: 25 points.

Background/History: Skarn's son Arthon inherited his father's great skill at magic, but only a small measure of his bodily strength and toughness. Arthon became the Congeries's second-most powerful sorcerer, and a formidable mage by any standards. He often acts as Skarn's proxy on magical military operations.

Personality/Motivation: Skarn's eldest son is a cold-blooded schemer who keeps an eye out for his own advantage. He particularly wants to increase his own powers of magic, and will exploit and betray anyone else to get what he wants — so long as this doesn't directly compromise Congeries security.

Anyone who doesn't bow and scrape to the arrogant Arthon receives a "lesson in manners" that may well prove fatal. Absolutely nobody except Skarn likes Arthon, but Arthon thinks people obey



masters they fear better than masters they love.

Arthon loathes his half-brother Torvost, whom he considers a stupid, vulgar brute. Arthon isn't ready to murder Torvost as long as Skarn lives, but he won't miss a chance to make his brother look bad.

Quote: "One would think that even outworlders would have better manners when meeting royalty; but no. It seems one will have to deliver a lesson."

Powers/Tactics: Arthon has dimensional powers like his father's. He is also tremendously learned in Thaumaturgy, but his technique is less than perfect. He still needs the "crutches" of ritual procedures for maximum effect; thus, he cannot easily muster his full power in combat. Most of his spells remain slightly unreliable (he must make a Thaumaturgy Skill Roll not only to change his VPP, but usually applies it as a Limitation to Powers produced through his VPP). Without applying any Limitations, Arthon cannot produce Powers exceeding 25 Active Points from his VPP. He can increase the power of his spells by using Limitations such as Focus (he always keeps several OAF talismans stashed in his belt), Gestures, and Incantations. If necessary, Arthon accepts Increased Endurance Cost. He uses Extra Time or Concentration for non-combat spellcasting; only dire need would make him accept Side Effects on a spell. To produce a 75 Active Point spell, Arthon needs -2 worth of Limitations; usually he can employ such powerful spells only at the start of a fight. The magic he improvises later is less powerful, as he exhausts his Foci and falls back on other Limitations. Changing the VPP also requires a Thaumaturgy Skill Roll and a full Phase.

Since Arthon isn't especially brave and dislikes bruises, he prefers to fight from behind a screen of expendable soldiers. He never goes to all-out attack; he prefers to Hold his Action and maintain good defenses. Arthon often dedicates his entire Multi-

power to defense by putting up both of his *Mystic Shields*, adding *Dimensional Contraction* to raise his DCV, then using his Power Pool to craft a pair of devastating 75 Active Point attacks. The remaining 25 points of his VPP go into miscellaneous defenses or Invisibility. Even if Arthon lacks time to adjust his Power Pool for this, his VPP "default setting" should include a number of defensive spells and at least one full-power attack.

Campaign Use: If the PCs lack the power to face Skarn, Arthon serves as a substitute. The heroes can gain practice and experience by fighting him before they face the Shaper himself. The treacherous Arthon also serves as a foil to Skarn's odd sense of honor. Arthon *doesn't* keep promises, and heroes can count on him to betray any allies. Clever PCs can probably lure Arthon into a trap baited with an opportunity to gain greater personal power, or a chance to discredit Torvost.

If you need to make Arthon more powerful, increase the strength of many of his Multipower slots (which only have about 60 Active Points in their powers), increase the size of his VPP, and/or apply Advantages to let him change his VPP more quickly and easily. If Arthon is too powerful for the PCs, reduce his VPP and possibly his SPD as well.

Arthon readily Hunts heroes who defeated him, and may even Hunt heroes who won a promise of safety from Skarn. But Arthon conducts his attacks through proxies because he's a coward (and to maintain plausible deniability if he breaks one of his father's vows).

Appearance: Arthon looks like a slender bear-man standing 6'6" tall, with small horns and delicate claws. He wears a long, belted tabard with a high collar and a large, talismanic brooch on his chest. When not using his dimensional powers, he has short, light brown fur. When his dimensional shield is up, his body seems made of black, starry space.

TORVOST

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
60	STR	50	21-	Lift 100 tons; 12d6 [6]
26	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
30	CON	40	15-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
10	COM	0	11-	
35	PD	23		Total: 35 PD (20 rPD)
30	ED	24		Total: 30 ED (20 rED)
7	SPD	34		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 12
20	REC	4		
60	END	0		
65	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 286

Movement: Running: 12"/24"
Swimming: 7"/14"

Cost Powers**END**

80	<i>Brick Tricks:</i> Variable Power Pool, 60 base + 30 control cost; Only For Brick Tricks (-½) var			
53	<i>Claw/Bite:</i> HKA 3d6, Affects Desolidified (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); No STR Bonus (-½) 3			
	<i>Martial Arts:</i> Congeries Commando Training			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
5	Choke Hold	-2	+0	Grab One Limb; 2d6 NND (2)
4	Disarm	-1	+1	Disarm, 70 STR
4	Escape	+0	+0	75 STR Escape
5	Kick/			
	Roundhouse	-2	+1	16d6 Strike
4	Punch	+0	+2	14d6 Strike
20	<i>Divine Resilience:</i> Damage Resistance (20 PD/20 ED) 0			
5	<i>Divine Heritage:</i> Power Defense (5 points) 0			
5	<i>Divine Heritage:</i> Life Support (Longevity: Immortality) 0			
6	<i>Super-Healing:</i> Healing 1d6 (Regeneration; 1 BODY per 5 Minutes), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Self Only (-½), Extra Time + Increased Time Increment (1 BODY per 5 Minutes; -1¼) 0			
12	<i>Predatory Speed:</i> Running +6" (12" total) 2			
5	<i>Predatory Speed:</i> Swimming +5" (7" total) 1			
20	<i>Astral Awareness:</i> Dimensional (Astral Plane) for Sight and Hearing Groups 0			
6	<i>Animal Senses:</i> +2 PER for all Sense Groups 0			
5	<i>Animal Senses:</i> Nightvision 0			
6	<i>Animal Senses:</i> +4 versus Range Modifier for Sight Group 0			
6	<i>Animal Senses:</i> +4 versus Range Modifier for Hearing Group 0			

Perks

5 Fringe Benefit: Upper Nobility of the Congeries

Talents

3 Ambidexterity
17 Combat Sense 14-
20 Universal Translator 12-

Skills

3 Acrobatics 14-
3 Breakfall 14-
3 Climbing 14-
3 Concealment 12-
10 Defense Maneuver I-IV
11 Power: Brick Tricks 18- (DEX-based)
3 Stealth 14-
20 Survival (Arctic/Subarctic, Mountains, Temperate/Subtropical, Tropical, Deserts, Marine, and up to four other 2-point groupings defined by the GM) 12-
7 Tracking 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 363

Total Cost: 649

200+ Disadvantages

15 Enraged: if tricked or humiliated (Very Common), go 8-, recover 14-
10 Hunted: by Skarn 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
25 Psychological Limitation: Won't Surrender, Flee Or Refuse A Physical Challenge (Very Common, Total)
15 Psychological Limitation: Expects Respect And Obedience (Very Common, Moderate)
15 Psychological Limitation: Loyalty To Skarn (Very Common, Moderate)
15 Psychological Limitation: Won't Lie, Cheat Or Break A Promise (Very Common, Moderate)
15 Reputation: Skarn's champion, 14-
5 Rivalry: Professional (with Arthon, for Skarn's favor; Rival Aware of Rivalry)
324 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 649

Background/History: Skarn's son Torvost inherited his father's physical prowess, but not his magical skills. Torvost developed his combat skills until in some ways he surpasses even Skarn. Torvost often leads armies invading other dimensions: he's no tactician, but in close combat he can out-fight most opposition.

Personality/Motivation: Torvost's two favorite things in life are a good fight and a good party. Not only is he the Congeries's greatest warrior, his godlike constitution makes him the ultimate party animal. He's mostly honest, absolutely fearless, and all in all a pretty decent chap. Admittedly, being a demigod gives Torvost a teeny little ego problem, but he rips people's heads off only when they gravely insult him or circumstances make him look foolish. Of course, he wouldn't dream of disobeying his father.

**TORVOST
PLOT SEEDS**

Torvost and a crew of Congeries soldiers invade a city and start tearing things up. When confronted, however, Torvost insists this is not an attack: Skarn sent him to find a person, place, and object that could endanger all reality if they come together. Perhaps Skarn really does want to forestall some cosmic danger — but the Shaper surely has some deeper plot as well.

Torvost learns humanity has developed more advanced combat techniques than are known in the Congeries. He comes to Earth to learn from a martial arts master. Torvost initially hooks up with a supervillain such as Shadowdragon or Cheshire Cat, and they go on a spree of robberies. Torvost would switch his alliance to a hero, however — even a PC — if he can offer superior training. The PCs could gain a powerful ally for a time, but do they want to make the Son of Skarn even more formidable?

Skarn decides he wants to study samples of Earth's most powerful technologies. He sends Torvost and a team of soldiers to steal a super-computer, a fully-armed fighter plane... and a nuclear warhead. Can the heroes stop Torvost before he smashes his way into a missile silo and perhaps provokes a nuclear incident?



Torvost spends much of his time with the rank-and-file soldiers of the Congeries, who adore him. The only person in the Congeries Torvost flat-out hates is his half-brother Arthon, whom he considers a bloodless, cowardly sneak.

Quote: “Hey, let’s fight! C’mon, it’ll be fun. Well, at least it’ll be fun for *me*.”

Powers/Tactics: Torvost is a “brick” with unusually refined fighting skills. In addition to normal combat maneuvers, he knows some special tricks — for example, he can wrap an opponent up with convenient sturdy objects, throw things tremendous distances, or use his STR to affect astral or Desolidified beings. (See *The Ultimate Brick* for dozens of possible abilities he could use.) You can simulate these abilities through his *Brick Tricks* Variable Power Pool; the GM should allow him to buy naked Advantages for his STR through the VPP. Torvost is also highly resilient. He cannot cast spells but possesses a few innate magical abilities.

Like Skarn, Torvost prefers fighting one on one. His tactics aren’t very subtle (since he can usually win through raw force), but he isn’t stupid. If an opponent proves unusually tough, or Torvost must fight a group of competent foes, he employs more sophisticated combat maneuvers. For instance, he might Grab one opponent to throw at another.

Campaign Use: Torvost offers super-sorcerers the challenge of a highly physical adversary. Although he has few defenses against mystical attacks, his high STUN makes him hard to defeat quickly, and he probably gets in a few good attacks of his own. He works especially well against a mixed group of superheroes: Torvost can battle the non-sorcerers while the mystics fight other adversaries.

If Torvost is not powerful enough for your characters, increase his Strength, add Damage Classes to his martial arts, or the like. To scale back Torvost’s power, reduce his STR, SPD, defenses and VPP to appropriate levels.

Torvost is not vindictive enough to Hunt a character. Skarn might send his son to attack his enemies, though.

Appearance: Torvost is a shaggy, hugely muscular bear-man standing just over seven feet tall. His fur is a deep golden brown. Like Skarn, he has two small horns on his head. Normally he wears black metal wristbands and a breechcloth-like plaque on a chain-link belt.

BRELL				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [2]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
20	CON	20	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
18	COM	4	13-	
15	PD	11		Total: 15 PD (5 rPD)
15	ED	11		Total: 15 ED (5 rED)
4	SPD	10		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	0		
40	END	0		
30	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 134
Movement: Running: 16"/32"				
Leaping: 14"/28"				
Flight: 10"/20"				
Cost	Powers	END		
48	<i>Thaumaturgy</i> : Multipower, 60-point reserve; all slots Only When In Humanoid Form (-¼)			
4u	1) <i>Sixth Light of Luathon</i> : Dispel Magic Powers 12d6, any Magic spell or power one at a time (+¼); Only When In Humanoid Form (-¼)	4		
4u	2) <i>Cerulean Spear</i> : Ego Attack 4½d6; Only When In Humanoid Form (-¼)	4		
4u	3) <i>Korior's Crimson Crystals</i> : Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF; Takes No Damage From Attacks (all attacks; +½); Only When In Humanoid Form (-¼)	4		
3u	4) <i>Mystic Mirror</i> : Missile Deflection (all Ranged Attacks), Ranged (+1); Only When In Humanoid Form (-¼)	0		
4u	5) <i>First Sorcerer's Star</i> : Energy Blast 9d6; Only When In Humanoid Form (-¼)	4		
2u	6) <i>Third Saffron Sphere</i> : Sight Group Images, +4 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (4" radius; +½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only When In Humanoid Form (-¼), Only To Create Light (-1)	0		
2u	7) <i>Shield Of Skarn</i> : Force Field (8 PD/8 ED), Hardened (+¼); Only When In Humanoid Form (-¼)	2		
2u	8) <i>Change The Living</i> : Major Transform 2d6 (any change to a living creature's body), Improved Results Group (any physical alteration; +1); Only When In Humanoid Form (-¼), Concentration (0 DCV; -½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Limited Target (living beings; -¼)	6		
3u	9) <i>Augmentation</i> : Aid Characteristics 3d6, affects STR, CON, BODY, and STUN at once (+1); Only When In Humanoid Form (-¼), Concentration (0 DCV; -½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½)	6		
54	<i>Mutable Form</i> : Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, and Touch Groups; any shape), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0		

22	<i>Blend In</i> : Persistent (+½) for Shape Shift, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only When Assumes A Humanoid Form (-¼)	0
37	<i>Bigger Forms</i> : Growth (+30 STR, +6 BODY, +6 STUN, -6" KB, 6,400 kg, -4 DCV, +4 PER Rolls to perceive character, 8 m tall, 4 m wide), Costs END Only To Activate (+¼)	1
75	<i>Smaller Forms</i> : Shrinking (0.124 m tall, 0.062 m wide, 0.0240 kg mass, +12" KB, +8 DCV, -8 PER Rolls to perceive character), Costs END Only To Activate (+¼)	5
25	<i>Function Follows Form</i> : Multipower, 25-point reserve	
1u	1) <i>Protected Eyes</i> : Sight Group Flash Defense (5 points)	0
1u	2) <i>Extra Arms</i> : Extra Limbs	0
1u	3) <i>Suckers/Insectile Legs</i> : Clinging (normal STR)	0
1u	4) <i>Fins</i> : Swimming +5" (7" total)	1
2u	5) <i>Long Legs</i> : Running +10" (16" total)	2
2u	6) <i>Wings</i> : Flight 10", x4 Noncombat; Restrainable (-½)	2
1u	7) <i>Leaping</i> : Leaping +10" (14" forward, 7" upward)	1
22	<i>Function Follows Form</i> : Variable Power Pool (Biological Pool), 16 base + 8 control cost; Only For Powers Suitable To Shape Shift Forms (-¼)	var
5	<i>Divine Resilience</i> : Damage Resistance (5 PD/5 ED)	0
6	<i>Divine Heritage</i> : Mental Defense (10 points total)	0
5	<i>Divine Heritage</i> : Life Support: Immortality	0
Perks		
5	Fringe Benefit: Upper Nobility of the Congeries	
9	Reputation: Skarn's Mercy (throughout the Congeries), +3/+3d6	
Talents		
3	Bump of Direction	
20	Universal Translator 13-	
Skills		
2	AK: The Congeries 11-	
3	Stealth 13-	
3	Scholar	
2	1) KS: Body Alterations 13-	
2	2) KS: Congeries Geography 13-	
2	3) KS: Congeries Races 13-	
1	4) KS: Thaumaturgy 11-	

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 388

Total Cost: 522

200+ Disadvantages

5	Distinctive Features: Alien Magical Aura (Not Concealable; Always Noticed; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses)
20	Psychological Limitation: Abhors All Combat (Very Common, Strong)
20	Psychological Limitation: Protective Of Congeries Population (Very Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Loyalty To Skarn

BRELL PLOT SEEDS

Skarn decides Brell ought to do her part to expand his rule. He sends her to Earth to acquire certain mystic artifacts. She uses her shapeshifting and modest magic to steal the artifacts. Although the heroes surely want to stop Brell's thefts, they cannot help noticing that this mysterious new supervillain seems remarkably soft-hearted: Brell leaves a trail of magical healings and rescues as well as burglaries. She could easily fall in with a "nice villain" team such as GRAB.

A magical villain (such as Dark Seraph) kidnaps Brell in hopes of extorting a ransom from Skarn. Wild with rage, the Shaper nullifies any previous pledges to leave Earth alone and invades Earth in force to recover his daughter. The heroes must rescue Brell before Skarn conquers the Earth. But did an Earthly villain really kidnap Brell... or did Tyrannon frame someone for the deed?

After the heroes meet Brell a few times and both help and receive help from her, she professes her love for one of the characters — though she's not yet ready to move to Earth. How does the hero respond to this declaration?

- (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Swayed By Noble Hearts (Common, Moderate)
 - 10 Reputation: Skarn's daughter 8- (Extreme)
 - 10 Susceptibility: to being gated/Teleported by surprise, takes 2d6 damage instantly (Uncommon)
 - 10 Susceptibility: to being forced into her true form, takes 2d6 damage instantly (Uncommon)
 - 222 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 522

**EXAMPLE POWERS FOR FUNCTION
FOLLOWS FORM POWER POOL**

Aquatic Form: Brell could take the form of an aquatic creature such as a fish, or simply grow fins, gills, and a tail for activity underwater. (The GM allows her to buy the *Environmental Movement Talent* in her VPP to simulate this.)

Life Support: Expanded Breathing (Underwater) plus Environmental Movement (Aquatic Movement). Total cost: 8 points.

Spider Maiden Form: Brell takes a cue from Earthly spiders and grows two extra pairs of arms. (This requires the GM's permission, since Extra Limbs are a Special Power.)

Extra Limbs (4). Total cost: 5 points.

Mirror Beast Form: The Mirror Beasts of the Congeries — which look something like huge, silver-plated horses with tusks like a warthog — dwell in a region of deadly light and heat. Brell can take the form of a Mirror Beast to defend herself against similar conditions. (She must also use Growth, since Mirror Beasts are quite large.)

Armor (8 ED) (12 Active Points); Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (light and heat; -¼) (total cost: 10 points) plus Sight Group Flash Defense (6 points) (total cost: 6 points). Total cost: 16 points.

Background/History: Skarn's daughter Brell is considerably younger than her half-brothers. Arthon and Torvost frequently told her she could never hope to equal their power, so she never tried. She has not greatly developed either her physical or magical powers, and doesn't involve herself in palace rivalries or other affairs of state. As a result, the movers and shakers in the Congeries ignore her.

Brell spends much of her time out in the Congeries, helping the people cope with Skarn's latest modifications to them and their environment. Her good works make her the most popular of Skarn's children with the common folk of the Congeries.

Personality/Motivation: Brell is quite modest and unassuming — a remarkable thing in a family of raging egomaniacs. Her "charity work" started as an excuse to stay away from the palace, and grew into a genuine interest in the Congeries and its diverse population.

Brell is probably the only important person in the Congeries who might give the PCs a fair hearing. Although she feels great respect for her divine father, she admits Skarn's will can be awfully inscrutable.

Quote: "Please, you mustn't judge my father harshly. He only wants what's best, in his fashion."

Powers/Tactics: Brell's parentage gives her incredible vitality by human standards, and she has casually picked up a bit of thaumaturgy. Her single greatest ability is shapeshifting. She can assume an incredible variety of forms and stay in any humanoid form indefinitely (though she cannot perfectly copy other forms).

As long as Brell stays in humanoid form, she can also cast spells



for attack and defense. But Brell strongly dislikes combat; she fights — physically or magically — only if she must.

Brell wields more influence in the Congeries than anyone realizes, including herself. The common people like her a lot more than Arthon or Torvost. Skarn also thinks of Brell as “Daddy’s Little Princess,” and may grant her requests that he would deny to anyone else.

Campaign Use: Brell doesn’t have to be an enemy. She might help the heroes, if they can persuade her that annexing Earth to the Congeries would be wrong or that one of her father’s plots could harm the people of the Congeries. A hero’s selfless nobility might lead her to question her obedience to Skarn, though not to the point of helping anyone harm her father.

The Daughter of Skarn generally doesn’t need to be made more or less powerful because combat is not her function within adventures (though you could increase her versatility by applying some Adders to her Shape Shift, such as Imitation or Instant Change, or adding more Sense Groups). She speaks for all the Congeries people who might suffer in an all-out war against Skarn, and humanizes the Shaper and his family. She could become a Contact within the Congeries, or even a love interest for a hero. She would not Hunt a PC on her own, but Skarn, Arthon, or Torvost could draft her into one of their schemes.

Appearance: Brell can look however she wants. In her natural form, she’s a humanoid female with sleek, cinnamon-hued fur, a bearlike head with small ivory horns, and small claws on her fingers and toes.

SOLDIERS OF THE CONGERIES

Skarn commands a military as heterogeneous as his dimension. Congeries troops perform the same functions as any soldiers in a villainous organization. They serve as a petty obstacle between the heroes and the main villain; supply combat support for the main villains; occupy conquered territory and push around the civilians; and conduct legwork in tracking down heroes and making their lives miserable. Masses of soldiers standing at attention or marching in formation also make a leader look more impressive. Congeries soldiers tend to say things like, “By your command, my lord!” and “It shall be done, sire!”

HUSSAR

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [1]
15	DEX	15	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
8	PD	5		Total: 15 PD (7 rPD)
8	ED	5		Total: 15 ED (7 rED)
3	SPD	5		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
28	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 66

Movement: Running: 7”/14”

Cost	Powers	END
31	<i>Glaive:</i> Multipower, 62-point reserve; all slots OAF (-1)	
2u	1) <i>Blade:</i> HKA 3d6+1, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); OAF (-1), No STR Bonus (-½)	2
3u	2) <i>Force Ray:</i> Energy Blast 10d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); OAF (-1)	2
3u	3) <i>Life Drain Ray:</i> Energy Blast 5d6, AVLD (defense is Power Defense; +1½); OAF (-1)	6
3u	4) <i>Paralysis Field:</i> Entangle 3d6, 3 DEF, Takes No Damage From Attacks (+½), Area Effect (One Hex; +½); OAF (-1)	6
15	<i>Lasso:</i> Telekinesis (20 STR), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), Limited Range (6”; -¼), Only Affects Human-Sized Or Smaller Objects (-¼), Only To Grab And Possibly Squeeze (-¼), Can Only Affect One Target At Once (-¼)	0
14	<i>Warding Harness:</i> Armor (7 PD/7 ED); OIF (-½)	0
3	<i>Warding Harness:</i> Power Defense (5 points); OIF (-½)	0
13	<i>Bracers:</i> Missile Deflection (all Ranged attacks); OIF (-½)	0
1	<i>Venom Tolerance:</i> Life Support: Immunity (Harridan venom)	1
2	<i>Fast March:</i> Running +1” (7” total)	1

Perks

29	<i>Harridan Steed:</i> 145-point Follower (see text)
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Skills

15	+3 with Glaive and Lasso
2	Animal Handler (Flying Steeds) 12-
3	Breakfall 12-
3	Riding 12-
3	Teamwork 12-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 145

Total Cost: 211

50+ Disadvantages

- 20 Psychological Limitation: Devotion To Skarn And Mission (Common, Total)
- 5 Rivalry: Professional (with other Congeries soldiers, for glory)
- 20 Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
- 116 Experience Points or Disadvantages specific to the individual Hussar

Total Disadvantage Points: 211

Description: The Hussars are an elite cavalry unit noted for their religious devotion to Skarn. Hussars never surrender, and only overwhelming opposition can make them accept the shame of aborting a mission and retreating.

Hussars carry a nonmagical lasso and a magical polearm called a glaive, and ride harpy-like flying creatures called Harridans which are specially trained to serve a specific Hussar (for these, use the Medium Warhorse from page 170 of *The HERO System Bestiary*, but give the creature Flight 10" in addition to its other abilities). The glaive shoots a variety of magical blasts from its jeweled tip, while its blade can chop through a brick wall. Standard tactics have one Hussar paralyze a target, then other Hussars immediately attack with force-rays or life-draining blasts, Phase after Phase. Once they incapacitate an opponent, the Hussars either carry him off with their lassoes or land and hack the enemy to bits with the blades of their glaives. In a mass battle, Hussars target opposing officers. In such a case, they alter the routine to paralyzing

the targets, the lasso him, then blast him as he dangles from the rope. The Hussar holding the lasso steadily ascends with his captive so that even if the victim can work his way loose, he faces a lethal fall.

Most Hussars look essentially human (though perhaps with odd hair and skin colors), but they wear sword-and-sorcery outfits of leather straps, metal plates enameled with mystic glyphs, helmets, cloaks, rune-engraved arm bracers, and swash-topped boots.

ALL-PURPOSE PETTY OBSTACLE WARRIORS

The Hussars are Skarn's elite cavalry troops. He's got countless other soldiers and guards who aren't as skilled and powerful as they are. To create one of those characters, simply change the Hussar. Get rid of the *Harridan* Follower and the Lasso, reduce Characteristics as appropriate, and change the Glaive to a more appropriate, less powerful weapon, and so on. (Sometimes each one has a single major attack power, one strong enough that most PCs cannot ignore it.) Petty Obstacle Warriors range in appearance from oddly-garbed humans to weird, alien thingies.

Their leaders may send Petty Obstacle Warriors on many different missions, but they all fulfill one role: token opposition for the heroes. Petty Obstacle Warriors lack the power to win an open fight with a superhero, but defeating a small group of them should take a few Phases. An attack by Petty Obstacle Warriors has little chance of success, but it lets the PCs know someone wants to stop them. Similarly, these mystical soldiers can't truly defend anything against superheroes, but their presence indicates the existence of something worth defending. The GM can also use Petty Obstacles early in an adventure to show the heroes that dirty work's afoot; for instance, a hero encounters a group of Petty Obstacle Warriors sent to kidnap someone or steal something.

Skarn uses Petty Obstacle Warriors for several purposes. His palace guards, for instance, are Petty Obstacle Warriors with secondary spells or items geared to detecting concealed intruders. He may send a platoon of various Petty Obstacle Warriors to attack the PCs and watch the fight via scrying as a way to gauge the PCs' power and look for weaknesses. These soldiers carry more lethal attacks and have stronger defenses.

THE CONGERIES

The Congeries began as a small realm called Orom. After Skarn ascended to godhood, he merged Orom with hundreds of other little dimensions, each with its own wildly different environment. Then Skarn capriciously altered local environments still further. By now the Congeries has literally thousands of different environments. Some look like strangely altered Earthly landscapes: a brass and crystal forest; a hill of quivering flesh; a lake of fluid darkness. Other regions fuse or transpose objects in unearthly ways: a garden where flowers walk and humans grow rooted to the soil; a river of dust inhabited by stone fish; a field of boulders where every rock is a lump of solid flame. Much of the Congeries, however, looks like nothing recognizable at all — just abstract shapes and



smears hanging in space.

The size of the Congeries is hard to judge. Space itself is warped, twisted, and so riddled with wormholes that whether a location is “near” or “far” may depend on which route you take. Most of the Congeries’s volume, however, is just air or otherwise uninhabitable. Some of these empty places are big enough to hold the Earth. The relatively “normal” zones where humanlike creatures live add up to an area no larger than North America. Few domains within the Congeries exceed more than a few hundred square miles.

At the “center” of the Congeries lies the former dimension of Orom, a broad, flat ribbon of land twisted into a trefoil knot. Several platforms of land drift nearby. The ribbon and platforms bear compact towns, farmland, and forest, with only small anomalies such as pits of blue fire that should pierce the ribbon but don’t, or patches of living quicksand. In the very center of Orom a knot of interlocking wormhole portals (the Thousandfold Doors) leads to other sections of the Congeries, including Skarn’s palace. Bridges lead from the trefoil band to the portals.

The Congeries’s inhabitants are as diverse as its geography. The original Oromians are humanoid, though their skin has a light red-violet hue and their hair comes in shades of blue or purple. Skarn prefers to annex dimensions with similar inhabitants, but even the humanoid Congerites vary wildly — from ones who seem like Earthly humans to talking rock formations.

All the people of the Congeries have one thing in common, though. Skarn is their god. They dare not question his will.

Region Generator

The Congeries is far too diverse to list its regions. Instead, GMs can create weird environments as needed for adventures. Most of the pocket environments have a short descriptive phrase of the form “<Place Term> of the <Adjective> <Noun>” instead of, or in addition to, proper names. Using the lists below, you can quickly generate new place names and evocative settings. Roll for random combinations, or pick something that sounds good.

Skarn’s Hunting Preserves

Skarn created several special enclaves in the Congeries. These zones of space are accessed only by one or two wormholes. These areas are game preserves where he amuses himself by hunting using only his physical abilities. He stocks the preserves with fierce and powerful beasts from throughout the Multiverse. Skarn also pops captured enemies into game preserves if he thinks they might give him good sport. Typically, Skarn wagers on the hunt: anyone who survives the hunt and finds the hidden way out of the preserve can go free and maybe win some other boon as well.

One typical hunting preserve consists of a bubble of space about three miles in diameter,

CONGERIES REGION GENERATOR

Place	Term	Adjective	Noun
1	Mountain(s)	Red/Orange	Stones
2	Valley	Yellow/Green	Statues
3	Plain	Blue/Purple	Walls
4	Hills	Black/Dark	Windows
5	River	White/Pale	Spires
6	Lake	Grey/Brown	Eyes
7	Marsh	Silver/Golden	Mouths
8	Garden	Brazen/Iron	Faces
9	Forest	Crystal	Hands
10	Desert	Burning	Giants
11	City	Frozen	Flowers
12	Hall	Liquid	Trees
13	Castle	Flowing	Slime/Ooze
14	Caverns	Flying	Beasts
15	Dungeon(s)	Dancing	Men
16	Island(s)	Singing	Blades
17	Domain	Moaning	Gates
18	Land	Screaming	Mirrors
19	Temple	Dreadful	Fires
20	Place	Shining	Mists

giving it an area of 30 square miles. (Gravity works differently, so the entire inner surface is “down.”) The entrance is a door in Skarn’s palace. If that door is closed — which is usually the case — the only exit is a cunningly hidden wormhole that leads to a waiting room back in the palace. The waiting room has strong walls, locked doors, and no windows, in case some ferocious beast finds the wormhole.

A “floor” of earth lines the preserve, but this “floor” has gaps. Anyone who steps through a gap emerges half a mile up, on the opposite side of the bubble. Looking through a gap, then, a character can see the opposite floor! Light shines evenly from the horizonless sky.

Dense forest covers the preserve’s rolling terrain, with patches of marsh, brush, and a few ponds. Both flora and fauna are varied, fantastical, and occasionally dangerous. The largest plant is a huge tree, up to half a mile tall. Its blue-green foliage consists of round, cupped leaves five to 10 feet wide. One such tree grows up through a gap in the sky, where its leaves hide the gap. Most of the forest, however, grows less than a hundred feet high. Hazardous plants include vines that can grasp and strangle, fungi that explode like hand grenades, adhesive moss, and giant pitcher plants that offer treacherous concealment or fruit within their depths.

The preserve always holds several large, dangerous animals. The GM should design these as fairly serious hazards, at least if Skarn stripped the PCs of some of their powers. *The HERO System Bestiary* supplies plenty of critters a GM can turn into Congeries beast just by changing their appearance and maybe adding a template. Typical beasts could include a truculent herbivore like a rhinoceros covered in iron scales, or a cross between a puma and a centipede. In addition to these “show-piece” beasts, the preserve has various “nuisance” beasts, such as: giant, camouflaged land clams that try to swallow people whole; horned snakes

POPULATING THE CONGERIES

The Congeries holds hundreds of different sentient races and sub-races, and any number of weird monsters — more than a GM could ever find time to design. So don’t! Use creatures from the *The HERO System Bestiary* or *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*. Make their appearance even stranger by changing the color scheme, adding antlers, or making other minor changes. Apply a template if you like. If you feel more ambitious, adapt monsters and races from other games — the more bizarre, the better.

Under most circumstances, it’s enough to provide a brief description of a strange creature and move on. Like on Earth, most people and creatures in the Congeries aren’t looking for a fight. They function as “local color.”

SAMPLE PALACE STRANGENESS

A door labeled “Sand-box.” It opens to a sandy beach on a sea of green champagne. The beach and sea are in a vaulted room at least half a mile square, lit by a huge, glowing banana hung from the ceiling.

A concert hall with a rack of disembodied, still-living heads on stage. Skarn gathered the best singers of the Congeries and gave them dubious immortality and “freedom from distractions,” then forgot about them.

Rooms with no walls or ceiling and nothing under the floor. They are just platforms hanging in a psychedelic void, with doorways in and out.

An impossible stairway that somehow forms a closed loop without ever changing direction. Someone who walks up or down the stairs eventually comes to the place where he started.

Mirrors that reflect things reversed top to bottom instead of side to side.

Ranked desks of skeleton clerks with quill pens, doing the palace paperwork.

Quivering, tentacled balls that drift through the air to no apparent purpose.

A hallway where everyone else walks on the walls. They give strange looks at the characters walking on the floor.

that leap from trees to impale their victims; giant insects; and *something* that shoots huge, grasping tentacles out of the ground.

Skarn's Palace

One of the warp-portals in the center of the Congeries leads down a hallway to the massive doors of Skarn's palace. A pair of living statues of sphinx-like beasts guards the doors, but skillful sorcerers can sneak past or deceive them without much trouble. (Skarn is so sure of his power that he never bothered to install locks on the doors or really paranoid and perceptive doorkeepers.)

The doors open on the central courtyard of the palace. The courtyard is actually a large, hollow space surrounded by the palace — an Escher-like labyrinth of warped perspectives, staircases, arcades, towers and intersecting planes of gravity.

Skarn's palace is virtually a self-contained town. The palace has all the normal fixtures of a royal residence: throne room, ballroom, council chamber, kitchen, bedrooms, servants' quarters, storerooms, administrative offices and so on. Very little else about this palace is normal, though. The GM should try to keep a visit to Skarn's palace constantly disorienting through a constant stream of funny, macabre, and just plain strange sights and encounters (see sidebar).

SKARN'S THRONE ROOM

Skarn's grandiose throne room is built of pastel marble disks edged in gold, assembled into a huge, hollow globe. Golden filigree studded with jewels fills the gaps between the disks. More marble disks float about the throne room, carrying petitioners, courtiers, and servants in sublimely random disregard of gravity. Another disk carries a large, round mirror. The only stable platform, hanging opposite the entrance, carries Skarn's throne of gold, ice, and flames caught in mid-flicker.

THE ALL-SEEING EYE OF SKARN

The huge All-Seeing Eye Of Skarn hovers in the middle of the palace courtyard. The one hex-wide eyeball turns to look at (and magically scan) everyone who comes through the doors... and it's harder to fool than the doorkeeper golems. If it sees any person or object whose visual, magical, and Spacial Awareness images do not match, the Eye fires its Dispelling beam and raises the alarm. The Eye also scans the palace with its Clairvoyance. When it finds inconsistent images, fights, or anyone who goes where he should not, it alerts guards to investigate.

Skarn and some of his cadre can set other duties for the Eye as well. The Eye can look into virtually any section of the Congeries and watch for specified objects or activities. Since the Eye lacks genuine intelligence, however, it needs detailed, specific instructions to conduct a search.

THE ALL-SEEING EYE

Farseeing: +10 versus Range Modifier for Sight Group (15 Active Points); OAF Immobile (-2). Total cost: 5 points.

See In Darkness: Nightvision (5 Active Points); OAF Immobile (-2). Total cost: 2 points.

Sense Magic: Detect Magic 12- (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Ranged, Sense (22 Active Points); OAF Immobile (-2). Total cost: 7 points.

Displacement Sense: Spatial Awareness (no Sense Group), Ranged (27 Active Points); OAF Immobile (-2). Total cost: 9 points.

Search The Congeries: Clairvoyance (Sight Group, Detect Magic, Spatial Awareness), 1,000,000x Range (entire Congeries), Reduced Endurance Cost (0 END; +½) (195 Active Points); OAF Immobile (-2). Total cost: 65 points.

Dispelling Beam: Dispel Magic 30d6, all Magic spells and powers simultaneously (+2), Reduced Endurance Cost (0 END; +½) (315 Active Points); OAF Immobile (-2). Total cost: 105 points.

Not Truly Intelligent: Computer (50 points) to represent the Eye's “brain”


Total cost: 243 points.

THE IMAGE-PROJECTING MIRROR

This 1” wide, ornate mirror floats in Skarn's throne room. It acts as a “terminal” for the All-Seeing Eye Of Skarn, allowing the Eye to show what it sees. (The connection with the Eye is a 0-point ability, analogous to a TV screen hooked up to a computer-controlled security system. For the Congeries, this is “off the shelf technology.”) The mirror can also project huge, multiple images of whatever happens before it throughout the Congeries. Skarn uses this power to make public announcements.

The Image-Projecting Mirror: Sight and Hearing Group Images, +4 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (250” radius; +2), Autofire (20 shots; +2½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +1) (175 Active Points); OAF Immobile (-2), Set Effect (whatever's in the hex in front of the mirror; -1). Total cost: 44 points.

TYRANNON THE CONQUEROR



Background/History: Throughout the Outer Planes, mages and spirits fear the name of Tyrannon. The Thousand-Headed God, mystics call him, and Sunmaker — or the Cosmic Cancer, or the Eater of Souls. Tyrannon's most common epithet, however, is the title he chose for himself: the Conqueror. Tyrannon inspires such terror because he does not merely exile, enslave, or kill mystical foes. He *eats* them, and resurrects them as new incarnations of himself. The newest Great Power to arise in the Multiverse lives in hundreds of bodies at once.

The trillions who suffer under Tyrannon's rule do not know this, but Tyrannon began as a mortal mage, just five centuries ago. He was born on a world called Thulkos. Mystics now use that name for the entire plane. Although matter in this dimension collected in circular loops rather than spheres, Thulkos resembled Earth in many ways. Life appeared on Thulkos billions of years ago and eventually evolved into a sentient race very much like Earth-humans. Unlike Earth, however, this dimension's supernatural energies could act only through matter. Mystics practiced various sorts of alchemy or crafted magic items.

The supernatural energies spontaneously generated a thousand or so "gods." These elemental spirits remained formless and mindless, though they showed affinities for different types of matter or living creatures. Sometimes a god infused itself into matter for a brief incarnation. The Thulkosians regarded their mindless "gods" as natural disasters. Only the most powerful mystics could influence them.

Tyrannon became a spell-smith in an age of industrial magic. (Old Thulkosian technomagic bore similarities to the forge-alchemy of the Lemurians; the resemblance is probably coincidental.) He was not the most brilliant or powerful magus of his time, but he had enough skill to participate in his civilization's most ambitious project. Dozens of spell-smiths, and hundreds of followers, set out to merge themselves with Thulkos's elemental gods. They hoped to free their world from mindless divine rampages. They expected to become powerful, but not so mighty that Thulkosian spell-weapons could not defeat them. The spell-smiths crafted mighty talismans and rituals. Each participant fused with a god: spirits of fire and water, wood and earth, light and life, and many more.

Tyrannon merged with one of the most powerful gods. His strong will enabled him to master his powers quickly. Tyrannon liked his power, and wanted more. He attacked a weaker mage-god, killed him, and stole his power and his soul. Now Tyrannon

had even greater power, and a will strengthened by the subsumed spirit of his victim — and he wanted still more. He attacked a second weak mage-god and subsumed him as well. The more Tyrannon defeated and devoured, the more he hungered, until Tyrannon devoured most of the incarnate gods. Each spirit he consumed, however, eroded a bit more of Tyrannon's own personality. Tyrannon the mage became Tyrannon the Conqueror.

The nations of Thulkos had prepared for several hundred man-gods with their own varied interests and loyalties. They were not ready for one creature with the power of several hundred gods. The Thulkosians and the remaining man-gods united to destroy Tyrannon... and failed. The Conqueror slaughtered billions in his conquest; he forced the survivors to worship him through more death and blood. The gods whom Tyrannon could not devour, he imprisoned, exiled to other planes, or drove into the far reaches of the Thulkosian universe.

Worship and sacrifice gave Tyrannon enough power to change reality itself. One world did not satisfy Tyrannon any more than one god's power had. He warped Thulkos's dimension to bring other inhabited worlds within his reach. The Conqueror spent a century reshaping and mastering his universe. He broke Thulkos's ring-shaped star and reshaped the fragments into a new shape — spheres — that he used as shining prisons for eight defeated gods.

When Tyrannon ran out of worlds to conquer in his own universe, he turned his gaze on other dimensions. He learned to open gates to other planes and sent some of his bodies to conquer their inhabitants. Once he ruled another dimension, Tyrannon gathered all his many bodies into one form of incredible power. He ripped wide the barriers between realities and merged the other plane with Thulkos. The laws of Thulkos overwhelmed the natural laws of the other spaces, and their environments became copies of Thulkos's own.

Eventually, Tyrannon encountered beings comparable to himself, who could fight back. Some were other conquerors and would-be conquerors. Others were merely powerful mystics determined to protect their homeworlds. No one, however, can block Tyrannon from every possible universe. The Conqueror seeks dimensions with high populations to worship him, but few powerful mystics to oppose him. In his endless search through the Multiverse, Tyrannon recently discovered a plane that seems ideal:

Earth's.

TYRANNON PLOT SEEDS

An Emissary comes to Earth and enslaves a remote community. Psychically sensitive people around the world start having nightmares. The heroes must follow the slender clues from these dreams to find the Emissary. By then, however, the people have finished building the pylons to stabilize a dimensional bridge. Just as the heroes defeat the Emissary and think that Tyrannon's not so tough, the Emissary's controlling Viceroy appears.

When Tyrannon invades a dimension in force, war refugees scatter to other worlds, including Earth. Some refugees have magic powers and turn to banditry. The heroes must defeat this secondary invasion. They could drive away the refugees, find them a new home, or even try to save their home dimension from Tyrannon.

Tyrannon's agents find a clue to an awesomely powerful magic artifact, which he believes would place the entire Multiverse at his command. The heroes learn that Tyrannon seeks the artifact. The race is on to see who finds it first!

Personality/Motivation: The Conqueror wants more power, so he can conquer even more of the Multiverse and gain still more power. He seeks to merge all the dimensions into one, and make himself the sole ruler — indeed, to absorb the Multiverse into himself so that nothing exists but him.

Tyrannon possesses the knowledge of every soul he conquered and devoured. In theory, this makes Tyrannon extremely knowledgeable. In practice, Tyrannon has a bad memory. None of Tyrannon's forms carries all his knowledge, and only his greatest forms have significant access to the memories of devoured victims. Tyrannon's KS: Knowledge From Consumed Spirits is a plot device for him to know whatever he needs for the sake of an adventure, without giving Tyrannon any broader information about a subject.

The Conqueror lacks the patience for devious scheming. His deceptions seldom become more complex than disguising a Viceroy as some other creature, handing a magical superweapon to an ambitious but gullible mystic, or promising someone that he can rule the world in Tyrannon's name if he helps the Conqueror. Such promises are worthless: the Conqueror never shares power, and an erstwhile ally merely becomes a slightly more favored slave. Tyrannon considers his directness a sign of his superiority: "Knowledge? Cunning? Tyrannon does not need such things. Tyrannon rules by power alone!"

Quote: "Understand, mortals: Tyrannon is no creature like yourselves. Tyrannon is an incarnation of the infinite and ultimate. In Tyrannon do all things reach their completion. The storm, the sea, the circling suns of your galaxy — they are nothing in comparison. Now see the power of Tyrannon... and tremble."

Powers/Tactics: Tyrannon's greatest power consists of his legion of Duplicates. The Conqueror normally lives in 888 bodies at once, scattered through multiple dimensions, in constant communication through psychic links. This makes it nearly impossible to kill or imprison Tyrannon: as long as one Duplicate remains free, the Conqueror might regain his power.

The Conqueror's bodies vary in power. The eight *Throne* forms wield the power of whole armies. Each Throne represents a class of life or matter: elemental earth, fire, and fluid, plus tree-like, insectoid, octopoid, reptilian, and avian Throne forms. The most powerful form, the Tree Throne, rules the densely-populated core of Thulkos itself. The seven lesser Thrones oversee provinces of Thulkos's dimension or conquered planes not yet merged with Thulkos. Each Throne personally guards some location of great strategic importance, such as concentrations of magical energy Tyrannon can exploit.

Each Throne controls ten *Viceroy*s, who serve as principle enforcers of Tyrannon's will. Some Viceroy's make war upon other dimensions. Tyrannon posts others to guard strategic resources and locations, or to teach obedience to conquered populations. Still other Viceroy's serve as roving troubleshooters who punish those who fail to serve Tyrannon to his satisfaction.

Each Viceroy, in turn, creates ten *Emissaries*, the least powerful of Tyrannon's forms. Emissaries scout new worlds for conquest and police the Conqueror's far-flung demesnes. When an Emissary sees something Tyrannon doesn't like, he sends a Viceroy to deliver the appropriate correction. Emissaries wield power comparable to a typical super-mystic. A team of heroes can defeat an Emissary with ease — but as soon as one of Tyrannon's forms comes under attack, his other bodies know in seconds. Other Emissaries... or a Viceroy... or maybe even a Throne soon appear to join the fight.

Each of Tyrannon's forms has a psychic link to several other Duplicates. Emissaries are linked only to their parent Viceroy. Each Viceroy has a link to all ten of its subject Emissaries, to its parent Throne, and to five other Viceroy's from that Throne. Thrones have links to all ten of their Viceroy's, to the other seven Thrones, and to fifteen of their subject Emissaries. Information rapidly passes up and down the chains of psychic links, with the Thrones as coordinators.

Fortunately for everyone else, Tyrannon cannot concentrate many of his forms in one place — especially the Viceroy's and Thrones. If more than 2,000 Character Points' worth of Duplicates spend more than a Turn within 8" of each other, the less powerful Duplicates merge with the more powerful forms. For instance, Tyrannon might commit a Viceroy and three Emissaries to a fight. Let a fourth Emissary join the crew, however, and the Viceroy must absorb one Emissary. If six Emissaries gather in one place, they fuse and are replaced by one Viceroy, summoned from elsewhere in the Multiverse. Likewise, three Viceroy's would merge and be replaced by one Throne. Necessarily, Thrones never associate or fight alongside Viceroy's — the Throne would absorb the Viceroy, or one Throne would absorb the other. Tyrannon does not want to reduce the number of his Duplicates in this way. On the other hand, Tyrannon can cycle through Duplicates, bringing new bodies to a fight while others retreat and recover.

Sometimes, however, the Conqueror deliberately merges his many selves to work his most awesome feats of magic, such as fusing dimensions. Tyrannon can do this safely only at special alignments of Thulkos's eight suns, because only then can Tyrannon emanate his Duplicates again. When Tyrannon occupies just one body, he becomes far more vulnerable to attack despite the vast power of his combined self. These crucial alignments do not happen very often, and they last for less than an hour; they impose significant restrictions on the Conqueror's plans.

Each of Tyrannon's 888 forms can cast a variety of mystic bolts and evoke magical shields. These spells remain nearly the same for all of Tyrannon's forms, except for their power level, though Thrones and Viceroy's know a few more spells than Emissaries. Tyrannon's forms are also physically strong and tough.

Tyrannon's eight "elemental" classes of forms possess a few special powers based on their physical forms or a particular sort of magical or

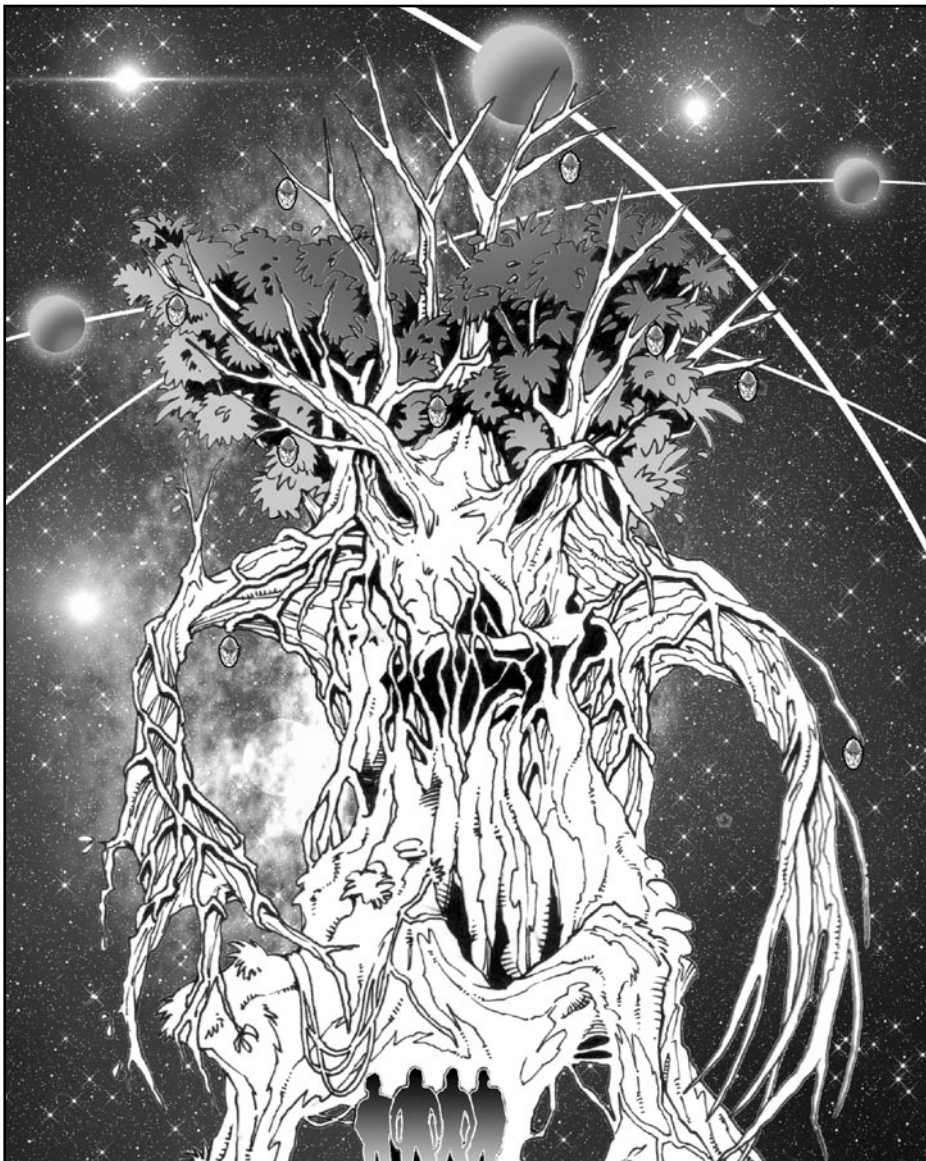
natural phenomenon. For instance, the Fire Throne and its emanations all have Damage Shields because their bodies are indeed made of flame. The Reptile Throne and its emanations can bite, but the Throne and Viceroy also wield magic of time and probability because the primal Thulkosian gods of these phenomena felt a mysterious affinity to reptiles. Each class of Tyrannon's bodies also suffers one or two special weaknesses based on its substance or the form's favored class of magic.

The *Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon* deserves a special mention. Mechanically, this spell works the same for every form: it's a Continuous RKA that bypasses every defense except Resistant forms of Mental Defense. The special effect of the spell, however, varies for each elemental class of forms. For example, a fire form makes the victim combust from the inside out, while a time-controlling reptilian form can age a victim to death.

The eight Thrones draw additional power from the worship and sacrifice by Tyrannon's subjects. The Conqueror can use this power, represented as a Variable Power Pool, to do almost anything he can imagine. Tyrannon usually ties up a Throne's Power Pool in some special magical feat intended to conquer a dimension at a stroke. Forcing Tyrannon to use his Power Pool in combat may thwart his plans. Fortunately, Tyrannon cannot use his Power Pools to increase the power of his spells, augment his Characteristics, or add Advantages to any of his Powers. The Conqueror also does not like to use Limitations, so a Throne will not use them to buy more Powers from the Pool. Still, the Power Pool enables a Throne to tailor attacks against a foe, perform multiple-power attacks, or create defenses, movement modes, or other powers to counter an enemy's strengths.

In combat, Tyrannon trusts in his mystic shields and innate toughness to protect him while he blasts away. He may use the *Hand Of Tyrannon* to throw one opponent at another, or hold a foe that he then bludgeons with raw strength. The *Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon* works better as a threat than as an attack against a group of heroes: Tyrannon may use it to torture a bystander until the heroes submit or retreat to save the innocent's life. Against single foes who lack suitable defenses, however, the *Deadly Wrath* becomes Tyrannon's single favorite attack.

Thulkos's primal gods were powerfully bound to the physical substance of that dimension, and Tyrannon absorbed that connection along with the gods' power. The Conqueror's greater forms cannot spend much time away from Thulkos without suffering damage. Tyrannon can work around this weakness by relying on Emissaries or staying near an active Gate to Thulkos. Thrones and Viceroy cannot move more than one mile from



such a Gate without suffering this Dependency. Tyrannon's first act in invading a dimension, therefore, is usually to build a stable *Dimensional Bridge* between the target plane and Thulkos. A world's defenders can force a temporary retreat by finding and destroying the special disk or pylons that sustain the Gate.

Tyrannon's arrogance offers heroes their greatest advantage over the Thousand-Headed God. He may agree to limit his own power in battle, to make his victory that much more glorious. For instance, Tyrannon likes to believe he doesn't really need his worshippers, and so a Throne might forego the use of its Power Pool in combat. Heroes might also challenge Tyrannon to fight them without cycling through multiple forms, or to accept some other restriction. Tyrannon isn't vain and stupid enough to accept blatantly self-defeating conditions, but heroes can play on his egotism to make a fight more fairly.

No promise binds Tyrannon for long. The Conqueror might wager an entire invasion on a duel between one Emissary and one hero, but he only risks *one* invasion. If Tyrannon loses the duel, he withdraws to Thulkos, ponders how the heroes defeated him, then tries again once he can allocate

Duplicates to the attack.

Resources: Tyrannon rules multiple dimensions, with a total population in the hundreds of trillions. Some of the worlds in his empire are larger and more populous than Earth. Tyrannon commands an army of more than a billion soldiers, though most of this force is tied up fighting the Conqueror's rivals or pacifying newly-conquered regions. Tyrannon commits his armies only after he personally destroys a world's most powerful defenders.

Not all of Tyrannon's resources are magical. Some conquered worlds retain technology comparable to Earth's, though technology stops working once a dimension fully merges with Thulkos. Tyrannon dislikes nuclear weapons and other technological devices, but his satraps may use such weapons in attempts to please him.

Relations With Others: Tyrannon has no allies, only dupes and slaves. Dupes do not stay dupes very long: Tyrannon destroys them if they fail, or enslaves them if they succeed.

The Conqueror counts Istvatha V'han as his greatest enemy; Skarn the Shaper is his second-most-powerful foe. The Multiverse's more mysterious cosmic evils, such as the Kings of Edom, either do not know about Tyrannon or view him as a rival who could interfere with their own plans. Tyrannon, for his part, thinks he can conquer or exploit any other cosmic power, and this may lead him to free a King or unleash other powers he cannot control. Tyrannon does not know about Takofanes, the Dragon, or any of Earth's other powerful entities (and so far, they seem to know nothing of him).

Campaign Use: Tyrannon is the definitive dimensional conqueror. He works well as the main villain of a campaign devoted to defending Earth against invaders from beyond. He can bully lesser dimension lords and tempt evil mystics with greater power, offering further story options while keeping Tyrannon as the prime mover of most adventures.

In all his forms, Tyrannon is a blowhard's blowhard. He cannot actually hold a conversation. Sometimes Tyrannon's pompous, bragging soliloquy has something to do with what another person said; sometimes not.

The GM can play Tyrannon as campy, but you can easily present him as a deadly serious, terrifying threat to humanity and reality itself. Heroes have almost no way to remove his menace once and

for all. At most, the Sunmaker gives Earth a respite while he conquers other worlds. Months, years, or decades later, the Conqueror *will try again*. Heroes who want to stop Tyrannon for good must engage in a long campaign to destroy his Duplicates one by one, or seek magical powers as dark and deadly as Tyrannon himself.

To make Tyrannon more powerful, increase the number of Duplicates he can bring to a fight, or increase the power of his innate magic. Reduce his power by reducing his innate magic, his defenses, or his SPD. An Emissary's attacks and defenses should fall in the same range as a starting superhero, with Viceroys' attacks about 20 Active Points greater and Thrones' attacks 10 to 15 Active Points beyond that.

In his own mind, at least, Tyrannon Hunts anyone who thwarts his plans — no exceptions. Tyrannon seldom Hunts anyone at more than 8-frequency, though. He has so *many* enemies that even with 888 bodies, he can't find time to Hunt them all at once. Tyrannon may increase his Hunting to 11 - if a character emerges as his most determined foe.

Appearance: None of Tyrannon's forms looks exactly alike. Thrones look partly humanoid; at least some Viceroys look humanoid; and Emissaries look like smaller versions of their controlling Viceroy. See the character sheets for further details about Tyrannon's forms.

All of Tyrannon's bodies bear his sigil, a sort of three-pointed arrowhead crossed by a crescent, unless they Shape Shift to conceal this mark. Tyrannon's sigil usually appears on the forehead (if a form has a recognizable head, of course).

Tyrannon's Duplicates also share a "distinctive feature" not visible to the eye. The Conqueror's power is so vast that magical senses become Mega-Scaled for detecting his presence. The range increments for sensing an Emissary increase from hexes to kilometers; to tens of kilometers for Viceroys; and to hundreds of kilometers for Thrones. Psychically sensitive people also dream about Tyrannon when one of his bodies enters a world, while actual precognitives suffer horrifying nightmares about the devastation he will inflict. Such dreams may provide clues to Tyrannon's location and plans, but they are always vague, symbolic, and uncontrollable — a way for the GM to alert PCs that a menace needs stopping, not provide instructions about how to do it.

THE TREE THRONE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
85	STR	75	26-	Lift 32.8 kt; 17d6 [8]
28	DEX	54	15-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
40	CON	60	17-	
35	BODY	50	16-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
28	EGO	36	15-	ECV: 9
50	PRE	40	19-	PRE Attack: 10d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
30	PD	13		Total: 30 PD (30 rPD)
30	ED	22		Total: 30 ED (30 rED)
8	SPD	42		Phs: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12
25	REC	0		
160	END	40		
100	STUN	2		Total Characteristics Cost: 439

Movement: Running: 0"/0"
Swimming: 0"/0"

Cost Powers **END**

310	<i>Divine Power:</i> Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 150 base + 75 control cost; Cannot Add To Or Modify Other Powers Or Characteristics Or Change Form (see text; -¼) plus Cosmic (+2); Only When In Thulkos (-¼), Cannot Add To Or Modify Other Powers Or Characteristics Or Change Form (see text; -¼) var
54	<i>Tyrannon's Full Godly Might:</i> Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), +30 base plus +15 control cost; Cannot Add To Or Modify Characteristics Or Other Powers Or Change Form (see text; -¼), Cannot Be Used When Duplication Is Active (-½) plus Cosmic (+2); Only When In Thulkos (-¼), Cannot Add To Or Modify Other Powers Or Characteristics Or Change Form (see text; -¼), Cannot Be Used When Duplication Is Active (-½) var
169	<i>Tyrannon's Mighty Magic:</i> Multipower, 169-point reserve
9u	1) <i>Power Of Tyrannon:</i> Energy Blast 15d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 3
9u	2) <i>Ire Of Tyrannon:</i> Ego Attack 7½d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 3
9u	3) <i>Hand Of Tyrannon:</i> Telekinesis (28 STR), BOECV (+1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 4
9u	4) <i>Might Of Tyrannon:</i> Energy Blast 12d6, Affects Desolidified (+½) 9
9u	5) <i>Bonds Of Tyrannon:</i> Entangle 4d6, 5 DEF, Affects Desolidified (+½), Cannot Be Escaped With Teleportation (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 4
9u	6) <i>Curse Of Tyrannon:</i> Dispel Magic 25d6, any Magic power or spell one at a time (+¼) 9
9u	7) <i>Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon:</i> RKA 1d6+1, BOECV (+1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1), +2 Increased STUN Multiplier (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 4

9u	8) <i>Tyrannon Is Legion:</i> Summon four 400-point Emissaries 9
4u	9) <i>First Shield Of Tyrannon:</i> Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/6 Power Defense), Hardened (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) 0
3u	10) <i>Second Shield Of Tyrannon:</i> Missile Deflection (all Ranged attacks), +7 OCV 0
4u	11) <i>Quelling Will Of Tyrannon:</i> Suppress Magic Powers 7d6, any Magic power or spell one at a time (+¼) 4
4u	12) <i>Astral Phasing:</i> Desolidification (affected by spirit magic) 4
3u	13) <i>Tyrannon Sees All:</i> N-Ray Perception Sight Group) (blocked by magical barriers), Telescopic (+22 versus Range Modifier) 0
9u	14) <i>Fury Of Tyrannon:</i> Energy Blast 9d6, Area Of Effect (9" Radius; +1), Double Knockback (+¾), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½) 13
8u	15) <i>Gift Of Tyrannon:</i> Aid Magic 2d6, Can Add Maximum Of 22 Points, all Magic spells and powers simultaneously (+2), Ranged (+½), Indirect (+½), Transdimensional (any dimension; +1); Costs Endurance (-½) 10
7u	16) <i>Dimensional Bridge:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location in any dimension), Area Of effect (One Hex; +½), Continuous (+1), Uncontrolled (until another EDM/Teleportation Power used within the Bridge; +½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Usable By Other (+¼); Gate (-½), Extra Time (5 Minutes to activate; -1) 0
5u	17) <i>Thulkosian Dimensional Bridge:</i> Teleportation 10", Area Of Effect (12" Radius; +1), MegaScale (1" of Teleportation distance = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼), MegaScale (1" of range = 1,000 km, can scale down to 1" = 1 km; +1¼), Continuous (+1), Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Usable By Other (+¼); Gate (-½), Extra Time (5 Minutes to initiate; -1) 0
8u	18) <i>Animate Plants:</i> Summon any Plant Monster built on up to 300 Character Points, Expanded Class (plant monsters; +¼), Devoted (+¾); Summoned Being Must Inhabit Locale (-½) 12
9u	19) <i>Mastery Of The Vegetable Kingdom:</i> Major Transform 5d6 (any change to any plant), Improved Results Group (any change, as long as it involves plants; +¾); Limited Target (plants; -½) 13
5	<i>Dimensional Bridge Anchor:</i> Area Of Effect (15" Radius; +1) on <i>Dimensional Bridge</i> ; OAF Immobile (circle of pylons inlaid with images of Tyrannon; -2); Extra Time (5 Minutes to activate; -1) 0
40	<i>Devour Souls:</i> Aid END and STUN 4d6, two Characteristics simultaneously (+½), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Hour; +1); Self Only (-½),

	Only Works If A Sentient Being Died Within 3" Of Tree Throne Within Two Segments Prior To The Phase When Tree Throne Activates Power (-1)	0
149	<i>Tyrannon's Many Forms:</i> Duplication (create up to 887 Duplicates built on up to 1,342 Character Points), Easy Recombination (Zero-Phase Action at full DCV), Altered Duplicate (25%; +¼); Extra Time (1 Turn to initiate; -¾), May Only Activate During Alignments Of The Kae Linn (-½), May Only Have 2,000 Character Points' Worth Of Duplicates In One Location At The Same Time (-½)	0
474	<i>The Gathering Of The Forms:</i> Ranged Recombination (+½) for Duplication, Armor Piercing (+½), Indirect (+½), Increased Maximum Range (640 billion hexes, or about 800 million miles; +3), Transdimensional (any dimension; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Extra Time (1 Turn to initiate; -¾), May Only Activate During Alignments Of The Kae Linn (-½)	0
63	<i>Tyrannon Grasps The Spirit World:</i> Affects Desolidified (+½) for 85 STR, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
5	<i>A Thousand Clutching Roots And Branches:</i> Extra Limbs (thousands), Inherent (+¼)	0
65	<i>A Thousand Clutching Roots And Branches:</i> Stretching 13", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only With Extra Limbs (-½)	0
14	<i>Tyrannon's Toughness:</i> Hardened (+¼) for 30 PD/30 ED	0
37	<i>Tyrannon's Toughness:</i> Damage Resistance (30 PD/30 ED), Hardened (+¼)	0
10	<i>Tyrannon Has No Weakness:</i> Lack Of Weakness (-10) for Normal Defenses	0
12	<i>Tyrannon's Pitiless Gaze:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points), Hardened (+¼)	0
24	<i>Tyrannon's Invincible Ego:</i> Mental Defense (25 points total), Hardened (+¼)	0
5	<i>Tyrannon's Invincible Ego:</i> Damage Resistance (10 Mental Defense)	0
19	<i>Tyrannon's Mystic Fortitude:</i> Power Defense (15 points), Hardened (+¼)	0
90	<i>Tyrannon's Godhood:</i> Life Support (Total, including full Immunity as described in <i>Galactic Champions</i> and Longevity: Immortality)	0
20	<i>Astral Awareness:</i> Dimensional (Astral Plane) for Sight and Hearing Groups	0
10	<i>Mystic Awareness:</i> Detect Magic 13- (Sight Group), Discriminatory	0
10	<i>A Thousand Eyes:</i> Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees) for Sight Group	0
25	<i>One Will In Many Bodies:</i> Mind Link, specific group of up to 32 forms of Tyrannon, any distance, any dimension, Psychic Bond; Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1)	0
-12	<i>Rooted To The Ground:</i> Running -6" (0" total)	0
-2	<i>Rooted To The Ground:</i> Swimming -2" (0" total)	0

Perks

50	Fringe Benefit: Deity All the Bases, Vehicles or Followers that he wants
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Skills

3	Interrogation 19-
3	AK: Domains Of Tyrannon 13-
3	KS: Knowledge From Consumed Spirits 13-
3	KS: Blood Image Magic 13-
3	KS: Dimension Lords 13-
2	KS: Fertility Magic 11-
2	KS: Magic Styles 11-
2	KS: Necromancy 11-
2	KS: Old Thulkosian Forge Alchemy 11-
3	KS: Outer Planes 13-
5	KS: Plans Of Tyrannon 15-
3	KS: Plant Magic 13-
4	Navigation (Dimensional) 14-
3	Oratory 19-
17	Power: Thaumaturgy 20-
3	SS: Botany 13-
3	Teamwork 15-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 1,835**Total Cost: 2,274****200+ Disadvantages**

30	Dependence: must remain in Thulkos (or near a wormhole to it) or suffer 3d6 damage per Minute (Very Common)
35	Enraged: Berserk when "betrayed" (Common), go 14-, recover 11-
10	Hunted: Istvatha V'han 8- (As Pow, Kill)
10	Hunted: Skarn the Shaper 8- (As Pow, Kill)
5	Hunted: assorted cosmic entities and dimension lords 11- (As Pow, Watching)
10	Physical Limitation: Others' Magic Senses are MegaScaled to Detect Tyrannon (Frequently; Slightly Limiting)
15	Physical Limitation: Gargantuan (64m tall; -10 DCV, +10 to PER Rolls to perceive) (Frequently; Greatly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: Rooted To The Spot (no innate movement modes; cannot use any possible movement except Teleportation and Extra-Dimensional Movement, both with <i>lots</i> of Increased Mass for a suitable quantity of soil) (Infrequently; Slightly Impairing)
25	Psychological Limitation: Driven To Dominate All The Multiverse (Very Common, Total)
25	Psychological Limitation: Convinced Of His Utter Superiority (Very Common, Total)
25	Unluck: 5d6
20	Susceptibility and/or Vulnerability based on form (see pages 128-32)
1,859	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 2,274

EXAMPLE POWERS FOR TYRANNON'S FULL GODLY MIGHT POWER POOL

Reshape Galaxies: At his full power, Tyrannon can change the architecture of an entire galaxy, or at least a major portion of one. The Sunmaker reshaped most of Thulkos's cosmos using powers like this, collapsing it to a fraction of its former size. Keep in mind that the BODY of stars and planets is divided among millions of hexes. By Transforming the matter in every hex at once, Tyrannon can alter such enormous masses in hours or days rather than centuries. If Tyrannon annexes a world like Earth, he uses a variation on this Power to spin it into a ring-shaped world like Thulkos.

Major Transform 1d6 (change location and form of stars, planets, and space itself; heals back if Tree Throne destroyed within 1 month of change), Area Of Effect (12" Radius; +1), Continuous (+1), Difficult to Dispel (x2 Active Points; +¼), Indirect (affects interior of buildings, stellar bodies, and the like without diminishment of effect; +¾), MegaScale (1" = 10,000 light-years wide and deep; +4½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼). Total cost: 131 points.

Cosmic Fusion: Tyrannon establishes his rule using *Dimensional Bridges* no larger than a small office building. Once he controls a world and secures the worship of its people, he creates a world-sized dimensional bridge to fuse the other plane to Thulkos. The natural and magical laws of Thulkos eventually overwhelm and reshape the other dimension, if Tyrannon himself does not speed the process using his own power.

Like all Tyrannon's Gates, *Cosmic Fusion* requires a Focus to stabilize it. In this case, the Focus consists of hollow statues representing Tyrannon's eight Throne forms, cast in pure diamond and filled with the blood of sacrificed mortals. Tyrannon sets the eight statues spinning in a ring and creates the vast Gate between them. The spell consumes the statues, however; a *Cosmic Fusion* can be broken only by creating another Gate within it (or, at the GM's option, attacking it with other dimension-warping powers). The collapsing of a Gate is a great excuse to send heroes into some weird dimension.

Extra-Dimensional Movement (to a single location in any conquered dimension), Increased Mass (400 kg), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Continuous (+1), MegaScale (1" = 10,000 km wide and deep; +1¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Uncontrolled (lasts until another Gate is created within it, or some similar form of dimension-warping attack is used against it; +½), Usable By Other (+¼) (175 Active Points); OAF Immobile Expendable (Very Difficult to replace; -2¾), Extra Time (5 Minutes to activate; -1). Total cost: 37 points.

Background/History: The Tree Throne is Tyrannon's most powerful form. It is the "real" Tyrannon, insofar as Tyrannon's other forms converge on the Tree Throne when he gathers his power for his mightiest feats of magic. The Tree Throne has to be the focus of Tyrannon's power because it cannot move. If someone destroyed the Tree Throne, another Throne form would eventually take its place as Tyrannon's center.

The Tree Throne dwells at the center of Thulkos. Tyrannon's subjects worship the Tree Throne as the god of agriculture and the cycle of life and death.

Personality/Motivation: Tyrannon takes special care to protect the Tree Throne because of its role as his central form and executor of his greatest magic. Here, alone, Tyrannon might bargain with enemies to save one of his lives. By the same token, the Tree Throne is least likely to accept self-defeating conditions on a fight.

Quote: "You have found the heart of Tyrannon. You have found your doom!"

Powers/Tactics: The Tree Throne possesses the greatest physical strength and toughness of any of Tyrannon's forms. Tyrannon can crush just about anything, matter or spirit, that comes within reach of the Tree Throne's enormous arms. He can also clutch at opponents with the smaller branches and roots that radiate from his body. Although the roots and branches are defined as Extra Limbs, Tyrannon has so many of them that breaking one limb inflicts no meaningful harm on him. (And of course, he can always use his spells to Heal himself.)

Tyrannon can gather all his Duplicates into the Tree Throne at any time (this is represented by the *Gathering Of The Forms* power). When Tyrannon does this, the Tree Throne doubles in size and its Variable Power Pool increases in power. (See the Lesser Throne character sheet for feats using the basic Variable Power Pool. The Tree Throne examples all use the augmented VPP.) But while the Conqueror can gather his forms at any time, he can Duplicate himself, only when the eight suns of Thulkos form certain conjunctions or alignments. Even then, restoring his multiplicity takes Tyrannon twelve seconds. During this time, the Duplicates grow like fruit on the Tree Throne's branches. Once the Duplicates grow and separate themselves, they must immediately move away from the Tree Throne or be absorbed again.

Tyrannon's mightiest form can consume and reincarnate other souls or spirits, the fate of defeated dimension lords or mystics (this is mostly a "plot device" ability, so it's not represented in *HERO System* terms). Devoured souls can fuel the re-creation of destroyed Duplicates, or Tyrannon can resurrect slain foes as fanatically loyal slaves. Indeed, Tyrannon could turn a consumed spirit into a new Duplicate outside the eight normal classes of Thrones, Viceroys, and Emissaries by paying points to add more Duplicates. The GM can use these "extra" Duplicates to surprise heroes who think they know the Conqueror's limits.

The Tree Throne is rooted to the spot. If the Tree Throne wants to move, Tyrannon must use a *Dimensional Bridge* or teleport using its Power Pool (and take a large volume of soil with himself). This is also the only Throne that cannot disguise itself through Shape Shifting.

The Tree Throne possesses a few special spells for transforming and affecting plant life. This form also has a special aptitude for magic related to plants, birth, growth, death, and necromancy.

Campaign Use: Meeting the Tree Throne is a pivotal event in an adventure. Either the heroes launched a daring attack at the heart of Tyrannon's power — or they are captured and about to die, if they cannot escape quickly.

On the other hand, the Tree Throne offers heroes their best chance to destroy Tyrannon. When the Conqueror gathers himself together, the heroes have a short period of time in which to kill or imprison him before he re-grows his Duplicates and becomes the Thousand-Headed God once more. Simply destroying the Tree Throne would greatly weaken Tyrannon for months, until another Throne took over its role and Tyrannon defeated and devoured a spirit powerful enough to metabolize into a new Throne form.

See the introduction for suggestions about making Tyrannon's forms more or less powerful. The Tree Throne cannot Hunt characters directly.

Appearance: This form of Tyrannon looks like a gigantic tree 200 feet (30") tall. A thick trunk rises from a welter of roots that spread out over and under the ground. Two powerful, branch-like limbs sprout from the trunk, while ridges and gashes in the trunk form a gnarled face. Hundreds of smaller branches sprout from the tree-trunk. The Tree Throne's form and foliage slowly changes: sometimes it looks like an oak, sometimes a pine, a willow, or any other sort of tree, including trees never seen on Earth. Dozens of heads, Thulkosian and otherwise, grow like fruit on the branches, giving the Throne the power to see all around itself. Sometimes Tyrannon speaks from the Throne's main face; sometimes all the heads speak in unison.

When the Tree Throne absorbs Tyrannon's other forms, it swells to twice its normal height and girth. The Throne also looks more humanoid: Its trunk reshapes into a humanoid torso, with a crested Thulkosian head instead of a face within the trunk. The Tree Throne's skin remains furrowed bark, however, while branches bearing foliage and smaller heads still sprout from the torso and the pair of great arms — though the branches look much smaller in comparison to Tyrannon's colossal body.

LESSER THRONE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
60	STR	50	21-	Lift 100 tons; 12d6 [6]
28	DEX	54	15-	OCV: 9/DCV: 9
40	CON	60	17-	
30	BODY	40	15-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
28	EGO	36	15-	ECV: 9
50	PRE	40	19-	PRE Attack: 10d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
30	PD	18		Total: 30 PD (30 rPD)
30	ED	22		Total: 30 ED (30 rED)
8	SPD	42		Phs: 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11, 12
25	REC	10		
100	END	10		
80	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 387

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Flight: 5"/10"
Teleportation: 15"/30"

Cost	Powers	END
207	<i>Divine Power:</i> Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 100 base + 50 control cost; Cannot Add To Or Modify Other Powers Or Characteristics Powers (-¼) plus Cosmic (+2); Only When In Thulkos (-¼), Cannot Add To Or Modify Other Powers Or Characteristics Powers (-¼)	var
169	<i>Tyrannon's Mighty Magic:</i> Multipower, 169-point reserve	
9u	1) <i>Power Of Tyrannon:</i> Energy Blast 15d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
9u	2) <i>Ire Of Tyrannon:</i> Ego Attack 7½d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
9u	3) <i>Hand Of Tyrannon:</i> Telekinesis (28 STR), BOECV (+1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	4
9u	4) <i>Might Of Tyrannon:</i> Energy Blast 12d6, Affects Desolidified (+½)	9
9u	5) <i>Bonds Of Tyrannon:</i> Entangle 4d6, 5 DEF, Affects Desolidified (+½), Cannot Be Escaped With Teleportation (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	4
9u	6) <i>Curse Of Tyrannon:</i> Dispel Magic 25d6, any Magic power or spell one at a time (+¼)	9
9u	7) <i>Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon:</i> RKA 1d6+1, BOECV (+1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1), +2 Increased STUN Multiplier (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	4
9u	8) <i>Tyrannon Is Legion:</i> Summon 4 400-point Emissaries	9
4u	9) <i>First Shield Of Tyrannon:</i> Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/6 Power Defense), Hardened (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
3u	10) <i>Second Shield Of Tyrannon:</i> Missile Deflection (all Ranged attacks), +7 OCV	0
4u	11) <i>Quelling Will Of Tyrannon:</i> Suppress Magic Powers 7d6, any Magic power or spell one at a time (+¼)	4

4u	12) <i>Tyrannon Goes Where He Wills:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any location in any dimension), Increased Mass (200 kg)	4
4u	13) <i>Astral Phasing:</i> Desolidification (affected by spirit magic)	4
4u	14) <i>Astral Leap:</i> Teleportation 15", Armor Piercing (+½)	4
9u	15) <i>Fury Of Tyrannon:</i> Energy Blast 9d6, Area Of Effect (9" Radius; +1), Double Knockback (+¾), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½)	13
7u	16) <i>Dimensional Bridge:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location in any dimension), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Continuous (+1), Uncontrolled (until Lesser Throne loses consciousness; +½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Usable By Other (+¼); Gate (-½), Extra Time (5 Minutes to activate; -1)	0
5	<i>Dimensional Bridge Anchor:</i> Area Of Effect (15" Radius; +1) on <i>Dimensional Bridge</i> ; OAF Immobile (circle of pylons inlaid with images of Tyrannon; -2); Extra Time (5 Minutes to activate; -1)	0
14	<i>Tyrannon's Toughness:</i> Hardened (+¼) for 30 PD/30 ED	0
37	<i>Tyrannon's Toughness:</i> Damage Resistance (30 PD/30 ED), Hardened (+¼)	0
5	<i>Tyrannon's Toughness:</i> Lack of Weakness (-5) for Normal Defenses	0
10	<i>Tyrannon's Pitiless Gaze:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)	0
19	<i>Tyrannon's Invincible Ego:</i> Mental Defense (25 points total)	0
5	<i>Tyrannon's Invincible Ego:</i> Damage Resistance (10 Mental Defense)	0
15	<i>Tyrannon's Mystic Fortitude:</i> Power Defense (15 points)	0
90	<i>Tyrannon's Godhood:</i> Life Support (Total, including full Immunity as described in <i>Galactic Champions</i> and Longevity: Immortality)	0
10	<i>Mystic Awareness:</i> Detect Magic 13- (Sight Group), Discriminatory	0
25	<i>One Will In Many Bodies:</i> Mind Link, specific group of up to 32 forms of Tyrannon, any distance, any dimension, Psychic Bond; Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1)	0
20	<i>Tyrannon Ignores Gravity:</i> Flight 5", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½)	0
125	Special Powers based on Throne's form (see see pages 128-32)	
Perks		
50	Fringe Benefit: Deity All the Bases, Vehicles or Followers that he wants	
Skills		
3	Interrogation 19-	
3	AK: Domains Of Tyrannon 13-	
3	KS: Blood Image Magic 13-	

3	KS: Dimension Lords 13-
3	KS: Knowledge From Consumed Spirits 13-
2	KS: Magic Styles 11-
2	KS: Old Thulkosian Forge Alchemy 11-
3	KS: Outer Planes 13-
3	KS: Plans Of Tyrannon 13-
4	Navigation (Dimensional) 14-
3	Oratory 19-
13	Power: Thaumaturgy 18-
3	Teamwork 15-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 955

Total Cost: 1,342

200+ Disadvantages

30	Dependence: must remain in Thulkos (or near a wormhole to it) or suffer 3d6 damage per Minute (Very Common)
35	Enraged: Berserk when "betrayed" (Common), go 14-, recover 11-
10	Hunted: Istvatha V'han 8- (As Pow)
10	Hunted: Skarn the Shaper 8- (As Pow)
5	Hunted: assorted cosmic entities and dimension lords 11- (As Pow, Watching)
10	Physical Limitation: Others' Magic Senses are MegaScaled to Detect Tyrannon (Frequently; Slightly Limiting)
10	Physical Limitation: Enormous (up to 8m long or tall, up to 6,000 kg weight; -4 DCV, +4 to PER Rolls to perceive) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
25	Psychological Limitation: Driven To Dominate All The Multiverse (Very Common, Total)
25	Psychological Limitation: Convinced Of His Utter Superiority (Very Common, Total)
25	Unluck: 5d6
20	Susceptibility and/or Vulnerability based on Throne form (see pages 128-32)
937	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 1,342

EXAMPLE POWERS FOR DIVINE POWER POWER POOL

Dimensional Surveillance: For all his arrogance, Tyrannon still appreciates the value of spying on his enemies. A Lesser Throne can whip up a spell to scry across dimensions to Earth — one lesser mystics have little chance to detect.

Clairsentience (Sight, Hearing, and Magic Sense Groups), Dimensional (Earth), Invisible to Magic Sense Group (+½). Total cost: 75 points.

Hole In The World: The Earth Throne can command the ground to split — all the way down into a planet's mantle. Within an hour, this creates a volcano that erupts for the next several million years until it's the size of, say, Hawaii. A group of heroes must act quickly to find a way to plug the hole before the volcano buries a city.

Tunneling 1" through 8 DEF material, Mega-Scale (1" = 100 km; +¾), Usable As Attack (+1). Total cost: 71 points.

Infantilized Population: The Reptile Throne can use its mastery of time to reverse aging, rapidly Transforming everyone within hundreds of miles into small children. They shall grow up again learning to worship Tyrannon as their terrible Divine Father.

Major Transform 1d6+1 (adult sentients to children; reversed by killing/dispelling the Reptile Throne), Area Of Effect (6" Radius; +1), Continuous (+1), MegaScale (1" = 100 km wide, broad, and deep; +¾). Total cost: 75 points.

Tailored Attack: If Tyrannon recognizes that a particular enemy lacks a particular defense, he can design an attack to exploit that deficiency. He could also tailor attacks to exploit known Vulnerabilities or Susceptibilities. (Is this fair or game balanced? Of course not. Tyrannon is a cosmic entity who doesn't have to play by the same rules as the PCs.)

Energy Blast 6d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), NND (defense is something he knows the target doesn't have; +1). Total cost: 75 points.

Background/History: Each lesser Throne claims jurisdiction over an area and population larger than the Earth. They are Tyrannon's ultimate weapon: when he sends one of his greatest selves into war, he intends death and destruction on a scale of nations, if not continents. Tyrannon's subjects know the power of his Thrones very well indeed. When a Throne appears in a region apart from a scheduled state visit, they

know someone has displeased their god and they shall soon face his awful and inescapable wrath.

Personality/Motivation: The Lesser Thrones show Tyrannon's arrogance and will to power in full measure. Unfortunately, they also have the power to back up the boasts. Tyrannon expects his Throne forms to crush any opposition.

Quote: "Know, insolent worms, that at last you face the full power of Tyrannon. Take pride in this honor... in the few moments before you die."

Powers/Tactics: Lesser Thrones combine awesome physical power with nigh-limitless magical ability. In addition to innate spells of formidable power, each Lesser Throne has a hefty Variable Power Pool. When a Throne assaults a world, it often generates MegaScaled attacks to devastate wide regions and incapacitate or kill entire populations.

Their Variable Power Pools give Thrones diverse options in personal combat, and they are smart enough to use their powers efficiently. For instance, a Throne could make itself Invisible to almost every sense imaginable, fly in, start Entangling enemies, and then reveal itself to gloat a while. If Tyrannon discovers a foe's weakness, he will certainly tailor an attack to exploit it. On the other hand, the Conqueror enjoys making a Throne invulnerable to anything the heroes can throw at it, then laughing as he blasts away with his innate spells... though heroes may surprise Tyrannon with a power he didn't anticipate and can't defend against right away.

Campaign Use: When heroes encounter a Lesser Throne, either they went looking for trouble, or they made Tyrannon very angry. Tyrannon does not send Thrones into action for any mission less important than conquering a world, defeating an army — or destroying his most persistent foes. PCs should encounter a Lesser Throne only after clashes with Emissaries and Viceroys, so they appreciate the menace of Tyrannon's greatest incarnations.

See the introductory section for details about making Tyrannon's various forms more or less powerful. Tyrannon commits a Lesser Throne to Hunting characters only if they blocked several of his attempts at conquest.

Appearance: Lesser Thrones are each about the size of an elephant (unless a Throne uses its Variable Power Pool to change its size). Each Throne combines different aspects of its class of creature or matter in an ever-changing fusion. For instance, the Reptilian Throne might have the body of a huge turtle, a long, snakey tail, scaled but humanoid arms and legs, and the head of a crocodile, while the Earth Throne is veined and layered with different metals and minerals. A Throne's appearance changes from hour to hour, or Turn to Turn in combat, as body parts change their form or substance. A Lesser Throne always includes some humanoid element, and its head always bears the three crests typical of a Thulkosian. A Lesser Throne may Shape Shift to look like anything it wants, but Tyrannon always resumes his true form in combat so his enemies will know who destroyed them.



VICEROY				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
50	STR	40	19-	Lift 25 tons; 10d6 [5]
24	DEX	42	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
30	CON	40	15-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
24	EGO	28	14-	ECV: 8
35	PRE	25	16-	PRE Attack: 7d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
30	PD	20		Total: 30 PD (20 rPD)
30	ED	24		Total: 30 ED (20 rED)
6	SPD	26		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
20	REC	8		
100	END	20		
60	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 293

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
 Flight: 5"/10"
 Teleportation: 13"/26"

Cost	Powers	END
146	<i>Tyrannon's Mighty Magic:</i> Multipower, 146-point reserve	
8u	1) <i>Power Of Tyrannon:</i> Energy Blast 13d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
8u	2) <i>Ire Of Tyrannon:</i> Ego Attack 6½d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
8u	3) <i>Hand Of Tyrannon:</i> Telekinesis (24 STR), BOECV (+1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
8u	4) <i>Might Of Tyrannon:</i> Energy Blast 11d6, Affects Desolidified (+½)	8
8u	5) <i>Bonds Of Tyrannon:</i> Entangle 5d6, 4 DEF, Affects Desolidified (+½), Cannot Be Escaped With Teleportation (+¼)	8
8u	6) <i>Curse Of Tyrannon:</i> Dispel Magic Powers 22d6, any Magic power or spell one at a time (+¼)	8
8u	7) <i>Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon:</i> RKA 1d6+1, BOECV (+1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1)	8
3u	8) <i>Tyrannon Is Legion:</i> Summon 400-point Emissary; Extra Time (One Turn; -1¼)	8
4u	9) <i>First Shield Of Tyrannon:</i> Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/6 Power Defense), Hardened (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1
3u	10) <i>Second Shield Of Tyrannon:</i> Missile Deflection (all Ranged attacks), +5 OCV	0
4u	11) <i>Quelling Will Of Tyrannon:</i> Suppress Magic Powers 6d6, any Magic power or spell one at a time (+¼)	4
4u	12) <i>Tyrannon Goes Where He Wills:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location in any dimension)	4
4u	13) <i>Astral Phasing:</i> Desolidification (affected by spirit magic)	4
4u	14) <i>Astral Leap:</i> Teleportation 13", Armor Piercing (+½)	4
8u	15) <i>Fury Of Tyrannon:</i> Energy Blast 8d6, Area Of Effect (8" Radius; +1), Double Knockback (+¾), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½)	12
6u	16) <i>Dimensional Bridge:</i> Extra-	

	Dimensional Movement (any physical location in any dimension), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Usable By Other (+¼); Gate (-½), Extra Time (5 Minutes to activate; -1)	0
9	<i>Dimensional Bridge Anchor:</i> Uncontrolled (until anchor-disk broken; +½) for Dimensional Bridge; OAF Bulky (disk inlaid with images of Tyrannon; -1½)	0
20	<i>Tyrannon's Toughness:</i> Damage Resistance (20 PD/20 ED)	0
5	<i>Tyrannon's Toughness:</i> Lack of Weakness (-5) for Normal Defenses	0
5	<i>Tyrannon's Pitiless Gaze:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (5 points)	0
15	<i>Tyrannon's Invincible Ego:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
15	<i>Tyrannon's Mystic Fortitude:</i> Power Defense (15 points)	0
90	<i>Tyrannon's Godhood:</i> Life Support (Total, including full Immunity as described in <i>Galactic Champions</i> and Longevity: Immortality)	0
10	<i>Mystic Awareness:</i> Detect Magic 12- (Sight Group), Discriminatory	0
22	<i>One Will In Many Bodies:</i> Mind Link, specific group of up to 16 forms of Tyrannon, any distance, any dimension, Psychic Bond; Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1)	0
29	<i>Tyrannon's Malleable Form:</i> Shape Shift (Sight and Touch Groups, any shapes of that Viceroy's class), Costs END Only to Change Shape (+¼)	3
20	<i>Tyrannon Ignores Gravity:</i> Flight 5", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½)	0
75	<i>Special Powers</i> based on Viceroy's form (see pages 128-32)	

Perks

30	150 points for Bases and Followers
10	Fringe Benefit: Head of State

Skills

3	Interrogation 16-
3	AK: Domains Of Tyrannon 12-
2	KS: Blood Image Magic 11-
3	KS: Magic Styles 12-
3	KS: Outer Planes 12-
3	KS: Plans Of Tyrannon 12-
4	Navigation (Dimensional) 13-
3	Oratory 16-
7	Power: Thaumaturgy 14-
3	Teamwork 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 631

Total Cost: 924

200+ Disadvantages

25	Dependence: must remain in Thulkos (or near a wormhole to it) or suffer 3d6 damage per 5 Minutes (Very Common)
35	Enraged: Berserk when "betrayed" (Common), go 14-, recover 11-



- 10 Hunted: Istvatha V'han 8- (As Pow)
- 10 Hunted: Skarn the Shaper 8- (As Pow)
- 5 Hunted: assorted cosmic entities and dimension lords 11- (As Pow, Watching)
- 5 Physical Limitation: Large (4m tall; -2 DCV, +2 to perceive) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Magic Senses are MegaS-caled to Detect Tyrannon (Frequently; Greatly Limiting)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Driven To Dominate All The Multiverse (Very Common, Total)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Convinced Of His Utter Superiority (Very Common, Total)
- 20 Unluck: 4d6
- 20 Susceptibility and/or Vulnerability based on Viceroy form (see pages 128-32)
- 534 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 924

Background/History: Each Throne form emanates ten Viceroy. These are smaller, less powerful versions of the Throne. If Lesser Thrones fill the role of ICBMs, submarines, and other strategic weapons in Tyrannon's military plans, Viceroy are field artillery and attack aircraft: they deliver a lot of damage on a smaller scale, and they are hard for a small group of fighters to defeat without special weapons. A few Viceroy can conquer, pacify, or destroy a city or a small dimension.

Personality/Motivation: Viceroy display Tyrannon's self-absorbed megalomania in full measure. They have

enough power to fight and win against many foes, but are not as omnipotent as Tyrannon thinks. Viceroy are also less intelligent than Thrones, and less skilled overall. Viceroy are not actually stupid, but Tyrannon tends to overestimate the skills of his Viceroy as well as their power.

Quote: "You thought you knew the measure of Tyrannon. Now learn the depth of your mistake... for Tyrannon is legion!"

Powers/Tactics: A Viceroy has a good selection of attack spells (though they lack the Variable Power Pool that gives the Thrones such combat flexibility). Viceroy also have strength and toughness comparable to a typical "brick," and a variety of spells for perception and movement.

Viceroy keep a stable baseline form, but can use magic to alter their shape into anything within their particular class of life or matter: thus, a Fluid Viceroy can look like anything — but it's still made of some sort of liquid. An Insectoid Viceroy can look like any sort of insect, though it keeps its huge size.

Tyrannon's Viceroy usually engage in straight-up battles. A Viceroy's favorite strategy is simply to keep its Force Field up and blast away. If Tyrannon finds his Viceroy outmatched, however, he may employ basic deceptions such as pretending to retreat (using Desolidification or Teleportation) while actually finding a place to spy on his enemy from a distance and waiting for a chance to take the characters by surprise.

A Viceroy may possess a Base or Vehicle, possibly including a magical superweapon. The Base or Vehicle probably includes a stabilized Dimensional Bridge, since Viceroy wither and die without such a contact to Thulkos (or some other world where the people worship Tyrannon). Lesser Thrones have Bases too, but they keep them back in Thulkos or subject dimensions; Viceroy may possess field Bases built by Emissaries and enslaved local labor.

Campaign Use: Tyrannon usually relies on his Viceroy to fight hero teams. One Viceroy gives a hero team a good fight, but a team can beat it; two Viceroy, or a Viceroy and a few Emissaries, have a good chance to defeat a team of typical superheroes who do not fight strategically. Viceroy show that Tyrannon is a force that surpasses the PCs, but not hopelessly so.

See the introduction for suggestions about making Tyrannon's forms more or less powerful. When Tyrannon Hunts his enemies, he uses Viceroy for straightforward assaults upon them.

Appearance: Just as each Throne presents a hybrid or generic form of a state of life or matter, each Viceroy looks like a specific type within that class. For instance, the Reptile Throne has Viceroy shaped like a lizard, a crocodile, a snake, a turtle, various sorts of dinosaurs, and so on. The Earth Throne has Viceroy look like misshapen, humanoid lumps of different metals and minerals. Fire Viceroy range from slender gas-jet flames to masses of hot ash and coals. Each set of ten Viceroy includes one that looks like a Thulkosian, shaped from the appropriate substance or given a suitable integument. Viceroy are generally 12 to 13 feet tall or long.

EMISSARY

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
35	STR	25	16-	Lift 3,200 kg; 7d6 [3]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
23	CON	26	14-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
10	INT	0	11-	PER Roll 11-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
4	COM	-3	10-	
25	PD	18		Total: 25 PD (10 rPD)
25	ED	20		Total: 25 ED (10 rED)
5	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
15	REC	6		
46	END	0		
40	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 172

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Flight: 10"/20"

Cost	Powers	END
94	<i>Tyrannon's Mighty Magic:</i> Multipower, 94-point reserve	
6u	1) <i>Power Of Tyrannon:</i> Energy Blast 12d6	6
6u	2) <i>Ire Of Tyrannon:</i> Ego Attack 5d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	2
6u	3) <i>Hand Of Tyrannon:</i> Telekinesis (18 STR), BOECV (+1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
6u	4) <i>Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon:</i> RKA 1d6, BOECV (+1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1)	6
6u	5) <i>Banishment Of Tyrannon:</i> Dispel Magic 16d6, any Magic spell or power one at a time (+¼)	6
6u	6) <i>Tyrannon Goes Where He Wills:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location, any dimension), x16 Increased Mass	6
3u	7) <i>First Shield Of Tyrannon:</i> Force Field (8 PD/8 ED/5 Power Defense), Hardened Defense (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1
3u	8) <i>Second Shield Of Tyrannon:</i> Missile Deflection (all Ranged attacks), +5 OCV	0
3u	9) <i>Astral Leap:</i> Teleport 10", Armor Piercing (+½)	3
10	<i>Spiritual Substance:</i> Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED)	0
11	<i>Mighty Will:</i> Mental Defense (15 points total)	0
5	<i>Mystic Defense:</i> Power Defense (5 points)	0
5	<i>Mystic Awareness:</i> Detect Magic 11- (Touch Group)	0
10	<i>One Will In Many Bodies:</i> Mind Link to parent Viceroy, any distance, any dimension, Psychic Bond; Only With Others Who Have Mind Link (-1)	0
30	<i>Special Powers</i> based on the Emissary's form (see pages 128-32)	

Perks

10	Fringe Benefit: Head of State
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Skills

3	Interrogation 13-
2	KS: The Plans of Tyrannon 11-
3	Oratory 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 228

Total Cost: 400

200+ Disadvantages

35	Enraged: Berserk when "betrayed" (Common), go 14-, recover 11-
10	Hunted: Istvatha V'han 8- (As Pow)
10	Hunted: Skarn the Shaper 8- (As Pow)
5	Hunted: assorted cosmic entities and dimension lords 11- (As Pow; Watching)
20	Physical Limitation: Dispelled When Knocked Out (Frequently, Fully Limiting)
10	Physical Limitation: Others' Magic Senses are MegaScaled to Detect Tyrannon (Frequently; Slightly Limiting)
25	Psychological Limitation: Driven to Dominate All the Multiverse (Very Common, Total)
25	Psychological Limitation: Convinced of His Utter Superiority (Very Common, Total)
15	Unluck: 3d6
20	Susceptibility and/or Vulnerability based on Emissary form (see pages 128-32)
25	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 400

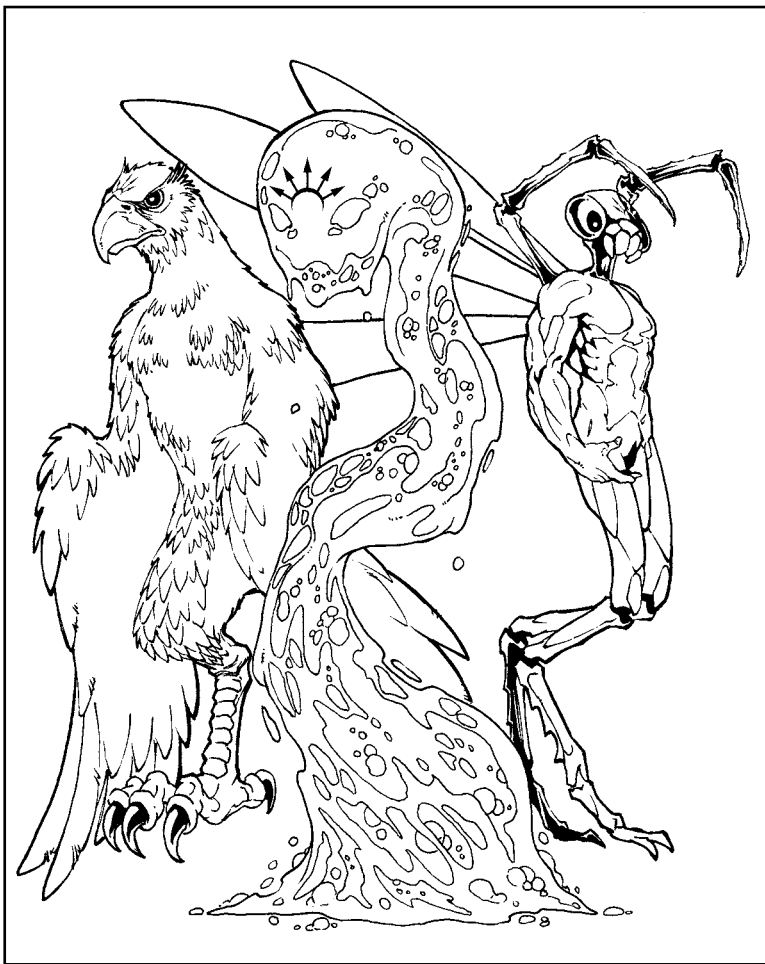
Background/History: Each Viceroy of Tyrannon emanates ten Emissaries, the weakest of the Conqueror's forms. They form Tyrannon's heavy infantry as well as his messengers and recruiters. As the most numerous class of Tyrannon's forms, they are also the aspect of the Conqueror that his enemies encounter most often.

Note that Emissaries are not immortal, nor resistant to environmental effects. Of all Tyrannon's forms, they are most often absorbed and re-created; none of them exist long enough for natural aging to become an issue. Normally, Duplicates would age (or not) along with the original character. In this case, however, the GM can ignore such details in the interest of dramatic sense.

Personality/Motivation: Emissaries are just as overbearing as Tyrannon's greater forms. They are also less intelligent than the Conqueror's other forms. An Emissary can carry out complex tasks under the guidance of a Viceroy or Throne, but Tyrannon's Emissaries don't adapt to surprises very well. When an Emissary encounters something it finds confusing or surprising, it calls its parent Viceroy to investigate.

Quote: "Fools! You face but the tiniest fraction of Tyrannon's power. Surrender now, and spare yourselves the pain and humiliation of defeat!"

Powers/Tactics: Tyrannon's weakest forms are not much more powerful than a typical starting superhero. Emissaries have a limited selection of spells, but are physically tougher than the average mystic.



Their greatest strength is that they lack the greater forms' Dependence on planes where people worship Tyrannon: Emissaries can go to any dimension and stay as long as they want.

Instead, Emissaries suffer a more ambiguous weakness. An unconscious Emissary vanishes and returns to Thulkos, just as many spirits are dispelled by "killing" or knocking out their corporeal form. On the one hand, Emissaries seldom truly die in combat. On the other hand, once an Emissary drops to negative STUN, it's gone from the fight and has no chance to recover.

Emissaries often scout a world before Tyrannon invades in force. They learn about the people and the world's defenses, and may enlist fifth columnists through promises of favor under Tyrannon's rule. Most importantly, Emissaries can prepare the disks and pylons needed to stabilize a *Dimensional Bridge*. This requires the use of local artisans, since Tyrannon lacks the skills to build anything himself. An Emissary simply bullies or bribes local people into making the basic Foci, then consecrates the disks and pylons through human sacrifice.

Campaign Use: A group of Emissaries can function like a supervillain team. Emissaries can also act as field agents for a Viceroy that fills the role of a mastermind villain — though of course, Viceroy and Emissaries are really all the same character. That may not be obvious the first time heroes encounter Tyrannon, if the Viceroy and Emissaries come from different classes of Tyrannon's bodies. The Conqueror may also use Emissaries for relatively

stealthy missions, such as recruiting gullible natives as lackeys to prepare the way for an invasion.

See the introduction for notes about increasing or decreasing the power of Tyrannon's forms. Tyrannon uses Emissaries to Hunt PCs in hit-and-run attacks, since he can most easily spare them from other duties. Once Tyrannon knows an enemy's location, Emissaries Gate in and attack.

Appearance: Emissaries look like smaller forms of their controlling Viceroy. A typical Emissary stands six feet tall, though some are slightly larger or smaller. Each one of an Viceroy's Emissaries has a different color: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple, black, white, grey, and brown.

TYRANNON'S VARIED POWERS

Avian Forms

Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon Special Effect: Victim shakes and vibrates, tearing himself apart.

Cost	Throne Powers and Skills	END
45	Wings: Flight +20" (25" total), x4 Non-combat, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Restrainable (-½)	0

Additional Multipower Slots:

11u	1) Tornado: Energy Blast 14d6, Area Of Effect (7" Radius; +1); Does Not Work Underwater Or In A Vacuum (-¼), Random Knockback (see <i>Champions</i> , page 153; -0)	13
10u	2) Wind Blast: Energy Blast 14d6, Double Knockback (+¾); Does Not Work Underwater Or In A Vacuum (-¼)	12
12u	3) Suffocation: Energy Blast 8d6, No Normal Defense (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing]; +1), Continuous (+1)	12
11u	4) Airborne Supremacy: Suppress Flight or Gliding 8d6, one Power at a time (+¼), Area Of Effect (7" Radius; +1), Personal Immunity (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	5
9u	5) Weather Control: Change Environment 8" radius, +/-10 Temperature Levels, Multiple Combat Effects, Varying Combat Effects, Varying Effect (+1), MegaArea (1" = 1 km broad and wide; +¼); No Range (-½)	14
3	Bump of Direction	
17	Power: Wind/Weather Tricks 20-	
3	KS: Air Magic 13-	
2	KS: Dimensional Magic 13-	
1	Navigation (Air; adds to Dimensional) 14-	

Total Cost: +124 points

Cost	Viceroy Powers and Skills	END
41	Wings: Flight +18" (25" total), x4 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Restrainable (-½)	0

Additional Multipower Slots:

- 10u 1) *Tornado*: Energy Blast 12d6, Area Of Effect (6" Radius; +1); Does Not Work Underwater Or In A Vacuum (-¼), Random Knockback (see *Champions*, page 153; -0) 12
- 8u 2) *Wind Blast*: Energy Blast 12d6, Double Knockback (+¾); Does Not Work Underwater Or In A Vacuum (-¼) 10
- 8u 3) *Weather Control*: Change Environment 8" radius, +/-7 Temperature Levels, Multiple Combat Effects, Varying Combat Effects, Varying Effect (+1), MegaArea (1" = 1 km broad and wide; +¼); No Range (-½) 12
- 3 Power: Wind/Weather Tricks 12-
- 3 KS: Air Magic 12-
- 1 Navigation (Air; adds to Dimensional) 12-

Total Cost: +74 points**Cost Emissary Powers and Skills END**

- 29 *Wings*: Flight 15", x4 Noncombat Movement, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Restrained (-½) 1
- 1 KS: Air Magic 8-

Total Cost: +30 points**Val Avian Form Disadvantage**

- 20 Susceptibility: to Entangles, Grab, or other restraints, 1d6 damage per Phase of restraint (Common)

Earth Forms

Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon Special Effect: Stone needles erupt from the victim's flesh.**Cost Throne Powers and Skills END**

- 69 *Earth Passage*: Tunneling 7" through DEF 7 material, Fill In, x8 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 2
- 11 *Stone Body*: Armor (6 PD), Hardened (+¼) 0

Additional Multipower Slots:

- 4u 1) *Earth Barriers*: Entangle 8d6, 5 DEF, Variable Special Affect (any mineral substance; +¼); Only To Create Barriers (-1) 8
- 6u 2) *Earthmoving*: Telekinesis (50 STR), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Only Versus Earth/Rock (-½) 4
- 6u 3) *Tremors*: Energy Blast 12d6, Explosion (+½), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½), Only Affects Targets On The Ground (-¼), Only Does Knockdown, Not Knockback (-0) 10
- 6u 4) *Earth Lance*: Energy Blast 8d6, Indirect (+¾); Target Must Be Within 8" Of Earth Or Rock (-¼) 5
- 9u 5) *Augment Earth*: Succor Earth Powers 9d6, any Earth power one at a time (+¼), Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 4
- 9u 6) *Quell Earth*: Drain Earth Powers 4½d6, any Earth power one at a time (+¼), Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 4

- 3 Power: Earth Powers Tricks 13-
- 2 SS: Geology 11-

Total Cost: +125 points**Cost Viceroy Powers and Skills END**

- 45 *Earth Passage*: Tunneling 7" through DEF 7 material, Fill In 4
- 7 *Stone Body*: Armor (4 PD), Hardened (+¼) 0

Additional Multipower Slots:

- 3u 1) *Earth Barriers*: Entangle 6d6, 5 DEF, Variable Special Affect (any mineral substance; +¼); Only To Create Barriers (-1) 8
- 5u 2) *Earthmoving*: Telekinesis (40 STR), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Only Versus Earth/Rock (-½) 3
- 5u 3) *Tremors*: Energy Blast 10d6, Explosion (+½), Personal Immunity (+¼); No Range (-½), Only Affects Targets On The Ground (-¼), Only Does Knockdown, Not Knockback (-0) 9
- 5u 4) *Earth Lance*: Energy Blast 7d6, Indirect (+¾); Target Must Be Within 8" Of Earth Or Rock (within 8"; -¼)
- 3 Power: Mineral Tricks 12-
- 2 SS: Geology 11-

Total Cost: +75 points**Cost Emissary Powers and Skills END**

- 30 *Earth Passage*: Tunneling 6" through DEF 6 material 3

Total Cost: +30 points**Val Earth Form Disadvantages**

- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Sonic/Vibration Attacks (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Sonic/Vibration Attacks (Uncommon)

Fire Forms

Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon Special Effect: Target catches fire and burns from the inside out.**Cost Throne Powers and Skills END**

- 78 *Flaming Body*: HKA 3d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Always On (-½), No STR Bonus (-½) 0
- 20 *Flaming Flight*: Flight +10" (15" total) 2

Additional Multipower Slots:

- 9u 1) *Fire Blast*: RKA 5d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 3
- 8u 2) *Augment Flames*: Succor Fire 9d6, any Fire power or spell one at a time (+¼), Limited Range (20"; +¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 4
- 7u 3) *Quell Flames*: Drain Fire 4½d6, any Fire power or spell one at a time (+¼), Limited Range (20"; +¼) 7
- 3 Power: Flame Tricks 13-

Total Cost: +125 points**Cost Viceroy Powers and Skills END**

- 43 *Flaming Body*: HKA 1½d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½), Reduced

	Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½);	
	Always On (-½), No STR Bonus (-½)	0
20	<i>Flaming Flight</i> : Flight +10" (15" total)	2

Added Multipower Slot:

9u	1) <i>Fire Blast</i> : RKA 4½6, Reduced	
	Endurance (½ END; +¼)	4
3	Power: Flame Tricks 12-	

Total Cost: +75 points

Cost	Emissary Powers and Skills	END
26	<i>Flaming Body</i> : HKA 1d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½), Reduced	
	Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½);	
	Always On (-½), No STR Bonus (-½)	0

Additional Multipower Slot:

4u	1) <i>Fire Blast</i> : RKA 3d6	4
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Total Cost: +30 points

Val	Fire Form Disadvantage	
5	Vulnerability: 1½ x STUN from Water Attacks (Uncommon)	
5	Vulnerability: 1½ x BODY from Water Attacks (Uncommon)	
10	Susceptibility: to being in vacuum, underwater, or in other fire-suppressant environments, 1d6 damage per Turn character is in such an environment (Uncommon)	

Fluid Forms

Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon Special Effect: Victim's body dissolves into water or some other fluid.

Cost	Throne Powers and Skills	END
40	<i>Fluid Body</i> : Desolidification (affected by cold, heat, or fire attacks); Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-½)	0
40	<i>Fluid Movement</i> : Swimming +27" (29" total), x4 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1
3	<i>At Home In The Water</i> : Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement (no penalties in water)	0
5	<i>Watery Tentacles</i> : Extra Limbs (as many as Throne wants)	0

Additional Multipower Slots:

8u	1) <i>Dehydrate</i> : Energy Blast 6d6, NND (defense is Power Defense or a body that lacks liquids; +1), Affects Physical World (+2), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Victims At Least 50% Immersed In Water Get A Free Recovery Of This Damage Each Phase (-½)	6
9u	2) <i>Fluid Shaping</i> : Telekinesis (20 STR), Affects Porous, Area Of Effect (96" Any Area; +2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Affects Fluids (-½)	0
14u	3) <i>Fluid Blast</i> : Energy Blast 8d6, Affects Physical World (+2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
3	AK: Thulkosian Seas And Oceans 13-	
3	KS: Physical Transformations 13-	

Total Cost: +125 points

Cost	Viceroy Powers and Skills	END
40	<i>Fluid Body</i> : Desolidification (affected by cold, heat, or fire attacks); Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-½)	0
3	<i>At Home In The Water</i> : Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement (no penalties in water)	0

Additional Multipower Slots:

6u	1) <i>Dehydrate</i> : Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is Power Defense or a body that lacks liquids; +1), Affects Physical World (+2), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Victims At Least 50% Immersed In Water Get A Free Recovery Of This Damage Each Phase (-½)	4
5u	2) <i>Fluid Shaping</i> : Telekinesis (18 STR), Affects Porous, Area Of Effect (5" Any Area; +1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Only Affects Fluids (-½)	3
4u	3) <i>Fluid Movement</i> : Swimming +27" (29" total), x4 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1
12u	4) <i>Fluid Blast</i> : Energy Blast 7d6, Affects Physical World (+2), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
3	AK: Thulkosian Seas And Oceans 13-	
2	KS: Physical Transformations 11-	

Total Cost: +75 points

Cost	Emissary Powers and Skills	END
27	<i>Fluid Body</i> : Desolidification (affected by cold, heat, or fire attacks); Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-½)	4

Additional Multipower Slot:

3u	1) <i>Fluid Movement</i> : Swimming +20" (22" total), x4 Noncombat Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	2
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Total Cost: +30 points

Val	Fluid Form Disadvantage	
10	Vulnerability: 1½ x STUN from Heat/Fire Attacks (Common)	
10	Vulnerability: 1½ x BODY from Heat/Fire Attacks (Common)	

Insect Forms

Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon Special Effect: Victim glows and gradually dissolves into luminous vapor.

Cost	Throne Powers and Skills	END
60	<i>Wings</i> : Flight +20" (25" total), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
10	<i>Sticky Feet</i> : Clinging (normal STR)	0
5	<i>Light-Adjusted Eyes</i> : Sight Group Flash Defense (+5 points; 15 points total)	0
5	<i>Master Of Mystic Defense</i> : Power Defense (+5 points; 20 points total)	0

Additional Multipower Slots:

9u	1) <i>Wizardbane Web</i> : Major Transform 7d6 (remove ability to cast one spell, heals through another application of this	
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	spell or the death of the Throne); Improved Results Group (remove any one spell; +¼); Limited Target (spellcasters; -½)	13
9u	2) <i>Ward-Crushing Blast</i> : Energy Blast 9d6, NND (defense is Power Defense; +1)	9
9u	3) <i>Solar Burst</i> : Sight Group Flash 8d6, Area Of Effect (5" Radius; +1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	4
8	+4 Levels with Flight	
3	Analyze Magic 13-	
4	KS: Magic Item Enchantment 14-	
3	KS: Metamagic 13-	
Total Cost: +125 points		

Cost	Viceroy Powers and Skills	END
25	<i>Wings</i> : Flight +10" (15" total), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1
10	<i>Sticky Feet</i> : Clinging (normal STR)	0
5	<i>Light-Adjusted Eyes</i> : Sight Group Flash Defense (+5 points; 10 points total)	0
5	<i>Master Of Mystic Defense</i> : Power Defense (+5 points; 20 points total)	0

Additional Multipower Slots:

11u	1) <i>Enchantment</i> : Major Transform 5d6 (give item magical powers, heals through any successful application of a Dispel, the death of the Viceroy, or another application of this power), Improved Results Group (any powers; +¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	4
8u	2) <i>Ward-Crushing Blast</i> : Energy Blast 8d6, NND (defense is Power Defense; +1)	8
8u	3) <i>Solar Burst</i> : Sight Group Flash 7d6, Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
3	KS: Enchantment 12-	

Total Cost: +75 points

Cost	Emissary Powers and Skills	END
20	<i>Wings</i> : Flight +10" (15" total)	2
10	<i>Sticky Feet</i> : Clinging (normal STR)	0
Total Cost: +30 points		

Val Insect Form Disadvantage

20	Susceptibility: to Sight Group Darkness fields, 1d6 STUN per Phase Viceroy is within such area (Common)	
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Octopoid Forms

Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon Special Effect: Victim
perceives an attack by whatever he most fears.

Cost	Throne Powers and Skills	END
5	<i>Many Tentacles</i> : Extra Limbs (6)	0
20	<i>Many Tentacles</i> : +2 SPD	0
15	<i>Long Tentacles</i> : Stretching 2", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
4	<i>Aquatic Movement</i> : Swimming +4" (6" total)	1
3	<i>At Home In The Water</i> : Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement (no penalties in water)	0

22	<i>Mental Sense</i> : Detect Minds 13- (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Targeting, Sense	0
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Additional Multipower Slots:

9u	1) <i>Enslaving Touch</i> : Major Transform 4d6 (target gains the Psychological Limitation <i>Believes He's Part Of Tyrannon</i> [Very Common, Total], heals back when Tyrannon so wills), BOECV (+1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼); No Range (-½)	13
14u	2) <i>Psionic Surgery</i> : Minor Transform 5½d6 (remove or change a target's memories of events within the past year, heals back normally), Improved Results Group (any type of memory alteration; +¼), BOECV (+1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼)	14
9u	2) <i>Tyrannon Commands The Senses</i> : Mental Illusions 18d6	9
9u	3) <i>Tyrannon Commands The Will</i> : Mind Control 18d6	9
9u	4) <i>Tyrannon Knows Your Inmost Thoughts</i> : Telepathy 18d6	9
3	KS: Mental Magic 13-	
3	PS: Psionic Surgeon 13-	

Total Cost: 125 points

Cost	Viceroy Powers and Skills	END
5	<i>Many Tentacles</i> : Extra Limbs (6)	0
20	<i>Many Tentacles</i> : +2 SPD	0
7	<i>Long Tentacles</i> : Stretching 1", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
2	<i>Fast Swimmer</i> : Swimming +2" (4" total)	1
3	<i>At Home In The Water</i> : Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement (no penalties in water)	0
5	<i>Mental Monitor</i> : Mind Link increased to any mind	0

Additional Multipower Slots:

8u	1) <i>Enslaving Touch</i> : Major Transform 3½d6 (target gains the Psychological Limitation <i>Believes He's Part Of Tyrannon</i> [Very Common, Total], heals back when Tyrannon so wills), BOECV (+1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼); No Range (-½)	12
8u	2) <i>Tyrannon Commands The Senses</i> : Mental Illusions 16d6	8
8u	3) <i>Tyrannon Commands The Will</i> : Mind Control 16d6	8
8u	4) <i>Tyrannon Knows Your Inmost Thoughts</i> : Telepathy 16d6	8
1	KS: Mental Magic 8-	

Total Cost: +75 points

Cost	Emissary Powers and Skills	END
5	<i>Many Tentacles</i> : Extra Limbs (6)	0
20	<i>Many Tentacles</i> : +2 SPD	0
2	<i>Aquatic Movement</i> : Swimming +2" (4" total)	1
3	<i>At Home In The Water</i> : Environmental Movement: Aquatic Movement (no penalties in water)	0

Total Cost: +30 points

Val	Octopoid Form Disadvantage	
10	Vulnerability: 1½ x STUN from Area Energy Attacks (Common)	
10	Vulnerability: 1½ x BODY from Area Energy Attacks (Common)	

Reptile Forms

Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon Special Effect: Victim withers and ages to death.

Cost	Throne Powers and Skills	END
37	<i>Bite:</i> HKA 2d6 (4d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1
9	<i>Scaly Skin:</i> Armor (3 PD/3 ED)	0

Additional Multipower Slots:

9u	1) <i>Slow Time:</i> Drain SPD 5d6, Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
9u	2) <i>Fast Time:</i> Aid SPD 6d6, Ranged (+½)	0
9u	3) <i>Age Change:</i> Major Transform 5d6 (any being or object into older/younger version of itself; heals via the application of any chronal manipulation power), Improved Result Group (+¼)	9
6u	4) <i>Time Senses:</i> Clairsentience (Sight Group, Normal Hearing, and Mystic Awareness), Precognition, Retrocognition, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Precognition and Retrocognition Only (-½)	3
3	Absolute Time Sense	
31	Danger Sense (immediate vicinity, out of combat, Sense) 16-	
9	Lightning Reflexes: +6 DEX to act first with All Attacks	
3	KS: Time Magic 13-	

Total Cost: +125 points

Cost	Viceroy Powers and Skills	END
31	<i>Bite:</i> HKA 1½d6 (3d6+1 with STR), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1

Additional Multipower Slots:

7u	1) <i>Slow Time:</i> Drain SPD 4d6, Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
6u	2) <i>Age Change:</i> Major Transform 3½d6 (any being or object into older/younger version of itself; heals via the application of any chronal manipulation power), Improved Result Group (+¼)	6
5u	3) <i>Time Sight:</i> Clairsentience (Sight Group and Mystic Awareness), Precognition, Retrocognition, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Precognition and Retrocognition Only (-½)	3
3	Absolute Time Sense	
20	Danger Sense (self only, out of combat) 12-	
3	KS: Time Magic 12-	

Total Cost: +75 points

Cost	Emissary Powers and Skills	END
25	<i>Bite:</i> HKA 1½d6 (3d6+1 with STR)	2

Additional Multipower Slot:

5u	1) <i>Slow Time:</i> Drain SPD 3d6, Ranged (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	2
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Total Cost: +30 points

Val Reptile Form Disadvantage

10	Susceptibility: to environments colder than 40 degrees Fahrenheit, Drain DEX 1d6 per Turn (Uncommon)	
5	Vulnerability: 1½ x STUN from Cold attacks (Uncommon)	
5	Vulnerability: 1½ x BODY from Cold attacks (Uncommon)	

Tree Forms

Deadly Wrath Of Tyrannon Special Effect: Vines, mushrooms, or other plants sprout from and consume the victim's body.

Cost	Viceroy Powers and Skills	END
27	<i>Tropisms:</i> Spatial Awareness (no Sense Group), Range	0
5	<i>Grow Branches, Roots, And Vines:</i> Extra Limbs (thousands), Inherent (+¼); No Fine Manipulation (-¼)	0
15	<i>Extend Branches, Roots, And Vines:</i> Stretching 3", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only With Extra Limbs (-½)	0

Additional Multipower Slots:

6u	1) <i>Animate Plants:</i> Telekinesis (20 STR), Area Of Effect (16" Radius; +1½), Selective (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); OIF (sufficient quantity and type of plants of opportunity; -½)	4
8u	2) <i>Command Plants:</i> Mind Control 13d6 (Plant group of minds), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
3	<i>Thicketmaster:</i> Environmental Movement: no penalties to combat or movement from dense vegetation	0
6	Concealment 16-; Only In Forests/Dense Vegetation (-½)	
2	KS: Plant Magic 11-	
3	SS: Botany 13-	

Total Cost: +75 points

Cost	Emissary Powers and Skills	END
27	<i>Tropisms:</i> Spatial Awareness (no Sense Group), Range	0
3	<i>Thicketmaster:</i> Environmental Movement: no penalties to combat or movement from dense vegetation	0

Total Cost: +30 points

Val Tree Form Disadvantage

10	Susceptibility: to herbicides, 1d6 damage per Turn of exposure (Uncommon)	
5	Vulnerability: 1½ x STUN from Death/Disease-based Attacks (Uncommon)	
5	Vulnerability: 1½ x BODY from Death/Disease-based Attacks (Uncommon)	

MINIONS

Tyrannon doesn't rely exclusively on his own power to conquer and rule other dimensions. His demesnes spread so far that even the Thousand-Headed God can't oversee them all. Reluctantly, Tyrannon must delegate authority and recruit minions.

The Sunmaker's army consists of Competent Normal or Heroic-level people armed with minor magical weapons or innate mystical abilities. Tyrannon recruits his armies from throughout his demesnes, so his soldiers possess a wide range of abilities. The GM can use Skarn's All-Purpose Petty Obstacle Warrior (page 112) to represent the warriors in the Legions of Tyrannon.

Tyrannon foists the administration of conquered territories onto satraps brought from Thulkos or elevated from the native population. Satraps seldom wield significant personal powers — Tyrannon permits no potential rivals — but they can command large military forces in the Conqueror's name, build their own superweapons, and launch their own assaults.

Satraps gain little joy from their positions. Tyrannon permits them any personal luxury or abuse of the subject population... but a satrap must fulfill any command the Conqueror places upon them, no matter how unreasonable or impossible. Failure means death, unless a satrap can persuade Tyrannon that someone else caused the failure (and even this does not work all the time).

As a god, Tyrannon has priests. The Conqueror's priests remind his subjects of their absolute submission to their god, make sacrifices to him, and perform other priestly duties. Priests may possess minor magic based on invoking Tyrannon's various forms (see accompanying text box).

TYRANNIST MAGIC

Just as Western sorcery uses the elements, the planets, or the sephiroth of Kabbalism to classify and control all phenomena, Tyrannon's sorcerer-priests use his throne forms as the categories of existence. Each throne represents a collection of concepts and powers, as well as a type of life or matter:

Form Concepts And Powers

Avian	Air, Space, Motion, Sound
Earth	Minerals, Permanence, Restraint, Darkness
Fire	Fire, Destruction, Mastery, Order
Fluid	Water, Matter, Transformation, Artifice
Insectoid	Energy, Light, Spirit, Metamagic
Octopoid	Mind, Emotion, Sensation, Illusion, Chaos
Reptile	Time, Destiny, Chance, Luck
Tree	Life, Death, Fertility, Nature

Priests buy magic from Tyrannon through their sacrifices. A Tyrannist sorcerer carries finger-sized idols of the thrones. When he invokes that throne's power in a spell, he pierces his own flesh with a needle and smears a drop of blood on the appropriate figurine. The disks and pylons that stabilize Dimensional Bridges carry stylized representations of Tyrannon, and are enchanted by bathing them in the blood of victims, with appropriate rituals in praise of the Conqueror.



Satraps, soldiers, and priests retain their free will, but only because they lack real power of their own. Captured mystics or spirits face a more horrible fate: Tyrannon turns them into puppets. The Tree Throne can resurrect as a servant anyone whose soul Tyrannon devoured. Any Throne can brainwash a captured mystic or spirit so the victim becomes fanatically loyal to Tyrannon; the Octopoid Throne does this by touch. Tyrannon's sigil appears on the victim's forehead as a visible token of subjugation, even when the Transform is entirely mental in game terms.

Tyrannon makes his slaves believe they are part of his collective identity, and a Throne may monitor a slave through a Psychic Link. Mystics who encounter the Slaves of Tyrannon do not always realize they face a brainwashed victim instead of an actual Duplicate. Since the Conqueror has thousands of brainwashed slaves, some mystics believe the Conqueror lives in thousands of bodies at once, instead of hundreds.

A telepath can free a Slave of Tyrannon by reaching into the victim's memory and reminding the victim of his connection to humanity (or whatever species he comes from). If the telepath can access the victim's unconscious mind, he may find stray thoughts Tyrannon left by accident. These may offer clues to the Conqueror's schemes.

When Tyrannon invades a world, however, his favorite minions are the Signifiers. These jabbering runts are one of the Conqueror's weaker sorts of slave — but they make more of themselves.

SIGNIFER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
5	STR	-5	10-	Lift 50 kg; 1d6 [1]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
6	BODY	-8	10-	
5	INT	-5	10-	PER Roll 10-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
10	PRE	0	11-	PRE Attack: 2d6
2	COM	-4	9-	
7	PD	6		Total: 13 PD (6 rPD)
7	ED	3		Total: 17 ED (10 rED)
3	SPD	3		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
36	END	0		
18	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 35

Movement: Running: 9"/18"

Cost Powers **END**

48	<i>Sign Of Tyrannon:</i> Major Transform 1d6 (physical change to Signifer, heals by washing off Sign); Limited Target (sentient beings; -¼), 12 Charges (-¼) plus Major Transform 1d6 (mental change to Signifer; reversed by washing off Sign), BOECV (+1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼); Limited Target (sentient beings; -¼), Linked (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼) plus Major Transform 1d6 (spiritual change to Signifer; reversed by washing off Sign), BOECV (+1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼); Limited Target (sentient beings; -¼), Linked (-¼), 12 Charges (-¼) [12]	
16	<i>Armored Costume:</i> Armor (6 PD/10 ED), OIF (-½)	0
7	<i>No Thought But Service:</i> Mental Defense (10 points total)	0
7	<i>No Thought But Service:</i> +15 PRE; Only To Protect Against Presence Attacks (-1)	0
5	<i>Tyrannon Does Not Grant Permission To Die:</i> Life Support (Longevity: Immortality)	0
6	<i>Swift Scuttling:</i> Running +3" (9" total)	2

Skills

6	+3 OCV with Sign Of Tyrannon	
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Total Powers & Skills Cost: 95

Total Cost: 130

50+ Disadvantages

25	Dependence: must stay near Tyrannon's magic or suffer 3d6 damage per Hour (Uncommon)
15	Physical Limitation: Mute (communicates only by gestures) (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
5	Physical Limitation: Small, suffers +3" Knockback from attacks (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
25	Psychological Limitation: Suicidally Obedient To Tyrannon Or A Designated Master (Very Common, Total)
10	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 130

Description: Tyrannon created several dozen of these servants through his vile magic. Over the centuries, the Signifers expanded their number to thousands, then millions — because their sole attack changes their enemies into more Signifers. These creatures have overrun whole worlds at the Conqueror's command, like a mystical plague.

These spindly creatures stand just three feet tall, and their hunched posture makes them look even smaller. They have bone-white skin, big, bald heads, pointed ears, and tiny shark eyes. Signifers smell like vinegar, and jabber nonsense in thin, shrill voices. They communicate by pointing, jumping up and down, or other simple gestures. Black, rubbery armor something like an articulated wetsuit covers all of a Signifer's body but its face, hands, and feet. The chest of the armor bears the sign of the Throne or Viceroy whom the Signifer serves. Tyrannon's sigil also glistens on a Signifer's forehead, as if the symbol were drawn in oily paint.

A Signifer can project a mystic beam from the sign on its forehead. Not only does this beam shock targets, it leaves an oily copy of Tyrannon's mark. The victim feels his spine hunch for a moment, or briefly thinks about the need to serve the Conqueror, but the attack causes no long-term effect — unless the Transform accumulates enough to change the victim into another Signifer, with his own forehead mark and loyalty to Tyrannon. All Signifers project identical attacks; at the GM's option, the Transform damage from different Signifers can cumulate into a single "Transform attack." Dispelling any increment of the Transform restores a Signifer to its former state; simply scrubbing off the *Sign Of Tyrannon* with soap and hot water also reverses the change.

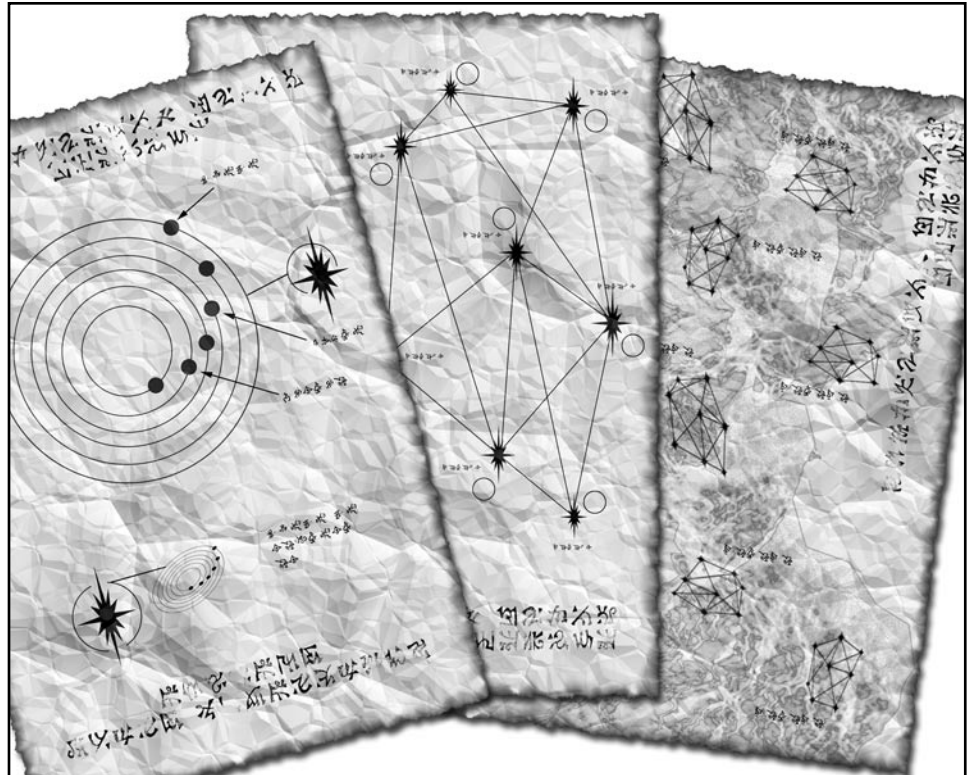
Tyrannon decreed that the Signifiers could not live without him. They wither and die in hours if they do not spend some time every hour within 16" of one of Tyrannon's forms, or some person or object empowered by the Conqueror's magic. Tyrannon sometime loans Signifiers to duped minions, or sends a force of Signifiers to accompany an Emissary. One of the Conqueror's simpler plans is simply to wrap a world in some magical effect (a MegaScaled Change Environment, for instance) and let the Signifiers multiply. Although a single Signifer is a pathetically weak opponent for a superhero, they rarely appear less than a dozen at a time.

THULKOS

Thulkos began as an Assiatic dimension. Like Earth's cosmos, Thulkos started with a Big Bang. In Thulkos, however, matter gathered into circular loops rather than spheres. Thulkos itself was a slender ring of rock, metal, water, and air 500 miles thick but more than 160,000 miles in diameter. This noodle-shaped world spun along a threadlike "star" 2,000 miles wide but forming a loop hundreds of millions of miles long. Thulkos shared its star-thread with several other worlds of various sizes. Some worlds were themselves ringed by doughnut-shaped moons. Millions of other stars circled in a ring-shaped galaxy over a hundred thousand light-years wide, the only galaxy in this Reality.

After he conquered Thulkos, Tyrannon reshaped his home dimension into a series of shells centered on himself. In the process, he drastically shrank Thulkos. This concentrated the dimension's ambient magic, permitting a cosmic structure that would never work under previous natural laws. By imposing his will on such a scale, however, Tyrannon also bound himself to Thulkos's reality. Only his weakest forms can survive without some connection to Thulkos.

The very center of the dimension holds Tyrankos, the Conqueror's capital. Tyrankos is a disk 100 miles wide and seven miles thick. One side is landscaped with farmland, towns, temples to Tyrannon, and concentration camps for sacrificial victims. The Tree Throne lives at the very center of Tyrankos, so the entire dimension orbits around Tyrannon's mightiest form. The underside of Tyrankos is bare, jagged rock. Tyrannon didn't bother giving Tyrankos' underside gravity. Ironically, the very heart of Tyrannon's empire holds a place the Conqueror ignores.



Dozens of Thulkosian world-loops form a filigree cage around Tyrankos. The smallest world-loop is about 60,000 miles in diameter, while the largest is 150,000 miles wide. The world-loops hold bands of land and ocean, with mountains, deserts, rivers, and other landscapes like those on Earth, though many plants and animals look somewhat different. In all, the world-loops have a surface area twenty times that of Earth.

Air extends from Tyrankos all the way to the outermost world-loop. Huge, magical sky-galleons fly from world to world. Their sails, painted in blood with the sign of the Avian Throne, catch astral winds created by Tyrannon for this purpose. For more rapid transportation, Tyrannon created Gates between worlds. A hundred billion people — humanoid Thulkosians and several other species — live in this, the heartland of the Conqueror's empire.

THE KAE LINN

Around this shell of world-loops orbit the eight globes called the Kae Linn. These eight magical suns orbit between one to two million miles from Tyrankos. Thulkosians receive day when their part of a world-ring faces outward, toward the nearest Kae Linn, and night when they face inward to Tyrankos. On Tyrankos itself, at least half the distant Kae Linn are in the sky at all times, so Tyrannon's capital receives a dim but constant daylight.

Tyrannon created the Kae Linn by magic — and each orb imprisons a god of sunlight, fertility, and healing. Releasing these gods, who are also called the Kae Linn, would snuff the eight suns and doom billions of Thulkosians to freezing death.

BEYOND THE KAE LINN

Beyond the Kae Linn lies a second and greater shell — but this is a shell of star-threads. These loops of glowing gas are thousands of miles thick and hundreds of millions of miles wide. The largest are a billion miles in radius. Up to a dozen world-loops of various sizes slide along each star-thread. Only one world-loop per star is habitable, though. Tyrannon moved all the worlds settled by Thulkosian humans to the core shell of worlds, along with the homeworlds of the other sentient races in his cosmos. The second shell received the aliens' colony worlds, and most of the other habitable worlds Tyrannon found within his galaxy. Trillions of people, from many species, live in this second shell.

A tenth of a light-year from Tyrankos, the third layer begins. Thousands of star-threads, many with world-loops, orbit the dimension's core in a vast smoke-ring of stars. This smoke ring extends outward two light-years, becoming sparser with greater distance from the core. These thousands of stars are all that remain of the rest of Thulkos's galaxy: Tyrannon destroyed every star-thread that was too small or faint to support a life-bearing world, since he didn't want billions of "useless" stars and planets in his universe. The Conqueror once planned to create more habitable worlds in this outer star-ring, but he now sees the conquest of other dimensions as a quicker means to expand his rule.

Tyrannon gives a low priority to patrolling the sparsely-settled, widely-scattered worlds of this cosmic hinterland. Instead of sending Emissaries, he leaves the job of managing these frontier worlds to merely mortal servants and soldiers. Anyone who can escape to the star-ring can easily pass beyond the reach of the Thousand-Headed God, so long as Tyrannon does not think they are important. Beyond the intensely magical core of Thulkos, however, the star-threads orbit in vacuum, so a traveler between worlds needs some form of magical transportation, such as a Gate.

Beyond the smoke ring, a few star-threads and sunless world-loops drift through the dark void. Most of these are just bits of Thulkos that Tyrannon missed when he reconstructed the universe. Some, however, hold gods imprisoned by Tyrannon or hiding from him, both protected and isolated by light-years of empty space. Exiled gods create small environments to suit themselves. Gods in hiding might even collect small communities of worshippers through raids into the hinterlands of Thulkos. The exiles hate Tyrannon... but that doesn't necessarily make them better than him.

MERGING WITH THULKOS

When Tyrannon merges another dimension with Thulkos, he places it in the star-shell or the outer star-ring. Small dimensions often fit on a single world-loop. A whole planet, such as Earth, goes in orbit around a star-thread. If Tyrannon does not reshape the planet right away, the planet crumbles and the wreckage forms a new ring-shaped world around the star. Because Tyrannon commands it, large sections of the inhabited surface remain intact. The planet's crumbling does not doom all the inhabitants — just a large fraction of them.

Tyrannon favors his native species in governing his empire. Thulkosians look humanoid, but their heads are longer than human's. Instead of hair, Thulkosians have three ridges or crests that begin over the bridge of the nose and meet again at the base of the skull. One ridge extends over the top of the head, while the other two pass about an inch over each ear. Thulkosian eyes have epicanthic folds, giving them a somewhat Asian appearance. Thulkosian skin ranges from pale green to dark blue. Avian, reptilian, octopoid, and insectoid species come from other Thulkosian worlds. Tyrannon also brings other races into Thulkos as he expands his empire and merges dimensions, and these range from utterly alien creatures to humans indistinguishable from Earth-dwellers.

The bulk of Tyrannon's empire, however, lies in other dimensions — the war with Istvatha V'han prevents Tyrannon from merging dimensions as often as he'd like. The Conqueror rules hundreds of worlds or dimensions, ranging from little taffy-pull realms with a few thousand inhabitants, to planets as large and populous as Earth. Larger realms receive more frequent visits from Emissaries and Viceroyes. Gates link these realms to Thulkos and each other. Dozens of large *Dimensional Bridges* might lead to a major world, while small realms might be linked by just a few smaller Gates.

Tyrannon conquers for the sake of conquest, but also to gain ever-greater numbers of sacrificial victims. The Conqueror runs his empire like a pyramid scheme. Each world must supply a certain number of sacrificial victims over a given time period. The victims do not have to come from the demesne's own population, however. If the people of that world assist in conquering another realm, they may draw upon the other realm for their quota of victims. That plane, in turn, may do the same by assisting in the subjugation of a third dimension. If Tyrannon's vassals also want to squeeze demesnes lower in the pyramid for other sorts of tribute, that's their own business. Tyrannon desires only blood and any other sources of magical energy a plane may possess. As his empire spreads, the Conqueror demands greater numbers of victims, and so his power grows.

FIGHTING TYRANNON

Characters may despair of defeating a villain as powerful as Tyrannon, who has multiple bodies to boot. Nevertheless, Tyrannon has weaknesses to exploit. If the heroes can't destroy Tyrannon, perhaps they can at least force him to leave Earth alone.

THE KAE LINN

Life in the inner shell of worlds depends on the light of the Kae Linn. The Tree Throne also needs this light — this form is a supernatural tree, but a tree nonetheless, and plants need light to survive. A convincing threat to destroy the Kae Linn could penetrate Tyrannon's arrogance and force him to negotiate. Of course, destroying the Kae Linn would also mean killing a hundred billion people, and true heroes would balk at such a deed — but Tyrannon doesn't know that. *He* killed billions to get his way, and assumes everyone else would, too.

Less drastically, heroes could release the Kae Linn without destroying the magical suns. How to release gods imprisoned within planet-sized globes of white-hot plasma is an exercise left to players and GMs. Aside from their innate power, and that Tyrannon doesn't dare kill them, the Kae Linn could start a religion to compete with

OLD THULKOSIAN MAGICAL NULLIFIER

This specimen of Old Thulkosian technomagic consists of several crystal globes mounted on an array of gim-balled metal rings, like an orrery. When the apparatus turn, it casts a powerful field that reduces any one magical effect by 30 Active Points. The device consumes enormous amounts of mystical energy; the Old Thulkosians attached the device to a magical generator, but heroes could try running it off their own power — for a little while.

Suppress Magic 10d6 (standard Effect: 30 points), any Magic power one at a time (+¼), Area Of Effect (10" Radius; +1), MegaScale (1" = 1 km wide, deep, and broad; +¼), Power Can Draw END From Character Or Endurance Reserve (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (150 Active Points); OAF Bulky (-1½), Extra Time (1 Turn to activate; -¾), Independent (-2), Requires A Spell Research Roll (-½). Total cost: 26 points.

Tyrannon's. The Conqueror presents himself as the sole source of life in Thulkos — but the freed Kae Linn could prove he isn't, and so undercut Tyrannon's worship and sacrifice. Admittedly, starting a religious war on Thulkos is a long-term strategy against the Conqueror.

THE EXILED GODS

The man-gods whom Tyrannon exiled to the deeps of space or other dimensions would gladly help anyone who opposed Tyrannon. Whatever their own morals may be, they want revenge on the Conqueror. They would not make such good prospects for competing religions as the Kae Linn, but they can certainly supply more firepower for a fight.

Most importantly, however, the exiled gods remember how they, as mortals, merged with Thulkos's elemental spirits. That information might help an expert magus design spells to bypass Tyrannon's defenses — perhaps even to sever the bonds between his many selves. The exiles are also the last beings who know how to repair and operate the old Thulkosian magical machines.

RELIC TECHNOMAGIC

Once he conquered Thulkos, Tyrannon outlawed the old alchemical technology. He did not, however, change the laws of magic so that it wouldn't work. He became a god through such devices; after becoming the Conqueror, Tyrannon was no longer a skilled enough theorist to predict the consequences of destroying the very magic that created him. He might destroy himself too!

Tyrannon did try to find and destroy all examples of spell-smithing, and purge all knowledge of the art, but a few well-hidden caches of weapons survive. Tyrannon probably is not Vulnerable to spell-smith devices, since the old Thulkosians failed to destroy him with such weapons, but heroes who fight the Conqueror need every weapon they can get. Some devices might be powerful enough to kill or incapacitate a Viceroy, if heroes used it properly.

THE QUATERNION BANISHMENT

Earth's best protection against Tyrannon, however, remains the Quaternion Banishment (see page 84). Tyrannon cannot conquer the Earth if the entire world becomes deadly to him. He may still attack the Earth, but he could never rule it... and the Multiverse has plenty of other dimensions to conquer. Unfortunately, the last mystic qualified to use the Quaternion Banishment died in 1908 — the last Archmage.

THE DRAGON AND THE NAGAS



HIS VOICE IS HEARD IN THE HURRICANE

Hidden in the caverns of inaccessible mountains, or coiled in the unfathomed depths of the sea, he awaits the time when he slowly arouses himself into activity. He unfolds himself in the storm-cloud, he washes his mane in the darkness of the seething whirlpools. His claws are in the fork of lightning, his scales begin to glisten in the bark of rain-swept pine trees. His voice is heard in the hurricane, which, scattering the withered leaves of the forest, quickens a new spring. The dragon reveals himself only to vanish.

—Okakoro Kakuzo,
Book Of Tea

Background/History: Cultures around the world describe snakes or part-snake creatures as bestowers of magical knowledge and power. Some of them work for good; others, for evil. Here are a few examples:

SUMERIA: The primal dragon Tiamat owns the magical Tablet of Destiny that gives rulership of the Universe.

EGYPT: The solar serpent called the Uraeus shows the king's divine right to rule, granted by Ra, the King of the Gods.

CHINA: Dragons are mostly benevolent creatures who control rivers and the weather and have many magical powers. The trigrams of the I Ching appear on the back of a "dragon horse."

GREECE: The semi-divine snake-man Cecrops, an early king of Athens, teaches humans how to build in stone. One story of Teiresias, Greece's most famous seer, says he gained his prophetic powers when a serpent sent by Athena licked his ears. A serpent led the healer-god Asclepius to a magic herb. On the other hand, evil giants like Typhon have serpents for legs.

INDIA: The Nagas of India, like the Chinese dragons, control rivers. Some legends paint them as malevolent, but in other stories, they guard Heaven and teach heroes.

SEMITES: The Serpent, "subtlest of beasts," persuades Adam and Eve to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. The name of the Seraphim, one of the highest orders of angels, translates as "Fiery Serpents."

CENTRAL AMERICA: The Aztec Quetzalcoatl and Mayan Kukulcan taught the civilized arts to Man when they ruled as wise and good kings.

Wizards know that all this is more than coincidence. The Mystic World includes *two* reptilian powers. The Dragon is Earth's supreme Power of Evil. It wants to corrupt and rule mankind. The mystic race of Nagas opposes the Dragon; they seem to care about human welfare, although the details of their motives remain inscrutable.

Mythology remembers the Dragon under many names: Tiamat, Apep, the Midgard Serpent, and many others. But these legends omit the greatest and most terrible truth about this primal power of evil: the Dragon exists within us, in the collective unconscious of humanity.

Strictly speaking, the Dragon does not occupy a physical location. Wherever any human goes, the

Dragon goes too. The Dragon does, however, have a focus of awareness and action, an astral form chained beneath Faerie, glaring down on the Void of Dreamless Sleep. Its vast mouth is a portal to the Netherworld, which is why medieval artists represented Hell within the jaws of a monster. As long as that astral form remains bound, the Dragon cannot use its full power against humanity.

The titanic chains binding the Dragon only seem to be made of steel — nothing physical can bind the very idea of evil. Ancient magic forged the Dragon's chains out of the noblest aspects of humanity, such as courage, altruism, faith, and honor. Tradition says a thousand chains restrain the Dragon. When humanity follows its higher instincts, the chains tighten. In times of cowardice or surrender to evil, chains break, and the Dragon's power grows. If the Dragon broke free, humanity would cease to be human — if anyone survived at all.

For countless millennia, the Dragon has tried to escape into the physical world — to become real. In every age, various cults and sorcerers fall under its sway and try to help it. The Dragon taught black magic to mankind and spawned demons; its minions created the curses of lycanthropy and vampirism; it taught the first empires how to rule by armed terror and religious mystery. It still broods and schemes to corrupt mankind, slipping its monstrous dreams into the minds of humans too much ruled by hate, fear, greed, and ambition.

Where did the Dragon come from? How did it lodge in the human soul? The few entities that might know refuse to divulge the secret. Mystics offer many theories, though. Christian mystics believe the Dragon is Satan himself: just as the Yahweh in Elysium is a mask for the true Supreme God of the Multiverse, so the Dragon is a mask for His adversary. Other mystics think the Dragon might be a degenerate shadow of one of the Four Zoas, or a spirit from the Outer Planes that somehow became trapped in the Astral Plane. A theory that the Dragon personifies the reptilian hindbrain — the ancient part of the human brain responsible for territoriality, aggression, and the will to power — has become popular with mystics interested in the new discoveries of science. Most mystics think the remaining theories, like one occultist's suggestion that the Dragon is a fusion of malevolent ghosts from a prehistoric civilization of sentient dinosaurs, are too wacky or stupid to need refuting.

Regardless of the Dragon's origin, how can humanity get rid of this cancer on its collective soul? So far, the only known way to destroy the Dragon is to exterminate mankind. No one cares much for that solution.

Even if humanity found some other way to kill or expel the Dragon, psychic adepts warn of appalling consequences. The Dragon is too much part of us. Losing it, and the Netherworld in its belly, would be the psychic equivalent of hacking off a limb. Faerie would fall apart without the Dragon's support as well, and that's another hefty chunk of the collective unconscious. The psychic maiming would surely drive all humanity insane. The Dragon, then, cannot be destroyed. Humanity can only work to contain the Dragon and mitigate its influence.

Some mystics even suggest the coming of the Dragon — the loss of humanity's innocence, however it happened — was a fortunate fall. The Dragon, they say, links humanity to the spirit world. Without it, humans could not work magic. As so often happens with mysticism, however, no one can prove or disprove such claims.

Will this battle ever end? Will humanity never escape this blight on its soul? The mystics offer one faint and distant hope. A few adepts — a very few — break free of the Dragon's influence by rising to the ultimate heights of mental self-mastery. They completely wall off or excise the part of their mind that holds the Dragon; in a sense, their minds are no longer human. Such masters progress beyond even the Archmages. They usually lose all emotional commitment to humanity and depart for other planes. Once every several hundred years, though, a Master retains human compassion and stays a while to help the rest of humanity through his teachings. If all humanity can reach Enlightenment — not abandoning human nature but transcending it — the Dragon will be exorcised forever.

Personality/Motivation: The Dragon doesn't have a reason. It is evil, like water is wet. It has two great desires: to break free, and to conquer humanity. If it ever succeeded in ruling the Earth, it would plunge the world into ultimate misery, until Earth and the Netherworld merged and even death would not bring escape.

Heroes cannot maneuver the Dragon into helping them fight other cosmic evils. The Dragon would enjoy seeing most of the human race die horribly, as long as some of its worshippers survive. It doesn't care if Skarn, Tyrannon, or anyone else conquers humanity: these cosmic evils might even give it a chance to escape its bondage. In that case, it would not need its minions any more and would gladly destroy them as well.

Quote: "You would try to deceive Me? I know you better than you know yourself: your dreams, your terrors, your darkest desires..." (Here the Dragon tells the PC about something he thought was utterly secret.)

Powers/Tactics: While bound on the Astral Plane, the Dragon is indestructible. Only mind-based attacks — Mental Powers, BOECV powers, Mental Transforms, and the like — can possibly affect the Dragon (and its high Mental Defense makes that unlikely). On the other hand, the Dragon has very little power to affect its surroundings. For all practical purposes, GMs can treat the Dragon as an AI

controlling a set of powers (and that's how he's written up, though it also has PRE and Interaction Skills).

Face to face, the Dragon attacks through its unbelievable Presence. Seeing a monster whose eye is the size of a city can be rather overwhelming! The Dragon's voice alone can terrify or compel attention, and only persons of exceptional willpower can resist its hypnotic gaze. A character who uses mental powers on the Dragon, however, encounters something far worse. The Dragon readily opens its mind to the character... and lets him feel its infinite foulness, the evil *that he carries within himself*. This usually overwhelms even the strongest-willed mortal. However, the Dragon cannot really control the long-term effect of this mammoth Presence Attack. Some maddened victims might worship the Dragon (which the Dragon likes), but enduring terror is more likely.

The Dragon possesses equally formidable psychic powers based on its connection to every human mind. It can find any human's mind, anywhere. This may take a while, in the case of people with very high EGOs or who go to an Outer Plane, but the Dragon can find them eventually. No one, either the target or any mentalist nearby, can detect this Mind Scan, and no amount of Mental Defense can block it, because the scan comes from inside the target's own mind. On the other hand, the Dragon cannot locate nonhuman minds.

Once the Dragon locates its target, it can read the target's mind. The Dragon must assign 20 points of the effect rolled to making the Telepathy unnoticeable. The Dragon's Telepathy also accesses minds from the bottom up — the reverse of the way normal telepaths do. By rolling more than the target's EGO on its Telepathy roll, the Dragon accesses the target's unconscious mind. Through this, it can tap into people's dreams, neuroses, and drives. At EGO +10 effect, the Dragon reads memories. Only at EGO + 30 can the Dragon read surface thoughts, and it cannot reliably achieve such a good result.

Since Mental Defense counters the Dragon's Telepathy, a strong-willed character seldom needs fear the Dragon getting anywhere close to his conscious thoughts. The Dragon can watch his dreams, however, and these may reveal a great deal about the character. Eventually, the Dragon can probably access the character's memories. Unless the Dragon's target has an EGO + Mental Defense total of at least 50, the Dragon can learn the character's Secret Identity, loved one, and major weaknesses in a matter of weeks. The Dragon cannot act on this information — but it may relay the data to minions who can.

Anyone willing to crawl between the Dragon's mighty teeth and down its throat finds himself plummeting into the Netherworld. The Dragon can deactivate this Power if it wants, but why would it want to keep anyone *out* of Hell? With the Dragon's jaws chained, only a few people at once can enter the Netherworld this way. Fortunately, only a few demons at a time can *leave* the Netherworld this way, too. The Gate in the Dragon's gullet opens both ways.

THE DRAGON PLOT SEEDS

One of the world's most famous heroes, whose courage and honor inspire millions (perhaps including the PCs), starts acting erratically. It could be because of a string of bad luck, from villains who make unexpected getaways to an embezzlement scandal in the hero's fan club. Concerned PCs find the situation is far worse than it seems: the Dragon torments the hero in his dreams, advises the villains he fights, wrecks his marriage, and makes him suspect betrayal from everyone close to him. If the heroes cannot help him break the Dragon's grip on his life, the hero will spectacularly self-destruct. Even if the hero doesn't become a supervillain, his disgrace would disillusion millions of people... and break a chain on the Dragon, for the hero is himself a living chain.

If the heroes fail to stop a major villain's plan, thousands of people might die. Only then do the heroes discover (because the GM just decided) that the Dragon put the plan in the villain's head, as part of a scheme to invade the material world. Draconic cultists and sorcerers such as Giacomo Sylvestri were nearby, ready to channel the mystic power of the deaths into a spell to Summon the Dragon Incarnate. Now the heroes face a much worse threat.

A Draconic cult or sorcerer creates the Tiamat Brazier. Mystics might notice the wave of malignant psychic force sweep over the city at the next new moon. Detective heroes and

Continued on next page

Continued from last page

the police notice the monthly spikes in crime. Can the heroes find the cult's secret temple and destroy the Tiamat Brazier before the city sinks into a mire of crime and corruption? "On the edge" heroes with Enrageds or strong Psychological Limitations might themselves have committed crimes under the Dragon's influence.

Finally, the Dragon has a Variable Power Pool it cannot use — at least, not very much. The GM decides how many powers the Dragon can produce through its VPP, but the number should not be large. Whenever the Dragon breaks a chain, it gains another power through its VPP. When a new chain is forged, the Dragon loses a slot.

The Dragon can certainly use its Variable Power Pool to force telepathic contact on anyone who comes within its Line of Sight on the Astral Plane. It can also Summon a few demons to attack astral voyagers. Most Netherworld creatures obey the Dragon without question and are happy to murder some poor fool caught in the Dragon's mental snares or its overwhelming Presence. Other powers should be based on mental effects or the Dragon's close connection to the Netherworld.

The Dragon can use its Variable Power Pool freely under one circumstance: if some mortal contacts the Dragon's mind, the Dragon can create any mental effect it wants. The Dragon can only affect that character, however, on that Phase, and the power cannot cost END.

Resources: The Dragon retains influence despite being bound — after all, it's part of every human soul. Normally, the Dragon cannot access peoples' conscious minds, but it reads or influences dreams. Sometimes its promptings slip through as a whisper in the back of one's mind. One whisper led an arrogant explorer to a strange serpent's cave in Africa. Another prompted a geneticist to invent the COIL gene and become King Cobra. No one could say how much of the dark side of history was due to the Dragon.

Many people serve the Dragon directly. Some are human cultists who deliberately open themselves to the Dragon. Satanic cults further the dragon's goals, too. The entire Sylvestri clan of sorcerers and Satanists (see *Arcane Adversaries*) works for the Dragon.

The Dragon also has inhuman servants. It and its human servants create whole races of monsters such as the Ophites. The greatest wave of monster creation took place millennia ago, in a conflict later mythologized as the battle between Marduk and Tiamat. The Dragon's servants strive to locate surviving monsters from that battle, sleeping in long-lost crypts or hidden places of this and other worlds. They also create new "Dragon Warriors" when they can.

The Dragon's greatest resource, however, is its counsel. The Dragon is the ultimate secret mastermind. It gathers vast amounts of information through peoples' dreams and memories and shares what it learns with its minions. Game-masters can assume that if *any* human knows something, the Dragon can discover it in a month or so. It can tell its minions about Mr. Big's secret escape tunnel, or a hero's Secret Identity, or the launch code for a nuclear missile....

Campaign Use: Skarn and Tyrannon are relatively straightforward, in-your-face villains. The Dragon is an example of a more metaphysical sort of master villain, one who presents a spiritual threat more than

a physical danger (though the Dragon's minions provide plenty of menace to heroes' lives). While bound on the Astral Plane, the Dragon cannot fight characters directly — but it can tempt them, threaten them through its minions, or try to drive them to despair. The heroes can never hope to defeat the Dragon through raw force, because it exists as an idea in every human mind rather than as a corporeal entity. To fight the Dragon is to fight Evil itself, in the persons of its many mortal servants.

The Dragon wants to become a physical creature so it can work its malice against humanity without the need for minions. Occasionally its servants magically create a body on Earth as a conduit for the Dragon's mind and power. Bodies for the Dragon vary widely, according to the power and skill of their makers — they might be golems, creatures of magically-altered flesh and blood, or constructs of ectoplasm. The Dragon prefers to possess bodies that resemble its base form, and its minions try to satisfy it, but it may have a body that doesn't look at all draconic. Naturally, the Dragon's servants try to give it as powerful a body as they can manage. When the Dragon incarnates itself, heroes can fight it directly. Destroying one of the Dragon's bodies merely thwarts one of its plans, though. The real Dragon still exists.

The Dragon is not the forgiving sort. It Hunts anyone who thwarts its plans. If the Dragon cannot locate an enemy's mind directly, it searches other people's minds for memories of its target. The pursuit could take months, even years — but the Dragon has plenty of time. By itself, the Dragon can send horrific nightmares. Its minions can arrange painful deaths. The Dragon relents only if its enemy submits and accepts miserable, degrading servitude of body and soul.

If the Dragon is too powerful a foe, even while chained in the Astral Plane, reduce or eliminate its Variable Power Pool. The Dragon Bound cannot fight heroes anyway, unless they deliberately confront it; the GM decides how much time and effort the Dragon allocates to Hunting the characters through its proxies, and how much information about them it passes to its minions. To make the Dragon more powerful, remove Limitations on its VPP so it has more ways to directly affect characters who confront it.

Appearance: Bound on the Astral Plane, the Dragon looks about 400 miles long. Its stony scales are the size of football fields; its eyes seem like lakes of swirling, dark fire. Mammoth iron chains wrap about it, each link the size of a supertanker. Its back sinks into the underside of the Land of Legends. A few of the chains have broken, their ends trailing into the void beneath.

Ancient Serpent

'And he seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the Devil and Satan, and bound him for a thousand years...'

—Revelations 20:2

THE DRAGON BOUND

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
30	INT	20	15-	PER Roll 15-
35	EGO	50	16-	ECV: 12
10	DEX	0	11-	OCV: 3/DCV: 3
40	PRE	40	17-	PRE Attack: 8d6
4	SPD	20		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
Total Characteristics Cost: 130				
Cost	Power	END		
305	Potentially Infinite Power: Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 175 base + 87 control cost, Cosmic (+2); Very Limited Use (see text; -1)	var		
16	Commanding Gaze: +40 PRE; Only For Presence Attacks (-1), Eye Contact Required (-½)	0		
97	All The Evil Of The Human Soul: +35 PRE; Only To Make Fear-Based Presence Attacks As Part Of Mental Damage Shield (-2) plus Damage Shield (Mental; +½) for 115 PRE, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0		
257	Locate Minds: Mind Scan 30d6, Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible; +½), Transdimensional (any dimension; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Affects Earth-Descended Humans (-½), Mandatory Effect (Dragon must always allocate 20 points of effect to making Mind Scan unnoticed by victim; -¼)	0		
200	Read Minds: Telepathy 20d6, Indirect (+½), Invisible Power Effects (Fully Invisible; +½), Transdimensional (any dimension; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only Affects Earth-Descended Humans (-½), Mandatory Effect (Dragon must always allocate 20 points of effect to making Mind Scan unnoticed by victim; -¼)	0		
80	Jaws Of Hell: Extra-Dimensional Movement (to a single location in the sky of the Netherworld), x16 Increased Mass, Area Of Effect (12" Radius; +1), MegaScale (1" = 1 km wide and deep; +¼), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Usable By Other (anyone in area, but not the Dragon itself; +¼); Gate (-½), Others Only (-½)	0		
15	Vast Eyes: Sight Group Flash Defense (15 points)	0		
15	Vast Ears: Hearing Group Flash Defense (15 points)	0		
7	Vast Will: Mental Group Flash Defense (7 points)	0		
35	Mind Like An Ocean: Mental Defense (35 points total), Hardened (+¼)	0		
25	Beyond The Power Of Puny Mortals: Power Defense (20 points), Hardened (+¼)	0		
35	Inescapable Awareness: Detect Human Minds (Mental Sense Group), Targeting, Telescopic (+20 versus Range Modifier)	0		
35	In Your Thoughts: Mind Link, any four human minds at a time, any distance, any dimension	0		

Talents

- 5 Eidetic Memory
- 20 Universal Translator 15-

Perks

- 50 Fringe Benefit: Deity
- All the Followers and other resources it "needs"

Skills

- 40 +20 OECV with Mind Scan
- 25 +5 with any Background Skill
- 3 Analyze Magic 15-
- 3 Concealment 15-
- 3 Conversation 17-
- 5 Cramming
- 3 Deduction 15-
- 3 Persuasion 17-
- 3 PS: Researcher 15-
- 19 Spell Research (Inventor) 23-
- 3 Scholar
- 2 1) KS: Black Magic Horrors 15-
- 2 2) KS: Current Events 15-
- 2 3) KS: Human Evil 15-
- 2 4) KS: Magic 15-
- 2 5) KS: Mystic World 15-
- 2 6) KS: Secret Things 15-
- 2 7) KS: Subcultures 15-
- 2 8) KS: Who Does What 15-
- 2 9) KS: World History 15-
- 2 10) KS: World Politics 15-
- 3 Traveler
- 1 1) AK: Astral Plane 11-
- 1 2) AK: Babylon 11-
- 2 3) AK: Earth 15-
- 1 4) AK: Elysium 11-
- 2 5) AK: Dreamzone 15-
- 1 6) AK: Land of Legends 11-
- 2 7) AK: Netherworld 15-

Total Abilities Cost: 1,340**Total Character Cost: 1,470**

200+ Disadvantages

- 10 Hunted: Nagas and their allies 14- (Less Pow, Bind Further)
- 10 Hunted: Great Powers of Babylon, Elysium, and Faerie 8- (As Pow, Destroy/Bind Further)
- 25 Physical Limitation: Bound, can act in only limited ways (All The Time, Fully Impairing)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Lusts To Rule And Corrupt Humanity (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Relishes Fear And Pain (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Hates/Fears Non-human Or Transcendent Minds (Uncommon, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: supreme power of evil, 14- (Extreme, Limited Group [Mystic World])
- 1,145 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 1,470

THE MIDGARD SERPENT

Straightway Odin cast the serpent into the deep sea, where he lies all about the land; and this serpent grew so greatly that he lies in the midst of the ocean encompassing all the land, and bites upon his own tail.

—Snorri Sturluson, *The Prose Edda*

TIAMAT

Sharp of tooth and unsparing of fang.

[Tiamat] filled their bodies with venom instead of blood.

She cloaked ferocious dragons with fearsome rays,

And made them bear mantles of radiance...

—Enuma Elish



EXAMPLE POWERS FOR POTENTIALLY INFINITE POWER POOL

Dreamscape: The Dragon forces a group of people into a shared hallucination. It may use this dreamscape to tempt the characters, threaten them, reveal damaging secrets, or delude them with subtle lies.

Mental Illusions 14d6, Area Of Effect (11" Radius; +1); Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½). Total cost: 175 points.

Forced Mental Contact: The Dragon forces a telepathic communion on a group... whether the people want it or not. Everyone learns the worst about each other. Characters can resist the effect with an EGO Roll, but suffer a -3 penalty if they have any Strong Psychological Limitations, or -5 for Total Psychological Limitations or Enraged. This power works on all sentient creatures, human or not.

Telepathy 10d6, Area Of Effect (13" Radius; +1), Usable As Attack (defense is EGO Roll to hide one's thoughts and resist peeping on others, see text; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½). Total cost: 175 points.

Horrific Hypnosis: If the Dragon snares someone with its hypnotic gaze, it can paralyze the victim with sheer terror and despair. This also works well on foolish mentalists who try to attack the Dragon's mind.

Entangle 4d6, 5 DEF, BOECV (+1), Takes No Damage From Physical Attacks (+¼), Works Against EGO, Not STR (+¼), Invisible To Sight And Hearing Groups (+¾), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½). Total cost: 169 points.

Killing Thought: The Dragon can hurl its malevolent will against someone who contacts its mind, causing a brain stroke through sheer overload of terror.

RKA 3d6+1, BOECV (+1), Does BODY (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½). Total cost: 175 points.

Master The Mad: Anyone driven insane by contact with the Dragon's mind might become the Dragon's slave. The Dragon can ensure this happens by striking directly at the foolhardy mentalist's will.

Major Transform 4d6 (normal human to human with the Psychological Limitation Worships The Dragon [Very Common, Total], heals back through psychoanalysis or the like), BOECV (+1), Works Against EGO, Not BODY (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (165 Active Points); Limited Target (only people who suffer an EGO + 40 effect from the Dragon's Presence Damage Shield; -1). Total cost: 82 points.

Usurp The Will: The Dragon can take over the body of anyone who meets its dreadful gaze or opens his mind to it, turning the person into a puppet.

Telekinesis (30 STR), Fine Manipulation, BOECV (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½). Total cost: 137 points.

THE DRAGON INCARNATE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
110	STR	100	31-	Lift 100 ktons; 22d6 [11]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
40	CON	60	17-	
35	BODY	50	16-	
28	INT	18	15-	PER Roll 15-
30	EGO	40	15-	ECV: 10
40	PRE	30	17-	PRE Attack: 8d6
0	COM	-5	9-	
30	PD	8		Total: 30 PD (30 rPD)
30	ED	22		Total: 30 ED (30 rED)
6	SPD	32		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
30	REC	0		
80	END	0		
110	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 379

Movement: Running: 10"/20"
Flight: 30"/240"

Cost Powers END

175	<i>Potentially Infinite Power:</i> Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 120 base + 60 control cost, Cosmic (+2); May Only Be Used Once Per Turn (-1), May Only Create One Power At A Time (-1), Cannot Add To Or Modify Other Powers Or Characteristics Powers (-¼)	var
100	<i>Monstrous Attacks:</i> Multipower, 100-point reserve	
6u	1) <i>Swat:</i> HA +11d6, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	4
7u	2) <i>Wing/Tail Sweep:</i> HA +8d6 HA, Area Of Effect (18" Cone; +1¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)	4
9u	3) <i>Claw/Bite:</i> HKA 5d6 (10d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	3
5u	4) <i>Swallow Into Hell:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (to a single location in the sky of the Netherworld), Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Usable As Attack (defense is dimensional powers; +1)	5
9u	5) <i>Fire Breath:</i> RKA 5d6, Personal Immunity (+¼); 16 Charges (-0)	[16]
10u	6) <i>Lightning Breath:</i> Energy Blast 20d6; 16 Charges (-0)	[16]
9u	7) <i>Frost Breath:</i> RKA 2d6, NND (defense is Safe Environment: Intense Cold, or having fire/heat powers; +1), Does BODY (+1); 16 Charges (-0)	[16]
10u	8) <i>Rip The Mind:</i> Ego Attack 8d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	4
10u	9) <i>Delude The Senses:</i> Mental Illusions 16d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	4
10u	10) <i>Master The Will:</i> Mind Control 16d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	4
10u	11) <i>Know Inmost Thoughts:</i> Telepathy 16d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	4
8u	12) <i>Psychic Lock:</i> Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, BOECV (+1), Takes No Damage From Physical Attacks (+¼), Works Against EGO, Not STR (+¼); Cannot Form	

110	Barriers (-¼)	10
	<i>All The Evil Of The Human Soul:</i> +75 PRE; Only To Make Fear-Based Presence Attacks As Part Of Mental Damage Shield (-2) plus Damage Shield (Mental; +½) for 115 PRE, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
27	<i>Tireless In Combat:</i> Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) for 110 STR	0
5	<i>Legs And Tail:</i> Extra Limbs (3)	0
90	<i>Long Reach:</i> Stretching 12", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
14	<i>Steel-Hard Scales:</i> Hardened (+¼) for 30 PD/30 ED	0
37	<i>Steel-Hard Scales:</i> Damage Resistance (30 PD/30 ED), Hardened (+¼)	0
10	<i>Huge Eyes:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)	0
5	<i>Huge Ears:</i> Hearing Group Flash Defense (5 points)	0
5	<i>Accustomed To Hell's Stench:</i> Taste/Smell Group Flash Defense (5 points)	0
30	<i>Immense Bulk:</i> Knockback Resistance -15"	0
5	<i>Too Vast To Harm:</i> Lack of Weakness (-5) for Normal Defenses	0
17	<i>Godlike Will:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total), Hardened (+¼)	0
25	<i>Divine Defense:</i> Power Defense (20 points), Hardened (+¼)	0
90	<i>Immortal And Indestructible:</i> Life Support (Total, including full Immunity as described in <i>Galactic Champions</i> and Longevity: Immortality)	0
8	<i>Massive Legs:</i> Running +4" (10" total)	2
58	<i>Mighty Wings:</i> Flight 30", x8 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Restrained (-½)	3
30	<i>Sense The Soul:</i> Detect Soul/Spirit 15- (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Range, Targeting	0
5	<i>Dark-Adjusted Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0
12	<i>Keen Eyes:</i> +8 versus Range Modifier for Sight Group	0
25	<i>Connection to All Humanity:</i> Mind Link, any one human mind, any distance, any dimension	0
	Perks	
50	Fringe Benefit: Deity of several cults	
	Talents	
5	Eidetic Memory	
20	Universal Translator 15-	
	Skills	
15	+5 with <i>Monstrous Attacks</i> Multipower	
25	+5 with any Background Skill	
3	Analyze Magic 15-	
3	Concealment 15-	
3	Conversation 17-	
5	Cramming	
3	Deduction 15-	
3	Persuasion 17-	
13	Power: Thaumaturgy 20-	
3	PS: Researcher 15-	

CULTS OF THE DRAGON

Many cults serve the Dragon, though not all of them fully understand what they serve. These range from international cults with thousands of members, to tiny covens of less than a dozen people. Here are some of the more powerful cults:

The Bone Children:

Vampires lead this small but noxious cult, which combines Draconic worship with necromancy. The vampire-priests promise the cultists "immortality" if they die in service to the cult... then reanimate the cultists as zombies. Very few cultists reach the ultimate reward of being turned into a vampire to join the leadership.

The Cult Of The Red Banner:

Located in China, the Dragon's largest cult worships it in the form of Lóng Wang, the "Dragon King." Higher initiates learn their god's other name: *Szé Lóng*, the Death Dragon. The cult takes its name from its symbol, a red flag bearing a Chinese ideogram. Red Banner cultists practice martial arts, and high-ranking priests can cast spells. The cult has trained or empowered several superhuman operatives, and is far larger and more dangerous than the Chinese government believes.

Ouroboros: One of the principle Western cults worships the Dragon under the name of Abraxas, a Gnostic god of time, enlightenment, and magic. Ouroboros claims descent from ancient Gnostic cults, though the actual organization began in the nineteenth century. The cult teaches members that their status

Continued on next page

Continued from last page
as divine souls makes them no longer bound by conventional notions of good and evil — they can do what they want, or whatever Abraxas commands, because the deeds of the body do not affect the enlightened soul.

The Sons Of Kingu:

This small Middle Eastern cult worships Tiamat, the primal power of chaos from Mesopotamian mythology. According to myth, after the gods defeated Tiamat and her army of monsters, they made humanity from the blood of Kingu, the chief lieutenant of Tiamat. The Sons of Kingu try to awaken the divine-demonic power of Kingu's blood in themselves, gaining minor mystical powers such as unnatural strength, toughness, and endurance. The cult seeks an artifact called the Milk of Tiamat, which they believe will transform them into monsters — a new army for Tiamat.

Vritrasangha: This cult in India worships the Dragon under the name of Vritra, the serpent-demon of drought and death who threatens the gods in the Hindu Vedas. Vritrasangha members gain their magic through extreme asceticism that would kill anyone who didn't spend years training to endure such self-torture. Like the Circle of the Scarlet Moon (see *Arcane Adversaries*), the cultists can combine their powers in group rituals, but most of their spells take a week or more to cast. Vritrasangha is particularly skilled at death-curses and materializing counterfeit people called *tulpas*.

Any of these cults might work together, if the Dragon ordered it.

- 3 Spell Research (Inventor) 15-
- 3 Scholar
- 2 1) KS: Black Magic Horrors 15-
- 2 2) KS: Current Events 15-
- 2 3) KS: Human Evil 15-
- 2 4) KS: Magic 15-
- 2 5) KS: Mystic World 15-
- 2 6) KS: Secret Things 15-
- 2 7) KS: Subcultures 15-
- 2 8) KS: Who Does What 15-
- 2 9) KS: World History 15-
- 2 0) KS: World Politics 15-
- 3 Traveler
- 1 1) AK: Astral Plane 11-
- 1 2) AK: Babylon 11-
- 2 3) AK: Earth 15-
- 1 4) AK: Elysium 11-
- 2 5) AK: Dreamzone 15-
- 1 6) AK: Land of Legends 11-
- 2 7) AK: Netherworld 15-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 1,176

Total Cost: 1,555

200+ Disadvantages

- 30 Enraged: Berserk when defied or insulted (Very Common), go 11-, recover 14-
- 15 Dependence: must receive 100 human sacrifices every day or suffer 3d6 damage (Uncommon)
- 15 Distinctive Features: Every sensitive on Earth knows it's loose (Not Concealable; Cause Horror; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
- 10 Hunted: Nagas and their allies 14- (Less Pow, Capture)
- 10 Hunted: Great Powers of Babylon, Elysium, and Faerie 8- (As Pow, Destroy/Capture)
- 20 Physical Limitation: Colossal (about 60" long and weighs 6 ktons; suffers -12 DCV and +12 on PER Rolls to perceive him) (All The Time, Greatly Impairing)
- 15 Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Lusts To Rule And Corrupt Humanity (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Common, Strong)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Relishes Fear And Pain (Common, Strong)
- 10 Psychological Limitation: Hates/Fears Non-human Or Transcendent Minds (Uncommon, Strong)
- 15 Reputation: supreme power of evil, 14- (Extreme, Limited Group [Mystic World])
- 15 Unluck: 3d6
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from attacks with BOECV and Does BODY (Uncommon)
- 10 Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from attacks with BOECV and Does BODY (Uncommon)
- 5 Vulnerability: 1½ x STUN from attacks with Transdimensional (Uncommon)
- 5 Vulnerability: 1½ x BODY from attacks with Transdimensional (Uncommon)
- 5 Vulnerability: 1½ x STUN from attacks with Affects Desolidified (Uncommon)

- 5 Vulnerability: 1½ x BODY from attacks with Affects Desolidified (Uncommon)
- 1,105 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 1,555

EXAMPLE POWERS FOR POTENTIALLY INFINITE POWER POOL

Entropic Fire: The Dragon growls, its eyes shine with dark fire, and a wide area shimmers with the dark iridescence. Flesh and wood rots, girders rust, glass cracks, and stone and concrete crumble into sand. People die and buildings collapse after just a few uses of this attack.

RKA 2d6, Area Of Effect (24" Radius; +1½), Indirect (ignores barriers to act throughout an area; +¾), Penetrating (+½). Total cost: 112 points.

Hell Gate: The Dragon can call open Gates to the Netherworld, so demons can invade. The Hell Gate manifests as a circle of black stone flickering with sulfurous flames.

Extra-Dimensional Movement (any physical location in the Netherworld), x2 Increased Mass, Area Of Effect (One Hex; +½), Continuous (+1), Usable By Other (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½). Total cost: 97 points.

Horrific Hypnosis: If the Dragon snares someone with its hypnotic gaze, it can paralyze the victim with sheer terror and despair.

Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, BOECV (+1), Takes No Damage From Physical Attacks (+¼), Works Against EGO, Not STR (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼). Total cost: 110 points.

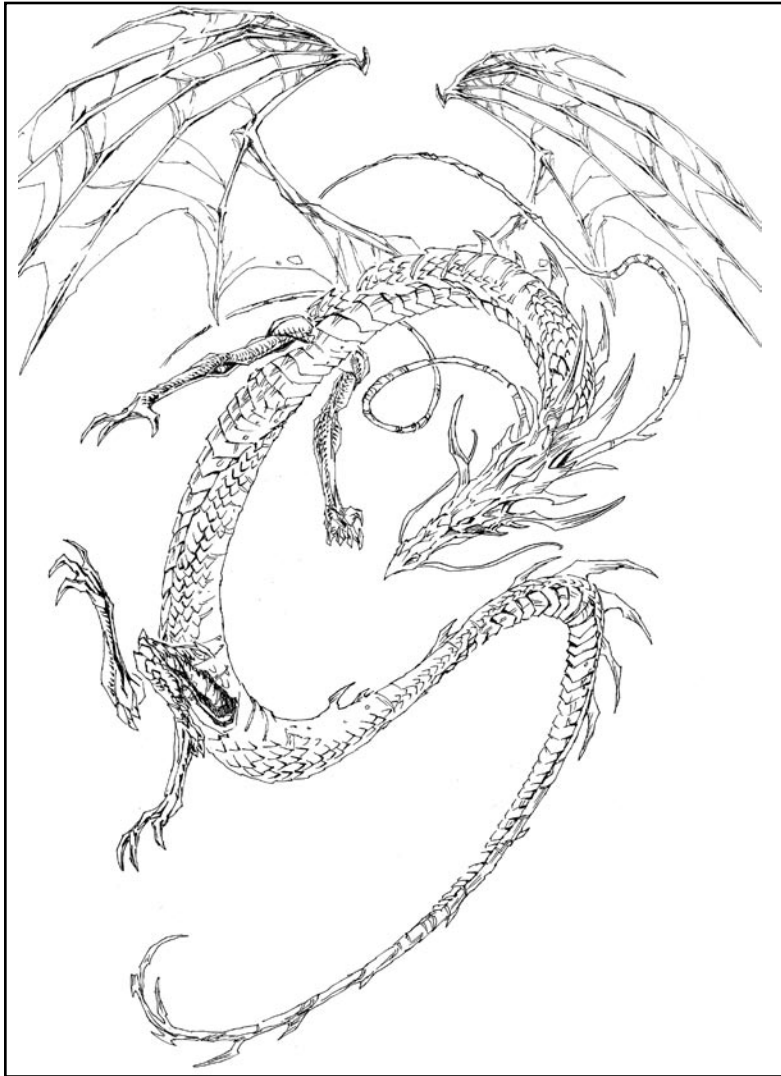
Killing Thought: The Dragon can hurl its malevolent will against someone who contacts its mind, causing a brain stroke through sheer overload of terror.

RKA 2d6, BOECV (+1), Does BODY (+1), +2 Increased STUN Multiplier (+½). Total cost: 105 points.

Description: This is an extremely strong ectoplasmic body for the Dragon — one powerful enough to devastate armies and defeat whole teams of heroes. Creating such a body for the Dragon would require the use of a high-powered artifact like the Tablet of Destinies and the sacrifice of hundreds, if not thousands, of mortal victims. More likely, the Dragon's minions would incarnate it in a less powerful body and increase its power through further rituals of mass human sacrifice.

Thus incarnate, the Dragon loses much of its contact with the minds of all humanity, but it gains tremendous destructive power. Its gigantic body can crush a tank in one bite, knock over a skyscraper with a swat of its paw, or send a whole convoy flying with a sweep of its wing or tail. Nor need the Dragon fear most mundane weapons.

On top of that, the Dragon still wields immense magical power. Some are physical (for



example, it can exhale devastating blasts of fire, lightning, or cold); others are psychic, for the dragon remains a master of minds. If the Dragon wants to take the time, it can cast powerful spells for any other effect it wants. It retains its Damage Shield: anyone who invades the Dragon's mind encounters the concentrated horror of all humanity's evil.

Free to act with this sort of power, the Dragon ravages the world, destroying whole cities for the fun of it. In a few days, however, it settles down to establishing its New World Order. It selectively annihilates centers of government and uses its mental powers to enslave political, military, business, and cultural leaders. The very people needed to rally humanity against the Dragon become its front men.

The Dragon then sets itself up as a god, with Giacomo Sylvestri as chief acolyte. The various Satanic cults join it at once. King Cobra and VIPER

soon follow as they recognize the true Supreme Serpent. The Dragon's minions recruit other evil organizations (such as drug syndicates, racist groups, and opportunistic supervillains) by promising them power over their enemies. Gates to the Netherworld unleash the Hordes of Hell on the Dragon's enemies. Unless the heroes can destroy the Dragon's body, within a month it rules the world and the Earth becomes a Hell of torment and despair — forever.

Fortunately, such a mighty incarnation comes with correspondingly severe weaknesses. The Dragon Incarnate is still only a projection or extension of the real Dragon, and that makes it vulnerable to attacks that disrupt its astral cohesion. It needs at least 100 human sacrifices presented to it every day, in a ritual that takes 20 minutes; without that ritual, its ectoplasmic body starts to unravel. If the Dragon can go a month with a proper sacrifice every day, it loses this Dependence.

The Dragon's aura of evil is so powerful that every mystic and psychic in

the world knows it's loose, and has some idea where it is. Within an hour of its manifestation, it's likely that every heroic super-mage in the world (and some villains) will mobilize to fight the Dragon and its minions. The Heavenly Hosts of Elysium follow as soon as they can find a way to Earth, to engage the infernal legions of the Netherworld. Babylon and Faerie send what aid they can, though the Dragon's servants surely raise havoc in these realms as well. But can even these mighty forces defeat the massed legions of Evil itself?

In this form, the Dragon stretches about 400 feet long from nose to tail. It resembles a classic European dragon, with batlike wings, huge claws and teeth, scales the size of shields, and a jagged crest running along its head and down its spine. Most of its slender body is shiny black, but the scutes along its belly are blood-red.

THE TIAMAT BRAZIER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
35	STR	25	16-	Lift 3,200 kg; 7d6 [3]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
25	CON	30	14-	
14	BODY	8	12-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
23	EGO	26	14-	ECV: 8
30	PRE	20	15-	PRE Attack: 6d6
0	COM	-5	9-	
29	PD	22		Total: 29 PD (13 rPD)
29	ED	24		Total: 29 ED (13 rED)
5	SPD	22		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
15	REC	6		
50	END	0		
45	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 210

Movement: Running: 12"/24"
Swimming: 0"/0"

Cost Powers **END**

43	<i>Mental Flame:</i> Multipower, 75-point reserve; all slots IAF Fragile (flame in head; -¾)	
4u	1) <i>Breathe Fire:</i> RKA 4d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); IAF Fragile (flame in head; -¾)	3
3u	2) <i>Hypnotic Flaming Eyes:</i> Mind Control 10d6, Telepathic (+¼), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); IAF Fragile (flame in head; -¾), Eye Contact Required (-½)	3
4u	3) <i>Burn Into The Mind:</i> Telepathy 12d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); IAF Fragile (flame in head; -¾)	3
4u	4) <i>Scorch Psychic Foes:</i> Ego Attack 6d6, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); IAF Fragile (flame in head; -¾)	3
1u	5) <i>Fan The Flames Of Id:</i> Mind Control 6d6, Telepathic (+¼), Area Of Effect Nonselective (5" Radius; +¾), MegaScale (1" = 1 km; +¼), Trigger (next selfish, antisocial urge; +¼); IAF Fragile (flame in head; -¾), Set Effect (Act on urge; -½), No Range (-½), Only At The Dark Of The Moon (-2), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2)	7
37	<i>Claws:</i> HKA 2d6 (3½d6 with STR), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼)	1
13	<i>Made Of Iron:</i> Damage Resistance (13 PD/13 ED)	0
10	<i>Sees By Magic:</i> Sight Group Flash Defense (10 points)	0
15	<i>Will Of The Dragon:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
7	<i>Animated By Magic:</i> Power Defense (7 points)	0
50	<i>Animated By Magic:</i> Life Support: Total (Includes Longevity: Immortality)	0
10	<i>Large Iron Body:</i> Knockback Resistance -5"	0
12	<i>Long Legs:</i> Running +6" (12" total)	2
-2	<i>Sinks Like A Rock:</i> Swimming -2" (0" total)	0
10	<i>Knows All Minds:</i> Targeting for Mental Awareness	0

Perks

25 Fringe Benefit: Divine avatar, revered by minor cult

Talents

20 Universal Translator 13-

Skills

6 +2 OCV or DCV with Claws

3 Analyze Magic 13-
3 Climbing 13-
3 Concealment 13-
3 Deduction 13-
3 Persuasion 15-
3 Scholar

2 1) KS: Black Magic Horrors 13-
2 2) KS: General Magic 13-
2 3) KS: Human Evil 13-
2 4) KS: Mystic World 13-
2 5) KS: Secret Things 13-
2 6) KS: Who's Who in Everything 13-
2 7) KS: World History 13-
2 8) KS: World Politics 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 306

Total Cost: 516

200+ Disadvantages

30 Enraged: Berserk if head flame extinguished (Common), go 14-, recover 14-

15 Enraged: when defied or insulted (Very Common), go 8-, recover 14-

15 Hunted: Doctor Teneber 11- (As Pow, Destroy)

15 Physical Limitation: Very Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

10 Physical Limitation: Large (2" long, weighs 800 kg, -2 DCV and +2 to others' PER Rolls to perceive it) (Infrequently, Greatly Impairing)

25 Psychological Limitation: Exists To Corrupt And Rule Mankind (Very Common, Total)

20 Psychological Limitation: Vengeful (Very Common, Strong)

15 Psychological Limitation: Relishes Pain And Suffering (Common, Strong)

10 Reputation: supreme power of evil, 11- (Extreme, Limited Group [Mystic World])

15 Susceptibility: to head flame extinguished, 1d6 damage per Turn until it re-ignites flame (Common)

15 Susceptibility: to being inside a Mental Defense area or barrier, 1d6 damage per Phase (Uncommon)

131 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 516



Description: The Dragon could manifest on Earth by possessing a golem body specially created for that purpose — such as the Tiamat Brazier. Any halfway competent group of sorcerer heroes can defeat and destroy the Tiamat Brazier; even a single hero could do it with good strategy. Of course, the heroes have to get past its cultists or other defenders first....

The Tiamat Brazier's strength, claws, and resistance to most forms of damage make it a formidable combatant. Its mystical powers make it even more dangerous. It can breathe jets of fire, read minds, and hypnotize anyone who meets its flaming eyes.

Worst of all, on the night of the new moon, it can send a wave of psychic force sweeping outward for about three miles. Everyone in the Area of Effect has his mind opened further to the Dragon's influence. The next time the person feels some selfish, antisocial urge — to shoplift something he can't afford, to beat the hell out of that annoying kid, to force himself on the pretty girl who keeps saying no — the Dragon nudges him act on that urge. (This is an EGO + 10 Effect: something the target wouldn't mind doing.) After the Tiamat Brazier Fans The Fires Of Id, an incredible wave of beatings, muggings, thefts, rapes, and murders follows. Strong-willed heroes can ignore the Tiamat Brazier's perfidious influence... but what happens to the city?

The Tiamat Brazier is a knobby, black iron statue of an emaciated, wingless dragon. The top of the head, however, is cut off to form a bowl of fire. This fire also shines through the red glass eyes. This fire is the Tiamat Brazier's greatest weakness: if the flame goes out, the golem goes berserk, cannot use its mental powers, and gradually loses its magical life-force. It's an ordinary flame, susceptible to all the usual methods of extinguishing it — a Called Shot to the head with a blast from a fire extinguisher, or any other such attack that could disrupt a small fire. A similar but more rapid weakening happens if the Brazier enters an area protected by Mental Defense; for instance, if a Mental Defense Force

Wall surrounded it. Such an area interferes with the Dragon's possession of the golem body.

The Dragon does its best to keep the Tiamat Brazier free and active. Not only does the golem increase the Dragon's grip on thousands of people at a time, it lets the Dragon gain direct experience of the material world. The Dragon does not hesitate to sacrifice the minions who created the Brazier if necessary — with its power to read human desires and exploit them, the Dragon can recruit new minions easily enough.

OPHITE				
Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
23	STR	13	14-	Lift 600 kg; 4½d6 [2]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
20	CON	20	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll 11-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
2	COM	-4	9-	
17	PD	12		Total: 17 PD (6 rPD)
17	ED	13		Total: 17 ED (6 rED)
3	SPD	3		Phases: 4, 8, 12
9	REC	0		
40	END	0		
32	STUN	0	Total Characteristics Cost: 89	
Movement:		Running: 6"/12"		
Cost	Powers			END
	Martial Arts: Wrestling			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Escape	+0	+0	38 STR versus Grabs
3	Grab	-1	-1	Grab Two Limbs, 33 to STR for holding on
3	Take Down	+2	+1	4½d6 Strike; You Fall, Target Falls



- 26 Claw/Bite: HKA 1d6 (1½d6 with STR), Armor Piercing (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) 1
- 6 Scaly Skin: Damage Resistance (6 PD/6 ED) 0
- 10 Gecko Hands and Feet: Clinging (normal STR) 0
- 5 Tail: Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼) 0

- Skills**
- 3 Breakfall 12-
 - 3 Concealment 11-
 - 3 Stealth 12-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 66
Total Cost: 155

- 50+ Disadvantages**
- 10 Hunted: Draconic cult's leader 11- (Mo Pow, Watching)
 - 25 Psychological Limitation: Fanatical Devotion to the Dragon (Very Common, Total)
 - 10 Susceptibility: to magical Adjustment Powers used as attacks and Transforms, takes 2d6 STUN instantly (Uncommon)
 - 60 Experience Points or Disadvantages specific to the individual Ophite
- Total Disadvantage Points: 155

Description: Ophites look like muscular men (they are actually neuter) covered with heavy scales. They have a tail, distorted, snakelike heads, and impressive claws and fangs.

Some of these creatures were fanatical cultists who willingly had themselves transformed into reptile-men, the better to serve the Dragon. Draconic cults also kidnap, brainwash, and change people into ophites. After a week as an ophite, the spell can no longer be lifted through a simple Dispel: returning an ophite to humanity requires physical, spiritual, and mental counter-Transforms.

Cults of the Dragon often use ophites as guards. In combat, one ophite Grabs or knocks down an opponent, and the other ophites claw and bite the helpless target. Ophites may use Clinging and Concealment to set ambushes, lurking above doors to leap down on victims.

Ophites suffer only one physical weakness: the magic that transformed them isn't perfect, so any magic that changes an ophite in other ways, or drains their life force, causes them pain and disorientation.

THE NAGAS

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
20	CON	20	13-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
28	INT	18	15-	PER Roll 15-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
10	PD	8		Total: 23 PD (13 rPD)
10	ED	6		Total: 23 ED (13 rED)
4	SPD	12		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
8	REC	4		
40	END	0		
25	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 118

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Flight: 13"/104"

Cost	Powers	END
120	<i>Master Of All Mystic Arts:</i> Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), 60 base + 30 control cost, Cosmic (+2); OIHID (-¼), Only Magic (-¼)	var
50	<i>Seraphic Mastery:</i> Variable Power Pool (Magic Pool), +30 base + 15 control cost, Cosmic (+2); OIHID (when in Seraph form; -¼), Side Effects (character suffers Drain CON 1d6 each Turn spent in Seraph form, points return at a rate of 5 per Hour, always occurs; -½), Only Thaumaturgy (-½)	var
17	<i>Seraphic Aura:</i> Elemental Control, 60-point powers; OIHID (when in Seraph form; -¼), Side Effects (character suffers Drain CON 1d6 each Turn spent in Seraph form, points return at a rate of 5 per Hour, always occurs; -½)	
18	1) <i>Shining Shield:</i> Force Field (13 PD/13 ED/9 Power Defense), Hardened (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIHID (-¼), Side Effects (as above; -½)	0
21	2) <i>Radiate Flames:</i> RKA 2d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); OIHID (-¼), Side Effects (as above; -½)	2
17	3) <i>Rainbow Wings:</i> Flight 14", x32 Noncombat, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); OIHID (-¼), Side Effects (as above; -½)	2
18	4) <i>Energized Self:</i> Aid Characteristics 2d6, all Characteristics except CON, INT, and COM simultaneously (+2), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½; OIHID (-¼), Side Effects (as above; -½), Self Only (-½)	4
12	<i>Tough Scales:</i> Armor (5 PD/5 ED), OIHID (-¼)	0
12	<i>Invincible Will:</i> Mental Defense (14 points total), Hardened (+¼)	0
5	<i>Innate Mystic Defense:</i> Power Defense (5 points)	0

15	<i>Immortality And Perfect Health:</i> Life Support (Longevity: Immortality; Immunity: all terrestrial diseases and bio-warfare agents)	0
29	<i>Assume Human Form:</i> Shape Shift (Sight and Touch Groups, any humanoid form), Costs Endurance Only To Change Shape (+¼)	
17	<i>Mystic Perception:</i> Detect Magic 15- (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Range, Sense	0
20	<i>Astral Awareness:</i> Dimensional (Astral Plane) for Sight and Hearing Groups	0
4	<i>Tail:</i> Extra Limb (1), Inherent (+¼); Limited Manipulation (-¼), OIHID (-¼)	0
5	<i>Tail Reach:</i> Stretching 1", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OIHID (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼)	0

Perks

5	Reputation: legendary fount of magic (in Mystic World) 11-, +5/+5d6
---	---

Talents

5	Eidetic Memory
20	Universal Translator 15-

Skills

20	+2 Overall
3	Analyze Magic 15-
3	Conversation 13-
5	Cramming
3	Cryptography 15-
3	Deduction 15-
3	AK: Inner Planes 15-
3	AK: Shamballah 15-
2	AK: Agharti 11-
2	AK: Mystic Power Sites 11-
13	Power: Magic 20-
2	PS: Personal Choice 11-
3	Spell Research (Inventor) 15-
6	Individual Skills specific to a particular naga (GM's choice)
3	Scholar
2	1) KS: Gods and Spirits 15-
2	2) KS: Legends 15-
2	3) KS: Lost Civilizations 15-
2	4) KS: Magic Styles 15-
2	5) KS: Magical Beings 15-
2	6) KS: Mystic History 15-
2	7) KS: Mystic World 15-
2	8) KS: Thaumaturgy 15-
2	9) KS: Theurgy 15-
2	10) KS: World History 15-
2	11) KS: Personal Area of Expertise 15-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 496

Total Cost: 614

200+ Disadvantages

20	Accidental Change: to Naga form when struck by magical attack 14- (Common)
15	Distinctive Features: aura of vast mystical power (Concealable With Effort; Causes Major Reaction [awe or intimidation])

NAGA PLOT SEEDS

The basic naga plot: a mysterious stranger offers a hero a cryptic warning of some evil brewing. A more subtle naga can arrange for a clue to reach a hero by seeming coincidence, such as posing as a concerned citizen who saw an evil cult's ritual, or planting a clue at the scene of a mystic villain's crime. A naga might keep this up for a long time before the heroes realize their witnesses don't exist and their enemies are more careful than they thought.

A naga comes to trust a group of mystic heroes enough that it becomes their mentor. After a while, though, the characters realize their mentor has other irons in the fire. In fact, the naga also uses several false identities to manipulate supervillains, positioning them for a massive battle that will surely destroy the evil and dangerous regime of a small nation (such as Awad or Lur-ranga, from *Champions Universe*). Do the heroes permit this, regardless of the loss of civilian lives that will surely happen? Do they stop the plan, despite their mentor's assurance that the regime is about to cause immensely greater harm to the world? Do they try to find some other way to stop the regime?

The nagas themselves need help when a mystical master villain like Takofanes, or a group like the Crowns of Krim, penetrates their hidden valley. They call in the PCs, since they have worked together in the past (even if the heroes didn't know it).

- 25 Hunted: the Dragon and its minions 14- (Mo Pow, Kill)
- 10 Hunted: assorted evil mystics 8- (As Pow, Capture/Kill)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Always Uses Minimum Force (Very Common, Total)
- 20 Psychological Limitation: Committed To The Welfare Of Humanity (Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Secretive (Very Common)
- 10 Susceptibility: to the Dragon, its avatars, or its creations, suffers 1d6 damage per Turn spent within 5" of them (Uncommon)
- 274 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 614

EXAMPLE POWERS FOR MASTER OF ALL MYSTIC ARTS POWER POOL

Most of the spells from Chapter Three scale down to 50-some Active Points without much trouble. These examples are of magic a naga might use in the course of guiding or assisting a hero.

Evade The Dragon: The Dragon's servants Hunt the nagas whenever the Dragon suspects their interference. This spell helps a naga and an ally escape psychic and mystical attempts to find them, or infiltrate a Draconic stronghold with less chance of being noticed.

Invisibility to Mental and Mystic Sense Groups, Usable Simultaneously (up to two people at once; +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼). Total cost: 44 points.

Invulnerable Serenity: If a hero intends to confront the Dragon, a naga can at least protect him from the Dragon's overwhelming Presence. This spell calms the subject's mind and quells his passions so he more easily resists attempts at intimidation, persuasion, or other forms to influence his thinking, though it doesn't protect against actual mental attacks.

+30 PRE, Usable By Other (+¼), Uncontrolled (one hour, or until person acts on a Strong Psychological Limitation; +½) (52 Active Points); Only To Protect Against Presence Attacks (-1). Total cost: 26 points.

Psychic Healing: Mystics sometimes suffer damage to their brains, or even their souls, because of their battles. A naga can heal the psychic damage that defies mundane medicine and even powers of corporeal healing. The example uses Intelligence, but a naga can also heal damage to Ego or Presence.

Healing INT 4d6. Total cost: 40 points.

See Possible Destinies: To influence history, the nagas need to find people who can do what they

need, where and when they need it. They prefer people who would serve their goals willingly, but don't consider this essential. Nagas can look forward along a person's timeline to find points when he might make decisions that benefit or hinder their plans. When they find such people, the nagas can subtly create situations that encourage the person to make the decision they want. Finding a suitable moment of decision in the manifold possibilities of the future requires a successful PER Roll.

Clairsentience (Sight Group and Normal Hearing), Precognition (45 Active Points); Precognition Only (-1), No Range (only works on a person with whom the naga has contact; -½). Total cost: 18 points.



EXAMPLE POWERS FOR SERAPHIC MASTERY POWER POOL

See Chapter Three for typical thaumaturgy spells. In Seraph form, a naga typically uses the VPP to create a 60-point attack, a 30-point defensive or movement power, and allocates any remaining points to an Enhanced Sense or special defense such as Flash Defense or Life Support (all this assumes, of course, that the GM allows it to create Special Powers with its Power Pool). Under special circumstances, a naga might instead cast exceptionally powerful spells using the full Active Points of the VPP.

Banishment: At full power, a naga can force extraplanar creatures to return from whence they came, wherever that may be.

Extra-Dimensional Movement (a single physical location in a related group of dimensions [the home dimensions of the target of the spell]), Usable As Attack (defense is having Extra-Dimensional Movement or dimension-manipulating powers; +1), Ranged (+½) (62 Active Points); Only Works Against Beings Not Native To The Dimension They're Currently In (-½). Total cost: 41 points.

Close Gate: A naga can destroy Gates, even very powerful ones such as Tyrannon's *Dimensional Bridges*. This may take several Phases, though. During this time, the naga may need protection from heroes.

Dispel Extra-Dimensional Movement 15d6, Cumulative (+½), Increased Cumulative Points (180 points; +¼) (79 Active Points); Only Works Versus "Gate" Forms Of Extra-Dimensional Movement (-½). Total cost: 53 points.

Background/History: Humanity never stood alone against the Dragon. For countless millennia, the nagas have served as helpers and advisors. Curiously, the Dragon's eternal foes are also reptilian. Mythology speaks of serpents, dragons, and snake-men as bringers of wisdom, prosperity, and civilization as often as it portrays them as corruptors and destroyers.

The nagas refuse to disclose their own origins, but they have existed as long as the Dragon. Certain secret traditions say the nagas and the Dragon founded the first civilizations and used them to make war on each other — a war for the future of humanity. That war continues to this day.

Nowadays, the nagas stay in the background. They seem bound by an inscrutable code of conscience: they raise empires and cast them down, but never meet force with force. Unlike the Dragon, the nagas do not *compel* people to do anything. Instead, they create situations where the right person is in the right place, at the right time, to do what the nagas want... and pay the personal cost. The nagas are a bit more straightforward with mystics who show concern for humanity — they often warn super-mages about major plots by the

Dragon. But even then, they give only the information a hero absolutely needs to stop the plot.

What are the nagas? From whence did they come? Why do they oppose the Dragon? Masters of occult lore agree that solving the mystery of the nagas would also solve the mystery of the Dragon, or vice-versa. No one seems to know the answers but the nagas themselves, and they won't tell. They say only that until humanity can master the Dragon on its own, they must follow their duty.

Personality/Motivation: Despite their commitment to human destiny, the nagas are pacifists. Only a truly desperate situation prompts them to act directly, and even then, the nagas avoid violence. They may help humanity's champions, but they insist that humanity must solve its own problems and fight its own battles.

Quote: "My identity is unimportant. I believe you should know that a threat to Humanity is growing on Sakhalin Island — I must say no more. Here are plane tickets, if you need them."

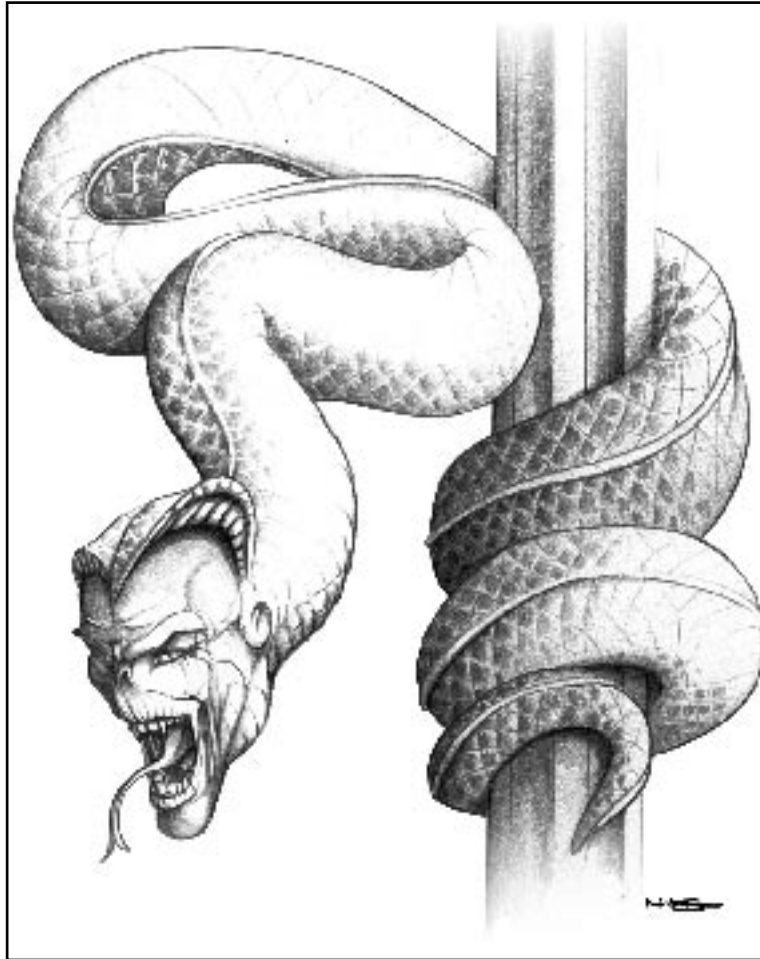
Powers/Tactics: All nagas are masters of both thaumaturgy and various sorts of theurgy drawn from many different human cultures. Their encyclopedic knowledge of the mystic arts enables nagas to perform any sort of magic.

Nagas have three forms: one with a humanoid torso and serpent tail (their standard form); a form that looks like a human being; and a "Seraph" form in which the basic naga body becomes white and translucent, surrounded by a swirling aura of iridescent light, with rainbow wings. The *OIHID* Limitation represents powers a naga can only use when in its basic form.

In its basic "humanoid torso, serpent tail" form, a naga has a 60-point Magic Pool. When in human form, a naga must take a Phase and succeed at a Thaumaturgy Skill Roll to shift the Power Pool. In a crisis, a naga can assume its full-power, "Seraph" form in which its Cosmic Power Pool increases to 90 points and it gains several other powers besides. However, a naga can use the extra Magic Pool points only for thaumaturgy. Nagas can use their full power for only a short time; taking Seraph form tires them greatly. (This gives them a practical as well as a philosophical reason for making humanity look after itself.)

Until someone directly attacks a naga, it employs its magic to prevent confrontation. A naga uses illusions to keep potential menaces distracted, at least long enough for innocent bystanders to get away; then it vanishes.

Campaign Use: The nagas function as teachers, advisors, and sometimes manipulators. The GM can use a naga to bring a hero team together (especially a team of super-mystics). Their naga mentor might appear now and then to warn the characters about threats to humanity, teach new spells, and perhaps even help them obtain a Base. He will not, however, solve their problems for them. Nagas seldom become Contacts because they appear when it suits *their* purposes — not the heroes'.



To make the nagas more powerful, increase their Characteristics or remove Limitations on their two-step Magic Pool. To make them less powerful, remove the *Seraphic Mastery* enhanced VPP.

The nagas would never Hunt heroes who remain heroes. In fact, they may be the only people who believe a hero who's been framed for some evil deed, or who remain willing to help a fallen hero return to the straight and narrow path. On the other hand, the nagas care very little about individuals: if the nagas need a hero to sacrifice himself to

stop some great evil, they will maneuver the hero to make that sacrifice.

Appearance: Nagas have three forms (although they can assume any form through magic). Their basic "Naga" form is a humanoid torso on a long snake body. Yellow-green, dark green, and bronze scales cover their bodies. A naga has a narrow, triangular face topped by a saw-toothed crest instead of hair. Humans usually describe nagas as male because they show no female sexual features, but no one really knows if they have gender.

When nagas use their full power, they change to their "Seraph" form. The naga becomes white and translucent, surrounded by a swirling aura of iridescent light. Feathered wings of rainbow light unfurl from the naga's shoulders.

More often than not, however, nagas use their magic to take human form. They assume a racially neutral appearance. A shape-shifted naga has a totally

bald head; the eyebrows, the only hair they show, are black but the eyes might be any color. Nagas dress conservatively and unobtrusively. In the Western world, for instance, a naga might wear a tan suit with a green tie and a golden tie-tack shaped like a Chinese dragon as the only distinctive element. Again, nagas seem male, but that's probably just to fit cultural assumptions about authority figures. They use obvious pseudonyms like "Mr. Smith."

GLOSSARY



Here's a quick summary of important terms and concepts relating to the Multiverse of the Hero Universe. See the Index for page references to these subjects.

Abyss, the: The barrier between Briah and Atziluth.

Achaea: The realm of the Greek gods in Faerie.

Aleph: Another term for Kether (*q.v.*).

Allamanda: The farmlands around Golgonooza.

Archetypal World: Atziluth (*q.v.*).

Archmage: An office held by the most powerful mystic on Earth, who's charged with protecting Humanity from occult threats. Earth has not had an Archmage since 1908.

Assiah: The Material World, the lowest level of the Multiverse, containing the sephiroth Malkuth.

Astral Plane: A Yetziratic realm in the sephiroth Yesod that connects Earth's dimension to countless other realms. It's divided into the Lower, Middle, and Upper Astral, each with its own properties.

Astral World: Yetzirah (*q.v.*).

Atziluth: The highest level of the Multiverse, containing the sephira Binah, Chokmah, and Kether.

Azoic, Thanoro: The first Archmage of Earth.

Babylon: The City of Man, one of the four main Imaginal Realms. It embodies the achievements and powers of Man. It resembles every city on Earth, but moreso.

Balthus: A dimension lord who feeds on fear.

Ban, the: A mystical phenomena that prevents the gods and their chief servants from coming bodily to Earth except in limited ways.

Beulah: The realm of Luvah, Prime Avatar of Chaos.

Binah: "Understanding," an Atziluthic sephiroth, an infinite reservoir of power.

Briah: The Creative World, the second-highest level of the Multiverse, containing the sephira Tiphereth, Pachad, and Chesed.

Bright Sea Of Forms: Chokmah (*q.v.*).

Bromion: A dimension lord and Lord of Order who serves Urizen. He controls the Millworks, a dimension in Netzach.

Cassai: A dimension lord, known as one of the Multiverse's best crafters of enchanted items. He's at once hungry for power and paranoid about others stealing *his* power.

Cathedron: The citadel in Golgonooza that holds the loom of Enitharmon the Weaver.

Chesed: "Greatness," a Briahic sephiroth that contains the realms of the four Prime Avatars.

Chokmah: "Wisdom," an Atziluthic sephiroth that contains every possible archetype of objects, actions, ideas, structures, and so on.

Circle of the Scarlet Moon, the: An evil cabal that uses its mystic powers to try to obtain power and wealth.

City Of Man, the: Babylon (*q.v.*).

Creative World: Briah (*q.v.*).

Cysts: Pockets of Astral Space with strange properties.

Da'ath: The lost sephiroth, the link between Wisdom and Understanding, from where a mystic could call on the power of Binah and shape it via Chokmah.

Dark Sea of Being: Binah (*q.v.*).

Death's Dominion: The realm of Death in the sephiroth of Tiphereth.

DEMON: An evil occult organization that worships the Kings Of Edom.

Descending Hierarchy: The rulers of the Netherworld, including Mephistopheles, Baphomet, Beelzebub, Astaroth, and other demon princes and arch-devils.

Dominions: Dimensions in the sephiroth Netzach, each ruled by a controlling intelligence.

Dragon, the: A being who embodies the primal power of evil within the human mind and soul.

Dreamtime, the: A dangerous region of Faerie (*q.v.*) where flexible time becomes even more flexible and distorted than ever.

Dreamzone: A division of the Lower Astral Plane composed of all the dreams being dreamed by humans at any given moment.

Elysium: The Imaginal Realm formed from human ideas of goodness, Heaven, and so forth as defined by the "ethical religions."

Enitharmon the Weaver: One aspect of Urthona, Prime Avatar of Art; wife of Los.

Entuthon Benython: A dark forest that exists in the realms of all four Prime Avatars.

Faerie: The Imaginal Realm that's home to fairies, nature spirits, and pagan gods. In part it derives from human ideas about, and anthropomorphization of, nature.

Formative World: Yetzirah (*q.v.*).

Four Worlds: The Multiverse, so called because mystics typically organize it into four "levels": Assiah,

Yetzirah, Briah, and Atziluth.

Fuzon: A dimension lord and Lord of Nature who rules a dimension called the Burning Sky.

Generation: The realm of Tharmas, Prime Avatar of Nature.

Golgonooza: The city of Urthona, Prime Avatar of Art.

Hod: “Glory/Splendor/Fame,” a sephiroth in Yetzirah, containing dimensions that run by magic but still run by themselves (*i.e.*, where magic follows rational, quasi-scientific rules).

Imaginal Realms: Dimensions created from the Astral Plane by the human imagination, including Faerie, the Netherworld, Babylon, and Elysium.

Inner Planes: The Imaginal Realms (*q.v.*).

Kether: “The Crown,” the highest and most inaccessible of the planes — the ultimate realm of indivisible being.

Kings Of Edom, the: Malevolent, or at least uncaringly powerful, beings from the Qliphothic Realms.

Koriol: A dimension lord, once the Archmage of Loezen.

Kryptos: The Lord of Secrets, an Archetype who dwells in Briah.

Land Of Legends, the: Faerie (*q.v.*).

Loezen: A dying dimension in the sephiroth Malkuth.

Los the Smith: One aspect of Urthona, Prime Avatar of Art; husband of Enitharmon.

Luban: The citadel in Golgonooza that holds the forge of Los the Smith.

Luvah: The Prime Avatar of Chaos.

Malkuth: “The Kingdom,” the lowest sephira of the Multiverse.

Material World: Assiah (*q.v.*).

Mental World: Briah (*q.v.*).

Mundane Shell: Kether (*q.v.*).

Nagas: Mysterious serpentine beings who protect humanity from the Dragon.

Netherworld, the: The Imaginal Realm formed from human ideas of evil. It's the home of demons, devils, and other foul beings.

Netzach: “Conquest/Victory/Permanence,” a sephiroth in Yetzirah, containing dimensions ruled by a controlling intelligence (*a.k.a.* Dominions).

Orc: A form taken by Luvah, Prime Avatar of Chaos.

Outer Planes: Dimensions in Hod and Netzach.

Pachad: “Strength/Justice,” a sephiroth in Briah, containing, among other dimensions, the Garden Of Earthly Delights.

Pandemonium: The seat of government for the Descending Hierarchy (*q.v.*).

Parterres: The Imaginal Realms (*q.v.*).

Prime Avatars: Urizen, Urthona, Tharmas, and

Luvah, the cosmic entities who embody the concepts of Order, Art, Nature, and Chaos, respectively. Also called the Zoas.

Primum Mobile: Kether (*q.v.*).

Qliphothic Realms: The dimensions “below” or “behind” the Tree Of Life — realms of decay, darkness, and evil.

Quaternion: The four primary Imaginal Realms of Babylon, Elysium, Faerie, and the Netherworld.

Sephirothic Tree Of Life: The organizational scheme used by Western mystics to describe the Multiverse, consisting of *sephiroth* (“emanations from God”) that cascade down from Kether to Malkuth in a series of Four Worlds (Atziluth, Briah, Yetzirah, and Assiah).

Skarn the Shaper: A powerful dimension lord who rules the Congeries and wants to merge all other dimensions with his own.

Solipsist, the: The Decreator, the Anti-God, the absolute limit of negative existence who dwells in the Qliphothic Realms.

Tharmas: The Prime Avatar of Nature.

Thaumaturgy: The style of magic used by super-mages and their ilk.

Thiralatha: “The Lady of the Dreamful Caves,” a dimension lord and Lady of Artifice who possesses vast transmutative powers.

Tiphereth: “Beauty,” a sephiroth in Briah, containing the Veil Of The Temple and Death's Dominion, among other dimensions.

Trismegistus Council, the: A cabal of “good” mystics opposed to the Circle of the Scarlet Moon, DEMON, and other evil occult organizations.

Tyrannon the Conqueror: A powerful dimension lord, ruler of Thulkos, whose self exists in 888 forms. He wants to merge other dimensions with his own to increase his power.

Udan Adan: A dark and bitter lake in Generation.

Ulro: The realm of Urizen, Prime Avatar of Order.

Upper Planes: The Brialic dimensions.

Urizen: The Prime Avatar of Order.

Urthona: The Prime Avatar of Art.

Vala: The feminine aspect of Luvah.

Veil Of The Temple, the: The Upper Astral Plane, which forms a barrier between the Yetziratic and Brialic planes.

Yesod: “The Foundation,” the lowest sephiroth in Yetzirah. It contains the Astral Plane and the Imaginal Realms.

Yetzirah: The Formative World, the second-lowest level of the Multiverse, containing the sephira Yesod, Hod, and Netzach, as well as various demi-planes and the like.

Yggdrasil: The Yetziratic dimension of plant life.

Zoas: The Prime Avatars (*q.v.*).

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