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MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS

BOOK OF MAGIC



SOURCEBOOK

"WHO AMONG US CAN RESIST THE LURE OF STORIES THAT FEATURE MYSTERY, FANTASY, FICTION, ACTION, MENACE, AND MAGIC, ALL TIED TOGETHER TIDILY AND THREATENINGLY BY THEIR INCREDIBLE LINK TO THE WORLD OF THE SUPERNATURAL?"

-STAN LEE, DOCTOR STRANGE:
MASTER OF THE MYSTIC ARTS





BOOK OF MAGIC

A GREEN RONIN PRODUCTION

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INTRODUCTION

Long before there were comic books, before there were cosmic rays or strange visitors from doomed planets, stories of mythic heroes were about magic. Whether birthright, gift of the gods, or hard-earned through study and practice, heroes wielded supernatural forces, giving them powers and abilities far beyond those of ordinary mortals. Magic is, in many ways, the oldest of “super-powers,” dating back as far as we have stories.

Magic in the comic books also has a long history, and some of the earliest and the most successful superheroes have ties to the mystical and supernatural. *The Book of Magic* is a complete sourcebook on comic book magic and mysticism for the *Mutants & Masterminds* superhero roleplaying game, giving you all the information you need to include in your game all the mystic elements and characters of the comics.

Book of Magic also serves as a sourcebook and guide to the mystical and magical in the *Freedom City* setting, with plenty of sample characters, spells, magical items, entities, and places for heroes to visit and adventure. It has some guidelines and suggestions for using this information in the *Paragons* campaign setting as well, for those looking to add a little more magic to the paranormal world. Whatever superheroic setting you may use for your *Mutants & Masterminds* game, you can find something in these pages to add a little (or a lot) more magic to it!

USING THIS BOOK

The Book of Magic is divided up into four main chapters:

CHAPTER 1: THE MYSTIC WORLD

Chapter 1: The Mystic World starts with an overview of how magic and mysticism have been portrayed in the comic books, followed by how you can incorporate them into your own *M&M* game. It includes a look at genre conventions, the intersection between mystics and “mundane” reality in the comics, and mystical dimensions and their place in the overall setting.

CHAPTER 2: MYSTIC HEROES

Chapter 2: Mystic Heroes is all about creating mystic characters, from spell-slinging magicians to supernatural beings. It goes through the various aspects of character creation with an emphasis on trait choices of importance to mystics. It includes a variety of traits looked at through a mystic lens, some new character options, and a selection of pre-designed powers, mystical devices, and heroic archetypes you can use to create new characters quickly.

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTIC SERIES

Chapter 3: The Mystic Series is for the Gamemaster, providing information on how to put together an *M&M* series based around, or simply including, mystic characters. It looks at the all-mystic series and a game with just one or two mystics among a team of mainstream superheroes. It also includes supporting cast and villain archetypes along with a bestiary of mystical creatures for your games.

CHAPTER 4: THE MYSTIC WORLD OF FREEDOM

Chapter 4: The Mystic World of Freedom takes a look at the shadowy supernatural side of the *Freedom City* campaign setting, giving you a ready-to-use setting for mystical *M&M* adventures. It includes information on the major figures in the mystic community, the cosmology of dimensions, and the various supernatural forces at work in the World of Freedom, along with dire mystical threats to menace the heroes and the world!

WHAT THIS BOOK IS NOT

While we've tried to make *The Book of Magic* a complete resource on comic book magic for *M&M*, there are some things explicitly *not* included in its pages. Readers should be aware of the following:

- *The Book of Magic* is not a guide to fictional magic in general. In particular, it doesn't attempt to cover the vast range of magic in fantasy fiction, from the sword & sorcery pulps to classics of fantasy literature. You won't find many bearded wizards in robes and bearing gnarled staffs in this book, nor faithful clerics of a wide pantheon of gods.
- *The Book of Magic* doesn't deal with magic in the horror genre *per se*, except as found in many horror comics from the 1970s onward and in more modern occult horror comic books like DC Comics' *Swamp Thing* or *Hellblazer*. In particular, superhero comics are about heroes *overcoming* mystical threats, rather than succumbing to them, as the protagonists of horror stories often do. If Unspeakable Elder Gods exist in a superhero setting, the characters are more likely to fight them than fall victim to their madness!
- Lastly, and perhaps most importantly, *The Book of Magic* is not about real-world occultism or spiritual belief systems, even when it touches upon or uses them as examples or inspiration. This is a book of *comic book* style magic. Its deities are the “gods” put forth by comic creators like William Marsden, Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko, Neil Gaiman, and countless others. Its cosmology is suited for a superhero game rather than a well thought-out model for how the cosmos really works. Its ancient spiritual traditions are sources of fantastic super-powers more than spiritual enlightenment. Readers should keep this in mind before taking it seriously, either pro or con.

Ultimately, the “magic” the book is about is the sense of wonder when we first look out into a fantastic astral “dream-cape” or read the first heroic incantation, when we cheer on the lone magician, standing guard on the gulf between our world and the unknown, or the thrill we feel at seeing the sinister occult villain revealed for the first time. It's the magic of the comic books themselves, which we capture and transmute and make into our own stories in games like *Mutants & Masterminds*. So, through this book and all others, may your games always be magical!



CHAPTER 1: THE MYSTIC WORLD

The world of a mystic is one filled with danger and the thrill of the unknown. Mystics deal with forces and powers beyond ordinary comprehension, often with their own rules and culture. Theirs is a kind of shadow world, coexisting alongside mundane reality, but different and distinct.

It can be a lonely world, outside the understanding of others, where the only people you can rely on are other mystics, assuming you can trust their motives. It's a reality where everything comes with a price, every word and promise is laden with meaning, and where you have to watch your step to make sure you don't suddenly fall into an abyss from which there is no return.

Strange, shadowy, and lonely a mystic's world may be, but it is also a path to power and enlightenment. The journey through the darkness

leads to understanding, and knowledge leads to power and the ultimate choice: what will you do with that power? Some mystics choose responsibility and service, while others seek only their own aggrandizement and control. Even still, these adepts of the arcane arts recognize in each other a kind of kinship, because they exist in a world others cannot perceive or understand as they do.

This chapter looks at the world of the mystic, from a history of magic and mysticism in the comic books to the mystic world-view and genre conventions, through to mystical dimensions and levels of reality and how they contribute to a wider, more wonderful, and more dangerous mystic world.

Enter that world now, if you dare, and learn their secrets, but be warned! Those who step onto the path are forever changed by it, and there is no turning back. You must forge ahead, no matter the cost.

MAGIC IN THE COMICS

The history of magic in comics begins a few millennia before the first funny book rolled off the presses. The ancient myths of all civilizations featured larger-than-life characters who engaged in episodic exploits. These heroes were almost universally empowered by or fought with magic and magical entities, whether cunning self-made adventurers (Odysseus), those of supernatural birthright who walk the halls of power (Hera), or entities descended from the sky to walk the Earth (Zeus), and they have distinct similarities to heroes such as Batman, the Inhumans, and Superman.

Perhaps the biggest difference between these tales and their more modern (within the past 100 years) brethren is that those who first created and recounted the tales of myth generally took for granted that magic was a fact of life. In much the same way modern audiences can believe in extraterrestrial contact as the basis for a story (such as in Carl Sagan's *Contact*), so too could Scandinavian audiences accept that a rainbow bridge connected their world to the realm of the gods.

With the scientific revolution of the 16th century came the abandonment of the idea of the mystical as a commonplace force, and with it, the relegation of "magic" to tales of the unreal, unprovable, and whimsical. Of course, the universe was still a large place with seemingly infinite areas waiting for study, but as the world entered the Victorian era, it seemed to view the "unknown" as finite and the "unknowable" as paradoxical; even mystical pursuits with few scraps of concrete evidence were given nomenclature, research, and investigation. It is from this era that we received most "modern" forms of quasi-scientific mysticism: ESP, astral projection, past-life regression, and so on.

As the end of the Victorian era melded into the beginning of the pulp world, the Victorian sense of knowing the unknowable merged with a growing American idea that most problems could be solved with a leather jacket and a haymaker... a spirit emboldened by the United States' role in the "War to End All Wars." In the early part of the 20th century, these tales became wildly popular, with science-minded characters like Doc Savage and the Phantom fighting against (or utilizing) Asian mysticism, magic performed by "primitive" people, and so on. One popular character, the Shadow, eventually developed

"the power to cloud men's minds," making him a textual precursor to comic book heroes.

As a final bit of trivia, 1934 saw the beginning of the syndicated comic strip *Mandrake the Magician*. Created by Lee Falk (also responsible for the pulp jungle-protector, the Phantom), this spell-slinging hero eventually appeared in comic books himself once the Golden Age began. Many argue that he is, in fact, the first "super-powered" comic character. Certainly, his dapper appearance (moustache, tuxedo, and all) may have inspired later magician heroes.

THE GOLDEN AGE: THE BIRTH OF MAGIC

The Golden Age of comics was itself a magical time; every idea gracing the pages of these new multicolor pulp magazines was the first time that concept had been captured in that form. *Action Comics #1* (April 1938) gave the world its first comic book superhero, but it also gave it one of the world's earliest comic book magicians: Zatara, who would be established as the father of Silver-Age character Zatanna, herself an instrumental player in reshaping the Modern Age.

This era also saw the creation of those with true mystical powers. In addition to Zatara (who cast his spells by speaking them backwards), there was the Spectre (February 1940), the undead avenging spirit (co-designed by Superman co-creator Jerry Siegel) charged by "The Voice" to rid the world of evil, and Doctor Fate (May 1940), the son of an archeologist who discovered a magical helmet belonging to an Egyptian wizard. There were also characters with mystical origins, such as Johnny Thunder (January 1940), a somewhat unremarkable guy who could summon a magical entity resembling a lightning bolt by saying "Cei-U" ("say you"), Green Lantern, the hero with a magic ring that was powerless against wood, and the Phantom Stranger (August 1952), the prototypical cloak-wearing mystic who would virtually define the magic of the DC Universe in the Bronze Age.

The Golden Age also saw the first "universes" created. Although, technically speaking, each character was more or less in his own continuity (it was years before Superman and Batman met for the first time, despite being published by the same company), some continuities introduced more concepts and cohesiveness than others. For example,

Wonder Woman (beginning in December 1941) formed an entire universe around ideas largely (and loosely) based on Greek and Amazon mythology. Wonder Woman had her own magical home (Paradise Island), magical mother (Queen Hippolyte), and magical weapons (unbreakable bracelets and the Lasso of Truth). With Superman and Batman, she is considered one of the three iconic heroes of the modern DC universe and carves out and defines the entire mythological aspect of that world in the same way that Superman represents science fiction while Batman can stand for the “real” world. (The company that would become known as Marvel had their own mythology-based heroes in this time. For example, 1948’s *Venus* introduced the titular character who was steeped in Greco-Roman mythology and who more recently made a reappearance in the 2006 mini-series *Agents of Atlas*.)

The second character noteworthy for identifying his own magical cosmology during this era is Captain Marvel (appearing in *Whiz Comics #1* from February 1940 and not to be confused with the Marvel Comics science-fiction-style character of the same name, who first appeared in 1967). In the origin of this story, 12-year-old Billy Batson discovers an ancient wizard named Shazam. When Batson says the wizard’s name (itself an acronym for six legendary characters—Solomon, Hercules, Atlas, Zeus, Achilles, and Mercury), he gains powers associated with those six names (wisdom, strength, stamina, power, courage, and speed). This is probably the most famous modern interpretation of the “magic word” that bestows incredible powers, tapping into the myths of old. The Captain Marvel stories were noteworthy in their sheer unbridled imagination, especially the aspects that were magically based. Eventually, an entire cosmology of other heroes powered by Shazam stood battle against science-fiction foes and magically powered enemies, including Black Adam (with powers and origins similar to Captain Marvel) and a magic-charged brute named Ibac. (There was even a magic-powered bunny named Hoppy.) Also noteworthy about Captain Marvel is *Whiz Comics #2*, which introduced Doctor Sivana, the arch-foe of Captain Marvel. This rivalry established the first conflict between a magically-powered protagonist and a science-minded enemy, and it remains a relatively rare formula, even today.

The Golden Age is when the first interplay between non-magical heroes and the world of the supernatural began. Emerging from the pulp era, some tales included the occult elements that were recently popular, including ghosts, vampires, and mesmerism. For example, an early Batman tale (*Detective Comics #31-32*) has him facing a vampire-werewolf hybrid called The Monk; Batman shoots him and his female assistant, Dala, while they sleep for the day. This is also the era when Superman’s vulnerability to magic was established (although not as vigorously or definitively as his other weaknesses, and fans debate even today what his “vulnerability to magic” really means).

Starting in 1944, this vulnerability was exploited by Mister Mxyzptlk (who, in the Silver Age, would become Mxyzptlk), a magical imp from the Fifth Dimension who enjoyed playing pranks on Superman and who could be sent back home if tricked into saying his name backwards. Batman received his own tormentive imp, in the form of Bat-Mite (May 1959), another interdimensional imp who caused considerable problems in spite of (or because of) his fanatic devotion to his hero, Batman.

The first super-teams were formed in the Golden Age, with mystical and magical heroes forming the core roster of the Justice Society of America (Doctor Fate, the Spectre) and the Seven Soldiers of Victory (Shining Knight) in the early 1940s. These groups established the tradition of a rounded roster, with magical heroes having slots on most super-teams from that point on. Another noteworthy trend commencing in the Golden Age began with Sargon the Sorcerer (May 1941),



who was perhaps the first character who passed off his real magical powers as being illusionary.

Also in the Golden Age were two tangential types of tale that would have future repercussions for magical characters. In the early 1950s, one of the most popular kinds of comic book stories were horror comics, especially those published by EC Comics (*Vault of Horror*, *Tales from the Crypt*, and *The Haunt of Fear*). These comics were eventually effectively crushed—or at least rendered toothless—by the implementation of the Comics Code Authority (see *M&M*, page 188), which would have a lasting effect on the development of magical characters for decades to come. In addition, in the final years of the Golden Age (or the beginning of the Silver Age), monster comics became popular at Marvel, with many of these characters having magical or mystical origins very much in keeping with the pulp traditions. Although not directly related to superheroic comics, both types of these non-super tales would form important bricks in the foundation of both the Silver Age (where Marvel made extensive use of its monster backstock) and the Bronze Age (where the horrific elements made popular in the 1950s would be reintroduced to a new generation as part of the superheroic universe). DC also had their own horror comics during this time. One of them, the *House of Mystery*, had the titular house serving as a framing device, which would play a more important role in later decades.

In the final years of the Golden Age, interest in superheroic tales began to wane, and even stalwart sellers like Superman and Batman found themselves evolving ever more outlandish tales, usually with “science fiction” elements (in the “rubber-suited aliens” tradition). It wouldn’t be until the establishment of the Silver Age that a new generation of talent would infuse the heroic ideals with magic... in more ways than one.

JUDEO-CHRISTIANITY AND COMICS

The Bronze Age really began hitting home the idea that, for the most part, comics treat the Judeo-Christian aspects of culture—especially the “Christian” side—as being more “true” than other cultures or beliefs. While there were frequently other beliefs presented, especially dead mythologies, these often were presented as being nondivine (aliens, cosmically powered, etc.). In contrast, characters with Christian connections—such as Mephisto—were not often shown to be “false” so much as “indeterminate.” One curious aspect of this Christian focus is the fact that there were numerous “miracle of Christmas” stories with supernatural elements, written and drawn by Jews.

Writer Alan Moore and others following in his vein started laying the groundwork for other beliefs. Nonetheless, it was still the norm in the mainstream comics universes that, when aspects of the afterlife were shown, they were the usually the Heaven, Hell, angels, and demons of the Bible, Dante’s *Divine Comedy*, and Judeo-Christian traditions.

THE SILVER AGE: MULTI-DIMENSIONAL HEROES

If the acorn of the Silver Age was planted with the scientific revivals of the Flash and Green Lantern in the late 1950s, the oak that became the Silver Age sprang from it with Marvel Comics and its introduction of the *Fantastic Four* in November of 1961. But, four months earlier saw another character created by Stan Lee and Jack Kirby, in the pages of *Amazing Adventures #1*: Doctor Droom, who appeared in five of the first six issues of that title, serving as a plot device for some of the monster tales. Doctor Droom was later revived and renamed Doctor Druid, so it could be said that the entire Silver Age begins with a magical character.

The next big Silver Age magical development was the creation of Thor in August 1962. Following the tradition of Wonder Woman two decades earlier, along with Thor came an entire magical universe, based on quasi-Norse mythology with Shakespearean-speaking styles. This marked the first Silver-Age magical universe and laid the framework for many conventions used today (mystical worlds care deeply about Earth, these worlds can be accessed by numerous difficult means, and so on). Perhaps chief among these additional characters is Loki, introduced in October 1962 (unless one counts the 1949 appearance of a character by that name in a different Marvel comic).

In much the same way Thor established the mythological corner of the Marvel universe, so too did July 1963’s introduction of Doctor Strange define the mystical aspect of that world. As the most powerful mystic in the Marvel universe, many aspects of the four-color mystical hero have been defined through him, including fictional spells (“By the Crimson Bands of Cyttorak!”), other-worldly threats (Dormammu of the Dark Dimension; Shuma-Gorath, the Lord of Chaos), and strange places (the Dimension of Demons, Raggadorr). Through creators Stan Lee and Steve Ditko, these tales were an ever-escalating romp through the universe. Unlike the characters of the Golden Age, Doctor Strange didn’t draw his tales or origins from an existing mythology; they were created out of whole cloth.

A renewed interest in super-teams marked the Silver Age, and magic became one of the most typical reasons to unify a group of heroes against a common foe. Although it wasn’t until the second issue of the *Justice League of America* comic book title (their fifth appearance in all) that magic played a part (“Secret of the Sinister Sorcerers!”), it formed a consistent threat that was used repeatedly. More impressively, the September 1963 formation of The Avengers—Marvel’s premiere Silver-Age team of heroes—was caused by Thor’s arch-foe, Loki.

This era saw the first glimmers of comic universes as cohesive wholes. The Marvel universe, for example, had its heroes crossing over immediately, and trying to fit all the disparate pieces of the world’s puzzle together was part of the fun for its fans. Over in the DC uni-

verse, the Justice Society was revealed to be on their own world called Earth-2 (and still in the 1940s), while the “real” world—Earth-1—had their own super team (the Justice League); the two groups teamed up as an annual tradition, along with other groups from this time. For example, in one tale, the sorcerer Mordru fought the Justice League, the Justice Society, and the 30th-century science-fiction hero group the Legion of Superheroes. (Mordru would continue to be a foe to both the 20th and 30th centuries for decades.)

Many characters from this era, especially at Marvel comics, straddled magical and scientific or cosmic origins. Some noteworthy characters with this distinction include the Iron Man foe, the Mandarin (February 1964), whose powerful rings—recovered from the wreckage of an alien spaceship—were like magic; the Scarlet Witch (March 1964), a mutant with probability-manipulation powers who would become a true magician in later years; and Mephisto (December 1968), a powerful cosmic entity who first challenged intergalactic traveler Silver Surfer, but has since turned his sights on Earth. The latter is not to be confused with the Marvel character Lucifer, an alien who first appeared in 1965 and who attempted to conquer the Earth several times (in addition to crippling powerful mentalist Charles Xavier) by infusing humans with ionic energy; he was eventually replaced with the computer Dominus.

Unfortunately, as the examples of Lucifer and Mephisto (or even “mage fights 1940s heroes with 30th-century heroes”) show, the tales of this era—along with similar ones in the DC universe—had similar problems to their Bronze-Age successors. They were crafted not with the idea of creating a strict continuity for future generations so much as making exciting stories, so there were often contradictions, overlaps (demons in both universes have multiple origin sources, for example), and inconsistencies. These issues wouldn’t begin to be resolved until late in the Bronze Age, and not until the Iron Age would things really become sorted out with the idea of making truly cohesive universes.

THE BRONZE AGE: TO HELL AND BACK

The end of the Silver Age is a nebulous period, but for the purposes of looking at the magical world of comics, a good defining point for the beginning of the next era is the 1971 introduction of the Swamp Thing in *House of Secrets #92*. This year also saw a revision of the Comics Code, allowing the use of horrific figures such as vampires and werewolves. (Zombies were still forbidden, but loopholes were utilized that permitted the walking dead to grace comics. In Marvel titles, for example, such entities were called “zuvombies.”)

This resurgence of supernatural elements permitted a new breed of horrific-magical characters. Perhaps chief among them was Ghost Rider (August 1972), along with Brother Voodoo (September 1973), Werewolf by Night (February 1972), and others. This fusion of Golden Age horror with Silver Age ideas led to many new and interesting stories. These weren’t the crisp and clean magic-wielding heroes of the Golden Age, or even the four-color tragic heroes flinging fictional

spells with colorful names. These were damned souls—sometimes literally—making references to Hell, Satan, and other aspects of Judeo-Christian tradition. During this time, the Fantastic Four's archenemy, Doctor Doom, was also pushed as a villain who bridges the world of science and magic, and a long-running subplot involved him attempting to rescue his mother's soul from the clutches of hell.

In this era, the Phantom Stranger and Zatanna both became members of the Justice League of America, and in so doing, they started carving out and shaping how magic worked in that world (in the same way Wonder Woman defined its mythological aspects). During this time in the DC universe, magic was first established as a force incompatible on some fundamental level with science. For example, the origin of the galaxy-spanning heroic Green Lantern Corps is directly tied to the decision of their masters—the Guardians of the Universe—to attempt to isolate much of the magical energy of the universe into an orb called the Starheart.

Toward the end of the Bronze Age, the periodic restructuring of the Comics Code gave new freedom to comic creators. Among the alterations was the removal of the 1954 requirement that evil-doers be brought to justice in every story and the line between "good" and "evil" be distinctly drawn. This paved the way for the sword-and-sorcery tales of *Conan the Barbarian* (1970) and the *Warlord* (1975). While the former developed in his own (non-super) continuity, the latter existed within the mainstream DC universe, as did *Arion, Lord of Atlantis*, a powerful mage who began as a 1982 backup in *Warlord* and eventually had his own series that lasted until 1985.

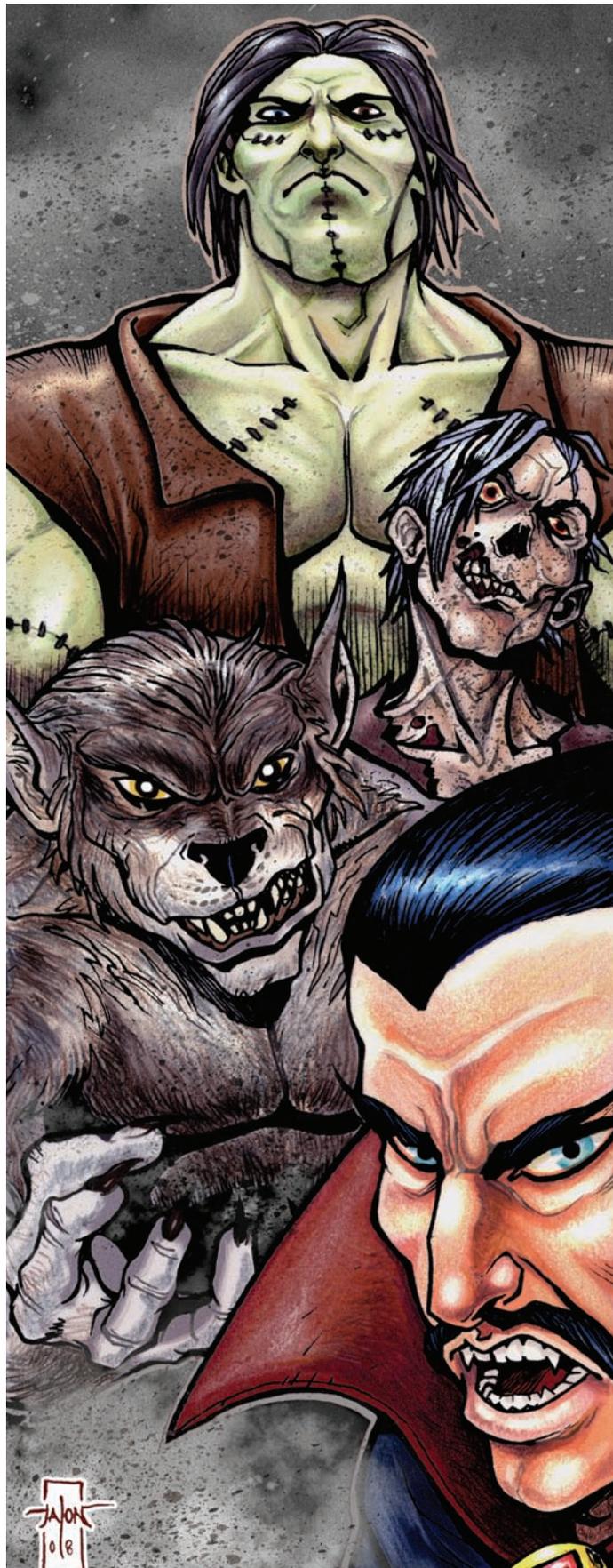
In much the same way *Warlord* and *Arion* blurred the possibilities of comic book magic, so too were various story possibilities mixed and intermingled. As one example from January 1983, in issue #53 of *DC Comics Presents* (the monthly Superman-and-someone-else team-up book), the science-fiction-based Superman entered the horror-based *House of Mystery*, eventually confronting the goofball antics of Mxyzptlk.

One final development in the Bronze Age was *Jack Kirby's Fourth World*, interconnected titles for DC created by one of the masterminds behind the Marvel Silver Age. Although not directly magical (having more in common with cosmic titles), the characters were nevertheless steeped in mythological ideas and Jungian archetypes, and many aspects—including the New Gods and the planets named New Genesis and Apocalypse—had strong mythological overtones.

THE IRON AGE: REALITY OF MAGIC, MAGIC OF REALITY

While the Iron Age brought a newfound sense of gritty realism to mainstream comic universes in the macro sense, so too did it accomplish much the same with their magical universes. It is only fitting, then, that the beginning of the Iron Age was marked in the same way as the beginning of the previous era: with the emergence of the Swamp Thing. In this case, Alan Moore re-envisioned this character—begun in *Saga of the Swamp Thing* #21 (February 1984)—as an inhuman force of nature (and, later, an elemental force of the Earth itself), rather than the modified muck-covered human portrayed as in previous years.

In June of the next year, Alan Moore also created John Constantine (*Saga of the Swamp Thing* #37), the chain-smoking British expert on the occult who would prove the era's prototypical street-smart magician (author Neil Gaiman, through the character of Constantine in *Books of Magic*, dubbed DC's group of similarly-dressed mystics, "the Trenchcoat Brigade"). This mythology, along with the works of Neil Gaiman, would reshape the DC universe's view of magic at the end of the Iron Age.



MAGIC: DC VERSUS MARVEL

If one goes by a casual count of world-shaking magical events, it seems that magic is a much more prevalent force in the DC universe than in Marvel's. While this could be seen as an example of Marvel's adherence to a more "realistic" outlook (having been primarily shaped by the science-fictional Silver Age), in reality, it seems likely the reason is in the nature of how magic is defined in a comic universe.

It's possible to view characters in a super-universe based on their archetypes; in other words, the first (or most popular) version of a heroic trope tends to "carve out" that niche, delimitating it for that world. Thus, the first techno-armorsuited hero for a world tends to define all techno-armorsuited heroes for that setting. Going by this, Marvel instantly has a problem with establishing its magical world more fully: The first character of that type—Doctor Strange—is also its most powerful. (It's not a stretch to wonder if he exists more as a plot device than a full-blooded character.)

Conversely, spellcasting heroes have never been a truly major force in the DC Universe. Dr. Fate, perhaps the most powerful wizard, and Zatana, perhaps the most prominent spellcaster, tend to have minor, supporting roles, and neither has supported an ongoing title for very long. This tends to make magical threats more of a concern, since there isn't a single "Sorcerer Supreme" to take care of matters.

Although somewhat separate from the Iron-Age realistic movement, probably the development that affected comic book magic most strongly in this era was the *Crisis on Infinite Earths*, the year-long event begun in April 1985 that sought to simplify and codify the DC universe, consolidating worlds, streamlining characters, and chiseling away a half-century of barnacles from the company's iconic characters. One of the side effects of this effort was to redefine and codify magic in a more stringent fashion, attempting to streamline the many divergent views and outlooks on magic into a more cohesive whole. (Sadly, the patchwork nature of the post-*Crisis* relaunches meant that, in some ways, this new universe ended up being *more* complicated and confusing than the previous one. For example, Wonder Woman, a character who, essentially, defines an entire corner of the DC universe's



magic, wasn't restarted until February of 1987.) One quintessential example of this attempt at streamlining the chaos of this world was *The Atlantis Chronicles*, a seven-issue miniseries by Peter David and Esteban Maroto that tried to unite the various views of what had been disparate Atlantises.

The Iron Age saw two of Marvel's widespread story arcs with supernatural ties. The first was a major mystical event in the form of *Inferno* (1989), which revolved around a demonic invasion of Earth. The second was a loose connection. *Acts of Vengeance* (1989-1990) had many villains attack targets other than their primary foes, in the hopes of keeping the heroes off-balance; it was ultimately revealed that Loki was the architect of that machination. Beyond that, the Marvel universe had little direct and consistent involvement with magical issues; Doctor Strange's titles were relegated to mid-tier sellers, and a revival of *Ghost Rider*, despite having considerable sales at first, was eventually cancelled with a cliffhanger issue (#93) in 1998 that wasn't resolved for almost 10 years.

Over at DC, this era had four universe-wide events with mystical overtones. The first, 1991's *War of the Gods*, detailed a conflict between the Greek and Roman gods that embroiled the rest of the DC universe (most notably Wonder Woman and Captain Marvel); it was largely overshadowed that year by the more science-oriented crossover *Armageddon 2001*, which dealt with a nightmare far-flung alternate future of 2001. The success of the latter series led to the following year's *Eclipso: The Darkness Within*, which had various heroes possessed by shards of the evil spirit Eclipso, a former-second-rate villain first seen in the Silver Age. Several years later, 1995's *Underworld Unleashed* portrayed a villainous demon named Neron empowering and revamping many super-villains (and a few heroes) in exchange for their souls; the final conflict revolved around a battle for Captain Marvel's innocence.

Finally, 1997 saw the *Genesis* crossover, which tied in strongly with the New Gods. The central idea behind this plot was the positing of the "Godwave," a wave of energy that washed over the Earth ages ago to create the Greek and Roman gods (among other supernatural entities), then "bounced" back at the edge of creation, empowering a secondary wave of beings that began the modern age of heroes. Thus, magic was tied into a source with cosmic and scientific overtones; for the most part, however, this storyline has been ignored.

The Iron Age was also a time of expansion and experimentation beyond the traditional four-colored world of the mainstream DC and Marvel universes. This primarily took the form of the eruption of independent titles, whose explosive speculative growth in the mid-to-late-1980s (along with the resultant bubble burst) altered the landscape of comics for a decade. From a magical standpoint, one noteworthy series from this era was Bill Willingham's *Elementals*

(1983-1997), whose protagonists were all mystically resurrected heroes tied to one of the four elements that killed them.

As the Iron Age progressed, the audience for more mature supernatural tales grew, and DC capitalized on this interest with comics that, while somewhat tied to the mainstream comic universe, formed their own separate niche. The beginning of this movement was probably the 1988 *Black Orchid* mini-series by Neil Gaiman and Dave McKean, which reinvented the Silver-Age crimefighter as being a human-plant amalgam with ties to the Swamp Thing mythology. The fan support of this series led to the creation of Neil Gaiman's *Sandman*, a modern-fantasy series steeped in dreams, horror, mythology, and the power of stories. Begun in January 1989, the title lasted 75 issues plus several spin-offs and one-shots before being retired at the request of Gaiman. So great was his influence (and so lucrative were the *Sandman* reprint volumes) that DC agreed to end the series. Also by Gaiman, 1990-91's *Books of Magic* is probably the quintessential redefinition of magic in the DC universe, focusing on Timothy Hunter, a young, bespectacled, would-be wizard forced to choose between the paths of magic or science, good or evil, illumination or darkness.

The strength of these titles (and others) led to the creation of a separate imprint at DC comics: Vertigo. While Vertigo has some ties with the mainstream DC universe (and greatly influences the more realistic shape and outlook of DC magic), for the most part, it remains in its own corner, seldom crossing over with themselves, let alone other comics. However, it has truly exemplified the "shadow war" aspect of the modern magical story, with gargantuan events happening behind the scenes, without the public being any wiser.

THE MODERN AGE: OLD ANEW

The Modern Age is a fuzzy concept to define, especially since it's happening right now. Nevertheless, magic demands symmetry and symbolism, so perhaps it's best to peg this era's beginning once again to Alan Moore. In this case, the foundation of his comic book line, America's Best Comics, began in April of 1999 with *Tom Strong #1*. Throughout these titles, Alan Moore took the reconstructive instincts of the end of the Iron Age and reworked them, producing comics that each remained separate, and each presented an homage or inspiration that ranged from Victorian adventure (*League of Extraordinary Gentlemen*), to 1930s-style

pulp-science (*Tom Strong*), to even a super-powered police procedural (*Top 10*). For magic lovers, the most noteworthy title is *Promethea*, a 32-issue series (1999-2005) that is as much about the titular magical protagonist as it is a metafictional mouthpiece for Alan Moore's views on comics, philosophy, and magic.

The Modern Age has seen a blending of previous ages, enabling creators to select the elements they want for their stories. With the "Ultimate" line from Marvel and the "All-Star" titles from DC, "alternate" universes have begun featuring the iconic characters of those mainstream universes recast for a new generation. Frequently, these alternate versions outsell their mainstream counterparts.

The rise of the Internet and other fan communication sources has increased the demand (and thus the need for) cohesive views of comic magic in the universe. For example, 1999's *Day of Judgment* in the DC universe centered on the Spectre becoming possessed and unleashing Hell on Earth. The elements and implications of this storyline have direct ties that connect it to other major events (including those science- and cosmic-focussed) of the DC universe, and it's possible to view the narrations of the late 2000s as one continuous storyline progressing for over a decade. For example, one plot point of *Identity Crisis* revolves around the magical hero Zatanna using her powers to wipe the mind of the science-fiction villain Doctor Light as well as that of the pulp-realistic Batman.

Finally, the Modern Age has seen a growth and acceptance of more complex workings of magic itself. Where the Golden Age consisted of a few mythological names tossed into a hero's background, the Silver Age revolved around fabricated spells and myths, and the Bronze Age fixated on Hell, recent years have seen fully fleshed cosmologies based on real-world research and internally consistent development. One need only look at a character like 1973's Brother Voodoo—with his buzzword-laden text and little else related to the actual religion—compared with the *WildC.A.T.s* character Voodoo (as written, unsurprisingly, by Alan Moore), with its extensive research of actual Voodoo practices and beliefs, to see the difference. In the same way ancient beliefs in the gods of Mount Olympus and Asgard crafted tales memorable millennia later, so too does this strong belief and respect for the ideas of magic make it possible these tales may be looked upon with wonder by audiences in centuries to come.

MYSTIC WAYS

Imagine trying to explain to a telepathic alien what "sound" is, with the hitch that the alien is completely deaf, unable to sense auditory input or vibrations. You might show a mother, her face lighting up in concern at a baby monitor. Or, you might start by displaying a cup shaking off a thin wooden table that also supports a bass woofer. Or, you might present a nightclub, with motionless people springing to life in dance.

Now imagine the alien asks questions such as, "Using this 'sound,' can you alter the emotional response of the harried-looking woman?" or "Can you make the cup move faster?" or "Can you make the young Terrans gyrate more vigorously?" Without being able to use words like "vibration" or "louder," your answers may well resemble something like, "I might be able to change her response, but it's dependent on an outside force you can't comprehend." Or, "I could make the cup move faster, but if I overtax the source of movement, I might damage the cup or the table, or the cup might stop moving entirely, or I might cause myself injury." Or, "I might be able to intensify their vigor, if I call upon the power of this iPod to bring forth the 'Love Shack' of the B-52's."

This is what it is like to tap into the power of magic and the mystical: answers without explanations, explanations without justification, justifications utilizing terms and names others simply don't comprehend. The outside world can perceive the *effects* of what a magic-user does, but not the underlying source of that power. Worse, no amount of explanation or demonstration will bring the vast bulk of humanity any closer to understanding.

Nevertheless, perhaps the best way to understand how a mystic interacts with a superhero world is to break down observations into four areas: self, friends, strangers, and enemies.

THE SELF: THE MYSTIC'S ONLY CERTAIN ALLY

There when the mystic is born, and there when he dies, the self (and the sense of self) is arguably the most important aspect of harnessing magical powers. Others call them egotistical, but those who do not maintain a strong sense of self above all else may find themselves utterly consumed by the arcane forces of the universe.



MOVING IN MYSTERIOUS WAYS

If there is but one word that sums up all interactions with a mystic in a superhero universe, it is—unsurprisingly—“mysterious.” More than any other type of costumed individual, those who tap the powers of magic make mystery their stock and trade... intentionally or otherwise.

As explained previously, most of the world doesn't even begin to understand the powers mystics tap or how they use those powers to help or harm humanity. Perhaps even more frustratingly (at least, for those mages who still care what the mortal world thinks of them), heroic mystics can be hard-pressed to even explain the enemies they fight or the results of their accomplishments. Imagine how a mundane citizen of a superhero world would react to hearing a garishly clad man say, “I stopped the seven-faced tyrant of a thousand worlds from killing the Embodiment of Love.”

Not all mages are aloof. Some embrace their humanity and work hard to remain affable. But for many, the need to remain in the shadows most of the time causes them to retreat there the rest of the time.

BOUNDLESS EGO

Many mages siding with the forces of good are considered egotistical, removed, or “jerks.” Not all mystics are arrogant—some are quite pleasant, amiable, and even friendly—but the numbers are more than a statistical anomaly.

The very nature of their abilities is partly to blame for this. While others perform impossible feats they can sum up succinctly—“I derive powers from my cybernetic implants” or “I am a mutant, powered by the sun”—those who tap the mystic might of the world find themselves saying things like, “I wield powers beyond your comprehension,” or,

“To tap the barest fragment of the forces I possess would no doubt drive you mad.”

However, the nature of magic itself is a more likely cause. In most settings, harnessing magic is not something just anyone can do. At some level, it almost always involves imposing your will on the fabric of the universe in some fashion, which, obviously, is much more difficult for someone with self-esteem issues. Most mystics see themselves as adults in a world of toddlers; they might be able to be patient and understanding, but it's much easier just to do what needs doing, working around the infantile understandings of humanity without explanation: “These matters need not concern you,” is mage-speak for “No-no, only Daddy touch.”

THE MORE THINGS CHANGE

One of the concepts mystics realize about the universe is magic is a force for change. Even the more static forms of magic, such as those favoring Order, realize “Order” is merely imposing the resistance to change, which is itself a change from what would be. Whether it's seeking of personal enlightenment or attempting to bend the world to one's will, magic requires and produces change. “All that magic is, is change,” as the saying goes.

Mystics often debate about the true nature of magic and its relationship to change. Is magic akin to the fire stored in a piece of coal, invisible and waiting to be released, or is it like the wind, ever-present and experienced by those who witness it, waiting to be tapped by the sufficiently willful person with a mill?

Regardless of which metaphor is “true” in a given universe (if any metaphor is entirely correct), the wise mystic realizes change comes with a price. Once coal is burned, it cannot be retrieved, and clear-cutting for windmills in a vain effort to capture the wind can ruin a pristine landscape.

THE POWER OF METAPHOR

So far, this section has relied on several metaphors. So, too, do mystics in a superhero world. In the comics, this is partly done for the reader's benefit; since magic is a force that (presumably) most of the audience doesn't know about or can perceive directly, any explanation of it needs to be in the form of something they *can* understand.

Moreover, metaphors are also used to reflect the way in which the mystic views the nature of magic itself. How the mystic frames his thoughts (for it's likely he was not born able to perceive and comprehend magic) can shape his outlook, and—indeed—his ability to shape magic. For example, a spell-slinger might consider the wielding of magic akin to harnessing an energy source in the mundane world; regardless of how someone does such, it's still disruptive to the natural order, although some methods (such as windmills and solar collection) are less disruptive than others (strip mining coal). Another mystic might view magic as a pact between lesser and greater beings, with both sides trying to get the best bargain they can (usually resulting in trickery on the lesser being's part, since he has less he can bargain with).

In a roleplaying game, it can be incredibly useful for a mystic player to use metaphor; it's essential for the flavor of the genre, and being able to spout out something like, “Our minds would be buffeted in the astral plane like a cork in a whirlpool,” goes a long way toward establishing the mood. Likewise, metaphor can be useful to the Gamemaster to present information about the nature of the multiverse (or other magical topics). A series where it's said, “The Earth is but an indistinguishable grain of sand on the infinite beach of the cosmos,” provides a very different setting than, “The Earth is the acorn of reality, from which all other

thoughts, minds, patterns, and life extend downward into the ground and upward into the sky."

SENSE OF DUTY

Most non-magical heroes in the comics have a strong sense of duty; they are usually found in the thick of a crisis, hoping to do what's right. Many mystics take this attitude one step further: they often have a strong *actual* duty. Whether by title, mantle, or mandate, these heroes are expected by some outside force to handle their responsibilities with utmost concern. The nature of this arrangement varies from mystic to mystic, but it's usually tied to a one-to-three-word concept, such as "Order," "Balance," "Vengeance," "Master Mage," "Protector of Nature," and so on. Such mystics must often balance the needs of their masters (from whom they receive some or all of their power) with their own desires and goals.

A player seeking to capture the full flavor of this kind of relationship should define the concept or word the mystic serves and outline how the hero perceives the relationship. ("perceives" because the Gamemaster might have a slightly different idea for how the relationship *actually* is. For example, a "protector of nature" might view humans as part of the natural order, while her masters hold differing ideas, resulting in the mystic having less power in some circumstances or needing to convince her superiors of her case for an exception.)

NOW IS NOT THE TIME FOR ACTION

The nature of magical duties—along with various pacts the hero, his predecessors, or his superiors might have made (see **Pacts of the Ancients**)—is the core of the reason mystical heroes are often obliged to remove themselves from many conflicts. For example, the cosmos' mightiest magicians of order might consider alien invaders part of the galaxy's natural structure and, as such, refrain from stopping their Earth-shattering machinations. They may even mutter excuses about how each piece on the chessboard must struggle to find its own order in the universe. More likely, they don't even offer that type of excuse, and their noninterference with many types of conflicts bolsters their auras of mystery and reinforces the stereotype that they're stuck-up jerks.

For many players in a roleplaying game, it isn't fun to play a character who needs to stand on the sidelines, twiddling his thumbs. As such, it's probably in the best interests of the series for the player and the Gamemaster to sort out ahead of time the extent of noninterference expected of the hero, especially if the Gamemaster is emulating that aspect of a superhero universe closely. Consider the following options:

- The mystic simply isn't beholden to the same rules that bind others (maybe he isn't powerful enough yet).
- The mystic is *supposed* to follow such a set of rules, but opts not to (the rogue element of such a hero is appealing for many).
- The mystic has been on the sidelines in the past and may be on the sidelines in the future, but he isn't required to be now for some reason.
- For most adventures, the hero is forced not to interfere and is only permitted to act in certain limited circumstances, usually when there's magic involved. With this option, the player may want to consider making a secondary (non-magical) hero, who happens to be on the spot when the mystic cannot become involved. Such a "role call" casting of characters is very appropriate to many superhero series.
- The series focuses on events where the mystic character can act, leaving the "sideline" events for the sidelines, having them happen "off-stage" where neither the player nor the GM needs to worry about them. This is a good approach for a magic-focused series; the events of the "mainstream" superhero setting still happen, but the mystics don't deal with them.

Of course, a character beholden to a labyrinthine code of conduct could be an interesting challenge for a player, and if everyone is willing to try such a thing, it might be possible to build a hero concept around the idea of helping as discreetly and clandestinely as possible. In this case, the player and Gamemaster should sort out what, exactly, the hero is permitted or forbidden from doing, what the consequences for disobedience are, and how likely the chances for discovery are. Characters who uphold their responsibilities should definitely get hero points for their complications when they crop up.

YES NO ISN'T IS

Mystics often need others, yet alienate them through word and deed. They keep the world free by becoming entangled in pacts and favors. They teach others, yet remain afraid of those with too much knowledge. Mystics tend to embrace contradiction as part of their very existence, and they have no problem doing so (since their egos are almost always strong enough to keep two contradictory ideas in mind at the same time). A mystic might fight Loki one week and Lucifer the next... and both exist as "prince of lies" despite being from disparate cosmologies.

The tendency toward paradox would keep many lesser minds from doing anything except curling up in the fetal position. The mystic has no such difficulties; rather, he makes up his mind, convinces himself he's right, and does what needs to be done. There's really no time for questioning or philosophical woolgathering when lives or souls are at stake.

MAGICAL MYSTERY STEWARD

While a costumed crimefighter might travel to different parts of his city keeping it safe, a magician may voyage all over the known universe... and a few unknown places as well. Mystics tend to roam more than almost any other type of hero, with the possible exception of cosmic entities. (And even that is debatable; how does the distance to Rigil Kentaurus compare to the journey to the Land of Forgotten Dreams?)

Such travel can encompass places on Earth—mystic ruins, undersea kingdoms, hidden gatherings—as well as other dimensions. (Curiously, most mystics don't do much traveling outside of Earth *within* this dimension; it's possible magic is somehow tied to humanity and traveling outside of the human sphere doesn't accomplish much.)

Most mystics have a small list of places to which they travel frequently. This includes any realms that are part of their domains (such as Atlantis for an Atlantean mage or the Dream World for a mentalist) and any realms common to most mystics (such as the astral plane). Depending on their level of power, they may also have access to many other worlds they have seldom (if ever) visited. The magnitude of possibilities is often difficult for mages to convey to outsiders, and some mystics are quite irritable when asked why they didn't try to stop a certain tyrant of a little-traveled dimension or didn't bother to find a powerful lost artifact on the astral plane. As one mystic put it, "Here on Earth, aren't there dozens or even hundreds of dictators and madmen who hold positions of power? Why didn't you bother dealing with them? Stammer as you may of implications or difficulties or how you

have had more important tasks. And yet, this orb only has 200 million square miles of surface area, less than a third of it land. Multiply that domain by countless dimensions, each extending indefinitely, and you begin to glimpse the vastness of my responsibilities. In short, I've been busy."

Although most heroic mystics won't hesitate to stop on-the-spot crimes they see in a city, powerful magic wielders do not typically "patrol" in person like their mundane counterparts. Rather, they tend to use surveillance spells, familiars, and (if feeling personal) their astral form to examine large areas quickly. As such, depending on the mystic's level of power, he could be just as likely called for duty in an alleyway down the street as in the ruins of the Valley of Pain or in the depths of Hell. Mystics often also have supernatural senses to warn them of impending danger or superiors to call them to act when they are needed. Gamemasters can play the role of both of these and use them as hooks to get mystics involved in a story.

THE ENEMY WITHIN

Those dabbling in magic often discover they are their own worst enemies... sometimes quite literally. While mystic masters don't find themselves possessed or otherwise mind-controlled more often than other types of heroes, they do come into conflict with "dark" versions of themselves with a greater than normal frequency. Whether this is a "dark self" spawned from a visit to another dimension, a parallel version from an alternate future, an offspring of the soul's primal self, a construct from a powerful foe, or something from another source, mystics must be aware the worst foe they—or their allies—will face is often themselves.



FOCUS WITHOUT, POWER WITHIN

Those who harness the powers of the occult tend to have more accouterments than their more "ordinary" super-powered counterparts. It may be a vocal or gestural styling, such as speaking each spell as a rhyme or holding one's hands together before unleashing a magical effect. It might be an item the magician is never without, such as an intricate wand or a garish cape. Regardless, those who witness the magician may come to believe this item or technique is essential to the usage of the mystic's powers.

Sometimes, it is indeed essential (and warrants an appropriate drawback to the Magic power). It's just as likely, however, that many who tap arcane abilities rely on a minor bit of misdirection. Aside from gestures and phrases, a number of wizards seem to have tangible foci for their powers. In game terms, the player buys the character's powers as normal but defines a "Device" (using the guidelines for the Device power). In fact, this "Device" isn't a Device at all (although it might have the minor effect "Can seem to be the focus of a power"); the mystic does not really need it to perform magic. It can provide an element of surprise in a tight situation, if the mystic is able to wield powers even when seemingly "disarmed."

Alternatively, the mystic can purchase some ranks of power through a Device and have some ranks of the same power intrinsically. This represents the spell-slinger aided by a magical focus but not completely dependent upon it.

Needless to say, should a mystic—hero or villain—use misdirection, he should only reveal the deception in the direst of circumstances. After all, unless the magician uses lethal force to keep his secrets, the revelation of such a ruse could well mark the end of that focus's utility, especially if the victim of the trick spreads the knowledge to others.

TRENCHCOATS OR TALISMANS?

In the comics, most heroes' costumes tend to evoke adjectives such as "iconic," "utilitarian," or "uniform-like." In contrast, most spell-slingers tend to gravitate toward one of two extremes: those who wear mundane street clothes, like the suit of a doctoral thesis defense committee member or the trenchcoat of a Philip Marlowe protagonist, and those who look like they dressed by picking items at random from a 1970s Vegas overstock closet with their eyes closed.

Why the discrepancy?

The typical rules of fashion don't apply to the mystical community. For the most part, they aren't trained as a unit, so uniforms aren't generally appropriate. Likewise, the realms of magic and the mundane world are almost entirely separate, making it possible for special garments to be visible only to certain people or on certain planes of existence. Finally, magic users tend to stick to the shadows most of the time; if they are seen, they either don't want people to notice them, or they want to make as big a splash as possible.

So, what kind of wardrobe should an aspiring mystic hero adopt? If part of the accouterments is a large, flashy piece of mystical jewelry—such as the Golden Helm of Order—then there's little motivation to maintain a low profile with the rest of the wardrobe. Conversely, if there's no particular reason for a mage to dress garishly, it's up to him whether or not he wants to. Most of the reasons non-magical superheroes wear costumes—to inspire the masses, maintain a secret identity, all your peers are doing it—don't necessarily apply to the magical community. Complicating either option is the possibility that use of the mystic's powers causes some kind of transformation or alteration to his form; it's really up to the mage whether he feels more comfortable exhibiting a huge glowing eye in his chest while wearing a trenchcoat or the Robe of the Elder Magi.

NOT QUITE A MAGICIAN

Although much of this book relates primarily to magicians—in other words, those who specifically cast spells, perform rituals, or otherwise dabble directly in the arcane arts—a fair bit of the material also applies to those with magical origins who aren't necessarily spell-slingers (in other words, who don't specifically have the Magic power).

By way of example, consider two (non-magical) speedsters. The first is the run-of-the-mill runner, capable of breaking the speed of sound, running up walls, vibrating through objects, and so on. The second speedster is a "master of the speed essence" and can do everything the first hero can do, *plus* he can transfer his speed to others, remove the inertial energy of others, and so on.

Let's assume that both somehow utilize the same "speed essence." The former is merely powered by this speed essence, while the latter is a "master" of that essence. In theory, the first speedster could eventually elevate his knowledge to the level of the second.

Such is the same for magic-powered heroes. Although it's not terribly common, it's possible for a character to start out as being "merely" magically-powered and "elevate" to a level of greater understanding. For example, a hero who is transformed by a bolt of magical lightning might eventually discover he can harness that lightning more fully, perhaps summoning it to strike enemies or start a useful fire, for example.

This is an ideal situation to use hero points to gain power stunts for existing powers. If the player is trying to venture down this road of character development, he may want to request that the power descriptor on some or all of his powers be reclassified as "magic" or "mystic" to smooth the transition; this may even warrant one of those "Everything You Know About Hero X Is Wrong!" subplots and a complete re-design of the character.

Although a character who starts out as simply magically enhanced will seldom reach the raw magical abilities of a true magician, he can still become a powerful magical agent, especially since he usually keeps his old powers. (It's not an impossible jump, however, as the character could drop out of the series for a while to train, or pop over to a useful dimension where time passes faster so he can turn a one-week vacation into a five-year education). This technique is also a useful means for a player to take a hero in a new and interesting direction.

IS IT MAGIC?

There exists one curious conundrum for series dealing with the supernatural: Is it really "magic"? As one example, a devout Catholic superhero might have access to healing powers and divination otherwise unknown to the world, yet he would not consider what he does "magic" so much as a divine gift or—if pressed—a "miracle." As another example, a race of humanoid "Tomorrow Gods" might believe what they do to be a type of super-science, even though their names, powers, and inspirations are drawn from mythological sources: Ur-Thor, The Zeusian, and so on. So, are these beings magical or not?

There are actually two different angles from which this question needs to be answered. First is from the standpoint of the game: Does the player believe the character's abilities are magical? (Of course, the GM should agree with the player's decision. Additionally, the Gamemaster makes this determination for the series' NPCs.) In game terms, all magical powers have the "magic," "mystic," or "divine" power descriptor. In some cases, this is automatic; for example, all instances of the Magic power and related power feats come with the "magic" descriptor. In most cases, though, the player needs to determine the descriptors.

For the character, the answer of where a power comes from can be very different. In this instance, it's usually a case of *community*; the hero believes his powers stem from whatever source that others he associates with believe. Thus, if a character is raised by druids who teach him how to conjure shields of leaves or fire piercing bolts of thorns, he might believe his powers to be "natural" and the result of training anyone could get through... even if, in game terms, they're considered "magical" and identical in mechanics to an occult-book-reading thaumaturge.

When it comes to designing appropriate adventure obstacles, the character's beliefs are more important than the mechanics. A coniving demon could still trick a pious character into believing the Almighty has abandoned her, regardless of the game-mechanic source of her powers.

The designation of magic is not an all-or-nothing requirement for a character's abilities; it's possible for different powers to derive from different sources. For example, a technomage's talents might come primarily from occult research and study, but he may possess nanites in his

blood that enable his form to vibrate at the required special frequency to enter the astral plane (the Astral Form power with the "technology" descriptor). Or, a strange visitor from another planet might have most of his powers with the "alien" descriptor, but a shaman replaced the alien's eyes with those belonging to an enchanted raven; in this case, his Super-Senses would probably have the "magic" or "mystic" descriptor.

WHAT COST MAGIC?

In most comic eras (see pages 187-194 of *M&M*), super-powers don't come with much of a cost. They're something a character is born with, something he stumbles across, or something he trained for in an origin flashback and never really worries about again. During the Silver Age, there were some attempts at making somewhat more "realistic" or tragic heroes, such as powerful characters trapped in frail alter egos, but even then, these origins were seldom portrayed as little more than minor speed bumps to the super-powered good times.

However, mystics have often had greater tolls taken upon them than their non-magical counterparts, regardless of the era. First, most competent mages require extensive training, almost always years or more. This education is often away from the prying eyes of humanity, quite possibly marking the beginning of the near-inevitable drop out of society that a magical career entails.

In addition to the extended period of training, magic often requires periodic acquisition of new lore. For the mage who seeks to continue increasing his power, most downtime will be spent alone, researching and experimenting with new spells. Interpersonal relations are often one of the first casualties for the devoted mystic, and this extends to literal casualties among those who become or remain friends (see **Friends** later in this chapter).

As if the sacrifice of time isn't enough, the use of magic often necessitates exotic or even horrific sacrifices. Some examples include:

- The mystic is forced to feed a familiar some of his own blood every day, week, or month.
- The mage's preternatural need for vengeance requires him to lash out at any transgressions against his chosen enemy (chaos, those who victimize women, etc.).

- The sorcerer's magical patrons demand a sign of his devotion in the form of the death of a child or loved one, or they require such an act to perform a desired spell or ritual. (Although this is obviously not recommended for a hero in any remotely optimistic or four-color series, the *possibility* that the hero might be required to make such a choice can form the basis for a side quest to circumvent this obligation, or even as a test of character: "The Ritual of the Ancients is only for the most worthy of souls, and by refusing to perform a despicable act as we have commanded, you have proven yourself worthy...")

Finally, magic is, as discussed earlier, a force for change, and the mere act of using it causes things to be different than they were. Given all the potential costs and probable changes, the wisest of mages weigh their actions carefully. Of course, those who serve darkness don't particularly care and often succumb to the weight of their own decisions—along with many innocents.

DWEOMERS FOR DUMMIES

While most mystic heroes are assumed to have spent years or even decades perfecting their craft before entering the field, it's also possible for a character concept to be built around the idea of a fledgling mage trying to find his way in the world. Whether the hero is a student at an academy for empowered youngsters (magical or otherwise) or a self-taught prodigy, the idea of an apprentice-in-training is common for mystic characters. Such heroes face considerable challenges—for example, mystic villains are often epic for a fully trained mage, let alone a novice—but they can also be excellent team players and provide a good

balance for players who want to craft a character possessing magical powers but who still works well as part of a group.

This type of character is actually not that different from most other "inexperienced hero" types, despite being magic-based. For example, a teenage mystic might still have to worry about getting to school on time, keeping a true secret identity, and so on. From a roleplaying standpoint, it's also an interesting challenge for a player looking to investigate when the divergence for such a character would be: At what point does he need to bolster his ego? When, how, and to what extreme does he need to split from human concerns? Can he keep friends (super-powered or otherwise) as his powers and knowledge diverge vastly from his peers?

FRIENDS

It takes two humans to make one; extending upwards from one, the roots of each person's family tree branch and intermingle, to the sky. No one begins life alone, and it is unnatural to be alone. But mystics do the unnatural every day, and for some, the relationships they forge with friends (or choose to not) define them as much or more than their powers.

WHO NEEDS FRIENDS?

Given the need to stick to the shadows—by desire or necessity—some mystics may wonder whether they should even bother having anyone in their lives. Indeed, the "stoic loner" is probably the most enduring archetype of the magical world, and even the most genial of mystics tend to count on one hand the number of friends they allow to get truly close. Yet paradoxically, the supporting casts of some loner mystics would fill a suburban phone book. Why the discrepancy?



First, being a mystic's friend is one of the most dangerous callings in the world, and that at least a third of that "phone book" probably consists of those who have died... usually because of their relationship to the mystic. As such, those who immerse themselves in the magical world tend to keep others at arm's length, for their own protection. Indeed, many mages consider any knowledge a dangerous thing and even go so far as to wipe the minds of those close to them who learn too much.

The caveats about self-protection are reduced considerably for others with powers beyond those of ordinary mortals. Obviously, mystics tend to keep company most often with other mystics, since they have the most in common and the discomfort caused by the gulf in understanding doesn't exist (or is lessened for those whose specialties are in differing fields of magic).

Even so, magic-wielders occasionally associate with individuals empowered by other sources, and such people frequently become strong allies. Of course, while it's possible for true friendship to blossom, it's often made more difficult by previously discussed matters of ego, lack of connection between worlds, and so on.

LEAGUE OF HEROES: MYSTIC WANTED

In the comics, true mystics were key figures in the most famous super-teams from the Golden Age. By the Silver Age, they were absent from most super-teams (although some heroes had magical origins or backgrounds, and magical villains were commonplace), but they made a resurgence in the Bronze Age. Regardless, mystics have seldom been considered the "cornerstone" characters of teams as they once were in the 1940s. The reason for this stems from the increasing complexity of comic book universes, starting in the Silver Age. The elevation of magic from just another neat origin element to a powerful force in these comic universes led to the distancing of these characters from mainstream human concerns, and with that came a general lack of interest in joining groups.

Nevertheless, with the Bronze Age came a newfound association, and many super-groups of that era featured founders with mystical powers or origins. In later eras, groups consisting entirely of magical entities started appearing, and many modern groups include at least one mystic (although seldom more than one).

While there are downsides for a mystic considering joining a super-team—lack of peer understanding, endangerment of the group, need to devote time to the team—there are also considerable advantages. Primary among them is access to allies. Contrary to what some high-minded book-dwellers might have others believe, mystics still have ties to the physical world, and having some heavy-hitter friends who can handle mad scientists, alien conquerors, or other non-magical threats can allow them to focus on what they consider more important matters. In addition, even though non-magical allies are often at a disadvantage when it comes to handling mystic threats, they can still prove useful; someone who can carry an office building while hovering in the real world can also keep a flying castle afloat when the mad mage controlling it decides to send it crashing to the ground.

Alternatively, a mystic could take the option many have taken since the Bronze Age and join a group as a "reservist" or "honorary" member. Of course, the team he's a pseudo-member of won't answer the mystic's calls as quickly as they would a full-fledged member, but they won't expect him to handle monitor duty on the space station, either. In a roleplaying game, a reservist-style membership can allow a character to maintain that mysterious outside flavor so important to many mystic concepts, while still happening to be on the scene at the beginning of any gaming sessions.

SUFFERING MAGIC'S BLOWS

Many friends of magical heroes have a vulnerability to magic. However, it's important to realize what, exactly, this means. In the comics, there are generally two broad possibilities. The first is that some or all of the hero's resistance is lessened by the presence of magic. The second option is that magic affects the person *more* than an average person; in this case, the character is more "allergic" to magic than vulnerable. In some extreme cases, the mere presence of magic can cause the character difficulty, like sunlight to a vampire, even if it's not targeting the hero directly.

As a mental exercise when trying to discern how a magically vulnerable character is affected, try to envision how the character suffers from certain effects. For example, if the character is impervious to normal damage, should a magic sword be able to cut him? Would a sleep spell thwart his indomitable will more than mundane sleeping gas? Does a magically enhanced super-strong villain's punches hurt more than someone who got their abilities through radiation exposure? And so on.

In game terms, Power Loss (to the hero's defensive capabilities) and possibly minor Vulnerability best suit the first option. The second option is best represented by moderate or major Vulnerability, Power Loss (to other abilities, especially rapid healing ones), and possibly Weakness (if the mere presence of magic fatigues the character). This latter option can be extremely dangerous and should be chosen only after considering the consequences if mystics are going to play a large part of a series. It might not be fun for the other players' heroes to be marveling in the wonders of the Dimension of Future Dreams while one player's character is curled up, crying and vomiting.

TO TEACH IS TO LEARN

From the earliest days of superhero comics sprang the idea of the "sidekick," a (usually) younger do-gooder who follows around the primary hero and tries to learn what he can. This idea translates to magical characters as well, and it's quite common for a mystic to take a student, apprentice, or disciple. This relationship is similar to the non-magical sidekick-hero one, save for a few differences.

First, students of mystics tend to be placed in great peril... for both the fledgling and the master. It can take a long time for a student to be able to cast the most basic of spells. Until then, he is defenseless; worse, his proximity to the master makes him a prime candidate for possession, corruption, entrapment, and so on, placing both at risk.

In addition, learning the magical arts is a continuing process. As such, even those who have students often have teachers themselves, and it's not uncommon for a well-established mystic to return to his learned master for additional training or information.

Finally, the student-teacher relationship is often much more intimate for mystics than others, and it's not unheard of for students to become lovers (or lovers to become students). Such relationships can earn the questioning stares of others in the superheroic community, but those whose lives are steeped in magic are used to scornful and quizzical stares already.

SEX AND THE SINGLE SORCERER

Starting with the Bronze Age, sexuality becomes much more pronounced in comic book worlds, from 1970s charismatic super-spies awakening in a beauty's bed to modern-day flying heroes taking full advantage of inertialess horizontal movement. This effect is perhaps more pronounced for the mystic in the superhero world: succubi and incubi (sexual demons) are real threats, the close nature of many hero-

villain encounters increases the opportunities for seduction, and some forms of magic—most notably Tantric rituals—require the harnessing (or repression) of sexual energies.

The mystic in a superheroic universe needs to understand that his every action can have elevated consequences: snips of hair become powerful talismans, scribbled graffiti might actually be words of power, and stepping through a seemingly mundane doorway can represent the trigger for a spell of transport. In this way, so too does the act of union between two (or more) become much more than just a physical act; it can represent something universally primal. (Of course, the implications can be more cosmic. A mystic was once confronted with a droll observation about pointy wands piercing magical circles and the like, “Is everything magical symbolic of sex?” The mystic retorted with, “How do you know that sex isn’t symbolic of magic?”)

Of course, the player of a mystic should sort out with the Gamemaster ahead of time the level of comfort everyone in the gaming group can accept when it comes to sexual matters. In true comic book tradition, it’s perfectly fine to assume strategically drawn hair and robes cover all the naughty bits, and the succubus merely casts a “spell of sleep” over her victims, with anything else happening “off-panel.”

STRANGERS

There are none so strange as those who wield magic. Yet to those who do, the bulk of humanity consists of strange eyes attached to judgmental minds. There are many options for a mage to interact with those who cannot be kept as close as friends or enemies, but none of the choices are wholly satisfying.

IN THE REAL WORLD, GRUDGINGLY

Most mystical heroes don’t concern themselves with real-world affairs. If they have jobs, they are often tied to their occult personae: owners of second-hand bookstores, experts on the occult, fortune-tellers, and so on. Mystics often don’t have obvious trappings of wealth (expensive cars, non-utilitarian jewelry, or the like), but that’s more a matter of choice. In addition, many mystical teachers warn their pupils early on that a strong attachment to the lures of the physical world presents, at best, a barrier to true enlightenment and, at worst, a dark path down which lays ruination.

AN IDENTITY OF SECRETS

In most mystical tales—especially those set in the superhero universe—people with sorcerous abilities don’t tend to concern themselves with a “secret identity,” or if they do, it’s the flimsiest sort; a college professor born Arthur Arcane might adventure under the costumed name of Professor Arcane. Amazingly, this tissue-thin pretense actually tends to work.

While it’s easy to assume this is because of the ways of magic (and, indeed, some mystics might use their occult powers to cast spells to confound efforts to breach their public and private lives), more often than not, the reason is even simpler: For a good number of magical characters, the mystical persona is unknown to the world at large (or, at least, no more known than the public one). These characters have avoided the limelight, and newspaper reporters are quite rare in other dimensions. Even if someone were to know (or learn) the truth, that information won’t usually do much good if no one cares about *either* identity. (“Arthur Arcane of Freedom City University is actually the magician Professor Arcane!” “Great... who’s Professor Arcane?”)

Even if the mystic’s enemies figure out a hero’s alternate identity—and it seems likely many otherworldly entities at least have access to the divinations necessary—they tend not to use this resource to try

to hamper the mystic’s real-world life. This might be partly because many mystics view their “real-world” lives as expendable; if Arthur Arcane needed to disappear from Freedom City and become R. Cain somewhere else, no one would probably notice. In addition, many of a mystic’s more powerful foes probably also view the secret identity with more bemusement than anything, and—if they give their enemy a second thought as a threat—probably devote their resources to more sinister ends than messing with the hero’s private life. It’s hard to imagine Domakku, Seven-Faced Conqueror of a Thousand Worlds, believing the best way he can lash out at his accursed foe is by making his landlady hound him for rent or messing with his love-life, for example.

Nevertheless, the friends and loved ones of mystics often are tempting targets for some foes, and the wise hero—magical or otherwise—tends to make sure those close to him are protected as much as possible.

LORE FOR MORE

Although a small number of mystics attempt to spread knowledge of the arcane to the general populous, most are content to allow humanity to remain blissfully ignorant. Sure, the observant cabbie might notice a horde of demons attempting to destroy the city, but they’re really not that different from the robo-raptors that tried to destroy the city last week or the trident-wielding Atlanteans the week before that.

The general secrecy of magic is connected to the problem (see **A Little Knowledge**) that limited comprehension can be incredibly dangerous. In addition, though many may be loathe to admit it, trying to discern the best way to teach the widespread knowledge of magic is a daunting task. While most mages would be good one-on-one teachers, trying to disseminate widespread knowledge of magical lore would be like trying to do damage control if all the world’s five-year-olds were suddenly given Uzis. As such, mystics are often forced to try to cover up the most egregious use of their (or others’) abilities. Fortunately, most mundanes desire to remain unaware helps the conspiratorial mystic considerably.

Regardless, all mages realize knowledge is power and treat even the most trivial of unknown facts with an urgency that confuses outsider or, at least, until the trivia that the Fae Queen never looks at her own reflection ends up saving the world.

YOU CAN DO MAGIC?

Another uncomfortable truth many mystics grapple with is that magic isn’t for everyone. While it’s possible almost everyone, with enough determination and focus, can (say) draw with some skill or perform moderately complex mathematics, not everyone can perform magic, no matter the will or desire. Worse, the reason as to *why* magic remains elusive can be just as mysterious as magic itself. Otherwise perfect students can simply fail to harness it to its full potential, or even at all.

The nature of the universe and its relationship to magic varies from series to series. In many worlds, it’s likely all sentient beings can access magic in some fashion, although only the smallest fraction has any significant potential, and only a sliver of those realize it. In others, perhaps only a select few—such as those with Atlantean blood or born on a certain day or time—can wield magic. Regardless, this selectivity on magic’s part—whether by cosmic design, coincidence, or cruel fate—keeps significant portions of humanity distant from magic. This gulf is part of what produces alienation and separation for mages with good hearts. This divide can also be the cause of twisted villainy: Powerful mages feel superior to the unwashed masses, while those who cannot tap their full potential use what they have with a ruthless rage.

FACTS OF THE ANCIENTS

Many magical heroes find themselves protected yet bound by Byzantine pacts, agreements, favors, obligations, and rules. (See the discussion in **Sense of Duty**.) For example, a soul-harvesting demon might possess incredible power but be bound by ancient pacts that keep him from directly killing a foe unless the target specifically gives up hope. In a superhero universe, no other type of character has remotely the same type of code of conduct as mystics, much of it seemingly nonsensical ("seemingly" because, of course, it all makes perfect sense to them... mostly). Outsiders—especially super-powered heroic allies—often find these obligations annoying, but they usually help the mystic (and the world) at least as much as they hinder him. Thus, for example, a mystic might be charged with delivering a willing person to the Faery Kingdom every 10 years, and in exchange, the Kingdom agrees not to invade the mystic's world. Allies and enemies might come in conflict with the mystic as he attempts to fulfill his obligation, or they might try to assist him in his quest.

Players seeking to emulate these pacts have a few options. First, they can try to enumerate all the pacts to which they are beholden. For game balance, usually these pacts don't do much directly for the hero (or are even somewhat against him), although the implications for what happens if they aren't followed can be significant. For example, the mystic shouldn't be part of a pact that causes the smiting of one of his enemies in exchange for a plate of cookies (unless those are some mighty special cookies). But, he might be part of an agreement that says the Dimension of Nightmares won't attack Earth directly unless someone from Earth attacks them first. Similarly, he might be the access point for a pact with the Seelie Court that says they will fight against the Unseelie Court's attacks against Earth, and in exchange, the mystic agrees to be available for 33 hours every 333 days. (Even a pact such as this can leave room for enterprising players and is often the stuff of interesting subplots: Are those 33 hours contiguous? If the mystic does a favor for the Seelie Court unbidden, can he count that time against the 33 hours? And so on.) For game balance, these pacts shouldn't have much impact on the series unless the player has spent points for it.

Perhaps more interestingly, however, the player might define a certain level of pact involvement and make it part of the character's complications. Then the Gamemaster can spring any manner of challenge on the hero, in the form of pact obligations: "It's the Summer Solstice; you promised to dance with the Elven Queen at midnight!" Really, this shouldn't be any more demanding for the character than equivalent subplots for non-magical heroes. It should be just as difficult to get Aunt Mary her medicine by noon as it is to get to Central Park by midnight. A player choosing this option is encouraged to spend hero points on feats with social aspects, such as Connected or Contacts. The player may even discuss with a Gamemaster the ability to spend a hero point (or more) to call upon a previously unknown favor or pact with relatively minor in-game benefits: "Domakku, I hereby invoke the Pact of the War of the New Moon to request five minutes for me to gather with my friends in quiet reflection before you slay us."

Finally, if the group is trying to impart this type of feel to the setting, a character ought to try to forge new pacts or favors during the course of a series. For example, he may release a defeated foe under the promise never to again invade the hero's dimension so long as the mystic's bloodline lives, thus spinning off a new plot for a future adventure.

FINDING MAGIC'S SOURCE

In the comics, there are a lot of entities that seem to be lumped into the broad "magical" category, even though they are all vastly different; the



splash page shows the Sorcerer Extreme standing alongside Wandering Judas next to the probability-altering Blood Warlock. (It would be the equivalent of assembling the world's greatest "doctors" and getting a radiologist, a professor of archaeology, and Dr. Demento.) Likewise, comic books often exhibit a tension between three broad classifications of power: scientific, magical, and cosmic. Thus, mad mages seek to entrap the cosmic personification of Death, travelers of the cosmos belittle the efforts of scientists to unlock the galaxy's hidden powers, and technological villains use atom smashers to breach the dimensional barriers to magical worlds.

So, which power source is "right" or the most powerful?

The obvious answer is, ultimately, the most powerful is whatever the Gamemaster decides. The less-than-obvious answer is that, depending on the scope of the series, such a decision can make a profound difference in the state of the setting.

Most comic book universes seem to side with the idea that these forces are all functionally equivalent, at least on some level. Thus it is possible for a determined mad scientist to harness the forces of magic, or a magician to entreat cosmic entities. In fact, some comics depict all energy as tapping from the same source or having the same origins; Arthur C. Clarke stated, "Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic," and that could certainly apply. Of course, as a practical matter, most powered beings—super, magical, or cosmic—aren't really affected by what forces their powers draw upon, any more than a fisherman cares that his lure contains an amount of energy equal to its mass time the speed of light squared.

However, it's possible for one source to ultimately be "correct." For example, the world's laws might be such that magic is merely a somewhat more complex form of otherwise mundane energy. In much the

same way that mathematicians resorted to various kludges and guesses to determine how the world worked before Newton's laws of motion, so too might the powers of magic ultimately be simplified or deduced in such a way that, in the future, these energies can be harnessed much more easily and logically. This quest for an "All-Force Equation" could form the basis for a universe-shaking plot or a character's goal (either the quest for knowledge of a player's hero or the thirst for power of a mad tyrant). If one force is ultimately more powerful than the others, then there should probably be some reason to keep that force from becoming too common, from a game-balance standpoint. For example, maybe magic is the most powerful force in the universe, but tapping its energies is a sure path to madness; as such, cosmic energies represent a means of accessing a fraction of magic's power, but in a more sustainable, rational manner.

It's also possible for the forces to be aligned in such a way that none hold total dominion over the other, or that some forces are more powerful than others in certain situations. In much the same way that gravitational force is relatively weak but connects any two objects in the universe, for example, so too might one force be weaker but more useful. Stealing the analogy directly, cosmic forces might trump magical ones but are limited in scope to one universe, while magic can connect any objects or beings across multiple planes of existence.

It might also be possible for the Gamemaster to chart out these three forces with some kind of cyclical pattern, indicating which power holds supremacy when. (The forces of science and scientific reasoning, being relatively constant, might be better assigned a straight line.) For example, an astrologically inclined series might be developed around the idea of magic as a "female" force, with cosmic power as a "male" one, and science a neutral. In this way, magic might be given a 28-day cycle, cosmic forces a 365-day pattern, and science, a straight line. Assuming the three forces start at the same point on January 1, we see that on the 273rd day of the year (September 30th on a non-leap-year), both cyclical forces are at their lowest possible points; at this time, the Gamemaster might decide that an ambitious-enough mad scientist might use his scientific knowledge to attempt to assume mastery over both the cosmic and magical forces of the universe... unless a group of heroes stop him, of course.

As a final note, the designation of "magical, cosmic, scientific" is arbitrary and meant to signify three broad strokes in the mainstream comic universes. It's entirely possible for a setting to have different forces in a struggle for supremacy. For example, "magical" might be subdivided into "divine" and "magical" or into "law," "chaos," and "balance"; or "cosmic" might be further separated into "intergalactic" or "intragalactic," representing those forces that can affect the entire universe versus those limited to one galaxy.

ENEMIES

Energy is defined by its opposition; there can be no noise without silence, no light without darkness, no order without chaos. The same holds true for those who wield magic; the choice to tap its vastness means there will be those who oppose that decision. How a mystic handles this opposition defines him as a hero; how *well* he handles this opposition may also define him as a corpse.

LIKE BATTLES LIKE

The enemies of a mystic hero tend to be magical themselves. While it's common for mundane or technologically oriented heroes to have magical villains, the reverse is seldom true. The exception is the superscientific character, utilizing the "sufficiently advanced science is magic" concept, which puts these kinds of characters on the same level as most mystics.

If the Gamemaster wants to mix this up by including technological villains, it's necessary to have a good idea how magic and technology interact. Can Doctor Tobor, raised by a mystical order of Tibetan monks, harness magical powers in his suit of armor? Can machines be adversely affected by magical lightning? If the hero decides to flee a confrontation by entering the astral plane, does the villain have any hope to follow? These and similar issues should be considered before starting the adventure.

SPHERE OF INFLUENCE

While enemies of spell-slingers tend to be magical, that covers a wide ground. In fact, a magician might have little to no knowledge of what aspect of magic a threat encompasses. This differs from the world of technological villains, where even if an adversary draws his powers from a source different from the hero—say, a techno-armor-suited hero who faces a master of sonics or a chemical genius—it's fairly likely the do-gooder has at least some knowledge of what forces the villain wields.

This isn't necessarily the case with a hero who's devoted his life to the mystic arts. He might face threats that, while "magical" in the greater sense, have almost no relation to the hero's sphere of influence or area of expertise. For example, the Demon Prince of Nightmares might antagonize the mystic or his allies in the realm of dreams, and the hero could have little to no idea about what's going on. Similarly, if a villain draws his energies from a dark dimension of uncaring cosmic horror, the collective unconsciousness that unites humanity, or the Library of Unwritten Words, the magician might have little idea how to thwart his adversary or undo any damage done. This can frustrate the allies of a mystic, who don't understand "magic" is a broad category. Even mystics tend not to understand other mystics, and the wars they wage against their foes are often only superficially understood (at best) by the outside world.

TERRIBLY MYSTERIOUS

Like their heroic counterparts, magical foes tend to be much more steeped in mystery than other bad guys in a superhero world. This is especially true of otherworldly enemies; these are almost never "captured" (at least to be turned over to mortal authorities) so much as banished, vanquished, slain, and so on. But almost all magical foes work from the shadows, and heroes might be confronted with the disquieting realization that, in many ways, they are not terribly different from their enemies: the need to keep the general population in the dark, the following of ancient rules, the quest for more knowledge and power, and so on. (Whether another reason why mystical heroes are mysterious is because their villains are or vice versa is a coffee-shop conundrum for some.)

One option for mystics that isn't available for some other superheroes is the personal interactions that can exist between the mage and the menace. This is especially significant because of the nature of pacts and agreements that occur within the larger magical community. Many a scene has evolved out of some powerful magical foe appearing before the hero (and his allies) and taunting, arguing with, or making offers to those who might oppose him: "Though I cannot strike against you in your sanctum, I come with a proposition..."

IMPENETRABLE GOALS

Outside of a fledgling spell-slinger or someone who stumbles across arcane secrets (see the following section, **A Little Knowledge**), it's almost unheard of for a true magician to stoop to mundane crimes: robbing banks, stealing jewels or technology, and so on. An arcane enemy doesn't blackmail the mayor into doing his bidding, he injects a horrific



creature into her chest to turn her into a fleshy puppet or traps her mind inside a seven-sided gem in the astral plane. In addition, most magical malevolents won't merely kill someone by shooting them or even breaking their necks; rather, they turn them into insects and crush them underfoot, or gruesomely remove vital organs and smear the lifeblood into arcane patterns.

Goals of villainous magicians usually entail nebulous or mysterious ends, such as "entrap the city under perpetual rainfall that drains life essence" or "discover Shakespeare's hidden ritual that allows writing to elevate the soul." Such goals need not be earth-shattering; a nigh-omnipotent archmage of a pocket dimension could be just as intent on convincing an innocent to renounce her ways and fall into darkness as he is in converting the millionth soul on Earth to a mysterious faith of lies and in so doing unshackle a long-captive deity so he may bind it to his bidding.

The nature of these crimes often leads both sides into the shadows of mystery, as discussed previously. Those working for darkness prefer the element of surprise that unknowingness provides, while those serving the light don't wish to fuel the negative psychological impact that widespread revelations of such waking nightmares would entail.

A LITTLE KNOWLEDGE

One common problem mystics face is the amateur sorcerer, an otherwise mundane human who discovers an arcane artifact, magic tome, or ancient ritual and uses it for some nefarious end. In fact, as far as adversaries go, the incidental magician is much more common than the scientific counterpart; an unearthed wand is usually much easier to figure out—at least superficially—than an alien ray gun or abandoned F-11

fighter jet. In fact, the device might be sentient enough to guide the discoverer on how to operate it. Among more experienced magicians, such neophytes often cause exasperated eye-rolling: "Any fool who finds a shiny crystal or a pulsing tome believes he's the next conqueror of the cosmos."

Nevertheless, unlearned enemies are often incredibly dangerous; their inexperience means they don't suffer from limitations linked to self-preservation or things Humanity Truly Wasn't Meant to Know. In mundane parlance, your average super-genius wouldn't detonate a nuclear bomb in the middle of a city (unless he was a particularly nihilistic sort); likewise, more experienced magicians generally won't dabble with unknown magical devices or lore. But unwitting amateurs can unleash all manner of trouble upon the world without being fully aware of what they're doing, and artifacts and spells are often designed with this in mind. For example, a fledgling magician might cast a spell from the Unspeakable Tome of Pandaro that promises to make him "the strongest person in the world" without realizing it's designed to destroy all life but that of the caster.

CULTS ARE FRIENDS WHO KILL

Another subset of those foes with only a little knowledge is the magical cult—those who serve some force as a group. These can either be fully devoted believers steeped in the dogma of the group or mere pawns of a larger force offering what the casual members wanted to hear. ("We didn't know rap star K-Thul was evil!") The latter can form a conundrum for mystics of high morals, as these minions often aren't guilty of "evil" so much as "bad judgment"... and perhaps not even that, if the head of the cult is a powerful mentalist.

In comics, the goal the cult has in mind is usually nefarious, but this doesn't need to be so. By some definitions, an ancient order charged with protecting some dark secret from sinister forces would be considered a "cult," as would those groups with more unusual goals (such as a community devoted to removing all evidence of magical effects from discovery by mundane eyes).

While individually weaker than almost any other threat, cultists still pose considerable dangers for the mystic. First, they are often instrumental in those "once a millennium" threats discussed in the next section, **The Mysterious Nature of Time**. Second, they often don't have magical powers themselves (and hardly ever powerful ones), which enables them much more freedom than some magical threats; it's easier to sneak into most mortal places as a disheveled person than one sporting the torso of a snake.

THE MYSTERIOUS NATURE OF TIME

Enemies of mystics (as well as mystical enemies) can have much different time frames than more mundane foes, and the passage of time moves both more quickly and slowly for them. On the one hand, magical enemies are often immortal or in possession of much longer lifespans than normal humans. Such foes can be a lot more deliberative in their efforts, and by the time they come to the attention of the forces of good, it can be sobering for a mystic to realize the plot was conceived long before the hero's grandparents.

The flip side of this realization is mystics occasionally encounter such schemes mid-stream, without fully realizing what the threat is or how to defuse it. Indeed, it could pose quite a moral quandary for a busy hero if he learned of a plot that was not going to come to fruition for, say, 17 years; the temptation could be great not to do anything about

it, especially if more pressing matters keep surfacing. (For Bronze-Age series that enjoy "social relevancy" storylines, such known long-running, difficult-to-diffuse threats can be an allegory for any number of global problems facing humanity.)

Mystics also encounter an amazing number of plots requiring split-second timing: astral conjunctions where the stars have to align *just* right, rituals timed for the death (or birth) of a specific person, a powerful spell that can only be attempted every 666 years, and so on. Such long-thinking plans are almost always directed at a grand goal; hardly anyone casts a spell only possible once a millennium in order to, say, change the color of his eyes (although it would make a good "completely different" humorous adventure if some odd-minded villain had exactly such a goal in mind). Rather, these plans usually involve phrases such as "gain complete mastery over..." or "harness the infinite power of..."

One upshot of this—for mystics as well as their allies—is these plans are usually the victims of their own weight. The consequences of failure are catastrophic, but the means of sending the whole house of cards falling down can be fairly straightforward or even trivial. If some grand wizard's evil scheme relies on casting a spell at midnight, for example, a simple hex that slows down his antique pocket watch can succeed where hours of hand-to-hand combat failed.

THE SUM OF THEIR PARTS

Mystical characters can simply be mundane powered beings with magic as an incidental part of their make-up. The trappings and challenges of ordinary men and women of valor apply, and they can become average heroes. By using the information in this chapter, players can go beyond the ordinary and experience their mystical characters on a different level, complete with their own special duties, secrets, enemies, and encounters.

MYSTIC DIMENSIONS

In the pages of the comic books, superheroes visit a wide array of worlds. Some are extra-terrestrial, alien worlds orbiting distant stars. Mystic heroes tend to deal with extra-dimensional realms instead, hidden away but accessible with certain spells and devices. Inside these worlds, mages find adventure and danger, battling dimensional conquerors, discovering strange civilizations, and learning ancient magicks thought to be extinct.

Some heroes traverse the planes using an astral form, separating themselves from their bodies as they quest for information, while others use powerful spells or artifacts to open up doorways between the worlds. In *M&M* game terms, this is usually done through the use of Super-Movement (Dimensional Travel), often with the Portal modifier, or the Dimensional power feat of the Astral Form power. Mystical dimensions offer players a chance to relive some of their favorite comic book exploits, and for the Gamemaster, they provide countless adventure hooks for a mystic series.

TRANSITIVE DIMENSIONS

Some mystic dimensions are "in-between" places, leading from one realm to another, or to many different dimensions or mystic realities. These are called *transitive* dimensions, and may be places of danger and adventure in their own right, as well as gateways to realms beyond for mystic heroes.

THE ASTRAL PLANE

Probably the most important dimension for any mystic, the astral plane is a place in-between worlds, allowing access to a score of other realms

and providing the perfect battleground for mystics to settle their disputes away from mundane eyes (and, for good magicians, away from innocent bystanders who might get caught in the crossfire).

Though classically depicted as a field of misty nothingness, the astral plane of the superhero comics is a bit more exotic, akin to the void of outer space, but often flooded with rays of psychedelic light and streaming colors, much like a 1970s black-light poster (common inspiration for artists at the time). Islands of solidity float through the chaos of this realm, some fairly flat, but, more often than not, carrying mountains and rocky spires upon them while they glide through the plane, as if adrift in an ocean. Because of its inherent nature, there is something breathable here, though calling it air might be a bit presumptuous, as anything within the plane can breathe it, even those that survive on alternate environments. Gravity is also a questionable force on the astral plane, as the islands there tend to carry some semblance of gravity, but this seems based more on the visitor's belief in the necessity of such a force rather than it actually existing on its own.

Entering the astral plane can be as easy or difficult as the Gamemaster wishes. The most common way is using the Astral Form power, which allows the user to separate his spirit from his body and exist in a ghost-like state. To achieve this as it is depicted in comics, a player may apply the Dimensional power feat, allowing the hero's astral form to cross-dimensional pathways. Some Gamemasters may find it easier to allow any character with the Astral Form power to access the astral plane without the Dimensional feat, reserving the power feat for accessing other mystical planes of existence. This would explain why so many heroes and villains in comic books seem to have

the ability to enter the realm with such ease through the use of mental or mystical powers

Another possibility is using a form of Dimensional Movement, shifting the body into an astral form and allowing the hero to roam through the plane. The major benefit is the hero doesn't leave a body behind, but rather transforms into an astral form. In lower power level games, the Gamemaster may decide each astral traveler has a "silver cord" connecting them to the physical world. The cord acts as a way back and may provide a vital connection between body and soul, much like an astronaut's lifeline to a spacecraft. If the cord is severed, the traveler might die or simply become lost in the astral plane, adrift endlessly until he finds another way back to the physical world.

Some mystics travel the astral plane to gain knowledge, while others use it as a safe battleground, and others still maintain sanctums there for both privacy and remoteness for experimentation. Like most dimensions, the astral realm has its share of inhabitants, whether native or not, and, as such, it retains some possible knowledge a mystic may need for various reasons. Of course, not all beings are willing to give up their knowledge voluntarily, requiring the mage to be either deceptive or forceful with requests. The astral plane may also be a place where lost artifacts or mystic tomes drift through the void, cast there by long forgotten magicians.

A mystic may need to do battle with something or someone in the astral plane. As seen in many comic books, magicians are occasionally called out for a mystic variation of a gunslinger's match, both combatants armed with an arsenal of spells. Instead of dueling on the main street at high noon, the mystics bring their vast power to the astral plane to duke it out. In these instances, sorcerers can unleash their full magical might, shattering powerful shields with massive bolts of other-dimensional power. In many cases, the hero's goal is to subdue their enemy's astral form and cause them to retreat. The villain, on the other hand, is rarely so kind, as they attempt to destroy the wizard's astral form and vanquish their foe once and for all. In an occasional plot twist, the villain may attempt to subdue their heroic foe, but only in hopes of capturing them long enough to use their nemesis's spiritless body and ruin the reputation they've built up as a hero.

A mystic may keep a sanctum within the folds of the astral plane. Within this otherworldly stronghold, the magician may conduct experiments with spells, study powerful tomes, or even have a magical "Doom Room" to practice and hone his skills. Though most sanctums appear as a living domicile, the mage has more freedom with design within the astral plane, allowing for more eccentric builds or even more primitive ones. In some cases, a hero may choose to create a multi-layered Parthenon to fit his needs, while another may use something like a cave or shrouded forest. No matter the design, unless lost in the astral, the owner of such a place always keeps a tether to their homeworld accessible from within the sanctum. To some, it could take the form of a simple door; for others, it could be round pool of liquid or energy. In some incredible displays of power, the domicile has several exits leading to various worlds, not unlike the Dimension of Doors. In these instances, the owner of such a place is usually a master of magic, able to traverse the dimensional pathways on a whim. For more on magical headquarters, see the end of **Chapter 2**.

THE ETHEREAL PLANE

Though occasionally confused with the astral plane, the ethereal plane is in fact a plane of between states of form. To some, the ethereal form is that which an incorporeal ghost would take, while to others, the ethereal form is nothing more than an alternate to the astral. In either case, the ethereal plane is attuned very close to the mainstream uni-



ACCESSING THE ETHEREAL PLANE

The easiest way of accessing the ethereal plane is through Dimensional Travel. However, since it's basically a realm of incorporeal matter, stepping within it may be a problem. So, unless the hero has flight or some mode of hovering, stepping into a solid may not be the wisest choice. That said, there are a few other methods of moving while in the plane. The first, and easiest, would be Astral Travel. While using your astral body, you can easily glide through the shrouded dimension and investigate what you need to. Another way is using Incorporeal. When someone using the Incorporeal power steps into the dimension, they temporarily gain Air Walking while moving through the dimension. Some mystics have surmised that this is due to their natural attunement with the dimension. Finally, another way of traversing this dimension is via a spell or power that puts the hero into an ethereal state, much like a ghost. When in this form, said hero would automatically enter the ethereal and would quickly adapt to his surroundings while cruising the dimension.

verse, occasionally allowing someone with a mundane eye to see things within the plane as it wisps past the normal world.

But what's in the ethereal plane? Most might say it's a plane of ethereal spirits, ghosts that haven't passed over to the Realm of the Dead and still try and interact with the mainstream world. In this case, there really isn't much to the dimension other than swirling fog and mist. Those that venture within the plane take the chance of angering a spirit trapped within it, or worse, letting something out. It's this type of ethereal realm that is commonly seen in comics centering on the mystic superhero. In some of those cases, this plane also bleeds into other dimensions, including some of the godly realms, the Realm of the Dead, and even limbo. It's also possible that some characters with abilities like Incorporeal actually pass through this dimension when they use their powers, allowing them to temporarily shunt their matter into this realm long enough to pass through something solid like most ghosts. Other powers that may use this dimension are Invisibility,

Teleport, and Morph/Alternate Form—all of which allow the hero to move something solid through the ethereal and back into the mainstream universe.

THE DIMENSION OF DOORS

Like the astral plane, the Dimension of Doors is a place where mystics travel to various worlds and dimensions. Called the Nexus in some circles, this plane is a vast city of doors built on an outcropping of rock that may be approached either astrally (using the Astral Form power) or using Dimensional Movement. The sky within the city is a magnificent starscape shining various bright colors and patterns, though it has also appeared as a dull gray sky, blank and empty, in times of turmoil along the Cosmic Coil. Though the dimension is basically one sprawling city, there are few who call it home. Some lone wardens or guards maintain outposts, but, for the most part, the city is only temporarily populated by the various travelers accessing the doors.

The identity of the builders of the Dimension of Doors is lost to history, but the Master Mage Ios is known for having discovered and refurbished much of the realm. She wove the spells that maintain many of the gates and paths here and established the Door Wardens to watch over them. The Door Wardens are an order of mystics recruited from across the planes to uphold the sacred duty to safeguard the dimension and keep the keys that open the many doors. They aid and guide travelers through the dimension, particularly assisting those who are lost.

Navigating the Dimension of Doors is more difficult than one might imagine. Multiple doors can lead to any given dimension, and therein



DOOR WARDEN

POWER LEVEL 6

Str 14 | **Dex 13** | **Con 15** | **Int 10** | **Wis 14** | **Cha 11**

Skills: Disable Device 8 (+8), Knowledge (arcane lore) 6 (+6), Knowledge (history) 6 (+6), Notice 4 (+6), Profession (Door Warden) 8 (+10), Sense Motive 4 (+6)

Feats: Benefit (Door Warden), Defensive Attack, Equipment 2, Favored Environment (Dimension of Doors) 2, Power Attack, Second Chance (checks to navigate or locate things in the Dimension of Doors), Track
Equipment: Armored Vest (+2 Toughness), Sword (+3 Damage)

Powers:

Comprehend 2 (languages)

Device 1 (Door Key; easy to lose, Restricted)

Magic 6 (eldritch force **Blast 6**); some Door Wardens know other spells as well

Combat: Attack +6, Damage +2 (unarmed), +4 (sword), Defense +6 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +1

Saving Throws: Toughness +4 (includes +2 from armor), Fortitude +4, Reflex +3, Will +4

Attributes 17 + Skills 9 (36 ranks) + Feats 9 + Powers 20 + Combat 24 + Saves 6 = 85

YOU GOT YOUR DEITY IN MY MYTHOLOGY!

The question may arise, "But how can that god exist when this god does?" Well, there are a few answers to this. First of all, they don't have to. If your group isn't that interested in a large cosmology of gods and such, don't make religion all that important. There are plenty of heroes in comics that rarely, if ever, brush up against their faith and are none the changed because of it. However, in some groups, religion may be a factor, and it might be easier to use religion only in the background, allowing players to deal with it, but not so it affects game play.

Other campaigns may use a large cosmology, using all the types of deities presented in this section and then some. In this case, it's best to take a page from some of the major comic book companies and acknowledge that there may be some truth to them all. Perhaps the ruler of the Realm Beyond is an actual deity, while all of the other "gods" are actually dimensional beings that were considered gods in the past by virtue of their natural powers. Or, maybe they exist in a way where they actually kind of fold into one another, allowing beings such as Odin, Zeus, and Ra to actually be three aspects of the same person.

In the long run, it comes down to the Gamemaster to create an enjoyable game environment with the players. If someone is offended by the use of multiple pantheons, the best bet is to downplay religion or possibly make it more like modern day, where there is a mixture of faiths.

lies the problem. Instead of attuning oneself to a dimension, a traveler needs to know the right door, and if the wrong door is chosen, they could end up in a dark dimension, a void, or some hellish netherworld.

So, how does one choose a door properly? The first way is a simple mystic attunement. Any character with Mystic Awareness can make a Search check (DC 15) to navigate the Dimension of Doors. Vary the DC of the Search check as needed to suit the story; some dimensions are simply easier to find than others.

Another way to choose the right door is with a Knowledge (arcane lore) check, against a base DC 15, modified by the demands of the adventure. Unlike the attunement method, the traveler can get help from things like maps and signposts, both of which offer a bonus to find the right door.

DOOR KEY

Finally, there are door keys, simply known as "keys" to the Wardens. Door keys are mystical devices attuned to the Dimension of Doors. Most look like actual keys, but there are others with a more exotic appearance. Some examples are a piece of chalk able to draw "doorways" that then open into the dimension, a piece of knotted wood that opens a doorway to the Dimension of Doors when knocked upon a normal door, or a modern-looking passcard that opens doors into the dimensions. The Gate-Keeper is in many regards a "living door key," able to perform their functions through innate magical power.

DOOR KEY

DEVICE 1 • 4 POINTS

Easy to lose; Restricted; Super-Movement 2 (dimensional, mystic dimensions)

LIMBO

Another dimension occasionally fashioned after the astral plane is limbo. "Limbo" is technically a class or type of dimension, as there are many different limbos, all places where time flows at a different rate than in Earth's dimension. Some limbos actually stop time (at least compared to the Earth dimension), making those within it virtually ageless, while others have a degree of slowed or accelerated time passage. In the latter case, a visitor could spend days, months, and even years between the ticks of a clock while in the limbo. These are places where a young mystic might train for some time, emerging back on Earth older and wiser, only to discover little or no time has passed in their absence.

Some limbo dimensions are nothing more than endless emptiness, containing nothing but what enters the dimension from the outside. For an isolated limbo, this could be virtually nothing at all, but other realms

are more like dumping grounds for extradimensional civilizations, filled with drifting collections of flotsam. Other limbos are hellish realms full of demons and other unpleasant creatures. It's even possible to have a form of limbo *within* a mystical headquarters, allowing a mystic hero all the time he needs to study his spells (see **Sanctums Sanctorum** in **Chapter 2**).

DIVINE DIMENSIONS

Deities from various religions have always had an important role in comics. In some ways, the spandex-clad heroes of the modern age could be viewed like gods themselves with the powers they wield and the tales told of them. But, even among their kind, there exist legendary deities from pantheons past and present. The gods Thor and Hercules have had lengthy runs in comics, with titles based on their exploits both in mythology and as modern-day superheroes. Other heroes have powers bestowed by the gods to defend mankind or serve as their champions in the earthly realm. Even the concepts of modern monotheistic religions have made their way into four-color superhero books, with angels and agents of the realm above doing their god's work on Earth.

But what of their home dimensions? While some deities work from the mainstream world, others come and go as they are needed, watching the world of man carefully from their divine abodes. Divine dimensions are, by definition, realms where the gods dwell. Some divine dimensions are multi-dimensional, often having various divisions. These may include infernal and afterlife dimensions, such as the realms of the Norse gods, which have the divine realms of Asgard and Vanirheim as well as the afterlife of Hel and the infernal realm of Muspelheim, for example.

ASGARD

Beyond the rainbow bridge Bifrost lies the fabled land of Asgard, home to the Norse gods. A world of epic battles and tales, this realm has been depicted in comics as a vast city with impressive castles and peaks, with rural areas surrounding it on an edge of land that seems to float in a stary sky.

From this floating city, the gods come and go as they please, using the rainbow bridge connecting Asgard to Earth and other realms. Anyone traversing the bridge should be ready to confront Heimdall, the guardian of Bifrost and warden of all those that would pass. To attempt to sneak past this guardian is an almost impossible feat, as his senses are so greatly enhanced that he is always alert and ready for danger. It takes a DC 40 Stealth roll to accomplish such a feat and, if discovered afterwards, would warrant punishment from some of the fiercest warriors in Asgard.



ASGARDIANS

The Asgardians tend to be a bit more durable than other gods. War-hardened and ready for combat, the gods of Asgard often dress in furs and armor, carrying swords, hammers, and spears into combat.

ASGARDIAN TEMPLATE 14 POINTS

Skills: Knowledge (tactics) 4

Feats: All-Out Attack, Rage

Powers: Enhanced Strength 4, Immunity 1 (aging), Protection 4, Super-Strength 1

FIRE GIANT

Massive creatures made of super-heated magma and fire, fire giants are an impressive sight to behold. Standing well over fifteen feet tall, these creatures are war-like and strive for nothing more than Ragnarök, where they will set fire to Yggdrasil, the world tree, and end the world of the Asgardians.

FROST GIANT

Born in frozen Niflheim, the frost giants of Asgard aren't as war-like as their fiery cousins, but, like most things in this realm, they aren't above battle either. Towering above like their Fire Giant cousins, these huge creatures vary in appearance, ranging from large blue-skinned humans to monstrous fusions of man and ice. Though commonly depicted as icy brutes, Frost Giants have also been portrayed as being wise and offering sage advice to those willing to listen.

FIRE GIANT POWER LEVEL 10

Str 28	Dex 11	Con 18	Int 10	Wis 11	Cha 9
Skills: Climb 2 (+8), Intimidate 6 (+9)					
Feats: Equipment 1, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Grapple, Power Attack, Startle <i>Equipment:</i> Gigantic axe (+5 damage)					
Powers: Blast 8 (fire), Energy Aura 12 (fire; Permanent; Innate), Growth 8 (Continuous; Permanent; Innate), Immunity 10 (heat and fire damage)					
Combat: Attack +6 (includes -2 size), Grapple +23, Damage +14 (axe), Defense +4 (includes -2 size, +2 flat-footed), Knockback -2, Initiative +0					
Saving Throws: Toughness +4, Fortitude +6, Reflex +0, Will +0					
Attributes 3 + Skills 2 (8 ranks) + Feats 9 + Powers 76 + Combat 28 + Saves 2 = 120					

FROST GIANT POWER LEVEL 9

Str 28	Dex 11	Con 20	Int 10	Wis 11	Cha 9
Skills: Climb 2 (+8), Intimidate 6 (+9)					
Feats: Equipment 1, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Grapple, Power Attack, Startle <i>Equipment:</i> Gigantic sword (+5 damage)					
Powers: Energy Aura 8 (cold; Permanent; Innate), Growth 8 (Continuous; Permanent; Innate), Immunity 10 (cold damage), Protection 4 (Impervious)					
Combat: Attack +4 (includes -2 size), Grapple +21, Damage +9 (unarmed), +14 (sword), Defense +4 (includes -2 size), Knockback +6, Initiative +0					
Saving Throws: Toughness +9, Fortitude +5, Reflex +0, Will +0					
Attributes 5 + Skills 2 (8 ranks) + Feats 9 + Powers 60 + Combat 24 + Saves 0 = 100					

VALKYRIE POWER LEVEL 9

Str 16	Dex 16	Con 15	Int 13	Wis 15	Cha 13
Skills: Diplomacy 6 (+7), Intimidate 6 (+7), Medicine 5 (+7), Notice 5 (+7), Ride 7 (+10), Search 6 (+7), Sense Motive 5 (+7)					
Feats: Assessment, Attractive, Defensive Attack, Diehard, Improved Initiative, Quick Draw (sword), Second Chance (Search checks)					
Powers: Device 2 (magical armor, hard to lose), Device 2 (magic sword, easy to lose), Immunity 3 (aging, critical hits), Super-Senses 2 (detect worthy souls, ranged) <i>Magical Armor:</i> Protection 5 (Impervious) <i>Magical Sword:</i> Strike 6 (Affects Incorporeal 2, Mighty)					
Combat: Attack +9, Grapple +12, Damage +3 (unarmed), +9 (sword), Defense +9 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -6, Initiative +7					
Saving Throws: Toughness +7 (+2 without armor), Fortitude +4, Reflex +3, Will +4					
Attributes 28 + Skills 10 (40 ranks) + Feats 7 + Powers 19 + Combat 36 + Saves 4 = 104					

VALKYRIE

The warrior-maidens of Odin, clad in armor, typically ride into battle upon winged horses or wolves. Though appearing ready for battle, the valkyries' true purpose is to carry the souls of worthy warriors on to Valhalla, the Asgardian Hall of Heroes. Though their function seems passive, one would be cautioned against stepping between a valkyrie and their chosen dead. In most cases, such a feat would end with the interrupter being vanquished to Hel.

OLYMPUS

Legends say Olympus, home of the Greek gods, sits atop the appropriately named Mount Olympus. But in most comics, Mount Olympus exists in another dimension, accessible through mystic gateways within ancient Greek ruins. Some creators have depicted Olympus as it may have stood in the classic era, while others take a more creative approach, making the realm akin to a tesseract, including various sub-realms within it.

Even though the general appearance may change depending on the creator, the influence of classical Greek architecture is still there. Many times, the realm boasts lavish columns of white marble, as well as stone floors and various reliefs that mark the ancient Greek era. In some cases, there is ivy growing on the pillars, while in others, they are clean and without wear. Like so many places in ancient Greece, Olympus may have large pools and baths, as well as places of public forum for the gods, many of whom have their own "sub-realm" within Olympus as well.

To reach the home of the Greek gods, one must either find the right passage or be able to traverse the dimensions. If the former, it's largely a plot device under the Gamemaster's control, although skills like Arcane Lore can be helpful. In the latter case, the character simply needs the right dimensional movement power.

OLYMPIANS

The Olympians, while they have had their share of battles, have always been more interested in human behavior and how it serves them. Manipulative and petty in their interests, these gods have typically used mankind as pieces in a chess game, attempting to move them closer to the gods' needs. Though usually depicted in Ancient Greek togas or armor, the Olympians are a bit more resourceful, having studied the objects of their attention, and they may appear as almost anything.

OLYMPIAN TEMPLATE

18 POINTS
Skills: Knowledge (arts) 2, Knowledge (theology & philosophy) 2

Talents: Assessment, Attractive, Fascinate

Powers: Immunity 1 (aging) Morph 3 (any form), Super-Movement 2 (dimensional)

AMAZON

A staple of comic books, the amazons are an offshoot of humans that are comprised entirely of women warriors. Accomplished in all martial ways, the typical amazon works to perfect herself in any manner that she can. Though warriors, they also produce fine art, agriculture, and grand sport, all of which are commonly tributes to the Olympian gods. It should be noted that the beautiful city of Themiscyra, the classical amazon capital, could very well be part of Olympus, a separate dimension of its own, or even hidden away somewhere within the mainstream dimension.

CYCLOPS

The monocular cyclopes are monstrous giants standing well over fifteen feet tall. Humanoid in build, these beings usually serve Hephaestus in his forge. However, much like humans, there is always a chance for these giants to go rogue, and they have a few times in the past. Though not aggressive by nature, they can have a quick temper that, when combined with their massive strength, can result in quite a bit of damage.

AMAZON

POWER LEVEL 7
Str 15 | Dex 17 | Con 15 | Int 13 | Wis 15 | Cha 13
Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+8), Intimidate 6 (+7), Knowledge (tactics) 8 (+9), Medicine 2 (+4), Notice 5 (+7), Ride 7 (+10), Search 6 (+7), Sense Motive 5 (+7)

Feats: Assessment, Attractive, Defensive Attack, Diehard, Equipment 3, Fascinate, Improved Aim, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Ranged Pin, Quick Draw (bow) 2

Equipment: Armor (+4 Toughness), bow (+4 damage), sword (+3 damage)

Powers: Immunity 1 (aging)

Combat: Attack +9, Grapple +11, Damage +5 (sword), +4 (bow), Defense +8 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -3, Initiative +7

Saving Throws: Toughness +6 (+2 without armor), Fortitude +5, Reflex +3, Will +4

Attributes 28 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 14 + Powers 1 + Combat 34 + Saves 5 = Total 93

CYCLOPS

POWER LEVEL 9
Str 26 | Dex 11 | Con 18 | Int 10 | Wis 11 | Cha 9
Skills: Climb 5 (+5), Intimidate 6 (+9)

Feats: Equipment 1, Fearsome Presence 4, Improved Grapple, Power Attack, Startle

Equipment: Club (+4 damage)

Powers: Growth 8 (Continuous, Innate, Permanent), Protection 10

Combat: Attack +4 (includes -2 size), Grapple +20, Damage +7 (unarmed), +11 (club), Defense +4 (includes -2 size, flatfooted +2), Knockback -7, Initiative +0

Saving Throws: Toughness +14, Fortitude +4, Reflex +0, Will +0

Attributes 1 + Skills 3 (11 ranks) + Feats 8 + Powers 35 + Combat 24 + Saves 0 = Total 71

GORGON

POWER LEVEL 9
Str 12 | Dex 17 | Con 17 | Int 10 | Wis 11 | Cha 9
Skills: Bluff 4 (+3), Climb 4 (+5), Intimidate 6 (+5), Notice 3 (+3), Search 4 (+4), Survival 3 (+3)

Feats: Attack Focus (Ranged), Attack Specialization (Petrification), Equipment 3, Favored Environment (Olympus) 3, Fearsome Presence 3, Startle

Equipment: Bow (+3 damage, Drain Constitution 5 poison)

Powers: Protection 6, Transform 10 (flesh to stone, Continuous Duration, Perception Range, Sight-Dependent)

Combat: Attack +6 (+7 ranged), Grapple +7, Damage +1 (unarmed), +3 (bow), Defense +6, Knockback -4, Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +9, Fortitude +3, Reflex +3, Will +0

Attributes 16 + Skills 6 (24 ranks) + Feats 12 + Powers 46 + Combat 24 + Saves 0 = Total 104

GORGON

Originally cursed by the goddess Athena, these horrible creatures hate all things good and wise. A fusion of snake and woman, the gorgons are accomplished warriors that specialize in archery and have a petrifying gaze. While climbing Mount Olympus, it's very possible to encounter a small hunting party of gorgons searching for new pieces for their statue garden, a place where art really does reflect life!

MINOTAUR**POWER LEVEL 8****Str 20** | **Dex 11** | **Con 18** | **Int 10** | **Wis 11** | **Cha 9****Skills:** Climb 4 (+5), Intimidate 6 (+7), Survival 2 (+2)**Feats:** Equipment 1, Improved Grapple, Improved Overrun, Power Attack, Startle, Track**Equipment:** Axe (+4 damage)**Powers:** **Growth 4** (Continuous, Innate, Permanent), **Protection 5, Strike 7** (Mighty), **Super-Senses 1** (scent)**Combat:** Attack +6 (includes -1 size), Grapple +15, Damage +9 (axe), Defense +4 (includes -1 size), Knockback -4, Initiative +0**Saving Throws:** Toughness +9, Fortitude +4, Reflex +0, Will +0**Attributes 7 + Skills 3 (12 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 27 + Combat 24 + Saves 0 = Total 67****MINOTAUR**

Like the gorgons, the original Minotaur was the result of the gods' actions, this time to punish the tyrannical King Minos. It was eventually slain by the hero Theseus. Since that time, there have been a few other reported cases of these half-bull, half-man creatures who now roam the mountain entirely free from the hindrance of a labyrinth like the one that fettered the first of their kind. Because of their bull-like nature, minotaurs are usually quick to fight and not typically great thinkers. When moving towards Olympus, it's possible to meet up with a minotaur or two looking for food.

THE REALM BEYOND

Beyond the veil of life and death, there exists another realm, one of a solitary deity and his servants. Some call it Heaven, while others call it Nirvana or Zion. In the worlds of comic books, the Realm Beyond often works as a place of divine mysticism, offering powerful servants and places of rest for the truly good and heroic. Though comics have used the stereotypical cloud with golden gates in them, there have

been many variants of what this realm looks like. Sometimes, the land is that of perfect meadows and relaxing souls appearing as they did in their prime. Other times, the land is shrouded in a cloudy fog with great castles and mountain peaks poking up from within. Unlike the other version, the souls instead reside within the structures, with the occasional soul wandering outside. In all reality, more than many of the other realms, the Realm Beyond is very malleable and dependent on the Gamemaster to build. It's even possible for the dimension to be reactive to the viewer, appearing as whatever they see as paradise.

AGENTS OF THE BEYOND

There are some mystics in the realms that serve the Higher Power and, as such, have occasionally been viewed as being akin to some superheroes. Though they rarely don colorful costumes or promote themselves publicly like some heroes, most of these agents help others. In fact, that's the sole purpose of their existence: to help others succeed in their destinies. Because of this, it can occasionally seem as though they may be working both sides of the fence, helping both heroes and criminals. But, as everyone knows, the Higher Power has a plan for everyone and, the villain that an agent helps today may become the hero the world needs tomorrow.

AGENT OF THE BEYOND**21 POINTS****Powers:** **Super-Senses 7** (detect evil, divine awareness, precognition [Affects Others]), **Teleport 6** (Progression 2)**ANGELS**

The messengers and warriors of the Higher Power, angels are often seen as a miracle or portent of things to come. Unlike most servants, these beings serve their master out of love and devotion, offering their very life to carry on his message. Though usually depicted in flowing white robes with large, white wings, angels in superhero genres usually have access to armor and power weapons that allow them to defend the Realm Beyond.

OTHER PRIMORDIAL POWERS**LIGHT REALMS**

In some cases, light may also be considered a primordial power, not only because it warms us, but also because it helps nourish all life. In a Realm of Light, the world may feel warm and welcoming, healing all wounds and providing a sense of safety. Often, heroes will find themselves within the presence of the light to find healing or some answer that eludes them. After all, the truth does shine like a beacon. However, in a twist of ideas, it's possible for the sense of safety to be a trap by the power itself. It's then that the hero may have to rescue someone from it or find someone to rescue them.

PARA-ELEMENTAL DIMENSIONS

Sitting adjoined to the primordial powers, the para-elemental dimensions are filled with the mixed offspring from the other elements. Smoke, Lava, Steam, Dust, Mud, and Mist: these are the common mixes of para-elementals that heroes may encounter. Like their parentage, these beings strive in a world composed of their element, but they may also live within the world of either or both parents.

THE VOID

Though some may call it darkness, many know it by The Void, a realm of shadows and murky dusk that hangs over the edge of twilight. Though some believe it may be inherently evil, darkness does serve a purpose, if only to balance light. The beings within this plane could be simple night-dwellers, their eyes adjusted to the shadowy realm. However, it may also have ties to the Nightmare Realms and even some Dark Power dimensions. It's also possible that, in some cases, the realm is nothing more than a bog of dark energy that some heroes and villains can tap into, a kind of shadow power that can be manipulated and moved through. If connected to the Nightmare Realms, it could also serve as a place of fear and loathing, causing even the bravest man to step into its inky tendrils and feel his greatest fear.

OATH-BOUND ANGEL **POWER LEVEL 10**

Str 16	Dex 16	Con 18	Int 14	Wis 15	Cha 15
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Skills: Diplomacy 6 (+8), Gather Information 5 (+7), Intimidate 6 (+8), Investigation 6 (+8), Knowledge (Religion and Philosophy) 10 (+12), Notice 5 (+7), Search 6 (+8)

Feats: Assessment, Attack Specialization (sword), Attractive, Critical Strike, Diehard, Fearless, Fearsome Presence, Power Attack, Takedown Attack 2

Powers: **Device 4** (sword, easy to lose), **Device 2** (armor, hard to lose), **Flight 4**, **Fire Control 9**, **Immunity 10** (fire damage)

Armor: **Protection 5** (Impervious)
Sword: **Nullify Summon 8**, **Strike 8** (Mighty)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +11, Damage +3 (unarmed), +11 (sword), Defense +8 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -7, Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +9, Fortitude +4, Reflex +3, Will +2

Attributes 34 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 10 + Powers 56 + Combat 32 + Saves 0 = Total 143

ANGEL TEMPLATE **19 POINTS**

Skills: Diplomacy 4, Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 8

Feats: Attractive, Diehard, Equipment 2, Fearless, Teamwork
Equipment: Armor (+3 Toughness), sword (+3 damage)

Powers: **Flight 4**, **Super-Movement 1** (dimensional, the Realm Beyond)



within it, just a large amount of the element that calls it home. Using water as an example again, perhaps in a comic book plane of water, there are small islands and a sky, but, for the most part, it's a massive amount of depthless water. It's also possible for other life to survive on these planes, allowing for some strange variations on mundane wildlife and celestial versions that may be revered by some as deities themselves. For example, perhaps a celestial carp swims within the primordial plane of water, while a magnificent, Chinese *lung* (dragon) soars through the plane of air. It's even possible that the heroes themselves could come from one of these places, possibly as a native race that inhabits one of the worlds, or even as an experiment by one of the powers there.

While some primordial powers are seen as creatures of balance, it's very possible to have them be both malevolent and benevolent forces in the universe.

Primordians are created when an elemental attempts to either create life or endow some of its power to an already living being. This usually occurs because an elemental is curious, requires a servant, or because something is wrong with the natural balance. Though primordians are often created as an ideal being in the mind of the elemental, they are not always looked upon as favorably by the average person, as these creations may have rocky skin, be partially ignited, have fish-like traits, or even be a literal interpretation of an air-head.

PRIMORDIAN TEMPLATE **20 POINTS**

Skills: Knowledge (arcane lore) 4

Feats: Diehard, Endurance

Powers: **Element Control 6**, **Immunity 3** (aging, critical hits), **Super-Senses 2** (detect element)

OATH-BOUND ANGEL

Of all the angels, the most feared and revered are the oath-bound angels. Elevated through the ranks of servants, the oath-bound have been given the special task of protecting their assigned oath. In many ways, they serve as generals in the armies above, as well as being messengers and those who punish sinners. Some may even view them as a type of minor deity, and this has even inspired a few groups that work within their name and oath.

The stats for the oath-bound angel assume that his oath is related to fire, appearing as a fire-winged man with bronze armor and a flaming sword. Not all oath-bound are the same, each having different powers depending on their oath. If their oath is ever stripped from them, oath-bound angels must start from the bottom of the hierarchy and move their way up.

PRIMAL DIMENSIONS

Earth, Air, Water, and Fire. Sure, it sounds like the tag line of an old cartoon. But in a mystic sense, these are the primordial powers that existed before the Earth and the people on it. In the world of superheroes, these powers usually stick to their own dimensions, but they occasionally interfere when needed. In some of the most common cases, they serve as origins for many characters with elemental-based abilities, using them as a sort of avatar to their power. In other cases, they are used as a force of nature striking out against the forces that would corrupt them. In this case, they're not always seen in the heroic light but more of a menace of disastrous proportions. Finally, like most spirits, they may be summoned from their realm and used as pawns ... though they tend to get revenge on those disturbing them in the long run.

But what of their realms? In the simplest of ideas, the dimensions are the sum of their being. Meaning, when visiting the plane of water, it's just that ... water. Nothing else. However, because this is comic books, it's more likely that a primordial world will have all four elements



REALM OF THE FEY

In many legends, there are references to mischievous spirits from a world beyond our own. Some call them boggins, while others call them sidhe or kitsune. These beings collectively have become known as faeries. Though the name usually infers a small spirit with gossamer wings, it actually encompasses an entire species of magical creatures that people have come to both love and be leery of.

Though faeries are usually encountered within the mainstream dimension, they actually come from a land known as the Realm of

the Fey. In this realm, the geography looks similar to the mainstream world, but where there stood proud cities, there instead stands a massive forest; where airplanes filled the skies, there are riders of winged beasts, both large and small, soaring through the air; and where people stood that were human, there are now the variants of the faerie species.

Of all the realms that a mage may visit, surprisingly, the Realm of the Fey may prove the most dangerous. Though one may not realize this (or be told, for that matter), there are rules to anyone entering this dimension. Exactly what those rules are is up to the Gamemaster, but some possible rules (and the Knowledge (arcane lore) check to realize them) could be:

- Do not take anything from a faerie. If you do, you are indebted to them, and they may claim a hefty price for something as simple as a piece of fruit. (DC 18)
- Be especially careful what you wish for. Some fey are generous, while others like to fulfill first and expect payment after. (DC 20)
- Not everything is as it seems in the Realm of the Fey. A person may be something else, and a horse could even be a person. Treat everything with respect. (DC14)
- Politeness can go a long way. Always treat the denizens of the realm with respect ... it may save your life. (DC 15)
- Some food and drink may be more than what it seems. Be careful what is consumed, for it could transform you, make you sleep for many years or, worse, put you in a coma-like state until someone performs a task on your behalf. (DC 15)

These rules are most important when dealing with fey nobility, as the land is made up of two courts: Seelie and Unseelie. The Seelie Court are the fey that have spent time with humans and appreciate their quirkiness. Throughout myth and legend, these are the faerie that have helped mankind and have bestowed upon them great favors. Despite this generosity, one should also remember to be careful when in the presence of a member of the Seelie Court. If the rules are not kept to, the Seelie aren't above claiming servitude or, worse yet, claiming a hero as their own.

The Unseelie Court, while having no love or regard for anything beyond themselves, enjoy the fine art of trickery, even if it ends poorly

AN ALTERNATE LAND OF FAERIE

Though what's depicted in this section is more or less a classical look at the Realm of the Fey, it's also possible to have heroes dealing with a realm composed of fairy tales. While not unheard of in comics, it's rare to see them used in any major capacity within a four-color superhero book. In this world, heroes like Jack, Little Red Riding Hood, and Prince Charming could be almost like superheroes themselves, while villains like the Big Bad Wolf, The Wicked Queen, and Rumplestiltskin serve as archetypes of evil that plague the world.

In this case, the world may appear akin to medieval Europe, with spired cathedrals, grand fortresses, and dark, foreboding forests littering the lands. In some areas, one might see houses made from candy, while in others they may be dealing with talking pigs and horses. For some enterprising Gamemasters, it might prove worthwhile to switch things up a bit. Perhaps the Wicked Queen is the victim of Snow White's lies, or could it be that Jack slew the giant just for his gold? Occasionally, mixing up the stereotypes makes it new again, as well as enjoyable for a group of players.

Another variant that's quite popular in comics is the concept of Lewis Carroll's Wonderland. In many adventures, heroes have found themselves in a world much like the Wonderland that Alice explored, dealing with the likes of the Queen of Hearts, the Mad Hatter, and the Cheshire Cat. The thing to remember when running Wonderland is the stranger the better. A character like the Queen of Hearts doesn't have to have a reason to put a hero on trial, nor does the Mad Hatter have to be villainous to get a team of heroes to sit and enjoy a spot of tea. In many ways, the adventure should be a bit surreal, offering the players a chance to role-play their way out of situations and try and find a way home. In a twist of the genre, perhaps the roles of Wonderland are being played by people near and dear to the heroes, or maybe they're all villains of the heroic team, bewitched to think they're something they're not.

for the target of their pranks. Unlike their Seelie brethren, these faeries have few limitations within the mainstream world and are only contained by the laws set forth by some of the elders. Though they thrive on protocol like the Seelie, it's more of a mockery to the rules set forth and, when encountering a being outside their realm, they attempt anything within their power to trick them into breaking any and all laws they can.

In many ways, when dealing with either court, there very possibly could be shades of Louis Carroll's card court or inspiration drawn from Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. In a superhero setting, it could be a great challenge for a group of heroes to save a comrade that has fallen to a trick by the Unseelie court. Perhaps a trial would have to be set forth, or an object would have to be traded for their "misdeed." Of all the sources to gather information from, folklore that's been handed down for centuries should be more than enough for GMs to gather plot seeds from, as well as several movies, plays, and books based on these faerie tales.

THE FEY-TOUCHED

In some legends, a member of one of the Faerie Courts (usually Seelie, as most Unseelie faeries believe tainting themselves with that sort of human contact to be most abhorrent) has a child with a human, creating what has become known as a fey-touched being. These hybrid children tend to have more in common with their human parent than a full-blooded faerie, but they almost always retain some sort of fey-like abilities or traits.

Though fairly normal in appearance otherwise, most fey-touched have fair skin and fair hair, as well as slightly pointed ears. Hidden in their eyes is a spark of mischief that occasionally comes forth as they use their abilities. Fey-touched beings also tend to share some of the personality characteristics of their faerie parent. The child of a Seelie parent may be generous, honorable, and a loyal friend, whereas the offspring of an Unseelie union may result in a person that is self-centered, deceitful, and fickle.

FEY-TOUCHED TEMPLATE

26 POINTS

Skills: Bluff 6, Knowledge (arcane lore) 6

Feats: Distract (Bluff), Fascinate (Bluff)

Powers: **Illusion 5** (visual), **Immunity 1** (aging), **Super-Senses 10** (true sight)

CHANGELING

In some other tales, the fey decide to play a cruel trick on someone (some deserving, others not so) and replace their child with a changeling. These cruel fey take on the form of the child and take on their life, being coddled by the human parents until such a time that they need to return to the Realm of the Fey. When this varies depending on the changeling and their specific mission; some take on the child's life for several years, while others only spend a short amount of time in the form.

In some rare cases, the changeling is actually put in place to protect a special child from some evil. This could be a magical evil, or, more often, an Unseelie threat. In such occurrences, the changeling remains until the child is ready to defend themselves or it is found out. In other, even more rare situations, a changeling is swapped with a child and forgets altogether that it's a changeling, living the life of the child until it starts noticing some oddness that the other kids don't have in common.

CHANGELING

POWER LEVEL 6

Str 10	Dex 11	Con 12	Int 10	Wis 14	Cha 14
Skills: Bluff 10 (+12), Disguise 10 (+12), Gather Information 3 (+5), Notice 3 (+5), Search 4 (+4), Sense Motive 3 (+5), Stealth 8 (+8), Survival 3 (+5)					
Feats: Distract (Bluff), Second Chance (Disguise)					
Powers: Comprehend 3 (languages), Immunity 1 (aging), Morph 8 (humanoids)					
Combat: Attack +4, Grapple +4, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +4, Knockback -0, Initiative +0					
Saving Throws: Toughness +1, Fortitude +1, Reflex +0, Will +2					
Attributes 11 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 23 + Combat 16 + Saves 0 = Total 63					

KITSUNE

POWER LEVEL 6

Str 10	Dex 16	Con 14	Int 14	Wis 16	Cha 16
Skills: Bluff 10 (+13), Disguise 10 (+13), Notice 3 (+6), Search 4 (+6), Sense Motive 6 (+9), Stealth 8 (+11), Survival 3 (+6)					
Feats: Distract (Bluff), Fascinate (Bluff), Hide in Plain Sight, Second Chance (Disguise), Taunt					
Powers: Comprehend 3 (Languages), Morph 8 (Humanoids)					
Combat: Attack +4, Damage +0, Defense +4, Knockback -1 Initiative +0					
Saving Throws: Toughness +2, Fortitude +2, Reflex +3, Will +3					
Attributes 26 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 22 + Combat 16 + Saves 0 = Total 80					

POOKA

POWER LEVEL 8

Str 10	Dex 15	Con 15	Int 10	Wis 14	Cha 14
Skills: Bluff 10 (+12), Diplomacy 4 (+6), Disguise 10 (+12), Notice 3 (+5), Search 4 (+4), Sense Motive 3 (+5), Stealth 7 (+13), Survival 3 (+5)					
Feats: Distract (Bluff), Second Chance (Disguise), Taunt					
Powers: Comprehend 5 (Animals & Languages), Shapeshift 6 (Animals Only), Shrinking 4 (Innate, Permanent)					
Combat: Attack +5 (+1 from Shrinking included), Grapple +1, Damage +0, Defense +5 (+1 from Shrinking included, flat-footed +3), Knockback -1, Initiative +2					
Saving Throws: Toughness +2, Fortitude +2, Reflex +2, Will +2					
Attributes 22 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) + Feats 3 + Powers 55 + Combat 16 + Saves 0 = Total 107					

KITSUNE

These fox-like fey are considered master tricksters, using alternate forms to seduce others, thief, humiliate their target, or even cause vengeance for some deed against them. In their natural form, kitsunes look like foxes with up to nine tails and a glint of otherworldly wisdom in their eyes. While using their Morph ability, they commonly take on the shape of beautiful women, the elderly, or even children.

POOKA

Like kitsune and changelings, pooka are also fey tricksters and shapeshifters, though they tend to use a bevy of animal forms. In their natural form, which they're rarely in, these faerie look akin to fauns and satyrs, sharing features from both animals and man. When shapeshifted, on the other hand, they prefer the form of a dark horse with glowing eyes and a flowing mane. They have also been known to take on the forms

REDCAP**POWER LEVEL 6**

Str 16	Dex 12	Con 16	Int 10	Wis 12	Cha 12
Skills: Bluff 10 (+11), Climb 4 (+7), Notice 3 (+4), Search 4 (+4), Stealth 8 (+13), Survival 3 (+4)					
Feats: All-Out Attack, Equipment, Improved Grab, Takedown Attack, Teamwork 2 <i>Equipment:</i> Knife (+2 damage)					
Powers: Immunity 1 (Slow-Aging), Protection 6 , Shrinking 4 (Innate, Permanent)					
Combat: Attack +6 (+1 from Shrinking included), Grapple +5, Damage +5 (knife), Defense +6 (+1 from Shrinking included), Knockback -1, Initiative +1					
Saving Throws: Toughness +3, Fortitude +3, Reflex +1, Will +1					
Attributes 22 + Skills 8 (32 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 10 + Combat 20 + Saves 0 = Total 66					

of dogs, goats, and other wild game. Though they are mischievous in nature, pooka have no true desire to harm those they taunt. After all, what fun is it when you have no one to play with? Pooka make excellent "magical imp" characters, ranging from the provided power level and game traits on up to power level X plot devices, if you want a really powerful (and frustrating) foe to challenge your heroes.

HELLISH DIFFICULTIES

While using a dimension like hell, a GM may need some of the difficulties that are associated with it. These are just a few hazards that a hero may encounter while in this dimension:

BRIAR PATCH

The briar patches of Hell are extra-sharp and almost impossible to break. In many instances, it's not so different from razor-wire (which, in some Hells, the briars could easily be part of). When a character maneuvers through a briar patch, have them make a few Reflex saves (DC 18) or take Strike 10 damage. If the GM would like them to be especially deadly, the patch could be laced with a fast-acting poison, causing Drain Constitution 8 if actually damaged by the briars.

HELLFIRE PIT

In a Hell that's blazing with hellfire, it wouldn't be too much of a stretch for someone to fall into a pit of it. When walking around a pit, if a hero fails a Reflex save (DC 12-18 depending on the terrain), they would be hit by a hellfire Blast 10 attack with no range. If the GM would like to express how dangerous the land around it is, he could enforce a Fortitude save (DC 12) to survive the heat. Failing that roll could mean that the hero is exhausted, perhaps needing to push themselves to do anything more than sit.

RAZOR-SHARP ROCKS

The deadly landscape of Hell could easily produce razor-sharp rocks, which, in turn, could prove fatal to some and become a weapon to others. If a hero bumps into one of these rocks, treat it as a lethal Strike 7 in most cases (unless the GM wants higher lethality). On the other hand, if someone wants to use one as a weapon, it could give a +1 or +2 to damage rolls.

SHEER CLIFF

Some areas of Hell have typically had inescapable pits with sheer cliffs. But, with people having abilities like wall-crawling or leaping, it may not be as inescapable as one might think. In most cases, a base Climbing check, without abilities or any powers, should be considered DC 40. If someone has wall-crawling or wall-running, it should still be difficult, just not as much. In these instances, a base DC of 25 may work, with the DC decreasing depending on how the hero has adapted to the area.

TOUCH OF THE DAMNED

Though they may seem to just be tormented souls, the damned may strike at any time against the heroes. Their mere touch should cause one of two types of damage. In the case that the damned are physical, they should be cursed with a touch of hellfire (Hellfire Aura 8) that does damage to any not native to the plane. If an incorporeal damned is more to your liking, then their touch should be a Wisdom or Constitution Drain 8, causing the person touched to either not care to leave or just not be well enough to leave.

REDCAP

Amongst the more rowdy of the Unseelie Court, redcaps are the mooks of the fey, carrying out odd jobs and delighting in the mayhem they can cause. Commonly found in small packs of three or so, these nasty faeries will start fights with no reason, and they pull pranks just because they can. If encountered in less than a pack, a hero should be cautious ... it's more than likely a trap.

INFERNAL DIMENSIONS

Evil comes in many shapes in sizes. From world conquering demons to mystic creatures bent only on destruction, comic books have presented many of these beings as coming from darker worlds, with some appearing like ours. However, more often than not, the landscape is a hellish visage from a mage's worse nightmare. It's within these dark realms that evil sorcerers draw some of their power and where some of the worst creatures lie in wait. But what makes up a good realm of dark power? Is it the landscape itself that fights the invaders? Or, do the heroes have a bestiary of evil to fight?

In the most common instance, both the landscape and the denizens of the realm assault the heroes. No dimension signifies this as well as Hell. In comics, Hell normally appears as a jagged landscape of razor peaks and pools of hellfire-spewing magma, surrounded by inescapable

able cliffs of stone and ash. Surviving in the land would be almost impossible in most cases, what with the sulfuric gases, the moans of the damned, and the unbearable heat. And, there lies the point of a place like Hell, as the realm itself will keep you on the edge of life just for the torment involved. A lot of the time, the environment is the least of a hero's worries though. Within a land such as this, the inhabitants also aim to draw off torment, clawing and battling the hero into a submissive state. From demon lords to lower caste demons and even the damned themselves, anyone venturing into this dimension will find a fight awaiting them.

Who says that a realm like Hell has to be all "hellfire and brimstone" though? A possible alternative that a GM might consider would be using Hell as a realm where the land isn't as much against you in an aggressive stance, but more as a passive resistance. Using things like briar patches or pools of quicksand or mud to slow down those that stumble into the traps might work better than the obvious dangers that are usually associated with a Hell-like dimension. The same can be said about the denizens. Rather than use a frothing pack of demonic horrors, perhaps the heroes encounter something that seems placid at first sight and works to corrupt them slowly. After all, what better prize is there in Hell than a fallen hero?

DEMONS

Not all demons are created equal, nor are they all the same. While some demons may appear as the traditional bestial and horn-headed evil that immediately strikes fear into those around them, others may look no different than the average human, at first glance. When confronted or angered, however, their true nature is often revealed by a slip in their façade, an intense fiery glow held within their eyes that not even the most expensive contact lenses can mask. The majority of demons, no matter how they might appear at first, do share common abilities such as bat-like wings and a penchant for firing hellfire at their targets when in their natural form.

DEMON TEMPLATE

27 POINTS

Skills: Intimidate 4, Knowledge (arcane lore) 4

Feats: Fearsome Presence 2, Startle

Powers: **Flight 2**, **Hellfire Control 8**, **Immunity 3** (aging, critical hits)

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Flight, if wings are restrained, -1 point)

THE TAINTED

Just like the Higher Power, Hell, too, has its agents working for it. Typically, tainted beings are sorcerers or occultists looking for as much power as they can amass. They sell their souls for such abilities, and, in return for a small taste of dark power, they find themselves contracted into a lifetime of servitude to their hellish masters. This template offers just the basic abilities that someone might receive. More often than not, these beings also carry magical abilities or possibly Hell-made weapons to aid them in their mission.

TAINTED TEMPLATE

8 POINTS

Skills: Knowledge (arcane lore) 4

Feats: Fearsome Presence, Startle

Powers: **Immunity 3** (aging, critical hits), **Super-Senses 2** (mystic awareness)

ELDER SERVANT

POWER LEVEL 10

Str 18 Dex 18 Con 20 Int 9 Wis 11 Cha 8

Skills: Climb 3 (+7), Intimidate 6 (+5)

Feats: All-Out Attack, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Grapple, Power Attack, Startle, Teamwork 2

Powers: **Concealment 4** (visual; Limited to Shadows), **Flight 2**, **Protection 6** (Impervious), **Strike 6** (Mighty), **Super-Senses 2** (detect life, ranged)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +12, Damage +10, Defense +8, Knockback -8, Initiative +4

Saving Throws: Toughness +11, Fortitude +5, Reflex +4, Will +0

Attributes 24 + Skills 3 (9 ranks) + Feats 11 + Powers 29 + Combat 32 + Saves 0 = Total 99

INFERNAL CREATURES

Conversely, some dark dimensions are more bestial driven. In comics, there are entire dimensions filled with creatures that want nothing more than destruction. In some cases, these are just mindless creatures interested only in "king of the hill" style combat. In others, the realms are filled with elder beings that want nothing more than to destroy the mainstream dimension. Almost like gods or, in some cases, cosmic forces, these beings have some relation to higher caste demons, as well as beings of eldritch power. It's these creatures that evil sorcerers occasionally mistakenly summon, or, in nihilistic fashion, purposefully call upon and attempt to control. In most cases, however, these mages have fallen victim to these extra dimensional creatures, as they use the villains to cross into the mainstream dimension and destroy all around them. Occasionally, these creatures use smaller minions from the same dimension, allowing them to be "used" by an evil sorcerer and serve as their scouts.

Though these creatures are a massive threat to the mainstream dimension, their own world is nothing more than a husk of land that stretches for millions of miles. It's possible that, at one time, this world flourished, and it's even possible that the world may not even be their own. Perhaps it was a world they conquered many centuries ago, leeching away all of its natural resources since then. That could be an explanation as to why they're interested in the mainstream world, a land still ripe with resources.

ELDER SERVANT

These inky-black beings are roughly humanoid in shape, having a gangly form with long arms and powerful legs. Their almost blank face has sharp teeth that glisten with translucent slime, and large, leathery wings protrude from their back. In combat, they use their detect life ability to hunt their prey, rending them to pieces with their razor-sharp, retractable claws.

AFTERLIFE DIMENSIONS

Dead heroes have become something of a common occurrence in comic books. From legions of the dead coming back to serve a necromantic master to former sidekicks appearing just long enough to give even the bravest hero the chills, the Realm of the Dead can be a harrowing place for any encounter. It is within this shroud that heroes can be reunited with allies and enemies alike, as well as encounter legends and even loved ones.

In its most common occurrence, the realm is a nexus for the dead to wander within. In many ways, it serves a role similar to purgatory

ENCOUNTERS WITHIN THE REALM OF THE DEAD

If entering the realm of the dead, there are several souls that could be encountered. Keep in mind, depending on how you would like to run the realm, the souls may materialize in various forms ranging from appearing as they did in their prime to looking as they did when they died. This is a small smattering of encounters that could be used:

HEROIC LEGEND

The first soul you meet while in the realm is a legend to the superhero community. Perhaps it's a long-dead, Golden Age hero that offers to be your guide. Or, perhaps it's a mentor that passed on, offering to guide you along the realm as well as offering you advice from beyond the grave.

FORMER SIDEKICK

Like the legend, you may encounter a former sidekick of yours or one of an older hero that's passed on. Though they may be helpful, because of their age, they may also resent your status (especially if you replaced them). While some may be good guides and offer helpful advice, others may not be so helpful.

FORMER ENEMY

Like a normal encounter in the land of the living, the heroes could encounter and have to tangle with an old enemy that's been dead for a bit. Or, in a twist of fate, maybe the villain insists on helping you so that they can pass on. Though the hero should need some persuasion, the villain will do his hardest to help the heroes, even if it means sacrificing himself to save them.

FORMER LOVED ONE

Tragedy surrounds superheroes. In some instances, when entering the Realm of the Dead, they may find a parental influence, former lover, or sibling that may be their guide. Though they may share a tender moment, they also understand that the hero must eventually leave them again and return to the land of the living.

in that the souls of the dead await a kind of judgment on where their soul is going to go. While in this example, the land usually appears cracked, with an occasional dead tree or rocky outcropping decorating the horizon—or, at least, any of the horizons you may be able to see through the thick mists that float above the ground, its cold dampness chilling everyone but the denizens of the realm. In some cases, there's a stream that runs across the dried land, not providing any nurturance to the ground or having any seeming end to it. Upon closer examination, the stream isn't one of water, but rather of souls that flow both up and down the river. These are lesser souls who have been ruled to wander the Realm of the Dead. Though you rarely see heroic essences within this stream, it does occasionally happen, especially if something is done while within this realm.

In other instances, it's possible to draw upon mythology for ideas. Perhaps the Land of the Dead is like the Olympian Elysian Fields, where the souls live in a garden full of lush green plants and never-ending food and drink. Or, in direct contrast, perhaps they are trapped within a realm like Hades, where their essence is tested and tried every day for past deeds. Better yet, perhaps, for superheroes, there exists a land akin to the Norse Valhalla, where they recount their days with other heroes and tell tales until the time of judgment or until they are needed. In fact, a staple of comic books often has dead heroes coming to their protégé/replacement and offering advice within dreams. This way, they can help the hero move on and possibly complete a task that's holding the deceased hero in the Realm of the Dead.

On the other hand, not all Realms of the Dead have to be pleasant. Taking a page from some current comics and horror films, a possible dead realm may be one filled with the hungry dead awaiting a chance to escape and feed. Though its not often that you may find a deceased hero here, it is possible to find a former villain or even a corrupted loved one. In a more disturbing trend, it's also possible that any heroes that are here are ones from an alternate world and are just looking for the right opportunity to break out and replace the hero in the mainstream dimension.

Another more disturbing realm would be one where souls are more like shades than spirits. Like the hungry dead, these specters enjoy destruction and suffering, but they do so out of enjoyment rather than hunger. The world is nothing but a shadow of reality, mocking the life they once knew. Upon entering, anyone alien to the world would instantly become a target to any shades around them, feeling the chilling touch of the greedy specters until the light of their living nature is extinguished.

DENIZEN OF THE DEAD

The Realm of the Dead houses many souls, including past loved ones, enemies, and allies. But, occasionally, these spirits are summoned forth into the mainstream dimension and gain physical form. Seldom are these beings brought out of their realm for anything that could be considered for the sake of good, often being enthralled by an evil sorcerer or mystic creature who wishes to use them as a tool of vengeance against their heroic adversaries.

DENIZEN OF THE DEAD TEMPLATE 40 POINTS

Powers: Immunity 30 (Fortitude), **Protection 5** (Impervious)

THE HUNGRY DEAD

There are few undead that are feared as much as the hungry dead. Akin to a zombie in concept, these ghoulish creatures are constantly looking to feed on the flesh of the living. But that's where the similarities between a classic zombie and the hungry dead stop. When something becomes a hungry dead, they are corrupted from the inside out, retaining their intelligence and abilities, but gaining inhuman strength, speed, and a taste for flesh. In most cases, whatever originally caused these creatures to come into existence also hardened their bone structure, allowing them to bite through some of the hardest substances imaginable to get to their prey.

HUNGRY DEAD TEMPLATE**51 POINTS****Feats:** Attack Focus (melee) 2**Powers:** **Enhanced Strength 6**, **Immunity 30** (Fortitude), **Speed 2**, **Strike 5** (Mighty; Penetrating)**SHADES**

Unlike most common spirits, these undead monsters delight in nothing more than to stalk the living and devour their willpower, leaving nothing except a simpering shadow of their former self behind. Appearing as nothing more than living shadows, these creatures could very easily take over the mainstream dimension if let out of their native environment.

DREAM DIMENSIONS

Some have theorized that when we sleep, we enter a dimension of the mind separate from the one we live in. Within this realm, anything is possible, but only while the body is asleep. In some ways, it retains a kinship with the astral plane, in that a being's dream form acts much like an astral form, leaving the physical body behind while entering this world within slumber. But, unlike most other realms, this one is much more mutable, allowing some people to change and warp the landscape to fit their visions. In some instances, this causes others in the dreamscape to take on various roles for the central dreamer that's in control, perhaps enacting a mundane role by seeing incredible things. In other possibilities, dreamers use only a fraction of the dimension as it creates an environment for them to shape and use as they need. In both cases, upon that dreamer's awakening, the realm either reverts to its original state or falls to another dreamer to control.

Though the realm's environment changes from dream to dream, it's very possible for it to have a native landscape. Though many visiting the realm may not see it, any natural inhabitants would and possibly be able to access it even when a dream is happening. In comic books, the Realm of Dreams has a few different appearances, of which two are most popular. In the first example, the dimension doesn't look all that different from the astral plane. In fact, in this particular instance, it'd be feasible to link the dimensions together. Like the astral, the dream dimension appears like the night sky, with multicolor lights shining like stars, as well as floating islands within the "space." But, along with the stars, there are abstract objects just kind of floating there. Giant, disembodied eyes float from place to place, examining other beings as they float by, and grids made from unknown energies sizzle and spark in random patterns. Not to mention the lost dreams that wander throughout the dimension, occasionally looking for a way out or attempting to find a place to stay forever. Though a bit surreal, this type of dreaming dimension would easily allow trips to various worlds, just by visiting each island and experiencing anyone's dreams on it.

The second such realm is closer to the ethereal plane, which could be easily linked to said plane. In it, the landscape is naturally bleak and the sky appears to be constantly overcast. There are few buildings within the plane, but plenty of hills, mountains, and lakes to make the land look at least a bit interesting. Color in general is muted in this realm; even the colors that visitors bring in with them seem more drab than usual. In this variant plane, it's more likely that the land reshapes to a dreamer's whim, though it would be possible to make specific areas attuned to certain people. Perhaps a house in the middle of nowhere acts as a storehouse for someone's dreams, and it's there that they appear every time they sleep.

Another staple of four-color comics is a dream master, someone who presides over all dreams and lives in the dream dimension. While this

SHADE**POWER LEVEL 9****Str** – **Dex 18** **Con** – **Int 10** **Wis 16** **Cha 10****Skills:** Intimidate 8 (+8), Stealth 8 (+12)**Feats:** All-Out Attack, Favored Environment (Shade Plane) 2, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Grapple, Startle, Teamwork 2**Powers:** **Drain Wisdom 10** (Affects Corporeal), **Flight 1**, **Immunity 30** (Fortitude), **Insubstantial 4** (Continuous; Permanent; Innate), **Super-Senses 2** (detect life, ranged)**Combat:** Attack +7, Grapple –, Damage –, Defense +7, Knockback -0, Initiative +4**Saving Throws:** Toughness +0, Fortitude –, Reflex +4, Will +3**Attributes** –6 + **Skills 4 (16 ranks)** + **Feats 12** + **Powers 75** + **Combat 28** + **Saves 0** = **Total 113**

character isn't necessary, they may serve a purpose as a field guide or even as host in some dreams. Another vital role they may play is as a type of overseer of the realm, acting as judge and jury when appropriate and keeping the creatures that wander the dreamscape under wraps when need be. Though this person often appears as a neutral party, it is possible that they could be evil, good, or even have aspects of each separated into several dream masters (perhaps presiding over specific dreams).

Interaction in the Realm of Dreams is a tricky thing. In most cases, things that happen in the dream may affect the real world, causing people who have harsh experiences (such as being injured) to carry them into the physical world. This is especially deadly when dealing with creatures invading from Nightmare Realms, as they attempt to feed off a being's dread. Though many may not believe it to be true, if someone dies in the dream realm, they often die in the real world as well, their bodies becoming nothing but lifeless vegetables as their spirits are trapped between realms.

DREAMWALKERS

Not all mystics use magic in a traditional, spell-based way. Some are gifted with powers not unlike most superheroes are, allowing them to do fantastic things without having to cast a spell. Such is the case with dreamwalkers. Bestowed with the ability to naturally enter the dreamscape, these individuals can use the energies of dreams to create powerful effects and take control of others' dreams. Some attempt to use their gifts to help mankind, like many heroic mages, while others use their power to control and harm others, hiring themselves out as dream assassins or stalking their prey as a type of nightmare-based serial killer.

DREAMWALKER TEMPLATE**37 POINTS****Skills:** Bluff 2, Diplomacy 4, Knowledge (arcane lore) 6**Feats:** Favored Environment (dreamscape) 2**Powers** (see *Ultimate Power*, page 150): **Dream Control 8**, **Dream Travel 8****NIGHTMARE REALMS**

It's also possible that these beings are nothing more than a nightmare that someone dreamed up. In this case, it could be the dimension itself that is against the hero, creating and drawing opponents from their slumbering mind. Nightmare Realms such as these are more reactive to people coming into them, no matter the state. As soon as a hero enters



the area, the realm itself concocts its own guardians and assaults the hero with visions straight out of a bad dream. Though in many comics these creatures are nothing more than illusion, as long as the hero believes them to be real, they are just that, assailing their victim with what is perceived to be actual attacks. It's also within this realm that the hero may revisit a failure or fear that haunts them, as the realm uses its abilities to weaken the hero's willpower. Along this thought, a particularly warped trick of the dimension is to give the hero what he's always wanted and make his life perfect, but allow him the knowledge that it's also not right. Slowly, the dimension takes the life away from him, sapping his will in the process and making way to keep the hero in its realm forever.

So, why would a dimension do this? What's its motivation? In many cases, it does these things because that's its purpose, to create fear and disillusionment. Other options could include that the dimension is alive and feeding from the fear, feeding from the nightmares themselves, or even because it is lonely and wishes to populate itself. Another staple of comics has someone behind these nightmares, a fiend that, like a demon of Hell, lords over the unfortunates trapped within their dominion. In this case, the nightmare realm becomes more like the first examples, with the nightmare lords' servitors doing his will.

Not all Nightmare Realms are large planes. Some exist in the minds of people, while others can almost be physical realms.

A KILLER'S MIND

Nothing could be more horrifying than to be trapped in the mind of a killer. As movies and novels have portrayed, some serial killers are more monster than man, and becoming a victim within their mind can be

more horrifying than in real life. To depict this, use their native area or, in the case of a truly monstrous killer, the place where they last lived, as a starting point. Allow the hero time to wander the plane, but also give them hints that something seems to be watching/stalking them as well. Scenes like this should be intense and possibly over the top, allowing for good suspense potential.

MONSTER IN THE CLOSET

Every child has a moment in their life where they think the Boogiemán is coming for them. Though they may call it other things, there's always a fear that something is out there waiting for them in the dark. Well, what if there was? What if the closet or underbelly of a child's bed were a nexus to a creature's magical realm? Imagine the heroes' surprise when the team is called by an 8-year-old boy who asks them to stop the Boogiemán. While they may scoff at first, they may soon realize that this boy's plight may have something to do with a rash disappearance of children in the area.

THE REALM OF SPIDERS

One of the more common fears of people is arachnophobia, the fear of spiders. Falling into this realm may be due to an evil mystic's trick, or perhaps the dimension itself has targeted people with this fear. Perhaps the dimension is filled with spiders of various sizes and shapes. Or, better yet, perhaps there are larger spiders that are like lords unto the smaller, more common species. But, no matter the type of spider, the land could easily be made up of expanding forests, cavernous tunnels, or large peaks filled with a plethora of webbing and webbed prey. Not only would this be truly terrifying to someone

inflicted with arachnophobia, but it'd be disturbing just for the normal hero (or person).

THE BOGEYMAN

Delighting in the sheer terror of youth, the creature known as the Boogiemán feeds off of the fear he inspires. In his natural form, he appears as an inky-black creature displaying a crooked smile of jagged teeth. His actual origins are a mystery, though many believe him to be fey in nature, and he may have been banished from the Realm of the Fey.

POWER DIMENSIONS

In comic books, magic-using heroes and villains are frequently heard shouting out odd-sounding names when casting their spells or performing their rituals. Though these names are catchy and sound like a clever rhyme or awe-inspiring alliteration, in actuality, the mage is calling on power from an extra-dimensional source to aid them as they weave their magic. In these cases, for their spells to work, a mage must tap into the vast resources of arcane energy one can only find within the Realms of Eldritch Power or among those who reside there.

In some cases, the dimension itself serves as a well of power, accessible to those with the means to tap into it. In the rare instance such a place does support life, the indigenous population often uses the plane's abundant energy and may oppose efforts to draw upon it. A failure to successfully tap energy from the dimension might accidentally summon forth one of its inhabitants, or they may deliberately seek out the most egregious users of their home's power. Such things make suitable complications or side-effects for spellcasters.

In one of the more common staples of comics, the mystic doesn't draw power from the dimension itself, but from a powerful extra-dimensional entity. Many times, when casting a spell, a mage may entreat the favor of one of these beings, acting as a channel for the entity's power. But, like most pacts, casting spells like this may include a price the mystic must pay. Fortunate magicians may be aligned with entities with similar goals, meaning the payment is little more than the respect the higher being is due. However, there are others that may ask for a limited period of servitude, for special offerings, or undefined favors. With some beings of the Eldritch Realms, it's not even so much what the hero has to offer them, but rather that something important needs to be taken from them. Tournaments and duels between mages competing for the same source of power are not unheard of, nor is the concept of having the winner of such a match learning that he must best an entity of great power on his own before it will seal their pact.

There are other times heroes actually come from another dimension or are born of its energies and may draw upon them naturally. Though this is common in some sorcerers' origins, it also may be possible in some less-magical heroic origins as well. Like other mages, sorcerers born in this way summon up power, but, instead of entreating some entity, they actually draw upon the innate power within them as they act as a natural conduit for the realm of their birth.

For more on entreaties and spells, see **Chapter 2**.

THE REALM OF ZOI THE ALL KNOWING

At the dawn of the Grand History, it is said Zoi was the "First One," referring to his role as the first being in existence (although others have claimed that mantle as well). As the worlds began to coalesce, Zoi took his position as the All Knowing, recording the secret history and powers of the multiverse into the Tome of One. As the multiverse grew, Zoi took a small piece of it and claimed it as his home, his grand library situated on a hill overlooking a sea of multi-colored stars.

BOOGIEMAN						POWER LEVEL 10
Str 15	Dex 18	Con 20	Int 15	Wis 16	Cha 16	
Skills: Diplomacy 8 (+11), Intimidate 10 (+13), Sense Motive 8 (+11), Stealth 6 (+10)						
Feats: Defensive Roll 4, Diehard, Fearsome Presence 5, Sneak Attack 2, Startle						
Powers: Drain Wisdom 5 , Shapeshift 8 (Limited to things the victim fears), Super-Movement 1 (dimensional, Dream Dimension)						
Combat: Attack +7, Grapple +9, Damage +2, Defense +8, Knockback -2, Initiative +4						
Saving Throws: Toughness +5, Fortitude +5, Reflex +4, Will +8						
Drawbacks: Vulnerability (Light)						
Attributes 40 + Skills 8 (32 ranks) + Feats 13 + Powers 63 + Combat 30 + Saves 5—Drawbacks 4 = Total 155						

As time moved on, Zoi continued his task of chronicling the worlds, along with the power that they possess. Because of this, many sorcerers of varying allegiance have sought pacts with him, having to pass a test of responsibility for the power they wish. Those who fail are turned away with no hope of ever gaining this knowledge, whereas those who pass are granted access to both the power and the wealth of knowledge he has collected in his long existence. Many times, this test requires the participants to understand the weighty responsibility his power carries with it.

In game terms, Zoi is more of a plot device than an actual character. He can't really be destroyed, nor can he be controlled or imprisoned. In some cases, he may allow it to appear so, but it's often to test someone or acquire knowledge. A master of illusion, Zoi has the ability to appear as anything, although, in the past, he's shown some preference for the form of a wizened, Asian man or a talking cricket.

VINOTH

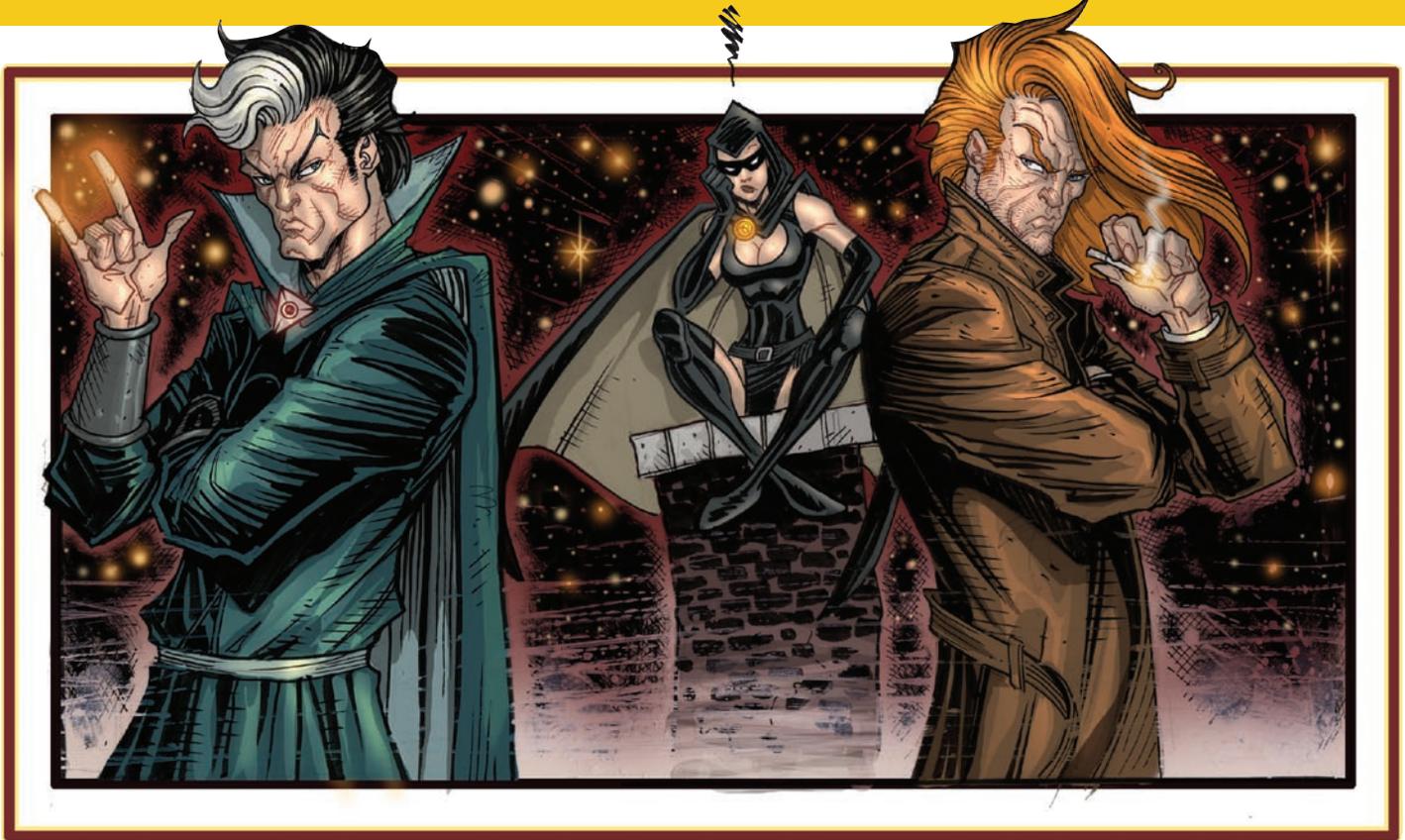
Accessible through the astral plane and the Dimension of Doors, Vinoth is a realm that was once a shining beacon of knowledge throughout the omniverse. For millennia, sorcerers and scholars would gather at Vinoth to study and exchange lore.

As they accumulated information, they also gained the envy of an evil entity known as Ma'al the Malevolent. Infiltrating their midst with utmost care and planning, Ma'al seduced one of the lead scholars and took control of Vinoth. Under his rule, the once-proud ivory white towers and fantastic architecture have been reduced to ruins and rubble. Only the Celestial Library has been spared from this devastation. Now slaves to Ma'al, the beings of Vinoth still gather knowledge, but it is for their master rather than their library, as he quests for ultimate power.

Once a paradise, Vinoth is wracked by black clouds and crimson lightning, the sound of thunder a constant rumble in the distance. The marble walkways are cracked and rocky, and the once arching bridges are now twisted sculptures of beings in agony. In the center of the city lies the one unscathed building, a beautiful structure made of white stone with gold accents. Outside of this building is where Ma'al rules on a throne made of the surrounding rubble and the bones of those that the surviving Vinothi people call "the fortunate ones."

Ma'al the Malevolent is a dimensional conqueror (see **Chapter 3**) with a particular thirst for knowledge. His agents scour the planes for valuable arcane lore to bring back to their master, and Ma'al believes he will eventually accumulate enough, or find the right ritual, incantation, or spell to grant him the ultimate power he seeks.

CHAPTER 2: MYSTIC HEROES



The magician is a master of the unseen, a wielder of arcane forces unknown to the rest of humanity. Other sorts of heroes are easier to accept, generally speaking: mutants, tinkers, athletes trained to the peak of human capability, and those who gained their powers through freak accidents all make sense to the average man on the street. They may seem fantastic, certainly, but ultimately they “fit” into the world as our average citizen assumes it works.

Not so the magician. Most occultists are secretive for a very good reason. In many ways, the occult world is its own thing, apart from the “real” world. It is a dangerous world, and those who find themselves in the midst of ancient curses, sanity-shattering hell-beasts, and the ghosts of Atlantean necromancers are in near-constant peril. Generally speaking, the magician’s caginess is to protect others. Most heroes can get away with a secret identity, but a pair of glasses and the combing back of a hero’s forelock doesn’t fool the arcane powers of the cosmos.

As such, magicians often lead solitary lives, surrounded by others of their ilk. This isn’t to say the supporting cast for a mystic hero is altogether absent, mind. It simply means they usually know her for who and what she is, and they may be involved in the occult themselves. Apprentices, antiquarians, historians, adherents to fringe religions, faithful servants, and the rare love interest or spouse—these make up the cast around the mystic hero.

Of course, not all magicians lurk in darkened sanctums, staring intently at crystalline artifacts. Many are part of superheroic groups, lending their skill and prowess to the common good. Even in such

instances, however, mystics tend to maintain some distance. On some level, belonging to a superhero team is as much camouflage as hiding away in the shadows—among colorful-clad people wielding a wide range of amazing powers, what’s one more? Of course, in such instances, the general public often assumes the magician hero’s occult persona is as much a gimmick as any other hero’s, which is as the mystic wants it.

This chapter focuses on mystic heroes: their power levels, what sort of skills and feats are common among magicians, and the kinds of unique powers they wield. It provides players with all the information they need to create their own mystic heroes and Gamemasters with guidelines for mystic games and non-player characters.

POWER LEVEL

Perhaps more than most comic book archetypes, the power level of mystics varies tremendously, from subtle occult powers requiring great time and effort to godlike beings able to change reality to suit their whims. Overall, mystic power levels break down into five broad categories, described here.

STREET MAGIC — POWER LEVEL 6

The lowest power level mystics tend to be around power level 6, similar to their ancestors, the pulp heroes. Most of their 90 starting power points go towards basic traits: abilities, a fair number of knowledge and interaction skills, and either the Ritualist feat and a mystic Device or

two or a minor innate power or two. Some street magic heroes may even have a lower ranked Magic power and an array of spells.

These heroes tend to be the subtlest of mystics, because they need to be. They can't afford to go around showing off their powers or their true nature, as they have too many potential enemies. Street mystics are more likely to go in for trenchcoats and rumpled suits or other mundane clothing, rather than high-collared cloaks and tunics sewn with arcane symbols. If nothing else, long coats have lots of pockets for the various paraphernalia these mystics carry and use on a regular basis.

Power level 6 mystics tend to rely far more on their Knowledge skills and interaction; they're more likely skilled at Bluff or Diplomacy rather than just Intimidate (although most of them are also plenty intimidating when they need to be). Rather than going in "spells blazing," they research the situation, learning about the threats facing them and what they can do to counter them. Theirs is a complex game of move and counter-move with hostile occult forces, more like a detective novel than a superheroic battle.

ADEPTS OF THE ARCANES — POWER LEVEL 8

Mystics at this power level have some real power at their fingertips. They're not true masters in comparison to most comic book magicians, but they're certainly more powerful than your run-of-the-mill demon or undead creature, and they're probably capable of dealing with them without too much trouble. Arcane adepts are more likely to have the Magic power and an array of spells, although they still find uses for rituals and magical Devices. Their Magic may have various drawbacks or flaws, owing to their less-than-complete mastery.

Power level 8 mystics are more likely to face occult enemies on their own turf, including ventures into other dimensions and mystic realms (see **Chapter 1** for more information). They may also have the power points to invest in more expensive traits like Astral Form. It's also at this power level where mystics are more likely to find their way onto teams working with other superhumans.

MYSTIC MASTERS — POWER LEVEL 10

The default power level for *Mutants & Masterminds* is sufficient for true masters of the mystic arts, as demonstrated by the Mystic archetype (*M&M*, page 20), with all the essential powers at ranks sufficient to work alongside other costumed heroes of the same power level. Some magicians do this, while others prefer to remain loners, dealing with problems single-handed, and certainly, they are more able to do so than most.

Mystics at this power level virtually always have the Magic power, unless their abilities are specifically focused elsewhere. Moreover, their Magic should be at as high a rank as possible for their power level limits to reflect their mastery of the arcane arts. Mystic masters tend to use the Ritualist feat much like PL 10 gadgeteers use Inventor: for occasional one-time effects as needed. More common for PL 10 magicians is spending hero points for one-off spells as power stunts.

GUARDIANS OF THE GATES — POWER LEVEL 12+

At this power level and beyond, magicians attain the kind of power needed to safeguard a whole world or even dimension. True "masters," recognized as the greatest magicians of their worlds, are at this power level, ranging on up to as high as the GM wishes to go. Sometimes such legendary adepts don't have quite as much sheer power as their PL would indicate, having a Magic power rank lower than their PL limit, but with tremendous breadth and flexibility from having a wide range of mastered spells (Alternate Power feats).

Mystics at this power level are well suited to operating alone, and often do, but even they may band together to deal with a sufficiently potent threat. For example, the mightiest mages of the various inhabited worlds of a dimension might form an alliance to safeguard their home-realm against invaders from beyond—whether that "beyond" is deep space, Hell, or some parallel dimension. Things can get interesting if personalities clash, and the mystics in the alliance don't always get along outside of it!

OMNIPOTENT ENTITIES — POWER LEVEL X

At the very top of the mystic hierarchy are beings so powerful they could be called omnipotent, capable of altering reality on a massive scale. Given the restraint and responsibility that are the watchwords of the heroic magician, these entities are virtually always either aloof and distant patrons of heroic mystics or else the most dire occult threats to reality as we know it. They're not suitable for use as heroes, but rather, they are forces under the control of the Gamemaster. See **Plot Device Characters** in *M&M* (page 211) and **Chapter 3** for more on these powerful beings and their uses in a mystic series.

ABILITIES

Generally speaking, magicians have a reputation for being highly intelligent, perceptive individuals, initiated as they are into otherworldly wisdom and lore. Accordingly, many mystics have high Intelligence and Wisdom scores, often as high as 20 or more. Wisdom, in particular, is a potent ability, influencing as it does the ability to intuit, notice things, and resist outside influences (via Will save bonus).

Likewise, many mystics are highly charismatic, though they are not always suave socialites (this is generally a reflection of skills rather than raw Charisma). They tend to have considerable presence and force of personality, reflected by a high Charisma score. Indeed, magical characters sometimes deal with otherworldly entities and must demonstrate great force of personality to prevent their destruction at the hand of such beings. In a mystic series using the Stability saving throw option from the *Mastermind's Manual* (page 23), Charisma is even more important to help reflect the magician's composure and sanity.

Mystics are rarely known for raw physical strength or tremendous agility. Some, however, are capable of withstanding tremendous physical rigors in the pursuit of their magical goals, such as surviving in environments hostile to the human body or exhaustive rituals taking hours to perform, as well as the fortitude to resist the poisons, contagions, and various horrific miasmas surrounding the things they face. Thus, of all the physical Abilities, most magicians find Constitution most useful. Still, much of their renowned endurance comes from a substantial Concentration skill bonus, sometimes coupled with certain feats (see **Feats**).

This isn't to say magicians are somehow required to be physically deficient. Certain individuals find their way to the mastery of the mystic arts through physical disciplines like the martial arts, for example. It's more accurate to say mystics are rarely physically remarkable; they tend towards fit, but are otherwise average, with physical abilities well within the "normal" human range.

SKILLS

Magicians demonstrate a wide variety of talents, particularly those who stumbled into the occult world later in life. Invariably, magicians are dedicated and learned people, even before they applied their drive to the magical arts, and their skills reflect this. The following skills are likely to play particularly strong roles in magical *M&M* games.



CONCENTRATION

Magic requires a disciplined, strong mind. Any number of interruptions and disturbances may disrupt the mental focus of a magician, causing her control over a spell to go terribly awry. Magicians also rely on various spells like mystic shields, levitation, or protective spells requiring a measure of concentration to maintain. Most mystics are therefore likely to have at least some training in this skill.

CRAFT

The creation of things has long been associated with magical practice—smiths among the Irish, weavers in the Mediterranean, sand paintings, ju-ju bottles, and a wide variety of other cultural practices. As a result, many magicians have some skill in one Craft or another.

In particular, mystics may use Craft skills in conjunction with the Artificer feat to produce magical inventions. See *M&M*, page 132, and the **Magical Items** section of this chapter for details.

Artistic and structural Craft specialties are the most common for mystics, although the chemical specialty can also reflect a knowledge of alchemy, and some magicians may use the mechanical specialty to produce arcane clockworks and the like. The electronic specialty of Craft really only shows up among technomancers or magicians with an interest in electronics before their study of magic.

DIPLOMACY

Though Diplomacy is an excellent means of maintaining good relations with one's neighbors and the local authorities, keeping on the good

side of mortals is not the primary reason many occultists learn this skill. Rather, it is vital to remain polite and well-mannered when dealing with extradimensional entities, spirits, and gods—though sorcerous power may assist in fighting these beings, it is far better to never have a fight break out in the first place.

INTIMIDATE

Like Diplomacy, Intimidate can serve a magician well. While some choose affable relations with those around them, others use the fear and unease their magical practices invoke in others to their advantage. Moreover, some entities are uninterested in friendly interactions, respecting only power. This skill is of tremendous use in convincing certain entities that the magician has the power to destroy them and is willing to use it (whether or not it happens to be true). More than a few mystics have diffused situations based solely on what others thought they *might* do rather than anything they actually did.

KNOWLEDGE

Rare is the magician who simply learns the magical arts directly. Many have other, overlapping interests and talents. This is best reflected through the use of the various Knowledge skills. A few of these skills, however, are worth noting specifically with regard to mystics.

ARCANE LORE

No single skill is more suited to a mystic than this one. This does not mean, however, that all magicians must have this skill. Some get by solely on natural talent or innate ability and a modicum of actual knowledge. As noted in the *Mutants & Masterminds* rules, this skill covers a broad understanding of magic and the occult in general, an understanding not all magicians possess. Generally speaking, magicians are assumed to know enough about magic to use their powers and to be a member of their own magical tradition. Some magical powers, however, require the magician possess a greater understanding of the arcane; see the Check Required flaw under **Power Flaws**.

ARCANE RESEARCH

As noted on page 50 of *M&M*, taking 20 on a Knowledge check requires access to a library or similar reference materials. In some settings, a library of arcane and occult books may be rare enough to qualify as a Benefit (arcane library) feat, allowing the owner (or anyone using the library) to take 20 on Knowledge (arcane lore) checks. The researcher's Knowledge bonus represents the ability to use the library's resources—including obscure references, encoded information, and so forth—in an efficient way.

HISTORY

Many magicians are adept historians, for one simple reason: many of the most powerful expressions of occultism are relics of ancient cultures. A grounding in history provides a degree of context and understanding for elements of that culture's magical practices. Moreover, given the sheer number of threats a magician may face from ancient curses, entombed sorcerers, and similar things, it is practically an exercise in self-defense to crack open a history book now and again.

THEOLOGY AND PHILOSOPHY

Many magical traditions are steeped in religious symbolism and practice. As such, it is common for occultists of all stripes to have some

knowledge of a wide variety of various theologies and religious practices, whether they happen to believe in or practice them or not.

LANGUAGE

Nearly any student of the occult is going to be versed in multiple languages. Most systems of arcane knowledge are steeped in the culture that created them—there are words encompassing things in Shinto that do not have good translations outside of Japanese, and concepts in ancient Khemetic occultism that don't exist in languages other than ancient Egyptian. Moreover, most magicians understand the power of the spoken word, and they seek to understand the nuances of human language for a better understanding of humanity itself.

Similarly, mystics often learn to read ancient or dead languages, or even alien tongues never spoken in Earth's dimension. Gamemasters using the literacy option mentioned on page 50 of *M&M* may wish to keep this in mind when assisting players in creating mystic heroes.

NOTICE

A wise mystic is aware of the moment and alert from subtle clues, omens, and signs of danger. Already typically high in Wisdom, magicians often pick up ranks in this skill to reinforce their ability to notice important things before it's too late for them to act. It tends to be difficult to catch a master of mysticism entirely off-guard, and what sometimes appears to be a supernatural prescience is actually just a finely-honed ability to notice things others tend to miss.

SENSE MOTIVE

The mystic world is often one of illusion and deception: demons, fey, trickster spirits, and evil sorcerers try to fool their enemies and lull them into traps. Thus, many mystics acquire training in Sense Motive, giving them a strong intuitive feeling for the motives and intentions of others, as well as resistance to their subtle wiles. In particular, mystics are skilled at noticing outside influences (with the usual Sense Motive check against DC 10 + the influencing power's rank).

ARCANE INNUENDO

At the GM's option, mystics can substitute their Knowledge (arcane lore) skill for Bluff when attempting to covertly communicate with anyone else who is trained in arcane lore (see **Notice Innuendo** under **Sense Motive**, *M&M*, page 54). Sense Motive is used to pick up on the hidden message, as usual, but it is "transmitted" by the kind of cryptic arcane references mystics so often use.

SLEIGHT OF HAND

While the true arcane arts are not stage illusion, many comic book magicians either disguise their magical powers behind a veil of stage performance or pick up some skill at prestidigitation to use the arts of misdirection against their foes. Mystics who also intend to be successful stage magicians usually acquire ranks of Perform (acting or oratory), as well.

CONCEALED SPELLCASTING

A magician can use Sleight of Hand to conceal an attempt to cast a spell behind a stage-magic act or otherwise innocuous gestures. Treat this as a Bluff skill check, using Sleight of Hand in place of Bluff versus the target's Sense Motive check result. Success means the target doesn't notice what the magician is doing or doesn't think anything of it until

the spell occurs. If the spell effect itself is subtle, no one may notice anything at all!

FEATS

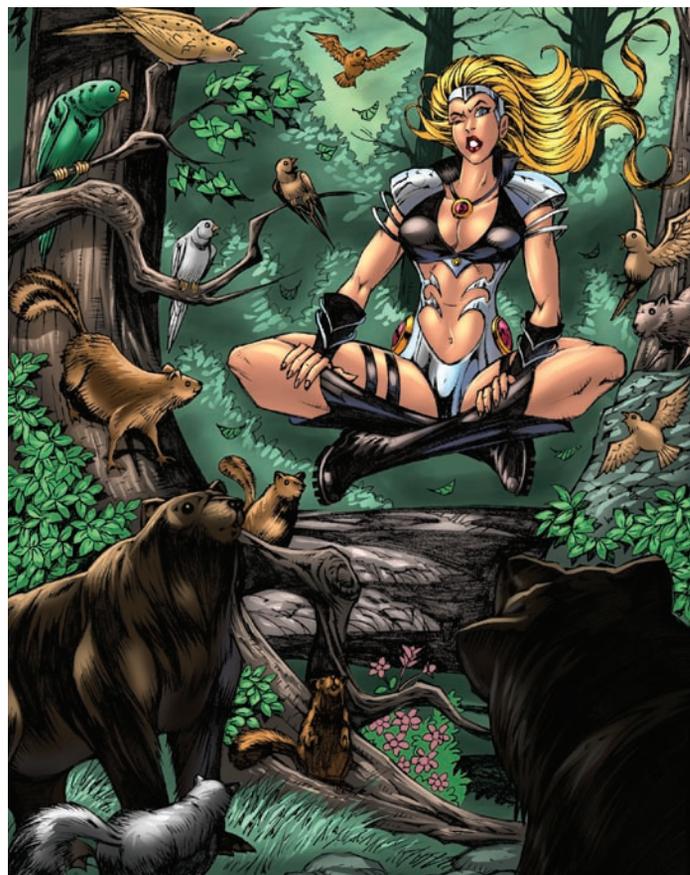
Like skills, a mystic's feats may help to define the sort of mundane life the character led before discovering magic. A number of feats also reflect mystic talent, training, or resources.

In addition to the specific feats described here, many mystics, particularly those steeped in Eastern disciplines, often pick up one or more fighting styles (*M&M*, page 65) as part of their martial arts training. Such hand-to-hand skills can provide a useful surprise against opponents who think of spellcasters as helpless in unarmed combat, especially for magicians deprived of their powers for some reason.

ANIMAL EMPATHY

Many magicians—particularly those versed in spiritual or natural magics—seem to have some ability to communicate with animals. Thus, this feat is a natural for such characters.

Additionally, as the feat description suggests, a character might apply the effects of this feat to subjects other than animals, using an appropriate skill in place of Diplomacy. So, a technomancer may be able to communicate with machines using her Computer skill (Machine Empathy), a druid may speak with plants with Survival (Plant Empathy), a shamanic character might communicate with local spirits using Perform (Spirit Empathy), and a necromancer might deal with undead using Knowledge (Undead Empathy), for examples. The ability to substitute another skill for Diplomacy may also be a prerequisite for certain spells or magical powers with the Skill Check Required flaw as part of a particular magical style.



ARTIFICER

Characters with this feat can use Knowledge (arcane lore) and Craft to create magical inventions, using the guidelines on page 132 of the *M&M* rules. Artificers can range from humble “hedge magicians” or “root doctors” making potions and charms to powerful wizards able to whip up single-use magic items on-demand, depending on the type of series. You can find more information on artificing in the **Magical Items** section later in this chapter.

ATTACK SPECIALIZATION

Gamemasters should decide whether or not the Magic power constitutes a suitably narrow range of attacks to qualify for this feat. As the description on page 59 of *M&M* calls for “a specific attack or weapon,” the answer is probably no, but individual Gamemasters may decide otherwise. At the very least, a magician *can* Specialize in a particular Magic attack, such as a Blast or Snare spell, with no difficulties.

CONNECTED

Some magicians have ancient pacts with tribes of faeries, the ghosts of their ancestors, or angelic heralds of their deity. This feat can be used to represent those connections, though the GM may, of course, veto any request that may disrupt the game. Supernatural entities often have their own reasons for doing things—or not doing them, as the case may be, and they often move in mysterious ways. As with Animal Empathy, the GM may permit substitution of a different appropriate skill for the normal Diplomacy skill check, like Knowledge (arcane lore) or Perform.

CONTACTS

As with the Connected feat above, many magicians maintain supernatural sources of information, using this feat to reflect such aid. As with any other use of Gather Information, however, you must have an appropriate means of reaching your contacts. For mystic beings, this might be a scrying crystal or arcane portal, rather than a cell phone or Internet connection, but the requirement is the same. Likewise, there is still a chance your inquiries will draw unwanted attention unless you accept a skill check penalty.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADAPTATION

Magicians often traveling to distant worlds and beyond the dimensional veils may use this feat to help operate under the conditions they find there. Note this feat is not the same as having Immunity to hostile environmental conditions. See the **Powers** section of this chapter for more on this.

EQUIPMENT

Mystics rarely use equipment as such; *M&M* defines equipment as commonly available items, and the tools of the mystic are *not* found at your corner store! As described more fully under **Magical Items**, the talismans and enchanted tools of a magician are Devices, not Equipment. It would be an unusual setting indeed where things like magic wands and flying carpets were sold commercially and available to everyone! In this type of game, magical items *can* be considered equipment, but it's up to the Gamemaster to decide.

LUCK FEAT OPTION

With Magic power stunts a common element of the genre, the Luck feat becomes particularly valuable in a mystic *M&M* series. Gamemasters may find players wanting as many ranks of it as they can justify, for the extra hero points.

In this case, you may wish to take this optional approach of splitting the Luck feat up into several related feats. Essentially, each new feat provides a “virtual hero point” usable for only *one* of the multiple uses for hero points. So, the Improvisation feat is usable only for power stunts, Instant Countering is usable only to instantly counter, and so forth. The suggested new feats are:

- **Determination:** Points usable for the improve roll aspect of hero points.
- **Determined Recovery:** Points usable for the recover aspect of hero points.
- **Escape Death:** Points usable for the escape death aspect of hero points.
- **Improvisation:** Points usable to cancel the fatigue of performing power stunts.
- **Inspiration:** Points usable for the inspiration aspect of hero points. For mystics, this might represent true “inspiration” from a higher power or occult entity (see the **Powers** section of this chapter for more on this).
- **Inspired Feat:** Points usable for the heroic feat aspect of hero points.
- **Instant Counter:** Points usable for the instant countering aspect of hero points.
- **Lucky Dodge:** Points usable for the dodge aspect of hero points.
- **Second Wind:** Points usable for the cancel fatigue aspect of hero points, *except* for fatigue caused by power stunts (covered by the Improvisation feat).

Gamemasters may wish to divide up the aspects differently into fewer feats. This approach substitutes nine feats for one, making actual hero points more valuable and forcing players to choose exactly what capability they want their characters to have for their feat ranks. However, it does add an additional number of feats and complexity to character design and should be considered carefully before use.

As with the Luck feat, you cannot have more ranks in one of these feats than the series' power level. On the other hand, you can have up to the power level in ranks in *each* feat, if the GM allows and you're willing to spend the power points. This allows for a wide range of customization, such as Determination 3, Inspiration 2, and Inspired Feat 1, for example.

The only exception to this guideline is headquarters: equipment points from this feat can and should be used to acquire mystic HQs, the same as the modern and super-science hideouts of other heroes. See the **Magical Items** section for details.

FAVORED OPPONENT

Magicians sworn to defend a place or people from a specific threat frequently have this feat. Holy magicians who battle demons, eco-saviors fighting polluters, and those magicians sworn to defend Earth against the incursions from a hostile world or dimension might all reflect those oaths and experience battling their unique foes with this feat.

FEARSOME PRESENCE

As mentioned under **Intimidate**, magicians often use their threatening presence to their advantage. This feat represents a step up from mere intimidation to a mystic who is so unnerving as to inspire terror.

FEARSOME REBUKE

A variant of this feat, at the GM's option, is the ability to "rebuke" a particular type of creature, such as undead, demons, enemies of your faith, or the like. Your Fearsome Rebuke works only against those creatures, but it can affect even subjects normally immune to interaction and mental effects (treat those without a Will save bonus as having a +0 modifier).

MINIONS

Servant spirits, animal companions, and shambling hordes of servitor zombies are all in-genre for magician characters. Unlike many heroes, magical heroes may be entrusted with some manner of minion as part of their duties. Alternately, some magical styles assume the mastery of a magician over lesser entities. This feat is useful for reflecting those entities.

Note that *summoned* minions are handled using the Summon power (see **Powers**). The Minions feat assumes minions that exist in the same world as the character and must come to their master under their own power. Even in the mystic genre, large numbers of minions tend to be the purview of antagonists rather than heroes.

QUICK CHANGE

A "simple spell of transformation" is a common ability for comic book magicians to change from their street clothes into their mystic regalia with a wave of the hand; so common, in fact, the GM may not even want to require this feat to do it in an all-mystic series! In such a game, you can just assume mundane tasks like changing clothes are something anyone with the Magic power can do in an instant as a free action. Otherwise, this feat is perfectly appropriate for mystic heroes.

RITUALIST

Though many powerful magicians have and use this feat, it can serve another purpose in a mystic series. One of the genre's archetypal characters is the dabbler in occultism, someone who knows just enough magic to get into terrible trouble. Another is the band of cultists, perhaps led by a "high priest," who are not magicians themselves, but possess enough occult knowledge to perform disastrous rituals, such as the raising of ancient horrors or similar things occult heroes might wish to prevent. These characters operate via the Ritualist feat and the guidelines for magical rituals on page 131 of *M&M*.

Ritualist is a useful "in-between" ability to grant mystics extra flexibility without making their powers too broad: rather than using extra effort or hero points for Magic power stunts, characters with this feat can whip up rituals for certain effects as they're needed. In fact, you can *require* rituals for some magical effects in the game in order to get the characters to go off looking for exotic ingredients or obscure arcane texts necessary to perform the ritual. Most of the advice regarding magical powers in the following section applies to the effects produced by rituals as well.

OPTIONAL SKILLS

The Gamemaster may wish to allow certain other Knowledge skills in conjunction with this feat. Each permutation requires a separate feat, but such allowances can drastically expand the potential mayhem and flavor Ritualist provides for the game. Thus, a group of monks who have preserved a set of magical rites over the centuries may use Knowledge (theology and philosophy) for their rituals, a feng shui consultant on ley lines may use Knowledge (earth sciences), an urban ritualist tapping into the power of street lore and urban legends may find power in Knowledge (popular culture) or Knowledge (streetwise), and the group of hackers that are somehow tapped into the Ghost in the Machine may use Knowledge (technology) to hack reality.

You can even expand the Ritualist feat beyond Knowledge to skills like Concentration (for Zen trances), Perform (drama, dance, and music have long associations with magic in many cultures), or Sleight of Hand (for stage magic performances empowering real occult effects).

SIDEKICK

Like Minions, this feat can reflect powerful servants and other aides, from spirits trapped in skulls to faithful djinn servants to powerful creatures of legend pledged to service. When a magician gains an apprentice or disciple of some sort, this is also an excellent feat for reflecting that individual's capabilities. As with Minions, Sidekick doesn't represent summoned allies under the magician's control; the Summon power does that.

TRANCE

Schooled in meditation and esoteric disciplines, this feat is a common one for mystics, who also use it to meditate (or astral project; see **Astral Form** under **Powers**) for long periods of time without needing food or water and consuming less air. Even magicians who don't seem to have this feat may acquire it using heroic effort and the expenditure of a hero point, dimly recalling half-forgotten lessons on meditation or coming up with the technique entirely on their own in a moment of need.

WELL-INFORMED

Infamous know-it-alls, mystics are well suited for this feat, since they tend to keep abreast of happenings in their own circles.

OPTIONAL SKILLS

Rather than conventional means, mystics may be Well-Informed through regular use of divination, scrying, or the reading of omens. In this case, you may wish to permit the use of different skills in place of Gather Information. Each skill is a separate feat, but otherwise works the same way, substituting the skill's bonus for Gather Information. Appropriate skills include Notice or Search, for scrying, and Knowledge (arcane lore or theology and philosophy), for interpreting omens.

POWERS

Mystics have perhaps the broadest range of powers of any M&M characters, simply because magic can potentially do almost anything. Still, magic-users in the comics do demonstrate some limits on their powers, and the GM should exercise some control over the use of magical powers in a *Mutants & Masterminds* game, just like any other powers.

This section examines the various superpowers wielded by mystics, with particular focus on the Magic power and its associated effects. It also explores other powers with magical or mystic descriptors and how they might come into play for a mystic character. It provides numerous sample powers for mystic heroes and villains, using the *Freedom City* setting from **Chapter 4** as an example for their style and descriptors.

THE MAGIC POWER

The most important M&M power to mystics is, naturally, the Magic power (*M&M*, page 91). Technically speaking, Magic isn't a "power," but what *Ultimate Power* calls a power *structure*, a way of organizing a variety of power effects. Specifically, Magic is a power array, a base power and a collection of Alternate Power feats, each representing a particular "magic spell" the character has mastered and can cast at will. This section looks at the Magic power in greater detail and ways to use and modify it in a mystic-focused M&M game.

COUNTER-SPELLS

Magic can counter (and be countered by) other magical effects, representing a sorcerer's ability to "undo" the spells of others.

COUNTERING VS. NULLIFY MAGIC

Given the breadth of magical effects, Gamemasters can consider Magic's ability to counter them similar to a 1-point Nullify effect, able to counter any one magical power at a time. For a more comprehensive ability to counter *all* magical effects at once, see the Dispel Magic spell in the **Sample Spells**, the equivalent of a 2-point Nullify effect, and the Nullify effect description in general (*M&M*, page 94).

COUNTERING OTHER DESCRIPTORS

At the GM's discretion, spells with additional descriptors may also be able to counter certain other effects, as appropriate. For example, a fiery Mystic Blast spell (with the fire descriptor in addition to the magic descriptor) could potentially counter (and be countered by) cold, ice, or water effects. The GM should handle these matters on a case-by-case basis.

COUNTERING AND DESCRIPTORS

In a magic-heavy game, the GM may wish to limit countering to Magic of the same style or an opposed style (see **Styles of Magic**). For



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example, axiomatic magic can counter its own style and chaotic magic, its opposite. Likewise, nature magic could counter itself and perhaps technomancy. Similarly, the 1-point level of Nullify would only counter a particular style of magic, while the 2-point level would be needed to counter *all* magical powers. This means magicians of different traditions cannot counter each other's powers quite as easily or effectively.

SAMPLE SPELLS

The following are some suitable spells (Alternate Powers) for a Magic array, although they are by no means the only effects suited to Magic. The exact spells suited to a particular Magic array depend on the magician's style and the power's other descriptors (e.g. nature magic, voodoo, technomancy, etc.).

CHARM

This spell changes the subject's attitude towards you, like the love effect of Emotion Control at your Magic power rank. Subjects become friendly toward you, their attitude improving to helpful if the Will save fails by 5 or more and fanatical if it fails by 10 or more.

CONCEALMENT

A spell of concealment hides things from the perceptions of others. A typical example is invisibility, a Visual Concealment effect (requiring 8 points, or 4 ranks of Magic, to cast). Affects Others and Area are common extras. Magicians also typically use spells like ESP Concealment to hide from the scrying spells of mystic foes. Each type or combination of Concealment effects is a separate spell.

DAZZLE

The typical version of this spell releases a blinding beam or pattern of light as a Visual Dazzle effect at your Magic rank. A similar spell Dazzles mental senses, "blinding" abilities like Magical Awareness or ESP for a time.

DIMENSIONAL GATE

You open a portal into another dimension, through which anyone can move (as a move action). This is a Super-Movement (dimensional) effect with the Portal modifier, for a cost of 12 power points (6 ranks of Magic required to cast).

DISPEL MAGIC

This spell counters all magical effects within (Magic rank x 5 feet) of you, a Touch Range, Burst Area, Nullify Magic effect. An alternate version targets a specific character, countering all magical effects on or by that character at normal range (a standard Ranged Nullify Magic effect).

ELEMENTAL CONTROL

Magicians—particularly druids, witches, and other "nature magicians"—can cast spells to control the elements. The powers of Air Control, Earth Control, Fire Control, Plant Control, Water Control, and Weather Control—and all of their Alternate Powers—are available as individual Magic spells.

FOG OF FORGETFULNESS

Swirling mists rise up around the target and blank out a particular memory if the target fails a Will saving throw (DC 10 + rank) against this Area Mental Transform effect. Good magicians typically use this spell

to protect innocents from truths too terrible or dangerous for them to know, while evil magicians use it to cover their tracks.

GLAMOUR

You can fool the senses to create figments and phantasms. This is an Illusion effect at half your Magic rank, affecting all senses, with the Selective Attack and Phantasm modifiers (see Illusion for details).

MESMERISM

You can magically ensnare the wills of others, forcing them to do your bidding like the Mind Control power at your Magic power rank.

MYSTIC BINDING

Bands of magical energy entrap the target of this spell, like a Snare effect at your Magic power rank.

MYSTIC BLAST

A glowing bolt of magical force strikes as a ranged attack, inflicting damage equal to your Magic power rank.

MYSTIC HAND

Tendrils or a "hand" (or claw) of mystic force reaches out to move and manipulate objects like a Move Object effect at your Magic power rank.

MYSTIC PASSAGE

This spell teleports you across a distance, like a Teleport effect at your Magic rank. A common additional spell for magicians is a variation of Mystic Passage with the Portal modifier, functioning at half the magician's Magic rank (but useful for transporting groups of people).

OBSCURE

Mystics can often obscure the senses. Common versions of this spell include Visual Obscure effects (swirling mists or conjured darkness) and Auditory Obscure effects like a "sphere of silence" that no sound can penetrate (useful for silencing enemy magicians). An Obscure effect unique to Magic is an Obscure ESP spell used to "ward" an area against scrying (see the following).

SCRYPING

You can see distant places as if actually present there, an ESP effect for all your senses, operating at half your Magic power rank (since full-sensory ESP costs twice as much as Magic). You can use mental effects via your scrying spell, but usually only if it and your other effect(s) are Dynamic, or the other effect(s) are acquired outside your Magic Array (see the Dynamic power feat for details).

SUMMONING

Many magicians have the ability to summon demons, elementals, spirits, or other creatures to serve them. This is normally a Summon effect with a rank equal to your Magic. Some magicians may have multiple Summoning spells with various power feats and modifiers. A spell to summon a Horde of lesser creatures (demonic minions, for example) is common for evil sorcerers.

TRANSFORMATION

Magicians often have the ability to transform one thing into another: flesh into stone, humans into pigs, lead into gold, and so forth. Generally,

each Spell of Transformation is an individual 3-point Transform effect, but some magicians may also have a more limited, but broad, spell to transform subjects (effectively a 5-point or even 6-point Transform effect as an Alternate Power).

STYLES OF MAGIC

While “magic” and “spell-casting” can be suitable descriptors for the Magic power in and of themselves, some players and Gamemasters may want additional ways to differentiate various styles of magic, particularly in a magic-heavy *M&M* game, where such distinctions can be important in the way those powers interact. The following are some possible styles of magic to include as descriptors in your setting:

AXIOMATIC

This is the magic of order and law, often focused on restoring things to their proper form and balance, as well as protecting against the forces of chaos. Axiomatic magics draw on the Great Balance of the universe, the forces of justice, law, and order in the universe. These are not merely philosophical conceits to the magician; they are tangible, powerful emanations of universal balance. Magicians wielding axiomatic magic usually concern themselves with the vanquishing of chaos and the returning of order to the world around them.

Note, however, this is not the same as “good.” Indeed, law is a powerful thing that can be used for wicked or beneficent purposes, and the axiomatic



magician must take care in wielding these powers—there is a temptation to apply the stern hand of order to everything, even those things that bring peace and happiness in their chaos.

Typical powers for axiomatic magic involve defense, restraint, and restoration, such as Deflect, Force Field, Healing, Mind Control, Mind Shield, Nullify, Paralyze, Sensory Shield, Shield, and Snare.

CHAOTIC

Chaos. The Eternal Motion. Madness and Creation. Magicians throughout the millennia have turned to the primordial chaos that existed before any Intelligence did breathe order into its pure creative potential. After all, if the Gods of Creation find it an acceptable canvas on which to create, how can a mage fail to follow their example? For eons, chaos has been a thing of fear and terror. For much of history, civilization and mankind itself hung on a precipice: one wrong step, and it would all plummet back into chaos. Those who dabbled in the powers of chaos invited destruction and utter extinction, and the forces of law and order did not take kindly to such threats.

In recent years, however, such is not quite the case. It would take a great deal to threaten the existence of mankind. Some chaos magicians point out that is because humanity and its precious civilization have grown so large they have bypassed even the borders of order and absorbed some of chaos into itself. In these days, there is chaos within mankind’s understanding of order. “Fuzzy” logic, social dynamism, rabid individualism, the evolution of sub-cultures, and the philosophy of acceptance and *laissez faire*—all these things are the manifestations of chaos in the world. Neither good nor evil. Simply chaos: freedom and ferocity. Creation and destruction. Psychotics and spontaneous saints.

“Typical powers” for chaotic magic is almost a contradiction in terms, as the style is so individualized, but chaotic magic tends toward change most of all, with powers like Anatomic Separation, Elongation, Morph, Shapeshift, Transform, and other alteration powers.

DIVINE

Divine magic is the domain of faith. To touch the powers of divine magic, the occultist knows there is a price: worship. The divine magician must find within herself a genuine reverence for the Power she calls upon to aid her—it must play a role other than a source of power in her life. Thus, divine magicians must seek to embody the virtues upheld by the Power they revere and to use the power they are granted by that agency.

The divine magician is more than a simple theurgist, using the name of God (or the gods) for her own ends. She is a modern-day saint, a hero of old, and perhaps even a martyr for what she holds as holy and true.

The divine magician is not allowed the pride of other magicians—this is the foremost sacrifice the magician is supposed to make upon the altar of faith. Nonetheless, divine magicians battle with that pride their entire lives; it is hard enough to wield magic with humility, to say nothing of feeling the touch of the Most Holy as one does so.

Divine magic itself is neither necessarily good nor evil (such distinctions are part of moral magics, below); there are powerful gods of good and benevolence, and there are wicked, terrible gods. Rather, divine (and infernal, for that matter) is a distinction referring to a class of powers and how they relate to the human soul. The powers of divinity—whether benevolent or wicked—bolster the human soul, in some way. The powers of the infernal—whether monstrous or simply misunderstood—degrade and erode the human soul.

Divine Magic powers include both Healing and harming through powers like Blast and Strike to smite enemies of the faith. Protective

powers like Force Field and Shield are common, as are those that bolster or enhance, such as Boost.

HERMETIC

Though this style of magic is named for Hermes Trismegistus, the Thrice Great Hermes, patron of magicians, it encompasses more than his writings. At its core, hermetic magic is a study of academically minded syncretism. Codification, the understanding of occult correspondences, and the sharpening of the Inner Divinity are the goal of these magics. The hermetic magician understands her own soul is a shard of divinity, and the ability to name and command the world around her is her inheritance.

Through rigorous study of the magical sciences, the hermetic magician seeks to unlock this birthright. Enlightenment comes through understanding, and understanding comes through careful study and practice. As the magician becomes more learned, she becomes wiser—this is the cornerstone of hermetic thought.

“As Above, So Below” goes the Great Truism, and the hermetic magician understands that, on some level, all things are connected. Everything in existence can be a symbol of something else, which in turn turns symbols for other things. Through the manipulation of symbols—sigils, names, stones, colors, metals—and the exertion of the divine will of the magus is magic made.

Hermetic Magic powers include alteration effects like Transform, as well as Summon (for calling up and commanding magical entities) and mental effects from Communication to outright Mind Control.

INFERNAL

The Nether Powers wait for mortals foolish enough to dabble in the Dark Arts. The infernal magician understands that tremendous occult power lurks in the dark, deep places of the multiverse. To some magicians, this is a challenge, to snatch hellfire from the throne of the Adversary without being burned, to challenge the wits and will of the great demons of legend and to come away unscathed. Every culture has its legends of mortal men outsmarting demons and wicked spirits, and these magicians look to these archetypes as their inspiration, commanding by force of will and deceiving through sly guile the powers of the hells, playing the game of appearing to be tempted, only to betray the assumptions of the demons they deal with.

To other magicians, the power of the infernal is worthy of reverence and submission, in return for a part of that power. They believe, for whatever reason, that the day in which the demon lords rise up and throw down the natural order, seizing all of the world for themselves, is near at hand, and they intend to ingratiate themselves to secure rewards rather than obliteration when that happens. Or, they are souls who are sure that damnation is their post-mortem lot and intend on making sure they receive some kind of reward for loyal service.

Regardless of the reasons or assumptions magicians make about their interaction with the Dark Powers, they dabble in the blackest of arts. Hellfire, demons, temptation, sin, and damnation make up these powers, and the arts—whether used in the service of Hell, or in spite of it—are always terrifying.

Infernal magic itself is neither necessarily good nor evil, innately (such distinctions are part of moral magic, below). Rather, infernal (and divine, for that matter) is a distinction referring to a class of powers and how they relate to the human soul. The powers of divinity—whether benevolent or wicked—bolster the human soul, in some way. The powers of the infernal—whether monstrous or simply misunderstood—degrade and erode the human soul.

Hellfire Control is perhaps the most archetypal infernal Magic power (itself an array of related powers). Blasts of hellfire, along with the abil-

ity to Create Objects from it, are common. So, too, is Summon Demons, whether the magician serves the greater infernal powers or seeks to bind and use them towards positive ends.

MORAL

Ancient are the concepts of good and evil—ancient and pervasive. Every culture has believed in some version of these concepts, even if they were utterly incapable of agreeing what defined them. Those cultures have also long disagreed from whence came these concepts. Many civilizations believed they sprang from divine, spiritual, infernal, or other sources, while others conceived of them as uniquely human. To this day, magicians cannot definitively answer these questions. In truth, most agree that the concepts of good and evil are solitary and unique—they do not spring from other sources, but are rather sources unto themselves.

Many occult philosophies teach that good and evil are not different things, but rather shades of the same essential thing. Though most magicians seek to learn only one of these two paths, occasionally a magician becomes interested in how they relate to one another, seeking to understand the balance between them. Such a magician might seek to master both kinds of moral magics in her quest.

Moral magic also shades into other styles, particularly divine and infernal powers associated with certain moral codes (or the breaking of those codes). Moral magic is nearly always dualistic, since it exists by definition as a division between right and wrong, good and evil.

Typical moral Magic powers tend to be focused on the mind and soul, either to divine the truth through Detect and similar Super-Senses, Mind Reading to know a person's true intent, or powers such as Mind Control or even Mental Blast to enforce a moral judgment. There's considerable crossover with divine and infernal powers as well.

NATURE

Whether a magician understands nature as a source of natural inspiration and beauty or conceives of the wild places of the world as embodying that which is red of tooth and claw, no learned magician scorns the power of nature. Men have practiced nature magic since the primordial dawn of humanity's magic-use, and rightly so—after all, what other source of tremendous, undeniable power presented itself so readily to the first shamans and women of the dark places?

To some magicians, natural magic is simply an untapped, eternal source of power, without any purpose other than that to which a skilled magical will puts it. Such magicians tend to learn natural magics as the source of powerful elemental powers. Other natural magicians, however, see in the natural world their ultimate responsibility. Defending this source of eternal healing, prosperity, and defense is the duty of the magician that taps into these powers, just as one who dips into a well or drinking hole has a responsibility to ensure those waters remain clean and unpoisoned.

Nature Magic powers, not surprisingly, tend to be concerned with natural forces: control over the elements of Air, Earth, Fire, and Water, along with powers dealing with animals, plants, and the weather. At a primal level, nature magic is often concerned with life-force, healing, and fertility or growth.

NECROMANTIC

The human experience does not end with the living breath; why should the forces of magic? Necromancy is the art of interacting with the dead and the afterlife, as well as the cold, raw forces that embody and cause death. It has been suggested by some magicians that where natural magics are the sorceries of life, necromantic magics are their opposite,

embodying and tapping into the power of death. Others believe that they are simply different ends of the same spectrum and seek to master and understand both.

Practitioners of necromantic magic are often terrifying beings, as even non-magicians can often sense the unnatural congress they have with the very power of mortality. Not all those who practice the arts of the dead are twisted, evil death-mages, though. For every magician that pursues these arts for domination over the dead and power over the living, there is another that simply seeks to aid the dead in passing on to their great rewards, to delve into the powers their ancestors would lend them, or to simply understand the essence of death, that life is made more meaningful.

The classic necromantic Magic is various sorts of Summon Undead powers, allowing the necromancer to call upon the services of the dead. Other powers include ghostly manifestations for both attacks and defenses, or the direct manipulation of life-force. Some necromantic styles can actually have profound Healing effects, staving off death as well as feeding from it.

PRETERNATURAL

The reality of mortals and gods encompasses much that is beyond the ken of those who do not practice or understand the occult arts. But they are, by no means, all-wise. There are things that lie outside of that reality, things that twist sanity and warp our



reality when they bleed through. Magicians from the mortal places are, by their very nature, incapable of understanding the flow, warp, and weft of these strange nether-places.

This does not, of course, prevent many magicians from trying. Tiny secrets, snippets of lore, have snuck through into the occult world through the ages. Portions of names ancient and sanity-shattering, strange whispers gibbered on a cold Walpurgis Night wind, visions seen by the utterly mad in the colorful spatters their own blood makes on the padded walls of asylum cells: these are all sources of knowledge.

Those that seek these secrets must be cautious, for they may be driven mad by them. This has not stopped magicians through the ages from seeking these pieces of lore, for the power they offer is formidable indeed. After all, how can anyone predict that a foe may wield eldritch unfathomable words that drive the mortal listener to the brink of insanity, or that she might turn the nearest ninety-degree angle into a portal for ravening nether-hounds?

Preternatural Magic most often involves effects of chaos and madness. Confuse is a key power, and so is Transform. Many preternatural magicians can Summon strange creatures from beyond reality, although their ability to command them is often dubious.

PRIMEVAL

Primeval magics are closely tied to nature magics on some level. They tap into the powers of the earthly plane. However, where nature magics tend to grant a magician power over the "flesh" of the natural world—the physical elements, plants, animals, and the weather—primeval magics permit a magician to touch the very soul of this place. Practitioners of the primeval ways are those who commune with ancient spirits of the lands: totems, the loa, the daevas, and the fey.

Primeval magics are unnerving to modern sensibilities. To most people, the tenor of these primal spirits seems predatory, mad, savage, and beyond control. This is not far from the truth, though there is more to it. These entities—or simply the power that gives rise to them, the same power primeval magics draw on—are wise and ancient. A complex system of geasa and taboos surround these powers, and those who interact with them often seem strange to others, because of the myriad little things they must avoid doing, or must go out of their way to do, in order to remain on good terms with these entities.

Voodoo in the comic books tends toward urban myth and pop culture, with things like "voodoo dolls" (trappings for Perception Range effects targeted with Mental ESP and requiring something belonging to the target like a lock of hair) and zombies (either Mind Control or Summon Zombie, depending on whether the effect works on the living or the dead).

Like voodoo, comic book witchcraft tends toward the sensational and the mythic, particularly charms (mental effects) and alteration effects (notably Transform). Witchcraft trappings include things like flying brooms, cauldrons of noxious potions, and shape-changing familiars.

TECHNOMANCY

Most magicians assume technomancy is the youngest of all magics. In truth, however, magicians have practiced this art—in one form or another—for eons. Since the human animal learned to perceive the world in a particular way, learning to apply one part of her environment to another part of her environment to accomplish new and amazing things, magicians have drawn upon this domain of power. Though some magicians assume this is simply the realm of machine magics and cybermancy, technomancy is quite a bit more.

Many technomancers take great pride in being the men and women who act as the bridge for the occult to cross a threshold and become a

useful tool for everyone in the human experience. They claim that technomancy is this threshold, and it is hard to argue with their views. Where ancient alchemy was the sole province of educated, mysterious men, now everyone benefits from the wonders of chemistry. Advanced mathematics were once considered among the most potent of occult secrets, and yet now, in universities all over the world, men and women learn their use to work wonders in the world—including the construction of massive buildings, which itself was once a closely-guarded arcane secret.

Thus, not all technomancers are necessarily on the cutting edge of the technological curve. Some believe that da Vinci's inventions still have secrets left to reveal, and so study these intensely, hoping to decipher and unfold new things from them. Others may feel the same way about ancient astrology or the engineering feats of the ancients. By and large, however, technomancers have earned their reputation as being at the forefront of the technological wave. They are still magicians, though—an ancient chant may have been rendered down to its mathematical components and added in as part of a formula that describes the movements of certain stars through certain signs in the sky, but a demon is summoned just as surely when she runs that protocol on her adamant-screened, orichalcum-cased PDA (Personal Daemonic Agent). As might be guessed, technomancers are quite fond of Devices with a magical origin.

MAGICAL MASTERY

The Magic power, in conjunction with the standard *M&M* rules for power stunts and Alternate Powers, is already quite broad and flexible. With extra effort, a magician can do virtually *anything* within the base power points available to the Magic array. However, for an extra level of mastery above and beyond just additional ranks in Magic, you can choose to implement the Variable power structure from *Ultimate Power* (page 113) to create a "Magical Mastery" power.

In essence, Magical Mastery, which costs 6 points per rank, gives the magician 5 power points per rank to allocate to *any* power desired. All it takes is a standard action to re-allocate the points, and then the mystic can use the power or powers normally and as often as desired until the Magical Mastery points are changed again. If stunned or knocked out, the magician's Mastery points "reset" to their neutral state and must be re-allocated. Such a character essentially has *every* power stunt available all the time, requiring just time to focus her power.

The main modifiers applied to Magical Mastery are the Action extra and the Check Required flaw. The Action extra can reduce the time required to re-allocate power points; a move action for a +1 extra, a free action for a +2 extra. The Check Required flaw doesn't apply to using the powers, but to *changing* them: the magician must make a skill check (DC 10 + half the affected power points) in order to re-allocate them successfully. A failed check means nothing happens, and the action is wasted. The skills used are typically either Concentration or Knowledge (arcane lore), although other skills, such as different Knowledge or Perform specialties, may be appropriate to other magical styles.

Magical Mastery is a *very* powerful ability, best reserved for Master Mages and similarly mighty adepts. It borders on an X-trait (*M&M*, page 211), limited solely by the available power points and the player's imagination. If the GM permits it at all, players should be encouraged to figure out various effects for the power in advance, to cut down on the amount of game time needed to re-allocate the magician's power points.

MAGIC POWER DRAWBACKS

Certain power drawbacks (*M&M*, page 124) are common for the Magic power in the comics. Just like styles, drawbacks can help to further define a character's Magic in comparison to others in the game, particularly in a series with many mystics.

Note; as with other arrays, a power drawback must apply to *every* power in the Magic array for it to count towards reducing the cost of the Magic power itself. Otherwise, it simply reduces the cost of the individual Alternate Power so far as determining whether or not it will "fit" into the Array's available points.

ACTION

The Action drawback is known to apply to some Magic powers, although especially long and involved spells are more likely magical rituals (*M&M*, page 131 and the **Ritualist** section under **Feats**). More common is the Action drawback increasing the time it takes for the magician to switch between Alternate Powers in the Magic array; some spellcasters have a measure of versatility, but lack the ability to shift their power quickly.

DISRUPTION

This new power drawback is similar to Full Power; you have less than perfect control over the affected power. If you fail a Concentration check to use or maintain the power, something goes wrong. The power doesn't just fail to work or stop working, it "misfires" in some way. A Blast might go off and hit a random target, while a Summon effect calls up something unexpected. The exact effect is up to the GM, based on the original power and the nature of the disruption. Disruption also makes a suitable complication for certain difficult mystic powers lacking this drawback, in which case the player earns a hero point as usual.

FULL POWER

This drawback is best reserved for novice or naturally talented magicians who lack the training and discipline necessary to exercise their powers with finesse. Since Full Power can't apply to a number of effects, it's most likely reserved for individual spell effects the caster hasn't yet learned to control. For a more severe version, apply the Uncontrolled flaw (*M&M*, page 115) to the Magic power.

NOTICEABLE

Some otherwise subtle powers produce certain "special effects" as magic spells or even cause "sorcerer's marks," changes in the caster's appearance when the power is used or active. Such things include the magician's eyes glowing, harmless shows of light or mystic fire, glowing symbols in the air, or the scent of flowers or brimstone. Such displays may be noticeable all the time to those with Mystic Awareness, but that doesn't qualify for this drawback, which assumes the effect is noticeable to everyone.

POWER LOSS

Perhaps the most common drawback for Magic is something that robs the magician of the power or negates it altogether. The most common example is the need to speak spells aloud and make mystic gestures while casting them: such a magician is incapable of using Magic while bound and gagged (or otherwise silenced). Other common examples include the need for certain materials or props, or the inability to use magic under certain conditions, such as while touching iron or against anyone carrying a protective talisman (like the herb moly, used by Odysseus against the sorceress Circe).

ENTITIES AND ENTREATIES

Comic book magicians frequently invoke the names and titles of various mystic entities, calling upon them for power and assistance with their spells. These magical-sounding names and incantations can add flavor and style to a mystic character or series, so *M&M* players and Gamemasters are encouraged to use them in their own games.

Listed in the following pages are a selection of widely known mystic entities entreated for magical power in the *Freedom City* setting. Feel free to borrow these or adapt them to your own *M&M* setting as desired.

ABBRIDON

(AH-BREY-DON) **THE LANTERN OF HEAVEN, LIGHT OF RIGHTEOUSNESS**

Abbridon is an angelic higher being associated with order and truth, called upon for magic associated with revealing the truth or banishing darkness and deception. He is often depicted as a beautiful androgynous figure in flowing robes, with peacock feathered wings (the "eyes" of the feathers being his symbol) and carrying a torch or lantern. Sometimes addressed as "The Abbridon," some mystics have suggested Abbridon may be a multifaceted entity or collective class of higher angelic beings, perhaps even an office held by one of them. Abbridon is also one of the three entities making up the mystic trinity of the Modrossus, along with Heshem and Lamal.



ABJURATIONS OF ABBRIDON

Abjurations of Abbridon are various Nullify effects, primarily against darkness, bindings, and malevolent summoned creatures.

AEGIS OF ABBRIDON

Aegis of Abbridon calls forth a magical Force Field to protect the caster. The Aegis of Abbridon is one of the most commonly wielded defensive spells; even a novice mystic knows how to conjure one.

ALL-REVEALING LIGHT OF ABBRIDON

All-Revealing Light of Abbridon is a Nullify effect against all concealing, obscuring, or illusory effects, usually with the Burst Area and Touch Range modifiers (for a net +0 modifier), extending in a radius around the caster.

ALL-SEEING EYES OF ABBRIDON

All-Seeing Eyes of Abbridon creates mystic "sensors" for the caster, an ESP effect for all the magician's senses (in spite of the spell's name). Some know a variant of the All-Seeing Eyes using the Dimensional power feat, permitting the sorcerer's scrying to extend into other planes as well.

ILLUMINATION OF ABBRIDON

Illumination of Abbridon is a simple Environmental Control effect for creating light as bright as normal daylight, although such light can also affect creatures specifically vulnerable to it.

AHGRAZUL

(AH-GRAH-ZOOL) **ARCHMAGE OF ATLANTIS, THE EXPLORER**

Ahgrazul was a mighty archmage in ancient Atlantis, best known as a seer and diviner. He first explored the Cosmic Coil and blazed paths for the mystics who would follow him. Legend says Ahgrazul foretold Atlantis's fall, but he departed for worlds beyond before the island-continent sank beneath the waves.



AHGRAZUL'S COMPASS

Ahgrazul's Compass is a pathfinding spell, able to guide the caster to a desired destination. It's treated as a 2-point ESP effect, able to "search" an area like an Extended Search (see the guidelines on page 53 of *M&M*). Once the subject is found, the magician can maintain a "fix" on it by maintaining the spell like a sustained power.

AIRTS OF AHGRAZUL

Airts of Ahgrazul guide travelers on the winding coils between worlds. The spell is a Dimensional Movement effect to any mystical dimension along the Cosmic Coil. Beyond the minimum first rank of Magic required to cast it for one's self, additional Magic array points are usually allocated to sufficient Progression to bring others.

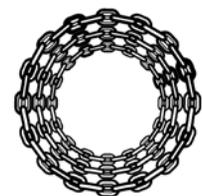
AUSPICIOUS AUGURY OF AHGRAZUL

Auspicious Augury of Ahgrazul is a potent ritual involving omens of the future. It's a Precognition effect (Super-Senses 4), but instead of providing precognitive visions, it offers an effect similar to an enhanced Second Chance feat: after the spell is cast (taking a full-round action), the magician can thereafter spend a hero point to "undo" a single event, treating it as a precognitive warning or omen rather than something that "actually" happened. Once this is done, the spell is expended and must be re-cast. This is essentially the same as the "Precognitive Do-Overs" option from page 87 of *Ultimate Power*.

BAL'HEMOTH

(BAL-HAY-MOTH) **THE BINDER, LORD OF CHAINS**

The sinister Bal'Hemoth was worshipped in ancient Lemuria as the iron-fisted master of order and enslavement. He taught dominance and the power of the strong over the weak, although Bal'Hemoth's ways were overthrown through generations of slave rebellions against the Serpent People of Lemuria and their inheritors.



BALEFUL BINDINGS OF BAL'HEMOTH

Baleful Bindings of Bal'Hemoth are dark metallic chains that appear around the target of the spell, a Snare effect. They are often enhanced with the Backlash modifier, causing the victim's efforts to escape to rebound against her. The Affects Insubstantial modifier allows the Bindings to trap astral forms and spirits as well.

POWER STUNTS AND IMPROVISED SPELLS

An additional use for the various spells and entreaties described in this section is as a catalog of power stunts for characters with the Magic power. Although each character has a set of "rote" or "mastered" spells—the established Alternate Powers of that character's Magic array—any magician can attempt to improvise an entreaty to any of the various arcane powers. Indeed, many of the spells used by comic book magicians are one-time things: if they require preparation and ceremony, they're rituals (**Magical Rituals**, *M&M*, page 131), but if they're done on the spur of the moment, then they're best considered Magic power stunts.

So, any magician can potentially cast *any* of these spells, provided the player is willing to use extra effort in order to do so. Magicians on all sides of the moral divide can also call upon the powers of virtually any entity: in his career, Eldrich has called on the power of Bal'Hemoth, the Howling Dream, and Vhoka, for example. Only the Three Powers of the Modrossus (Abbridon, Heshem, and Lamal) are really limited to certain sorcerers and even then, Heshem is known to answer entreaties from witches and wizards considered morally "grey" at best.

Lastly, in keeping with the theme of magic's price (see **Chapter 1**), the GM may, from time to time, choose to waive the fatigue caused by the extra effort of an improvised spell, instead imposing a future complication from calling upon that particular entity (for which the magician will not gain a hero point, since it was effectively "cashed in" for the spell itself). Likewise, the GM can use entreaties and characters' relationships with the various Powers of Magic as a source of future complications in the game, as magicians encounter omens, unusual "luck," and the like.

BEAST OF BAL'HEMOTH

Beast of Bal'Hemoth summons a demon warrior (*M&M*, page 233) or a monstrous spider (*M&M*, 234) to do the magician's bidding. Magic ranks above the minimum 6 required for the spell are often applied to either improving the Beast's attitude towards its summoner (3 ranks per improvement) or adding Progression power feat ranks to increase the number of Beasts the magician can summon.

BIDDING OF BAL'HEMOTH

Bidding of Bal'Hemoth ensnares the victim's will with a Mind Control effect, as surely as the Baleful Bindings ensnare the body.

BITTER LASH OF BAL'HEMOTH

Bitter Lash of Bal'Hemoth creates a crackling whip of dark energy in the caster's grasp. Its touch inflicts no physical harm, but rather it fills the target with a terrible feeling of hopelessness and indecision. It is a Paralyze effect, with Extended Reach 2 and the Will Save modifier, meaning it has a save DC modifier of one less than the caster's Magic rank (the remaining points covering the cost of the power feats).

GHORUMMAZ

(GO-ROO-MAZ) THE DRAGON WITHIN THE EARTH,
LORD OF STORMS, THE EARTH-BINDER

Ghorummaz is a primal, elemental force, often depicted as a serpentine dragon of stone and fire, spitting molten magma. It is strongly connected with "dragon lines" of force within the Earth and with the elements. Ghorummaz is Lord of Earthquakes and Storms, and a binder of what is unnatural.



GHORUMMAZ'S DICTUM

Ghorummaz's Dictum is a powerful abjuration of the unnatural. It hedges out unnatural creatures (including those from other planes) in a radius of (power rank x 5 feet) around the caster, preventing them from approaching any closer without a successful Will save (DC 10 + Magic rank). Any creatures inside the affected area failing the save must flee immediately. Treat it as a Mind Control effect with Burst Area, Touch Range, and Sustained Duration (1 point per rank).

GRASP OF GHORUMMAZ

Grasp of Ghorummaz creates a clawed hand of stone, bursting up from the earth to seize and hold a target as a Snare effect at the caster's Magic power rank. Some versions of the spell modify it with Affects Insubstantial to allow the Grasp to hold ghostly and spirit creatures as well, while the dread Crushing Grasp of Ghorummaz applies the Constricting extra from *Ultimate Power*, inflicting damage equal to half the spell's rank each round the target is held.

GREAT GALE OF GHORUMMAZ

Great Gale of Ghorummaz summons a powerful storm over an area, the equivalent of a 4-point Environmental Control effect (Distraction and Hamper Movement). The caster of the spell can direct the gale's effect, moving the center of it within range.

STORM OF GHORUMMAZ

Storm of Ghorummaz unleashes a powerful elemental fury, allowing the sorcerer to strike foes with bolts of lightning, a mystic, electrical Blast effect. The spell often applies the Indirect power feat, causing the bolts to strike down from the sky towards the target.

THUNDEROUS TREAD OF GHORUMMAZ

Thunderous Tread of Ghorummaz creates a localized earthquake around where the magician stomps the ground, like the Groundstrike power feat of Super-Strength (*M&M*, page 104), but substituting Magic rank for Strength bonus.

HESHM

(HEH-SHEM) SHE WHO IS THREE, THE HOODED ONE, TRIFORMUS

Heshem is the dark goddess of the between places, usually depicted as an ancient crone, robed and hooded, and bearing a staff or cane and a glowing lantern (often suspended at the end of her crooked staff). Cats are associated with her for their night vision and glowing eyes. Although stern and fierce, she can be a power for great good, bringing light into the darkness. Heshem is one of the Three Powers of the Modrossus.



CONJURING YOUR OWN ENTITIES

The entities and spells presented in this section are really only a sample of the full range of possibilities for a mystic *M&M* series. Virtually every power in the rulebook (and the *Ultimate Power* sourcebook) can be re-cast as a magical spell, to say nothing of the countless variations from adding power feats, drawbacks, extras, and flaws!

You can use the examples in this book as a jumping-off point for creating your own arcane entities for magicians to call upon in your series. All it really takes is an atmospheric name, a cool-sounding title or two, and some alliterative spells to go along with them, and you're all set. Although they're called "entities," the beings comic book sorcerers invoke for their spells are far more plot device characters than anything else. You do not need to be concerned about their game traits, for example, or how many power points they cost; rest assured, it would be *lots!*

Players of other roleplaying games have a slight edge when it comes to making up new arcane entities for their series: you can simply borrow them from elsewhere! Plenty of RPGs have pantheons of imaginary deities, angelic and demonic forces, occult mysteries, and so forth. Feel free to borrow from these wholesale or use them as inspiration for new occult lore in your *M&M* game. *The Book of the Righteous* from Green Ronin Publishing, for example, presents a richly detailed fantasy pantheon, but you can easily borrow parts of it to add new entities like Urian, Shalimyr, and Eliwyn to your setting's cosmology.

HAND OF HESHEM

Hand of Heshem (sometimes known as *Heshem's Shadowy Hand*) creates a shadow's ectoplasmic extension to the magician's grasp, a Move Object effect at the caster's Magic power rank.

HESHEM'S HOLY HEARTH

Heshem's Holy Hearth summons a golden light or an actual mystic flame whose light wards off creatures of evil and darkness, a Ward power effect at the caster's Magic power rank.

HESHEM'S ROAD

Heshem's Road conjures a dark mist that acts as a gateway into the astral plane or dream dimension. It requires Magic 3 with the effect of Dimensional Movement 2 with the Portal modifier. It's traditionally cast as a crossroads, but it can actually be used anywhere.

HOLY HOSTS OF HESHEM

Holy Hosts of Heshem invokes powerful forces of banishment in the form of a shadowy storm of wings, producing a Nullify Magic effect at the magician's Magic power rank.

HOOD OF HESHEM

Hood of Heshem cloaks an area in impenetrable darkness, a visual Obscure effect at the caster's Magic power rank.

HOOK OF HESHEM

Hook of Heshem is similar to Hand of Heshem, except the shadowy extension of the caster's hand is tipped with wicked claws for a Penetrating Strike effect at the magician's Magic rank.

THE HOWLING DREAM

THE CRYING CHAOS, THE PRIMAL STORM

The Howling Dream is as much a place or state of mind as it is an entity. It is mad, primal chaos dwelling within the darkest depths of consciousness, the stormy sea of emotions and awareness from which all thought and imagination first arose. It is that portion



of the Great Mind that will not be tamed or subject to order. It is insanity incarnate. Magicians calling on the power of the Howling Dream skirt the edges of madness themselves.

THE CRYING ROAD

The Crying Road is a path into the realm of dreams and nightmares. It opens a portal into the Dream Dimension, a Dimensional Movement 1 effect with the Portal modifier, requiring Magic 2 to cast.

CURSE OF HOWLING MADNESS

Curse of Howling Madness drags the victim's psyche down into the depths of the Howling Dream, a Sustained Confuse effect that causes erratic, often insane, behavior until the curse is broken.

DREAM DEMENTIA

Dream Dementia calls forth powerful dream images into the waking mind, causing the subject to hallucinate. It is a Selective Emotion Control effect with the Phantasms flaw as a special extra that so long as the victim fails the Will save against the effect, hallucinatory images accompany the emotions: so, a victim might see her greatest fear, perceive the magician as her one true love, and so forth, depending on the nature of the emotion(s) involved.

DREAM DENIZENS

Dream Denizens conjures up creatures out of nightmare, no two exactly alike. It is a broad Summon effect, with a default rank of half the caster's Magic rank (rounded down). The GM should feel free to choose suitable minions from those given in this book or the *M&M* rulebook, or simply make up something suitable based on the spell's rank and the conditions under which it is cast.

IDOLON

(EYE-DO-LON) THE ILLUSIONIST, VEIL OF ILLUSION, THE DECEIVER

The mysterious Idolon has no true or fixed appearance apart from a pair of glowing eyes seen in the darkness or in the shadowy depths of a hood. It is capable of assuming any appearance, for Idolon is a power of illusion and trickery. Mages call upon it for aid in concealment and crafting cunning images.



CLOAK OF IDOLON

Cloak of Idolon is a Concealment effect against mental senses and ESP, rendering the “wearer” difficult to locate and detect using magical means. It’s a known weapon in the arsenal of mage-killers, used to slip past the defenses of their prey, and it is sometimes used by magicians on the run from others of their own kind, to evade detection and capture.

ILLUSIONS OF IDOLON

Illusions of Idolon is a collection of Illusion effect spells, the most common being a full sensory Illusion with the Selective Attack and Phantasms modifiers, giving it a cost of 4 points per rank, and therefore, typically a rank of half the caster’s Magic power rank, rounded down.

VEIL OF IDOLON

Veil of Idolon is an Obscure effect against mental senses and ESP, warding an entire area and rendering it “dark” to many magical means of detection and scrying. Anyone attempting to reach into the affected area with a mental sense or an ESP effect senses nothing at all, which is usually enough for a mystic adept to realize a Veil is in place. Some magicians Veil their sanctums and working areas as a matter of course, to safeguard against spies.

IOS

(EYE-OS) THE WAYFINDER, THE SEER, IOS OF THE EIGHT EYES

Ios was an ancient archmage who ascended to a higher spiritual plane, becoming a guide and guardian of mystics to follow. She is most strongly associated with divinatory magic, connected with the symbol of the eye and with spells dealing with gates, both opening and closing them. Ios was known for her devotion to seeking truth and her opposition to the ancient Cult of Idolon, infamous deceivers and spies that they were.



THE EIGHT EYES OF IOS

The Eight Eyes of Ios are a glowing ring of unblinking golden orbs that float around the mage’s head when summoned. They grant the ability to see through any Concealment, Illusion, or Obscure effect, see the true form of any disguised creature (including traits that grant a Disguise bonus, like Morph and Shapeshift), and see any deliberately hidden or concealed item (secret door, hidden panel, etc.), although the GM may require a Notice check to detect the latter. This is the equivalent of the True Sight Super-Senses ability from *Ultimate Power*, requiring 10 ranks (and therefore Magic 5 to use as a spell).

THE ENCHANTMENT OF IOS

The Enchantment of Ios allows the magician to capture and hold a subject’s gaze, and attention, for as long as the caster continues to engage the subject in conversation or through performance. It is an Enhanced Feat (Fascinate) effect (Ultimate Power, p47), most often acquired by magicians familiar with the arts of Ios as a separate mystic power, rather than a Magic spell.

THE EVERWATCHFUL EYE OF IOS

The Everwatchful Eye of Ios literally grants the magician “eyes in the back of the head,” providing Danger Sense, Radius Sight, and Uncanny Dodge, all visual. This requires Super-Senses 4, so Magic 2 is needed to cast the spell.

KAR’KRADAS

(CAR-CRAH-DAS) THE WHISPERER IN THE SHADOWS BETWEEN WORLDS

Kar’Kradas is an ancient and powerful demon, known as the Whisperer in the Shadows Between Worlds. It is said he was bound in “the places between” long ago, perhaps even before time as we know it, and now he can only access the world through shadows, corners, and mirrors, perceived by some sensitives out of the corner of the eye in just a glimpse.



Magicians call on the Whisperer for powers of darkness, deception, and transcending time and space. Cults have worshipped Kar’Kradas throughout time, and some have sought to free him from his imprisonment, even though doing so would mean the unraveling of the Cosmic Coil and the end of all existence as we know it.

CALL OF KAR’KRADAS

Call of Kar’Kradas is a powerful demon-summoning spell—Summon Demon, Broad Type—providing an effective rank of half the caster’s Magic rank (rounded down). Remaining points are typically allocated to Progression for additional demon minions, although some prefer other modifiers to the spell, particularly Fanatical and Heroic, for loyal and powerful demon minions.

CHAINS OF KAR’KRADAS

Chains of Kar’Kradas wrap the target in bonds of pure darkness as strong as iron chains (if not more so), a Snare effect at the caster’s Magic power rank.

CROOKED ROAD OF KAR’KRADAS

Crooked Road of Kar’Kradas allows the magician to step into a shadow and vanish, reappearing out of another shadow some distance away: Teleport, Accurate, Medium (shadows), operating at the caster’s Magic rank.

HOUNDS OF KAR’KRADAS

Hounds of Kar’Kradas is a summoning spell that calls forth one or more “shadow hounds,” relentless hunters and trackers. This is a more specialized Summon, with Fanatical minions, providing an effective rank equal to two-thirds the caster’s Magic (rounded down). Leftover points may be allocated to Progression as well as the Mental Link power feat (to both issue orders and know what the hounds find). Shadow hounds have the game stats of lions (*M&M*, page 231), with the addition of Concealment 2 (visual, Limited to shadows), Insubstantial 4, and tracking Super-Senses, raising total points to 73.

UMBRAL KRAKEN OF KAR’KRADAS

Umbral Kraken of Kar’Kradas is another summoning spell, calling up a titanic tentacled creature of darkness from the depths. It’s the equivalent of the sea monster archetype (*M&M*, page 235), only with Burrowing rather than Swimming, if summoned on land. It requires a minimum of Magic 11 to cast.

LAMAL

(LA-MAL) THE LAW-GIVER, THE LEGATE, THE WISE, THE GREAT BALANCE

Lamal the Law-Giver is an entity of perfect order but, unlike his brother Weyan, he is concerned with order amongst individuals and societies, rather than the perfect functioning of a well-maintained mechanism. Mortals know Lamal as “the Wise” and the “Great Balance,” a giver of laws, guidance, and wise judgment. For this reason, he is often a guide and patron of magicians seeking to use their powers wisely for the greater good. Lamal is one of the Three Powers of the Modrossus.



LAMAL'S LABYRINTH

Lamal's Labyrinth mystically traps a subject in an extradimensional maze. It is treated as a Snare effect, with some special modifications: the target is considered “bound and helpless” (at least so far as the outside world is concerned) if the save fails (+1 extra), and the subject makes Search checks to “break” the Snare rather than using damaging attacks (+1 extra). This gives the spell a rank (and saving throw modifier) equal to half the caster's Magic rank.

LAMAL'S MIGHTY HANDS

Lamal's Mighty Hands are ghostly, invisible forces able to lift and move objects as the caster wills, a Precise, Subtle, Move Object effect at a rank one lower than the magician's Magic power rank (to account for the cost of the two power feats).

LAMAL'S REBUKE

Lamal's Rebuke is a powerful stunning spell usable against extraplanar creatures of chaos, creating a Burst Area Stun effect Limited to such creatures, with a rank equal to the caster's Magic rank.

LIGHT OF LAMAL

Light of Lamal, also known as the “Light of Law,” calls forth a pure, streaming beam of white light. Those illuminated by it cannot speak lies, only the truth as they understand it. This is a Conscious Mind Control effect Limited to making the subject speak the truth, functioning at the magician's Magic rank. Although the usurping of another's will is something right-thinking mages do rarely, if at all, this spell is generally considered ethical when the need is great (or when the subject consents).

MALADOR

(MAL-A-DOR) THE MYSTIC, THE MALIFICENT

Malador (see page 114) was a powerful and respected mage in ancient Atlantis who turned to dark and forbidden arts in his mad quest for immortality and power. He ironically gained his “eternal life” when his fellow mages bound him for all time in a tomb within the Temple of Sirrion. Malador's name is still invoked by magicians seeking power over life and death.



MALEVOLENT MINION OF MALADOR

Malevolent Minion of Malador reanimates a corpse as an undead minion, either a zombie or skeleton, depending on the state of the remains (*M&M*, page 235). This is an Animate Objects effect (rank 1 for zombies, rank 2 for skeletons), Limited to those subjects. Additional ranks are typically allocated to Progression to animate and control large numbers of undead minions, and Malador has at least once used a version with the Horde extra to animate an army of undead all at once.

MIASMA OF MALADOR

Miasma of Malador summons a cloud of noxious, acidic vapor to burn and blind targets. It is a Cloud Area Blast (acidic) Linked to a Cloud Area visual Dazzle effect, for a total value of 6 points per rank, making the effective rank typically one-third of the caster's Magic power rank (rounded down). Those still in the cloud's area on the following round suffer its effects again before it dissipates.

MIGHT OF MALADOR

Might of Malador is a straightforward Blast of necromantic energies, often appearing as black lightning leaping from the caster's hands to strike at targets.

MISTS OF MALADOR

Mists of Malador are dark grey, swirling clouds, quite similar to the Miasma of Malador and often mistaken for them, but merely creating a visual Obscure effect that hangs over a larger area.

THE MODROSSUS

(MOH-DRO-SOOS) THE LUMENVIRATE, THE HAND OF ORDER, THE THREE-IN-ONE, TRILUMINARY

The Modrossus is an amalgam of three potent mystic entities: Abbridon, Heshem, and Lamal, often depicted as a glowing being with three heads: male, female, and androgyne, or a lion, a serpent, and an eagle, each with a glowing rune on its forehead. The Modrossus is the single greatest force for positive and protective magic known to earthly magicians, and they often invoke its name and “the Magic of the Modrossus” or “Mysteries of the Modrossus” in their duties. The legendary Manual and Medallion of the Modrossus are entrusted to Earth's Master Mage.



JUDGMENT OF THE MODROSSUS

Judgment of the Modrossus is a fearsome invocation, calling upon the highest mystic order to appear and judge the petitioner's worthiness. Adrian Eldrich once used it to call upon the Lumenvirate to adjudicate an arcane duel between him and a challenger for the title of Master Mage. The judgment rendered by the triple-power is fair but dispassionate. Rather than a power in game-terms, this spell is more of a plot device, although a player might choose to invoke it by spending a hero point, the equivalent of asking the GM for inspiration (*M&M*, page 122).

MAGIC OF THE MODROSSUS

Magic of the Modrossus is a collection of spells invoking the power of the Triluminary. It is known to include the following effects:

- An eldritch Blast of searing blue-white light at the caster's Magic rank.
- Conjuring solid shapes out of glowing light, including walls and other barricades, makeshift support structures, bridges, and the like, as a Create Object effect at the caster's Magic rank.
- A blinding beam of blue-white light, a visual Dazzle effect at the caster's Magic rank. Some versions apply the Burst Area and Touch Range modifiers for an omnidirectional flash emanating from the mage.
- A Nullify Magic effect at the caster's Magic rank, often used as a counterspell.

MISTS OF THE MODROSSUS

Mists of the Modrossus are sweetsmelling vapors able to blank out the memories of the uninitiated who witness those things they are not meant to know. When the momentary mists clear, they take with them those recollections, leaving only a vague blankness. Mages from time immemorial have considered this a mercy to those they guard. The Mists are a Continuous, Burst Area, Mental Transform effect, Limited to memories involving forbidden magical knowledge (including the caster's true identity and similar information). Weaving the spell requires a full round action, and subjects make a Will saving throw against a DC of 10 + the magician's Magic rank.

SIGN OF THE MODROSSUS

Sign of the Modrossus is a powerful ward against uncontrolled mystic creatures, visible as the glowing sign of the Triluminary drawn in fiery blue-white light. It is a Damaging Ward, so it usually has an effective rank equal to half the caster's Magic power rank. Creatures failing the Will save against the Sign suffer damage read on the Toughness Saving Throw table (*M&M*, page 163). The caster can choose whether the Sign inflicts lethal or non-lethal damage when it is used.

OBROROS

(OB-ROAR-OS) THE SCREAMING SPIRE, OBSIDIAN WARD, EVER-WATCHFUL

Obroros is the name given to an ancient intelligent artifact, a double-terminated obelisk of gleaming black stone that serves as a guardian and gatekeeper to the netherworlds of the Cosmic Coil. Glowing eyes and mouths form on the surface of the spire when it deals with visitors or challengers. No one knows who placed Obroros on its eternal vigil, and the Spire remains silent on such matters. Its cries are terribly painful to dimensional intruders, driving them away, back from whence they came.



OBSCURING ORB OF OBROROS

Obscuring Orb of Obroros mystically "blinds" the sight and mental senses of those the mage chooses within its radius. It is a visual and mental Selective Obscure effect, making its rank half the caster's Magic rank. The mage designates who is and is not affected by the Obscuring Orb when calling it into being.

OCCULT EXORCISM OF OBROROS

Occult Exorcism of Obroros is a powerful ban against outside mystic influences, a Nullify effect against all mind-influencing powers at the caster's Magic rank. It can expel possessing spirits, break mind and emotion control, and so forth.

OMENS OF OBROROS

Omens of Obroros summons an extension of Obroros itself, a tall obelisk of polished obsidian appearing out of a cloud of grey smoke. It can answer questions posed to it by showing images in its depths. While this spell can be treated as an ESP effect (probably with 3 ranks of the Dimensional power feat), Gamemasters may prefer to treat it instead as an application of the inspiration aspect of hero points (*M&M*, page 122), providing the magician with useful clues and information.

PHOROS

(FOR-OS) THE BURNING PHANTOMS, FLOATING FLAMES, MIGHTY LIGHTS

The Phoros are immortal, immaterial magical beings from a realm of raw and chaotic energy. They appear as floating, glowing spheres of light or fire, and their full power can be damaging to unprotected material creatures. Some have likened them to "living stars." Magicians call upon them and their realm for energy and power.



FLAMES OF THE PHOROS

The *Flames of the Phoros* are actually several different applications of the raw magical power that is the essence of the Phoros' realm, capable of a number of discrete effects, including:

- A mystic Blast effect, which sends a gout of flames spurting from the magician's outstretched hands. A variant is a mystic fireball, applying the Burst Area or Explosion modifiers to the Blast effect.
- A Nullify Magic effect, where the flames "burn" the magic out of the target, much like ordinary flames consume oxygen, but they leave the target physically unharmed.
- A protective aura of magical flames (often in an unusual color like blue, green, or violet) around the caster, serving as a magical Force Field.
- A more violent aura of burning magical fire, inflicting damage on anything coming into contact with the magician, a fiery Sustained Strike effect with the Aura modifier (often in conjunction with the protective effect, previously).
- Magical Fire Control, enhancing or diminishing existing flames and directing them as the caster wills.

PHANTASMS OF PHOROS

Phantasms of Phoros, also known as the "Fata of the Phoros," shapes flickering light to create visual Illusions, the simplest being the appearance of floating orbs of light similar to the Phoros themselves. Unlike many magically made illusions (and in spite of the spell's name), the images are formed of light and do not have the Phantasms modifier, so they're visible to all, not hallucinations in the targets' minds.

SHATACHNA

(SHA-TAK-NA) THE IRON QUEEN, THE LADY OF PAIN, MISTRESS OF CURSES

The Iron Queen and Mistress of the Seven Hells, Shatachna is an ancient demon associated with pain and suffering. Those seeking power and dominion call her upon to inflict pain on others, and she has claimed the souls of more than a few would-be "magisters" as her personal slaves and attendants.



SCOURGE OF SHATACHNA

Scourge of Shatachna conjures a many-tailed whip that inflicts burning pain with each strike. It strikes as a Nauseate effect out to a distance of 20 feet (Nauseate 1 with Extended Reach 4), causing terrible pain to those it strikes. Points beyond the minimum 6 required go towards increasing the Nauseate rank, so the Scourge typically has an effective rank equal to the caster's Magic rank minus 2.

SCYTHE OF SHATACHNA

Scythe of Shatachna is a wicked, curved blade at the end of a long black handle, wielded as a two-handed weapon. It is preternaturally sharp and deadly, a Penetrating Strike effect equal in rank to the magician's Magic. The magic descriptor it carries also makes it effective against targets vulnerable to magical attacks. The Scythe can be surprisingly effective against foes not expecting a vicious melee attack from a spell-caster.

SERVANTS OF SHATACHNA

Servants of Shatachna is a demon-summoning spell, capable of calling up one as a Broad Summon Demon effect with a rank half that of the caster's Magic power. It's also a commonly enacted ritual for cults worshipping Shatachna, calling on one of her many demonic slaves for aid.

SHADOWS OF SHATACHNA

Shadows of Shatachna are more than mere darkness; they are *hungry* shadows from the depths of a dark netherworld, a darkness that feeds fear like oxygen feeds a fire. The visual Obscure effect is Linked with a Burst Area, Ranged, Emotion Control (Fear) effect, with Progression to increase its area. Fleeing victims often run into obstacles in the darkness in their blind efforts to escape from the dreadful terrors they feel lurking there.

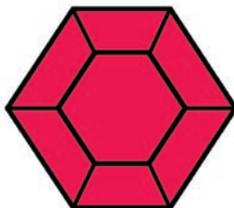
SHATACHNA'S SEAL OF SILENCE

Shatachna's Seal of Silence places an enchantment on the subject, preventing them from speaking of or communicating about certain information in any way. It is a Sustained Mind Control effect Limited to silencing the subject about a particular matter. The subject retains awareness of the information and of the spell, but they simply cannot communicate it.

SIRRION

(SEE-EE-UHN) THE RED WIZARD, SCARLET SORCERER, SCARLET SUMMONER, STARRY VISITOR

Sirriion, the Sorcerer in Scarlet, is a mysterious figure robed entirely in red, including a turban and veil, showing only a pair of glowing eyes in the shadows of his (her, its) face. Some associate Sirriion with Idolon, although there is no evidence of a connection between them. Sirriion is associated with the starry heavens and with the star system known as Sirius in modern history. He is known as "the Starry Visitor," perhaps indicating he was a wizard or entity from another planet or universe. The ancient Atlanteans built Temples in his name. Modern wizards call on Sirriion for spells of summoning, protection, and binding, amongst others.



SCARLET SHADES OF SIRRION

Scarlet Shades of Sirriion summons "vermillion darkness," a deep, red-tinted mist, blanketing a given area with a visual Obscure effect. Some versions of the spell add other senses to the effect, particularly mental or mystical senses, reducing the overall area but making the Scarlet Shades even more difficult to penetrate.

SHINING SHACKLES OF SIRRION

Shining Shackles of Sirriion, also known as the Scarlet Shackles or Bonds of Sirriion, are glowing red metal chains or crimson bands of energy, creating a Snare effect around the target. Some variations of the Shackles of Sirriion apply different Snare modifiers to the effect, particularly Backlash and Blocks Sense.

SHINING SHIELD OF SIRRION

Shining Shield of Sirriion summons up a glowing red aura or a disk-shaped shield of crimson force able to deflect attacks. The first version is a Force Field effect, while the second is a Deflect effect. Magicians often have the power to call up a Shining Shield separate from their Magic power (that is, not as an Alternate Power of their Magic array), so they can use it at will without tying up their other magical resources.

SHINING SUNS OF SIRRION

Shining Suns of Sirriion calls forth a blazing reddish-gold light, typically used as a visual Dazzle effect, although other uses of the Shining Suns include a mystic force Blast and a Nullify Magic effect.

SOMNAMBULANT SPELL OF SIRRION

Somnambulant Spell of Sirriion creates thin, reddish mist, rising up from the ground or pouring forth from the caster's hands or feet. It is a Cloud Area, Ranged Stun effect with the Sleep modifier, resisted by Will rather than Fortitude, and operating at half the caster's Magic rank for its save DC.

STAR DEMONS OF SIRRION

Star Demons of Sirriion conjures up one or more bat-winged beings formed of deep reddish shadow with burning red eyes that obey their summoner's commands. Use the Shadow Demon archetype in **Chapter 3** for the Star Demons of Sirriion. Higher ranks of Magic than the minimum required to Summon one Star Demon generally apply various feats and modifiers to the spell.

THE UNSPEAKABLE ONE

LORD OF THE YELLOW SIGN, RUNE OF MADNESS

The entity known as the Unspeakable One has been worshipped by mad cults since the days of Lemuria and the Serpent Empire. Its true name is known only to a few, for it is said to speak it invites its attention and, therefore, madness. The Unspeakable One is a force of primordial chaos, and its followers want nothing more than to summon it into the world to bring the "gift" of divine madness to all. A few with a slightly stronger grip on their sanity seek to use the Unspeakable One's power for their own purposes, but they constantly risk falling deeper into a psychic abyss from which there is no return.



CHANT OF CHAOS

Chant of Chaos is a rising and falling chant in an alien tongue, the very sound of which is maddening. It is a Confuse effect with a Burst Area and Hearing Dependent, as the targets must be able to hear the chant. The DC of the Will save against it is 10 + the caster's Magic rank.

UNSPEAKABLE SUMMONING

Unspeakable Summoning calls up a preternatural creature from the Unspeakable One's realm to serve the sorcerer, a lesser Eldritch Servitor (see **Chapter 3**). There are supposedly versions for summoning greater Eldritch Horrors, or even the Unspeakable one itself, but these are in the realm of plot devices (not to mention sheer madness for anyone even considering learning or using them).

THE YELLOW SIGN

The Yellow Sign is the most infamous rite of the Unspeakable One, a charged sigil able to induce madness in those who see it. It is a Confuse effect with Perception Area (visual), Continuous Duration, and No Saving Throw, giving it an effective rank of one-quarter the caster's Magic rank (rounded down). Only those who avert their gaze or have powerful mental shields can escape the power of the Yellow Sign's madness.

VHOKA

(VOH-KUH) THE DESTROYER, THE DEVOURER, THE OATHBREAKER

Vhoka the Destroyer is the legendary Eater of Gods, a primal force that destroys all in his path, consuming it so it may be reborn anew. He's most often depicted as a many-armed man with a wide, toothy maw much like a shark's, and wielding several swords. Although many fear Vhoka's power, in many respects, he is an entity beyond good and evil. Still, he is opposed to the forces of creation, so magicians allied with order tend to call upon him with great caution, if at all, while those devoted solely to their own power have few qualms about calling Vhoka's wrath down upon their foes.



DANCE OF VHOKA

Dance of Vhoka gives animation to a weapon, allowing it to fight on its own; it is an Animate Objects effect Limited to weapons. Additionally, the weapon gains the ability to float and move through the air (the equivalent of Flight 1, allocated from the available points provided by Animate Objects). Magicians traditionally applied this spell to swords, spears, and daggers, but modern spellcasters are known to place Dance of Vhoka on firearms and similar such weapons.

MAW OF VHOKA

Maw of Vhoka is a ghostly toothed maw, appearing out of nowhere to savagely bite at a target chosen by the caster, then vanishing. If the Maw fails to strike, it tries again, up to five times before vanishing. The basic spell is a Blast effect with Homing 3, requiring Magic 5; additional ranks improve the rank of the Blast and therefore the Maw's damage. Some versions of the spell are known to be Penetrating, as well.

VILE VENOM OF VHOKA

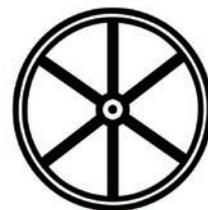
Vile Venom of Vhoka is a deadly toxin that saps a victim's strength and can eventually kill them. It is a Drain Strength and Constitution effect with the Disease modifier, making it quite long lasting. It typically has a

rank equal to half the magician's Magic, and if the initial Fortitude saving throw fails, the victim makes an additional save each day to avoid losing power points from both Strength and Constitution equal to the rank. At Strength 0, the victim is paralyzed, while at Constitution 0, she is dying. Magical healing may be able to cure the Vile Venom (with a DC of 10 + the spell's rank), but mundane medicine can do nothing against it.

WEYAN

(WAY-AN) THE WHEELWRIGHT, THE WATCHER, THE WHITE HAND

Weyan the Wheelwright is brother of Lamal the Law-Giver, and he is even more orderly than his divine twin. Weyan is an artisan, master of a vast and intricate clockwork of interlocking wheels and gears, always working to expand and maintain it. It is said the purpose of the vast mechanism is to perfect creation in some way. Perfection is Weyan's ultimate purpose, and he's called upon in matters of improving or perfecting things, or for the tremendous power contained in the wheels he makes and puts into motion. Unlike, Lamal, however, Weyan is less concerned with matters of justice, and wizards wield his power for their own purposes.



WARD OF WEYAN

Ward of Weyan (not to be confused with the Wheel of Warding, the Third Wheel of Weyan) is a dictum of law, warding off all creatures of chaos and disorder. It is a Ranged Ward (*Ultimate Power*, page 200) against such beings, at the magician's Magic rank.

THE WHEELS OF WEYAN

The Wheels of Weyan are a collection of the most common invocations to the Wheelwright of the White Hand, commonly known by number. Their use creates phantom images of rune-engraved circles or spoked wheels around the magician.

- *The First Wheel of Weyan*, or the Wheel of Workings, can Animate Objects as the power with a rank equal to two-thirds of the caster's Magic rank (rounded down). The Wheel of Workings can also repair damage inflicted upon the world by various unnatural forces. Righteous magicians use it to clean up the collateral damage in the aftermath of their victories.
- *The Second Wheel of Weyan*, or the Wheel of Watching, opens a circular "window" through which the magician can scry, using the ESP power at the caster's Magic power rank. The Wheel of Watching only provides visions of distant places; it does not transmit sound or other sensory impressions.
- *The Third Wheel of Weyan*, or the Wheel of Warding, can deflect and reflect ranged attacks. It is a Deflect power versus all attacks, operating at two-thirds of the caster's Magic rank.
- *The Fourth Wheel of Weyan*, or the Wheel of the Winds, can create powerful wind gusts at the caster's command, as Air Control equal to Magic rank.
- *The Fifth Wheel of Weyan*, or the Wheel of Waiting, can actually stop time in a limited area. It works as a Concentration duration Time Stop power (*Ultimate Power*, page 197), with a rank of one-third the magician's Magic.
- *The Sixth Wheel of Weyan*, or the Wheel of Whispers, is a Communication effect that can carry the magician's words over great distances.

WONDROUS WORKING OF WEYAN

Wondrous Working of Weyan is a particularly intricate—and dangerous—enchantment. It creates around the magician a wondrous phantasmal device of complex interlocking gears, powered by the ambient magic in the surrounding area. They spin faster and faster as the Wondrous Working uses up all the nearby magic, temporarily stripping the area of mystic power and denying all magicians and magical beings use of their abilities for a time. It is a Magic rank Nullifying Field against all magical powers, with a Concentration duration and the Side Effect flaw. If the spell fails to work, the caster suffers psychic backlash equal to the highest rank of the affected magical powers. Treat this as a Mental Blast equal in point value to the highest rank power.

YIG

THE FATHER OF SERPENTS

Yig is the god of the Serpent People, the archetypal great ancestor, master of snakes and reptiles. He is a cold-blooded creature, befitting his nature, but willing to grant power to those who serve him and his chosen ones. Followers of Yig often assume reptilian and serpentine characteristics and call on him for magic dealing with serpents, venom, and similar such things.



CURSE OF YIG

Curse of Yig brings the wrath of the reptile kingdom down upon the victim. It summons forth children of the Father of Serpents, typically poisonous vipers (see *M&M*, page 232). Magic 3 is sufficient to conjure up one deadly snake, while additional ranks increase their numbers with Progression. There are tales of powerful sorcerers calling down the Curse of Yig on entire cities, creature a plague of venomous serpents.

FANGS OF YIG

Fangs of Yig give the magician a poisonous touch, a Drain Strength effect with the Poison modifier at the caster's Magic power rank. A single touch may be enough to render an ordinary adult completely paralyzed.

YIG'S INEXORABLE TRANSFORMATION

Yig's Inexorable Transformation levys a terrible curse on a target, turning a humanoid victim into a savage Serpent Person (see *Freedom City*, page 96). The curse works like a Transform effect, except the victim receives three saving throws (DC 10 + Magic rank): one against the initial casting and another after each day. If all three fail, the victim is permanently transformed into a Serpent Person over those three days. Only a Nullify spell or a similar transformative spell can restore the victim.

MAGICAL ITEMS

Rings of power and dreadful tomes containing secrets Man Was Not Meant to Know™, enchanted swords and flying carpets, these items are every bit as much a part of comic book mystics' arcane arsenals as they are staples of fantasy fiction in general. In fact, the very first costumed superhero in the funny books—Dr. Occult, back in 1935—got quite a bit of mileage out of his fabled Symbol of the Seven. After that, swanky mystic trinkets and toys became *de rigueur* for any costumed mage or spellcaster. What would DC Comics' Dr. Fate be without his Helm of Nabu or Marvel's Dr. Strange without his Cloak of Levitation—or Amulet of Agamotto, for that matter? Accessories count, especially when said accessories embody ancient arcane wisdom or vast cosmic power.

In this section, we look at what distinguishes magic items from comparable technological wonders, peruse some design considerations to keep in mind when kitting out *M&M* magical devices, and then finish up with plenty of magical goodies to delight players and Gamemasters alike delving into the mystical mysteries and mayhem of *Mutants & Masterminds*.

CREATING MAGICAL ITEMS

Magical items are Devices in all but fairly unusual *M&M* settings, since a Device is defined as an item that bestows effects beyond the capabilities of normal equipment. Carried or held Devices are generally considered easy to lose, while worn items are typically hard to lose (only removable if the wearer is helpless).

Magical items simply too large and awkward to move at all (except, perhaps, under their own power), should be vehicles or features of headquarters, the only case where equipment points are appropriate for magic. See **Sanctums Sanctorum** for more on magical headquarters.

Unlike technological Devices, the conceit of super-science technobabble is unnecessary; magic is magic, after all. Its only real limits within a game setting are those imposed by the GM. That means pretty much any power is fair game, including those the technological descriptors have to stretch to accommodate, like Astral Form or Hellfire Control, as two examples.

POWER FEATS

With a device that is truly magical, certain power feats and modifiers move into the limelight. Magical devices able to target spectral opponents (Affects Insubstantial) or strike astral observers (Dimensional) are appropriate, as are weapons such as blades inflicting wounds untreatable by conventional methods (Incurable), bows or guns that ignore conventional defenses (Indirect), or arrows or bullets that don't stop pursuing their targets until they hit (Homing). Many magical items are completely indistinguishable from their mundane equivalents but focus powerful enchantments regardless (Subtle 2). Powerfully versatile items may house single power effects with multiple special effects, such as a wand capable of blasting a target with any variety of sorcerously-charged projectiles or energies (Variable Descriptor). And, don't forget magic items of great power often require special conditions even to harm them (Indestructible).

POWER EXTRAS

The same logic regarding power feats applies to modifiers. A damage effect with a Fortitude or Will Save can easily represent a magical weapon striking at a target's lifeforce or "soul" instead of simply their body. An Area modifier combined with the Selective Attack and No Saving Throw (applied toward Reflex) modifiers emulates a ranged weapon or other focus that simply doesn't miss, ever (though whether

it actually manages to *hurt* or otherwise affect the target is another matter). The Independent and Total Fades modifiers are tailor-made for items containing set or “programmed” spells and enchantments, and the Insidious modifier dovetails nicely with a descriptor requiring no overt presence or explanation (or warning, for that matter). Apply the No Saving Throw modifier to a weapon’s damage, and you have a weapon that will hurt anyone that *can* be hurt, regardless of their resilience. These are simply prominent examples, as a reader can easily thumb through pages and think of items that justifiably warrant every single modifier present in either the *M&M* rules or *Ultimate Power* when using the “magical” or “mystical” descriptor.

POWER FLAWS

Of the flaws and drawbacks in *M&M*, a number warrant special attention in relation to items of magical power. The Check Required flaw—with the check in question usually either Concentration or Knowledge (arcane lore)—is appropriate for a Device requiring a degree of skill to use safely or at all, particularly when combined with the Side Effect flaw. Adding Distracting or increasing the Action required to a Full Round are also ways to emulate requirements of skill or technique. Items drawing their power from the user warrant Tiring, and items never completely under their wielder’s control, or even cursed, justify the inclusion of Uncontrolled or Unreliable. To emulate foci requiring ritual-level investment to use, the Action drawback can come into play above and beyond the Action flaw, and Power Loss is appropriate for limitations rendering magic useless in the presence of particular substances (like wood, silver, or moly) or under certain circumstances (such as the genre staple of being unable to utter activating incantations).

ARTIFICING

The Device power handles the permanent and reusable magical items that make up a regular part of a character’s mystic arsenal. The Artificer feat, on the other hand, deals with the creation of temporary and single-use enchantments, usually as they’re needed in the course of an adventure. The feat is listed on page 56 of *M&M*, while the process of artificing is described on pages 131-132 of the rulebook.

Artificing uses the same guidelines as inventing. Indeed, it’s essentially the same process, just substituting magic for the super-science trappings of inventions. It also serves the same purpose in the game, allowing artificers to whip-up talismans, potions, or other such items on

the spot as they are needed. Typically, when the need is pressing, the artificer will spend a hero point to move the process along, the same as jury-rigging an invention.

ON-HAND ITEMS

Artificing is *not* intended as a means for characters to build-up arsenals of single-use magical items designed and created in their “off hours.” It’s a means for handling item creation during the game as needed. Players who want a character with regular and unlimited access to magical items should either acquire the items as Devices or consider the Magical Gadgets option (following), if the GM allows it in the game.

Gamemasters may wish to use the on-hand items guideline for equipment (*M&M*, page 133) for magical inventions as well. Essentially, if a player wants to have a particular item “on-hand” at a particular time, claiming the character prepared it earlier, the GM may allow this at the cost of a hero point, provided it fits the character’s capabilities and the flow of the story overall.

ARTIFICING GROUPS

Multiple artificers may cooperate to create a single item. Use the aiding another guidelines (*M&M*, page 10) for this: designate one artificer as the lead character. The assistants each make skill checks against DC 10, with success granting the lead character a +2 bonus. Every full 10 points by which an assistant exceeds the DC provides an additional +1 bonus.

The Gamemaster may limit the number of assistants as desired, but a maximum of one per every 5 points of skill bonus (not rank) possessed by the lead character, rounded to the nearest whole number, is a good rule of thumb. So, a lead artificer with Knowledge (arcane lore) +12 could have two assistants (12 divided by 5 and rounded down to 2). Thus, the effective maximum artificing group would be around nine (eight assistants for a leader character with a whopping +40 skill bonus).

MAGICAL GADGETS

At the GM’s discretion, the Gadgets power (*Ultimate Power*, page 159) can just as easily represent a collection of magical items as it can technological gizmos. This just applies the magical descriptor to the power in place of a technological or super-science descriptor; the game effects remain the same. This approach best suits an “artificer” who has an arsenal of magical items, rather than allowing someone with the Artificer feat alone to build up a large collection of inventions.



SAMPLE MAGICAL ITEMS

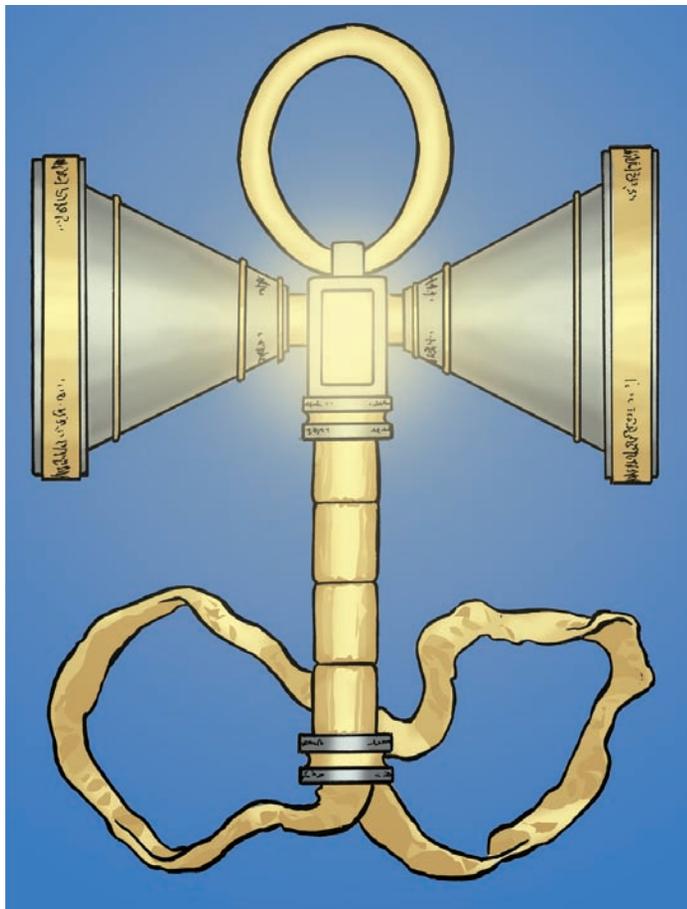
Though some of these items contain background descriptions tying them to the *Freedom City* setting, such references are easily ignored or mechanics traded out to tweak for non-Freedom City games. For example, the Ankh of the Avenger represents the weapon of a deity—change the physical description and trade out the Light Control array for a Weather Control array, and you have a reasonable substitute for a classic thunder god's weapon.

ABYSSAL TRIDENT

DEVICE 30 • 91 POINTS

Easy to lose; Indestructible; **Hellfire Control 13** (Perception Range, Selective Attack, Shapeable Area; *Alternate Powers*: **Illusion 15** [all senses], **Teleport 12** [Accurate; Medium—evil individuals; Change Direction, Change Velocity, Easy]), **Mental Transform 10** [into evil person; Continuous, Insidious; Subtle 2, Trigger (touching the trident)], **Strike 10** (Aura, Fortitude Save, Sustained)

A dark iron weapon reputedly forged from the blackest souls of the damned, the Abyssal Trident appears to have been crudely beaten and hewn into shape. It projects a field of black fire around its wielder and taps into infernal powers to create highly realistic illusions and emit terrible flames. A user can move through space to within close proximity of any soul tainted by evil, and in the hands of someone not already allied with or bound for the Pit, it slowly corrupts the user into acts of evil and depravity. Similar items in the shapes of other weapons are not unknown and have been seen in the hands of more than one netherworld's Dark Lord. They're also known to find their way to a Dark Lord's lieutenant or an otherwise decent person who might be corrupted by them.



ANKH OF THE AVENGER

DEVICE 23 • 72 POINTS

Easy to lose; Indestructible, Restricted 2; **Blast 14** (heat and light; Penetrating; Accurate 2, *Alternate Powers*: **Dazzle 15** [visual], **Light Control 15**, **Strike 8** [Penetrating; Mighty, Thrown]), **Enhanced Feat 1** (Instant Change), **Flight 8** (2,500 mph), **Immunity 9** (life support; Linked to Space Travel), **Space Travel 8**, **Super Movement 2** (dimensional, mystical dimensions; Portal; Progression 5 [x 50 mass]), **Super Senses 10** (true sight)

The weapon of the hero Horus the Avenger, this warhammer's profile resembles the ankh after which it is named. It has bell-shaped striking heads, a solid metal loop at its top, and it glows with an internal light. Where leather straps would wrap around a mundane warhammer's handle, the Ankh's straps appear made of gold.

In the hands of Horus, it was a terrifying weapon, capable of unleashing heat and fire at its wielder's command and shattering buildings with its mighty blows. It allowed him to fly, cross the void and pierce dimensional barriers, and it's said no deception could survive in its presence. While the Ankh returned to Heliopolis with its wielder when Horus retired from adventuring in the mortal world, it's possible it might return, perhaps in the hands of a worthy wielder chosen by the Avenger himself.

ASSASSIN'S BLADE

DEVICE 5 • 16 POINTS

Easy to lose; Restricted (member of appropriate cult); **Drain Constitution 8** (Insidious, Linked to Strike; Subtle), **Strike 3** (Penetrating; Mighty)

There are any number of weapons enchanted to deal more vicious or even hidden damage, but the black kris knives of the Waking Hand of Kar'Kradas cult represent a commonly recognized archetype for such a weapon, with the Fang of Sobek a close second in recognizability.

BRACERS OF ARCANE PROTECTION

DEVICE 13 • 52 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Absorption 12** (magical attacks, applied to Healing; Both Types, Energy Storage; Limited to magical effects; Progression 5 [storage])

Traditionally worn by the Hierarch of the Manus Argentum, these twin metallic bracers made from the purest silver have Enochian script winding around their entirety. Anyone wearing the bracers is extremely difficult to harm with magic, as the bracers simply "consume" incoming magical energies, fueling healing enchantments that revitalize the wearer. Since the destruction of the Manus Argentum order at the hands of the Dark Lord Una centuries ago, copies of these items have made their way through many worlds.

CHIMERIC BRAND

DEVICE 18 • 72 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Shapeshift 10** (Free Action)

A single thin bar of black iron twisted into the shape of a talon, this brand is absorbed in the body in an agonizing fashion when pressed against the chest of a user. It remains so until the wielder is incapacitated, at which time it appears to fall out of the wielder's chest and onto the ground. While possessed, the Chimeric Brand allows a user to take the semblance and abilities of any living thing they have ever seen or can imagine, switching between forms with the speed of thought.

CONJURE CLOAK

DEVICE 20 • 80 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Dimensional Pocket 6** (Sustained; Progression 10 (x5,000 mass), **Feature 1**, **Teleport 12** (Accurate, Portal; Change Direction, Change Velocity; *Alternate Power*: **Super Movement 3** [dimensional 3, any dimension; Portal])

Thought to have been first created by apprentices of Ios while attempting to duplicate some of her minor magical feats, the Conjure Cloak is a seemingly indestructible, cowled garment carrying a number of useful enchantments. First and foremost, the cloak is a portal into a pocket dimension that can be used to store just about anything, up to and including people (such as the wearer). By stepping into the cloak's folds, a wearer can also travel across continents, worlds, and even dimensions, all in an instant. Lastly, the cloak discards grime, stains, and travel-wear like water from a duck's back, staying permanently clean and fresh (though the same may not always be said of its wearer).

THE DRIOGANO TAROT

DEVICE 17 • 51 POINTS

Easy to lose; **Probability Control 10** (Fortune, Jinx, Shapeable Area, Selective Attack; *Alternate Powers*: **Blast 10** [Perception Range; Indirect 3, Subtle 2], **Deflect 10** [all attacks; Free Action, Ranged; Subtle 2], **Luck Control 4** [Bestow, Negate, Reroll, Share; Selective Attack, Shapeable Area], **Telekinesis 10** [*heavy load*: 12 tons; Perception Range, Selective Attack, Shapeable Area; Precise, Subtle 2]), **Super Senses 4** (precognition; Full Round Action, Requires Knowledge (arcane lore) Check)

A set of antique and highly detailed tarot cards, this deck once belonged to Margali Driogano, self-styled "witch queen" of Tuscany during the middle ages. Enchanted by the gypsy witcheries of multiple generations of Driogano women at the height of their power, this deck gifts its possessor with formidable control over chance, up to and including warping probability and causing events as improbable as walls suddenly collapsing on people, enemies tripping over each other to get in the way of attacks aimed at the user, and other unbelievable strokes of luck. It is also quite accurate in predicting the future (that it may then act to bring about, if need be).

ENCHANTED ARMOR

DEVICE 3 • 12 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Immunity 5** (cold, critical hits, disease, heat), **Protection 5** (Impervious)

In days past, this type of magic rested in chain- and plate-based armors. Today, it is equally at home in Kevlar mesh and flak vests.

THE EYE OF ARGON

DEVICE 24 • 96 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Create Object 8** (solid energy constructs; Movable; Precise, Progression 2 [200-ft. cube]), **Enhanced Attack 8**, **Enhanced Constitution 10**, **Enhanced Defense 8**, **Enhanced Dexterity 14**, **Enhanced Feat 2** (Attractive 2), **Enhanced Strength 8**, **Flight 6** (500 MPH), **Immunity 9** (life support), **Protection 3** (Impervious)

The Eye of Argon is a dark gemstone dating back to pre-cataclysmic Atlantis. With a malign intelligence of its own and a desire to experience life's many pleasures, the Eye possessed cub society reporter Amanda McKittrick in Freedom City, turning her into the supervillainess Opal in the 1940s, a regular foe of the original Siren and the Liberty League. Ms. McKittrick was eventually freed from the Eye of Argon's influence, thanks to Eldrich and the League, and the Eye is currently under-guard in Atlantis, where it waits, patiently and silently calling out to another who might be susceptible to its influence....

FLYING CARPET

VEHICLE 3 • 14 EQUIPMENT POINTS

Strength 30, Speed 3 (air), Defense 9, Toughness 12, Size Large

This can be any item enchanted for use as an unusual form of conveyance. Forms range from carpets to broomsticks to cauldrons—only the name and physical description changes.



GRASSCUTTER

DEVICE 8 • 25 POINTS

Easy to lose; Indestructible; **Drain Constitution 2** (Continuous, Linked to Strike, No Saving Throw; Power Loss if target takes no damage from Strike), **Strike 14** (Penetrating)

The legendary katana wielded by gods and heroes in Japanese mythology, Grasscutter is the pinnacle of weapons, meant to cut through any mortal obstacle and able to cleave steel like paper. Even the smallest cut is supposedly fatal, as anyone cut by Grasscutter begins to bleed and continues to do so until death or powerful magic intercedes, which ever comes first.

MASK OF THE MODROSSUS

DEVICE 20 • 83 POINTS

Hard to lose; Indestructible, Restricted 2; **Enhanced Charisma 10**, **Enhanced Feats 11** (Fearless, Fearsome Presence 5, Luck 5), **Enhanced Magic 10**, **Enhanced Wisdom 20**, **Feature** (inspiration from the Modrossus), **Immunity 10** (aging, life support), **Immunity 20** (magical effects, Limited to half-strength), **Protection 8** (Impervious 2), **Super-Senses 8** (cosmic awareness, detect magic [mental; acute, analytical, extended 3])

The Modrossus seldom intervene directly in mortal affairs, preferring instead to act through any number of agents and pawns in their eternal struggle against encroaching chaos. On a rare few occasions, however, powerful enough enemies have forced The Lumenvirate to take a more active hand.

The Mask of the Modrossus is an artifact of legendary strength, enabling its wearer to incarnate an aspect of The Three-Who-Are-One through her own physical form. While wearing the mask, more accurately described as a helm, that person becomes an almost-avatar of the

Modrossus, with all of the incredible magical power, will, and presence that implies.

Those who attempt to usurp the power of the mask by wearing it without the approval of the Modrossus risk having their minds burned out for the offense. The presumptuous wearer must make a Will save (DC 20) against a Mental Blast effect each round the Mask is worn. Those succumbing to it and falling unconscious are left permanently mad.

MASK OF THE MUSES

DEVICE 6 • 24 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Emotion Control 10** (No Saving Throw; Sight-Dependent)

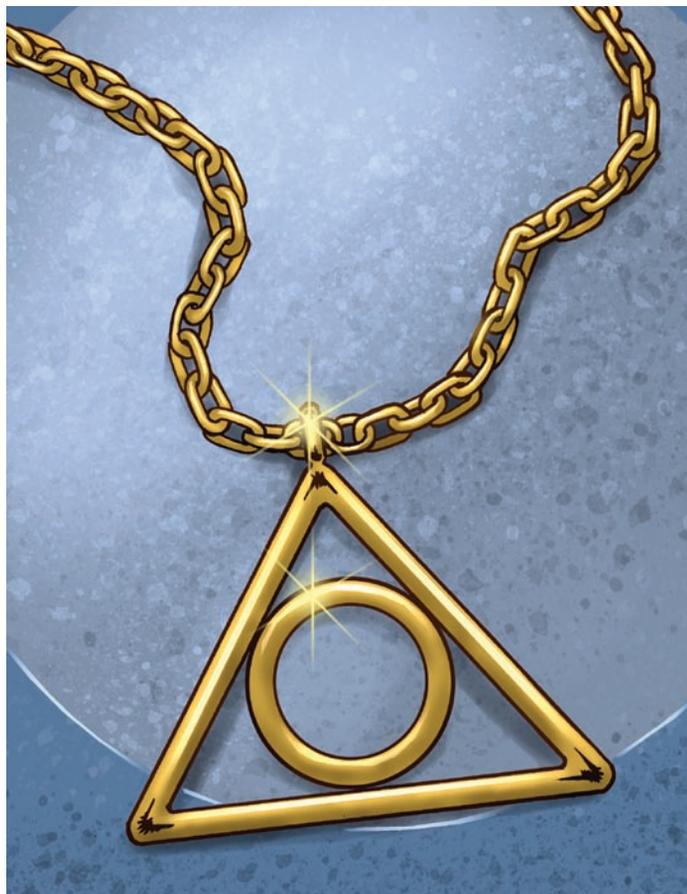
According to legend, Hecate made this mask for Hades as payment of a long-standing debt, and he, in turn, gave it to one of his many agents to use on Earth. That agent, his name never spoken of in the tales, became too confident in its power and attempted to turn the mask against his master. His ultimate fate varies from story to story, but it is always a terrible one.

A silver mask similar to those worn by actors on the ancient Greek stage, the Mask of the Muses changes expression to match that of its wearer, and it forces any who behold its visage to feel the emotion expressed by it. It is said no one who sees the mask's face can resist its magic, although in at least one case, Hades seems to have proven this untrue.

MEDALLION OF THE MODROSSUS

DEVICE 1 • 4 POINTS

Easy to lose, Restricted; **Enhanced Feats 5** (three Alternate Power feats: **Dazzle** [visual, Dynamic], **Mind Reading** [Dynamic; Move/Standard Action], **Nullify Summon** [supernatural creatures; Perception Range])



This silver clasp bearing the Mark of the Modrossus (a circle within a triangle) has been part of the regalia of various Master Mages for millennia. It's currently worn and used by Adrian Eldrich.

The Medallion is a powerful instrument of truth and overcoming the forces of darkness and chaos. At the wearer's command, it emits a blue-white light able to blind, read thoughts, or banish creatures of supernatural evil. Its, power, however, is limited by the strength of its wielder, who must be schooled in the arcane arts (i.e., have the Magic power). The user must also be worthy in the eyes of the Modrossus in order to tap into the medallion's power.

THE PHILOSOPHER'S STONE

DEVICE 8 • 24 POINTS

Easy to lose; **Transform 10** (elements; 2,500 lbs.)

The legendary Philosopher's Stone is the ultimate dream of many alchemists. It has the power to transmute the elements, turning lead into gold, water into mercury, or oxygen into chlorine. The Stone itself looks fairly unremarkable: a polished grey rock that fits easily into the palm of the hand, although to those with Mystic Awareness, the Stone is clearly a potent magical item.

THE PRIME ELEMENTS

DEVICE X

The Prime Elements are the crystallized essences of the four cardinal elements of western magic: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. Each appears as a large, faceted gemstone, shimmering with inner power. The Air Element is clear like diamond. The Earth Element is a deep, emerald green. The Fire Element is ruby-red and shines the brightest of the four, while the Water Element is deep sapphire, shimmering like the ocean depths.

Possession of even one of the Prime Elements is said to bestow complete control over the associated element. This is far beyond almost any measurable rank of the Element Control power; a wielder of the Water Element, for example, could literally control all the water in the world! The other Prime Elements can grant similarly powerful abilities.

Fortunately for the world, the Prime Elements are exceedingly difficult to master, and the secrets of controlling them are lost or hidden. One attempt to steal them transformed a group of criminal archeologists into the supervillains known as the Factor Four (*Freedom City*, page 154). Since then, their leader, Professor Fathom, has sought to learn enough about the Prime Elements to master them, thus far without success.

THE RING OF AGES

DEVICE 22 • 88 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Immunity 10** (temporal effects), **Regeneration 1** (Resurrection; True Resurrection), **Time Control 12** (Perception Range; *Alternate Powers*: **Super-Movement 3** [temporal; Portal], **Time Stop 12** [No Saving Throw])

This red crystal ring resembles an indeterminate number of ouroboros serpents twining one around another. Believed to date back to ancient Lemuria, the details of its origins are unknown. Given its abilities, this is unlikely to change. It may well be the Ring is its own origin, part of some temporal loop, or else from an alternate history erased by one of its wearers.

The wearer of the Ring of Ages is not only immune to the normal rigors of time and age, but also quite invulnerable to any changes wrought to time or through power over time. Further, the ring's wielder can control the passage of time in the vicinity and even travel through time itself.

The Ring of Ages is considered too dangerous an artifact to be allowed to fall into the wrong hands, but it often appears to have a mind of its own, disappearing from the custody of those who try to guard it.

DEVICE VS. PLOT DEVICE

It's important to keep in mind that in a subgenre including gods, angels, demons, and mystical trinkets that can create or destroy worlds on a whim (or bottle one up... literally), not everything actually needs game stats. If any part or parcel of the comic book milieu calls for Power Level X devices, it's the world of magic. When distinguishing between devices with actual game mechanics, as opposed to plot devices, keep a few questions in mind:

- How are the characters going to interact with this item?
- Is this something that should be possible to destroy, resist, or evade without a compelling story purpose?
- How frequently is this item going to come into play, and is it something the plot actually requires numbers to be established for any elements of it?

In many cases, the answers to these questions go a long way in answering the GM's dilemma. To use established examples from canon, in Marvel Comics, the grimoire called *The Darkhold* is an example of a plot device. It is quite beyond the ability of any player character to affect in any way not called for explicitly in the plot and is rarely used (with good reason). The Black Knight's *Ebony Blade* (still playing in Marvel's toybox), however, involves direct character interaction, and if used in a game, it would most probably include characters rolling saving throws (Will and Toughness, most likely). It *can* be resisted, it *does* get resisted, and therefore, it calls for actual numbers (though those may vary from campaign to campaign and from GM to GM).

This same logic holds true for places and adventure locations, as well as toys and trinkets.

Staying in canon, but switching companies, in DC Comics' *Shadowpact*, *The Oblivion Bar* is a statted location. It appears frequently in that title, characters (and their powers) interact with the elements of the Bar on a mechanical basis, and it could (under the right circumstances) be owned and controlled by the equivalent of player characters. Conversely, *The Rock of Eternity* in *Shazam* is a plot device. Its only limits are those needed by the plot, it is quite outside the ability of any (remotely playable) character to destroy or control, and its powers are seldom directed in such a way that they require numbers to define.

THE SCRYING STONE OF SIRRION

DEVICE 15 • 45 POINTS

Easy to lose; **ESP 15** (all senses; No Conduit [perception effects don't work through it]; Knowledge (arcane lore) Check Required, DC 25; Dimensional, Subtle 2), **Super-Senses 18** (aura reading, cosmic awareness, detect evil, detect lies, detect magic, see invisible, true sight; Knowledge (arcane lore) Check Required, DC 28 for all senses)

Many believe this obsidian sphere is the precursor to all crystal balls on Earth, the prototype for the entire tradition of such scrying devices. If anyone knows the truth of the matter, they aren't talking. Its purported creator, the fabled archmage Sirrion, is known for discovering and adding many of what would later become fundamental structures of magic and artifice to Earth's store of occult knowledge, so it's quite possibly true. As with many other such items of mystic power, the Scrying Stone is currently in the possession of Earth's Master Mage.

SEAL OF THE YELLOW SIGN

DEVICE 13 • 39 POINTS

Easy to lose; **Confuse 12** (Incurable, Reversible; No Saving Throw, Perception Area; *Alternate Powers*: **Summon Lesser Eldritch Horror 19** (Full Round Action), **Mental Transform 16** (to worshipper of the Unspeakable One; Triggered by physical possession of the Seal); No effect against worshippers of the Unspeakable One)

One of the more dangerous tools possessed by the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, the Seal is a palm-sized oval of pale yellow jade, flat and with an attached leather strap on its reverse side, carrying the enchanted blazon of the Yellow Sign on its front.

Any unfortunate soul who lays eyes on the sign and is not protected by membership in the loathsome cult is driven mad, stripped of all reason. Prolonged exposure can darken a target's soul and drag them onto the path of worship already trod by the Sign's wielders. There are stories that a powerful enough wielder can even call upon servitors of their dread master, the Unspeakable One, but that could easily just be an ability of such an accomplished wielder rather than the instrument itself.

The Brotherhood has been known to "lose" the Seal from time to time, but such instances often turn out to be ploys to place the sinister Yellow Sign in the right hands to corrupt the unwary with its power and draw them into the cult.

SECOND-CHANCE RING

DEVICE 3 • 12 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Regeneration 15** (+8 recovery bonus, Resurrection, 1/minute; True Resurrection; Limited to one Resurrection check only)

This type of item has actually appeared in the form of numerous kinds of jewelry, but most frequently it is a ring. Regardless of form, it acts to give its wearer one opportunity to escape from otherwise certain death and return to life.

SEEKING DAGGER

DEVICE 2 • 6 POINTS

Easy to lose; **Blast 3** (Homing 4 [25 attempts])

Though in modern times this type of weapon has more commonly been replaced by firearms carrying the same sorcerous effect, many traditionalists still prefer the old stand-by dagger that is thrown and magically returns to its user's hand afterward. Moreover, this enchanted blade follows a target until it hits its mark, or it is unable to and returns to its wielder.

THE SERAPHIC SIGIL

DEVICE 7 • 24 POINTS

Easy to lose; Indestructible, Restricted 2; **Telepathy 15** (*Alternate Powers*: **Dazzle 15** [visual; Cone Area; Touch Range], **Healing 6** [Cone Area, Selective, Total], **Mental Blast 7**, **Nullify Darkness 15** [all effects at once; Cone Area; Touch Range])

Said to have been given to John Dee by his angelic allies, this Seal is a puissant aid for the forces of light. Able to pierce any darkness, peer into even the strongest of minds, and strike at the very souls of those whose corrupt touch would threaten its wielder, the Seraphic Sigil is a potent weapon in a mage's arsenal.

THE SERPENT SCEPTER

DEVICE 16 • 50 POINTS

Easy to lose; Indestructible, Restricted; **Mind Control 20** (Burst Area, Conscious, Sustained Duration; Limited to Serpent People, Touch Range; *Alternate Power*: **Transform 20** [human to Serpent Person; Burst Area])

The Serpent Scepter is an artifact of the ancient Serpent People civilization of Lemuria. It is a rod of greenish stone, similar to jade except infinitely harder, about two feet long and carved in the shape of a writhing serpent.

The scepter is infused with preternatural power. Among other things, the Serpent Scepter is completely indestructible to any known force. Over the millennia, guardians aware of the Serpent Scepter's power have tried to place it out of the reach of would-be wielders: at the bottom of the sea, in ancient vaults, and even in dimensions beyond this one. Always the Scepter seems to find its way into the hands of those it can corrupt with its power.

The Serpent Scepter's powers involve the ability to control minds and transform creatures into reptiles. It possesses the Mind Control and Transform powers at rank 20, both with the Area extra, allowing them to affect a radius of up to 100 feet. The Scepter's Transform power can turn creatures into different sorts of reptiles or restore transformed creatures to their normal forms.

Anyone who uses the Scepter's power must make a Will saving throw (DC 30) to avoid being corrupted by it. A failed Will save means the character becomes increasingly possessive of the Scepter and willing to use its power. The character becomes paranoid that others want to steal the Scepter away and will do anything to avoid being separated from it. The wielder of the Serpent Scepter is eventually transformed by its power into a Serpent Person.

SEVEN-LEAGUE BOOTS DEVICE 3 • 12 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Teleport 4** (Accurate; Change Direction, Change Velocity, Easy)

Users wearing these (or similar shoes, or in some cases, pieces of jewelry, cloaks, or pretty much anything with this enchantment) appear to quickly fade away as they take a step, as each step carries the wearer great distances.

THE STAFF OF DOMINATION DEVICE 18 • 54 POINTS

Easy to lose; **Mind Control 12** (Burst Area, Conscious, Effortless, Instant Command, Selective Attack, Sensory Link; Knowledge (arcane lore) Check Required, DC 22; Mental Link, *Alternate Power*: **Dimensional Pocket 10** [Continuous, Perception Range; Knowledge (arcane lore) Check Required, DC 20; Progression 4 [x25 mass])

A stone staff with jagged spikes on its ends, this tool is covered in various sigils representing the name and worship of Bal'Hemoth, a terrible batrachian demon-god once followed by the Lemurians. A knowledgeable user can call upon the power of Bal'Hemoth's name to seize control of mortal minds or banish enemies to a dark and nameless dimension.

SUSANO'S BRILLIANT BANNER DEVICE 15 • 45 POINTS

Easy to lose; **Environmental Control 12** (weather effects; mix-and-match option, up to 6 points per rank), **Immunity 1** (own powers)

Originally assembled by a coterie of priests dedicated to the storm god Susano-We, this red and gold mounted battle standard received the blessing of their patron during a confrontation with an army of demons spilling out from the Schattenwelt. Since that day, whoever possesses the banner has been able to call upon the heavens to change weather patterns over vast areas or bring intense changes to localized patterns, ranging from inducing tranquil peace during monsoon season to forcing blizzard conditions in the height of summer in the middle of the Gobi desert.

TRIDENT OF POSEIDON DEVICE 8 • 24 POINTS

Easy to lose; **Animal Control 10** (Burst Area; Limited to sea-creatures; Mental Link, Progression 5 [rank x 250 ft. radius]), **Strike 6** (Penetrating; Mighty, Thrown)

Forged of orichalcum by the great sorcerer-kings from before Atlantis sank beneath the waves, the golden Trident of Poseidon is a focus for

powerful arcane energies. It helped protect Atlantis from the Serpent People and the preternatural servants of the Nameless Ones. The Trident survived the sinking of Atlantis and has been passed down through generations of Atlantean monarchs as part of the royal regalia. It rarely ever leaves the royal palace, except when wielded by a monarch going to war. Even then, the Trident is used sparingly, as its power is more important to Atlantis than any individual ruler.

UNIVERSAL KEY DEVICE 1 • 3 POINTS

Easy to lose; **Enhanced Disable Device 10** (+40 bonus; Limited to opening locks)

This key (or small bell, or in at least one case, a crystal wand) opens any locked door, portal, or similar obstruction simply by touching it.

WARDING BRACER DEVICE 2 • 8 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Force Field 10** (Impervious; Limited to a specific type of attack or attacker)

Another item that has appeared as many different forms of jewelry, the traditional form for a Warding Bracer is a wide metal bracelet with various protective sigils and inscriptions covering its surface.

WISHING RING DEVICE 20 • 80 POINTS

Hard to lose; **Animate Objects 15** (Additional Type [any], Horde; Progression 5 (up to 50 objects), *Alternate Powers*: **Create Object 20** [Continuous; Innate, Precise, Progression 10 (size), Subtle], **Summon 18** [Broad Type (any), Fanatical, Horde; Progression 5 (up to 50 subjects)], **Transform 13** [anything into anything; Continuous]; Power Loss when unable to verbally express wishes)

No one is quite sure who created the first of these rings, though the Arabic and Sanskrit inscriptions along the ring's surface and the djinn-like appearance of the spirit answering the wearer's summons tends to make most think the rings originate in Asia Minor or the Arabian Peninsula. Rubbing the ring brings forth a ghostly servant that grants the wearer's wishes—including creating almost anything the wish-maker desires (or a facsimile thereof), bringing normally unliving objects to life, and transporting whoever or whatever (or a facsimile thereof) the user wants directly into their hands.

MYSTIC TEXTS

A special kind of "magical item" is the mystic text, whether an actual bound book or a collection of scrolls or other writings. Such texts provide valuable insights into arcane lore and may be treasure troves of spells and rituals.

Possession of a mystic text may be a prerequisite to spending earned power points on a particular spell for a character's Magic array, for example. Magicians often search far and wide for scraps of hidden lore for just this reason. Likewise, the design phase of a magical ritual or invention could involve researching in different texts, with the Knowledge skill check representing finding the right passages and diagrams, rather than coming up with them from scratch.

Lastly, a powerful mystic text might be a Device unto itself, so potent that reading from it or even just possessing it provides its owner with various powers. For example, a mystic hero might derive some or all of her powers from reading spells out of an ancient and powerful book like the Manual of the Modrossus. The tome may provide the Magic power or simply the spells (Alternate Power feats) that draw upon the reader's raw Magic.

The following are some sample mystic texts and how they may be used.

THE BUTTERFLY DICTUM

Cause and effect. Seemingly irrelevant choices or accidents may have dramatic results in the end. The Butterfly Dictum is a set of chaos-magic disciplines encompassing this concept, setting into being a chain of events resulting in the magician's will being done. This phenomenon is best known to non-occultists as the "Butterfly Effect" after Edward Lorenz's paper "Predictability: Does the Flap of a Butterfly's Wings in Brazil set off a Tornado in Texas?" presented to the American Association for the Advancement of Science in 1972. Interestingly enough, in a 1963 paper, Lorenz used the flap of a seagull's wing as the basis for this theory; some magicians believe his interest in the concept brought him into contact with the Butterfly Dictum and led him to change his example.

The butterfly has, throughout many cultures, been seen as a strange otherworldly thing, transient and only partially of this world. The Butterfly Dictum has roots in several ancient practices, most notably among the Haida (where Butterfly is the dreamer companion of the trickster Raven), the Japanese (where the butterfly is unattainable beauty and whimsy), and the Aztec (for whom the butterfly always played a strange, otherworldly role). Masters describing this form of magic have always used the butterfly or moth as a symbol of the way a magician must approach the world—lightly flitting from one endeavor or topic to the next, resting overlong on none of them, the way a butterfly flits from spot to spot.

The Butterfly Dictum itself is also unusual because the original text—written on a manual typewriter from the look of it—is missing. It exists only as collections of photocopied pages and, presently, scanned graphics files. The book also has a tendency to find its way into the hands of those able to use it, although not always to use it well. It leaves them just as easily when the time comes.

The ideas and practices contained in the Butterfly Dictum primarily relate to chaos magic as a means of influencing luck and probability. Casual understanding shows the potential for lucky breaks and winning streaks, but a deeper reading opens up virtually limitless possibilities, since influence over the possible and the improbable is what the text is all about.

THE LOCARNO DIARIES

The Locarno Diaries are actually a collection of six journals handwritten by the 17th century Swiss clockmaker Hans Locarno, also known as Lord Deosil, the Master Mage of his time. Weyan particularly favored him, and the Diaries are filled with his meditations and journeys into the mysteries of the workings of the White Hand. All the various spells attributed to Weyan can be found in the Locarno Diaries, along with designs for a number of fantastic clockworks, some of which are of unknown purpose.

More curious are a number of cryptic prophecies written in each of the volumes of the Diaries, similar in style to the works of Nostradamus a century earlier. Many mystics have found truth in these passages and claim Lord Deosil possessed a profound ability to foresee the future. Some claim he couched his prophecies in metaphor and symbolism to ensure only the worthy would discover them, but a few wonder if the renowned precision of the Master Mage is seen even in his writings, a kind of painstakingly planned domino effect worked out across the centuries, intended to bring about certain key events in order to ensure or prevent certain things in the present day.

Adrian Eldrich has the first and third of the Locarno Diaries and copies of the second and fourth, which are owned by private collectors. The fifth and sixth volumes are missing and would be of tremendous value to anyone who finds them.

MANUAL OF THE MODROSSUS

This legendary tome of arcane lore is the most powerful collection of spells and rituals for good ever known. Its origins are shrouded in antiquity, but it has passed through the hands of most (if not all) of Earth's Master Mages over the millennia.

The Manual is a heavy book of ancient vellum pages covered with illuminated script in a variety of languages, many of them completely unknown to modern scholars. It is bound in deep blue leather, said to be dragon-hide, with brass cover-caps, a locking clasp, and the sign of the Modrossus—a circle inside a triangle—on the cover in brass. In spite of its apparent age, the Manual is actually far older and virtually indestructible by mortal means. Among its unusual properties is the fact that the last page of the book is always blank; there always appears to be space to write new text, and many Master Mages have added to the Manual over the years.

The Manual was lost for a time in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, claimed by the Cult of Kar'Kradas after the untimely death of Master Mage Violet Pennyworth. Adrian Eldrich later reclaimed it from the Cult's vile clutches, and it now resides in a warded vault in his sanctum in Freedom City.

THE PILLARS OF BHÂT

The Pillars of Bhât is the name given to a collection of Egyptian, Babylonian, and Sumerian scrolls of demon-lore gathered by blasphemous Arabic sorcerers called the Bhâti. Masters of summoning ifriti and the devils of the deserts, the Pillars of Bhât outline the magics of those wicked entities. At their core, the Pillars of Bhât are the metaphysical explanation of the sources of natural evil and tragedy in the world. The Bhâti learned to invoke them for their own ends.



The First Pillar is called the *Pillar of Fire*, so-called out of the understanding that burning is the source of purest physical and spiritual agony. Eventually, the human body inures itself to other pains, but the Bhāti teach that for as long as the body is capable of feeling pain, burning continues to bring agony. Fire is both holy and unholy, and to be wielded with caution. Upon the First Pillar stands the demon-king Asakku.

The Second Pillar is the *Pillar of Hunger*. Hungers of all kinds—hunger and desire—drive men to all manner of depravities. Hunger consumes and causes dissolution, and it is a physical manifestation of a spiritual Void. Around the Second Pillar is coiled Apep, the Eater of the Sun, and magicians invoking this power have the ability to utterly unmake the things of the world, feeding them to Apep.

The Third Pillar is the *Pillar of Contagion*. Wickedness is known by its ability to pass itself from one sinner to the innocent, through the generations. Likewise, as sin is the spiritual contagion, disease—which passes itself from one host to the next—is the physical contagion. Atop the Third Pillar crouches Lamastu, the killer of infants and bringer of disease, with a lion's head and serpents in her hands.

The Fourth Pillar is the *Pillar of Storms*. The sudden descent of chaos into the ordered life of the faithful can cause despair and sin. Such chaos often revolves around a central pillar, a source at the eye of the storm. In nature, this principle manifests as a great storm from out of the desert, devastating blowing winds that may be the sandstorm, the hurricane, the typhoon, or the tornado (all various forms of Weather Control). Atop the Fourth Pillar is Pazuzu or Sutekh, both demon-gods of the desert.

The Fifth Pillar is the *Pillar of Dissonance*. Dissonance, whether the terrible cacophonies of the secular world that drown out the words of the faithful or the silent doubts and terrors that drive a man from his faith, is the source of much evil in the world. Dissonance within the mind is madness, and within the spirit, it is confusion and sin. Atop the Fifth Pillar stands Honblas, the demon-horn blower, whose music is purest chaos and agony.

The Sixth Pillar is the *Pillar of Death*. The final end is a terror for the faithful, for it is the end of their time in which to live a righteous life. With death, all things are cast into doubt, doubly so when the death comes suddenly and without warning. Above the Sixth Pillar flies Mastema, a bringer of death, the demon-angel responsible for the slaughter of the first-born sons of Egypt.

THE RAVANA SUTRAS

A collection of prayer scrolls and ritual techniques from ancient India, the Ravana Sutras were used by worshippers of the rakshasa, demons who seek to trap mankind within Maya, the Great Illusion of the world. The diligent practitioner of Hinduism knows that by transcending this Great Illusion—by liberating the self from the concerns of the ego and the world—one can achieve enlightenment. But throughout history, there have been those who sought out the rakshasa, seeking greater pleasure and wealth in this world, regardless of how temporary or false. Over the centuries, the secrets wrested from these rakshasa have been compiled into the Ravana Sutras, a collection of Hindu-based spells of illusion and falsehood.

The best-known spells of the Sutras include the *Maya-Puja*, considered the most wicked prayer in the Sutras, for it strengthens the Maya world-illusion and allows a mortal to mimic the rakshasa's power to craft falseness. The practice of World-Prana teaches the practitioner to breathe in the illusory world around him, to seem to be part of that world. Another spell, simply called Unseen and Unholy, teaches the rakshasa-beloved to transcend the simple wickedness of the world with his own, mightier wickedness, seeming to vanish entirely from the Maya. Finally, the practitioner may grant another the True Sight, whispering the blasphemies of the Ravana-cults backwards and stripping away the Maya from the mind of a foe. Though this is the ultimate goal of spiritual

practice, it is too much, too soon, flooding the mind with all the understanding that is supposed to be gained through slow enlightenment, overwhelming the mind of those unfortunate enough to experience it.

THE SONG OF THE NIGHT

This collection of poems was written by the 17th century Arabian mystic Azim the Wise, based on a thousand and one nights of meditation in the desert, listening to the sounds of the wind, animals, birds, and insects, which Azim claimed were the voices of powerful spirits speaking to him. To modern occultists, it seems clear Azim's work was influenced by contact with the Howling Dream; the symbolism and descriptions are consistent with channelings of that entity.

While little more than a curious collection of obscure poetry to scholars, the verses of the Song of the Night contain vital clues for magicians seeking to invoke the powers of the Howling Dream and traverse the dream world. Unfortunately, the book has an ill-omened reputation, as many who have owned it have gone mad or met an untimely death.

SANCTUMS SANCTORUM: MYSTIC HEADQUARTERS

Mystic heroes, just like any others, need a place to hang their capes and shut out the troubles of the outside world to meditate and practice their arcane arts. Moreover, mystics often need places of power, strongholds in their battles to protect the world from hostile forces beyond mortal ken. Thus, many mystics (or groups of mystics) have a headquarters of some sort.

Mystic headquarters are created according to the same guidelines as given on pages 145-148 of *M&M*. As mentioned there, headquarters are not like other "equipment," in that they are locations rather than things characters carry around with them. Thus, headquarters are an exception to the rule that magical items are normally Devices; mystic HQs can have powers just as other HQs can, and they are still acquired using equipment points.

NEW FEATURES

The following new features are appropriate for mystic headquarters, although they may apply to others, at the GM's discretion.

DIMENSIONAL PORTAL

The headquarters has a portal or gateway to another dimension or dimensions. This can range from an otherwise innocuous-looking door to a high-tech portal surrounded by support equipment and monitors. The portal provides two-way travel to and from the other dimension, and it may even reach a number of related dimensions. At the GM's discretion, an appropriate skill check, typically Knowledge (arcane lore or technology), may be required to operate the portal.

DUAL SIZE

The headquarters has two separate Size categories: its inside category, purchased normally, which determines the structure's interior space, and an outside category, one or more size categories smaller. In essence, the headquarters is larger on the inside than on the outside. So a small house, for example, might contain the space of a huge castle on the inside. This costs 3 points (for Huge) plus the cost of this feature. The GM may even allow size categories beyond Awesome, with each additional category increasing size by the standard value progression (to 10,000 ft., 25,000 ft., 50,000, etc.); expensive HQs could be pocket universes!

PERSONNEL

The headquarters has a staff of personnel commensurate with its size and facilities. The staff is made up of characters created and controlled



by the GM and tasked with serving the headquarters. As such, they shouldn't be considered all-purpose Minions of the occupant(s) of the HQ. So, while an HQ's personnel may help defend it in case of attack, they're not going to go with the owner on adventures or otherwise assist outside of their duties. This feature simply ensures there's someone taking care of the headquarters while the owner isn't at home.

SEALED

This is similar to the Isolated feature (*M&M*, page 147), except the HQ is sealed off from the outside world rather than being isolated by geographic location. It may be behind a barrier, or it may be a structure with no doors, windows, or other outside access. Only the HQ's owner and designated guests may enter, although the GM should determine means by which trespassers might do so, including alteration or movement powers like *Insubstantial* and *Teleport*.

SELF-REPAIRING

The structure of the headquarters "heals" any damage done to it over time. Essentially, it recovers like a character does (*M&M*, page 165), removing an injured condition per hour and recovering from a disabled condition in a day. If this feature is taken twice, the structure will even rebuild itself in a week if it is destroyed! If it cannot rebuild in its original location, it reappears in the nearest suitable place.

TEMPORAL LIMBO

Time within the headquarters actually moves at a different rate than that of the world outside the headquarters! Time within the structure is either slowed or sped up compared to the normal passage of time, passing at half or twice the normal rate. Each additional application of this feature moves the ratio of time passage one step up the Value Progression Table: one-fifth or five times, one-tenth or ten times, and so forth.

SAMPLE MYSTIC HEADQUARTERS

Gamemasters can use the following as ready-made headquarters for mystic heroes or villains in the series. Players can use them as examples for creating their own headquarters.

ANCIENT CASTLE

HEADQUARTERS

Size: Huge; *Toughness:* 10; *Features:* Isolated, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Power System, Security System

Cost: 10 equipment points

HAUNTED MANSION

HEADQUARTERS

Size: Large; *Toughness:* 10; *Features:* Defense System (arcane defenses), Garage, Library, Living Space, Personnel (ghostly servants)

Cost: 7 equipment points

ISOLATED TOWER

HEADQUARTERS

Size: Large/Gargantuan; *Toughness:* 15; *Features:* Communications (scrying pool), Dual Size, Holding Cells (dungeons), Library, Living Space, Power System, Sealed (no doors or windows), Self-Repairing, Workshop

Cost: 15 equipment points

URBAN BROWNSTONE

HEADQUARTERS

Size: Tiny/Gargantuan; *Toughness:* 10; *Features:* Concealed, Dimensional Portal, Dual Size, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Pool, Power System, Security System (DC 30), Self-Repairing, Workshop

Cost: 18 equipment points

ARTIFICIER

POWER LEVEL 10

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+3	+1	+7	+4	+1
10	16	12	24	18	12

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+11/+1*	+8	+9	+11

*Without amulet

Skills: Concentration 8 (+12), Craft (artistic) 8 (+15), Craft (chemical) 8 (+15), Craft (structural) 8 (+15), Disable Device 8 (+15), Knowledge (arcane lore) 8 (+15), Knowledge (art) 4 (+11), Knowledge (history) 4 (+11), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 4 (+11), Notice 4 (+8), Pilot 4 (+7), Search 4 (+11), Sleight of Hand 4 (+7)

Feats: Artificer, Dodge Focus 2, Equipment 3 (sanctum), Improved Tools, Set-Up, Skill Mastery (Craft, Disable Device, Sleight of Hand), Sneak Attack, Ultimate Effort (choose one Craft skill)

Sanctum: Tiny/Gargantuan; **Toughness:** 10; **Features:** Concealed, Dual Size, Library, Living Space, Power System, Security System (DC 30), Self-Repairing, Workshop

Powers:

Device 3 (amulet of protection, hard to lose)

Device 1 (boots of leaping, hard to lose)

Device 6 (mojo pouch, easy to lose; Restricted)

Super-Senses 3 (mystic awareness, acute, extended)

Amulet of Protection: **Protection 10** (Impervious 5)

Boots of Leaping: **Leaping 5** (x50 distance)

Mojo Pouch: **Magic 12** (choose six Alternate Powers)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +8, Damage +0 (unarmed) or by power, Defense +9 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -8, Initiative +3

Abilities 32 + Skills 19 (76 ranks) + Feats 11 + Powers 38 + Combat 30+ Saves 20 = Total 150



The Artificier is a mystic focused around the creation and enchantment of magical items. Rather than rhyming spells and incantations, the Artificier relies on potions, powders, amulets, and other tools of the trade. The archetype can represent an alchemist, enchanter, or other type of mystic reliant on magical items rather than spellcasting abilities. The Artificier's primary magical Device is a "mojo pouch," or shoulder bag, containing a variety of talismans, potions, powders, and the like.

With some slight adjustments, the Artificier can also serve as a Technomancer archetype: replace the mojo pouch with a laptop computer or PDA with the same power, the boots with sneakers or athletic shoes, and the Super-Senses power with Datalink. Replace the artistic and structural specialties of Craft with electronic and mechanical and Craft (chemical) with Computers.

ELEMENTALIST

POWER LEVEL 10

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+2	+4	+1	+3	+2
15	15	18	13	16	15

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+10/+2*	+6	+7	+6

*Without Force Field

Skills: Bluff 4 (+7), Concentration 10 (+12), Knowledge (arcane lore) 8 (+9), Knowledge (earth sciences) 4 (+5), Notice 6 (+8)

Feats: Accurate Attack, Animal Empathy, Power Attack, Quick Change

Powers:

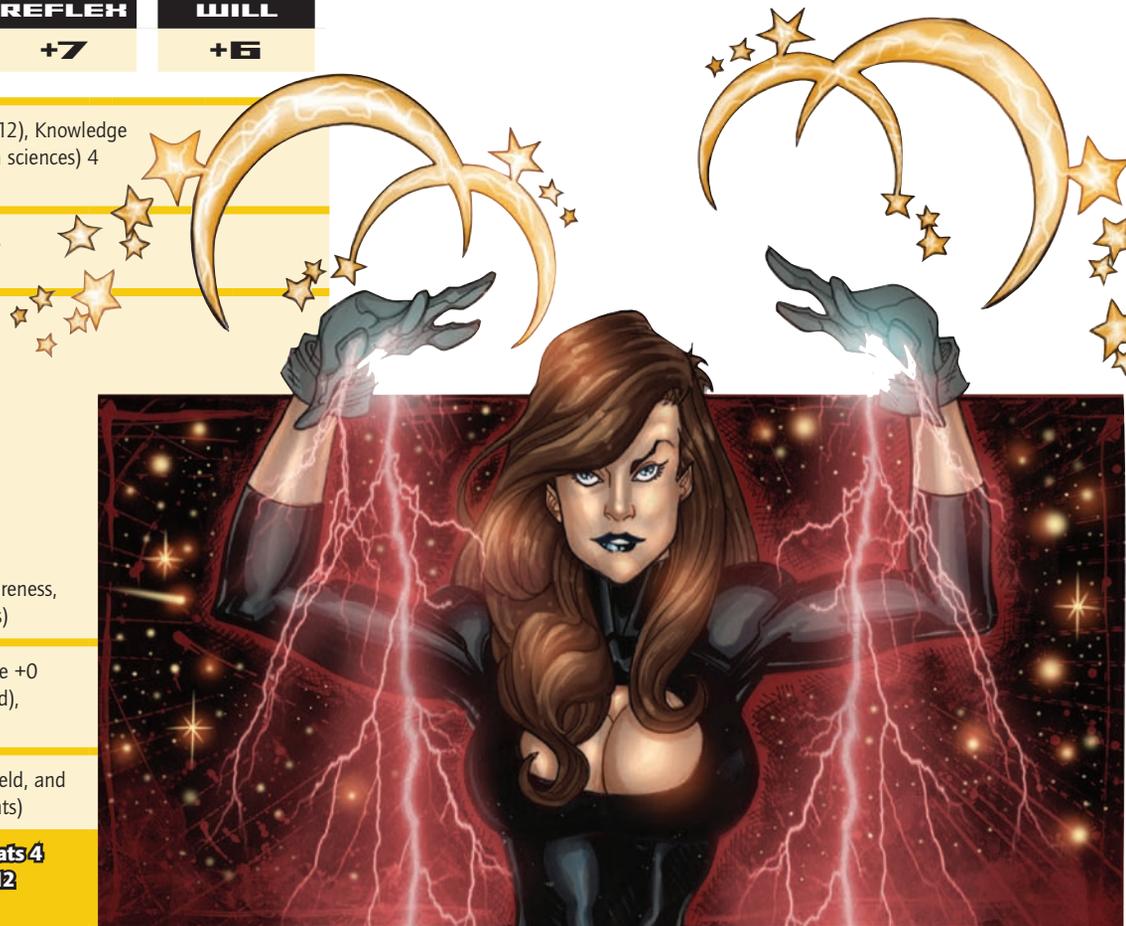
- Flight 6** (500 MPH)
- Force Field 8** (Impervious)
- Immunity 10** (elemental damage)
- Magic 12** (elemental, **Air Control 12**)
- Alternate Power: **Blast 12**
- Alternate Power: **Earth Control 12**
- Alternate Power: **Fire Control 12**
- Alternate Power: **Water Control 12**
- Alternate Power: **Weather Control 12**
- Super-Senses 4** (mental; elemental awareness, mystic awareness, acute mental senses)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +8, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +10 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -9, Initiative +3

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Flight, Force Field, and Magic, if unable to cast spells, -3 points)

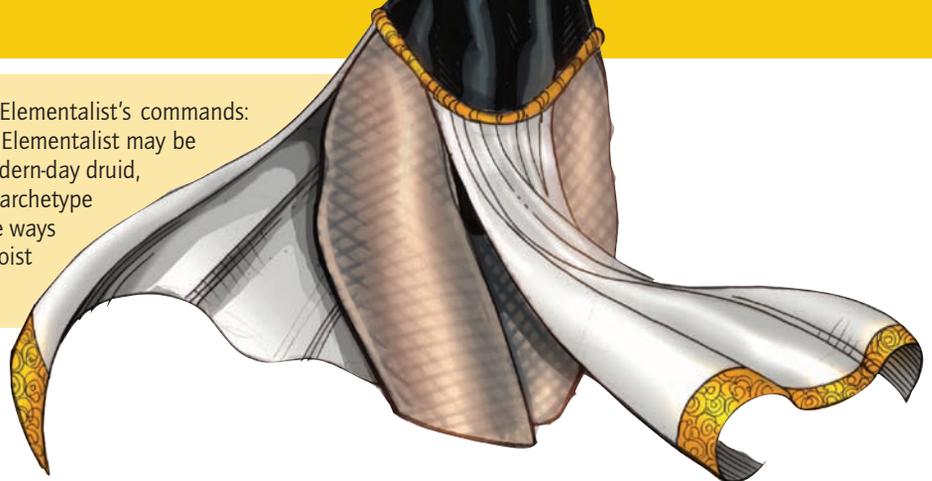
Abilities 22 + Skills 8 (32 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 71 + Combat 36 + Saves 12 - Drawbacks 3 = Total 150

"IT'S NOT NICE TO FOOL MOTHER NATURE!!!"



JAMES OR

The powers of the elements respond to the Elementalists' commands: wind and water, stone, fire, and weather. The Elementalists may be a witch in tune with the natural world or a modern-day druid, initiated into the secrets of the elements. The archetype can even represent an Asian mystic wise in the ways of the *wuxing*, the five-element system of Taoist mysticism.



INFERNALIST

POWER LEVEL 10

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+1	+4	+1	+5	+2
14	12	18	13	20	14

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+10	+10	+5	+10

Skills: Bluff 4 (+6), Concentration 8 (+13), Drive 7 (+8), Intimidate 8 (+10), Knowledge (arcane lore) 10 (+11), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 10 (+11), Language 1 (infernal), Notice 4 (+9), Sense Motive 8 (+13), Stealth 4 (+5)

Feats: Attack Specialization (trident), Fearless, Fearsome Presence 2, Power Attack, Startle

Powers:

Device 2 (infernal trident, easy to lose; Indestructible, Restricted)

Hellfire Control 11

Protection 6

Summon Infernal Chariot 2 (Continuous, Fanatical)

Super-Senses 2 (infernal awareness, mystic awareness)

Infernal Chariot: Medium-size; *Strength:* 35; *Toughness:* 10; *Speed:* 6 (air, 500 MPH); *Features:* Smokescreen, Super-Movement 2 (dimensional, infernal dimensions)

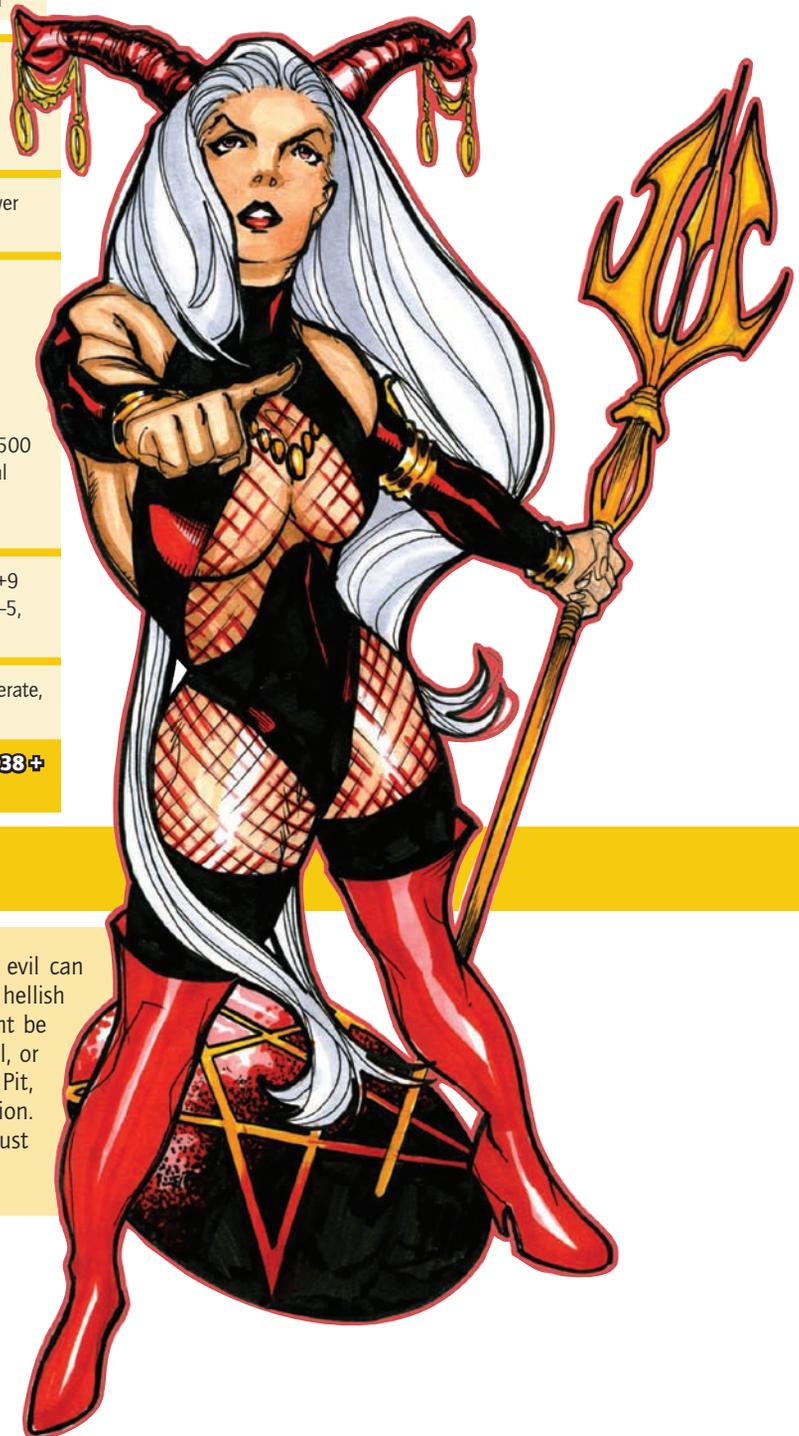
Infernal Trident: **Strike 7** (Affects Insubstantial, Mighty, Thrown)

Combat: Attack +9, +11 (trident), Grapple +11, Damage +2 (unarmed), +9 (trident), +11 (hellfire blast), Defense +10 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -5, Initiative +1

Drawbacks: Involuntary Transformation (demonic self, uncommon, moderate, -2 points)

Abilities 31 + Skills 16 (64 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 46 + Combat 38 + Saves 15 - Drawbacks 2 = Total 150

"YOU FACE THE UNLEASHED FURY OF HELL ITSELF!"



The Infernalist is living (or unliving) proof that the forces of evil can be turned to good and constructive ends. This mystic wields hellish powers, either by right of birth or choice. The Infernalist might be a half-demon, born of the unnatural union of human and Hell, or a mortal mystic who dared to claim the powers of the Eternal Pit, or was perhaps tricked into doing so, but now seeks redemption. Whatever the case, the Infernalist's powers are potent, but must be handled with great care.

MASTER MAGICIAN

POWER LEVEL 15

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+2	+4	+1	+3	+2
15	15	18	13	16	15

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+7/+4*	+8	+8	+6

*flat-footed

Skills: Concentration 12 (+22), Diplomacy 4 (+7), Gather Information 4 (+7), Intimidate 8 (+11), Knowledge (arcane lore) 18 (+21), Knowledge (history) 12 (+15), Language 6 (ancient tongues), Sense Motive 4 (+14), Sleight of Hand 4 (+6)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 5, Fearless, Ritualist, Trance, Ultimate Save (Will), Ultimate Skill (arcane lore)

Powers:

Astral Form 10

Alternate Power: **Flight 8**, **Force Field 15** (Impervious 10), and **Immunity 9** (life support, Sustained)

Magic 16 (Dynamic, all Alternate Powers Dynamic; choose two in addition to the following)

Alternate Power: **Animate Objects 10**

Alternate Power: **Blast 16**

Alternate Power: **ESP 10** (visual & auditory)

Alternate Power: **Illusion 6** (all senses)

Alternate Power: **Mental Blast 8**

Alternate Power: **Obscure 16** (visual)

Alternate Power: **Snare 16**

Alternate Power: **Telekinesis 16** (heavy load: 800 tons)

Alternate Power: **Telepathy 16**

Combat: Attack +8 (melee), +13 (ranged), Grapple +8, Damage +0 (unarmed), +16 (blast), Defense +10, Knockback -13, Initiative +2

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Magic, if unable to cast spells, -1 points)

Abilities 39 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 10 + Powers 106 + Combat 36 + Saves 17 - Drawbacks 1 = Total 225

"I DO NOT COME AMONGST YOU LIGHTLY, MY FRIENDS, BUT FOR REASONS OF THE GRAVEST IMPORT."



If the Master Magician is not the greatest mage in the world, then there are only a few of equal or greater power. This archetype is suitable for a truly powerful master of the mystic arts: the central character in a solo series (see **Chapter 3**), a sometime ally of a team of more conventional heroes, the mentor of a group of less powerful mystics, or a member of a "pantheon" of similarly powerful, archetypal heroes.

While the Master Magician is tremendously powerful, the archetype is not without vulnerabilities. With a normal +1 Toughness, a surprise attack could take out the Master Magician before a fight even begins, and even this powerful sorcerer cannot cast spells if bound or unable to speak.



MYSTIC KNIGHT

POWER LEVEL 10

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+1	+3	+0	+1	+2
15	12	16	10	13	15

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+8/+3*	+8	+6	+7

*Without armor

Skills: Diplomacy 6 (+8), Handle Animal 4 (+6), Intimidate 6 (+8), Knowledge (arcane lore) 4 (+4), Knowledge (history) 4 (+4), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 4 (+4), Notice 4 (+5), Ride 8 (+9), Sense Motive 8 (+9), Survival 4 (+5)

Feats: All-out Attack, Assessment, Attack Focus (melee) 2, Attack Specialization (sword), Dodge Focus 2, Endurance, Fearless, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Sunder, Inspire, Interpose, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Quick Draw (sword), Set-Up, Startle, Takedown Attack, Weapon Break

Powers:

Device 2 (armor, hard to lose)

Device 5 (shield, easy to lose)

Device 3 (sword, easy to lose; Indestructible)

Summon 2 (flying horse; Continuous, Fanatical, Heroic)

Armor: Protection 5 (Impervious)

Shield: Deflect 12 (all ranged attacks)

Sword: Strike 6 (Mighty, Penetrating, Penetrating Strength 2)

Flying Horse: As horse (*M&M*, page 231) with Str 15 and **Flight 3** (Power Loss, wings, -1 point)

Combat: Attack +10 (melee), +12 (sword), +8 (ranged), Grapple +12, Damage +2 (unarmed), +8 (sword), Defense +12 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -6, Initiative +5

Abilities 21 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 21 + Powers 43 + Combat 36 + Saves 16 = Total 150

"HOLD, BLACKGUARD!
YOUR REIGN OF
TERROR ENDS
NOW!"



The Mystic Knight is a magically armed and armored hero, a guardian against supernatural threats and mundane blackguards alike. The Knight may be a time-lost survivor of the Middle Ages, cast up on the shores of the present, or the inheritor of a knightly mantle and all the powers and responsibilities thereof.

With enchanted sword, shield, and suit of armor, the Mystic Knight is the equal of many a superhuman foe, and with the aid of a magical flying steed, she can reach those in need quickly. In a group of magical heroes, the Mystic Knight may be a stalwart ally of those more conversant in the mystic arts but not as skilled in matters of warfare.

OCCULT INVESTIGATOR

POWER LEVEL 6

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+1	+2	+4	+4
10	12	12	14	18	18

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+3/+1*	+4	+4	+8

*Flatfooted

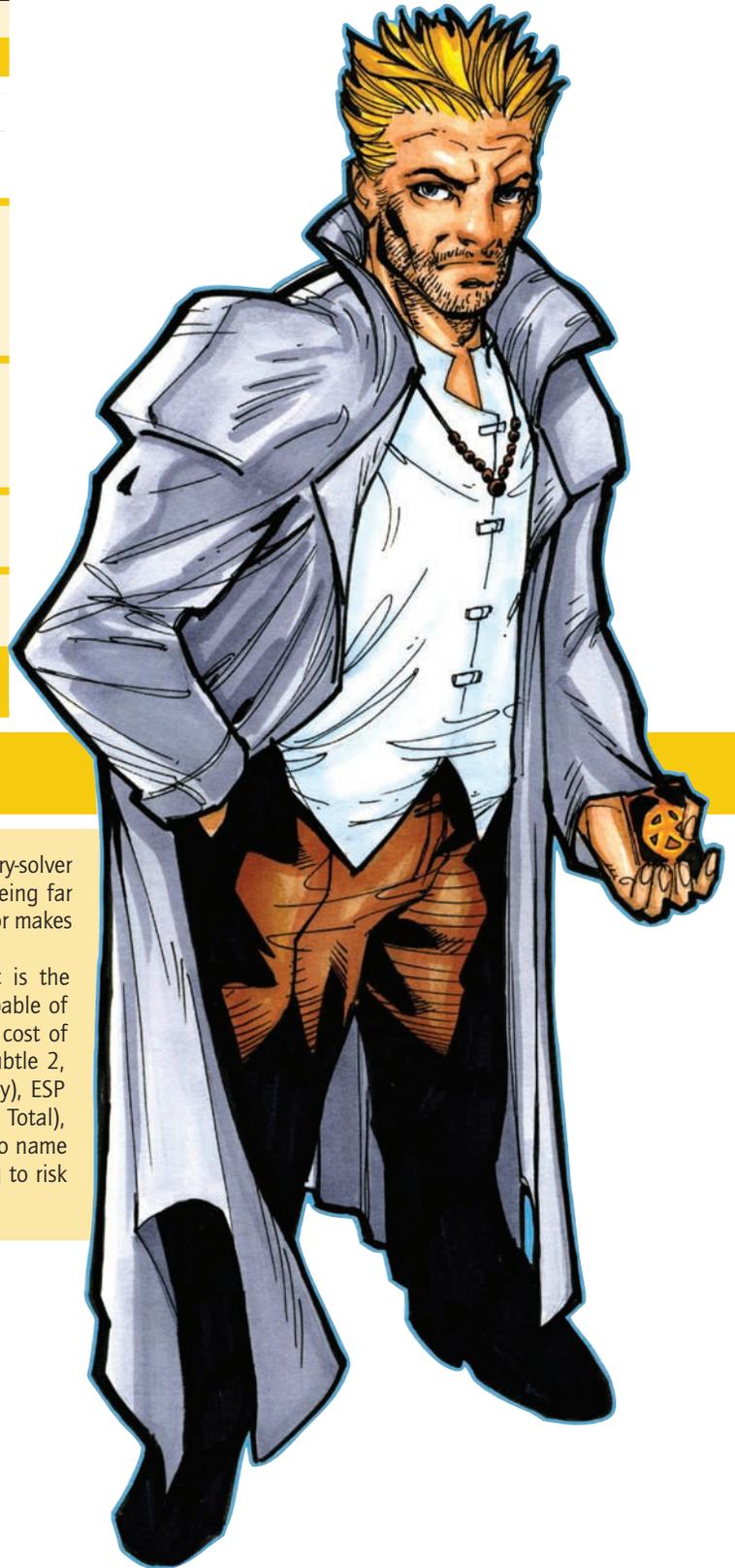
Skills: Bluff 8 (+12), Concentration 4 (+8), Diplomacy 4 (+8), Disable Device 4 (+8), Gather Information 8 (+12), Intimidate 4 (+8), Investigate 8 (+10), Knowledge (arcane lore) 10 (+12), Knowledge (streetwise) 8 (+10), Language 2 (player's choice), Notice 6 (+10), Search 8 (+10), Sense Motive 8 (+12), Stealth 6 (+7)

Feats: Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 3, Equipment 2, Luck, Ritualist, Well-Informed
Equipment: pistol (+3 damage), cell-phone, plus 3 points of miscellaneous items

Powers:
Super-Senses 1 (mystic awareness)

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +9 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +1

Abilities 24 + Skills 22 (88 ranks) + Feats 11 + Powers 1 + Combat 22 + Saves 10 = Total 90



The Occult Investigator is a detective of the mystical, a mystery-solver rather than a warrior or potent arcane guardian. Still, in spite of being far closer to "mere mortal" than master magicians, the Occult Investigator makes up any lack in sheer power with cleverness and connections.

Apart from sheer skill, the Occult Investigator's greatest asset is the Ritualist feat: with a +12 skill bonus, the archetype is routinely capable of rituals with a DC of 22 by taking 10, sufficient for effects with a cost of 12 power points. That's enough for Communication 10 (mental, Subtle 2, anywhere on Earth), Concealment 6 (all visual and normal auditory), ESP 4 (sight and hearing, 1 mile range), Healing 4 (Resurrection or Total), Possession 3, or Summon 6 (mystic servitor like a demon or spirit), to name a few. Higher levels of power are possible, if the character is willing to risk failure, and a hero point allows for a jury-rigged, on-the-spot ritual.

"SORRY, MATE, YOU
 HAVE GOT A PROBLEM,
 BUT I CAN TAKE CARE
 OF IT."

CHAPTER 3: THE MYSTIC SERIES

In some regards, running a mystic *Mutants & Masterminds* series is like running any other superhero game: the heroes encounter villainous plots hatched by their foes and must find ways to overcome them, while safeguarding the people under their protection.

Unlike other costumed heroes, however, mystics cannot rely on much support from the conventional authorities (or sometimes even from their fellow heroes), since many of the foes they fight are well beyond the

jurisdiction of any earthly authority, leaving matters in the hands of the mystics themselves.

The material in this chapter supplements **Chapter 11** of *Mutants & Masterminds*, providing a selection of mystic villain archetypes, supporting cast characters for the heroes, and various arcane creatures and minions to challenge them. It concludes with some mystic series frameworks, providing ideas for different kinds of games using the material in this book.

VILLAIN ARCHETYPES & MINIONS

The following archetypes cover the major villains encountered by mystic heroes, suitable for use as antagonists in a magical *M&M* game.

Of the existing villain archetypes in the *M&M* rules (pages 212-225), the following are particularly appropriate for mystical games:

The Brain in a Jar can represent a disembodied psychic or mystic kept alive by alchemy or arcane "mad science" rather than technology; just change the power descriptors as needed. Increasing power cost by 20 points can change the Brain's **ESP** power to **Astral Form**, allowing it to operate on the astral plane, looking either like its previous self or as a hovering astral brain.

The Corrupt Sorcerer is the *de facto* villain archetype of mystic games. Adjust the power level and Magic rank to suit the series, depending on whether or not the Sorcerer is intended to challenge one character or a group of mystics.

The Evil Robot can just as easily be a magical construct as a machine; the villain Talos, in *Freedom City*, is a mystical "evil robot," for example (*Freedom City*, page 158). Just change the descriptors on the Robot's powers.

The Hulking Brute is a good archetype for powerful mystic creatures like giants or ogres, or strong and not terribly bright demons under an evil magician's control. It also works well for superhumanly powerful zombies and revenants risen from the dead. Similarly, the Kung Fu Killer makes a good minion for a sinister mystic of an Eastern bent.

The Puppeteer can be a subtle and dangerous mystic foe who specializes in using poppets (like the infamous "voodoo doll") or similar charms to control people from afar. The Savage Man-Beast is a good archetype for lycanthropes and similar shape-changers (possibly adding a Vulnerable to Silver drawback).

Lastly, the Vampire Lord may be a foe for a mystic hero, particularly using the variation of adding the Magic power, creating a Vampire Sorcerer. For higher-level mystics, the Vampire Lord can be a vampiric minion of a more powerful villain.

Additionally, you can use the hero archetypes from *M&M* and **Chapter 2** as villains. In particular, the Costumed Adventurer, Energy Controller, and Martial Artist make useful agents of a more powerful mystic villain. The Mystic archetype, naturally, works as a mystic villain as well as a hero, and the Psionic and Shapeshifter can easily be made into mystical foes.

VARIATIONS AND CAPERS

The following are some ways to customize and use the villain archetypes found on pages 76-82 in your mystic *M&M* games.

DEMON OF FEAR

The Demon of Fear may be a literal demon, a creature from an infernal netherworld, or it may be some other sort of supernatural entity, like a ghost, spirit, or even a minor deity or embodiment from the Collective Unconscious. There may be many such entities, belonging to different classes of supernatural beings.

Similarly, there may be demons of other negative emotions, such as Hate, Greed, or Jealousy, possessed of similar powers, goals, and appetites. These creatures try to stoke the flames of their own particular emotion and draw people into behaving in a certain way to feed their own power and influence.

The Visual Area extra on the Demon's Emotion Control power causes it to work like a Sight-Dependent effect (*M&M*, page 115) but on *everyone* able to see the creature. Although targets get two saving throws (a Reflex and a Will save), this is a net extra because of the increase in area of effect. Those unable to see the Demon are immune to its fear-inspiring power. The GM should decide if opponents with the Fearless power feat constitute a sufficiently common vulnerability for the Demon's Insubstantial power, keeping in mind characters can emulate the feat by spending a hero point. If judged insufficient, you can change it to any opponent who succeeds at a Will saving throw at an appropriate DC (say 20).

ALL THE WE HAVE TO FEAR...

A fear of the occult and all wielders of magic is burning like wildfire through the city, including its otherwise level-headed heroic community. Extreme measures for restricting or banning the "dangerous" practice of magic and anything to do with it are under consideration, and no reasonable argument holds any sway over the growing mob mentality, particularly from mystics already cautious about how much they can reveal to others. The Demon of Fear is manipulating events behind the scenes, feeding off the growing fear of the only foes able to stop it. Once they are eliminated, its reign of terror will only have just begun!

ORDINARY FEARS

A new "self-help guru" is encouraging people to cast off their fears, with amazing results: previously terrified people have conquered deep-seated phobias. Curiously, the mystics begin inexplicably *acquiring* these same fears! The Demon is using its power over fear to transfer ordinary people's phobias—fear of open spaces, heights, strangers,

and more—to the mystic community, hoping to cripple them with fear. Then, when ordinary people think they've overcome what they fear most, it will come rushing back and cripple them, granting the Demon even more power. Can the heroes overcome these new fears and defeat the threat?

DIMENSIONAL CONQUEROR

Dimensional Conquerors are major opponents. The archetype presented here has the *minimum* traits for a Dimensional Conqueror. Many can easily be considered Power Level X plot devices (*M&M*, page 211): they're not NPCs to overcome in a direct fight, but challenges the heroes must find some other way to defeat. For example, a Dimensional Conqueror might have unlimited power, but a specific weakness. If the heroes can learn and exploit it, then they have a chance. A common one from the comics is a Dimensional Conqueror bound to an arcane code of honor: if the heroes can extract an oath from him, then he must abide by it, no matter what.

A variation on the mystic dimensional conqueror is the super-science or cosmic-powered dimensional conqueror. Such villains are more often the foes of traditional heroes and super-teams, but there's no reason why a mystic safeguarding Earth's dimension should discriminate based on a would-be conqueror's origin. This variant mainly involves changing some descriptors: making the Magic power into something like Cosmic Energy Control, for example, or possession of a reality-warping super-science device.

THE HERALD

The Dimensional Conqueror sends a herald or lieutenant (such as the Corrupt Sorcerer, Mage-Slayer, or Necromancer) to Earth to pave the way for his master's arrival to claim the world as his own. Even if the heroes are successful in repelling the herald, they still have to deal with his master when he arrives, unless they can find some way to prevent it, such as stopping the ritual intended to bridge the gulf between dimensions.

THE CHOSEN ONE

In a blasphemous rite, the Dimensional Conqueror has placed a portion of his essence in an unborn human child, conceived with the aid of his earthly cult. Shortly after birth, the infant will become a vessel for the Conqueror's power, a living bridge to Earth, bypassing all of the mystic defenses keeping the Conqueror out and giving him free rein in the world. If the heroes can learn where the birthing will take place, are they willing to slay a newborn child in order to safeguard the world from devastation?

ELDER EVIL

The game traits provided assume the Gamemaster wishes to assign an Elder Evil any defined traits at all. Elder Evils are ideal for use as Power Level X plot devices, with powers and motives literally beyond human comprehension. Indeed, this archetype could serve as a *servant* of an even greater Elder Evil, such as the Unspeakable One from *Freedom City* (page 142).

Given the variety found among such spawn of chaos, you have *carte blanche* to change around the Elder Evil's game traits as you see fit to create a horror suitably powerful to challenge the heroes. In particular, you may wish to change the Elder Evil's Confuse, Nauseate, and Strike powers to others better suited to a particular theme, such as blinding smoke, a burning aura, and talons of flame for an Elder Evil associated with a fiery realm.

WAKE THE SLEEPER

The classic Elder Evil scenario involves a ritual intended to summon up the creature from whatever dimension it calls home. The summoners might be delusional enough to believe the Elder Evil will serve them (willingly or bound by the spell) or, at least, slay them last and mercifully, when it destroys the world. Others are mad nihilists who care nothing for the fate of the world or actively wish to hasten its end. For a twist, the summoners might be other heroes, who are looking to bind the Elder Evil or actually seal a rift to its realm, but do so in secret to avoid alerting its earthly worshippers.

WHOM THE GODS DESTROY

Members of an Elder Evil's cult begin shadowing a particular hero, but take no hostile action. When confronted, one admits the hero is the prophesized avatar of their master! The cult claims the Elder Evil in fact engineered the hero's origin, and the hero's powers derive from it. What's worse, the story *could* be true, in which case every time the hero's powers are used, the barrier between dimensions weakens a bit more. Does the hero give up crime-fighting to safeguard the world, or is that simply what the cult and its master would like for him to believe?

JUMPED-UP DABBLER

The primary variation of the Jumped-Up Dabblers is the exact nature of the Item of Power. It can be a book of spells, a magic wand or staff, a jewel or orb, or virtually any other sort of magical item. See the **Magical Items** section of **Chapter 2** for inspiration. Good examples include the Abyssal Trident, Ankh of the Avenger, Mask of the Modrossus, Staff of Domination, and the Wishing Ring.

Some Jumped-Up Dabblers don't gain their increased power from an item, but from another outside source. The classic example is a third-rate sorcerer who has sold his soul to a demon or other entity in exchange for tremendous power. Naturally, once the sorcerer is defeated, his master calls the debt due, and he is dragged down into some hellish afterlife. These Dabblers have the same sorts of powers, just without the Device. In its place, they have another flaw or drawback, usually involving the temporary nature of their powers or a price they must pay.

GO FOR YOUR WAND

With the rush of power, the Jumped-Up Dabblers goes looking to kick some cloaks and demonstrate what a powerful wizard he is now. Naturally, the first mystics he finds are the heroes, and he challenges them to a magical duel. He might do something like take a building full of people hostage in order to encourage them to comply, or he might simply show up out of nowhere to attack them. Ideally, the Dabblers wants an audience to see his accomplishments and, if they're not cheering him on, well, there's always a Visual Area Mind Control effect....

MASTER OF THE WORLD!

Using the Item of Power, the Dabblers transforms the heroes' home city into his personal magical fiefdom, with himself as Supreme Emperor or the like. Naturally, all other mystics are either robbed of their powers, outlawed as criminals, or possibly both. On the run in a strange version of their familiar stomping grounds, the heroes must rely on their skills, wits, and feats like Artificer and Ritualist to figure out what's happened and what they can do to reverse it. You may find the fantasy version of Freedom City from the *Worlds of Freedom* sourcebook useful inspiration for this caper.

DEMON OF FEAR

POWER LEVEL 11

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+4/+11	+1	+6	+1	+5	+6
18/32	12	22	13	20	22

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+13	+6	+4	+12

Skills: Bluff 10 (+16), Intimidate 12 (+18), Knowledge (arcane lore) 6 (+7), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 8 (+9), Notice 4 (+9), Sense Motive 12 (+17), Stealth 8 (+9)

Feats: Assessment, Favored Opponent (shaken foes) 2, Fearless, Improved Grapple, Sneak Attack, Startle

Powers:

Boost Strength 14 (Limited to +1 Str per successful use of Emotion Control)

Emotion Control 11 (Visual Area, Limited to Fear)

Immunity 30 (Fortitude)

Insubstantial 4 (incorporeal, affected by Fearless attackers)

Protection 7 (Impervious)

Strength Affects Corporeal 11

Super-Movement 2 (dimensional; mystic dimensions)

Super-Senses 2 (detect fear, ranged)

Teleport 9

Combat: Attack +7, Grapple +11 (+18 at full Strength), Damage +4 (unarmed), +11 (full Strength), Defense +9, Knockback -10, Initiative +1

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Enhanced Strength and Magic, if a victim succeeds on three successive Will saves against Emotion Control, -2 points)

Abilities 47 + Skills 15 (60 ranks) + Feats 7 + Powers 128 + Combat 32 + Saves 10 - Drawbacks 2 = Total 237

"THE SWEET SUSTENANCE OF YOUR NIGHTMARES ...IT WILL BE MINE TO DEVOUR!"



Fear is one of a mystic's greatest foes, often literally, as this villain proves. Whether an actual infernal creature or a being from the depths of the unconscious, the Demon of Fear is an embodiment of unreasoning terror and despair and tends to feed off these feelings, growing stronger in their presence. Its purpose is to sow doubt, uncertainty, and mind-numbing fear, encouraging all the mistakes and regrets that follow.

Like fear itself, conquering the Demon is often more of a matter of conquering one's self, rather than a head-on struggle. The Demon is immune to many mortal concerns, capable of shrugging off most physical harm, like the living nightmare it is, so long as there is something to feed it. Its weakness lies in being cut off from the source of its power; true courage, willpower, and determination can overcome it and drive it away, at least for a time, until something summons it back to the world once more.

DIMENSIONAL CONQUEROR

POWER LEVEL 15

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+1	+5	+3	+11	+6
14	13	21	17	32	22

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+19/+5*	+10	+6	+19

*Without force field

Skills: Concentration 12 (+23), Diplomacy 8 (+14), Gather Information 10 (+16), Intimidate 8 (+14), Knowledge (arcane lore) 18 (+21), Search 4 (+7), Sense Motive 4 (+15)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 6, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Dodge Focus 3, Ritualist, Trance, Well-Informed

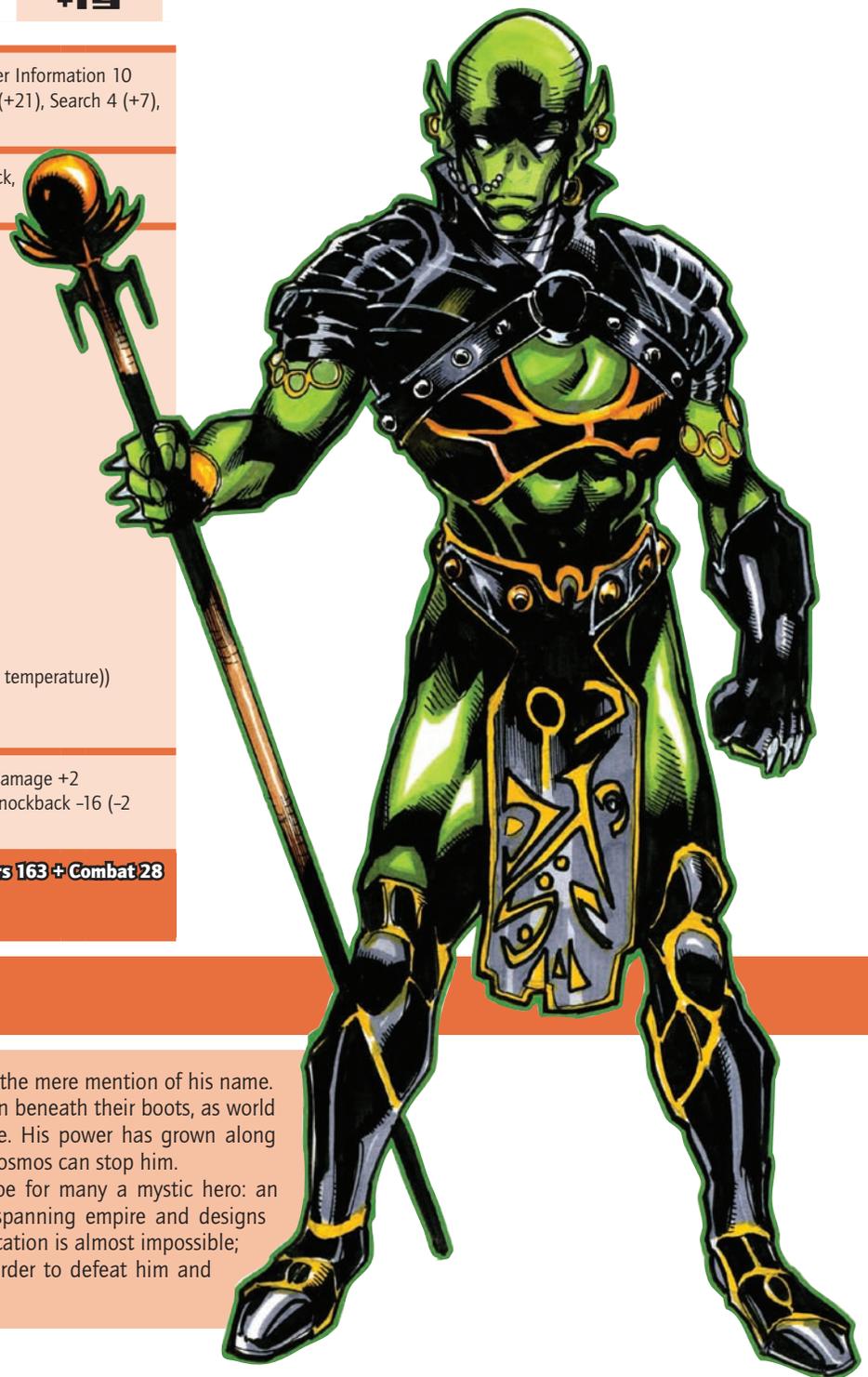
Powers:

Astral Form 10 (Dimensional 3)
Comprehend 2 (languages)
Force Field 14 (Impervious)
Immunity 10 (aging, life support)
Magic 18 (Dynamic, all spells Dynamic)
Air Control 18
Blast 18 (force)
Darkness Control 18
Earth Control 18
ESP 8 (all senses, Dimensional 3)
Fire Control 18
Mental Blast 9
Snare 11 (Backlash, Reversible)
Teleport 9 (Portal)
Teleport 18
Water Control 18
Weather Control 18 (distraction, hamper movement, temperature)
Super-Movement 3 (air walking, dimensional)
Super-Senses 1 (magical awareness)

Combat: Attack +6 (melee), +12 (ranged), Grapple +8, Damage +2 (unarmed), +18 (blast), Defense +11 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -16 (-2 without force field), Initiative +1

Abilities 59 + Skills 16 (64 ranks) + Feats 14 + Powers 163 + Combat 28 + Saves 18 = Total 298

"YOUR DIMENSION'S PUNY INHABITANTS WILL MAKE EXCELLENT ADDITIONS TO MY SLAVE ARMY, WIZARD!."



Over the ages, countless worlds have trembled at the mere mention of his name. Armies of his followers have crushed all opposition beneath their boots, as world after world has fallen under his iron-handed rule. His power has grown along with his dominion, until it seems no force in the cosmos can stop him.

The Dimensional Conqueror is the ultimate foe for many a mystic hero: an implacable and powerful sorcerer with a world-spanning empire and designs on Earth. Overcoming him through direct confrontation is almost impossible; heroes need to be courageous and cunning in order to defeat him and safeguard their world.

ELDER EVIL

POWER LEVEL 16

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+16	-1	+13	+9	+9	+4
42	8	36	28	28	18

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+21	+15	-1	+20

Skills: Intimidate 8 (+20 with size), Knowledge (arcane lore) 12 (+21), Notice 8 (+17)

Feats: Attack Focus 6 (melee), Fearless, Fearsome Presence 8, Ritualist, Seize Initiative

Powers:
Additional Limbs 8 (tentacles)
Communication 10 (mental; Dimensional)
Confuse 12 (reality-warping presence; Sustained Duration, Visual Area; Incurable, Innate)
Mental Blast 12 (mind-shattering contact)
Elongation 4
Environmental Control 6 (secondary reality-warping effect; distraction DC 10)
Feature 1 (dimensional inertia, cannot be summoned involuntarily)
Growth 16 (colossal; +32 Str, +16 Con, -8 Atk/Def, Continuous; Permanent; Innate)
Immovable 10 (anchored in space)
Immunity 20 (aging, life support, mental effects)
Nauseate 15 (Aura, Sustained Duration)
Protection 8 (only partially manifests in three dimensions; Impervious)
Shapeshift 6 (Uncontrolled)
Shield 6 (secondary reality-warping effect)
Strike 9 (dimension-boring tentacles; Affects Insubstantial, Dimensional, Indirect 3, Mighty)
Super Movement 2 (Dimensional Movement 2, mystical dimensions)
Super Senses 12 (cosmic awareness, blindsight [extended 6])
Super Strength 4 (*heavy load*: 1,064 tons)
Teleport 6

Combat: Attack +7 (melee, includes -8 size), +1 (ranged, includes -8 size), Grapple +43, Damage +25 (strike), Defense +2 (includes -8 size), Knockback -70, Initiative -1

Abilities 52 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) + Feats 17 + Powers 368 + Combat 38 + Saves 13 = Total 495

"ᄇᄇᄇᄇ ᄇᄇ ᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇ,
 ᄇᄇᄇᄇ ᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇᄇ!"



There are *things* in the void beyond space and time that care little if mortals exist at all, presuming mortals can interpret the alien thought processes of such entities sufficiently to reach even that conclusion... squamaous things, madness and amorphy in motion, whose very forms defy rationality and the sight of which twists perceptions and minds... things whose very existence is simply *wrong*.

Whether such things even have names of their own other than what foolhardy mortal summoners attribute to them is a matter for debate in the mystic community. Elder Evils answer invocations when it suits *them*, not at the whim of a summoner reckless enough to reach across that final barrier.

Physical descriptions are rather useless when dealing with things with no standard shape or form. GMs should use whatever comes to mind during a scene involving Elder Evils, the grosser and more disgusting the better. Use the uncontrolled Shapeshift to alternate between various traits: sharpened bills and hooks that slide in and out of view, razor-scaled carapaces that harden and melt without warning, vents that open and close to spew sticky acidic goo or flaming mucus, and so on.

Some forms and instances have names and stories told about them, while others have either never been named or simply have never left behind any surviving mortal witnesses to do the naming and recording. The Lord of Bitter Laughter, Coldcrystal, and the Unspeakable One are but a few of the names associated with Elder Evils, but whether each of these corresponds to entirely separate entities or whether there is some crossover in such obscure lore is a matter open to debate among those held foolish enough by the rest of the arcane community to actually devote their time to studying these terrible things.

JUMPED-UP DABBLER

POWER LEVEL 12

STR	DEK	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+0	+0	+1	+0	+0
10	10	10	12	10	10

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+18/+0*	+2	+2	+14/+4*

*Without Item of Power

Skills: Concentration 6 (+6), Craft (choose one) 4 (+5), Knowledge (arcane lore) 6 (+7), Knowledge (history) 4 (+5), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 4 (+5), Sense Motive 4 (+4)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 4, Beginner's Luck, Dodge Focus 2, Luck 3

Powers:

Device 20 (Item of Power, hard to lose)

Item of Power: **Immunity 10** (life support, own powers), **Magic 18** (Blast 18 plus up to 8 other spells), **Mind Shield 10**, **Protection 18** (Impervious)

Combat: Attack +2 (melee), +6 (ranged), Grapple +2, Damage +0 (unarmed), +18 (blast), Defense +6 (+2 flat-footed), Knockback -18, Initiative +0

Drawbacks: Normal Identity (without Item of Power, -1 point)

Abilities 2 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) + Feats 10 + Powers 80 + Combat 12 + Saves 8 - Drawbacks 1 = Total 118

The Jumped-Up Dabbler is a nobody, a mere novice, a magical has-been or wanna-be, if it weren't for a strange twist of fate that placed a powerful magical talisman into his hands, suddenly making him the equal of a master mage, if not more.

Now, the Dabbler means to use this new-found power to get everything he ever wanted, including revenge on all those so-called "masters" who consider themselves above him. He'll show them all what *real* power can do!

The Dabbler is a terribly unbalanced character: tremendous power in the hands of someone who is barely Power Level 3 otherwise. Note the Impervious Protection granted by the Item of Power makes him virtually immune to a direct assault: a damage bonus of +17 or less simply bounces off! He's likewise highly resistant to mental assault and immune to mortal concerns like having to breathe. Still, he's far from invulnerable. The Dabbler's weaknesses lie in human frailties: a fairly low Concentration bonus for maintaining those powerful Sustained effects and a poor Sense Motive and Will save for resisting things like Bluff and (ironically) Intimidate, which can make him blink.



"THE FOOLS ALL LAUGHED AT ME... LET'S SEE IF THEY LAUGH AT THE STAFF OF THE NECRO-KINGS!"

MAGE SLAYER

POWER LEVEL 9

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+2	+3	+1	+1	+2
14	14	17	12	13	15

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+7/+3*	+7	+6	+7/+13**

*Flatfooted **With Mental Shield

Skills: Bluff 6 (+8), Climb 8 (+10), Concentration 8 (+9), Craft (mechanical) 6 (+7), Disable Device 10 (+11), Drive 5 (+7), Escape Artist 6 (+8), Gather Information 11 (+13), Intimidate 9 (+11), Knowledge (arcane lore) 7 (+8), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 8 (+9), Notice 5 (+6), Search 9 (+10), Stealth 10 (+12)

Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus (melee) 2, Critical Strike, Defensive Roll 4, Dodge Focus 2, Endurance, Equipment 4, Evasion, Favored Opponent (magicians) 2, Fearless, Improved Initiative, Ritualist, Seize Initiative, Stunning Attack

Equipment: Sword (or similar melee weapon, +3 damage), plus 13 points in miscellaneous equipment

Powers:

Magic 8 (divine; **Blast 8** plus three other spells)

Mind Shield 6

Nullify Magic 9 (Sustained; *Alternate Power:* **Magic Resistance 9**)

Combat: Attack +10 (melee, +12 vs. magicians), +8 (ranged, +10 vs. magicians), Grapple +12, Damage +2 (unarmed), +5 (weapon), +8 (blast), Defense +12 (+5 flatfooted), Knockback -3, Initiative +6

Abilities 25 + Skills 27 (108 ranks) + Feats 23 + Powers 50 + Combat 36 + Saves 14 = Total 175

"Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live," says the Mage-Slayer, "nor a magician, mage, or mystic of any stripe." The Mage-Slayer is dedicated to the elimination of magic wielders, in spite of often being included among their ranks! Some Mage-Slayers are dedicated crusaders against all things magical, believing the occult is inherently corrupt and evil. They may be divinely empowered to stamp it out, or willing to use the magician's own tools in order to fight fire with fire, ignoring the hypocrisy of such a view by claiming they are doing what must be done.

Other Mage-Slayers are professionals, assassins specializing in mystic targets. They may belong to ancient secret societies or cults, patronized by those with spell-casting foes, including other mystics! Both types of Slayers tend to carefully study and stalk their prey before they strike, which may give a targeted mystic a hint of warning in the nick of time.

**"I WILL CLEANSE YOUR EVIL
TAINT FROM THIS WORLD,
WITCHLING!"**



JAMES-08-

NECROMANCER

POWER LEVEL 12

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
-1	+0	+0	+2	+6	+2
8	10	10	15	22	14

TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL
+14/+0*	+4	+3	+11

*Without Force Field

Skills: Concentration 8 (+14), Intimidate 10 (+12), Knowledge (arcane lore) 12 (+14), Knowledge (history) 8 (+10), Knowledge (life sciences) 8 (+10), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 10 (+12)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 6, Fearsome Presence 4, Ritualist, Trance

Powers:

Force Field 14 (Impervious 8)

Magic 14 (necromancy, choose five additional spells)

Blast 14 (necromantic force)

Drain Constitution 7 (Disease, Ranged)

Obscure 14 (visual, occult darkness)

Snare 14 (skeletal hands bursting from the earth)

Summon Undead 4 (60 points; Fanatical, General Type, Horde; Mental Link, Progression 7 [250 total])

Super-Senses 2 (danger sense, mystic awareness)

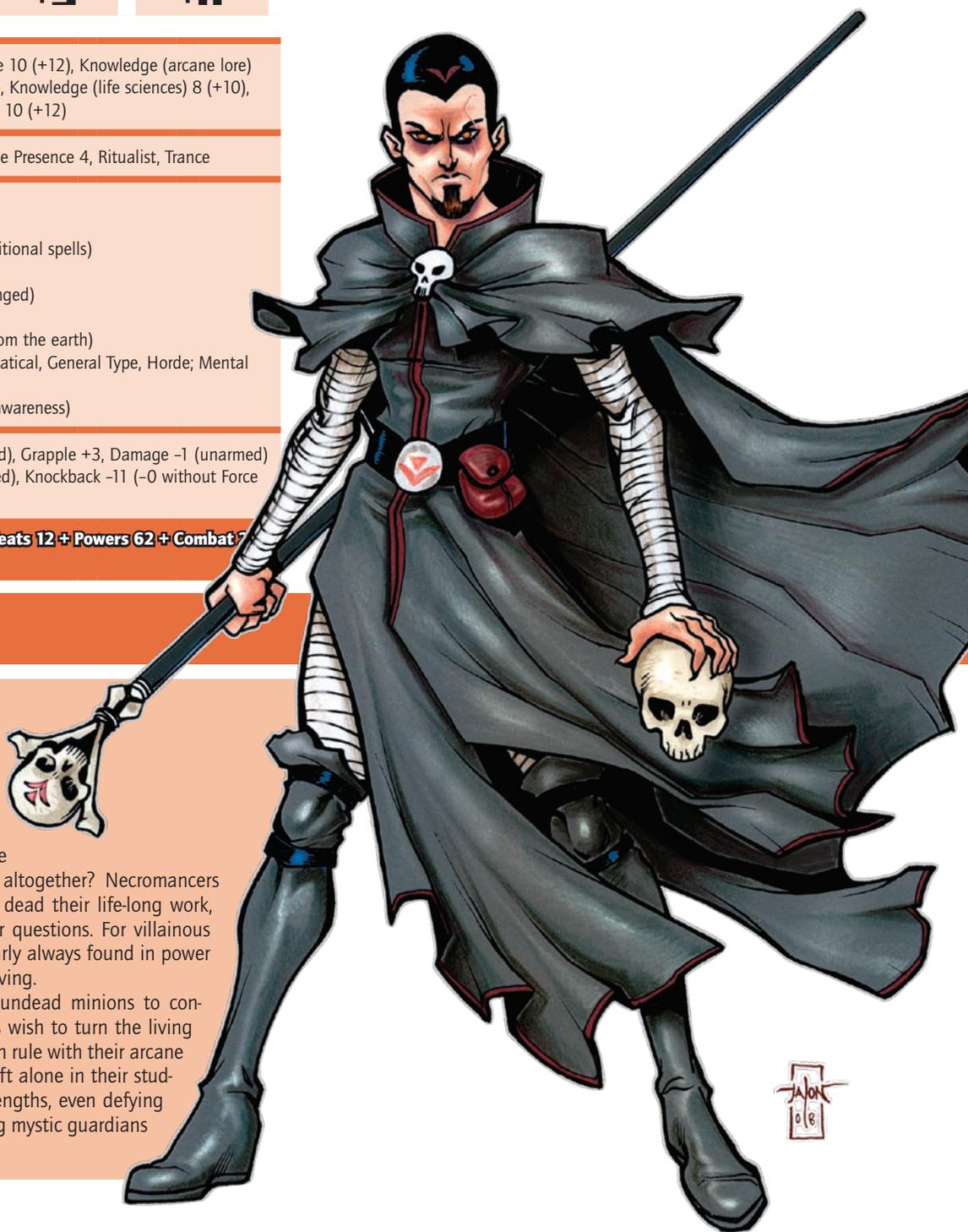
Combat: Attack +4 (melee), +10 (ranged), Grapple +3, Damage -1 (unarmed) or by power, Defense +9 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -11 (-0 without Force Field), Initiative +0

Abilities 19 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 12 + Powers 62 + Combat 7 + Saves 12 = Total 145

Death has long been the greatest challenge and mystery, even for masters of the mystic arts. What lies beyond the veil of life, and what is the ultimate fate of souls passing beyond? More importantly, how does one delay passage from this life, even cheat death altogether? Necromancers make the study of death and the dead their life-long work, seeking to master these and other questions. For villainous necromancers, the answers are nearly always found in power over the dead and, therefore, the living.

Some necromancers command undead minions to conquer the living world, while others wish to turn the living world into a vast graveyard they can rule with their arcane powers. A few simply wish to be left alone in their studies, but are willing to go to any lengths, even defying the very laws of nature, thus forcing mystic guardians to take action against them.

"SPIRITS OF THE RESTLESS AND VENGEFUL DEAD... ATTEND ME!"



NIGHTMARE RIDER

POWER LEVEL 11

STR	DEK	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+6	+2	+4	+4
10	12	22	14	19	18
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+11	+6	+6	+9/+13*		

*With Mental Shield

Skills: Bluff 14 (+18), Diplomacy 8 (+12), Intimidate 10 (+14), Knowledge (arcane lore) 10 (+12), Knowledge (behavioral sciences) 12 (+14), Notice 4 (+8), Search 6 (+8), Sense Motive 12 (+16)

Feats: Evasion 2, Improved Initiative

Powers:

- Illusion 11** (all senses; Damaging, Selective Attack, Sustained; Phantasms)
- Immunity 30** (Fortitude)
- Mind Reading 11**
- Mind Shield 4**
- Protection 5** (Impervious)
- Shapeshift 7**

Combat: Attack +3, Grapple +3, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +9 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -8, Initiative +5

Abilities 35 + Skills 19 (76 ranks) + Feats 3 + Powers 199 + Combat 24 + Saves 10 = Total 290

"RUN ALL YOU LIKE, WHELP...YOUR SOUL BELONGS TO ME!!!"



The ability to dream—to imagine something more—has always been one of humanity's greatest gifts, but it can become a curse when the dream turns into a nightmare and our worst fears and doubts plague us in our sleep. Such is the source of the Nightmare Rider's power: the terror in the still hours of the night, the things we keep buried deep inside us.

In many regards, the Nightmare Rider is like a specialized Demon of Fear, preying specifically on sleeping victims, but it is also more than that. The Nightmare Rider is a creature of the realm of dreams, where anything is possible. Within that realm, it possesses considerable power, and mystics must usually confront it on its home ground. Moreover, it can strike at foes when they are most vulnerable: when they are resting and not on their guard, slipping into dreams to turn them into nightmares, or ferret out secrets and weaknesses to use against its victims.

MAGE SLAYER

For a stealthy mage-assassin, switch Attack Focus to ranged and add feats like Improved Aim or Ultimate Aim, along with equipment like a sniper rifle (perhaps with special "magic-piercing" Penetrating ammo to overcome Impervious mystic shields and the like).

You can get some variations in style by choosing different types of magic for the Mage-Slayer, ranging from divinely gifted (whether from a true divinity or merely the Mage-Slayer's unshakable faith) to options like infernal (a literal deal with the devil) or other magical styles being turned against their wielders.

KEEN STUDENT

The Mage-Slayer comes in disguise to a notable magician or circle, petitioning to become an apprentice or disciple. His real purpose is to get inside the target's sanctum, learn as much as possible, and then turn those lessons against his unwitting teacher! Will the mystics learn of the new apprentice's duplicity in time? What if the teacher is also their mentor and insists the Slayer is harmless, forbidding the heroes to take action against him? Does he have a larger plan or is he being deceived somehow?

SUPREME SACRIFICE

The Mage-Slayer kidnaps a friend or loved one of a magician in order to lure the target out into the open, preferably to a battlefield of his choosing, mined with various traps. He intends to prove the mage's inferiority and corrupt nature, but willingness to risk and sacrifice on behalf of another may convince him otherwise, if confronted with the truth about his own hypocrisy.

NECROMANCER

A common variation on the necromancer is the undead necromancer, intimately familiar with the undead because he is one! Eliminate the archetype's Constitution score and add **Immunity 30** (Fortitude effects). Additional powers may be added if they suit the necromancer's undead type. See the Vampire Lord (*M&M*, page 225) for some ideas.

ARMY OF THE UNLIVING

Raising an army of undead soldiers, the Necromancer means to conquer the city unless the heroes can stop him. But is the horde of zombies merely a distraction, allowing the evil magician to do something else, such as perform another arcane rite or steal an item of power (perhaps even from the heroes' own sanctum) while they are dealing with the threat?

LEGION OF THE DEAD

The Necromancer uses forbidden rites to bring back a group of fallen superheroes as super-zombies! Rather than the typical horde of disposable undead, the heroes must face off against powerful creatures, some of which were once friends or teammates, perhaps even predecessors or ancestors!

NIGHTMARE RIDER

The Nightmare Rider may feed off the emotions of its victims in order to survive, like a psychic parasite, growing more powerful the more people fall under its sway. This can increase the creature's power in the dreaming world, perhaps even extending it to the waking world to some degree. Some Nightmare Riders are trapped in the dimension of dreams, seeking an escape, and sufficient power may allow them to either pos-

sess a living victim's mind and body or create a portal between worlds and emerge into the physical realm.

Although the Nightmare Rider is typically an inhabitant of the dimension of dreams (or nightmares), it may also be something else: an exiled mortal wizard, an alien psychic or dream entity, or even a nightmare empowered and given independent life in some fashion.

PERCHANCE TO DREAM

A strange "sleeping sickness" is spreading through the city; people are falling comatose and cannot be awakened. After dealing with some of the emergencies resulting from people falling asleep while operating cars, planes, or heavy machinery, the heroes investigate and discover a force from the dream dimension infiltrating the waking world. They can either travel into the dream dimension by their own methods or, eventually, they too will fall victim and be pulled in. There, they find the sleeping victims enslaved to the Nightmare Rider, who is using them to build a soaring tower from which it will extend its influence over the entire waking world.

LIVING NIGHTMARE

The heroes are trapped in a nightmare scenario: a supervillain or alien invaders have conquered the city or world, and they are largely powerless, hunted fugitives. They have to come up with some way to overcome their foes, like a desperate last strike at their headquarters. In truth, they are trapped in a *real* nightmare, a dream scenario created by the Nightmare Rider, and their "enemy" is just a blind to get the heroes to do what it cannot: break the barriers keeping it imprisoned. They have to realize there's something wrong with the whole thing before it's too late.

SUPPORTING CAST

Although the life of a mystic can be a lonely one, there are some people adepts of the arcane can rely upon, along with unfortunate dupes of unscrupulous magicians. The supporting cast of characters commonly found in a mystic series includes the following. Gamemasters can use these archetypes to fill-out the roles of supporting characters in a mystic series, modifying the game information as needed.

ACADEMIC

The Academic is a scholar in a particular field of knowledge of interest to mystics. While some rare academics have the arcane lore specialty of Knowledge, most are focused on disciplines like theology and philosophy, history, behavioral sciences, or the like, which brings them into contact with mystics when they encounter phenomena beyond the understanding of their science. Academics tend to be either helpful advisors or arrogant know-it-all's blundering into things man was not meant to know, leaving the hero to pick up the pieces.

ACADEMIC					POWER LEVEL 0	
Str 8	Dex 10	Con 9	Int 15	Wis 13	Cha 9	
Skills: Computers 6 (+8) Knowledge (choose one) 8 (+10), Knowledge (choose one) 6 (+8), Profession (researcher or teacher) 8 (+9)						
Combat: Attack +0, Grapple -1, Damage -1 (unarmed), Defense +0, Knockback -0, Initiative +0						
Saving Throws: Toughness -1, Fortitude +0, Reflex +0, Will +3						
Abilities 4 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) + Feats 0 + Powers 0 + Combat 0 + Saves 3 = Total 14						



ANTIQUARIAN

Similar to academics, the Antiquarian has a tendency to stumble upon the occult: an unusual rare book or "antique" of unknown origin shows up and turns out to be a focus for magical power. Some Antiquarians are aware of the existence of magic and may even have ranks in Knowledge (arcane lore). They sometimes act as brokers for customers interested in learning about or acquiring certain rare antiquities.

CULTIST

This archetype represents the typical member of a secret and often mystical cult, usually minions of a more powerful mystical villain or entity. Pledged to serve the master of the cult, or some profane god, they'll lay their lives down devotedly. Some cultists even possess minor powers granted by their master, either the Magic power or the Ritualist feat, allowing them to perform arcane rituals. Higher-ranking cultists tend to be more intelligent (Int 10+) and charismatic, but often less strong and tough, since they have the lower-ranking members of the cult to serve as cannon fodder.

HUMBLE SERVANT

Always in the background waiting to answer the door or offer a restorative cup of tea, the humble servant sees to the mundane things lofty mystics often ignore in pursuit of their duties. Sometimes a humble servant turns out to be not so humble—an exiled prince of a foreign land (or dimension), a secret master of the martial arts, or even a minor mystic in his own right (see the Minor Mystic archetype) may find a place serving a master of the mystic arts.

ANTIQUARIAN POWER LEVEL 0

Str 10	Dex 10	Con 10	Int 12	Wis 12	Cha 10
Skills: Knowledge (current events) 2 (+3), Knowledge (history) 8 (+9), Profession (antiquarian) 8 (+9), Sense Motive 2 (+3)					
Combat: Attack +0, Grapple +0, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +0, Knockback -0, Initiative +0					
Saving Throws: Toughness +0, Fortitude +0, Reflex +0, Will +2					
Abilities 4 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 0 + Combat 0 + Saves 1 = Total 10					

CULTIST POWER LEVEL 2

Str 12	Dex 10	Con 15	Int 8	Wis 10	Cha 8
Skills: Climb 2 (+3), Drive 4 (+4), Intimidate 4 (+3), Knowledge (arcane lore) 4 (+3), Knowledge (popular culture) 2 (+1), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+3), Profession (choose one) 4 (+4)					
Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 1, Equipment 3					
Equipment: pistol (+3 damage), dagger (+1 damage), ritual robes					
Combat: Attack +2 (melee), +1 (ranged), Grapple +3, Damage +1 (unarmed), +3 (pistol), Defense +2, Knockback -1, Initiative +0					
Saving Throws: Toughness +2, Fortitude +4, Reflex +0, Will +2					
Abilities 3 + Skills 6 (24 ranks) + Feats 4 + Combat 6 + Saves 4 = Total 23					

HUMBLE SERVANT POWER LEVEL 2

Str 10	Dex 12	Con 10	Int 12	Wis 15	Cha 12
Skills: Diplomacy 2 (+3), Knowledge (history) 2 (+3), Medicine 2 (+4), Notice 4 (+6), Profession (domestic) 8 (+10), Sense Motive 2 (+4)					
Combat: Attack +1, Grapple +1, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +1, Knockback -0, Initiative +0					
Saving Throws: Toughness +0, Fortitude +1, Reflex +1, Will +4					
Abilities 11 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 0 + Combat 4 + Saves 3 = Total 23					

INVESTIGATOR POWER LEVEL 3

Str 10	Dex 12	Con 13	Int 15	Wis 14	Cha 10
Skills: Computers 2 (+4), Diplomacy 3 (+3), Drive 4 (+5), Gather Information 4 (+4), Intimidate 4 (+4), Investigate 6 (+8), Knowledge (behavior sciences) 4 (+6), Knowledge (civics) 2 (+4), Knowledge (current events) 3 (+5), Knowledge (streetwise) 3 (+5), Notice 4 (+6), Search 5 (+7)					
Feats: Defensive Roll, Equipment 2					
Equipment: pistol (+3 damage), handcuffs, camera, cell phone, notebook computer					
Combat: Attack +3, Grapple +3, Damage +0 (unarmed), +3 (pistol), Defense +4 (+2 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +1					
Saving Throws: Toughness +2 (+1 flat-footed), Fortitude +4, Reflex +1, Will +6					
Abilities 14 + Skills 11 (44 ranks) Feats 3 + Combat 14 + Saves 7 = Total 49					

INVESTIGATOR

Whether private eye, police detective, or government agent, the investigator looks into the mysterious and unexplained, often leading to evidence of the occult. Many investigators choose not to believe it until they're face-to-face with some otherworldly horror. Others are more credulous but still try and ground their investigations in the real world. Either type finds an important ally in a magician willing to entrust at least some of the truth to others. Investigators do legwork for mystic allies and turn to them for help when things take a decided turn for the strange.

MINOR MYSTIC

For every mighty sorcerer and mage, there are a handful of hedge magicians and lesser mystics. They wield some real magical power, to be sure, but they lack the kind of raw ability to stand out on the front lines of the occult war. Instead, they live quietly, practicing and perfecting their arts, or else they ally themselves with one side or another in the conflict between good and evil, working to aid mystic guardians or

MINOR MYSTIC

POWER LEVEL 4

Str 10	Dex 10	Con 12	Int 13	Wis 14	Cha 12
Skills: Concentration 4 (+6), Diplomacy 2 (+3), Intimidate 4 (+5), Knowledge (arcane lore) 6 (+7), Knowledge (history) 4 (+5), Notice 4 (+6), Sense Motive 4 (+6)					
Feats: Dodge Focus 2, Ritualist					
Powers: Magic 6 (choose six spells with no save DC modifier over +4)					
Combat: Attack +2, Grapple +2, Damage +0 (unarmed), +3 (pistol), Defense +4 (+1 flat-footed), Knockback -0, Initiative +1					
Saving Throws: Toughness +1, Fortitude +3, Reflex +2, Will +6					
Abilities 11 + Skills 7 (28 ranks) Feats 3 + Powers 18 + Combat 8 + Saves 8 = Total 55					

becoming lieutenants of more powerful arcane villains in the hope of gaining greater power, assuming they survive long enough.

MONSTERS AND MINIONS

No adventure through the magical realm is complete without the required sparring partners and their dread minions. While singular foes of note are represented by the villain archetypes, there are also a number of "stock" threats of varying degrees of nastiness, ready and willing to bedevil our stalwart protagonists.

DEMON, BRUISER

Unlike normal demons, Bruiser Demons are dull-witted creatures that like to bully and pummel their prey. Usually standing well over seven feet in height, these demons are typically a rotted green in color, with massive builds and dark eyes. They are known to favor the use of grabs and claw attacks as they viciously lay into their target, continuing until either obedience or death is achieved.

DEMON, TEMPTER

The Tempter Demon's primary purpose is to lure the heroic into betraying their morals and falling under the sway of Hell. Appearing as beautiful men and women, Tempters can be recognized by their large, leathery wings. They often keep these concealed under clothing. Otherwise, they tend to wear very little, opting for leather straps or brief armor when they parade their catches through their hellish home.

DEMON, LESSER

The imp and warrior demon archetypes in *M&M* (page 233) represent vast multitudes of "generic" demons, the components of the average horde in the dark and infernal planes of existence. The lesser demon is a step up (or down, depending on context) the ladder from the imp and warrior demon archetypes, as far as denizens of various Hells go. Unlike its inferiors, this demon has a name of its very own (though said name may or may not be pronounceable by mortal tongues), as well as a specialty or personal power base, possibly associated with a particular concept, domain, or other category (such as Deception, Malice, Wrath, Fire, Cold, etc.).

The powers listed represent the base or fundamental abilities of the lesser demon. When appropriate, choose the general motif and assign from the following sample powers (usually at a rank equal to the demon's power level or, in the case of Enhanced Traits, sufficient to grant a bonus equal to the demon's power level), adjusting power level and cost as needed:

- **Animal:** Animal Control, Enhanced Feat (Fearsome Presence), Enhanced Physical Traits, Growth, Strike (often with the Poison modifier)

DEMON, BRUISER POWER LEVEL 8 • MINION RANK 8

Str 25	Dex 12	Con 20	Int 9	Wis 9	Cha 8
Skills: Climb 6 (+13), Intimidate 10 (+9)					
Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 2, Diehard, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Grab, Power Attack, Startle, Teamwork					
Powers: Immunity 32 (critical hits, Fortitude), Leaping 3 , Protection 5 (Impervious), Strike 3 (Mighty), Super-Strength 5 (<i>heavy load</i> : 12 tons)					
Combat: Attack +6 (melee), +4 (ranged), Grapple +18, Damage +10 (strike), Defense +6 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -7, Initiative +1					
Saving Throws: Toughness +10, Fortitude +5, Reflex +1, Will -1					
Attributes 23 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 12 + Powers 59 + Combat 20 + Saves 0 = Total 118					

DEMON, TEMPTER POWER LEVEL 8 • MINION RANK 7

Str 10	Dex 14	Con 20	Int 12	Wis 15	Cha 20
Skills: Bluff 10 (+15/+19), Intimidate 6 (+11), Stealth 8 (+10)					
Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 2, Attractive, Diehard, Sneak Attack, Teamwork					
Powers: Emotion Control 8 (Limited to love), Flight 2 , Immunity 3 (aging, critical hits), Protection 5 (Impervious), Strike 3 (Mighty)					
Combat: Attack +7 (melee), +5 (ranged), Damage +3 (strike), Defense +6, Initiative +2					
Saving Throws: Toughness +10, Fortitude +7, Reflex +4, Will +4					
Drawbacks: Power Loss (Flight, if wings are restricted, -1 point)					
Attributes 31 + Skills 6 (24 ranks) + Feats 6 + Powers 29 + Combat 22 + Saves 6 - Drawbacks 1 = Total 99					

- **Element:** Alternate Form, Blast, Element Control, Environmental Control
- **Emotion:** Emotion Control, Enhanced Charisma, Mind Control (Subtle)
- **War:** Blast, Enhanced Physical Traits, Strike (or Strike Aura)

Note the word "demon" is only a label. It describes a being or entity from another plane of existence whose general disposition, motives, and goals are antithetical to the well being of humanity. This need not be tied to any particular belief system, though more cunning examples of the breed are certainly willing to capitalize on any exploitable resemblances or useful themes, even if the actual ties to such are mere

fiction. You can change cosmetic details and easily populate the "officer corps" of armies of gods or other magical powerhouses with similar archetypes; the game traits work just as well for the Obsidian Reavers of Tezcatlipoca or the bilespawn of Varhaas Skinshroud as they do the Malebolgic Legions of Belial.

DEMON, GREATER

The greater demon is much the same pedigree as the lesser demon, but possessing greater power. A greater demon *always* has a personal name, probably recorded in arcane histories or catalogues across numerous worlds, as well as a body of lore regarding its exploits or past dealings. They have some sort of associated concept (Murder, Sloth, Vermin, etc.) and multiple titles in the hierarchy of Hell or whatever infernal domain it calls home ("The Hidden Scroll of the Trismegistus names it as Melaghaz, Marquis of the Chalcedony Rite of Mourning. Use that as you will, wizard.")

Use the guidelines for assigning additional powers to lesser demons, but generally, adjust the power level such that it is power level times

DEMON, LESSER POWER LEVEL 8 • MINION RANK 14

Str 26	Dex 16	Con 26	Int 22	Wis 22	Cha 22
Skills: Bluff 12 (+18), Diplomacy 8 (+14), Intimidate 8 (+14), Knowledge (arcane lore) 8 (+14), Notice 8 (+14), Sense Motive 8 (+14)					
Feats: All-out Attack, Fascinate 2 (Diplomacy, Intimidate), Fearless, Fearsome Presence 5, Improved Initiative, Rage, Ritualist					
Powers: Comprehend 4 (languages), Flight 3 , Hellfire Control 10 (Alternate Powers: Illusion 5 [all senses], Possession 6), Immunity 15 (aging, fire damage, life support), Morph 4 (humanoid forms), Impervious Toughness 8 (Limited versus holy or magical attacks), Super Senses 9 (darkvision, detect magic [extended 3], detect evil [acute], divine awareness, infernal awareness, scent), Telepathy 5					
Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +14, Damage +8 (unarmed), Defense +8 (+4 flatfooted), Knockback -4, Initiative +7					
Saving Throws: Toughness +8, Fortitude +10, Reflex +8, Will +10					
Drawbacks: Power Loss (blessed protections, items, etc. or when true name is used, -3 points), Weakness (blessed objects or places, -1 Con per minute, -5 points)					
Abilities 74 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 12 + Powers 82 + Combat 28 + Saves 11 - Drawbacks 8 = Total 212					

DEMON, GREATER POWER LEVEL 14

Str 28	Dex 18	Con 28	Int 28	Wis 30	Cha 28
Skills: Bluff 19 (+28), Diplomacy 11 (+20), Intimidate 11 (+20), Knowledge (arcane lore) 11 (+20), Notice 10 (+20), Sense Motive 10 (+20)					
Feats: All-out Attack, Fascinate 2 (Diplomacy, Intimidate), Fearless, Fearsome Presence 8, Improved Initiative, Rage, Ritualist					
Powers: Comprehend 4 (languages), Flight 3 , Hellfire Control 15 (Penetrating; Alternate Powers: Illusion 11 [all senses], Possession 15), Immunity 15 (aging, fire damage, life support), Magic 13 (choose base and four additional spells in keeping with motif, Summon Demon and Dimensional Movement are common), Morph 4 (humanoid forms), Protection 8 (Impervious; Limited versus holy and magical attacks), Super Senses 14 (darkvision, detect magic [extended 3], detect evil [acute, analytical, extended 4], divine awareness, infernal awareness, scent), Super Strength 2 (heavy load: 4,800 lbs.), Telepathy 10					
Combat: Attack +13, Grapple +24, Damage +9 (unarmed), +15 (hellfire), Defense +8 (+4 flatfooted), Knockback -12, Initiative +8					
Saving Throws: Toughness +17, Fortitude +14, Reflex +9, Will +18					
Drawbacks: Power Loss (blessed protections, items, etc. or when true name is used, -4 points), Weakness (blessed objects or places, -1 Con per minute, -5 points)					
Abilities 100 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 15+ Powers 160 + Combat 42 + Saves 18 - Drawbacks 9= Total 344					

DEMON, SHADOW POWER LEVEL 5 • MINION RANK 8

Str 10	Dex 14	Con 18	Int 10	Wis 10	Cha 10
Skills: Bluff 4 (+4), Knowledge (arcane lore) 4 (+4), Stealth 8 (+10)					
Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 4, Hide in Plain Sight					
Powers: Flight 2 (25 MPH), Immunity 30 (Fortitude), Insubstantial 4 (shadow form; Continuous, Permanent), Strike 4 (chilling touch; Affects Corporeal, Fortitude Save), Super-Movement 3 (slithering, wall-crawling 2)					
Combat: Attack +6 (melee), +2 (ranged), Grapple +6, Damage +4 (Strike), Defense +6, Knockback -2, Initiative +2					
Saving Throws: Toughness +4, Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +6					
Drawbacks: Weakness (daylight or equivalent, common, -1 Con per round, -8 points)					
Abilities 12 + Skills 4 (16 ranks) + Feats 5 + Powers 72 + Combat 16 + Saves 8 - Drawbacks 8 = Total 109					

DEMON, SUCCUBUS POWER LEVEL 10 • MINION RANK 16

Str 18	Dex 18	Con 18	Int 16	Wis 18	Cha 26
Skills: Bluff 8 (+16), Concentration 8 (+12), Diplomacy 8 (+16), Disguise 4 (+12), Intimidate 4 (+12), Knowledge (arcane lore) 8 (+11), Notice 6 (+10), Search 6 (+9), Sense Motive 12 (+16), Stealth 4 (+8)					
Feats: Attractive, Distract, Fascinate 3 (Bluff, Diplomacy, Intimidate), Improved Initiative 2, Sneak Attack 2, Taunt, Ultimate Skill (Bluff)					
Powers: Comprehend 4 (languages; Subtle 2), Drain Constitution 2 (life-devouring kiss; Insidious, No Saving Throw; Slow Fade 3, Subtle 2; power drawback: Power Loss versus target with "pure heart"), Flight 3 , Immunity 11 (aging, life support, starvation or thirst), Mind Control 10 (Conscious, Insidious, Linked to Drain; Subtle; Alternate Powers: Super Movement 3 (Dimensional Move 3), Telepathy 8 [Subtle]), Morph 5 (humanoids), Protection 4 (Impervious)					
Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +12, Damage +4 (unarmed), Defense +12 (+6 flatfooted), Knockback -6, Initiative +12					
Saving Throws: Toughness +8, Fortitude +10, Reflex +10, Will+12					
Drawbacks: Power Loss (Versus blessed protections, items, etc. or when true name is used) (-4), Weakness (blessed objects or places, -1 CON per minute) (-5)					
Abilities 54 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 11 + Powers 100 + Combat 40 + Saves 20 - Drawbacks 9 = Total 233					

three rather than just the power level itself. Though this “class” of being has a number of prominent vulnerabilities (and exploitable complications), Gamemasters should keep in mind the possible overkill that can result from not paying careful attention to point allocations: a greater demon is a *terrible* adversary, and the more intimidating examples are easily the equal in terms of raw power of a master supervillain, a nether world’s dark lord, or worse.

DEMON, SHADOW

Shadow demons are insubstantial shades, black shapes with bat-like wings and burning eyes, capable of harming mortals with their chilling touch, but driven away by powerful sources of light. They most often appear as the minions of evil sorcerers and other, more powerful, demons.

DEMON, SUCCUBUS

The succubus (or incubus, in male form) is neither a fighter nor a mastermind behind other grand demonic schemes, nor is it terribly concerned in rising in the hierarchy of the fallen. This type of demon thrives on corruption—bringing down the high, mighty, and holy, and then stripping their prey’s will, life, and soul away after the deed is done. They are predators, short and simple, and other denizens of the lower planes either know well enough to leave them alone or pay the price for their ignorance. More than one Greater Demon, however, has long since seen their value as tools and weapons, particularly when subtly reaps greater profit in a strategy than brute force or hellfire.

DEMON PRINCE

These horrific beings are the very pinnacle of infernal majesty, each a weapon of arcane destruction in its own right. Tales are told in harsh whispers of these horrors, and entire belief systems have risen around their worship. Asmodeus, Belial, Mephistopheles, the Yomi Kings, Chelibach the Wyrmfather, and others are, technically, not much less than gods in many respects. The only real limits on their powers are those needed for the adventures being spun by the Gamemaster in question. As such, they are more appropriately dealt with as PL X characters.

Where is the line drawn? Individual GMs need to ask themselves, does this entity require numbers in order to define any element of its usage? Is making a particular roll against an established number, be it an attack, a save, a power check, or other such use of the die, a necessity of the interaction with this character, or do description and personality suffice? Is defeating or otherwise overcoming this demon a matter of the mechanics behind the heroes’ abilities or instead tied to the choices and roleplaying of the player behind the character *regardless* of designed stats? If the answer is mostly the former, then stats are needed (and the opponent probably doesn’t belong in this category); if the latter, then the advice and guidelines for PL X characters addressed in *M&M* are the way to go.

ELDRITCH SERVITOR

The distinction between Elder Evils and Eldritch Servitors is based on exhibited power and relative independence, not taxonomy. Eldritch Servitors, as the name implies, appear to serve other terrible arcane threats such as the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, madmen like Malador, and even otherworldly invaders, of which Zhuul the Binder is but one example. The Wailing Spheres of Ta’Tulduk, Zhuul’s Charhounds, the Rhaharri, or the nameless grotesqueries serving the Unspeakable One are all examples of this breed.



ELDRITCH SERVITOR POWER LEVEL 12 • MINION RANK 20

Str 22 **Dex 16** **Con 24** **Int 15** **Wis 17** **Cha 11**

Skills: Notice 8 (+11)

Feats: Attack Focus 6 (melee), Fearless, Seize Initiative

Powers: **Additional Limbs 5** (tentacles; Sustained Duration), **Communication 10** (mental; Dimensional), **Confuse 12** (reality-warping presence; Continuous, Visual Area; Incurable, Innate), **Elongation 2** (Permanent), **Environmental Control 3** (secondary reality-warping effect; distraction 3), **Growth 4** (Continuous; Permanent), **Immovable 10** (anchored in space), **Immunity 20** (aging, life support, mental effects), **Insubstantial 1** (Continuous), **Nauseate 12** (Aura, Sustained Duration), **Protection 8** (only partially manifests in three dimensions; Impervious), **Shapeshift 2** (Uncontrolled), **Shield 6** (secondary reality-warping effect), **Strike 9** (dimension-boring tentacles; Affects Insubstantial, Dimensional, Indirect 3, Mighty), **Super Movement 2** (dimensional 2, mystical dimensions), **Super Senses 8** (blind sight [extended 4]), **Super Strength 3** (*heavy load*: 8,320 lbs.), **Teleport 4**

Combat: Attack +9, Grapple +18, Damage +15 (Strike), Defense +9 (+5 flatfooted), Knockback -55, Initiative +3

Saving Throws: Toughness +15, Fortitude +10, Reflex +4, Will +10

Abilities 33 + Skills 2 (8 ranks) + Feats 8+ Powers 283+ Combat 28 + Saves 11 = Total 365



GHOST

Also known as apparitions, fetches, haunts, phantoms, shades, specters, and many other names across countless cultures, a ghost is the spectral echo of a now-dead person or thing that has refused to move on to whatever awaits it after its normal lifetime. This reticence may be due to unfinished business left over from their lives, particularly heinous or traumatic circumstances surrounding the demise in question, or a continuing attachment to a person, place, or thing left in the mortal realm that simply transcends expected limitations.

In any case, the exact nature of the haunting presence varies from situation to situation. The ghost can be associated with either a person

GHOST						POWER LEVEL 2 • MINION RANK 9					
Str 10	Dex 10	Con –	Int 10	Wis 15	Cha 15						
Skills: Intimidate 8 (+10)											
Feats: Fearless, Fearsome Presence 8											
Powers: Concealment 10 (power loss versus mystical senses), Flight 1 (Continuous), Immunity 40 (Fortitude effects, mental effects), Insubstantial 4 (Continuous; Permanent; Innate), Regeneration 15 (Recovery Bonus +9; Resurrection 1/week [power loss when laid to rest properly or task is done]) Super Senses 3 (detect life [extended 2]), Telekinesis 2 (Affects Corporeal; Subtle)											
Combat: Attack +3, Grapple +3, Damage +0, Defense +4 (+2 flatfooted), Knockback -0, Initiative +0											
Saving Throws: Toughness +0, Fortitude –, Reflex +0, Will +2											
Abilities 0 + Skills 2 (8 ranks) + Feats 9 + Powers 102 + Combat 14 + Saves 0 = Total 127											

or a place. It can be little more than a presence, it can be a nuisance, or it can be a dire threat to all involved. Ultimately, the only real parameters are those needed by the plot of the encounter.

Some of the abilities exhibited by singular entities are different than the standard apparition. Add from the following as appropriate, and adjust final point costs (and both PL and Minion Rank) as needed:

- *"Each body but a shell...":* **Possession 10**
- *"See my pain, live my pain...":* **Illusion 10** (all senses; Damaging, Independent; Limited- only to replay events and scenes from ghost's past)
- *"Cower in my presence...":* **Paralyze 8** (Perception Area; Sense-Dependent [sight])
- *"Share the breath of your life with me...":* **Drain Constitution 8** (Affects Corporeal, Aura, Sustained Duration)
- *"I am bound here by a power greater than yours...":* **Immunity 15** (banishing and nullifying effects)

IRON GOLEM

A towering engine of strength, the Iron Golem represents the premiere bodyguard-thug of the arcane minded who don't want to muddle around with all that messy planar summoning. Slow, single-minded, and about as bright and creative as your basic can-opener, the Iron Golem is renowned for its raw physical power and durability. They are the mystic equivalent of a walking tank.

For GMs who want a little more subtlety in their destructive capabilities, the less overt model incorporates illusions to hide its true nature and appear far less formidable than it truly is. This can be emulated with the following: drop the 2 ranks of **Growth** and add **Morph 4** (one set form) and **Flight 1** (Continuous; Limited to counteract massive weight).

The iron golem archetype can also serve for pretty much any massive, powerful, and relatively mindless creature encountered by mystics, from an animated statue to a massive necromantic construct made of bones or a demon-powered robot built by a mad scientist and mystic dabbler. Modify the game traits as needed to suit the individual variants. The other golem archetypes (*M&M*, pages 233-234) can serve in a similar capacity for smaller creatures. The flesh golem in particular makes an effective mage-killer (given its Immunity to Magic).

IRON GOLEM						POWER LEVEL 11 • MINION RANK 10					
Str 36	Dex 10	Con –	Int 10	Wis 12	Cha 10						
Skills: Notice 4 (+5)											
Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus 4 (melee), Fearless, Improved Grab, Power Attack											
Powers: Density 10 (+ 20 strength, + 5 impervious toughness, + 3 ranks immovable, +3 ranks super strength, mass x 12, approximately 1 ton; Continuous; Permanent; Innate), Growth 2 (+4 strength, +1 toughness, 7 ft. tall; Continuous; Permanent; Innate); Immovable 2 , Immunity 42 (Fortitude, magical effects, mind control), Protection 8 (Impervious 5), Strike 2 (metal-shod fists; Mighty), Super Strength 2 (<i>heavy load</i> : 59 tons)											
Combat: Attack +9 (melee), Attack +5 (ranged), Grapple +27 , Damage +15 (fists), Defense +8 (+4 flatfooted), Knockback -32, Initiative +0											
Saving Throws: Toughness +14, Fortitude –, Reflex +2 , Will +6											
Abilities -6 + Skills 1 (4 ranks) + Feats 8+ Powers 102 + Combat 26 + Saves 7 = Total 138											

REVENANT

Much like the ghost, the revenant is a person or creature that has refused to shuffle of this mortal coil when it reached the end of its life. Unlike the ghost, the revenant is still in possession of its old body, rather than being a disembodied spirit, and it usually carries considerably more "oomph!" physically than it did in its days among the warm and living, as if the supernatural had amped it up for the task before it.

Also, traditionally, the revenant is almost exclusively holding onto its existence in order to complete a particular task or set of related tasks, usually revenge in some form or fashion. When that task is completed, the revenant goes on to its reward (whatever that might be). Revenants also vary from their etheric counterparts in that, many times, they can still pass for the living unless subjected to close scrutiny, possibly even only under medical examination. Free-willed and still possessing sentience to most, if not all, of the degree it did in life, the revenant is practically indestructible until such time as it completes whatever its mission is.

REVENANT POWER LEVEL 10 • MINION RANK 13

Str 22	Dex 18	Con –	Int 12	Wis 13	Cha 13
Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+12), Bluff 4 (+5), Notice 6 (+7), Search 6 (+7), Sense Motive 8 (+9)					
Feats: Acrobatic Bluff, Fearless, Improved Initiative, Taunt					
Powers: Immunity 30 (Fortitude), Leaping 1 (x 2), Protection 6, Regeneration 42 (Recovery Bonus + 9; bruised/no action, injured/no action, staggered/1 round, disabled/1 round, ability damage/standard action; resurrection/1 minute), Speed 1 (10 mph), Super Strength 1 (heavy load: 1,040 lbs.)					
Combat: Attack +14, Grapple +21, Damage +6 (unarmed), Defense +14 (+7 flatfooted), Knockback -3, Initiative +8					
Saving Throws: Toughness +6, Fortitude – , Reflex +10, Will +10					
Abilities 18+ Skills 8 (32 ranks) + Feats 4 + Powers 82 + Combat 56 + Saves 15= Total 183					

SERIES FRAMEWORKS

There are a number of different approaches to a mystic *Mutants & Masterminds* series, ranging from heroes as full-fledged magician-adepts safeguarding Earth's dimension against a variety of occult menaces to low-level ritualists and dabblers struggling against supernatural monsters preying on humanity. You can find additional series frameworks for mystic heroes at the end of **Chapter 4**, aimed particularly at series set in the world of *Freedom City*.

APPRENTICES TO POWER

A wise and experienced mentor gathers the heroes together to teach them arcane lore and to use their mystical talents responsibly for the good of humanity. The group's teacher may be the world's greatest magician or simply a retired occultist with an interest in passing on what he has learned to a new generation. Perhaps the students are meant to one day succeed their master and assume greater responsibilities.

This series works much like a traditional superhero game, with a focus on the magical. All of the heroes are at least mystically empowered, if not full-fledged magicians: some might have inhuman heritage or influences (divine, infernal, fae, elemental, or otherwise), possess powerful magic items, or come from other dimensions. While this type of series works well for a group of younger heroes, there's no particular limit on age. Characters all have a great deal to learn over the course of the story.

The Claremont Academy setting in *Freedom City* makes a good model for this series, and you may find the additional material in the *Hero High* sourcebook useful.

AVATARS OF THE ELEMENTS

The heroes in this series are all various types of mystics empowered by the forces of the elements: it may be the essential four of air, earth, fire, and water, along with the addition of others, ranging from the Asian elements of metal and wood to spirit or "elements" such as light, shadow, or other forces chosen by the Gamemaster as part of the setting's cosmology. The heroes may have a patron or mentor in the form of a higher being representing the balance of the elements or the natural world.

As embodiments of elemental forces, it is the heroes' duty to protect the natural world from harm. This can range from warding off extradimensional invaders to safeguarding the environment from polluters or exploitation, if the group wants to put an eco-activist slant on things. Perhaps the elemental forces are out of balance due to the actions of one avatar, who is now the group's enemy, and it's up to the heroes to put things right.

INVESTIGATORS OF THE STRANGE

Strange things are happening, and it's up to our heroes to find out what's really going on. The characters make up a group of investigators of the strange, occult, and paranormal. This may be a cover for a group of mystics ferreting out occult threats or, for a twist, the characters might actually be skeptics who don't believe in magic at all! Either they prove every "paranormal" event is actually a hoax, or perhaps their very disbelief gives them the power to overcome such threats and neutralize them. Afterwards, all anyone recalls is the "hoax" (another way of covering the memories of things people aren't meant to know). A similar cover is for the characters to all work for a tabloid newspaper: they can actually print the truth, since no one will believe it anyway!

Even if the heroes aren't skeptics, they're sure to deal with some, particularly if their true work is kept secret. They may also become freelance consultants for the police and national or even international authorities (like the FBI or Interpol).

MONSTER-SLAYERS

The world needs protection from all kinds of occult creatures going bump in the night. The heroes of this series are the ones who bump back. They investigate and deal with (in other words, slay) creatures like demons, zombies, vampires, ghosts, and all manner of other horrors, in order to keep the world safe and blissfully ignorant.

A monster-slayers series tends to be lower power level than most *M&M* games, around PL6-8, just enough to make the heroes a fair match for a vampire or werewolf (like the Savage Man-Beast or Vampire Lord from **Chapter 11** of *M&M*). The heroes' powers may include traditional Magic as well as innate supernatural abilities, making them



more effective fighters, or psychic powers they use to investigate the occult.

This series can be set in a traditional superhero world like *Freedom City*; after all, the monster-slayers are supposed to be working behind the scenes, so it doesn't much matter whether those scenes are in four bright colors or the greyer tones of a different world. On the other hand, the series can also be set in a world where superhumans and the paranormal are largely unknown to the public, and that's how both sides would like to keep it. The more conspiratorial aspects of the *Paragons* setting may work well here.

SPIRITS OF VENGEANCE

Spirits of Vengeance is an *Iron Age* mystic series, and GMs may wish to consult the *Iron Age* sourcebook for additional ideas and advice. In this game, the heroes are not mystic guardians of Earth's dimension or keepers of occult wisdom. Rather, they are hell-spawned seekers of justice and vengeance for the wronged and the helpless. Using their powers, they are judge, jury and, if need be, executioner.

The heroes might be fallen souls, returned to the world of the living to redeem themselves, or victims pushed too far, willing to give up their mundane lives to a greater calling. Some spirits of vengeance take a wrong turn, end up in the wrong place at the wrong time, and find their lives changed forever. They may seek to reclaim what they've lost, assuming it's even possible.

Enemies in this series tend to be somewhat more mundane: mortal criminals, gangs, and syndicates, along with cults and earthbound mystics. The heroes often must also contend with the mundane authorities, who consider them criminals as well, when they even believe they exist, that is. Suitable *Freedom City* foes include the Mob, Baron Samedi and his zombie minions, Jack-A-Knives, and the White Knight.

THE MYSTIC PARAGONS SERIES

Chapter 4 details the mystic side of the *Freedom City* setting, with an eye towards four-color and street-level mystic series. What about using the material from *Book of Magic* in a series set in the world described in the *Paragons* setting sourcebook?

As laid out in the sourcebook, the exact nature of the paranormal in *Paragons* is deliberately vague: it *might* be magical, or the occult could simply be window-dressing for another sort of paranormal power, a psychological "crutch" for self-proclaimed sorcerers and mystics. Whatever the case, the occult does exist in one form or another in *Paragons*, with individuals and factions taking advantage of magical lore and secrets to fuel their powers and further their own agendas.

You can use much of the material in this book as source material for a *Paragons* series focusing on the magical side of things. Most of the information about mystic characters applies equally to *Freedom City* superheroes and *Paragons* paranormals; the skills and feats are largely the same, and the different arcane powers and styles of magic can define a paragon's abilities. Magical items tend to be rare in *Paragons*, but like ACME-tech, items might serve to focus a paranormal's powers in some fashion.

The information on the various magical dimensions in **Chapter 1** and **Chapter 4** can provide inspiration from the Imageria, the mother of all alternate dimensions in *Paragons*. Any of them can describe a region of the Imageria, with all the associated occult imagery and symbolism. Magical creatures, from dragons and demons to things like the Battle Brutes (page 100) might come from those misty depths and even emerge into the real world.

Although aimed at four-color superhero settings, the archetypes and characters from this book can also work in a *Paragons* series. Any of the hero archetypes could be paragons with a magical bent, while villain archetypes like the Demon of Fear, Mage Slayer, and Necromancer work in the context of the setting. The Dimensional Conqueror, Elder Evil, or Nightmare Rider could be entities from the Imageria, powerful paragons, or some measure of both.

Lastly, although **Chapter 4** is designed to detail the mystic side of *Freedom City*, many elements of it work with *Paragons*, too. The Mayombe, for example, could be a sinister Voodoo cult led by paranormals. Maitre Carrefour is similar. Captain Blood might be a "real" pirate ghost or just a paranormal who thinks he is one (or pretends to be). Heroes like Gatekeeper, Koradji, and Thomas Rhymer could be paranormals, especially if you play down the superheroic side of things. Combine these with mystical elements from *Paragons* like the Pact and a series framework like the Eidolon Emanation or the Outer Darkness (*Paragons*, pages 216 and 218, respectively) and you're ready to go!

CHAPTER 4: THE MYSTIC WORLD OF FREEDOM

For the average citizens of Freedom City, the headlines and the nightly news—to say nothing of the skyline—is full of brightly clad costumed figures with amazing powers. Aliens have invaded from distant galaxies and other dimensions, and they have believed people could fly for all their lives. But if you ask them if they believe in magic, odds are you'll get a somewhat incredulous look. People with superpowers, sure, but magic? That sounds a little, well, flaky and unbelievable. I mean, it's all a trick, right? Just what some of those people in the costumes call their powers. It isn't "real" magic.

Of course, it often really *is* magic. In fact, magic is a more powerful force than most people know, perhaps the most powerful in the universe. It is also one of the most mysterious, and the occult in the World of Freedom is cloaked in an aura of mystery and misunderstanding. So, too, are the mystics who walk the hidden paths and explore the unseen

realms. In a world of unusual people with powers far beyond those of ordinary mortals, they are the oddities because, while somebody's mutant powers may be difficult to explain, they generally don't accidentally summon demons or elder evils from the dawn of time to devour your soul.

This chapter looks at the mystical side of the world of *Freedom City*, from its cosmology and hidden history to the important players in the game of magical supremacy, struggling for the fate of the world, even the universe itself—villains people dismiss as just more costumed crackpots, heroes many people don't even know. It concludes with some ideas for running your own mystic series set in Freedom City. In addition to this chapter, much of the information in **Chapter 2**, notably specific spells, entities, and magical items, are also useful in a mystic *Freedom City* series.

POWERS AND PRINCIPALITIES

The mystic world of Freedom has certain long-held traditions, roles, and factions defining the nature of magic in the present day as well as the struggle going on behind the scenes and in the secret corners of the reality. Traditions and titles draw the borders and destinations on the map of the mystical world, and anyone seeking to walk its paths should know and respect them.

THE MASTER MAGE

Supreme Adept of the Arts Arcane, Great Wizard, Arch-Magister... the titles have varied over the eons, but the role and responsibilities of the Master Mage have remained largely the same. It is a fact of cosmic reality in the Freedom omniverse that each universe has a magician most in-tune with the flow of mystic forces in that universe, the Master Mage. Becoming Master Mage is primarily a matter of skill, power, and insight (often destiny as well). Being *recognized* as Master Mage is sometimes a separate matter, although the exercise of a Master Mage's power is something difficult to deny. At some times, in some worlds, there have been contests to determine which adept can claim the title of Master Mage; in others, the choice is clear.

A portentous choice falls upon the shoulders of the Master Mage, perhaps the most important in the universe. Connected with the primal mystic forces of her reality, a Master Mage can choose to become the steward and guardian of the universe, safeguarding it from any and all threats, or the Master Mage can choose to grab hold of those forces, bending and shaping them to become the *master* of the universe, what has become known throughout the mystic dimensions as a Dark Lord. Many Master Mages in countless realities have fallen prey to the temptations of power and become Dark Lords, dimensional tyrants ruling their worlds with an iron fist. Some Dark Lords are deposed, replaced by either a guardian Master Mage or, more often, by another would-be Dark Lord, even if the rebel's original intent is pure; power corrupts, and there are few temptations greater than the opportunity to rule a universe!

Thus, it's no great surprise Master Mages like Eldrich have encountered more Dark Lords in the mystic realms than peers safeguarding

their own realities. The Dark Lords claim this is because their way, the way of power and dominance, is truly natural, and it is the mewling and weakling guardians who are the aberrations. In terms of sheer numbers, they may well be right.

KNOWN AND NOTABLE MASTER MAGES

NAME	ERA
Ios the Seer	ancient Atlantis
Malador the Mystic	ancient Atlantis
Naran the Wise	ancient Atlantis
Hermes Trismegistus	ancient Egypt
Simon Magus	circa 1st century AD
Merlin the Magician	circa 7th century AD
Broken Crow	mid-1800s to 1890
Lady Violet Pennyworth	1890 to 1895
Adrian Eldrich	1935 to present

BENEFIT (MASTER MAGE)

FORTUNE

This Benefit feat invests you as a Master Mage. In addition to the title and responsibilities, which may grant a bonus for interaction checks with those aware of the occult world, this Benefit allows you to spend a hero point for inspiration to invoke the Secret Circle for advice and guidance. See the following for more information.

Although investiture as a Master Mage does also include the potential to become a Dark Lord, this is not considered in the feat's value, as it is more of a plot device, and Dark Lords are presumed to be characters under the Gamemaster's control. Should a Master Mage character choose to become a Dark Lord in the course of play, control over that character goes to the GM, unless there's a specific agreement among the group to play out the Master Mage/Dark Lord struggle.

THE SECRET CIRCLE

The service of a Master Mage does not end with mortal death. Although the soul passes on from the world of the living, past Master Mages are all part of the Secret Circle, the ranks of enlightened mystics since time immemorial. One of the rights and powers of the current Master Mage is the ability to call upon this spectral council of wise ones for insight and advice.

The Secret Circle is by no means omniscient, although they represent the greatest collection of arcane knowledge in Earth's dimension and have considerable wisdom. Dark Lords, by their very nature, are solitary magicians and lack such spiritual allies for guidance. It is a fact Master Mages like Eldrich have used to their advantage in the past.

In game terms, the Secret Circle is a part of the Benefit of being Master Mage; spending hero points for inspiration (*M&M*, page 122) may represent a congress with the Secret Circle, with the Gamemaster passing cryptic clues and useful hints to the player(s) through the spectral mouthpiece.

Gamemasters can also use the Secret Circle as a plot device and adventure hook. The ascended mages have some ability to pass visions and guidance on to any mystic they choose. Since they do not do so often, any vision or charge given by the Secret Circle has considerable weight; mystics ignore them at their own peril!

THE LIGHT-BEARER AND THE SHADOW-TOUCHED

Two great powers of the occult world are Light and Shadow, essential symbols given form, influence, and action through various champions. They have been part of an essential struggle throughout history, although most people are only barely aware of it, and even then just as a battle between certain super-powered heroes and villains.

The Light has long been a symbol of hope, goodness, truth, and all that is right; mystics are said to be "illuminated" or "en-light-ened" by their studies. For millennia, before the advent of electric lights turned night into day, people huddled close around campfires, hearths, and other sources of light to keep the darkness at bay. Mystics have sought the "higher" light that is the source of all things; some of them have even succeeded.

The Light occasionally chooses a champion (or champions) to wield its power for the greater good. Their purpose is to enlighten, guide, heal, and protect against the forces that would threaten to snuff out the light within humanity and the world. In ancient Egypt, the hero Pharos wielded the power associated with Ra and the Sun. During the dark days of the Second World War, the German twins White Rose and White Thorn were the chosen Light-Bearers, yielding their power to Langston Albright, the hero known as Beacon, shortly after the war's end. There have been many others, and Albright searches even now for his successor, the next Light-Bearer.

Every light casts a shadow, however. Even before there was light, there was darkness. Among those people looking towards the light, there have always been a few who looked instead out into the shadows beyond it and heard something calling to them, saw in the darkness all that they wanted, and walked away from the light towards it. Certain mystics have embraced the dark as a source of power, willing to sacrifice anything, even their own inner light, to achieve their ends.

Just as the Light chooses its champions, so too are there those touched by Shadow who work its will in the world. The Shadow-World is a place of endless darkness, of fear and despair, but it is also a place of power. The Shadow-Touched seek to expand its power and influence in the world by spreading darkness and supporting others that do so. Their

ranks include the shadowy killer Nacht-Krieger and the sorcerer Taarvon the Undying. Even Blackstar, wielder of the Shadow Bands, is a conduit for the power of the Shadow-World.

LIGHT-BEARER TEMPLATE

46 POINTS

Powers: **Flight 4** (100 MPH), **Force Field 8** (Impervious), **Light Control 10** (Alternate Powers: **Blast 10**, **Create Object 10**; some Light-bearers develop additional power stunts, depending on their proficiency)

SHADOW-TOUCHED TEMPLATE

49/57 POINTS

Powers: One of the following:

- **Darkness Control 10** (Alternate Powers: **Blast 10**, **Create Object 10**; some Shadow-Touched develop additional power stunts as well), **Force Field 8** (Impervious), **Super-Senses 2** (darkvision), **Teleport 9** (Medium—shadows)
- **Immunity 30** (Fortitude), **Shadow Form 5** (**Concealment 4** [all visual, limited to shadows], **Insubstantial 3**, **Super-Movement 3** [slithering, wall-crawling 2]), **Super-Senses 2** (darkvision)

THE GATEKEEPER

The mystic paths of the Cosmic Coil were once much more open to those who sought them; crossing between worlds was as easy as crossing a field or a room (and still is, in some rare places in the world). Ancient Master Mages like Ios the Seer systematically placed seals, closed and locked gates, and rearranged the occult landscape so Earth—although it remains a mystic crossroads—is safer from the forces from other spheres of existence. However, for every locked door and gate, there is a key, and a guardian, and it is the Gatekeeper.

The Gatekeeper is a living nexus between the worlds, an embodiment of the crossroads energies of Earth's dimension. It is the Gatekeeper's responsibility to stand on the threshold between this world and countless others, keeping vigil and opening or closing the gates as needed for what must and what must not pass.

While the role of Master Mage is certainly one of destiny, it is also a position attained through ambition and achievement. The Gatekeeper, on the other hand, is truly chosen by destiny, although whether by the impersonal forces of chance or an embodiment of fate like the Norn remains unclear. Whatever the case, the Gatekeeper is born, not made, and another cannot take up the mantle until the current Gatekeeper is no more. Rumors abound of secret rites to usurp a Gatekeeper's power, but thus far, they remain only legend.

The Gatekeeper also has strong ties with the Dimension of Doors (see **Chapter 1**). The Door Wardens acknowledge the holder of the inheritance as an honorary one of their number, and they often assume the duty of training and teaching the new Gatekeeper about his or her responsibilities.

GATEKEEPER TEMPLATE

38 POINTS

Powers: **Dimensional Pocket 5** (2,500 lbs.), **Insubstantial 4** (limited to allowing objects to pass through; cannot move through objects), **Super-Movement 4** (air walking 2, dimensional 2, mystic dimensions), **Super-Senses 4** (dimensional awareness [accurate], magical awareness)

In addition to the template's traits, many Gatekeepers have trained as adept magicians, having Magic rank 8 or higher.

The Limit on the Gatekeeper's Insubstantial power represents the ability to allow small objects to pass harmlessly through the living "gateway" of his or her body, emerging on the other side. The Gatekeeper cannot, however, walk through larger barriers like walls.

OCCULT HISTORY

The secret history of the world is found in the pages of ancient tomes written in long-forgotten languages, in tales shared among a rare few who understand and believe in them. To the vast majority of people in the World of Freedom, occult “history” is no more than myth and legend, but some understand the truths behind the legends; these are those truths.

PREHISTORY

In the morning of life on Earth arose the Serpent People, intelligent reptiles with an innate talent for perceiving and manipulating mystic forces. The Serpent People used their arcane arts to influence their environment and not only survive but flourish in a savage world. They founded and built an empire centered on the island continent of Lemuria while humanity’s furry ancestors scurried through the trees, and their sorceries and arcane science allowed them to survive the extinction of the great saurians.

The Serpent Empire was already thoroughly corrupt and decadent by the time humanity evolved. Humans would have been nothing more than the slave pets (and occasional food) of the Serpent People, if it had not been for the intervention of the Preservers. These mysterious aliens performed genetic and social engineering experiments on groups of primitive humans. The near-complete lack of occult lore regarding them suggests the Preservers were not at all acquainted with the mystic arts, which may be why they showed no interest in the Serpent People or even actively avoided them. Some suggest, in fact, that the Preserver intervention was deliberately intended to *prevent* Earth from becoming a focus for magical power in the universe.

Whatever their motives, the Preservers gave humanity a leg-up in the evolutionary race. Uplifted humans founded the Empire of Atlantis and learned magical secrets from the Serpent People, who underestimated the mammals they once easily enslaved. The two great empires fought a series of wars, with long stretches of fragile and wary peace, until a magical cataclysm destroyed them both. This disaster was the end of the great Age of Magic on Earth. If the Preservers intended to limit magic’s power, they were at least partially successful; the arcane retreated into the shadows and legends of the world, where it has largely remained ever since.

Although much of the lore of Atlantis and Lemuria is lost to the modern world, they laid the foundations of magic, which remain strong to the present day. The ancient human magicians of Atlantis were the first known to hold the title of Master Mage and set many of the duties and responsibilities of that office. It may be the Master Mage was originally tasked with protecting humanity from the depredations of the Serpent People or, more likely, from the various alien extradimensional entities worshipped by the corrupt cults of Lemuria. The first Master Mages explored the Cosmic Coil, codified ancient spells, and forged pacts with entities like the Modrossus to give humans valuable allies (see **Chapter 2** for more information).

Other legacies of the Age of Magic remain as well. Adrian Eldrich is the reincarnation of an ancient Atlantean mage who put aside the opportunity to ascend to a higher plane in order to safeguard the Earth. The two great threats inspiring his choice were the continued survival of the Serpent People and their cults (especially the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign) and the imprisonment of Malador the Mystic in a tomb



MAGIC VERSUS SCIENCE

Magic and science are distinct ways of understanding and influencing the universe in the World of Freedom. Science is the more common mode by design, because anyone can potentially understand it and use the technology it produces. Magic requires a particular talent and considerable dedication to learn and master. Even then, it's dangerous, involving sanity-warping dimensions and entities. Science is a path for the masses, while magic is only for a select few.

While it's common to consider science and magic opposed forces, that isn't really the case, and it is usually a presumption from novice magicians or those ignorant of how magic works. In fact, magic has been an invisible ally of human knowledge and progress since the dawn of history. Things like the Pact and the work of Master Mages and others to protect Earth's dimension from outside magical forces have created a stable world where science and natural philosophy can flourish. This may well be the outcome planned by the Preservers from the beginning: a largely orderly reality, as opposed to the chaotic netherworlds so common along the twists and turns of the Cosmic Coil.

Thus, in a *Freedom City* series, "magic" and "science" (or "technology") are not considered opposed descriptors as such; they don't counter each other or affect each other unduly. Gamemasters wanting a more adversarial relationship can create one, if desired.

within the Temple of Sirrion. In addition, there are ancient artifacts, some in the safekeeping of the Master Mage, but others buried at the bottom of the sea or deep under the earth, waiting to be found and used once again.

THE ANCIENT WORLD

Long after the ocean waves had covered the ruins of Atlantis and Lemuria, consigning them to the realm of myth and legend, their legacies were felt in the ancient world. Humans worshipped various pantheons of gods, most of the eldritch entities of the past forgotten or forbidden to all but masters of magic. The gods descended to Earth from time to time, and the fruits of their dalliances with mortals became many of the great heroes of legend. Others were empowered by divine might or chosen as champions of other forces.

The Black Land of Egypt was a focus for mystic powers. At least one Master Mage walked the sands along the Nile and advised pharaohs. The noble prince Heru-Ra, chosen of the sun god, championed the cause of the light until he was brought low by the treachery of the sorcerer Tan-Aktor. Their *ka*, or life forces, were bound together to reincarnate over and over across the ages and continue their struggle. The powers of Light and Shadow found champions in the hero Pharos and the dark Cult of Set, with ties stretching back to the blood of the Serpent People.

Throughout Europe, the gods worked their wills over mortals. In ancient Greece, heroes with divine ancestry performed great deeds but often met with bitter ends at the hands of other Olympians. The gods moved mortals like pieces in a great game and were themselves moved by the fickle hand of Fate, involving themselves in wars and conflict. Of the immortal survivors of the Age of Heroes, only Medea of Colchis maintained ties to the mystic arts. Others like Daedalus, Talos, and the Minotaur turned away from the fickle workings of gods and magic to embrace science, reason, and secrecy.

In central Europe, the Aesir, gods of Asgard, fought and drank alongside their mortal worshippers. Odin and Loki traveled in various guises among them, working their wills. Elves lurked in the deep forests, and giants dwelled in the frozen wastes, while dwarves labored in their caverns deep below the earth. The secrets of runes and dwarf-craft found their way into mortal hands.

Far to the east, overlooking a hidden valley, the Shambala Temple preserved the arcane secrets of ancient Atlantis, mixing them with the philosophies and insights of mystics from India, Tibet, China, and other lands. Generations of monks and master-teachers passed on their disciplines and silently maintained the ancient crypts wherein the mortal clay of the Master Mages was interred. Wanderers and students from the temple ventured out into the world from time to time,

and where they walked, students of their arts appeared and performed great deeds.

Untold centuries after the Great Cataclysm, the people of Atlantis learned the surface world was not destroyed in a deluge as they thought. Explorers, and then scouts, found their way into the ancient cradle of civilization. They were followed by troops, as Atlantis sought to reclaim the empire that was once its birthright. But humanity had changed since those days, and the Atlanteans were only a shadow of their former glory. Aided by heroes like cunning Daedalus, the Athenians and Egyptians repelled the Atlantean invasion, leaving only legends of the strange visitors from the island-nation in the distant sea.

THE PACT

Although humanity had long since outstripped the Serpent People (who were reduced to a pitiful fraction of their former numbers, dwelling in Sub-Terra), they slid far from the pinnacle of ancient Atlantis. Even the Atlanteans themselves were diminished from the stature of their ancestors. Mortals were pawns to the gods they worshipped, game pieces in divine contests, and playthings for godly appetites.

So, the Master Mage known as Simon Magus forged the Pact, calling upon the aid of ancient eldritch forces all but unseen since the Great Cataclysm. It was a great and desperate gambit, a binding spell of such power and potency it would ensure humanity would live free ... or put an end to everything. The binding changed the Cosmic Coil itself, altering the fundamental nature of the dimensional crossroads of Earth. The barriers between worlds strengthened, and the balance of the cosmic axis shifted. When it was done, the gods and other entities from outside Earth's dimension could no longer enter without being called upon by a mortal power, without human *permission*. The power needed to overcome the binding was such that it would destroy the universe instead, robbing the invader of any prize.

The ancient gods had little choice but to largely withdraw from the world, retreating to their own realms to wait and watch. Some left behind touchstones and talismans, means of summoning awaiting those eager mortals who might use them. Others simply fled, leaving their worshippers behind.

It remains an open debate whether the Pact did the world any favors. What followed the departure of the old gods was the fall of ancient empires and a people floundering for meaning and direction in their absence. Some believe Simon Magus meant for the Pact to be a first step in a return to the supremacy of magic, but the plan did not work as intended. Others say the centuries-long Dark Ages were simply "growing pains," a necessary adjustment for what came later, and fairly minor in the grand sweep of history—no doubt a great comfort to the generations who suffered and died.

THE DARK AGES

The centuries following the creation of the Pact and the fall of Rome are well known as the Dark Ages in western civilization, a long, slow climb back from the depths to forge a new world.

The first great attempt was the work of the Master Mage Merlin, offspring of Earth and the realm of Avalon. He foresaw the opportunity to bring about the birth of a new champion, one who could unite the peoples of the British Isles and forge a new future. Carefully arranging events, he placed the child Arthur in the care of a foster family until the time was ripe for him to claim his birthright. He taught, advised, and guided the newly crowned King Arthur, gifting him with the sword Excalibur and overseeing the formation of the Round Table.

The machinations of the sorceress Morgan LeFey, Arthur's half-sister and a wielder of the power of Avalon, brought down Merlin's plans. Betrayed by his wife and best friend, challenged by his bastard son Mordred, Arthur's Camelot fell to the forces of darkness. He and his enchanted blade were taken to Avalon to await the time of their return, while Merlin, too, left the world, said to be imprisoned in the trunk of a tree, itself one of the fading gateways "under the hill" to Avalon.

Following the failure of Merlin's great experiment, other Master Mages wisely remained behind the scenes, dealing with threats to reality and humanity quietly and allowing the world to get on with the business of governing itself. Through wars, plagues, and the formation and breakup of nations, the masters of the mystic arts focused on the big picture: creating a "safe" environment for the progress of humanity. Centuries later, Eldrich would describe it thus:

"Why didn't the Master Mages of old do something about all the struggles of the time? It's a bit like the old joke about elephants: a fellow is doing something odd, and when someone asks why he's doing it, he says it's to keep away elephants. When it's pointed out there are no elephants around, he says, 'See how well it's working?' Well, that fellow is the Master Mage and the 'elephants' are arcane entities so powerful and terrible they could make every tragedy of human history seem like a stubbed toe by comparison. Like many things, it's a matter of perspective."

THE NEW WORLD

In time, the Dark Ages gave way to the Enlightenment and Renaissance, and a new era of science, learning, and exploration began. Natural philosophers straddled the divide between science and sorcery, but slowly, the occult ways of the magician gave way to reason and the scientific method. Magic moved deeper into the shadows, creating greater misunderstanding and mistrust. Righteous inquisitors and witch-hunters battled occult creatures preying on humanity, but they made little or no distinction between these threats and decent students of the arcane (a contradiction in terms, in their view).

This crusade against the supernatural extended to the colonies of the New World with men like the Reverend Elijah Prophet, famous monster-hunter. He tracked and slew lycanthropes, undead, demons, and other hell-beasts for many years, tirelessly working God's will in the world. Reverend Prophet, and others like him, also threatened the occult community, forcing them to hide their true nature from outsiders.

Some were able to remain hidden, but others, like Justina Vervain, were less successful. Justina was a young witch of the Old Ways, caught in the witch-hunter's net. Crown Prosecutor Lucius Cabot came to her in gaol and offered clemency in exchange for information about her craft. Reluctantly, Justina agreed, and earned only a swift hanging to ensure her silence. Her last words were a curse upon Lucius Cabot, that a child of her blood would one day avenge her.

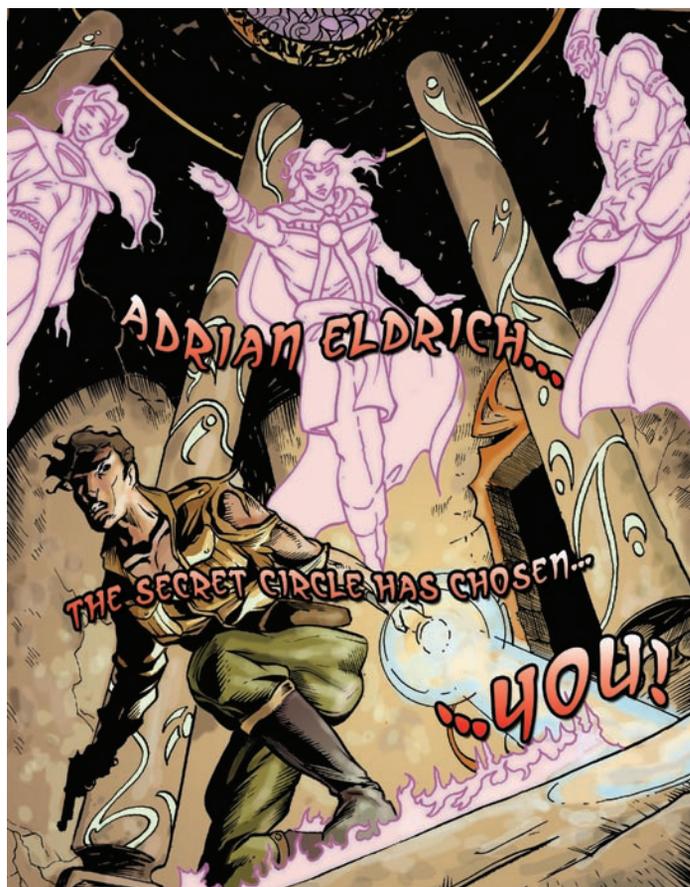
Cabot used his talent and newfound knowledge to contact an infernal coven called the Brood of Tiamat, enemies of Reverend Prophet. He offered to pledge his allegiance to their hell-spawned master and his aid in defeating their foe. Little did they know Cabot would betray them as well, selling his soul—and theirs—for power and eternal youth.

Justina Vervain's granddaughter, Constance, married Freedom's Colonial Governor, Terrance Strype. Heir to her grandmother's lore, Constance convinced her husband to build a summer home on the site where Lucius Cabot became immortal, in hopes of using the lingering traces of power there to exact revenge upon him. She bound the Vengeance Spirit summoned by Justina Vervain's curse and began to teach her children its secrets. Cabot was unable to strike directly at the Governor's wife, so he bided his time, already well past the span of his natural life.

His opportunity came to Freedom with the Revolutionary War. When Colonial troops laid siege to Freedom, Cabot's assassins struck. Constance sacrificed herself to allow her children and their nanny to flee to safety, and her killers made her death appear the work of rebel soldiers. Governor Strype, overcome with grief, fell under the sway of the Vengeance Spirit. The fire that consumed the governor's summer home was blamed on the rebels, but heroes like Minuteman and Lady Liberty knew it was the fire of Strype's vengeance, which consumed him utterly. For generations, Lucius Cabot lost track of Justina Vervain's descendants, occupied with other matters following the British defeat and the formation of the United States of America.

THE MODERN ERA

The forces of eldritch evil grew bolder after the death of Master Mage Broken Crow at Wounded Knee in 1890. His successor was



Violet Pennyworth, a British occultist and daring woman for her time. Unfortunately, Lady Pennyworth perished only five years later, fighting against the Cult of Kar'Kradas, and many of the talismans of her office were lost.

The role of Master Mage remained unfilled for decades, as Lady Pennyworth had no opportunity to train or designate a successor, and no worthy candidate stepped forward to claim the title. It was during this time that the Order of Light rose to prominence, standing in as best they could for the Master Mage and studying the auguries and divinations that promised the greatest Master Mage the world had seen in millennia was coming.

It was difficult at times for the magicians of the Order to remain hopeful: the dark specter of fascism rose in Europe and elsewhere, with rumors of corrupt sorcerers working behind the scenes. The Thule Society gained power in Germany, while the Green Dragon Society practiced its rites in Imperial Japan.

Then, in 1935, archeologist Adrian Eldrich discovered the fabled lost Temple of Sirrion. He uncovered the tomb of Malador and broke its mystic seals, freeing the undead sorcerer. Malador thanked his rescuer by draining the life forces of his workers and aides and leaving Eldrich bound in magical chains to die beneath the claws of the tomb's guard-

ians. They did not attack, however. Instead, the Secret Circle appeared to Eldrich and proclaimed him the next Master Mage, bearer of the reincarnated spirit of Malador's ancient foe.

Filled with great mystic power, Eldrich duelled and defeated Malador, imprisoning him once again, although the dark necromancer would escape on other occasions. Eldrich's initial rush of power faded, and he spent decades re-learning the occult secrets of his prior incarnation and more, proving himself worthy of the title of Master Mage.

In Germany, twins named Sophia and Wolfgang Shaal became the Light-bearers, safeguarded by members of the Order of Light until they could use their powers against Shadow-touched Nazis such as Nacht-Krieger and his master, Thule adept Wilhelm Kantor. The twins called themselves White Rose and White Thorn, and they sacrificed themselves to imprison Nacht-Krieger at the war's end, passing their power on to Langston Albright, the superhero known as Beacon.

For decades, Eldrich has worn the mantle of Master Mage and safeguarded the world from magical threats of all kinds. He banished the occult forces summoned by Nazi magicians after the war, and he has been a steadfast ally of the world's heroes. Still, he knows the time to choose his successor approaches, and he is alert for signs pointing to the identity of the next Master Mage. Whoever it is will inherit many challenges.

MYSTIC REALMS

In magical parlance, Earth—indeed the entire material universe—is but one “sphere” of existence. There are “higher” and “lower” spheres as well, magical dimensions where entities out of human myth and imagination reside. It's debatable whether or not these beings—gods, heroes and demons, dreams and nightmares—existed before humanity or arose out of human imagination and worship. In either case, they and their realms are quite real and capable of interacting with the material world.

Among the myriad dimensions of existence are the realms of the different mythological pantheons, such as Mount Olympus, home of the ancient Greek gods, and Guinee, the Island Beneath the Sea, home of the Voodoo loa. Numerous other godly realms exist, alongside various netherworlds and hells where demons and devils can be found.

Some dimensions serve as power sources to be tapped by mystics and mages from a thousand different worlds, each attributing the powers to some conceptual being that may or may not actually exist and may not particularly care how its power is used. See the **Entities and Entreaties** section of **Chapter 2** for details on these mystic power sources.

Actual magical beings from other dimensions—be they gods, demons, spirits, or something else entirely—rarely interact with life on Earth. Many are barred by various agreements among the higher (or lower) spheres, but often the distance and problems of traversing the dimensional gulfs keep them away from Freedom City and Earth as well. They can still reach the material world, but only if they expend a great deal of energy or are specifically summoned to the material universe, giving them a “bridge” to cross. Heroic magicians like Eldrich, Earth's Master Mage, safeguard people against invaders from other spheres.

TRANSITIVE DIMENSIONS

Two primary transitive dimensions are known to mystics: the Cosmic Coil, or the complex pathways “between” world, and the astral plane, a conceptual realm overlapping the physical world and connecting it with other spheres of reality.

THE COSMIC COIL

Mystic adepts call it many things: the Veiled Road, the Winding Way, the Spiral of the Spheres, and the Paths of the Magi. The Serpent People call it the Cosmic Coil, while to the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, it is the Maze of Madness, the path to the Unspeakable One, the all-devouring chaos at the center of existence. They all describe the mysterious pathways between dimensions, particularly to other worlds of magical power.

The Cosmic Coil winds its way between and around all the spheres of existence, a way of reaching other worlds for those who know how to walk its twisted, secret paths. Such journeys may be short or long (sometimes varying from one journey to the next), but they are always risky, even for true adepts of the mystic arts.

Once the Cosmic Coil was more accessible and even mundane people could wander into it as easily as crossing a stream, forest clearing, or cave opening. Now, mystic barriers erected by generations of magicians have largely sealed off access to the Coil and other dimensions. There remain some places where the walls between worlds are thin enough for casual passage, and there are creatures able to follow the Winding Way on their own, perhaps even leading others through it. For the most part, access to the Cosmic Coil is limited to mystics using the proper spells and rituals, and policing their use is an important task for the Master Mage.

THE ASTRAL PLANE

The astral plane is a dimension closely parallel to the material world and extending throughout the known dimensions of the Cosmic Coil. It is a realm of mind and spirit, made up of ectoplasm, a psychic substance analogous to matter but more malleable and responsive to mystic and psychic forces.

The near astral plane touches upon many different dimensions, allowing astral beings to see and hear things occurring in the material world and even to interact, to a limited degree. This is what some refer to as the “ethereal” plane (see **The Ethereal Plane** in **Chapter 1**), but it is actually the first “layer” of the astral. From the ethereal level, astral forms can

perceive and interact with the material world, and some in that world can perceive them as well (with abilities like mystic or mental senses).

The deep astral plane is a conceptual realm of floating pockets of ectoplasm in a psychedelic void. It is filled with drifting "islands," disembodied eyes or mouths, roads or paths (some of which form part of the Cosmic Coil), and other icons or images. Some astral imagery is dictated by the psyche of the traveler, since ectoplasm responds to thoughts and emotional impressions. Thus, visitors to the deep astral often see what they expect to see or encounter embodiments of their own deep-seated fears, desires, or dreams.

Visitors most commonly reach the astral plane through psychic or magical means, particularly the Astral Form power, creating a temporary body for the psyche out of ectoplasm. Physical transference to the astral plane is less common, and more dangerous, since it is possible to become lost in the misty astral depths, unable to return to the material world.

PRIMAL DIMENSIONS

The primal dimensions of the Cosmic Coil occupy a similar level to the material world, no surprise as—magically speaking—they are strongly in-tune with physicality and the natural world. They include the realms of elemental power as well as the sylvan dimension of Avalon, the realm of the faerie folk.

AVALON, THE REALM OF FAERIE

Technically speaking, Avalon is a particular place within the greater realm of Faerie, but it is the one with the strongest connection to Earth and best known to its superhuman inhabitants, so it has come into common use as another name for the fey realm.

Faerie is home to shape-shifting magical beings with powers of illusion known collectively as the Fae and called by numerous names in human folk legends, such as the Gentry, the Good Folk, and the Dwellers Under the Hill. Because of their mercurial nature, it's difficult to describe the Fae as a "species." There are numerous types, each with their own particular proclivities and specialties. The only real things they share in common are: an innately magical nature, a curiosity about the material world, a general lack of imagination and innovation, and a related devotion to tradition to the point of influencing their physical nature.

While often capable of changing their form and influencing the form and appearance of other things, the Fae lack creativity and imagination. Their forms and illusions are aped from things they have seen and experienced in the physical world, and once the Fae adopt something, they become strongly attached to it. This makes their culture baroquely complex and littered with superstitions and ancient *geasa*, or "bonds," traditions so strong it causes the Fae physical pain and harm to violate them. Among these include keeping their sworn word and various vulnerabilities, particularly to iron, which is anathema to many faeries.

Once, the realm of Faerie was strongly connected to Earth, particularly in the British Isles and parts of Europe. Fae interaction with humanity waned following the downfall of King Arthur's Camelot. The folk of Avalon took the fallen king with them into their realm to heal and await the day when he would be needed once more, while Faerie gifts like the sword Excalibur were also returned. In times since, Fae incursions to Earth have been rare, with the exception of Thomas Rhymer's visit to Faerie (see his description later in this chapter).

The inhabitants of Avalon have remained largely the same since the Middle Ages, and most of their realm seems like a fantastic version of Earth during that time, although some parts are even stranger. Some of the Fae have at least a passing acquaintance with modern human customs and technology, even if they do not always understand either.

ELEMENTAL REALMS

The elemental realms of air, earth, fire, and water define the far reaches of the primal dimensions. These places embody the essence of the element, making them dangerous for visitors. The realm of air is a vast and endless expanse of cloudy sky, while the realm of earth consists of mazes of tunnels through solid rock. The realm of fire is all molten magma and storms of fiery rain, while the realm of water is like a sea with neither bottom nor surface.

The elemental realms are home to creatures of their element, often summoned by mystics to do their bidding. They are also the source of power for certain primal, elemental magics, particularly the power of the Prime Elements, which empowered the Factor Four.

DIVINE DIMENSIONS

A number of different dimensions within the Cosmic Coil are home to the gods of human myth throughout history. Modern mystics have speculated whether or not these deities pre-date the human cultures worshipping them or if they were born of that worship. If the gods know the answer, they have chosen to remain silent on the matter.

Indeed, the inhabitants of the divine dimensions have relatively little interaction with humanity these days, due to the Pact forged centuries ago, which restricts their visits to Earth (see **The Pact** under **Occult**



OTHER DIVINE REALMS

The divine realms described here only scratch the surface. Every divine dimension of human myth and legend is alive somewhere in the twists and turns of the Cosmic Coil. The realms of every pantheon await travelers seeking them out, and gods without number observe mortal affairs and, sometimes, find ways to intervene in them.

What this means is you can include any mythology or spiritual background in the mystic cosmology of *Freedom City*. While those pantheons described are the most influential for the characters in the setting's history, do not feel limited to them. If you wish to include the gods of the Aztec myths, for example, in your series, feel free to do so and to describe the Seven Heavens and the layers of the underworld associated with them.

History. Now, the divine forces do not appear or intervene without a human agent to summon them. Still, more than a few adepts have called upon the gods over the years, affording them opportunities to involve themselves in mortal affairs.

ASGARD

The shining realm of Asgard, home of the Norse gods, stands at the pinnacle of the rainbow bridge Bifrost, guarded by the ever-watchful Heimdall. Asgard, with its many palaces and feast-halls, including the great hall of Valhalla, is but a part of the Nine Worlds of Norse myth. The others include Midgard (Earth), the elemental realms of Muspelheim and Niflheim, the homes of the giants and dwarves, the afterlife of Hel, and even the realm of Faerie, which the Norse call Alfheim (elf-home). The boughs, trunk, and roots of Yggdrasil, the great world-tree, form the paths of the Cosmic Coil in this complex of dimensions.

Much of the interaction between Asgard and humanity in modern times has been through the Aryan nationalists of the Nazi party and their descendants (both literal and philosophical), who have called upon the gods' power to further their cause. This has soured the Aesir and the All-Father Odin on humanity in general and only reinforced the Pact among the Nine Worlds. Odin generally forbids any under his reign to have dealings with Midgard, and he punishes violators severely.

GUINEE, THE ISLAND BENEATH THE SEA

At the bottom of a vast interdimensional sea lies Guinee, the island home of the loa, gods of Voodoo. Although it is described as an island, the territory covered by Guinee is vast and difficult to map in three-dimensional terms. The rulers of the domain of the loa are the great serpent gods Damballah and Ayieda, the white snake and the rainbow serpent. They are the most ancient of their kind and have spiritual ties to the Serpent People on Earth, although they no longer receive worship from them.

Voodoo has a tradition of trance-possession, wherein the loa enter and control the body of a worshipper, which has allowed the loa a means around the Pact to a degree, since they are invited in. The *cheval* or "horse" serves as a bridge for the spirits of Voodoo to cross over from Guinee. This may be one of the reasons why worship of the loa remains active and vital compared to other pantheons.

Although the loa interact with humanity more often than other ancient gods, they still observe restrictions on their interference in human affairs. Currently, the loa watch the struggle between Siren and Baron Samedi to determine the fate of future relations with humanity. Baron Samedi maintains that mortals are innately corrupt and fit as nothing more than the hosts and playthings of the powerful loa. Siren champions the human spirit and potential, advocating partnership and

cooperation. Although their struggle has been going on for years, the loa are timeless and patient, willing to let things play out.

HELIOPOLIS

Heliopolis, the City of the Sun, is the home of the ancient Egyptian pantheon. It is ruled by Ra, the Sun Pharaoh, who travels in his boat across the sky each day and through the underworld each night. It is known as the home of Isis, goddess of magic, whose husband is Osiris, ruler of the afterlife, who dwells there apart from his kin. Their son, Horus the Avenger, had a career as a superhero in Freedom City in the 1960s, although he has since returned to his people.

Heliopolis is a vast golden city of Egyptian-style pyramids and temples, bordered by the Quays of Night and Day, the docks where Ra's boat arrives and departs on its endless journey across the sky. An isolated temple in the dark deserts between Heliopolis and the Lands of the Dead is the home of Set, the god of evil, foe of Osiris and his nephew, Horus. Like most of his ilk, Set is forbidden to interfere directly in mortal affairs, but he finds ways around such restrictions.

MOUNT OLYMPUS

In the soaring interdimensional heights stands Olympus, home of the ancient Greek pantheon. It was once firmly connected with Earth at a dimensional nexus point atop the physical Mount Olympus in Greece, but that portal has been closed and now opens only occasionally from the earthly side.

The Olympians were once quite active in mortal affairs. They created or sired mortal champions and granted immortality to the inventor Daedalus. They also interfered in wars, politics, and other matters. Eventually, the Olympians, like other ancient gods, agreed to honor the Pact and leave humanity to make its own choices and progress in its own way, although the gods do still appear among mortals from time to time. They are some of the most likely to respond to summons, as they relish opportunities to visit Earth.

Zeus still reigns as king of all the Olympian gods, his wife Hera at his side. The most common Olympians to interact with mortals are Hermes and Hades. Hermes, swift messenger of the gods, carries Zeus's decrees to those mortals still willing to listen. A trickster and a thief, Hermes also sometimes slips away from his duties for some fun in the mortal world when the opportunity presents itself. He has challenged speedsters like Johnny Rocket to prove their mettle against him in the past.

Hades, dark lord of Tartarus, simmers with resentment at the restrictions placed upon him by his younger brother Zeus and the power of the Pact. He has sought to conquer or influence Earth in the past, and he particularly wishes to claim the immortal soul of Daedalus, who has thwarted and defied him many times over the centuries. As Hades is forbidden to directly interfere on Earth, he operates primarily through various pawns and underlings.

THE LIGHT AND THE LOGOS

The farthest reaches of the divine extend beyond the homes of the ancient gods towards what mystics call "The Light." It sits at the summit of the divine, a pure white light some say is the source of creation itself. Within the Light is the Logos, the divine Word, sometimes known simply as the Voice or the Presence. Those who have heard it often say the Logos is the voice of God, although no two visitors entirely agree about what the Logos is or what it says.

The emanations of the Light form powerful beings that serve the Logos, choirs and ranks of angels and angelic beings, although many of them are inhuman and terrible to behold. Mystics have been known to encounter and even summon angelic beings from the Light, and occult lore is filled

with tales of servants of the Light that have fallen into Shadow, becoming the denizens of the netherworlds and infernal realms.

INFERNAL DIMENSIONS

At the other end of the dimensional spectrum from the divine realms are the infernal dimensions, ruled by various powerful magical beings. Some are quite similar to the hellish afterlives described in human myth and legend, their rulers analogous to demons and devils. The common element in these infernal realms is the presence of tormented souls, which apparently grant power to the dimension's ruler. Some mystics liken the rulers of these dimensions to psychic parasites, feeding upon the souls they collect.

Fortunately for humanity, infernal forces are constrained from intervening directly on Earth for the most part. It is difficult for them to climb "up" out of the dimensional abyss where they are found, for one thing. Plus, infernal forces are limited by ancient pacts, oaths, and spells woven in pre-historic times, and by the power of the Pact. Thus, most of these fiends can only tempt and bargain for the souls they crave. Still, they find more than a few willing victims.

Earth's Master Mage is charged with the task of protecting the world from infernal influences, and the Lords of the Fiends would love nothing more than to see this primary obstacle removed from their path, allowing them free rein amongst mortals.

TARTARUS

Tartarus is the dark realm ruled by the Greek god Hades. There, the souls or psychic forms of the dead reside in eternal torment for sins committed in life. They include Sisyphus, who eternally rolls a massive stone up a hill, only to have it tumble back down again, and Tantalus, immersed waist-deep in water, but forever unable to drink.

In many regards, Tartarus is Hades' prison, as well. Although the god of the dead can and does visit Olympus, he spends most of his time brooding in his black stone palace in his bleak realm. Only his wife, Persephone, can occasionally soften Hades' black moods, and even she cannot sway the Lord of Tartarus from his endless quest to claim the throne of Olympus for himself, displacing his younger brother, Zeus.

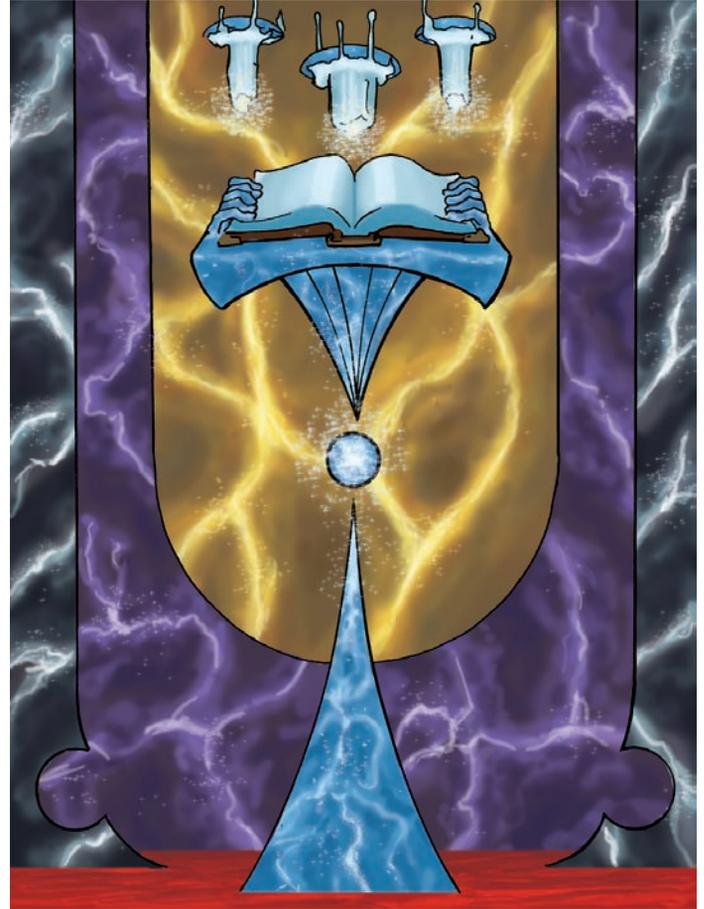
Hades' greatest enemy on Earth since the time of ancient Greece has been the hero Daedalus. Daedalus' attempt to refuse the gods' gift of immortality offended Hades, and his ageless existence since has been a thorn in the dark god's side. He wishes to claim Daedalus' soul as his own and cast down the inventor's beloved science in favor of a universe governed solely by the will of the gods—by *his* will.

THE DREAM DIMENSION

Also known as the Dreamlands, the Vale of Sleep, and the Dimension of Nightmares, the dream dimension is formed by the collective unconscious of all sleeping (and, to a degree, waking) minds. It is a place of thought and imagination, where dreams are reality, and everything ever imagined exists somewhere.

Like the astral plane, which it touches upon, the dream dimension has "near" and "far" or "deep" regions. Each intelligent being has its own region of the dimension, a personal dreamscape created by that individual's mind. The personal dreamscape blends into and eventually gives way to the vast and collective vista of the dream dimension, what psychologists call the collective unconscious and mystics know as the deep dreaming.

Also like the astral plane, outsiders usually visit the dream dimension in psychic or spiritual form, most often while sleeping, leaving the material body in the physical world while the psyche roams the vistas of dream. While events in the dream dimension (particularly in the personal dreamscape) are "just dreams," they can have real effects. This is particularly true of encounters in the deep dreaming, where entities of



great power and influence are sometimes found.

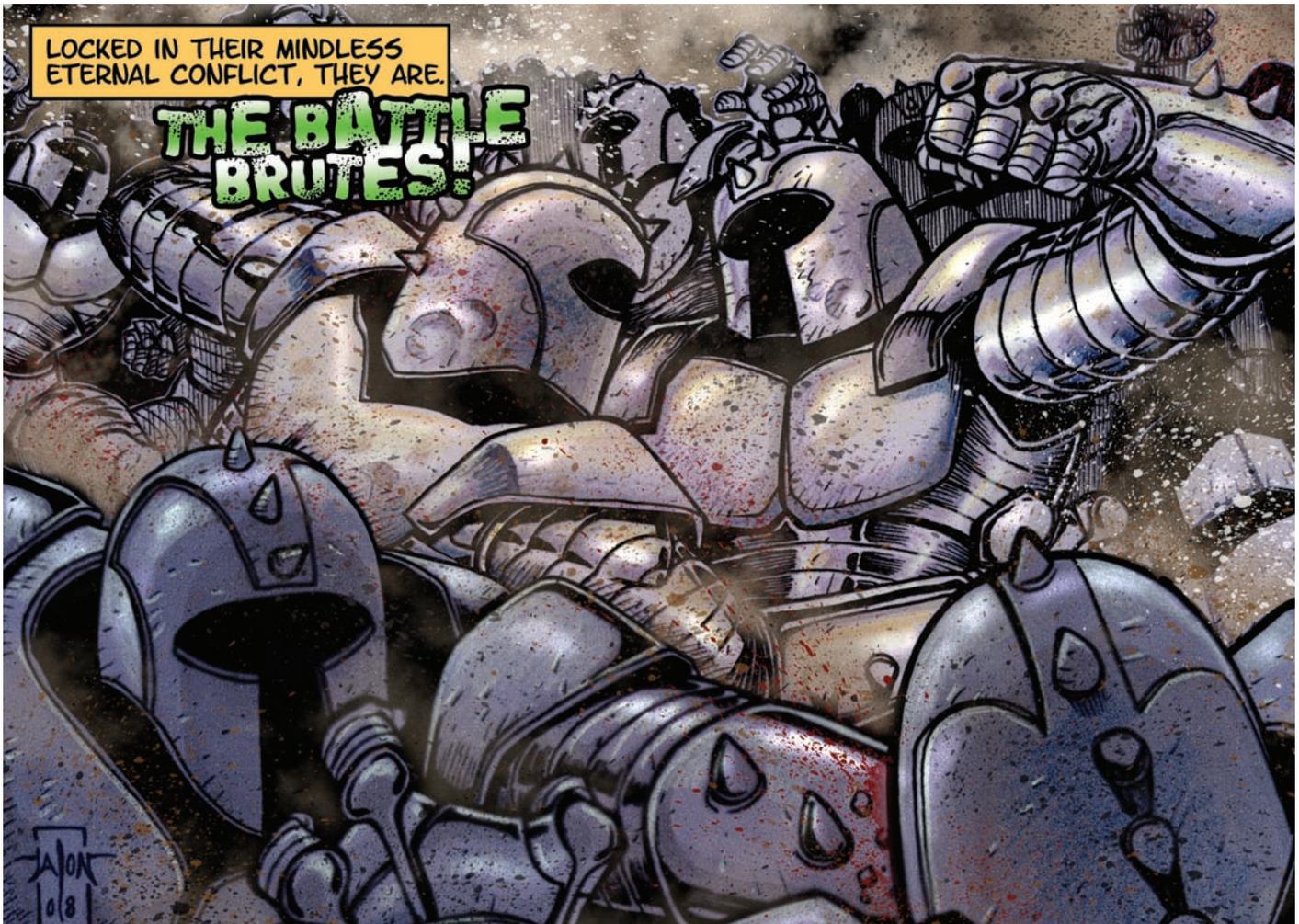
The inhabitants of the dream dimension are as diverse as the imagination, although they have varying degrees of reality and independence. Some are little more than phantasms, figments of the imagination, while others have an existence predating humanity. The Dreamlands are home to the dreaming selves of the Serpent People, ancient scions of that race who exist now in eternal sleep in the material world, their minds free to roam the Vale of Dreams. There are also many cats in the dream dimension, since cats spend so much time asleep, moving between the dreaming and waking worlds.

NETHERWORLD DIMENSIONS

Many of the dimensions beyond Earth's plane are "netherworlds." Each dimension in the Cosmic Coil has a Master Mage, its most powerful and skilled adept of the mystic arts. In some dimensions (such as Earth's), the Master Mage is a responsible guardian of order. In many others, the Master Mage is driven by a lust for power or has been corrupted by the power of the office, imposing her will on the very fabric of reality. In time, the dimension becomes a netherworld, and its Master Mage becomes a Dark Lord.

The netherworlds are places where magic reigns supreme, and physical laws are largely matters of convenience, existing almost entirely at the whim of its ruling Dark Lord. The orderly nature of reality gives way to chaos, shaped at the will of the netherworld's ruler. Netherworlds tend to take on the character of their ruling Dark Lord, reflecting personal preferences and idiosyncrasies.

Dark Lords often war against each other as they seek to expand their domains. Netherworlds can engulf and swallow each other or be sun-



dered by internal strife, particularly if another powerful sorcerer rises to challenge the ruling Dark Lord. The Dark Lords have only ever cooperated once in their known history, and it would take a similar threat to force them to band together once more.

The most infamous of Dark Lords is Una, the ruler of the largest and most extensive netherworld (simply known as “the Netherworld” by inhabitants of Earth). She is a long-time foe of Adrian Eldrich, Earth’s Master Mage, and would like nothing more than to humble him and to add Earth to her realm.

THE BATTLE BRUTES

Their origin is lost in the mists of some distant world. Mystic adepts know magicians forged the constructs called Battle Brutes as warriors in a long-forgotten war. The so-called “War-born” were the ideal soldiers, feeling no pain, fear, pity, or compassion. They existed solely to destroy the enemy, and they did their job well, all too well.

When the war had devastated their world, the Battle Brutes turned on their creators. Their existence since has been one of never-ending conflict, destroying anything in their path. It is said they will only stop when everything has been destroyed, and there is nothing left in all the cosmos.

Long ago, the Dark Lords of the Netherworlds united for the first and only time to pen the Battle Brutes behind mystic barriers and keep them from spreading to other worlds. Although the spells containing them have weakened on occasion, the War-born have always been returned to their interdimensional prison.

PRETERNATURAL DIMENSIONS

Beyond even the vast reaches of the Cosmic Coil, beyond all the diverse realms of the cosmos and even the darkest netherworlds and infernal reaches are places so alien and strange they cannot properly be called “places” at all. They are pure chaos, madness, and soul-annihilating darkness, places that should not, cannot exist, but do, as do their inhabitants.

BATTLE BRUTES POWER LEVEL 6 • MINION RANK 5

Str 24	Dex 10	Con –	Int –	Wis 10	Cha –
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Skills: None

Feats: None

Powers: **Immunity 30** (Fortitude), **Protection 8** (Impervious), **Regeneration 24** (recovery bonus +9, all conditions 1/minute, resurrection 1/hour)

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +12, Damage +7 (unarmed), Defense +5 (flat-footed +3), Knockback -8, Initiative +0

Saving Throws: Toughness +8, Fortitude –, Reflex +0, Will +0

Abilities -16 + Skills 0 + Feats 0 + Powers 70 + Combat 20 + Saves 0 = Total 74

The dwellers in these preternatural realms are known as the Nameless Ones, although some have been given names by the blasphemous cults and mad mystics who have worshipped them over the millennia. By far the best known in Earth's history is the Unspeakable One, patron (if such a term applies) of the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, which brought about the fall of Lemuria and Atlantis and nearly destroyed the ancient world.

The thoughts and motives of the Nameless Ones are unknowable, so alien is their nature. Most mystics believe they are only barely aware of humanity at all, giving us no more thought than a person does to bacteria, and willing to wipe us out just as casually as we might disinfect a room. Those who worship or serve the preternatural powers are nearly always mad (or quickly sliding towards madness), either believing their masters will spare them the coming purge or actively seeking the embrace of oblivion.

The Nameless Ones are tremendously powerful; use the Elder Evil archetype from **Chapter 3** for the least of them, with the strongest (like the Unspeakable One) as Power Level X plot-devices. Even the least of their Eldritch servitors is a match for superheroes; use the Eldritch Servitor archetype in **Chapter 3** for them.

THE SHADOW-WORLD

There is a dimension of darkness, dubbed *Shattenwelt* ("shadow-world") by the Thule Society in Nazi Germany. It is a realm of endless, inky blackness; not just the absence of light, but darkness made manifest. The Shattenwelt is a source of power for wielders of its dark energies, in particular the Nazi super-soldier Nacht-Krieger. Some sorcerers call upon the Shadow World for power, but such power comes at a price.

The darkness of Shattenwelt has a predatory, life-draining nature. It is almost alive, and it "hungers" for light to consume, including the "light" of living souls. So far as anyone knows, such victims are snuffed out by the eternal darkness, consumed by nothingness and oblivion. Mystic texts describe forbidden rituals for sacrificing souls to the Shadow World for power or even exchanging one's own soul for pure darkness, becoming a conduit for the power of shadow.

There is some evidence of a connection between certain undead creatures and the Shattenwelt, particularly life-drainers like vampires and "unliving shadows." Thule necromancers used its power to animate zombies, and Thule adept Wilhelm Kantor used the power of the Shattenwelt to endow Nacht-Krieger with his shadow-powers (see *Freedom City*, **Chapter 6**, p181, for more information).

MYSTIC ALLIES

Fortunately for the largely unsuspecting populace of the world, there are those gifted with both mystic potential and the willingness to use their power responsibly for the good of all. A small community of magicians, occultists, and those with innate magical powers safeguards the world—and all reality—from threats that would shatter the sanity of ordinary people.

THE ORDER OF LIGHT

The Order of Light is a modern incarnation of an ancient idea: a loose alliance of mystics dedicated to the responsible and ethical use of magic and the protection of humanity from forces beyond their ken. Many such alliances have arisen when the need was great, from the cooperation of the mages of ancient Atlantis to unseat Malador as Master Mage and imprison him, all the way until modern times. Indeed, the cooperation of magicians devoted to the light is likely the reason the Secret Circle exists, and the Circle is the model for alliances among mystics.

The Order of Light as it exists now came into being in the 19th century. In the centuries before, Europe was home to various lodges and circles of "illuminated" adepts, working in secret to preserve their arts and thwart the schemes of unscrupulous black magicians and sinister cults. One such lodge taught the British sorceress Lady Violet Pennyworth and later helped elevate her to the status of Master Mage, following the death of Broken Crow in America in 1890. Unlike her more solitary predecessors, Lady Pennyworth saw considerable value in cooperation amongst the mystically inclined, and she welcomed aid in her work. She consolidated the Order of Light from several European and American occult groups, envisioning one day a "net of lights cast about the globe."

Unfortunately, Violet Pennyworth was only Master Mage for a few short years before she fell against the Cult of Kar'Kradas in 1895. Fortunately, her establishment of the Order of Light provided a "storm break" against the rising tide of eldritch evil in the world. The mystics of the Order cooperated to seek the new Master Mage and to serve in Lady Pennyworth's stead until they were able to do so.

In the forty years before Adrian Eldrich assumed the mantle of Master Mage, the mystics of the Order of Light fought the forces of evil and did their best to secure arcane lore and potential for the future. Eldrich initially

experienced some friction with the mages of the Order, as he found them, rather than them finding him, as they'd planned. Some initially doubted Eldrich's claim to the title of Master Mage, but they came around in time. Four decades of service to the cause had made the Order somewhat hide-bound and reluctant to let go of its responsibilities, but it also had made its members willing to sacrifice for the cause. Sacrifice they did, as factions like the Thule Society rose to power in Europe, and the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign became active once again around the world.

The dark days of World War II decimated the ranks of the Order of Light, as the Thule Society and their Nazi agents often targeted Order mystics for arrest, execution, and assassination. The Order was able to save the Light-bearers, Sophie and Wolfgang Shaal, from death, allowing them to become the heroes White Rose and White Thorn, members of the Allies of Freedom.

In the decades following the end of the Second World War, the Order of Light experienced both an expansion and a dilution of its ranks: the occult became more publicly known and accepted, but at the same time, truly capable and talented mystics dedicated to the Art were fewer. More and more members of the Order were dabblers and dilettantes, and the growing strength and authority of Eldrich as Master Mage made their efforts seem less important.

The present-day Order of Light is merely a shadow of its former self, so to speak. Many mystics see it as a relic, filled with obscure fraternal rituals and codes no one really cares about any more, jealously guarding a role it no longer plays. Few members of the Order remember the daring and difficult days of the early 20th century; most weren't even born then. A small handful hold to long-standing traditions and understand that Adrian Eldrich may be one of the greatest Master Mages the world has known, but no holder of the office is eternal. There will be a need for the Order of Light once again, perhaps quite soon, and they had best be prepared for it.

The Minor Mystic archetype from **Chapter 3** serves for most members of the Order of Light, although an increasing number are better represented by the Academic or Antiquarian archetypes, with either the Ritualist feat or just a couple ranks of the Magic power. The Order has lodges and chapterhouses all over the world, although many have fallen into disrepair and disuse over the years.

ELDRICH

POWER LEVEL 13

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+2	+1	+3	+10	+3
10	14	13	16	30	16
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+16/+1*	+5	+5	+17		

*Without Force Field

Skills: Concentration 12 (+22), Diplomacy 4 (+7), Intimidate 8 (+10), Knowledge (arcane lore) 18 (+21), Knowledge (history) 12 (+15), Language 6 (Ancient Egyptian, Arabic, Atlantean, Greek, Latin, Sanskrit), Sense Motive 4 (+14), Sleight of Hand 4 (+6)

Feats: Benefit (Master Mage), Endurance, Equipment 3 (Sanctum) Fearless, Ritualist, Trance, Ultimate Save (Will), Ultimate Skill (arcane lore)

Powers:

- Astral Form 10**
- Device 2** (cloak of flight, hard to lose)
- Device 1** (Medallion of the Modrossus; see page 62)
- Force Field 15** (Impervious 10)
- Immunity 9** (life support, Sustained)
- Magic 16** (Dynamic, all spells Dynamic)
- Animate Objects 10**
- Blast 16**
- ESP 10** (visual & auditory)
- Illusion 6** (all senses)
- Mental Blast 8**
- Obscure 16** (visual)
- Snare 16**
- Telekinesis 16** (*heavy load: 800 tons*)
- Telepathy 16**

Cloak of Flight: Flight 5 (250 MPH)

Combat: Attack +10, Grapple +10, Damage +16 (blast), Defense +10, Knockback -13, Initiative +2

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Force Field, Immunity, and Magic, if unable to cast spells, -3 points)

Abilities 39 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 10 + Powers 145 + Combat 40 + Saves 14 - Drawbacks 3 = Total 262

Real Name: Adrian Eldrich	Identity: Secret
Occupation: Master Mage	Base of Operations: Freedom City
Affiliation: None	
Height: 6'	Weight: 170 lbs.
Eyes: Blue	Hair: Black (with a white streak)



Dr. Adrian Eldrich is a man from a simpler time. He was born in America in 1900 and grew up to become a respected archeologist, a contemporary of men like Howard Carter (who discovered King Tut's tomb). Adrian had many adventures while making a career out of studying ancient ruins and lost lore. Those studies eventually changed his life in ways he hardly could have imagined.

In 1935, Eldrich discovered the lost Temple of Sirrion. Inside, he found a tomb older than any known civilization. It contained the mummy of the Atlantean sorcerer Malador, who revived once Adrian unwittingly disturbed the magical seals and wards that trapped him in the tomb. Malador imprisoned Adrian in chains of magical force and left him to die beneath the claws of the

tomb's guardian creatures that had been unleashed with Malador's awakening. The Atlantean himself went to reclaim the magical talismans he'd lost millennia before when he was entombed.

Luckily, Adrian Eldrich did not die so easily. The guardian creatures, upon reaching the central tomb chamber, merely sniffed him and halted their attack. The spirits of three other Atlantean wizards appeared to him and explained that Eldrich was the reincarnation of their master, the wizard who defeated and imprisoned Malador. They said he had volunteered to follow the long path of reincarnation, until the prophesied time when Malador would return and the Earth would need a mystical protector. They roused Adrian's latent magical potential, giving him the power he needed to escape the chains and the tomb. They also awakened the memories of the ancient Atlantean Master Mage, granting him the power to overcome and imprison Malador again.

The initial rush of power faded, as did the full memories and lore of his previous lives, and Adrian began learning how to use magic all over again. He became a dedicated student of the occult and learned through those studies and regressive hypnosis that he had lived at least seven other magically powerful lives in the past. Eldrich operated as a hero in the 1930s and 1940s, although not as openly as most of the costumed "mystery men" of that era. Few people ever heard of his battles in faraway places against demons, undead, evil spirits, and sorcerers. He advised heroes and even worked behind the scenes against the occult agents of the Nazis, who sought ancient artifacts and tampered with forces best left alone. He crossed swords with the Thule Society and Wilhelm Kantor on a number of occasions. Following World War II, Eldrich traveled the world, studying and honing his magical abilities. He even spent time in distant magical dimensions.

In 1977, Eldrich moved into a brownstone in the Riverside neighborhood of Freedom City. He chose this city—and this particular building—for his home since it sat atop a "nexus," a confluence of dimensional barriers and magical energies. The house's mystical wards contain the nexus, but it certainly makes the brownstone an unusual place to visit. Attended only by his Egyptian manservant, Sallah, Eldrich continues to secretly stand guard over this threshold into Earth's reality. He helps the Freedom League on occasion, since they know to call on him in all matters mystical. The world at large believes he is the descendant of the original 1930s adventurer Adrian Eldrich, and he spends his time writing articles on ancient history and the occult "just like his grandfather did." Adrian never bothers to correct this notion, since it serves him well.

In many ways, Adrian Eldrich is a man out of time. The world has changed, while he holds on to a certain old-fashioned formality and sense of ethics. He can be stuffy and even pompous at times, but he's also intelligent, insightful, brave, and quite charming when he wants to be. He's usually all business and takes little time to relax and socialize, although he can sometimes be pried away from his dusty tomes and crystals for an hour or two. He's always got something on his mind and at least two or three different things vying for his attention, so he can seem distracted and impatient sometimes. Anyone who can get past his stern, formal exterior finds a brave, truly caring man who has dedicated his life (scores of lifetimes throughout the ages, in fact) to helping others.

In a standard superheroic series, Eldrich is a mystical *Deus ex Machina*, the sort who appears to offer dire portents and arcane advice, but is generally too tied up with the big picture to be of much assistance on a routine basis. He appears suddenly—often in astral form—offering his warning or information, then vanishes before anyone can press him for details, or else he forces heroes to seek him out in his sanctum, where his manservant Sallah might turn them away at the door with no more than a cryptic comment about how "the Master Mage is not available at this time."

In a mystic series, Eldrich may serve the role of mentor and guide to a group of novice mystics (see the **Eldrich Apprentices** series framework

on page 119 for more on this). Alternately, he may have finally passed beyond the veil, in which case the heroes are potential heirs to his role as protector of Earth's dimension, and Eldrich only appears occasionally (as one of the Secret Circle of deceased Master Mages) to offer them his advice. This is detailed in the **Heirs of the Mantle** series framework, also on page 119.

SALLAH

Adrian Eldrich's sole confidant, and perhaps his closest friend and ally, is the apparently unassuming Sallah, his manservant and house-keeper. In many regards, Sallah is even more mysterious than his occult employer, having very little to say about his own background and demurely deflecting questions while going about his duties.

It seems clear from past inferences Sallah is connected in some fashion to the archeological dig where Eldrich first gained awareness of his prior incarnations and his mystic potential. Some hint that he was one of the hired diggers, a long-time associate and friend of Eldrich in his archeologist days. Others suggest it was his father or grandfather, and Sallah's family has served the Master Mage since that time.

Whatever the case, the Egyptian serves the Master Mage faithfully and well. Although the only servant in a home that's much larger than it appears, Sallah keeps the Sanctum running smoothly at all times. He prepares meals, cleans, and greets visitors at the door, treating superheroes, mystic masters, and humble supplicants alike with the same quiet courtesy. On several occasions, Sallah has demonstrated he knows how to handle himself in a fight, and he knows enough first aid to assist Eldrich in times of need.

Sallah's manner suggests he is a faithful and practicing Muslim, although he clearly has no difficulty reconciling his faith with his employer or the shadowy occult world in which he lives. When asked about it, he merely shrugs and suggests that the mind of God is mysterious in many ways.

Sallah is largely left for the GM to define in game terms, as he's more a plot device for the Sanctum than anything else. He might have the traits of the Butler archetype (*M&M*, page 226) but probably also has some abilities that would surprise people.

ELDRITCH'S SANCTUM

The unassuming brownstone at 110 Ditko Street in the Riverside area of Freedom City is the sort of place most wouldn't give a second glance unless they were devotees of turn of the century architecture, and even they would soon forget seeing the place due to its nature. Only a select few know this spot is a seething cauldron of occult forces, held in place by the structure and the various wards woven into it over the years, as well as the brownstone's resident, Earth's Master Mage.

Inside, the building has the same quaint Victorian style, but rooms have a tendency to rearrange themselves on a whim, and sometimes doorways appear to lead places where they should not. The residence abounds with minor magical phenomena: talking paintings and statues, animated teacups, and clocks that chime thirteen. None of it seems to perturb its sole two residents; Eldrich and Sallah don't even seem to notice unless one of their guests seems startled or uncomfortable, in which case they tell them to pay it no mind.

ELDRITCH'S SANCTUM

HEADQUARTERS

Size: Medium; *Toughness:* 15; *Features:* Concealed, Dimensional Portal, Dual Size (huge inside), Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Self-Repairing, Security System (DC25), Workshop

Cost: 15 equipment points

GATEKEEPER

POWER LEVEL 10

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+1	+2	+6	+3
10	13	13	14	22	16
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+1	+5	+5	+9		

Real Name: Kyle Vance	Identity: Secret
Occupation: Freelance artist	Aliases: None
Affiliation: The Door Wardens	Base of Operations: San Francisco, CA
Height: 5'10"	Weight: 165 lbs.
Eyes: Blue	Hair: Brown

Skills: Concentration 8 (+14), Craft (artistic) 6 (+8), Knowledge (arcane lore) 6 (+8), Notice 4 (+10), Sense Motive 8 (+14)

Feats: Ritualist

Powers:

- Dimensional Pocket 5** (2,500 lbs.)
- Insubstantial 4** (Limited to allowing objects to pass through him)
- Magic 12** (Mystic Blast 12)
- Immunity 9** (life support, Sustained)
- Nauseate 8** (Affects Corporeal, Area Burst, Will Save; Touch Range)
- Nullify 12** (all dimensional powers, Area Burst, Touch Range)
- Obscure 12** (visual)
- Stun 6** (Affects Corporeal, Ranged)
- Summon Minions 7** (105-point spirits, General Type, Progression 3)
- Teleport 9** (Change Direction, Change Velocity, Easy, Progression 3 [x10 mass])
- Super-Movement 4** (air walking 2, dimensional 2)
- Super-Senses 4** (dimensional awareness [accurate], magical awareness)

Combat: Attack +8, Grapple +8, Damage +12, Defense +12, Knockback -0, Initiative +1

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Magic, if unable to reach Dimensional Pocket, -1 point)

Abilities 28 + Skills 8 (32 ranks) + Feats 1 + Powers 69 + Combat 40 + Saves 11 - Drawbacks 1 = Total 156

As a child, Kyle Vance always wanted to travel, to see fantastic and faraway places. A bookish child, he spent hours lost in the pages of fantasy and science fiction stories, and he dreamed of traveling the world, leaving behind life in the sleepy rural community in Colorado where he grew up. As he got older, Kyle became more aware that he was different from his peers, not only in terms of his imagination and artistic sensibilities, but also in his unusual awareness of things and in his romantic feelings towards other boys.

Attending art school in San Francisco allowed Kyle to stretch his wings as he'd never been able to do back home: he not only developed a dating and social life, but he improved his artistic skills and flirted with the city's occult subculture. It nearly ended in tragedy for Kyle, as a local cult came after him. Only the intervention of the Door Wardens saved his life. They took Kyle to the Dimension of Doors and revealed he was the new Gatekeeper, guardian of the nexus between worlds.

Since then, Kyle has split his time between his career as a freelance artist, his training with the Door Wardens, and operating as the superhero Gatekeeper in the San Francisco Bay Area (and worlds beyond). Although

his true identity remains secret, it's publicly known Gatekeeper is a member of the city's gay community, a considerable source of pride for both them and Kyle.

Gatekeeper is a living "portal" between dimensions, able to step between worlds as easily as most people cross a room. He can visit the



mystic dimensions of the Cosmic Coil, particularly the Dimension of Doors. By slipping between worlds, he can also teleport virtually anywhere on Earth. He can cause objects to disappear into the folds of his cloak and reappear later, as well as pass harmlessly through him. Most of Gatekeeper's dimensional effects center on his hooded cloak, although the cloak itself is not the source of his power, as some might believe.

In addition to his innate dimension-spanning abilities, Gatekeeper is a promising and adept mystic, with a natural ability for tapping into extradimensional sources of power for his spells. Oracles have told Kyle Vance he is destined for greatness as a magician, although their auguries remain unclear as to exactly how. Some have suggested Gatekeeper might be the next Master Mage, although that is not a role Kyle seeks.

KORADJI

POWER LEVEL 7

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+1	+2	+2	+1	+3	+1
13	15	14	12	17	13
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+5/+2*	+6	+6	+8		

Real Name: Warren Grey	Identity: Secret
Occupation: Mystic	Aliases: None
Affiliation: None	Base of Operations: Sydney, Australia
Height: 5'5"	Weight: 135 lbs.
Eyes: Black	Hair: Gray

*Flat-footed

Skills: Bluff 6 (+7), Climb 7 (+8), Concentration 8 (+11), Knowledge (arcane lore) 8 (+9), Language 1 (Aboriginal; English is native), Notice 6 (+9), Search 6 (+7), Sense Motive 8 (+11), Stealth 6 (+8), Survival 8 (+11), Swim 4 (+5)

Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 2, Artificer, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 2, Endurance, Equipment 2, Improved Initiative, Ritualist, Track

Equipment: Boomerang (+1 damage), club (+2 damage)

Powers:

Super-Movement 1 (dimensional; the Dreamtime; Progression 2)

Super-Senses 5 (mystic awareness, postcognition)

Teleport 4 (Portal; Long-Range)

Combat: Attack +8 (melee), +6 (ranged), Grapple +9, Damage +1 (unarmed), +2 (boomerang), +3 (club), Defense +8 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +6

Abilities 24 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 14 + Powers 21 + Combat 24 + Saves 13 = Total 113

Like many Australians of Aboriginal descent, Warren Grey had little or no contact with the culture of his ancestors. Government authorities took his father as a child to be raised in a foster family, and Warren did not meet his biological grandfather until he was at university. Warren's grandfather told him he was the inheritor of an important mystic legacy, a *koradji* of the Dreamtime. Warren rejected this notion and wanted nothing to do with the old man and his strange ways.

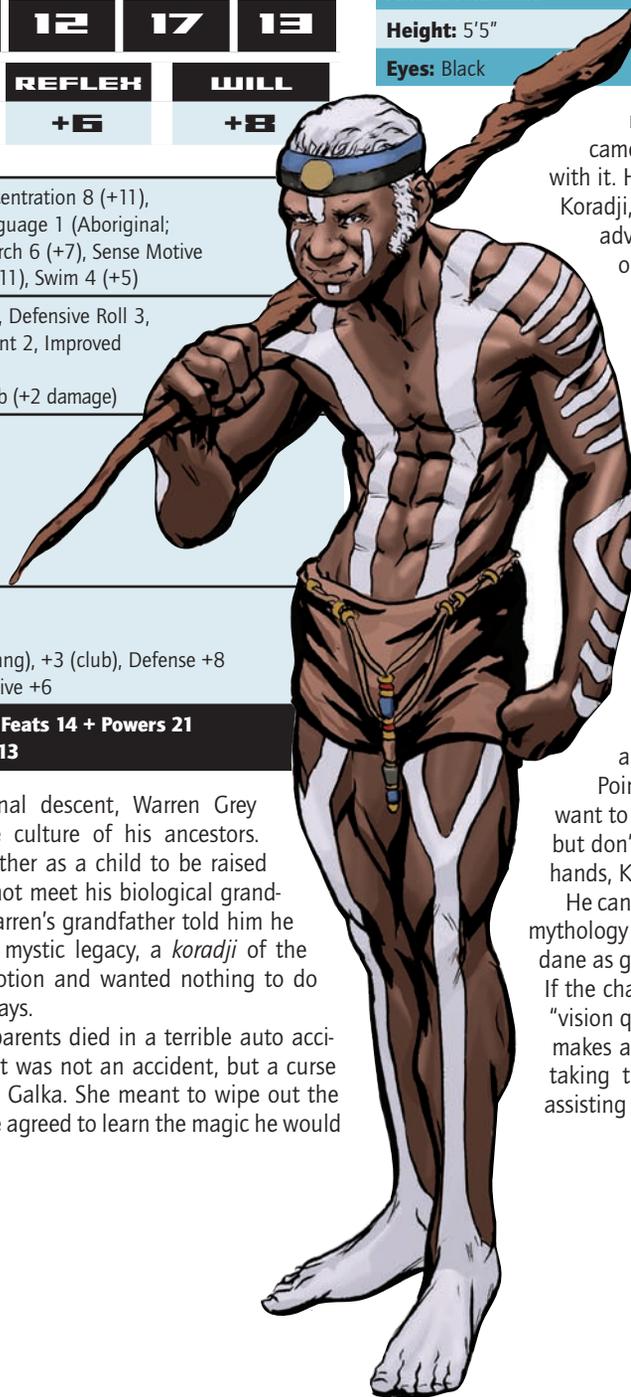
Things changed when Warren's parents died in a terrible auto accident. His grandfather told Warren it was not an accident, but a curse brought about by the evil sorceress Galka. She meant to wipe out the family line, and Warren was next. He agreed to learn the magic he would

need to defend himself and, in the process, came to understand the responsibility that came with it. He defeated Galka and claimed the mantle of Koradji, defender of the Dreamtime, guided by the advice of his grandfather even after he passed on from the living world into the dreaming.

Since that time, Koradji has served as a guide and guardian for mystics walking the dreaming paths, whether they knew it or not. He wanders both the Outback and the depths of what westerners call the astral plane, skirting the distant magical realms. He's been known to serve as a guide to those in need of one to reach other dimensions, provided they win his trust.

Koradji provides a means of dimensional travel for mystics lacking it and for non-mystical heroes to reach the other realms in order to partake of adventures there. Given his powers, he can show up virtually anywhere he's needed, serving as a plot device for getting the characters from Point A to Point B with fairly little trouble. If you want to include some dimension travel in your series, but don't want to place that power in the characters' hands, Koradji is useful as a living portal of sorts.

He can aid heroes with information about Aboriginal mythology and arcane lore, or even something as mundane as guiding them through the Australian Outback. If the characters need to embark on a "walkabout" or "vision quest" to attain some mystical insight, Koradji makes a good guide or facilitator for the experience, taking them to the appropriate sacred site(s) and assisting them as needed.



THOMAS RHYMER

POWER LEVEL 6

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+1	+1	+2	+4
10	12	12	15	18	21
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+3/+2*	+4	+4	+10		

*Flat-footed

Skills: Bluff 8 (+13), Concentration 4 (+8), Diplomacy 5 (+10), Disable Device 5 (+7), Gather Information 9 (+14), Intimidate 4 (+9), Investigate 8 (+10), Knowledge (arcane lore) 10 (+12), Knowledge (streetwise) 8 (+10), Language (Gaelic), Notice 6 (+10), Search 8 (+10), Sense Motive 8 (+12), Stealth 8 (+9)

Feats: Artificer, Beginner's Luck, Connections, Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Dodge Focus 3, Luck 2, Master Plan, Ritualist, Ultimate Effort (Bluff), Well-Informed

Powers:

Super-Senses 6 (mystic awareness, mental, acute; precognition, Uncontrolled)

Combat: Attack +5, Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), Defense +9 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +1

Abilities 28 + Skills 23 (89 ranks) + Feats 15 + Powers 4 + Combat 22 + Saves 12 = Total 104

Thomas Rhymer grew up in war-torn Belfast, Ireland. The seventh and youngest child of a large Catholic family, Thomas was always clever, but also wild and frequently in trouble with the authorities. His grandmother told him he possessed the second sight, a birthright of his family line, but Thomas did his level best to ignore his occasional unusual visions and insights. By the time he was a teenager, Thomas left home to join a rock band called the Stone Muses and tour Europe. He also started using drugs and drinking heavily at parties and shows.

Towards the end of the nearly yearlong tour, Thomas had a recurring vision of the death of his friend and band-mate Leo Matterly. He did his best to ignore this vision, and then to blot it out with drug- and alcohol-use. Unfortunately, Rhymer's wild partying, and that of his band-mates, led to the vision coming true; during a fierce argument between Thomas and Leo, the band guitarist fell from a seventh story hotel balcony to his death.

The police ruled the death an accident, even though Thomas claimed it was his fault. He admitted himself to a psychiatric hospital and attempted to get clean, but terrible visions continued to plague him. Therapy and anti-psychotic medications helped to quell the visions for a time, but upon his release, Thomas found himself drifting through the world like a ghost, disowned by his family and ostracized by his former friends. He ended up living on the streets of Belfast and, once his money ran out, so too did his regular medications. The visions returned, with awareness of... things moving in the shadows, just out of sight.

It was Beltane Eve when Thomas, half-stumbling through a dark alley, heard the jingling of harness bells. The woman in the dark limousine that pulled up along the street was the most beautiful he'd ever seen. He stepped into the car as if in a dream, and what passed that night was a whirlwind of sensations and visions. The woman told Thomas she was the Queen of Faerie, and she had chosen him to receive a special blessing. After what seemed an endless night of revelry, Thomas Rhymer woke up in the same alley a changed man.

Real Name: Thomas Rhymer	Identity: Public (for the most part)
Occupation: Troublemaker	Aliases: Too numerous to list
Affiliation: None	Base of Operations: Highly mobile
Height: 5'11"	Weight: 170 lbs.
Eyes: Blue	Hair: Reddish-blond



Since that time, Rhymer has not only been able to control his second sight, but he has also immersed himself in learning arcane lore and using his gifts to deal with the hidden world of the occult. Although he's not a mage at the level of masters like Adrian Eldrich, Thomas Rhymer is a force to be reckoned with in arcane circles. He's famed—infamous, really—for his ability to show up when and where he's needed and to use a combination of cunning, knowledge, and sheer determination to

put all the pieces in place to solve the problem. He's not conventional, and he's not polite company by any means, but he gets the job done. Still, Thomas Rhymer's gifts are just as often curses, as he must deal with his visions of what is to come and his endless wanderlust, driving him from place to place, never staying too long anywhere. His home is the open road, and his "village" is all of humanity, for as long as they need him.

BRITANNIA

POWER LEVEL 11

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+10	+2	+2	+2	+2	+4
30/12	15	14	14	15	18
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+12	+8	+6	+10		

Real Name: Margaret Collins	Identity: Secret
Occupation: Medical intern, heroine	Base of Operations: London, England
Affiliation: None	
Height: 5'5" (Margaret) 5'9" (Britannia)	Weight: 120 lbs. (Margaret), 135 lbs. (Britannia)
Eyes: Blue	Hair: Blond

Skills: Concentration 8 (+10), Diplomacy 8 (+12), Knowledge (current events) 2 (+4), Knowledge (life sciences) 6 (+8), Knowledge (history) 4 (+6), Medicine 8 (+10), Notice 6 (+8), Profession (physician) 6 (+8), Sense Motive 8 (+10)

Feats: Endurance, Inspire, Quick Change

Powers:

Enhanced Attack 7

Enhanced Defense 6

Enhanced Strength 18

Flight 5 (250 MPH)

Light Control 11 (mystic energy; *Alternate Powers:* **Blast 11**,

Deflect 11 [all ranged attacks], **Healing 11**)

Protection 10, **Super-Strength 6** (*heavy load:* 50 tons)

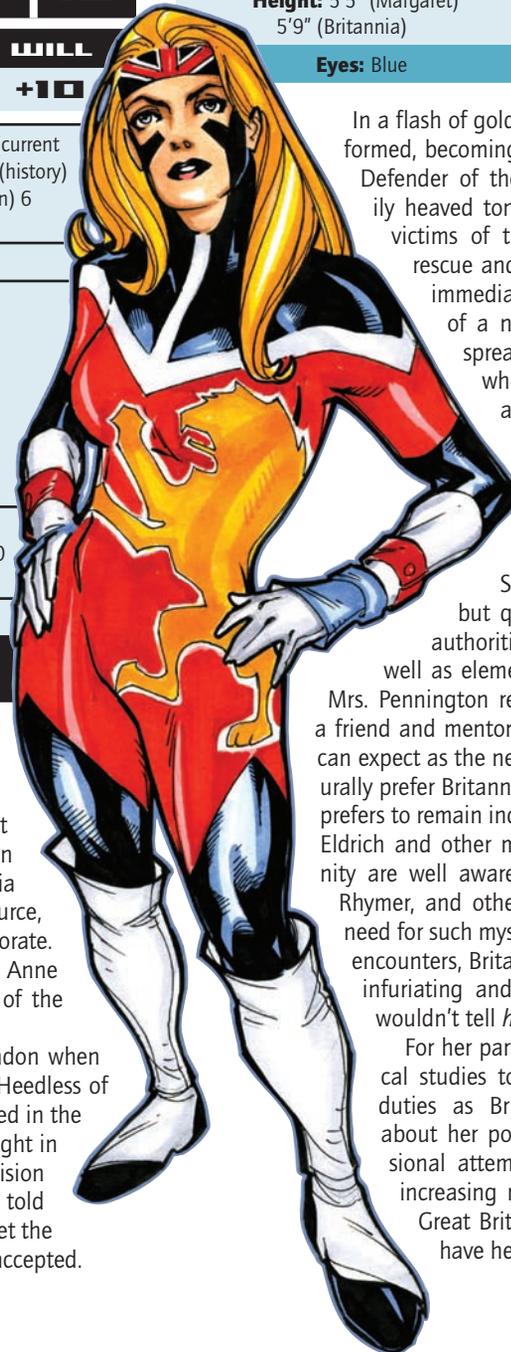
Combat: Attack +11 (+4 as Margaret), Grapple +27 (+5 as Margaret), Damage +10 (unarmed), +11 (blast), Defense +10 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -6, Initiative +2

Drawbacks: Normal Identity (free action, -3 points)

Abilities 28 + Skills 14 (56 ranks) + Feats 3 + Powers 101 + Combat 16 + Saves 18 - Drawbacks 3 = Total 177

Anne Pennington was invested during the Blitz with the power of the Spirit of Britain, giving her the mantle of Britannia, Defender of the Isles. She operated in Britain and Europe during the Second World War, helping protect London and other vital sites as well as engaging German supersoldiers in battle. Eldrich once implied Britannia and Lady Liberty's powers stemmed from a similar source, although, as usual, the Master Mage declined to elaborate. Although she lost the power of Britannia decades ago, Anne Pennington remains surprisingly vital, the grand-dame of the British super-set.

Margaret Collins was finishing medical school in London when a terrorist attack struck the city's Underground system. Heedless of her own safety, Margaret responded to help people injured in the attack. While providing first-aid for a victim, she was caught in a partial tunnel collapse. Blacking out, Margaret had a vision of a shining, regal woman who praised her bravery and told her Britain needed a woman like her. She offered Margaret the opportunity to aid her country and her people, and she accepted.



In a flash of golden light, Margaret Collins was transformed, becoming the latest incarnation of Britannia, Defender of the Isles, Lioness of Britain. She easily heaved tons of rubble off of her and brought victims of the attack to safety, assisting with rescue and triage efforts. Naturally, the media immediately picked up on the appearance of a new Britannia and the story quickly spread around the world. The terrorist who staged the attack made another attempt and, this time, Britannia was able to thwart it and capture many of them.

In the time since her empowerment, Margaret has started working at a hospital in London.

She has kept her identity secret, but quickly drew the attention of British authorities, like the Ministry of Powers, as well as elements of the superhuman community.

Mrs. Pennington reached out to her and has become a friend and mentor, telling Margaret some of what she can expect as the new Britannia. The Ministry would naturally prefer Britannia working under their aegis, but she prefers to remain independent for the time being. Adrian Eldrich and other members of Earth's mystical community are well aware of Britannia's return, and Eldrich, Rhymer, and others believe it portends an increased need for such mystic guardians as she. From their brief encounters, Britannia considers Thomas Rhymer both infuriating and strangely attractive, although she wouldn't tell *him* that right now.

For her part, Margaret Collins juggles her medical studies to become a full-fledged doctor, her duties as Britain's mystical guardian, learning about her powers and responsibilities, and occasional attempts to have a personal life. If the increasing number of super-powered threats in Great Britain is any indication, she's going to have her hands full for some time.

OTHER MYSTIC ALLIES

The mystic guardians and allies described in this chapter are not the sole protectors of the mundane world from magical threats, although they are the most prominent. The World of Freedom has various other minor mystics, hedge-wizards, occultists, wizards, shamans, and the like. They are aware, in varying degrees, of the true nature of the mystic world, and they use their powers to help safeguard those in their community. Some are associated with the Order of Light (as described in this chapter), while others operate on their own.

DUST DEVIL

The elemental guardian of Magic Mesa is detailed on page 94 of *Freedom City*. The spirit of Alejandro Roja has learned he is by no means the first desert spirit to safeguard the site. See **Magic Mesa** for more information.

THE GREEN KNIGHT

Priam of Camelot inherited the powers and responsibilities of the Green Knight from Merlin and the pagan powers of England. He wears green mail and a surcoat with a full-leaved tree, and he wields the magical silver sword Kairt ("apple"). For many years, Priam operated in secret in

the guise of the Green Knight. It was not until the fall of Camelot that King Arthur learned the champion's identity. Sir Priam accompanied his liege-lord to Avalon, where he remains as a champion, still occasionally called upon to fight the forces of evil.

LANTERN JACK

The mystic guardian of Lantern Hill in Freedom City (described on page 141 of that book) protects his domain from arcane threats of all types, while seeking out souls in need of either solace or justice. Lantern Jack is a formidable presence in the city, but he has little or nothing to do with affairs outside of it. Still, if a crime occurs in or around Lantern Hill, heroes can expect the ghostly guardian to take a hand in matters.

SEVEN

Serena Vervain is described in detail on page 136 of *Freedom City*. Destined to be one of the greatest witches of her family line, Seven has grown into her powers and her leadership role with the Next-Gen. Omens have hinted at her potential as the next Master Mage, but it remains to be seen if her destiny lies in that direction.

MYSTIC FOES

The foes arrayed against steadfast students of the arts arcane are many and varied. They include not only magicians seduced by the promise of power, but dimension-spanning Dark Lords, evil elder gods, demons and masters of infernal dimensions, and living nightmares given form. Mystics struggle against ancient cults, alien sorcerers, ghosts, spirits, and the undead. That's not counting the various mundane foes and threats heroic magicians may encounter while using their powers for the greater good.

More often than not, mystics do all this in secret, away from the eyes of the uninitiated, even their fellow heroes, who would not always understand what must be done in order to safeguard the world, indeed, all reality as we know it. While heroes in the World of Freedom know of—have even fought against—some of these menaces, others remain mysterious and largely unknown, which is just as they and their heroic opposite numbers tend to prefer it.

THE ARCANES

The reach of the Nameless Ones transcends space and time as mortals understand it. The lure of their preternatural power extends across the stars into the furthest depths of space, all the way to Gruen-Prime, the home world of the Grue Unity.

The Meta-Mind recalls the ancient time when the Grue first discovered magic. Initially, it was a promising source of power, but even then, it was troubling. The mindset and training required to wield mystic forces required a degree of ego—a strong sense of self—alien to the collective mind of the Grue. Thus, the strongest potential magicians were those willing to sever their connection with the Collective, and this could not be tolerated.

Still, magic is power, and some arcane Grue rogues managed to escape their brethren and survive, hidden away in secret corners or wastelands of Gruen-Prime, furthering their studies, and even secretly aiding others like them in escaping from the Collective. They plumbed the depths of the dimensions, seeking knowledge and power, and they encountered forces greater and more terrible than any of their kind ever imagined. They gladly forged pacts with them to further their own ends.

Eventually, the threat of these "Arcane" and their powers became too great for the Meta-Mind to ignore. War erupted on Gruen-World between the two factions. While the Arcane wielded considerable power, they were ultimately no match for the greater numbers and coordination of the Collective, willing to sacrifice drones by the hundreds, thousands, if need be, to eliminate the threat. The Arcane were too self-aware and valued their individual lives too much. Finally, they were forced to flee their home world, never to return. The Collective believed them extinct and chooses to continue believing it.

ARCANE

POWER LEVEL 6

Str 14	Dex 11	Con 14	Int 13	Wis 13	Cha 15
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Skills: Bluff 4 (+6), Disguise 0 (+32 with Shapeshift), Gather Information 4 (+6), Intimidate 4 (+6), Knowledge (arcane lore) 6 (+7), Notice 4 (+5), Search 4 (+5), Sense Motive 6 (+7), Stealth 4 (+4)

Feats: Improved Initiative, Ritualist

Powers: **Comprehend 2** (languages), **Drain Wisdom 1** (Will Save; Slow Fade 6 [one day]), **Magic 6** (choose four spells), **Mind Reading 6** (Touch Range), **Shapeshift 6**. Some Arcane possess higher ranks of Magic (with a commensurately higher power level).

Combat: Attack +6, Grapple +8, Damage +2 (unarmed), Defense +6 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +4

Saving Throws: Toughness +2, Fortitude +4, Reflex +4, Will +4

Abilities 20 + Skills 9 (36 ranks) + Feats 2 + Powers 77 + Combat 24 + Saves 9 = Total 141

In the dark depths of a black nebula lies a world shrouded perpetually in shadow, unknown save in tall tales of space-travelers. Its rocky, desolate surface is whipped by dusty winds and dotted with boiling cauldrons of molten rock. Here, the Arcane have their citadels where they study and practice the dark arts. The ego and individuality that allowed the Collective to triumph over them remains in full force, and the Arcane gather only for occasional councils, spending the rest of their time warring amongst themselves.

THE MAYOMBE

The cult of the Mayombe stretches back as far as the history of Voodoo itself. For as long as people have worshipped the loa, the gods of Voodoo, there have been those drawn only to the corrupt side. Whether motivated by hatred, vengeance, or simple power-lust, they have fallen under the influence of evil spirits and become their agents in the material world.

The Mayombe's stronghold has always been the New Orleans area of Louisiana, the center of American Voodoo practices. There, the cult thrived in the shadows of the bayous late at night, when other folk were asleep. Mayombe cultists were responsible for many crimes, and they did a great deal to give Voodoo its dark and sinister reputation among non-believers. At least a part of the Mayombe's power came from an intermingling between humans and debased Serpent People in the bayous. Their families often initiated members of the cult from childhood, and some bloodlines were particularly influential within the Mayombe's ranks.

In modern years, the Mayombe have come under the sway of Lady Mamba, an initiate of the cult. They serve as Lady Mamba's agents and underlings in her schemes to accumulate power and influence for herself. On a larger scale, the Mayombe cult has also become the agents of a faction of the Voodoo loa who consider humanity unworthy and wish to prove it to their fellow gods. The goddess Siren opposes this faction of loa (led by Baron Samedi) and took a human host in order to prove humanity worthy of the protection and guidance of the gods. Siren has become the primary adversary of the Mayombe, although she has found allies on occasion, including the Master Mage, Adrian Eldritch.

Lady Mamba gave birth to two children by two fathers. Her daughter's father was human, although Dahlia inherited a measure of her mother's mystical potential. Her son's father, on the other hand, was a Serpent Man, making him a mutant mix of human and reptilian characteristics. The two siblings were raised in the ranks of the Mayombe as Lady Mamba's heirs and, later, her primary agents. They have never known life outside of the cult's ranks and have no purpose except to serve the Mayombe's cause, although they sometimes chafe under the watchful eye of their mother. Dahlia, in particular, considers what things would be like if she led the cult.

In the present day, however, the Mayombe is only a shadow of what it once was. Many of the cult's members are older, and it hasn't replaced its losses in recent years. Lady Mamba's power and influence have diminished, and her children are not permitted to lead without her guidance. Baron Samedi focuses far more on his criminal empire in Freedom

City and has largely abandoned the cult. The Mayombe want to reclaim the favor of the loa and the power they once held, and they are willing to take great risks in order to do so.

LADY MAMBA

Marie Vaulaire was born into terrible poverty in the New Orleans area, where her mother raised her alone. Marie never knew her father, but she often used to imagine he was a special man, and one day, he would come back for her. As a child, Marie had a strong empathy for the bayou country, and for the creatures living in it, especially reptiles: snakes, alli-

LADY MAMBA POWER LEVEL 10

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+3	+2	+3	+2	+2
11	16	14	16	14	15
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+5/+2*	+4	+7	+5		

*flat-footed

Skills: Bluff 8 (+9), Concentration 8 (+12), Intimidate 6 (+7), Knowledge (arcane lore) 10 (+11), Knowledge (streetwise) 6 (+7), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 8 (+9), Notice 6 (+10), Perform (dance) 8 (+8), Search 8 (+9), Sense Motive 8 (+12)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 6, Defensive Roll 4, Dodge Focus 4, Fascinate (Bluff), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Minions 5 (ten cultists), Move-by Action, Power Attack, Ritualist

Powers:

Immunity 4 (aging, poison, disease, starvation; Limited to half effect)

Magic 10 (Mystic Blast 10)

Animate Objects 6 (Horde; Limited to zombies; Progression 4 [25 zombies])

Earth Control 10

Emotion Control 10

ESP 5 (all senses)

Mental Blast 5

Obscure 10 (visual, fog or mist)

Possession 10

Water Control 10

Mind Shield 5

Super-Senses 3 (darkvision, mystic awareness)

Combat: Attack +4 (melee), +10 (ranged), Grapple +4, Damage +0 (unarmed), +10 (mystic blast), Defense +12 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -4 (-2 flat-footed), Initiative +4

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Magic, if unable to cast spells, -1 point)

Abilities 23 + Skills 19 (76 ranks) + Feats 25 + Powers 40 + Combat 24 + Saves 13 - Drawbacks 1 = Total 143

Real Name: Marie Vaulaire	Identity: Public
Occupation: Mystic, criminal	Aliases: Various, including Marie Leveau
Affiliation: The Mayombe	Base of Operations: New Orleans, LA
Height: 5'4"	Weight: 90 lbs.
Eyes: Black	Hair: Gray

COTTONMOUTH

POWER LEVEL 9

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+4	+4	+4	-1	+0	-2
18	18	19	8	10	6
TOUGHNESS		FORTITUDE		REFLEX	
+6		+8		+10	
WILL		+5			

Skills: Intimidate 12 (+10), Notice 4 (+4), Sense Motive 8 (+8), Stealth 8 (+12)

Feats: All-out Attack, Attack Focus (melee) 6, Dodge Focus 2, Improved Grapple, Improved Initiative, Power Attack

Powers:

Drain Dexterity 5 (Poison, Linked to Strike)

Protection 2

Speed 1

Strike 2 (bite, Mighty)

Super-Movement 1 (slithering)

Super-Senses 4 (darkvision, scent, tracking scent)

Super-Strength 2

Combat: Attack +8 (melee), +2 (ranged), Grapple +14, Damage +4 (unarmed), +6 (bite), Defense +12 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -3, Initiative +8

Abilities 19 + Skills 8 (32 ranks)

+ Feats 12 + Powers 26

+ Combat 24 + Saves 15

= Total 104

Real Name: Silas Vaulaire	Identity: Public
Occupation: Criminal	Aliases: None
Affiliation: The Mayombe	Base of Operations: New Orleans, LA
Height: 12' (from head to tail)	Weight: 450 lbs.
Eyes: Yellow	Hair: None

gators, and lizards. Some said she was touched by the supernatural, and she had flashes of psychic insight. This led Marie to apprentice herself to a Voodoo priestess in the community, to learn more about the ways of the loa, the gods of Voodoo. Although Marie proved an excellent student, she had little interest in the good of the community. Instead, she used her gifts to further her own petty desires, to become feared and respected, like she always wanted.

Marie's father did, in fact, come back for her, although not in the way she imagined. Not long after she reached

womanhood and became a full-fledged priestess in her own right, she met her wayward father. He was not what she expected, not even a man at all, but one of the legendary Serpent People. He revealed Marie's true heritage. The blood of the ancient reptiles was in her, along with their sorcerous power. Her father wished to induct Marie into the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, and she went along with him in order to learn his secrets. When she did, however, she betrayed and destroyed the monster that called himself her father. She was a priestess of Voodoo, not of the Unspeakable One, and her heritage would not rule her.

Instead, Marie, adopting the name Lady Mamba, became a powerful influence within the cult of the Mayombe, worshippers of the corrupt and evil side of Voodoo. Her beauty, power, and sheer ruthlessness allowed Lady Mamba to rise to a place of power within the cult. She used that power to amass wealth and influence from the shadows of New Orleans. Crime-lords sought her favor, and corrupt officials were like puppets on her strings.

Lady Mamba faced her first real challenge when the Voodoo goddess Siren incarnated in human form and began operating as a superhero in New Orleans. Siren clashed with Mayombe cultists and confronted Lady Mamba directly on several occasions. Her influence and mystic powers allowed Lady Mamba to survive those confrontations. She allied herself with Siren's enemy, Baron



Real Name: Dahlia Dupree	Identity: Public
Occupation: Mystic, criminal	Aliases: Lady Voodoo, Mistress Midnight
Affiliation: The Mayombe	Base of Operations: New Orleans, LA
Height: 5'4"	Weight: 110 lbs.
Eyes: Black	Hair: Black

Samedi, from time to time, and she fought the sea goddess on her own, as well. Siren slowly tore down Lady Mamba's influence and rooted out parts of her syndicate.

The snake priestess has struggled against Siren for decades. She has even spent years in prison because of her foe. Although she possesses considerable mystic power, Lady Mamba is by no means eternal, and age has begun to take its toll on her. She is only a shadow of what she was in her youth, but she means to regain all she has lost and more.

COTTONMOUTH

Voodoo Dahlia's brother, Silas, is her devoted—some say *too* devoted—ally. Unlike Dahlia, who is a bewitching beauty, Silas, more often known as "Cottonmouth," is a hideous monster. He is a nearly pureblooded Serpent Person, but the mixture of reptilian and human blood, combined, perhaps, with a measure of his mother's Voodoo, makes Cottonmouth a nightmare. From the waist down, he is a powerful serpent. Above the waist, his body is humanoid, but covered in armored scales. He has snake-like eyes and powerful jaws he can open wide enough to swallow small animals (his favorite food) whole. Unlike other Serpent People, Cottonmouth has no talent for shapeshifting, and he cannot assume human-like form. His true appearance can be concealed with spells, but that is all. Cottonmouth doesn't feel like a freak. He was raised in a cult that practically worshipped him. He's not as clever as his mother or sister, and he lets them do most of the thinking. Still, anyone who underestimates Cottonmouth is likely to find out about his cunning, and venom, the hard way.

VOODOO DAHLIA

Dahlia Dupree is her mother's daughter through and through. She's every bit as beautiful as Lady Mamba was in her heyday (more, in her opinion) and quite skilled in using her looks and her skills to convince other people to do whatever she wants. She was raised as virtual royalty, with a cult of loyal followers, and she's used to getting her way. The only person she fears is her mother, who has ruled her life from the very beginning. The only area where her mother exceeds Dahlia is in the mystic arts. Voodoo Dahlia has never been a dedicated student of magic. She has learned some spells and enchantments, but she cannot match the skills of her mother or other true adepts. She's always looking for shortcuts to power without the need for study and practice.

MAYOMBE CULTISTS

These traits represent a typical member of the Mayombe cult, fairly easily led and swayed by Lady Mamba's influence and easily bent to her will (or that of her children). Higher-ranking members of the Mayombe have slightly higher mental abilities (usually with a +0 or even +1 modifier), but slightly lower Constitution (with just a +1 or +0 modifier, and corresponding Toughness reduction). The highest ranking have the Ritualist feat and can lead members in occult ceremonies or assist Lady Mamba or Voodoo Dahlia in doing so.

VOODOO DAHLIA

POWER LEVEL 7

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+1	+0	+0	+1
10	12	13	10	13	17
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+4/+1*	+4	+4	+6		

*Flatfooted

Skills: Bluff 4 (+7), Knowledge (arcane lore) 5 (+5), Knowledge (current events) 4 (+4), Knowledge (popular culture) 4 (+4), Knowledge (streetwise) 5 (+5), Perform (dance) 6 (+7), Sense Motive 5 (+6), Stealth 7 (+8)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 2, Attractive, Defensive Roll 3, Dodge Focus 4, Improved Initiative, Ritualist

Powers:

Immunity 4 (aging, poison, disease, starvation; Limited to half effect)

Magic 7 (Mystic Blast 7)

Animate Objects 5 (Horde; Limited to zombies; Progression 3 [10 zombies])

Emotion Control 7

ESP 7 (visual)

Obscure 7 (visual, fog or mist)

Snare 7

Water Control 7

Mind Shield 4

Super-Senses 3 (darkvision, mystic awareness)

Combat: Attack +5 (melee), +7 (ranged), Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), +7 (mystic blast), Defense +10 (+3 flat-footed), Knockback -2 (-0 flat-footed), Initiative +5

Drawbacks: Power Loss (Magic, if unable to cast spells, -1 point)

Abilities 15 + Skills 10 (40 ranks) + Feats 12 + Powers 29 + Combat 22 + Saves 11 - Drawbacks 1 = Total 98

MAYOMBE CULTIST

POWER LEVEL 2 • MINION RANK 2

Str 12	Dex 10	Con 15	Int 9	Wis 10	Cha 8
Skills: Climb 4 (+5), Intimidate 4 (+3), Knowledge (arcane lore) 4 (+3), Knowledge (streetwise) 4 (+3), Profession (choose one) 4 (+4)					
Feats: Equipment 1 <i>Equipment:</i> ritual knife (+1 damage)					
Combat: Attack +2, Grapple +3, Damage +1 (unarmed), +2 (knife), Defense +2 (+1 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +1					
Saving Throws: Toughness +2, Fortitude +4, Reflex +0, Will +2					
Abilities 4 + Skills 5 (20 ranks) + Feats 1 + Powers 0 + Combat 8 + Saves 4 = 22					

Current membership in the cult tends to be divided between the old guard loyal to Lady Mamba, but aging and gradually being replaced by younger cultists recruited by and loyal to Voodoo Dahlia, although still awed by her mother's power and influence. The newer members of the Mayombe are also more ambitious, or at least greedy and power-hungry, and more inclined to involve themselves in violent crime to further their own ends.

CAPTAIN BLOOD

POWER LEVEL 8

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+1	+3	+0	+1	+2
15	13	17	11	12	15
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+5/+3*	+3	+6	+6		

*Flat-footed

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+9), Bluff 8 (+10), Climb 6 (+8), Diplomacy 6 (+8), Intimidate 6 (+8), Language 1 (Spanish), Notice 8 (+9), Profession (sailor) 9 (+10), Ride 4 (+5), Search 6 (+7), Sense Motive 6 (+7), Stealth 4 (+5), Swim 8 (+10)

Feats: Attack Focus (melee) 2, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 11 (*The Black Plunder*), Fearless, Improved Block, Improved Disarm, Leadership, Minions 6 (50 ghost pirates), Taunt
The Black Plunder: Strength 55, Speed 3 (flying), 6 (sailing), Toughness 11, Defense 6, Size Gargantuan; Powers: **Blast 8** (cannon), **Obscure 8** (visual, cloud-screen), **Regeneration 9** (recovery, Regrowth)

Powers:

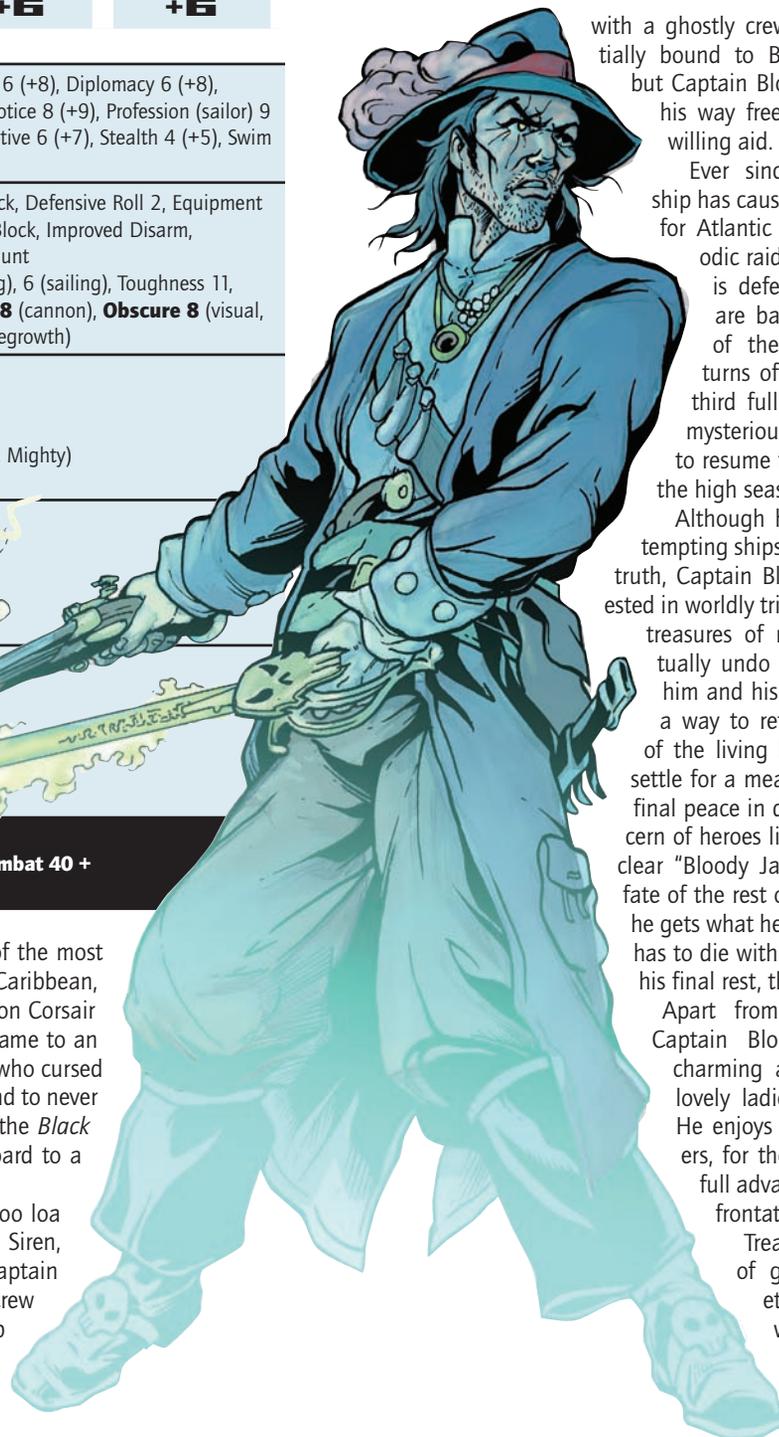
- Immunity 30** (Fortitude)
- Insubstantial 4** (incorporeal)
- Strike 3** (ghostly sword; Affects Incorporeal 2, Mighty)
- Super-Movement 2** (air-walking 2)

Combat: Attack +11 (melee), +9 (ranged), Grapple +13, Damage +2 (unarmed), +5 (sword), Defense +11 (flat-footed +5), Knockback -2 (-1 flat-footed), Initiative +1

Drawbacks: Power Loss (banished from the world for three turns of the moon when bested, very common, minor, -3 points)

Abilities 23 + Skills 20 (80 ranks) + Feats 27 + Powers 60 + Combat 40 + Saves 10 - Drawbacks 3 = Total 177

Real Name: Jonathan Carter	Identity: Public
Occupation: Pirate	Aliases: Bloody Jack
Affiliation: None	Base of Operations: Mobile
Height: 5'11"	Weight: 170 lbs. (when corporeal)
Eyes: Blue	Hair: Black



with a ghostly crew, the *Plunder* was initially bound to Baron Samedi's service, but Captain Blood eventually wormed his way free with Siren's less-than-willing aid.

Ever since, the ghostly pirate ship has caused occasional problems for Atlantic shipping with its periodic raids. When Captain Blood is defeated, he and his crew are banished from the world of the living for three full turns of the moon, but on the third full moon, they return on mysterious tides from elsewhere to resume their career of terror on the high seas.

Although he still raids and sacks tempting ships and seaside targets, in truth, Captain Blood is no longer interested in worldly trinkets. Instead, he seeks treasures of mystic power, to eventually undo the curse placed upon him and his men. Ideally, he wants a way to return fully to the world of the living but, barring that, he'll settle for a means to achieve true and final peace in death. Much to the concern of heroes like Siren, it has become clear "Bloody Jack" cares little for the fate of the rest of the world, so long as he gets what he wants. If everyone else has to die with him for him to achieve his final rest, then so be it.

Apart from his nihilistic streak, Captain Blood remains roguishly charming and loves to flirt with lovely ladies and taunt his foes. He enjoys using his ghostly powers, for the most part, and takes full advantage of them in a confrontation.

Treat Captain Blood's crew of ghost pirates like skeletons (*M&M*, page 235) without the Immunity to cold damage.

Jonathan "Bloody Jack" Carter was one of the most infamous pirates of the 17th century Caribbean, crossing swords with the legendary Crimson Corsair himself. The success of "Captain Blood" came to an end when he crossed a Voodoo priestess, who cursed him to know darkness, death, servitude, and to never know rest. It wasn't long thereafter that the *Black Plunder* went down with all hands on board to a dark and watery grave.

It didn't remain so, however. The Voodoo loa Baron Samedi, seeking to plague his foe Siren, used the power of the curse upon Captain Blood and his ship to raise vessel and crew from the briny depths. Now a ghost ship

MAITRE CARREFOUR

POWER LEVEL 9

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
-1	+0	+2	+2	+5	+2
9	10	15	14	20	14
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+2	+6	+3	+10		

Real Name: Unknown	Identity: Secret
Occupation: Mystic, mercenary	Aliases: Several
Affiliation: None	Base of Operations: Mobile
Height: 5'11"	Weight: 160 lbs.
Eyes: White (no pupils)	Hair: Bald

Skills: Bluff 4 (+6), Concentration 6 (+11), Craft (artistic) 4 (+6), Gather Information 4 (+6), Intimidate 8 (+10), Knowledge (arcane lore) 10 (+12), Knowledge (streetwise) 6 (+8), Knowledge (theology and philosophy) 7 (+9), Language 1 (Creole French), Notice 5 (+10), Search 4 (+6), Sense Motive 5 (+10), Stealth 4 (+4)

Feats: Artificer, Attack Focus (ranged) 4, Luck 2, Ritualist, Trance

Powers:

Deflect 9 (all attacks, Free Action)

Magic 9 (voodoo; **Mind Control 9**)

Animal Control 9 (Burst Area; Limited to reptiles)

Blast 9 (mystic darkness)

Darkness Control 9

Fatigue 6 (Ranged)

Snare 9

Snare 6 (Burst Area)

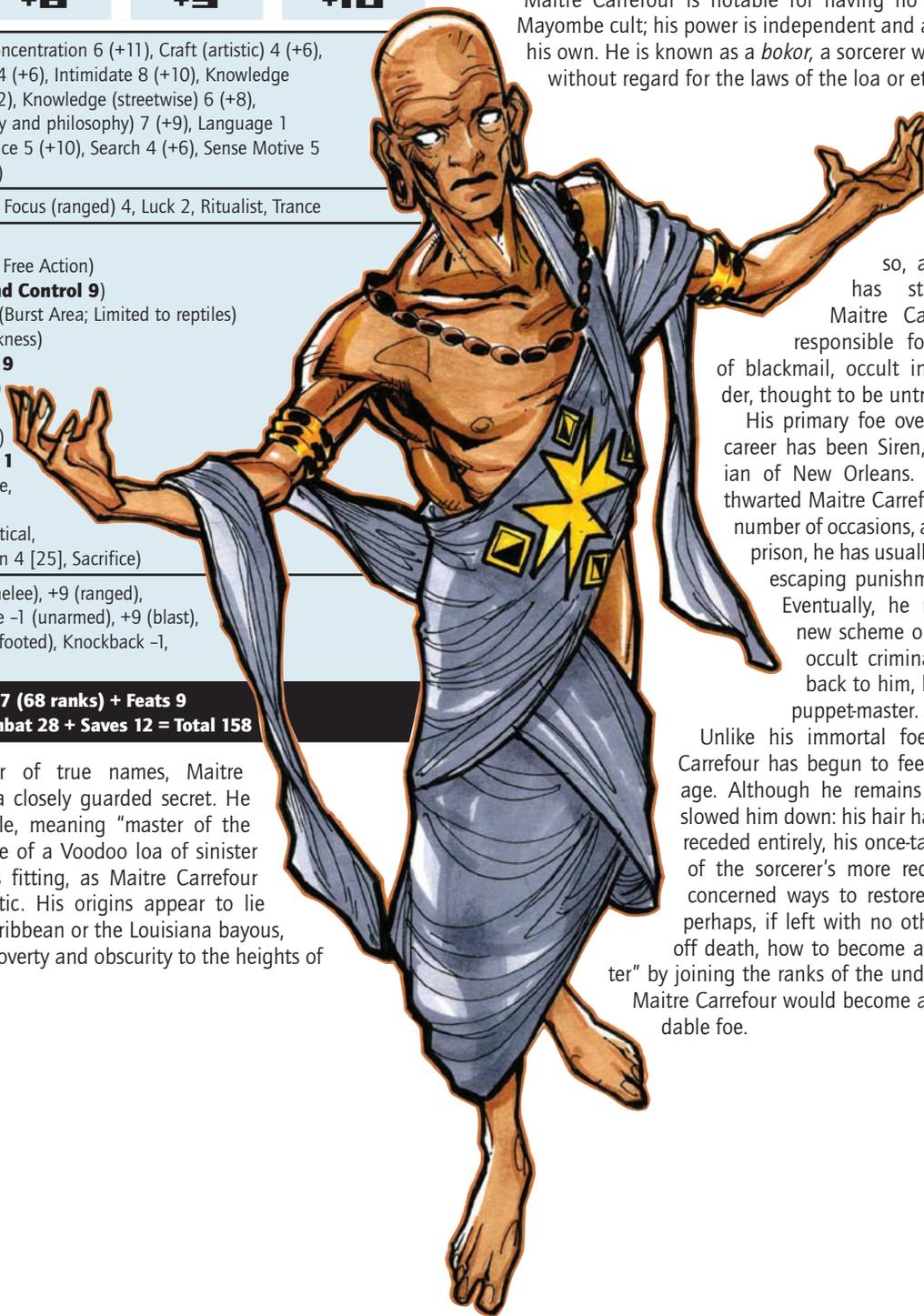
Summon Zombies 1

(Zombie archetype, *M&M*, page 235; Continuous, Fanatical, Horde, Progression 4 [25], Sacrifice)

Combat: Attack +5 (melee), +9 (ranged), Grapple +4, Damage -1 (unarmed), +9 (blast), Defense +9 (+5 flat-footed), Knockback -1, Initiative +0

Abilities 22 + Skills 17 (68 ranks) + Feats 9 + Powers 70 + Combat 28 + Saves 12 = Total 158

Knowing the power of true names, Maitre Carrefour keeps his a closely guarded secret. He goes only by his title, meaning "master of the crossroads," the name of a Voodoo loa of sinister sorcery. The name is fitting, as Maitre Carrefour is a formidable mystic. His origins appear to lie somewhere in the Caribbean or the Louisiana bayous, where he rose from poverty and obscurity to the heights of occult power.



Maitre Carrefour is notable for having no real ties with the Mayombe cult; his power is independent and achieved largely on his own. He is known as a *bokor*, a sorcerer who uses his powers without regard for the laws of the loa or ethical concerns.

For some time, his services were available to anyone able to meet his price, and they remain so, although the price has steadily increased.

Maitre Carrefour has been responsible for numerous cases of blackmail, occult influence, and murder, thought to be untraceable.

His primary foe over his long criminal career has been Siren, the mystic guardian of New Orleans. Although she has thwarted Maitre Carrefour's schemes on a number of occasions, and even put him in prison, he has usually found a means of escaping punishment for his crimes.

Eventually, he returns with some new scheme or the threads of an occult criminal conspiracy trace back to him, like the strings of a puppet-master.

Unlike his immortal foe, however, Maitre Carrefour has begun to feel the effects of his age. Although he remains healthy, time has slowed him down: his hair has gone white, then receded entirely, his once-tall form bent. Some of the sorcerer's more recent schemes have concerned ways to restore his lost youth or, perhaps, if left with no other means to stave off death, how to become a true "zombie master" by joining the ranks of the undead. In either case, Maitre Carrefour would become an even more formidable foe.

MALADOR THE MYSTIC

POWER LEVEL 14

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+0	+1	+5	+3	+10	+2
10	12	20	16	30	14
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+15	+5	+5	+17		

Real Name: Malador	Identity: Public
Occupation: Sorcerer	Aliases: None known
Affiliation: None	Base of Operations: Mobile
Height: 6'1"	Weight: 165 lbs.
Eyes: Glowing blue	Hair: White

Skills: Concentration 8 (+18), Diplomacy 6 (+8), Intimidate 8 (+10), Knowledge (arcane lore) 16 (+19), Knowledge (history) 6 (+9), Language 4 (various ancient dialects), Sense Motive 4 (+14)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 7, Diehard, Fearless, Ritualist

Powers:

- Comprehend 2** (languages)
- Immunity 30** (Fortitude)
- Magic 16** (Dynamic, spells all Dynamic)
- Animate Objects 10**
- Blast 16**
- ESP 8** (all senses)
- Flight 4** (100 MPH)
- Illusion 10** (all senses, Phantasms, Selective)
- Snare 16**
- Telekinesis 16** (*heavy load*: 800 tons)
- Teleport 6** (600 ft./20 miles, Portal)
- Transform 6** (living beings into creatures)
- Protection 10** (Impervious 5)

Combat: Attack +5 melee, +12 ranged, Grapple +5, Damage +0 (unarmed), +16 (blast), Defense +12 (flat-footed +6), Knockback -10, Initiative +1

Drawbacks: Vulnerability (arrogant, +50% from Bluff checks encouraging him to gloat, -2 points)

Abilities 42 + Skills 13 (52 ranks) + Feats 10 + Powers 98 + Combat 34 + Saves 11 - Drawbacks 2 = Total 206

Malador was born millennia ago in the ancient civilization of Atlantis. He became a promising student, and later, an accomplished master, of the mystic arts. He earned the mantle of Master Mage, but he also became the first to betray his oath and his duty to humanity. Malador bargained with unspeakable evil beings from other dimensions, bound in eternal slumber in realms beyond the ken of mankind. He sought power and knowledge above all else, and he would have gladly surrendered the whole world to his dark patrons. The sorcerers of Atlantis united against Malador and were able to overcome him. They stripped him of his power and bound him in a tomb for all time. Malador cursed all of Atlantis with his final breath, and it was not long thereafter that the island civilization sank in a terrible cataclysm.

Archeologists uncovered Malador's tomb in the 1930s and unwittingly awakened the ancient mage. One

of them, Adrian Eldrich, became invested with the power of an Atlantean sorcerer and has become Malador's arch foe in the modern era. Malador has clashed with Eldrich and various other heroes a number of times over the years.

All the while, the ancient sorcerer seeks to recover the power he has lost and to reclaim the mantle of Master Mage, to reshape the universe in his image and rule over a new netherworld as its Dark Lord.

Once a noble protector of humanity and a scholar of mystical lore, Malador has become mad with power-lust. He wants nothing more than to wield ultimate power and be acknowledged as the supreme master of the mystic arts. Anything in his way must be eliminated, preferably in a manner that demonstrates Malador's power to any other fools that might dare to challenge him.

Malador is supremely confident and assured of his own power and abilities. Minions who question him end up transformed into slaving monsters or simply destroyed, depending on Malador's mood. He cannot resist an opportunity to gloat once he has a foe in his clutches.

Malador is a master sorcerer, capable of casting a wide range of spells. His arsenal includes bolts of mystic power and magical shields that protect him from harm. He can levitate, allowing him to fly through the air, and he can entrap others in mystic chains, transform people or animals into demonic monsters, magically spy on distant places, and so forth. The only real limits on Malador's power are his concentration, time, and the amount of mystic energy at his command. He uses magical artifacts and devices to enhance his spellcasting abilities from time to time.



Malador is no longer a living being, having become more of an undead creature sustained by his powerful magic. He no longer suffers from mortal concerns like aging or needing to eat or breathe, and he is immune to most harmful environmental conditions. In fact, Malador's life force is bound into the golden mask he wears. Should his physical

body be destroyed, Malador's life force enters the mask and waits there until a suitable host-body comes into contact with it. Malador can then possess that person and magically transform their body into a duplicate of his own. More than once, heroes have believed the threat of Malador the Mystic was ended, only to have him return, as powerful as ever.

UNA, QUEEN OF THE NETHERWORLD

POWER LEVEL 15

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
+2	+1	+5	+3	+11	+6
14	13	21	17	32	22
TOUGHNESS	FORTITUDE	REFLEX	WILL		
+19/+5*	+10	+6	+19		

*Without force field

Skills: Concentration 12 (+23), Diplomacy 8 (+14), Gather Information 10 (+16), Intimidate 8 (+14), Knowledge (arcane lore) 18 (+21), Search 4 (+7), Sense Motive 4 (+15), Sleight of Hand 8 (+9)

Feats: Attack Focus (ranged) 6, Attractive, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Dodge Focus 3, Ritualist, Trance, Well-Informed

Powers:

- Astral Form 10** (Dimensional 3)
- Comprehend 2** (languages)
- Force Field 14** (Impervious)
- Immunity 10** (aging, life support)
- Magic 18** (Dynamic, spells all Dynamic)
- Air Control 18**
- Blast 18** (mystic force)
- Darkness Control 18**
- Earth Control 18**
- ESP 8** (all senses, Dimensional 3)
- Fire Control 18**
- Mental Blast 9**
- Snare 11** (Backlash, Reversible)
- Teleport 9** (900 ft./anywhere on Earth, Portal)
- Teleport 18** (1,800 ft./anywhere in the galaxy)
- Water Control 18**
- Weather Control 18** (distraction, hamper movement, temperature)
- Super-Movement 3** (air walking, dimensional)
- Super-Senses 1** (mystic awareness)

Combat: Attack +6 (melee), +12 (ranged), Grapple +8, Damage +2 (unarmed), +18 (blast), Defense +11 (+4 flat-footed), Knockback -16 (-2 without force field), Initiative +1

Drawbacks: Disability (unable by oath to directly attack the Earth, -2 points)

Abilities 59 + Skills 18 (72 ranks) + Feats 15 + Powers 163 + Combat 28 + Saves 18 - Drawbacks 2 = Total 299

Real Name: Una	Identity: Unknown
Aliases: the Uncaring, the Invincible, the Unrelenting, the Magnificent, and the Mighty (among her other titles)	
Occupation: Queen of the Netherworld	
Base of Operations: The Netherworld	Affiliation: None
Height: 5'9"	Weight: 125 lbs.
Eyes: Green	Hair: Black

One of the mightiest sovereigns in the known dimensions began her existence as a slave. Una was taken from her peasant family as a young girl to become the favored concubine-slave of a powerful wizard-king. Her par-



amour greatly underestimated the girl's keen intellect, considerable will, and her fierce ambition. Una wheedled mystic secrets from him and crept into the king's library to study its ancient tomes and scrolls. The more knowledge she gained, the more she hungered for it.

Una used the mystic arts to enhance her wiles and ensnare her king in a web of enchantment. His sudden and tragic death on their wedding night came as a great shock to his subjects, but it was the first of many sacrifices to seal the power of the new Queen. Una ruthlessly wrested mystic secrets from those throughout her dominion, eventually becoming Master Mage of her home, and then its Dark Lord. She transformed her world to suit her whims, gaining absolute power and mastery, but even that was not enough for her.

In her studies, Una learned of other dimensions, each with their own Master Mage, many of them ruled by rival Dark Lords. So began her great game of conquest and diplomacy. She arranged alliances with some Dark Lords to conquer others, inevitably betraying her erstwhile allies and turning on them. Over untold centuries, the Queen of the Netherworld has come to rule a vast interdimensional domain. In all her ages of conquest, Una the Unrelenting has encountered only two real setbacks.

The first was when her conquests brought her domain into contact with the Warborn. The mindless Battle-brutes were a threat even Una could not easily defeat, so she cooperated with

other Dark Lords to seal the threat off from their realms. The effort weakened Una for a time and forced her to curtail her plans in order to deal with uprisings and potential threats to her rule, but eventually, matters stabilized. The Battle-brutes remain a potential threat, albeit a rare one.

The most serious setback Una ever suffered was when she set her sights on Earth and encountered its Master Mage, Adrian Eldrich. Although he initially appeared to fall victim to her legendary charms, Eldrich proved false and was able to trick Una into accepting a duel

arcane, a formal conflict between wizards. Although she clearly possessed the power to best him, Eldrich was willing to sacrifice himself to allow rebels within her own dominion to strike. Forced to call off the duel to deal with the sudden uprising, Una was bound to an oath never to directly attack Earth's dimension. She has been scheming ever since to find a way to exact revenge and claim the one world she has been denied, preferably capturing or destroying her old foe Eldrich in the bargain.

OTHER MYSTIC FOES

For every corrupt mage or puissant dark adept, there are many lesser mystics willing to do almost anything to satisfy their lust for power.

THE CRIMSON MASK

The head of the modern Thule Society and a member of the Penumbra of SHADOW, the Crimson Mask is a formidable sorcerer with designs on becoming the Master Mage—and eventually Dark Lord—of Earth. For the time being, the Crimson Mask loyally serves Overshadow, while engaging in his own occult experiments and plotting to increase his knowledge and powers. The Crimson Mask is detailed in **Chapter Five** of the *Agents of Freedom* sourcebook.

QUEEN AYESHA

The queen of a hidden valley in the interior of Africa, Ayesha is an immortal born in ancient Egypt, rendered ageless by a mysterious volcanic flame in her domain. Over the centuries, she has mastered various arcane arts and spent time seeking the reincarnation of her lover from the ancient world. For a time, she took this to be King M'Ballá of Dakana, the White Lion, and lured him to her valley to force him to stay with her. On other occasions, she has sought revenge on the White Lion for spurring her love.

MEDEA

This ancient Greek sorceress and member of the Crime League is a long-time foe of Daedalus (something that takes on new meaning for enemies who have lived over thousands of years). Although adept, she

has never achieved the level of mastery needed to become Master Mage, although she has crossed spells with many of them, including Eldrich. Medea regularly seeks ways to increase her power, and she may be involved with events connected to Greek myth or the gods of Olympus. She is described in detail in **Chapter Six** of *Freedom City*.

OVERSHADOW

Although infamous for mad-scientist schemes and technological terrors, the leader of SHADOW is a formidable occultist. Although not a sorcerer, Overshadow possesses considerable arcane knowledge and the ability to perform various magical rituals, which he has done on a number of occasions. Overshadow is not one to overlook any source of power for his plans and has used magic the further them before, and will no doubt do so again, if the opportunity presents itself. Overshadow is described in **Chapter Six** of *Freedom City* as well as in **Chapter Five** of *Agents of Freedom*.

TAARVON THE UNDYING

This immortal sorcerer commands the powers of the Shadow World and seeks to supplant Omega as master of the Terminus. Taarvon was once a godlike immortal, but he gave in to temptation and the call of the Shadow World. For uncounted centuries, he has vied against Omega's rule, but there is no doubt his would be as bad. Where Omega seeks omniversal destruction, Taarvon is an agent of omniversal corruption. He would plunge all existence into the darkness he serves. Taarvon is detailed in **Chapter Nine** of *Worlds of Freedom*.

MYSTIC PLACES

Although magic in the World of Freedom has retreated to the shadows and the dusty realm of human myth and legend, it remains alive and active in some places. Certain parts of the world are so strongly associated with magic, so connected with other dimensions, that mystic power lingers there to this day.

Naturally, these places are also sites of mystic activity, where magicians set up their sanctums or come to perform their rites, seeking power or wisdom. They're often points of contention between mystic factions trying to control them and deny their power to their enemies while using them for their own ends.

ATLANTIS

Thousands of years ago, in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean, the island continent of Atlantis was the home of humans genetically enhanced by the extraterrestrial Preservers. Using samples of technology left behind by the Preservers and their own genius, the Atlanteans created an advanced civilization far beyond anything else on Earth. They

were explorers with visions of uniting the world, and they made contact with other lands, as legends of the fabled island-continent and its powers spread far and wide.

In time, the Atlanteans came into conflict with Lemuria and the ancient Empire of the Serpent People, descendants of a previous saurian empire that ruled the Earth millions of years previously. Although the Serpent People had become largely degenerate, they were led by cunning and powerful sorcerers and worshipped nameless cosmic entities. The war between Atlantis and Lemuria lasted for generations. The Atlanteans were ultimately victorious, but in the end, their arrogance became their undoing, as they sought to understand their foes' alien sorcery. In so doing, they triggered a disaster that destroyed Atlantis, sinking the entire continent below the waves.

Most of the Atlantean populace died in the Sinking, but a few saved themselves by adapting to their new environment. Some Atlanteans became amphibious water breathers, whether by magic, genetic engineering, or a combination of the two. Most of the water-breathing

Atlanteans lived in nomadic tribes; their civilization swiftly regressed to a primitive level. A few of these tribes were corrupted and interbred with Serpent People, taking on reptilian characteristics and worshipping evil, forbidden gods.

Over time, some Atlanteans have resettled the ruins of their ancestors' great cities and become more sophisticated, their culture similar in many ways to that of the Roman Empire at its height. They have access to ancient Atlantean technological and magical artifacts, although their understanding has been somewhat limited until recently, and their ability to manufacture such devices is likewise limited.

Atlantis's existence became widely known to some surface-dwellers in the 1940s, when the superheroine Siren operated with the Liberty League. She was a surface dweller who gained her powers from a combination of Atlantean science and sorcery. Following the war, she married Atlantis's crown prince, Thallor, and became its queen. Her son, Theseus, had a career as the superhero Sea-King and was a member of the Freedom League. He is now King of Atlantis, and his daughter, Nereid, is a student at the Claremont Academy and a member of the Next-Gen. The voodoo goddess Siren, although not an Atlantean, has visited Atlantis on occasion and met her Golden Age predecessor, now Atlantis's Queen Mother.

Atlantis's relations with the surface world have not always been peaceful. Atlantean barbarians have been known to attack ships and coastal areas. There have also been occasional coups or secession crises leading to Atlantean invasions of the surface world. Even the most peaceful Atlanteans are disdainful of surface-dwellers and their constant pollution of Earth's oceans. Atlantis currently has a delegation to the United Nations. While recognized as a sovereign nation by most of the surface world, contact is understandably at a minimum. There is also an ongoing debate as to how far Atlantis's "dominion of the oceans" extends, and whether or not King Theseus can truly claim to be "Sovereign of the Seven Seas." Although the king's hot temper has cooled somewhat over the years, diplomacy between Atlantis and the surface world remains tense.

ATLANTEANS

Atlanteans look much like surface humans, with a mixture of (mostly European) features. They tend toward Roman noses and jaw-lines. Atlanteans are generally sleek, muscular swimmers and have denser muscle tissue than humans, giving them super-strength (the average Atlantean can lift 1,400 lbs.). Some Atlanteans (particularly members of the royal family and some barbarian warlords) have even greater strength.

Atlanteans do not have gills; instead, the lining of their lungs has adapted to allow them to extract oxygen from water and withstand considerable water pressure. Atlanteans can also breathe air, although they're most comfortable in an aquatic environment.

ATLANTEAN TEMPLATE

15 POINTS

Abilities: Strength +4

Feats: Environmental Adaptation (aquatic)

Powers: **Immunity 3** (cold, drowning, pressure), **Super-Senses 1** (low-light vision), **Super-Strength 2, Swimming 2**

DEEP ONES

Deep Ones are Atlanteans corrupted by interbreeding with the Serpent People as well as the influence of the Serpent Scepter. They have hairless, green, scaly skin, clawed hands and feet, entirely black eyes (with no iris or pupil visible), pointed ears, and sharp teeth. Their scales pro-

vide Deep Ones with some natural armor, and their eyes are adapted to see even in the blackest ocean depths, but they deal poorly with light as bright as daylight on the surface.

DEEP ONE TEMPLATE

18 POINTS

Abilities: Strength +4

Feats: Environmental Adaptation (aquatic)

Powers: **Immunity 3** (cold, drowning, pressure), **Protection 2, Strike 1** (Mighty), **Super-Senses 2** (darkvision), **Super-Strength 2, Swimming 2**

Drawbacks: Disabled (dazzled in daylight, minor, common, -2 points)

ORICHALCUM

The ancient Atlanteans invented a unique metal alloy called orichalcum, a hybrid creation of advanced metallurgy and arcane alchemy. The secret of its creation was lost in the sinking of Atlantis, but samples of the metal still exist, owing to its near-indestructible nature, and some master Atlantean mage-smiths have some limited skill in reworking and repairing pieces of orichalcum.

Orichalcum is a golden metal with Toughness 25 and immunity to damage from temperature extremes, which has also allowed items to survive deep beneath the ocean's surface for millennia. It holds enchantments well, and many ancient Atlantean artifacts made of the metal have magical powers. Orichalcum weapons, armor, and tools are prized heirlooms among the Atlanteans, Utopians, and modern mystics aware of their history.

LEMURIA

The island continent of Lemuria once existed in the Pacific Ocean thousands of years ago. It was the center of an empire ruled by the Serpent People. The Serpent Empire of Lemuria was old even before modern humans first appeared, and humanity was little more than a curiosity to the saturnine Serpent People. They kept humans as pets and slaves, occasionally using them in their arcane experiments. Saurian scientists genetically-engineered various sub-species of humanity to serve them.

In time, the decadent Lemurian Serpent People came into conflict with the advanced human empire of Atlantis. They fought a long series of wars, which culminated in their mutual annihilation. Lemuria sank beneath the ocean in a terrible Cataclysm, the end of the last great Serpent Empire.

The ruins of Lemuria lie at the bottom of the Pacific, largely undisturbed, although occasionally visited by scavengers (human and otherwise) looking for ancient artifacts and secrets left behind by the Serpent Empire. Some scattered tribes of Deep Ones can be found there, usually worshipping some sunken idol or ruin. There are ancient passages from Lemuria into Sub-Terra, and some of the ruins still have pockets of breathable air (likely maintained by some ancient machinery or magic).

The Lemurian ruins are dangerous, holding ancient and corrupt magic, imprisoned creatures, and dormant war-machines or doomsday devices the Serpent People were unable to use in the final days of their war with Atlantis. The United Nations has declared the ruins off-limits and placed them under the jurisdiction of UNISON, which is charged with dealing with any poachers or scavengers, relying on the Freedom League for more serious problems. Even the mundane authorities are largely unaware of the mystic threats slumbering in the sunken ruins: preternatural forces that could, if unleashed, tear the cosmos asunder. Forces that mad cults like the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign have attempted to raise in the past.



MAGIC MESA

In the desert of the American Southwest stands a lone tower of rock, rising up above the painted sands, casting a long shadow in the rising and setting sun. Native legends speak of it as a place of power, where the spirits dwell and where braves went on vision quests seeking their wisdom and aid. Those who know of it call it Magic Mesa and say it's a place where strange things happen, a place best avoided by those who know what's good for them.

Magic Mesa is a nexus, a gateway between worlds, where someone lost in the desert can find the dark tower of stone, then wander away from it to end up somewhere quite different from where they started. It's a place where space and time as we know them have little meaning, and distant places and times sometimes touch. It's a well of mystic power and insight.

In the days of the Old West, Magic Mesa was a sacred place to the local tribes and became the sanctum of Broken Crow, a powerful Sioux shaman and the Master Mage of his era. Its magic helped resurrect Adam Prophet, the Pale Rider, and it may have influenced many other fantastic tales in the Old West. After Broken Crow's death at Wounded Knee, the location of Magic Mesa was lost to all but a few, although stories continued of people traveling in the desert and stumbling across it, for good or ill.

Those who have sought Magic Mesa to exploit its power have discovered—to their regret—that it is guarded to this day. Magic Mesa's guardian for over a century has been the elemental called Dust Devil, animated by the spirit of slain bandit. See *Freedom City*, page 94, for details and game information.

SHAMBALA VALE

Nestled in the Himalayan Mountains is a secret valley not marked on any map. The sole passage is hidden behind a towering waterfall, deep in a narrow canyon where the mighty Tsangpo River plunges down to the rocks below. Past the cascade of the Hidden Falls is Shambala Vale. It is known as Lotus Land, Pemako, Shangri-la, and many other names. Despite the harsh environment of the mountains, the legendary Vale remains temperate and spring-like year-round, its weather protected by ancient magic that also shields it from prying eyes. In truth, Shambala Vale is a *beyul*, a "hidden land," within a dimensional fold like that of Utopia Isle or the Lost World, which has kept it concealed from the outside world for untold generations.

Mystics from Atlantis settled the vale millennia ago to escape the war between that island nation and the Serpent Empire of Lemuria. They intermarried with the local people and founded a community, protecting it from the elements and potentially hostile outsiders. The eventual destruction of Atlantis affirmed their belief in isolation and pacifism, so they remained and studied the esoteric arts.

Shambala Vale is best known for its temple of learning, meditation, and contemplation, and for the crypts that lie beneath it. Only learned mystics and martial arts masters even know of the vale's existence, and fewer still know how to find their way there.

THE SHAMBALA TEMPLE

Located on a mountainside overlooking the green and fertile valley below, the Shambala Temple has stood for centuries as a place of contemplation and learning. Many of Earth's Master Mages have trained at the temple, and many mystical and martial arts traditions can trace their roots back to it, if one delves deeply enough into the past.

The masters of the Shambala Temple apply many tests to determine the worthiness of potential students. The first test is actually reaching the temple, no small feat for an outsider. Would-be students are often rejected and sent to live in the valley below to learn humility or made to wait outside the temple for days or weeks to learn patience. Once accepted, students do menial work in between lessons in meditation, exercise, martial arts, philosophy, and (in some cases) the mystic arts.

The martial arts taught at the Shambala Temple are said to be the "sun source" of all unarmed fighting techniques throughout Asia, perhaps even the world, dating back to the ancient adepts of Atlantis and their esoteric disciplines. Thus, students of the Temple can learn virtually any fighting style in the world, and true masters are among the greatest fighters the world has ever known.

THE CRYPTS OF KARU

In catacombs deep beneath the mountain of the Shambala Temple lie the Crypts of Karu. Within these vaults rest the mortal remains of many of Earth's Master Mages, placed there by the monks of the Shambala Temple. The crypts are a sacred place, and no one except for the monks and the current Master Mage (or those with his or her express permission) may enter. The statues within the antechamber of the crypts are enchanted as guardians over the final resting place of the honored dead (use the Clay Golem archetype, *M&M*, page 233).

Some Master Mages come to the Crypts of Karu to reflect and meditate and others to more directly commune with the spirits of their predecessors. These ancient spirits can give sage advice, but they only do so in times of the greatest need, since it is difficult for them to manifest on the earthly plane. This can serve as an opportunity for a mystic hero to spend a hero point for some inspiration in the form of advice or hints from the ancient spirits.

ULURU

Near the center of Australia stands the sandstone tower of Uluru, known to European settlers as "Ayer's Rock." Like Magic Mesa (previously) Uluru sits upon a dimensional nexus point, a natural gateway between worlds, particularly the mundane world and the depths of the astral plane, what the native Aborigines call the Dreamtime.

Uluru is nearly six miles in circumference, has numerous natural springs, caves, and waterholes, and is dotted with Aboriginal paintings and symbol, some of them dating back centuries. Aboriginal legend says many of the cracks and fissures in the great rock date back to the time of ancient serpent people who waged wars there. In modern time, hidden passages into Sub-Terra (*Freedom City*, page 95) found in

the rock suggest these legends are true, and the Serpent People may have fought the ancient humans who first settled the area before being driven back underground.

Aboriginal shamans have guarded the dimensional nexus of Uluru throughout recorded history. From time to time, malevolent spirits find their way into the physical world, or unwary visitors stumble into trouble. Anyone taking rocks away from Uluru may fall under a curse, or take some malign magical influence with them. Those the guardians of Uluru trust are sometimes permitted to visit there, either to seek paths along the Cosmic Coil or to perform needful rituals tapping into the power there.

The present guardian of Uluru is the Aboriginal shaman Koradji (described previously in this chapter), who holds the loyalty of others of his people and the respect of mystics around the world.

THE MYSTIC FREEDOM SERIES

There are a number of different approaches to a mystic Freedom City series, ranging from high power to low and from overt to secret. The following are some series frameworks Gamemasters can use for inspiration for their own mystic series set in the World of Freedom (and the magical realms beyond).

THE ARCANES VEIL

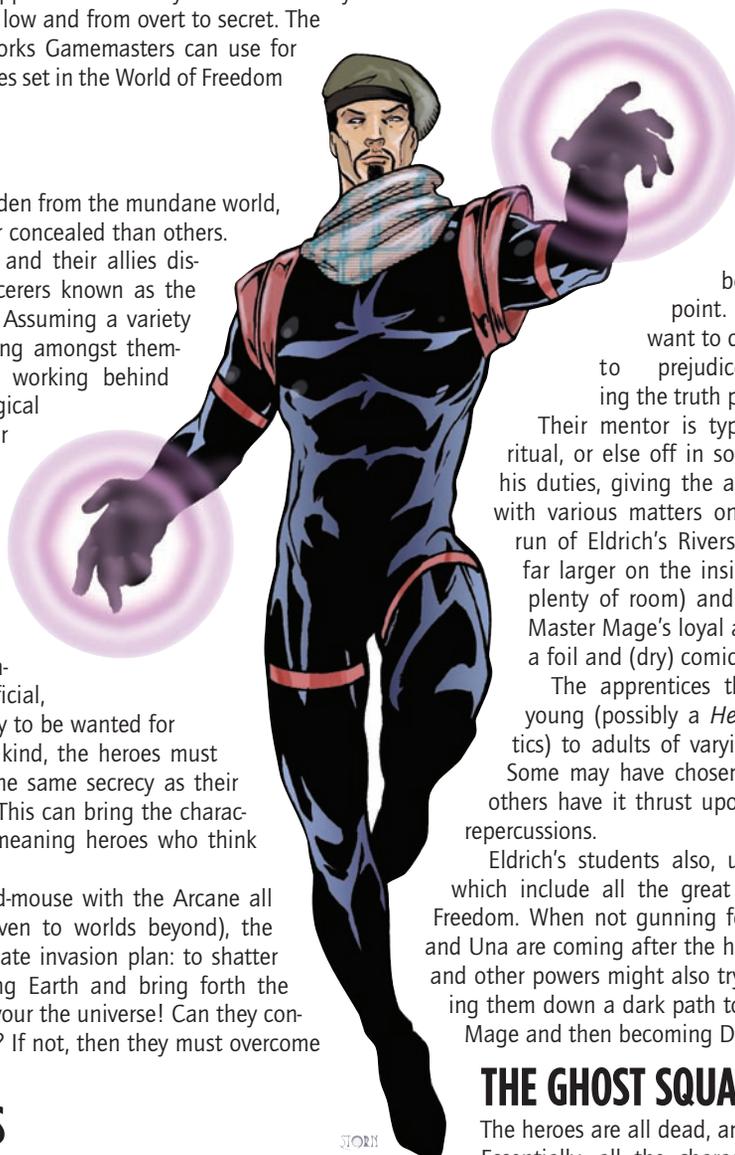
Mystics often deal with threats hidden from the mundane world, but some occult dangers are better concealed than others. In this series, a group of mystics and their allies discover the shape-shifting alien sorcerers known as the Arcane have infiltrated the Earth. Assuming a variety of guises, the Arcane are struggling amongst themselves for dominance while also working behind the scenes to weaken Earth's magical and mundane defenses. With their powers of transformation, mind-reading, and magic, they have not only hidden their invasion from everyone, but cultivated powerful allies in keeping their secret.

When the mystics discover one Arcane has taken the form of a high-ranking government or military official, they may manage to banish it, only to be wanted for murder! More than most of their kind, the heroes must retreat to the shadows and use the same secrecy as their foes to fight the Arcane invasion. This can bring the characters into conflict with other well-meaning heroes who think they've broken the law.

After a lengthy game of cat-and-mouse with the Arcane all across the world (and perhaps even to worlds beyond), the heroes must face the aliens' ultimate invasion plan: to shatter the dimensional barriers protecting Earth and bring forth the forces of the Nameless Ones to devour the universe! Can they convince others of the danger in time? If not, then they must overcome the forces of the Arcane alone...

ELDRICH APPRENTICES

In this series, the heroes are all apprenticed to Adrian Eldrich, Earth's current Master Mage. They're learning to master the magical



arts under Eldrich's guidance, and they are also assisting him with his duties to safeguard humanity from mystical threats (a full-time job, if ever there was one). Eventually, one of the characters may even have the potential to succeed Eldrich as Master Mage, although he keeps quiet about who that might be, assuming he even knows at this point. If he does, Eldrich likely doesn't want to create ill will among his students or to prejudice his potential successor by revealing the truth prematurely.

Their mentor is typically secluded in meditation or ritual, or else off in some other dimension attending to his duties, giving the apprentices plenty of time to deal with various matters on their own. They likely have the run of Eldrich's Riverside townhouse (which is actually far larger on the inside than the outside, giving them plenty of room) and the occasional assistance of the Master Mage's loyal aide, Sallah, who can also serve as a foil and (dry) comic relief, in true loyal butler fashion.

The apprentices themselves may range from fairly young (possibly a *Hero High* variant with all-teen mystics) to adults of varying ages and levels of experience. Some may have chosen to follow a mystical path, while others have it thrust upon them and are dealing with the repercussions.

Eldrich's students also, unfortunately, inherit his enemies, which include all the great magical threats of the World of Freedom. When not gunning for their boss, villains like Malador and Una are coming after the heroes! Foes like Mr. Infamy, Hades, and other powers might also try to corrupt the new mystics, drawing them down a dark path towards claiming the title of Master Mage and then becoming Dark Lord of Earth!

THE GHOST SQUAD

The heroes are all dead, and that's just the start of the series. Essentially, all the characters in this series are ghosts or undead of some sort, kept in the world of the living by a need



SHAMBALA TEMPLE, HIDDEN FAR FROM THE PRYING EYES OF THE MUNDANE WORLD

to do good. Perhaps they seek to redeem past mistakes or protect loved ones. Some may have sworn oaths that hold them even beyond death, while others are driven by a need for vengeance. Whatever the case, the heroes are drawn together by fate or perhaps by a supernatural guide or mentor who gives them their instructions.

For an interesting variation, the characters may all be ghosts normally unable to interact with the world of the living, but occasionally sent to possess living hosts for a time in order to carry out their missions. They either endow their hosts with certain supernatural powers, or they possess superhuman hosts in order to make use of their powers. So from adventure to adventure, the "Ghost Squad" can occupy different bodies with entirely different traits. One week they might be the Freedom League, while the next they're possessing super-criminals or ordinary people.

A Ghost Squad series could also have a mechanism by which certain characters eventually "move on" to whatever afterlife awaits them, once they've resolved the circumstances tying them to the mortal world. This is a novel means of retiring characters from the series, with new heroes coming in as recently deceased ghosts now dealing with their new undead status.

HEIRS OF THE MANTLE

Adrian Eldrich is no more: perhaps the Master Mage finally fell in battle against one of his many foes, he has come to the end of his mystically-enhanced life, or he has simply chosen to retire after decades of battling occult menaces. Whatever the case, the office of Master Mage is vacant for the first time in more than a generation, but it cannot be left empty for long, lest the arcane forces threatening Earth strike in a moment of weakness.

The heroes in this series are either candidates for the role of Master Mage or perhaps even part of a new circle intended to fill the role as a group. Given the additional threats and challenges of the modern age, it may be the power and responsibility of the Master Mage needs to be divided up among a number of trusted adepts. The additional benefit being no one of them has the ability to become a Dark Lord (at least not without betraying and killing all of the others...).

In either case, the heroes are essentially entrusted with the defense of Earth and our dimension against any and all mystical threats, from demons to strange cults, dimensional conquerors, corrupt sorcerers, and virtually any other villain or challenge from this book. They may take over Eldrich's old sanctum or establish one of their own, perhaps at a power spot like Happanuk Hill, Magic Mesa, or the like.

THE LIGHT-BEARERS

The present Light-Bearer, Langston Albright (*Freedom City*, page 59) has held the power since the late 1940s and has been searching for his successor for some time. The search is made more urgent by the return of his old foe, Nacht-Krieger, the most active Shadow-Wielder on Earth. In this series, Mr. Albright finally passes on his power and duties to the heroes.

Events in World War II demonstrated there can be more than one Light-Bearer at a time: White Rose and White Thorn shared the power during their time with the Allies of Freedom, before it passed wholly to Beacon. Given the rising tide of darkness and the greater threats of the modern world, Albright may be moved, by inspiration or desperation, to pass his power on to a *group* rather than an individual.

The players should be encouraged to create a group of characters sharing the mystic light-based powers of the Light-Bearer. They need not all be the same, although they might have similar basic powers (Environmental Control or Light Control, for example). Like White Rose and White Thorn, the group could also have some shared powers, which only work for them as a group. They might even have the Gestalt power

(*M&M*, page 86), with the ability to merge into a single powerful champion of the light!

The Shadow-Touched are natural enemies of the new Light-Bearers; this includes Nacht-Krieger and his master, Overshadow, the necromancer Malador, and possibly Taarvon the Undying from the Terminus (see the *Worlds of Freedom* sourcebook for information about this extra-dimensional master of darkness). They may find allies among Freedom City's other heroes, particularly Eldrich and the Freedom League.

REBELS AGAINST THE DARK LORD

The Freedom City setting assumes Eldrich is Earth's Master Mage, but this series framework takes a darker turn and posits Eldrich as a Dark Lord instead! Unlike conquerors like Una, Eldrich has taken his mantle quietly, behind the scenes. He maintains the *appearance* of a "mundane" world, but in secret, dark arcane powers reign supreme.

Earth's superheroes are utterly ignorant of this state of affairs and, in fact, the various foes and disasters they handle are merely distractions Eldrich creates to amuse himself and keep them in the dark. As the few mystics not under the Dark Lord's thumb, the heroes are some of the only ones aware of the real state of affairs, and no one will believe them if they claim Adrian Eldrich, one of the longest-standing members of the heroic community, arcane defender of Earth, is actually a secret villainous mastermind!

Thus, the heroes are on their own in a secret war against the Dark Lord to reclaim the Earth and restore the mystic balance. They have their work cut out for them, as Eldrich's agents are everywhere, and even the mundane authorities are on his side, or will be, once he frames the heroes as dangerous super-criminals. They have to work in secret to counter the Dark Lord's plans and eventually strike at him in hopes of overthrowing him. Of course, their problems don't end there, as Eldrich's enemies will be looking to move into the power vacuum created by his displacement.

SHAMBALA TEMPLE

The foremost training ground for students of the mystic arts in the World of Freedom is the hidden Shambala Temple. For millennia, it has safeguarded and preserved arcane secrets and worked to ensure they are imparted only to worthy students.

In this series, the heroes are students at the Shambala Temple, studying the esoteric arts under the watchful guidance of elder masters. They may include a mix of people from Shambala Vale along with talented

outsiders who have found themselves guided to the Temple by the subtle hand of destiny. As in the **Eldrich Apprentices** framework, the students may be relatively young or adults who are simply new to the mystic arts. Some might seek knowledge and enlightenment, while others deal with unwanted power or struggle with their true destinies. As an added benefit, not all the heroes need to be magicians; some might be studying the martial disciplines of the temple, for a combination of magic and martial arts action.

Shambala students can face many of the same threats as other novice mystics, but they also have to contend with life at the Temple under the firm discipline of their teachers. Students from the Vale itself are also inexperienced in dealing with the outside world; there are some interesting adventure possibilities in sending them somewhere like Freedom City (to meet with Eldrich, perhaps) and challenging them with life in a modern-day metropolis.

STREET MAGIC

Of course, not all the magic in the World of Freedom involves powerful sorcerers dealing with cosmic forces; there's a great deal of magic hidden in the shadows of the city streets and going on behind the scenes of the otherwise mundane world. Heroes in this series are mystics who don't wear costumes or cast spells accompanied by dazzling light shows. They walk the city streets rather than flying over them, but they still use their supernatural powers to help safeguard people against threats they cannot begin to fully understand.

A **Street Magic** series uses the superhuman elements of *Freedom City* as a backdrop, but the characters operate in neighborhoods like the West End, Southside, Lincoln, and the Fens. They may work in Riverside or Port Regal, too, but the key point is subtlety. They're far more likely to pursue the ghost haunting the funhouse at the Ocean Heights Amusement Park or unravel the mystery of a killer operating in the Fens than to take on a supervillain in an aerial battle over the city.

Still, street magic characters can interact with many of the occult aspects of the city. In addition to encountering someone like Thomas Rhymer, the characters can have run-ins with Lucius Cabot and his law firm (*Freedom City*, page 38) and cults like the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign or the Mayombe. Mysteries of the city like the Pinnacle Path and the Midnight Society await use as potential allies or adversaries, while foes like Baron Samedi and Jack-A-Knives can provide a fair challenge for heroes who have a more difficult time confronting them directly.

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RAMON PEREZ, ART

born prematurely{dislikes overstaying his welcome} on june 4th 1973 {a loveable gemini} to immigrants of the great white north. ramón laid about for the first three months of his life un-named {this is why he responds quite quickly to "hey you!"} till his parents gave up on trying to agree and decided to make him a "junior." ramón for dad and krzysztof for mum. over time little ramón grew up (somewhat) and learned many things, like what an ottoman is. though his body has never quite caught up to the size of his head, luckily the size of his face caught up with the size of his nose allowing him to lead a somewhat normal life.

UKO SMITH, ART

Uko Smith, a fulltime freelancer that was born and bred in Washington, D.C., then fled to the Columbus College of Art & Design has a usable BFA degree in Illustration and a minor in fashion. Uko first gained recognition for his erotic pinup work and his sensual style. Collectors of his work have come to notice his distinctive use of linework and stylized realization. Uko has been featured in *Heavy Metal* magazine as the Featured Artist of the Month, *Julie Strain's Nightmare on Pinup St.* where he has four pieces displayed, *Jade Magazine*, *Marquis*, *Aphrodisia* and others. Other works of Uko's can be found in the world of sketchcards from DC Legacy where he diligently in full color finished 750 cards, Marvel Masterpieces, the Complete Avengers and maybe some upcoming Star Wars stuff. Currently, he produces self published works such as sketchbooks, prints, original works and tshirts along with a steady load of freelance work from various companies along with Green Ronin. He currently has taught fast sketch and figure drawing class and lives with his girlfriend Terra and a dog named Yuki. Also, you can catch him on the convention circuit somewhere in artist alley where he constantly panhandles.

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