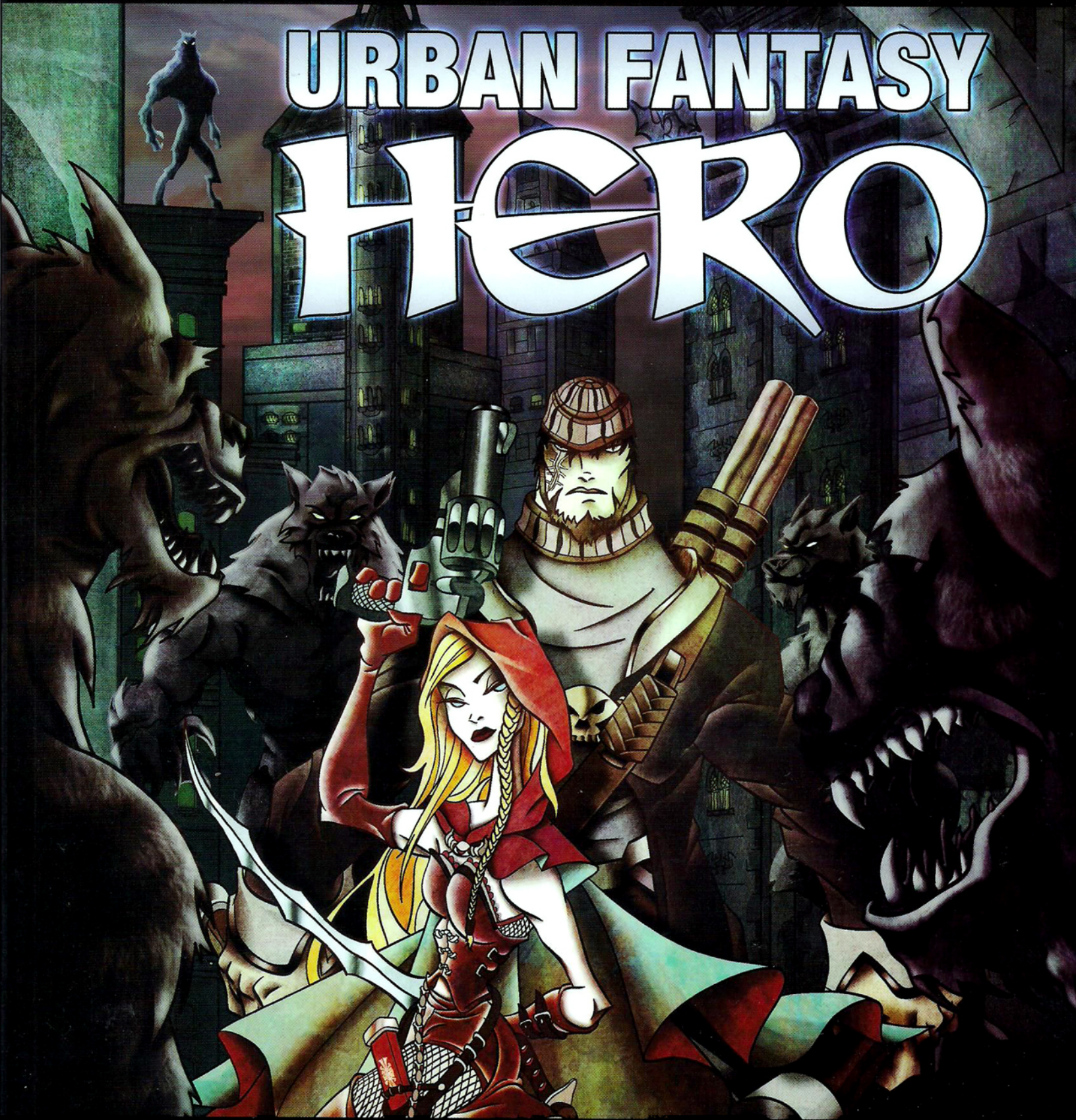


HERO
A genre book for **SYSTEM**
FIFTH EDITION

URBAN FANTASY HERO



STEVEN S. LONG

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A Genre Book for the HERO System

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INTRODUCTION



Fantasy is one of the most popular genres of speculative fiction — but not all Fantasy takes place in alternate worlds where wizards battle dragons, elves and dwarves go to war against armies of orcs, and bold adventurers delve in long-lost dungeons for hidden treasures. Some Fantasy stories examine the issues and dramatic potential raised by this question: “What would happen if magic and magical creatures existed in the real world?” Would professional spellcasters work for corporations, or would the use of magic be limited to a tiny group of “believers” that keeps its existence and powers secret? Would vampires prey on humanity, try to co-exist peacefully with it, or something else? Could someone use magic to affect the stock market, the balance of world power, an election, or a sporting event?

The answers to these questions, and countless more like them, depend on the individual storyteller, but they all revolve around the common theme of mixing magic (of some type) with the modern world of automobiles, computers, nine-to-five jobs, and fast food. It’s this theme that defines the genre known as *Urban Fantasy*.

Urban Fantasy Hero is your guide to this genre (or perhaps more accurately, subgenre of Fantasy) for gaming. It provides all the resources you need to use the *HERO System* to create Urban Fantasy characters and adventures just like those you’ve read about or seen on TV — or that you’ve dreamed up yourself to be nothing like anything that’s come before. Like Hero’s other genre books, you can think of it as a sort of “instruction manual” that shows you how to use the *HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* “toolkit” to create the best, most interesting characters and campaigns possible.

Chapter One, *Magic Meets The Mundane: The Urban Fantasy Genre*, reviews the genre as a whole, including its subgenres (such as Hidden History, Monster Hunting, and Open Magic), major elements and themes, and how it interacts with other genres and metagenres. If you don’t know much about the genre, or you’re looking for some inspiration for a character or campaign, read through this chapter and soon you’ll have all sorts of ideas.

Chapter Two, *The Wonders Of Creation: Urban Fantasy Character Creation*, covers the topic of creating characters for *Urban Fantasy Hero* games. It has two sections. The first includes Package Deals for Urban Fantasy characters. It includes a mix of Packages representing races, professions,

and backgrounds that often appear in Urban Fantasy stories. The second reviews the *HERO System* character creation elements like Skill and Powers, discussing how best to use them in the genre and providing expanded or optional rules for them when necessary.

Chapter Three, *Stories Of Magic And Wonder: Gamemastering Urban Fantasy Hero*, is for the GM’s eyes only. It provides general guidelines and advice for running Urban Fantasy games, ranging from deciding what type(s) of magic exist in the campaign (and how powerful and well-known they are), to campaigning with low-powered characters, to dealing with the existence of enchanted items. It also covers campaign style and tone, and how best to use the classic villains and NPCs of the genre.

Chapter Four *Magic In The Streets: A Urban Fantasy Sourcebook*, provides settings, scenarios, and other resources GMs and players can use in their Urban Fantasy games. They include:

- *Hudson City Shadows*, in which the PCs are part of the “Shadow World” of wizards and magical creatures that exists in hidden places within the metropolis of Hudson City;
- *Invasive Species*, in which the native mystical creatures of Reno, Nevada must cope with the arrival of newcomers;
- *The Sixth Sun*, in which the pagan gods of old have “remade” the world so that magic exists, wizards are commonplace, and mystical power has become as important in society as technology; and
- *Lines Of Contention*, in which a magus’s attempt to alter the ley lines in Hudson City could spell disaster.

Some of the settings include example characters, maps and detailed descriptions of specific areas the GM can use in his game.

Lastly, the book concludes with a Bibliography of Urban Fantasy literature and movies. It offers plenty of sources of inspiration for players and GMs alike.

So, make sure you have your crucifix and your best spells ready, and check the darkened alleys for lurking horrors — it’s time to brave the secret-haunted streets of *Urban Fantasy Hero*!



OTHER RESOURCES

In addition to *Urban Fantasy Hero*, Hero Games publishes many other books Urban Fantasy gamers may find useful. These include:

Fantasy Hero, which has detailed information on various Fantasy elements, including an extensive chapter on designing magic systems and spells. Various Fantasy Hero supplements, such as *The Fantasy Hero Grimoires* and *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders*, also include resources you can adapt to Urban Fantasy gaming.

The Ultimate Mystic provides detailed information about magic, characters that use it, and its role in gaming campaigns. It's invaluable for Urban Fantasy games and characters, and as such is referred to in many places throughout this book (particularly Chapter Two). It includes *HERO System* information for various types of real-world magic, such as Shamanism and Voodoo. (If your campaign involves a lot of the latter, you might also want to look at Hero Plus Adventure #17, *Strange Magics: Voodoo*.)

The HERO System Bestiary, a collection of 180 monsters and animals that will provide any GM with plenty of adversaries for the PCs. For example, it includes basic character sheets for vampires and zombies, two monsters often encountered in certain types of Urban Fantasy.

Dark Champions, the genre book for modern-day action-adventure. It contains all sorts of resources that are appropriate for many Urban Fantasy games. For example, if you want your Urban Fantasy PC to be a (former or current) cop, soldier, or spy, you won't find Package Deals for those professions in this book — you'll find them in *Dark Champions*. It also includes plenty of information on guns, body armor, and other modern-day equipment.

The HERO System Equipment Guide, a compendium of gear covering all time periods and genres (and which includes the equipment from *Dark Champions*). Whether your Urban Fantasy characters wield ancestral katanas hundreds of years old or the latest Uzi submachine guns, the *Equipment Guide* has the information they need to get the most of out of their gear.

CHAPTER

1



MAGIC MEETS
THE MUNDANE

THE URBAN
FANTASY GENRE

URBAN FANTASY



Magic... after all he'd seen, all he'd been through, he still found it difficult to believe in magic. Magic didn't make sense. Magic didn't follow the rules.

—Repairman Jack contemplates his recent experiences in F. Paul Wilson's *The Tomb*

The basics of Urban Fantasy are very easy to define, though their ramifications are far-reaching and broad. Simply put, Urban Fantasy stories bring magic, magical creatures, and other elements of Fantasy into the modern technological world.

But of course, it's not really quite as simple as that. Although accurate, that definition doesn't really convey the potential scope of the genre. Depending on how you want to define "magic" and "Fantasy elements," you can get everything from the "touches of magic in everyday life" stories of Charles de Lint to tales where wizards sell their services in public and dragons run megacorporations. Both are Urban Fantasy though they have almost nothing in common aside from the core element of "magic in the modern day."

Defining an Urban Fantasy setting is primarily a matter for the GM, and is covered in much greater detail in Chapter Three, but there are three key questions you should keep in mind as you review the other elements of the genre and consider what sorts of characters you want to play:

1. What types of magic (and other fantastical elements) exist in the setting?
2. How powerful is magic in the setting?
3. How commonplace (and well-known to the general public) is magic?

WHAT ISN'T URBAN FANTASY

"There's a true sense of mystery with magic," he says. "Like you're having a meaningful dialogue with something bigger than you — bigger than anything you can imagine. The tabloids are more like gossip."

—Charles de Lint, "The Invisibles"

As you think about what *is* Urban Fantasy, it may also help you to think about what *isn't* Urban Fantasy. Not every story that takes place in the modern-day world and features fantastical things qualifies as Urban Fantasy. Urban Fantasy tends to have more-or-less traditional Fantasy elements and character types embodied in the modern world (or sometimes transported into it), and not every fantastical thing that could exist in a gaming campaign qualifies.

For example, superheroes, even ones like Dr. Strange or Dr. Fate who use magic, are not Urban Fantasy. Characters in Urban Fantasy stories don't dress up in gaudy costumes, fight crime, or spout gaudy catch-phrases. And even in the highest of High Urban Fantasy settings, wizards' powers rarely equal those of superheroes. Certainly it's possible for Urban Fantasy characters to combat evil, but it's usually a more Fantasy type of evil (vampires, necromancers, and so on), not mask-wearing bank robbers or megalomaniacal would-be world conquerors.

Similarly, not all that's paranormal qualifies as Urban Fantasy. Bigfoot, the Grey aliens, weird psychic powers, strange government experiments gone awry, and the like are all a lot of fun — but though they may be fantastical, they're not the sort of mystic fantastical found in Urban Fantasy. There's no reason you can't mix "Weird Conspiracy" elements into an Urban Fantasy campaign (some of the example settings in Chapter Four do just that), but they're not, by themselves, Urban Fantasy.

OTHER URBAN FANTASY ELEMENTS

Besides the core element of “magic in the modern day world,” some of the other themes, tropes, and “bits” that define Urban Fantasy include:

A CHANGE IN PERSPECTIVE

“How can I be doing this?”...

“You’re finally beginning to accept a path you abandoned a long time ago,” the coyote answered.

—Joanne Walker starts to comprehend her magical powers in C. E. Murphy’s *Urban Shaman*

In Urban Fantasy stories where magic isn’t already known to and accepted by the protagonist at the start of the tale, there always comes a moment where he stops skeptically rejecting (or at least questioning) what’s happening to him and begins to accept the possibility that magic actually exists. In other words, his perspective changes. His eyes open to the greater World around him, the one that includes not just the cars and coffee shops he’s used to but the mysterious powers of magic.

Most Urban Fantasy gaming campaigns tend to feature characters who know about magic at the beginning of the game, but that’s not a requirement. A GM could easily start the campaign with some or all of the characters ignorant about the true nature of the world, then play out the revelation of magic in the first few gaming sessions. It won’t take long for the characters to become true believers, of course, but there’s some good role-playing to be had in the short road between ignorance and understanding.

BOOKSTORES

The Merry Dancers Old Book and Antique Emporium was situated on Bank Street[. It] was cluttered, certainly somewhat dusty, but not dirty. Leaning bookshelves suffed with fat, leather-bound volumes took up two walls, while the bay windows in front held a curious sampling of items the store offered[.] There were treasures to be found, indeed, but not for the fastidious.

—Charles de Lint, *Moonheart*

Because writers tend to like them, bookstores are a common feature in Urban Fantasy stories. The bookseller who knows a lot about everything (even mystical things) from his constant reading, and the store whose shelves may contain an old grimoire or book of lore if you just look long and hard enough with eyes properly opened, crop up in many a tale of modern wizardry. And after all, isn’t there something a little wondrous about being surrounded by so many stories and so much lore?



CLUBS AND BARS

Bars are sort of like vampires; they are at their best after dark.

—Anita Blake waxes philosophical in *Guilty Pleasures*

Again perhaps because they're so attractive to writers, Urban Fantasy characters tend to spend a lot of time in clubs, bars, and similar establishments (such as coffeehouses). These can range from ordinary places where the PCs and their friends (and perhaps enemies) recreate, to music clubs where musician characters play gigs, to special clubs open only to the denizens of the Mystic World. The latter might include clubs for specific types of beings (such as a "vampire bar" where vampires can dance the night away surrounded by mind-controlled "groupies" willing to offer up sips of their blood for the perverted thrill of it), or a bar where anyone who's connected with the Mystic World can go to hang out without having to worry about maintaining a facade of normalcy.

COMPUTERS

An odd notion came into my head. I had a sudden impression of some other place, a pixelated realm that lay somewhere in cyberspace — that mysterious borderland of electrons and data pulses that exists in between all the computers that make up the World Wide Web. I could almost see this deep forest of sentences and words secreted in a nexus of the Web, and as I did, I sensed some enormous entity swelling up out of it, a leviathan of impossible proportions that had no physical presence, but it did have a vast and incomprehensible soul.

—Charles de Lint, *Spirits In The Wires*

"Things involving the computer fill me with a childlike terror. Now, if it were a nice ogre or some such, I'd be more in my element."

—Giles expresses his opinion about computers on *Buffy, The Vampire Slayer*

Having become so omnipresent a part of modern life, computers tend to factor into Urban Fantasy stories. It might be as simple as the characters using one to research the latest haunting or monster they've encountered, or as complex as a demonic spirit who's taken control of a computer to wreak havoc... or even new types of faeries and goblins spawned by computers and the Internet.

DISCONTENT

"Curious, isn't it? ... All the magic people want to be normal, and all the normal people want magic. Nobody ever wants what they've already got and that's the story of the world."

—Charles de Lint, *Spirits In The Wires*

Although it's often quite subtle, a strain of discontent runs through much of Urban Fantasy. Many an Urban Fantasy character is dissatisfied with his life. Maybe he's not where he wants to be, or he's trapped in an unpleasant personal situa-

tion, or maybe he just doesn't quite fit into a mundane world that's lacking in magic. And it's his discontent that, directly or indirectly, drives him to discover the magic around himself, or which at least makes him more likely to accept it once he encounters it.

DREAMS AND DAYDREAMS

In the way of dreams, Sara felt that she had all the time in the world, and yet not a second to spare.

—Charles de Lint, *Moonheart*

As in many other types of Fantasy, dreams (and to a lesser extent, daydreams) often play an important role in Urban Fantasy stories. Through their dreams characters may glimpse the future, communicate with beings (beneficent or malevolent) from other planes of existence, receive premonitions of coming doom, or talk to their spirit animal guides.

In most cases dreams are simply plot devices — something the GM inserts into the game to keep the narrative moving forward and the PCs fully informed. But a character might have the power to call on his dreams for aid more or less on command. Abilities like that are typically built with some form of the Power *Clairement* and its *Only Through Dreams* (-1) Limitation (see page 44).

THE HIDDEN WORLD

With the rise of technology, the discipline of magic was totally forgotten, thought to be nothing more than myth and fantasy[.]

—Simon Hawke, *The Wizard Of Sunset Strip*

In some types of Urban Fantasy, magic's right out there in the open, known to all, practiced by many, and a part of daily life. However, that's not the situation in most Urban Fantasy stories. In them the world seems pretty much exactly like the real world... at least on the surface. Magic exists, but it's known to a very small group of people — a "hidden world" of wizards, vampires, and other mystics who live in the shadows of regular society. The denizens of this world often go to great lengths to keep the secrets of magic hidden, either to maintain their own power or for reasons of self-preservation. The *Hidden History* subgenre discussed below is premised largely on this view of magic, as are many Low Urban Fantasy games.

MUSIC

"I remember thinking there's a magic about her, too, but now I know it's in the music she calls up from that blue fiddle of hers, the same kind of magic any good musician can wake from an instrument. It takes you away."

—Charles de Lint, "Seven For A Secret"

He sat perched atop the highest point on Monaghie Drive, playing his guitar and watching the sound form shapes in the air. When his music was light and airy, the shapes were coruscating spear points that darted playfully, some-



times meshing in groups to form brief grids that sparkled in the clear air above the valley. When his music was moody, the shapes were nebulous things that coalesced in angry-looking cloud patterns of dark browns and brick reds.

—Stephen Boyett, *Prodigy*

Music is a common thread running throughout many Urban Fantasy stories. Harking back to the ancient rhythms of Pan's pipes, the shaman's drum, and the bard's harping, it evokes the magic nearly everyone has felt a time or two when listening to or playing music. As a result, many Urban Fantasy characters are musicians, instrument-makers, singers, or at least musically talented in some way. Some cast their spells through music, either consciously or subconsciously, and sometimes going to a concert in an Urban Fantasy world can be a dangerous thing to do!

THE MYSTIC CALENDAR

In many Urban Fantasy settings, dates of mystic significance govern spellcasting, arcane events, the restfulness/restlessness of the dead, and other important aspects of occult reality. Times of importance may be drawn from the traditional Western zodiac, other zodiacs, days devoted to specific saints, the Celtic calendar, or two or more of these schemes. The *Window Of Opportunity* Limitation, described on page 136 of *Fantasy Hero*, can be used for spells and other abilities that only work at certain times.

NATIVE PEOPLES AND ETHNIC HERITAGE

She smiles as I drop a pair of quarters in her palm. "If this were a fairy tale," she says, "you'd have just guaranteed yourself some unexpected help later on in the story." ... "Maybe a random act of kindness is magic enough, in its own small way. Maybe I owe you now and I'll have to come to you if ever you need my help."

—Charles de Lint, "Shining Nowhere But In The Dark"

The magics and monsters of Urban Fantasy aren't those of the "generic" Fantasy seen in typical roleplaying games — treasure-hoarding dragons, tribes of cruel orcs, rapacious griffins, and so on. Instead they're often taken from the native peoples and ethnic heritages of the real world — though the author may expand on or change them a bit for dramatic purposes. Just about any cultural background could form the basis of an Urban Fantasy story (typically because the hero and/or the villain belong to or are descended from that culture), but two cultures in particular tend to appear in Urban Fantasy stories.

First, Celtic legends and lore, particularly the faerie-folk, appear in many Urban Fantasy stories. Often claiming to have "been brought over" or "come with" Irish immigrants in years past, these pixies, banshees, leprechauns, sprites, elves, phoukas, and other faeries have made themselves at home in America. Stories involving them may feature a

modern take on old legends (such as the need for a mortal helper to win a faerie war in Emma Bull's *War For The Oaks*), a conflict between "immigrant" beings and "native" ones, or simply add flavor to an Urban Fantasy setting. Celtic lore is flavorful, fun, and relatively well-known to readers (and gamers), making it an ideal choice for many campaigns.

But "imported" mystical beings aren't the only option. American Indian lore and beings often show up in Urban Fantasy as well — rather than explain how creatures from some other land made their way to America, the author (or GM) uses what America already has to offer. This has several potential benefits. First, it often feels less "forced" than using creatures and legends from Europe, Africa, or Asia. Second, there are so many different American Indian tribes, with such diverse stories and bodies of myth, that it's often possible to find a creature or tale to fit just about any setting or story you have in mind. Third, where you can't find what you want, it does less violence to the whole to just make something up, since American Indian legends aren't usually as thorough, consistent, and/or well-recorded as the legends of people with extensive written traditions.

SECRET WARS

"You have seen one of them, one of their forms. That is what seeks dominion over every natural thing in this place. We of the Seelie Court are capricious, and not always well-disposed toward humankind. But would you hand this city over to the likes of what you saw tonight? That is the Unseelie Court. If we fall, every park, every boulevard tree, every grassy lawn would be their dwelling place."

—Phouka explains the facts of Urban Fantasy life to Eddi McCandry in Emma Bull's *War For The Oaks*



One trope that frequently drives Urban Fantasy stories is a "war in the shadows" between two or more mystic groups. Typical examples include Seelie Court ("good") faeries versus Unseelie Court ("evil") faeries, vampires versus werewolves, one vampire clan versus another, or one coven of spellcasters against another. See the *Monster Warfare* subgenre discussion, below, for more information.

TOTEMS AND SPIRIT GUIDES

"She comes," Ha'kan'ta said.

"She...?"

"My totem," Ha'kan'ta said.

She pointed westward and he followed the direction she'd indicated with his gaze, seeing a golden thread flow from her finger, a bright glitter against the black and grey stones and the stark white snow. He might have become lost, following that thread, except that he then became aware that there was something there.

It was enormous. A great black shape with a wingspread so wide it could not be measured except that it seemed to fill the entire sky. Central in that spread of dark feathers were two watchful eyes, blacker still and glittering. The monstrous shape neither approached nor threatened. It merely regarded him unmovingly, spearing him with that intense gaze[.]

—Kieran Foy encounters his totem, Raven, for the first time in Charles de Lint's *Moonheart*

The concept of the totem or spirit guide — a mystic entity that watches over, advises, and guides a character through life — appears in many Urban Fantasy stories, particularly those featuring lore from American Indians or shamanic peoples. In many cases a character's totem relates to his personality or abilities: a clever person's totem is Raven or Coyote; a big, burly warrior has Bear; a beautiful person has Hummingbird. But it can be fun to go against type as well, giving a character a totem that at first doesn't make sense. That can emphasize his potential to become more than he is or to broaden his horizons.

In game terms there's no one way to "buy" a totem for a character. A totem may give a character certain abilities, function as the special effect for some Skill Levels (based on the clever advice it gives), or provide the character with a Follower (a wise but otherwise mostly mundane version of itself, perhaps its earthly "avatar"). See *Shamanism*, page 167 for more information and ideas.

VAMPIRES AND WEREWOLVES

"I don't like vampires. I'm going to take a stand and say they're not good."

—Xander displays wisdom on *Buffy, The Vampire Slayer*

Lycanthropes are stronger and faster than humans. No mind tricks, no sleight of hand, they are just better.

—Anita Blake encounters some wererats in *Guilty Pleasures*

Among the many mystical creatures that appear in Urban Fantasy, two — vampires and werewolves — are particularly common. Vampires especially, with their sophisticated danger and smoldering sexuality, crop up again and again. They range from the traditional blood-sucker who can't abide the sunlight, sleeps in a coffin, and can change into mist or bat form, to "realistic" depictions that explain vampirism as a separate species, the result of a virus that infects humans, or the like. Sometimes they're totally evil (or at least a dangerous threat to humanity), sometimes bestial, sometimes they run the same range of emotions and personality types as ordinary humans. Whatever type of vampire you want, you can find it somewhere in Urban Fantasy.

Werewolves and other lycanthropes tend to be a little more predictable, since their animal form dictates, to a greater or lesser extent, their personalities and abilities. Werewolves are powerful, proud, and run in packs. Wererats are sneaky, tricky, and vicious. Wererats are clever. Just pick whatever type of animal fills the role you have in mind for the character, give it a human form, and you're ready to go.

You can find character sheets for vampires and many types of lycanthropes in *The HERO System Bestiary*. For Urban Fantasy settings that deviate from the "traditional" depiction of these creatures, you may need to adapt the sheets accordingly. For example, to create a "realistic" vampire you might want to strip away the more fantastic abilities (like shapechanging) and restrictions (such as an allergy to sunlight), creating a being who's more like a fast, strong human who needs to drink blood to survive than a mystic monster.

WITCHES

"I know you! You're that backwoods conjure-hag with the gingerbread fetish."

"I know you, too. Not that borrowed skin you wear — the real you. I sensed who you were the moment you woke up that ridiculous chicken hut of yours. Baba Yaga."

—Frau Totenkinder and Baba Yaga confront one another during the Battle of Fabletown in *Fables*

Apprehending unlicensed and black-art witches was my usual line of work, as it takes a witch to catch a witch.

—Rachel Morgan goes to work in *Dead Witch Walking*

Witches and witchcraft crop up frequently in Urban Fantasy. Not only do they deliciously embody the wickedness so often depicted in childhood fairy tales and the likes of *The Wizard Of Oz*, they can just as easily be good gals, sexy seductresses, or clever master villains. As a style of magic, witchcraft, with its bubbling cauldrons, gross ingredients, love-charms, and hexes provides both great visuals and great ways to motivate PCs. After all, what hero worthy of the name wouldn't want to help some innocent person lift a black magic curse cast on him by an evil witch?



URBAN FANTASY SUBGENRES



Like mainstream Fantasy, Science Fiction, and other major genres, Urban Fantasy isn't a single type of storytelling. It has many "subgenres," each sharing the common features of the overall genre (see above), but focusing on (or allowing for) different types of adventure.

The major issues that define any Urban Fantasy setting — the types, power, and commonality of magic — likewise help to define the different subgenres. Generally speaking they can be categorized as "low" Urban Fantasy (in which magic is low-powered, hard to cast, and/or often hidden) and "high" Urban Fantasy (in which magic is powerful, flashy, easy to cast, and/or known to the public).

HIDDEN HISTORY

Most people in the gambling business thought Siegel was a megalomaniac to build a grossly expensive luxury hotel and casino in the desert seven miles south of Las Vegas — but Leon, to his alarm, saw the purpose behind the castle.

Gambling had been legalized in Nevada in 1931, the same year that work was begun on Hoover Dam, and by 1935 the dam was completed, and Lake Mead, the largest man-made body of water in the world, had filled the deep valleys behind it. ... The Flamingo, as Siegel named his hotel, was a castle in the wasteland with a lot of tamed water nearby.

And the Flamingo was almost insanely grand, with transplanted palms and thick marble walls and expensive paneling and a gigantic pool and an individual sewer line for each of its ninety-two rooms — but Leon understood that it was a totem of its founder, and therefore had to be as physically perfect as the founder.

Leon now knew why Siegel had stolen the Tower card: based on the Tower of Babel, it symbolized foolishly prideful ambition, but it was not only a warning against such a potentially bankrupt course but also a means to it. And if it were reversed, displayed upside-down, it was somewhat qualified; the doomful aspects of it were a little more remote.

Reversed, it could permit a King to build an intimidating castle, and keep it.

—Georges Leon contemplates the secret history of Las Vegas in Tim Powers's *Last Call*

One of the most intriguing of the "low" Urban Fantasy subgenres is *Hidden History*. In Hidden History stories, the world is secretly a magical place, where people with arcane perceptions or abilities work their will in the shadows to try to manipulate events to benefit themselves. Often the members of this "occult underworld" have been affecting events from behind the scenes for decades, centuries, or longer — hence "hidden history," since the true story of how the world's gotten to be the way it is today involves facts known only to a few sages.

HIDDEN HISTORY ELEMENTS

Some of the elements that tend to define the Hidden History sub-genre include:

History Gone Wrong: Often in Hidden History stories, the plot is driven by the fact that there's more to some major historical event than most people know. The event was orchestrated to have mystic significance (or possibly became significant by itself somehow). The desired end results of the event are about to take place, with negative consequences for the world. The heroes somehow get involved and have to stop it. For example, the explosion of the first atomic bomb was really a mystic ritual orchestrated by Robert Oppenheimer, who was a wizard. It was intended to give him unprecedented mystical power, but it didn't quite work as expected. Now his heirs (either literally, or figuratively in the form of apprentices) want to re-create the event to "seal the breach" and obtain for themselves the vast arcane power Oppenheimer sought. Unless the heroes stop them, they'll detonate a nuke in a major city... and then use their mystic might to take over the world behind the scenes.

It's No Coincidence: In Hidden History stories (and also in some types of Low Urban Fantasy stories, see below), what seem to be coincidences rarely are. Any significant person or event is somehow related to something else — it's not a coincidence, it's deliberate correspondence. If a PC was born on the same day as an important NPC, they're linked in some way. If one person shares a distinctive feature (such as fiery red hair) with someone else, the two of them relate to one another somehow. And if two people show up in the same place at the same time to do the same thing, it's not dumb luck — they're meant to be together somehow, whether as friends or adversaries.



Occult Conspiracy: Within the Mystic World of a Hidden History setting there are often multiple factions or “players” competing with one another for power, prestige, or occult influence. For example, two or three powerful wizards might all be trying to perform a ritual to take control of the power in the ley lines running through Chicago... but only the one who’s at the top of the Sears Tower with Al Capone’s Bible at midnight on May Eve will succeed. For months or years in advance the wizards manipulate people and events to try to obtain these items, block their rivals, and ensure a clear path to the time and place where the spell will be cast. In another setting, the Freemasons have mystic powers that they use to keep the American government safe from occult threats. Their “enforcement arm” is the Knights Templar, and opposing them are other occult organizations who want to take over Washington, D.C. for their own purposes.

Ritual Magic: The magic in Hidden History tends to be the very opposite of flashy — even compared to the typical Low Urban Fantasy (see below) it’s subtle. Spells often take the form of elaborate rituals that can only be performed at certain places and certain times with specific people or props. Wizards may spend decades preparing to cast one

or waiting “for the stars to come right” (which, in game terms, is a great way to generate plots and put pressure on the PCs to act... if they don’t stop the villain in time, they won’t have another chance!). The spells themselves may be fairly powerful (in their own way), but it’s not a power that’s obvious to the mundane world.

HIDDEN HISTORY CAMPAIGNS

At best, Hidden History characters are Standard Heroic characters, with 75 Base Points plus up to 75 Character Points from Disadvantages. But most of them aren’t even that powerful; they’re basically just ordinary people with specialized knowledge. They might go as low as Skilled Normal (25 Base Points plus up to 25 points from Disadvantages) or Standard Normal (0 + 25 points). Depending on how the campaign’s magic system works, lower-powered characters might receive a separate allotment of points to buy spells.

Regardless of the starting point total, Hidden History characters must follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule (*i.e.*, they don’t get any Disadvantage points because of this). They get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for “free,” without paying Character Points for it. If they want a spell, enchanted item, or some unique piece of equipment, they may have to pay Character Points for it.

LOW URBAN FANTASY

"It's funny how your whole life can change because of the smallest thing. Like someone walking in through the door of your office. ... Everything still looks the same, but now I feel like the most common object has a secret history that most people can't see. The difference between them and me is, they don't even think about it."

—Charles de Lint,
"If I Close My Eyes Forever"

"Low Urban Fantasy" is a sort of catch-all category for Urban Fantasy campaigns at the lower end of the magical spectrum. Overall they tend to be more "realistic" than most types of Urban Fantasy campaigns, with far less emphasis on the fantastic than in, say, Monster Hunting or Open Magic. In fact, in some of them magic's barely there at all. In others, what magic does exist tends to be low-powered (at best), difficult (and perhaps dangerous) to cast, and difficult to perceive (if not totally invisible) to those who aren't "attuned" to the wondrous.

LOW URBAN FANTASY ELEMENTS

Besides the "low magic" described above, some of the elements that tend to define the Low Urban Fantasy sub-genre include:

Creatures Few And Far Between: In a Low Urban Fantasy setting, there may be few mystical creatures — or none at all. The vampires, werewolves, and faeries found in other campaigns are far too overt for this type of tale. Any creatures that *do* exist tend to "blend in": either they can make themselves look like human, or they can hide so well among people that no one ever knows they're there... unless he's got "the sight" and knows where to look.

The Magic Of The Mundane: In the lowest of Low Urban Fantasy, there may be nothing that remotely resembles spellcasting, grimoires, or familiars. Instead, the "magic" involved is the magic inherent in everyday experiences, for those who have the wisdom and patience to see them: the calm of a sunset; the warmth of a friendly touch; the kindhearted attention of a friend; the pleasure of a chance encounter with a compatible soul one's never met before. These things aren't "magic" in the sense that term's used in most RPG books (including this one), but it can definitely lead to some intense and intriguing roleplaying.

Similarly, in a Low Urban Fantasy story a character may encounter someone who may or may not be a magical being. Odd actions, sly comments, and other strangeness on the part of that person may make the character doubt what's real and what's fantasy, and in the end he's often left without any firm proof one way or another.

LOW URBAN FANTASY CAMPAIGNS

At best, Low Urban Fantasy characters are Standard Heroic characters, with 75 Base Points plus up to 75 Character Points from Disadvantages... but it's a rare character who becomes even that powerful. Most are pretty much ordinary people, often built on as little as Skilled Normal (25 Base Points plus up to 25 points from Disadvantages) or Standard Normal (0 + 25 points) point totals. Depending on how the campaign's magic system works, characters might receive a separate allotment of points to buy spells.

Regardless of the starting point total, Low Urban Fantasy characters must follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule (*i.e.*, they don't get any Disadvantage points because of this). They get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for "free," without paying Character Points for it. If they want a spell, enchanted item, or some unique piece of equipment, they may have to pay Character Points for it.



MONSTER HUNTERS

“Come on, we fight monsters, this is what we do. They show up, they scare us, I beat them up, and they go away.”

—Buffy explains the way things work on Buffy, *The Vampire Slayer*

Harry Dresden is the best at what he does. [W]hen the Chicago P.D. has a case that transcends mortal creativity or capability, they come to him for answers. For the “everyday” world is actually full of strange and magical things — and most of them don’t play well with humans. That’s where Harry comes in. Takes a wizard to catch a — well, whatever.

—from the back cover of *Storm Front*

Technically a cross between Urban Fantasy and Dark Champions, a Monster Hunter campaign (sometimes known as an “Occult Investigators” game) pits the PCs against various sorts of mystic threats: vampires; werewolves; evil sorcerers; demons; curses run amok; and more. The heroes fight to protect society from a menace most people don’t even believe in, and often the only thanks they get is to be shunned by an ignorant populace.

MONSTER HUNTERS ELEMENTS

In addition to the central theme of “fighting against malign mysticism,” the following conventions tend to define the Monster Hunters subgenre:

Comedy: There’s usually a strong note of comedy running through Monster Hunter campaigns, or at least sardonic commentary. After all, when one faces death and horror on a regular basis, and knows things Man Was Not Meant To Know, there’s gotta be a safety valve, right?

Disbelief: If they don’t hide their activities from the public (usually for the public’s safety), occult investigators have to cope with skepticism and disbelief constantly. Even the people who come to hire them, or who provide them with clues, don’t seem to accept what they do and how they do it at face value. The only ones who believe in them tend to be the mystic adversaries they fight.

Not Your Run-Of-The-Mill Action Heroes: While in many Monster Hunter games the PCs are just ordinary (albeit well-trained and -equipped) characters fighting decidedly extraordinary menaces, in some campaigns the PCs tend to be as unusual as the beings they fight. One or more of them may be a “chosen one” fated to fulfill some important destiny, the descendant of an ancient line of monster hunters, a person who has sorcerous powers of his own that he uses for Good instead of Evil, or the like. This may allow PCs to buy abilities (such as Danger Sense) that an “ordinary” human wouldn’t have.

Prophecy: Prophecies of various sorts crop up frequently in Monster Hunter campaigns. The PCs are fated to protect the world from a specific

menace. A few lines in an ancient tome foretell the coming of the latest threat the PCs have to defeat. Sensitive mystics vaguely warn the PCs of dangers to come later in the scenario. Many of these prophecies seem nonsensical or contradictory at first; it’s only as the story unfolds that the PCs can understand their full significance.

MONSTER HUNTERS CAMPAIGNS

In most cases, Monster Hunter characters are Standard Heroic characters, with 75 Base Points plus up to 75 Character Points from Disadvantages. In campaigns where the GM wants the PCs themselves to have mystic powers (or the like), he may prefer to start them as Powerful or Very Powerful Heroic characters (100 + 100 and 125 + 125 points, respectively), or even as Superheroic characters.

Regardless of the starting point total, Monster Hunter characters usually must follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule (*i.e.*, they don’t get any Disadvantage points because of this). They get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for “free,” without paying Character Points for it (though the GM may use the Resource Points rules from *Dark Champions* to keep characters from abusing this rule). If they want a unique piece of equipment — such as an enchanted weapon of some sort — they may have to pay Character Points for it.

MONSTER WARFARE

“Whether you like it or not, you’re in the middle of a war that has been raging for the better part of a thousand years. A blood feud between vampires and lycans — werewolves.”

—the vampiress Selene explains what’s really going on in *Underworld*

A Monster Warfare campaign is one built primarily around the “secret war” element described above. Two or more groups in the Mystic World are fighting for some reason — an ancient feud, the right to control a particular city or hunting ground, inbred racial hatred, Good versus Evil — and the PCs get involved. Usually the two groups are non-human creatures (hence the word “Monster”), but they don’t necessarily have to be. A campaign could, for example, revolve around the conflicts of various “lodges” or “orders” of magicians who compete for power, prestige, and pride.

In some Warfare campaigns the PCs are members of one side or the other — for example, they’re vampires in a vampires-versus-wererats war. In other cases they’re humans (ordinary or otherwise) who get sucked into the conflict somehow. They may see something they weren’t supposed to, or one of the combatants may need their help to win. Whatever the reason, they soon find themselves embroiled in a life-or-death battle in a Mystic World they may never have been aware of before.

VAMPIRE ROMANCE

"Buffy, when I said you could slay vampires and have a social life, I didn't mean at the same time!"

—Giles lays down the law for Buffy on *Buffy, The Vampire Slayer*

One relatively recent development in the Urban Fantasy genre is the rise of the *Vampire Romance* subgenre. In Vampire Romance, the protagonist is a human female who becomes romantically and/or sexually involved with a vampire. The stories mix many of the tropes of romance novels with the dark sexuality of the vampire, other exotic elements of Fantasy, and usually a touch of danger (either something external the two lovers must fight, or the potential of some authority discovering the existence of the illicit relationship).

Although not really suitable for gaming as a subgenre, Vampire Romance can make for an interesting subplot in a campaign. One of the PCs could find himself attracted to a vampire (or some other renegade inhabitant of the Mystic World) and roleplay the evolution of the relationship (whatever that may be). Inevitably this subplot will become a major plot at some point as the relationship exposes the characters to new enemies, makes them the favorite "human contacts" of vampire-dom, or the like.

MONSTER WARFARE ELEMENTS

Besides the central theme of a Mystic World conflict, some of the elements that tend to define the Monster Warfare sub-genre include:

Factions: While most Mystic World wars ultimately come down to Side A versus Side B (and possibly Sides C, D, and E, if you want to get really complicated), within each side there often exist factions. The war may have to be fought internally as well as externally if a given side is to survive — the doubters, the peaceniks, and those who would turn the conflict to their own ends have to be stopped lest they ruin the war effort.

Feuds: Ancient feuds are often an element in Monster Warfare. Given the tremendous lifespans some magical creatures have, these feuds could have been going on for thousands or tens of thousands of years. In some cases, the root cause of the feud has long been forgotten, replaced by the simple (and tragic) imperative of "they're the enemy, we've always fought against them."

Forbidden Romance: In campaigns where the PCs are members of the groups doing the fighting, it's possible they may not all fight for the same side. Instead a group of heroes could somehow contain at least one person from the enemy force... and just like in *Romeo And Juliet*, inevitably love blossoms between that person and one of his enemies. This may somehow lead to reconciliation and an end to the war... or it may come to tragedy and leave everyone even more bitter than before.

Picking A Side: In some Monster Warfare stories, the question of which side to support plagues the PCs. Both sides want their help, and both are willing to do whatever they must to get it. This can range from threats, to bribes, to anything else the GM can think of. The PCs have to try to figure out which is the "right" side to join, or else live with the consequences of helping evil to triumph.

MONSTER WARFARE CAMPAIGNS

In most cases, Monster Warfare characters are pretty tough — at least Standard Heroic characters, with 75 Base Points plus up to 75 Character Points from Disadvantages. If the PCs are monsters themselves, they may need a lot more points than that (look at the Werewolf and Vampire character sheets in *The HERO System Bestiary* for examples of how expensive the "traditional" forms of those monsters can get). The GM might even want them to be built as Superheroic characters.

Monster Warfare PCs may or may not have to follow Normal Characteristic Guidelines as a campaign ground rule — it depends on what type of beings they are and the nature of the campaign. In either case, they typically get their equipment (or at least standard equipment) for "free," without paying Character Points for it (though the GM may use the Resource Points rules from *Dark Champions* to keep characters from abusing this rule). If they want a unique piece of equipment — such as an enchanted weapon of some sort — they may have to pay Character Points for it.

OPEN MAGIC

The sky was full of broomsticks and the police were going nuts trying to handle the traffic. ... I edged my battered pre-war Chevy past a huge 200-dragonpower Lincoln with sky-blue handle, polyethylene straw, and blatting radio. It sneered at me, but I got to the vacant rack first. Dismounting, I pocketed the runekey[.]

—werewolf Steve Matuchek attends the homecoming game between Trismegistus University and Albertus Magnus University in Poul Anderson's "Operation Salamander"

Lovecraft: *Magic is the way of the future. Wouldn't want to buck the future, would you Bradbury?*

Bradbury: *If this is the future, I'll take vanilla.*

—Private eye H.P. "Phil" Lovecraft clues in Det. Bradbury to the way things are in *Cast A Deadly Spell*

Also known as "High Urban Fantasy," Open Magic campaigns take place in settings where magic is powerful, usually easy to cast, and most importantly known to and accepted by the public. In these games, magic and technology are both an important part of society. The average person may own devices that work via magic rather than electricity, or even know a few simple spells to make daily life easier. Magic is openly taught in universities, and a well-trained, talented spellcaster can become immensely powerful.

The specifics of an Open Magic campaign can vary wildly. Possible examples include: the PCs are soldiers or mercenaries in a world where the military uses magic as much as firearms; the PCs are spies, using their spells to ferret out the enemy's secrets; the PCs are private eyes and "freelance troubleshooters" working the spell-haunted mean streets; the PCs are law enforcement officers employed by the Bureau of Occult Investigation to look into (and stop) mystic menaces threatening the public; the PCs are a gang of thieves who use magic to commit elaborate "caper" thefts. The possibilities are limited only by the GM's imagination and the players' willingness to go along.

OPEN MAGIC ELEMENTS

Besides the central theme of magic being powerful and well-known, some of the elements that tend to define the Monster Warfare sub-genre include:

Magic As Analogy: Sometimes Open Magic Urban Fantasy uses magic, or some element of the fantastic, as an analogy for something in the real world, or to satirically mock real-world conventions. For example, a problem with kids sniffing pixie dust mirrors real-world drug abuse; limited supplies of mana to cast spells with represent oil (or, more broadly, energy); and conflicts between immigrant vampires and American Indian animal-men stand



in for debates on immigration policy. Too much of this, or too heavy-handed a use of it, tends to spoil a gaming campaign, but a little adds depth and spice.

Magic Meets Technology: In many Open Magic stories, the plot turns, at least in part, on how magic interacts with technology. A poorly-cast spell turns a computer into a doomsday weapon. An understanding of the scientific laws underlying magic allows a spellcaster to corral a renegade elemental. Wizards' magic often short-circuits technology, causing problems for the PCs when they can't get their car to start. Arcane shields can

stop any spell... but not mundane bullets. Depending on the situation, the results can be exciting, comic, or tragic.

Traditional Fantasy Elements: With the amount and power of magic raised to its highest level in Urban Fantasy, Open Magic games often include "traditional" Fantasy elements not found in the other subgenres. For example, Elves, Dwarves, Centaurs, and Orcs might be acceptable races for PCs, dragons might hoard bearer bonds and stock certificates instead of gold, and Arabic nations might use djinnis against their enemies.



MIXING GENRES

OTHER SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Pages 35-43 of *Champions* contain advice on applying meta-genres to superhero campaigns. Much of that advice is general, and could certainly work in *Urban Fantasy Hero* campaigns as well. You might also want to look at pages 17-19 of *Star Hero*, pages 17-19 of *Ninja Hero*, and pages 19-22 of *Fantasy Hero*, pages 17-19 of *Dark Champions*, pages 28-32 of *Pulp Hero*, and pages 18-19 of *Post-Apocalyptic Hero*.

Beyond “pure” expressions of the Urban Fantasy genre there are many types of stories (and game campaigns) involving the use of meta-genres, or which combine *Urban Fantasy Hero* and some other genre.

META-GENRES

A *meta-genre* is a style or theme of storytelling/game play/campaign conception that could apply to any genre. Comedy, horror, romance, and tragedy are all meta-genres, whereas Fantasy, Science Fiction, and Western are genres. Thus, you could have a horror Western, or horror Science Fiction, or horror Fantasy — horror isn’t a genre, it’s a *meta-genre*. A meta-genre can apply to an entire campaign, or just to specific adventures or story arcs within an otherwise normal *Urban Fantasy Hero* game.

In most cases, a campaign’s or scenario’s meta-genre evokes (or is intended to evoke) a particular mood in the characters: dread, compassion, suspense, humor. The GM should do his best to enhance the mood by encouraging players to have their characters engage in *dramatically appropriate actions* — such as deliberately putting them in situations where they’ll look ridiculous in a Comedic Action campaign. In some cases, this may involve granting Skill Roll bonuses (or the like) for actions that suit or improve the mood; in others it may mean giving the players advance warning about what’s expected and letting them concoct a proper response.

Comedy

The cheering squad paraded out onto the field. Their instruments wove through an elaborate aerial maneuver, drumming and tootling, as they made the traditional march up to the Campus Queen. I’m told it’s also traditional that she ride forth on a unicorn to meet them, but for some reason that was omitted this year.

—halftime at the homecoming game between Trismegistus University and Albertus Magnus University in Poul Anderson’s “Operation Salamander”

Comedy and whimsy definitely have their place in Urban Fantasy. At its most base level, Comedic Fantasy spoofs or parodies the serious elements of Urban Fantasy, such as by making the wise shaman into a bumbling Magic University professor. More sophisticated forms of Comedic Urban Fantasy

use the elements and tropes of the genre to create and exploit unique comedic situations. Usually this involves one of two things: a spell that goes awry, and the frantic efforts to fix things (*a la* Disney’s “The Sorcerer’s Apprentice”); or characters who have to obtain something valuable, leading to humorous encounters with funny monsters and the like. This form of Comedic Fantasy has more “legs” for gaming, but still usually works better for short-term games rather than as a full-fledged campaign.

In a gaming context, the GM can often rely on the help of the players to establish a comedic (or at least whimsical) mood. Players rarely do quite what the GM expects them to, and if placed in a ridiculous or absurd situation, frequently just dig themselves in deeper, with hilarious results. The trick to this is not to always use the PCs as fall guys, patsies, or the butt of jokes; no one likes to be made fun of all the time. Instead, put them in the driver’s seat sometimes, letting them take advantage of the other guy’s pratfalls.

Just about any type of character works for Comedic Fantasy, though such characters should rarely, if ever, be powerful or competent. Often the characters are in some way “misfits” in the Mystic World who have to prove that they’re just as good as everyone else.

Horror

Horror and Urban Fantasy go together so well it’s often hard to tell where one begins and the other ends. Like Urban Fantasy, many Horror stories involve mystic elements — dark occult secrets, haunted houses, vampires and other monsters, hidden terrors, curses, ancient magics gone wrong — in a “real world” modern-day setting. However, there are some key differences that set the two apart.

First, Horror often depends on ignorance — people tend to fear the unknown, so Horror stories often place characters in situations where they’re unaware of the true facts. But Urban Fantasy characters tend to be knowledgeable, and even if they don’t know a specific piece of information they know where to go (or who to talk to) to get it. And unlike in Horror, learning more is rarely harmful; ignorance is not bliss in Urban Fantasy.

Second, Horror also depends on powerlessness — characters in a Horror story lack the confidence and/or means to strike back at that which terrifies them (at least at first). But Urban Fantasy characters are often quite powerful, wielding magics and enchanted items that ordinary people lack. They also tend to be proactive in many ways, whereas Horror protagonists are

generally more reactive.

But despite that, it is possible to mix some Horror into your Urban Fantasy if you're so inclined. It's difficult to achieve Horror effects in a gaming context, with the lights on and plenty of snacks at hand, but it is possible. Even the toughest of *Urban Fantasy Hero* characters becomes less cocksure when stripped of his spells and talismans and put in a deadly situation he cannot control.

Mystery

"Someone killed two people with sorcery last night, Dresden. I think it was you. And when I find how you did it and can trace it back to you, don't think you're going to live long enough to cast the same spell at me."

—Harry Dresden gets in even more trouble in *Storm Front*

Mystery is a very suitable meta-genres for *Urban Fantasy Hero*. The "occult investigator" or "mystic troubleshooter" is a staple of the genre, as is the story of having to figure out who used magic to commit a crime or achieve some malign objective. It's even possible to run a mystery-oriented *Urban Fantasy Hero* campaign. In this sort of game, the PCs are all occult investigators (possibly "private eyes," possibly members of the police force) confronted with a new magical mystery every scenario. This sort of campaign tends to require a lot of work on the part of the GM. First, he has to concoct a new, plausible mystery for each game, and that can be difficult — despite the plethora of mystery novels on bookstore shelves, good, solid mysteries that work as gaming adventures aren't easy to come by. Among the things the GM needs to know (and be prepared to reveal to the PCs at the appropriate time) are:

- the identity of the criminal, and his motives for committing the crime
- the identities of other suspects, and their possible motives
- the identity of the victim (and any other relevant details about him, such as his personal history, job, family, and the like)
- how and when the crime occurred
- what type of magic was used, and the consequences of its use
- what happened when the criminal committed the crime, and what (if anything) he did afterwards
- other events that might affect the characters' ability to gather and correctly analyze the clues

Second, unlike a novelist, who can have a character suddenly realize the significance of a clue, the GM doesn't control the protagonists in his game (the PCs). This may lead to situations where (a) all of the players overlook a clue, or the significance of a clue, (b) the GM has to make a clue so obvious that there's no suspense, and/or (c) the players end up using a lot of die rolls to gather and analyze information, rather than solving the mystery on their own (often with the entirely fair, but

game-wrecking, excuse that "my character is better at these things than I would be"). The GM has to deftly manage the release of information, dropping (sometimes blatant) hints to the players ("What Bob just suggested really seems to make sense to you"), the use of die rolls, and the pacing of the story to keep the suspense alive and prevent the players from reaching the right conclusion too early or too late.

Romance

Romance as a meta-genre refers to campaigns or storylines involving, or focusing on, the romantic attachments, entanglements, and relationships of the main characters. Most *Urban Fantasy Hero* campaigns are "romantic" in the broad, dramatic sense of that term — they're filled with adventure, excitement, and in some cases appropriate but unlikely actions — but that's not quite the same thing.

Romantic Urban Fantasy campaigns generally require two things. First, the characters have to stay put in one location. This usually isn't a problem; compared to traditional Fantasy characters, Urban Fantasy characters usually confine their adventures to one city. Second, and more importantly, the characters must have potential romantic partners to choose from (and perhaps fight over). A Romance Urban Fantasy campaign won't go far without enough "fish in the sea" for the characters to take an interest in. The GM has to design intriguing NPCs who attract one or more PCs through some qualities, and yet have other qualities the PC(s) find troublesome or off-putting. For example, perhaps Sarah is beautiful, an excellent conversationalist, and shares several hobbies with Our Hero... but she's a vampire. But then again, what fun is a Romance story if the romances are smooth sailing all the way?

Romance works well in conjunction with the Comedy meta-genre. What makes people look more foolish, or causes them to do things they ordinarily wouldn't, than love? In Urban Fantasy, the possibilities are practically endless: misapplications of love potions and the havoc that results; characters who fall in love with ghosts, were-people, or other non-human creatures; couples kept apart by bizarre curses.

Tragedy

Traditionally, a Tragedy tells the story of a hero or heroes, doomed by some personal flaw or circumstance to loss, diminishment, or death. It's relatively rare as a major story element in Urban Fantasy; even the darker stories in the genre tend to have a silver lining in there somewhere.

In a gaming context, Tragedy works even less well as a campaign theme, since most people want to have fun when playing a game. However, a GM can easily introduce a few tragic elements or subplots by using a character's Disadvantages against him. Choose a Disadvantage — Psychological Limitations such as *Proud*, *Greedy*, or *Overconfidence*; an undeserved Reputation the character cannot overcome — and bring about the character's downfall by exploit-

DUNITS

Basically speaking, mysteries can be organized into three types:

Howdunits, in which all of the suspects had a motive, but it appears impossible that any of them (or possibly anyone else) could have committed the crime (this includes the classic "locked room" mystery). Solving the mystery involves figuring out how the crime was committed; this in turn tells the investigator who did it.

Whodunits, in which all the suspects had a motive, and the method of committing the crime is obvious. Solving the mystery involves figuring out who committed the crime. This is the most common type of mystery.

Whydunits, in which none of the suspects seems to have had a motive, and the method of committing the crime is obvious. Solving the mystery involves figuring out why someone would commit the crime; once the investigator knows that, he knows who's guilty.

Of course, some mysteries combine features of two or all three types. For example, a whydunit might reveal that more than one suspect had motive; at that point the mystery converts into a whodunit.

ing it. For example, perhaps a character who's Proud comes to a tragic end because he can't walk away from a situation where his enemies bait him into a trap by insulting him. In short, have the character's flaws lead to the tragic ending.

For a true Tragedy Urban Fantasy story, you should incorporate some unique Urban Fantasy elements into the mix. For example, magic can have all sorts of unintended tragic consequences that you could exploit. Imagine a mage whose arrogance and pride cause his true love to fall under a curse he cannot lift, and which eventually results in both their deaths. Enormous power (of just about any sort) can cause enormous problems the GM can use to tragic effect.

OTHER GENRES

The tropes, themes, and character types of Urban Fantasy stories easily mingle with those of other genres. Combining them can create fascinating campaigns and stories.



Champions

As discussed earlier in this chapter, Urban Fantasy and superheroes generally don't mix — once you introduce costumed crimefighters and superpowers into the mix, you've gone beyond what qualifies as "Urban Fantasy." However, it's not difficult to imagine a melding of the two genres where you have mystic characters who protect the city (and even the world) from mystic threats. They might even have superhero-level magic powers, though not superheroic garb. See *The Mystic World* sourcebook for all sorts of resources and ideas you could include in that sort of game.

Dark Champions

"So, what's on tap tonight that's so important? Uprising? Prophesied ritual? Pre-ordained deathfest?"

"Ah, the old standards."

—Buffy and Xander banter on *Buffy, The Vampire Slayer*

The intersection of Urban Fantasy with Dark Champions is the *Monster Hunters* subgenre, described above. It combines action and gunplay with weird mysticism and dangerous occult threats in a way many gamers find very satisfying.

Fantasy Hero

Urban Fantasy is a form of Fantasy, of course, so the two don't really "mix" *per se*. However, an imaginative GM might try to create an Urban Fantasy-like story by turning the tables: instead of introducing magic into the modern world, put high technology into a Fantasy world! The stories would play out basically the same in many ways, just with gods-fearing people who know what magic is and how it works being suspicious of dangerous, "devil-spawned" machinery. Roger Zelazny's novel *Changeling* presents a tale like this.

Changing "Modern:" Western, Victorian, Pulp, And Star Hero

The tropes, themes, and stories of Urban Fantasy usually take place in the modern day — but the modern day's not the only period in history (or fiction) when machinery and technology were available. With a few changes to what's considered "modern," you can run a "Historical Urban Fantasy" campaign set in the Pulp era or the nineteenth century, and perhaps earlier. For example, Naomi Novik's "Temeraire" books depict the Napoleonic wars being fought with draconic air cavalry. Going the other direction, a "Future Urban Fantasy" campaign would mix Science Fiction and Urban Fantasy. The only danger here is that, as Clarke's Law warns us, if the technology is too advanced, the Urban Fantasy magic may not seem all that special or effective.

CHAPTER

2



THE WONDERS OF CREATION
URBAN FANTASY
CHARACTER CREATION

PACKAGE DEALS



CHARACTERISTICS AND PACKAGE DEALS

Some of these Package Deals include additions to Characteristics. This reflects common levels of STR or other Characteristics found among characters of a specific background or who practice a particular professions. However, with the GM's permission, a player may change or eliminate that part of the Package Deal if he has an idea for a character who defies or transcends the general stereotype.

If the campaign uses the Normal Characteristic Maxima rules, those rules apply to Characteristics gained from Package Deals. This may in some instances require a character to spend additional points to buy a Characteristic affected by the Package Deal up to a proper level. For example, imagine a Package Deal that provides +15 CON, for 30 points. The first 20 points of effect increase the character's CON to 20. After that the Normal Characteristic Maxima doubling applies, so the next 10 points only add 2.5 points' worth of CON. Since a character can't have a 22.5 CON, the character has to spend 2 more Character Points to increase his CON to 23. Alternately, with the GM's permission a character can reduce the points a Package Deal adds to a Characteristic to avoid this problem.

The following Package Deals represent common professions, occupations, backgrounds, or careers for *Urban Fantasy Hero* characters. In addition to the listed Skills and abilities, each Package Deal includes suggestions on several related subjects: the goals and motivations of characters who belong to that profession; improved Characteristics and other abilities members of that profession might have; Disadvantages appropriate to the profession; and how the character might advance and progress during the campaign. But these are only suggestions — ignore them and choose something else if that suits the character you have in mind.

Package Deals are just organizational tools. They group together Characteristics, Skills, and abilities commonly associated with a given background or type of training to make the creation process quicker, easier, and more “realistic.” Unless the GM requires them, you don't have to use one. You can instead buy all of a character's abilities separately, or “customize” the Package Deal by taking only the parts of it you want and discarding the rest. Package Deals should enhance your creativity, not stifle it.

OTHER MODERN-DAY PACKAGE DEALS

This book does not include Package Deals for many adventure-oriented modern-day professions that Urban Fantasy player characters might have. You can find plenty of those in *Dark Champions*. If you want your character to be a soldier, law enforcement officer, spy, criminal, bounty hunter, or private eye, *Dark Champions* has all the information you need. It's also got lots of other details about Skills, Perks, and other game elements in modern-day settings.

ANACHRONISM

“OK,” she said between clenched teeth, “you'd better come out now. We have this whole area surrounded.”

There was a clanking noise, as of something very heavy moving[.] Then a ray of the setting sun fell suddenly on red gold and blue steel, and a man stood silhouetted against the sky on the edge of the mound.

He was a little over six feet tall, clad in gilded chainmail armour. ... In his right hand was a hand-and-a-half sword whose pommel blazed with garnets, like the lights of distant watch-fires.

“Who the hell are you?” said the man from the mound.

Hildy did not answer, for she could not remember. The man clapped his gauntleted hands, whereupon a procession of twelve men emerged from the mound. Nine of them were similarly armed [and armored.] Of the other three, one was small and stooping, dressed in a long white robe[.] The second of the three was a huge man, bigger than any human being Hildy had ever seen before, and he was dressed in the pelt of a long-haired bear[.] The third was shorter than the rest of the armed men but still tall, slim and quick-moving like a dancer. He wore no armour, but only a doublet of purple and dark blue hose. Tucked under his arm was a gilded harp[.] ...

“Well,” he said. “Here we are again. So how long do you reckon we've been down there?” ...

“[The wizard] says twelve hundred years, give or take,” said the standard-bearer.

—Hildy Fredriksen meets the ninth-century king Hrolf Ketilsson in Tom Holt's *Who's Afraid Of Beowulf?*

Not all Urban Fantasy characters are necessarily “native” to the modern-day period. In some stories long-slumbering kings, princesses who've been affected by sleep-curses, and wizards who get thrust forward in time due to a miscast spell awaken to a world of television, cars, and instant dinners. The results can be comedic, tragic, or simply heroic.

Typical Goals And Motivations: First and foremost an Anachronism has to struggle to come to grips with his new reality. He has to learn what society's like now and how to behave, lest he get himself in trouble acting the way he did in “the old days.”

In some cases he may be searching for a way to return to his own time as well.

Typical Abilities: An Anachronism's abilities depend on what he was in his proper time. If he was a wizard, he can cast spells; a knight knows how to fight and ride; a princess how to rule and play court politics. It's not uncommon for the enchantment that allowed the Anachronism to "sleep" or come to the present day to provide him with the ability to understand modern people (i.e., he has Universal Translator).

Suggested Disadvantages: Anachronisms usually start the game with the Physical Limitation *No Understanding Of Modern Earth Culture*, since they don't know what stoplights are, how to microwave a snack, or what's so important about the Super Bowl. As the campaign progresses they should gradually buy this Disadvantage down, and then off entirely.

Progression: Unless an Anachronism returns to his home time quickly, he's going to have to learn how to do something in the present day. Usually his chosen profession (and thus the other Package Deals he might eventually buy) depends on his existing Skills and preferences. A knight might become a policeman, soldier, or security consultant, for example, while a wizard turns his talents to teaching or working in a think tank.

ANACHRONISM PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 STR or +5 INT
15	15 Character Points' worth of Skills representing the character's profession or training (see the Package Deals in <i>Fantasy Hero</i> for some ideas)

Equipment

Cost	Power
var	Swords, armor, and other personal gear, possibly enchanted

Total Cost Of Package Abilities And Equipment:
20 + equipment cost (if any)

Optional Abilities

Cost	Ability
20	<i>Spell Of Comprehension</i> : Universal Translator (INT Roll)

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
15	Physical Limitation: No Understanding Of Modern Earth Culture (Frequently, Greatly Impairing)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 15

ANIMAL-MAN

"Anyway, she's got a friend named Bones who talks about beings that are part people, part animal. According to him, they originate in the spiritworld — which he says we can visit when we dream. In turn, the spirits visit our world and sometimes inhabit the bodies of people or animals. And sometimes they all get mixed up — people, spirits, animals — and you end up with these odd mythological sorts of creatures."

—Lily learns a bit about animal-men in Charles de Lint's *Someplace To Be Flying*

In Urban Fantasy campaigns with the right amount (or "flavor") of magic, one possible "race" for player characters is *Animal-Man*. An animal-man is a sort of spirit-being, a shapeshifter whose true form is an animal-human hybrid but who can assume human or animal shapes. Magical and often wise, animal-men may serve as guardians and helpers for special humans, "agents" for greater spirit powers, or the like.

Unlike lycanthropes, who are similar to them in many ways, animal-men cannot "infect" other people with their shapechanging powers. Nor do they tend to lose control and become ravening monsters during the full moon (or any other time). They're a separate, distinct kind of being, not a set of abilities overlaid onto a human.

Typical Goals And Motivations: An animal-man's personality usually depends on the type of animal it is. A fox-man is clever, sneaky, and witty; a crow-woman sometimes wise, sometimes greedy; a bear-man stolid and strong, slow to anger but dangerous when riled.

Typical Abilities: Animal-men are shapechangers. They rarely use their true forms, which are some sort of animal-human mix (for example, a raven-man might have a human body with a raven's head, and feathers here and there on his body instead of hair). Instead they usually adopt either an animal form, or a human form. Their human forms usually have physical characteristics based on those of their animal: a bear-man is big, broad-shouldered, and sturdy-looking; a raven-woman has a long, thin nose and black hair; a fox-man is red-headed and sly-faced.

The *Shapechanging* power in the Package Deal represents an "average" ability of this sort, based on the assumption characters are built on around 150-200 Character Points. If necessary, adjust it up or down to suit the campaign.

Suggested Disadvantages: An animal-man's underlying animal form and personality usually suggests at least one Disadvantage, often a Psychological Limitation. For example, a crow-woman might have *Loves Shiny Objects And Other Treasures* to represent how easily she can be distracted by gew-gaws. A bear-man might have *Enraged*: when injured; an owl-man might be *Vulnerable to light-based Sight Group Flashes* or suffer penalties in daylight.

ANIMAL-MAN
PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
10	10 Character Points' worth of Characteristics appropriate to animal type
5	+5 INT
10	+5 EGO
2	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 11-
2	KS: The Mystic World 11-
3	Animal Senses: +1 to PER Rolls with all Sense Groups
50	Shapechanging: Multiform (into animal or human form built on no more than 200 Character Points [animal-human hybrid shape is true form]), Instant Change

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 82

Optional Abilities	
Cost	Ability
10	Hybrid Mind: Mental Defense (10 points + (EGO/5))

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
15	15 points' worth of Disadvantages appropriate to animal form

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 15

Progression: Animal-men don't usually progress *per se*; they're content with their form and their lives. However, it might be possible for an animal-man to develop other powers (possibly like those of a shaman), or even to expand his shapechanging repertoire to encompass similar animals.



CLERIC

With all the evils they face — demons, the undead, and more — it's not surprising that sometimes a group of Urban Fantasy adventurers likes to have a religious man among their number. While most such characters are Roman Catholic priests, this Package Deal is written "generically" so that it can apply to most other types of holy men: Protestant ministers; Jewish rabbis; Muslim imams; and more.

Typical Goals And Motivations: As a devout man of faith, a Cleric wants to serve his God (or gods, as the case may be). In an Urban Fantasy context he often does so proactively, using the power of his faith to stymie or destroy vampires, devils, and other unholy evils.

Typical Abilities: For the most part a Cleric's abilities are his knowledge and the strength of his faith. In some High Urban Fantasy settings, Clerics may actually have "holy magics" of their own that they can cast.

Suggested Disadvantages: Besides a Psychological Limitation representing his faith, and in some settings a Social Limitation that he's subject to orders from his superiors, a Cleric could have just about any Limitation. Hatreds of evil creatures, Hunteds from creatures who escaped his crusade, and perhaps an appropriate Enraged could all suit a Cleric.

Progression: If a Cleric starts the campaign as a more or less ordinary holy man, an adventuring career will broaden his horizons significantly. He may need to pick up fighting skills, Combat Driving, or similar abilities just to survive! In a High Urban Fantasy setting he might study magic.

CLERIC PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
2	KS: [Religion] Doctrine And Theology 11-
3	Oratory
3	Persuasion
3	PS: [Cleric] (INT-Based)
9	9 points' worth of abilities from the following list: Acting, Bureaucratics, Combat Driving, Combat Skill Levels, Conversation, Deduction, High Society, Interrogation, Paramedics, Riding, Tactics, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill
2	Fringe Benefit: Priest
1	Fringe Benefit: Right To Marry

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 23

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
20	Psychological Limitation: Devout Follower Of [Religion] (Common, Total)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 20

CYBERMANCER

In High Urban Fantasy settings that mix magic and technology, the Cybermancer is the ultimate keyboard cowboy — the programmer and hacker who does his work with magic as much as skill, and who moves in the worlds of circuits and sorcery with equal ease. Able to manipulate machines with spells and access the Internet with only the power of his mind, he can perform feats of computer legerdemain other hackers can only dream of.

Typical Goals And Motivations: For the most part a Cybermancer's motivations are no different than those of mundane hackers. He wants to show off his skills and cleverness, sometimes by getting rich or playing malicious tricks. For heroic Cybermancers it may be more a matter of just proving they were the first to access a particular system or accomplish a renowned feat. Beyond that, a Cybermancer may also want to make his mark in the Mystic World and show "true spellcasters" that he's just as powerful and smart as they are.

Typical Abilities: Most of a Cybermancer's abilities focus on technology (for example, they have high Computer Programming rolls). However, the special effect for these abilities is cybermantic spells as much as, or more than, raw programming skill. One such spell (Internet Clairvoyance) comes with the Package Deal, and the Cybermancer gets the points to buy some others.

Suggested Disadvantages: If a Cybermancer's used his powers for criminal gain, he might be Hunted by all sorts of authorities — ranging from mundane cops, to people he's ripped off, to the Magical Bureau of Investigations (if such a thing exists in the campaign setting). Rivalries with other cybermancers and hackers are also common.

Progression: A Cybermancer usually progresses in one of two ways. First, he can go the technological

CYBERMANCER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
7	Computer Programming +2
3	Electronics
2	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 11-
2	KS: The Mystic World 11-
3	SS: Computer Sciences (INT Roll)
2	Security Systems (INT Roll); Only Versus Computer Security Systems (-½)
3	Systems Operation
9	<i>Internet Clairvoyance:</i> Extra-Dimensional Movement (any page or other location in the Internet) (25 Active Points); Extra Time (1 Turn to gain access; -¼), Meat Body (character's body remains in the real world, but cannot move, perceive, or act, and damage to it can hurt or kill the character; -½)
20	20 Character Points' worth of Cybermancy Spells (see page 163 for some examples)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 51

Optional Abilities

Cost	Ability
30	<i>What A Cool Laptop:</i> Computer built on 150 Character Points

Disadvantages

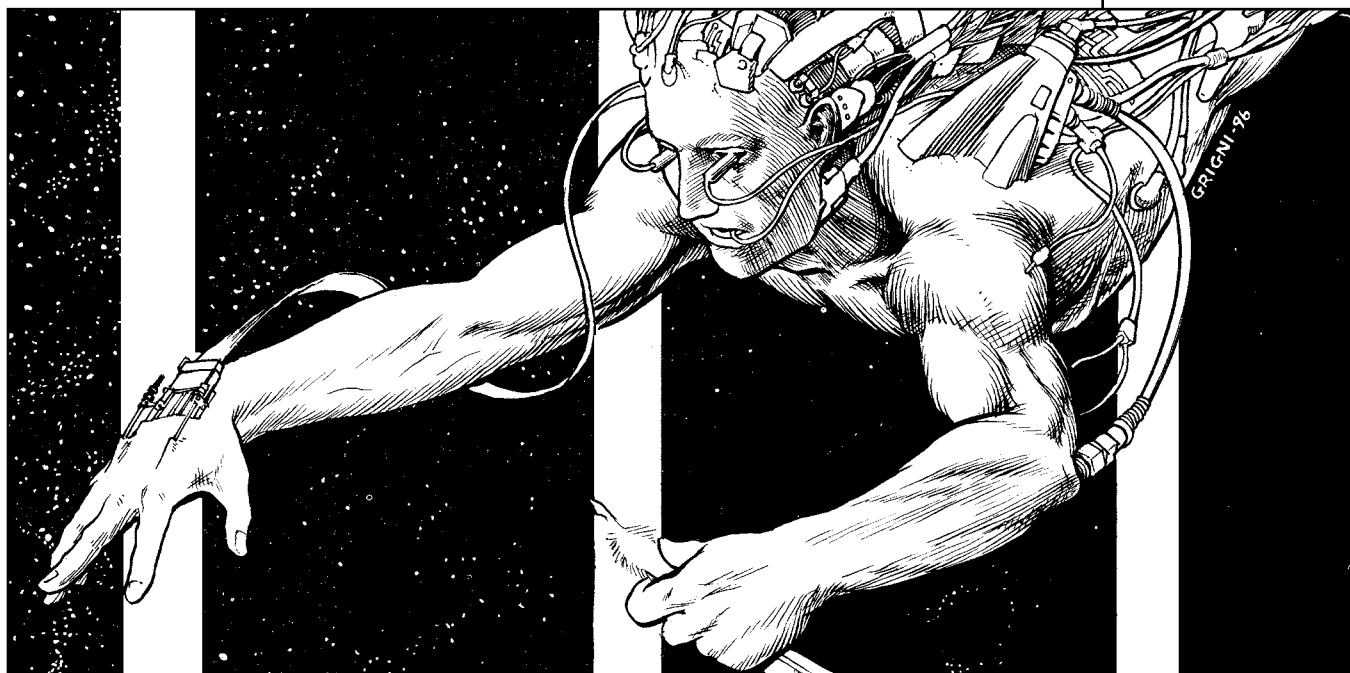
Value	Disadvantage
	None

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Optional Disadvantages

Value	Ability
-10	Social Limitation: Criminal Record (Occasionally, Major)

route and broaden his skill set to include Inventor, more SSs, Weaponsmith, and the like. Second, he can expand his magical horizons, becoming more of a true wizard versed in a variety of spells.



FAE-BLOODED

Sometimes the faerie-folk intermingle with humanity and breed children that have both fae and human blood. Perhaps some faerie prince becomes infatuated with a beautiful woman and gets her with child; or maybe a man sees a female selkie bathing, then steals her seal-skin and won't give it back until she becomes his wife. It could even be that the faeries leave a changeling (a faerie baby faerie in place of a human one) who, in growing up away from his kin, becomes as much human as faerie.

Whatever the cause, children born of the union between human and faerie are known as *Fae-Blooded*. The Fae-Blooded generally resemble ordinary men, but in almost all cases possess a certain unearthly beauty (or, rarely, repellent ugliness) that marks them as having faerie blood in their veins.

Typical Goals And Motivations: Fae-bloodeds' personalities are as varied as those of the races they spring from. Their faerie ancestry sometimes gives them both a certain nobility and a certain capriciousness; many of them enjoy pranks and games immensely.

Typical Abilities: Because of the magical nature of the faeries, the Fae-Blooded often possess an unusual talent for wizardry (particularly sorcery), druidry, or the bardic life. Many Fae-Blooded have other affinities relating to the precise nature of their ancestry; for example, the Fae-Blooded child of a selkie might be an excellent swimmer, while one sired by a forest-faerie would make a skilled woodsman.

The faeries usually (but not always) have a much higher regard for Fae-Blooded humans

than normal men — they're more likely to talk politely with the Fae-Blooded, or to grant them favors and gifts. (This is represented with the *Faerie Favor* Perk.) However, a few faeries dislike Fae-Blooded *more* than pure-blooded men, regarding the "stink" of their human ancestry as a defilement of faerie nature.

The Fae-Blooded tend to live longer than normal Humans, with lifespans of as much as 200 years.

Suggested Disadvantages: No Disadvantages are specific to the Fae-Blooded, though some of the traits described above may suggest Disadvantages if taken to extremes (e.g., faerie love of certain items or food; faerie Susceptibility to cold iron).

Progression: Since Fae-Blooded is a Racial Package Deal, it doesn't really have "progression"; a Fae-Blooded can take up any profession or hobby he likes.

LYCANTHROPE

Lycanthropes are humans with the ability to change their shape into that of a particular animal. (Or, more rarely, an intelligent animal with the power to assume man-shape.) Many people consider lycanthropy a curse, a dreaded disease they would give anything to be cured of, but some accept (or even revel in) their bestial nature and abilities.

Some Lycanthropes live as humans, whether among human societies or by themselves (they tend to be loners); others prefer to dwell with their wild brethren (perhaps even acting as their protector). All of them hunt or forage in animal shape to some degree, but they may also eat cooked human food. In some Urban Fantasy settings, various "tribes" of Lycanthropes (based around species) often live in the shadows of human society: packs of wererats dwell in the sewers, living off scraps and the occasional hapless victim; werewolf packs prowl the streets in human form in search of prey and secretly control much of the city.

In most settings, a mating between two Lycanthropes produces a child who also possesses lycanthropic powers. A mating between a Lycanthrope and an ordinary human, or an ordinary member of the species whose shape the Lycanthrope can assume, produces offspring with lycanthropic powers about half the time.

Typical Goals And Motivations: Typically, Lycanthropes have ordinary human motivations (ranging from pure beneficence to utter evil), but their personalities usually have a touch of the bestial nature of their animal shape. Werewolves are cruel and cunning, but also quite loyal to their friends ("pack"); werebears are slow and ponderous, but powerful once roused; wererats are sneaky and shift; and so forth.

Typical Abilities: Lycanthropes possess three forms: a normal human form; a human-animal "mixed"

FAE-BLOODED PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
2	+4 COM
1	<i>Fae-Blooded Longevity</i> : Life Support (Longevity: double normal lifespan)
Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 3	
Optional Abilities	
Cost	Power
-4	Reduce COM to 6
2	KS: Faerie Lore 11-
2	<i>Water Faerie's Child</i> : Swimming +2" (4" total)
4	<i>Forest Faerie's Child</i> : +2 to a Skill associated with woodcraft (such as Tracking, or appropriate forms of Survival)
20	<i>Mystic Affinity</i> : 20 Character Points' worth of <i>Magic</i> Perks and spells
var	<i>Faerie Favor</i> : a Perk (see text)
Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
	None
Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0	



form; and an animal form. The animal form may be physically normal for its kind, or unusually large and strong, but it almost always retains some or all of the human's intelligence. For the sake of simplicity, the Package Deal assumes that the half-animal, half-human form is a Lycanthrope's "true form" and that his human and animal forms are built on no more than 150 Character Points (use the animal character sheets from *The HERO System Bestiary* for this, but give them some extra points to account for their superior nature, intelligence, and the like). You may need to adjust the costs of things if that's not the case. However, for characters who contract lycanthropy from a werecreature's attack, the human form should be the true form. See *Contracting Lycanthropy* on page 96 of *The HERO System Bestiary* if you want detailed rules for this.

Common lycanthropic powers include: greater than normal physical Characteristics; fangs and claws; and the ability to heal with incredible speed. They also relate well to animals of their type (their *Animal Handler* Skill represents this; some may also have a Mind Link that works only with that type of animal).

Suggested Disadvantages: Traditionally, lycanthropes suffer extra damage from weapons made of silver (a few even suffer injury from just touching pure silver), and they have a tendency to lose control of themselves in battle or when hurt. They also lose control of themselves and change into were-form during the full moon, or possibly even at night. (In the interest of playability, many PC Lycanthropes get to dispense with this Disadvantage, or lessen its impact; see the Optional Disadvantage for some possibilities.)

Progression: Since Lycanthrope is in effect a Racial Package Deal, it doesn't really have "progression"; a Lycanthrope can take up any profession or hobby he likes... assuming his being a were-creature doesn't get in the way.

LYCANTHROPE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 STR
15	+5 DEX
10	+5 CON
5	+5 PRE
2	<i>Animal Empathy:</i> Animal Handler (one category based on werecreature's form)
20	<i>Shapechanging:</i> Multiform (change shape into 150-point human or wolf; true form is half-animal form); Extra Time (takes an Extra Phase to change shape; -¾)
20	<i>Fangs:</i> HKA 1d6+1 (plus STR)
12	<i>Claws:</i> HKA 1d6 (plus STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)
75	<i>Lycanthrope's Bite:</i> Major Transform 7d6 (human into lycanthrope of same type; heals back through special magic ritual), Trigger (whenever Fangs attack(s) do half or more of target's positive BODY, activating Trigger takes no time, Trigger immediately automatically resets; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); All Or Nothing (-½), Limited Target (humans; -½), No Conscious Control (character controls use of Fangs, but Transform always occurs under the specified conditions; -1), No Range (-½)
2	<i>Lycanthropic Resilience:</i> Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED)
40	<i>Lycanthropic Resilience:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Does Not Work Against Silver-Based Attacks (-½) plus Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Does Not Work Against Fire Attacks (-½)
18	<i>Lycanthropic Regeneration:</i> Healing 3d6 (Regeneration; 3 BODY per Turn), Persistent (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Self Only (-½), Does Not Heal Damage Caused By Silver Weapons (-½)
6	<i>Lycanthropic Senses:</i> +2 PER with all Sense Groups
5	<i>Lycanthrope's Eyes:</i> Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group)
5	<i>Lycanthropic Nose:</i> Discriminatory for Normal Smell
5	<i>Lycanthropic Nose:</i> Tracking for Normal Smell
3	Stealth

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 248

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Accidental Change: character always assumes were-form at night during the full moon (Uncommon)
25	Enraged: in combat or when injured (Very Common), go 11-, recover 11-
20	Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Silver Weapons (Common)
20	Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Silver Weapons (Common)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 85

Optional Disadvantages

Value	Ability
30	Accidental Change: character always assumes were-form at night (Very Common)
10	Accidental Change: character Frequently (11-) assumes were-form at night during the full moon (Uncommon)
20	Accidental Change: character Frequently (11-) assumes were-form at night (Very Common)
15	Psychological Limitation: Repulsed By Wolfsbane (Common, Strong)
20	Susceptibility: takes 1d6 per Phase when in contact with silver (Common)

MUSICIAN

*Eddi grabbed her mike and began to sing. ...
The band was together and tight at last; and
Eddi felt as if she'd done it all herself in a burst
of goddesslike musical electricity.*

—War For The Oaks

While it may not seem like the ideal career for an adventurer, a surprising number of Urban Fantasy heroes are musicians, singers, instrument-makers, or the like. You can use this Package Deal for any of them, though you may want to change the Professional Skills to suit the character you have in mind. (And if you have *The Ultimate Skill*, you can substitute Musical Instrument Familiarity for the PSs, making it easier to precisely define your character.)

Typical Goals And Motivations: Aside from whatever draws them into adventuring, Musicians' motivations generally relate to their music. They want to form the perfect band, build the best instrument they can, become famous, or just support themselves doing what they most enjoy — making music.

Typical Abilities: Musicians have various skills pertaining to making music. Beyond that, they tend to be sociable and get along well with others. Sometimes they gave up another career to pursue their true love of music, and you can give them a Package Deal or Skills to reflect that.

Suggested Disadvantages: Musicians often tend to be getting by on next to nothing; Poor or Destitute may be appropriate. A guitarist who can't resist the female fans may find himself Hunted by jealous boyfriends or husbands; one who can't resist the

lure of drinking and drugs could be Hunted by the police, or have a Dependence (Addiction).

Progression: There's nowhere to go but up — so to speak. Music neither predisposes nor disqualifies a character from any other profession or avocation, so a Musician character could become nearly anything. During the course of a campaign he may need to find a more "adventuring-appropriate" set of Skills he can take up.

MYSTIC DETECTIVE

*My name is Harry Blackstone Copperfield
Dresden. Conjure by it at your own risk.
I'm a wizard. I work out of an office in mid-
town Chicago. As far as I know, I'm the only
openly practicing professional wizard in
the country. You can find me in the yellow
pages, under "Wizards." Believe it or not,
I'm the only one there.*

—Harry Dresden describes
what he does in *Storm Front*

*I'd been sent to the Hollows in the rain to
collar a leprechaun for tax evasion. How much
lower, I wondered, could I sink?*

—Rachel Morgan laments her evening's
work in *Dead Witch Walking*

A staple of the Urban Fantasy genre, the Mystic Detective is a character who investigates mysteries and solves problems that pertain to magic, curses, fantastic creatures, evil wizards, and the like. He does this with a combination of knowledge and power — unlike the Occult Detective (see below), he has spells or other mystic abilities. He might be a full-fledged wizard, a were-creature, a spirit trapped in human form on Earth, an apprentice sorcerer, or something else, but what sets him apart from ordinary detectives isn't just his knowledge of matters arcane, but the tools he has to work with.

Typical Goals And Motivations: Several qualities tend to characterize the Mystic Detective. First, he's selfless. He may hold himself out as an ornery old bastard who works for money, money, and nothing but money, but the truth is he's a soft touch who often helps people in desperate need who can't afford his fees. (Somehow he usually seems to make out OK in the end, though, so maybe there's something to that "karma" thing.) Second, he's brave. His work often sends him into the most mystically dangerous places in the city, but he goes because he has to. He's mighty cautious about it, but sometimes all the caution and planning in the world can't save him from having to expose himself to danger. Third, he's a man of his word. If he takes a case for a client, he sees that case through regardless of what's required.

Typical Abilities: A Mystic Detective combines two suites of abilities. First, he's got a slew of ordinary detective skills — Deduction at the very least, and often things like Criminology and Shadowing as well. Second, he's an expert on matters arcane. He knows his tarot from his athame, can whip up a mean potion or two given time, and knows

MUSICIAN PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	Conversation
3	Persuasion
2	PS: Musician 11-
2	PS: Singing 11-
3	PS: play one instrument (character's choice) (DEX Roll)
2	PS: play another instrument (character's choice)
3	More PSs pertaining to music
3	Seduction
12	12 points' worth of abilities from the following list: Acting, Concealment, Cramming, Deduction, Disguise, Gambling, Lipreading, Mimicry, Sleight Of Hand, Stealth, Streetwise, Trading, Ventriloquism, any Background Skill, Jack Of All Trades, Well-Connected, Contact, Perfect Pitch

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 33

Optional Abilities

Cost	Power
var	Famous: Reputation as a musician

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
	None

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

who's who in the Mystic World. He may even be a full-fledged spellcaster, or own several powerful enchanted items.

Suggested Disadvantages: Mystic Detectives are often strapped for cash, so Poor (or even Destitute) might be appropriate (not to mention a great motivation for taking those dicey cases that lead to adventure!). Psychological Limitations like *Curiosity* and *Detective's Code* (of loyalty to the client) are definitely appropriate. A Hunted or two in the form of cops who Watch him or old adversaries out to get him, or a Rival detective competing for his clients, is another great story hook.

Progression: Mystic Detectives tend to start out broadly skilled in both their areas of expertise, so for them progression generally involves becoming more and more competent at them. This is particularly the case with magic, since there's always another incantation to learn or talisman to craft.

The Occult Detective

Not all investigators of the arcane are cut from the same cloth. Some are *Occult Detectives* instead of Mystic Detectives. An Occult Detective is basically the same as a Mystic Detective, with one major exception: he doesn't practice magic or have any special mystical powers. He's very knowledgeable about the occult and the Mystic World, and it's that knowledge, not spells, that sets him apart from ordinary private investigators and lets him do his job.

MYSTIC DETECTIVE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	Concealment
5	Deduction +1
2	CK: city of character's choice 11-
5	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore (INT Roll +2)
2	KS: The Mystic World 11-
6	Other KSs pertaining to occult subjects
3	Languages (3 points' worth)
2	PS: Private Investigator 11-
3	Stealth
2	Fringe Benefit: Private Investigator's License
10	Contacts (10 points' worth)
9	9 points' worth of abilities from the following list: Acting, Bureaucratics, Conversation, Criminology, Disguise, Gambling, High Society, Paramedics, Persuasion, Shadowing, Skill Levels, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Contacts, Fringe Benefit: Weapon Permit
30	<i>Practitioner Of The Occult</i> : 30 points' worth of mystic abilities, spells, and the like

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 82

Optional Abilities

Cost	Power
-30	<i>Occult Detective</i> : Remove Practitioner Of The Occult

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
	None

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0





SCHOLAR

Not all Urban Fantasy protagonists are spell-slinging witches or deadly werewolves. Some are more at home in the library or at a computer terminal, where they delve into the unknown without exposing themselves to danger... usually. Scholars range from high school and college students with curiosity about the arcane to aged professors who've spent a lifetime researching things Man Was Not Meant To Know.

SCHOLAR PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 INT
6	+3 EGO
10	Cramming (x2)
5	Deduction +1
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore (INT Roll)
3	KS: The Mystic World (INT Roll)
8	Other KSs relating to mystic subjects
4	Languages (4 points' worth of the character's choice)
2	PS: Research 11-

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 46

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
	None

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Typical Goals And Motivations: The Scholar's primary motivation is to know, to learn. Knowledge is power, especially in a world where magic works, and even if the Scholar can't cast spells or drive away demons himself, just knowing what's going on and what ordinary people can do to stop it can be a powerful weapon.

Typical Abilities: Scholars usually focus on Knowledge Skills, Deduction, and other "intellectual" Skills, often ignoring physical Skills entirely. However, some (particularly younger Scholars) run against type, mixing their time in the library with hours spent on the playing field, the shooting range, or the hiking trail.

Suggested Disadvantages: Scholars are often plagued by a host of minor physical ailments like nearsightedness, arthritis, or a limp, any of which could rise to the level of a minor Disadvantage if they're bad enough. Some have been driven mad by exposure to dark eldritch secrets and reflect this with Psychological Limitations and Enrageds. A Scholar's expertise may lead people to Hunt him so they can exploit his knowledge... or may turn a jealous colleague into a Rival.

Progression: Depending on the nature of the campaign, a Scholar may find himself forced to pick up some physical or combat-related abilities as a matter of survival. In a Low Urban Fantasy campaign this may mean learning how to shoot a gun or studying the martial arts. In a High Urban Fantasy game it usually leads to becoming a practicing spellcaster of some sort — the transition from Scholar to Wizard or Mystic Detective isn't much of a leap.

SENSITIVE

Eyes still closed, I reached out with my second sight, searching for the nearest ley line.

—Rachel Morgan uses her mystic senses in *Dead Witch Walking*

In a setting where magic, and even spell-casting, exist, not every member of the Mystic World possesses power in the same measure. Some are merely *Sensitives*, also known as Clairvoyants — people with the ability to sense mystic energy and phenomena.

Typical Goals And Motivations: Sensitives' motivations vary. Some use their powers for personal gain, perhaps by holding themselves out as wizards or mediums and defrauding gullible "clients." Others use their powers to help people. Some are even *compelled* to help by their powers. For example, a Sensitive who can see ghosts may discover that the only way to keep a ghost from bothering her is to set right whatever wrongness has kept it tied to the world of the living.

Typical Abilities: To be a Sensitive, a character has to at least possess the "second sight" — the ability to perceive magic and mystic phenomena. Exactly how this ability manifests varies from Sensitive to Sensitive. Some "see" magical energy as a glow, others feel it as heat or an itchy sensation, while others "hear" eerie music — the possibilities are limited only by your imagination. Powerful Sensitives go beyond that basic power; they can foresee

the future, read impressions left in objects, or even view distant locations. On the other hand, weaker Sensitives may only be "attuned" to a single phenomena, such as ghosts or ley lines.

Suggested Disadvantages: Not all Sensitives react well to their powers. Some may find the greater "awareness" to be more of a burden than a blessing, leading to Psychological Limitations and perhaps even some Physical ones as well. People eager to use the Sensitive for their own ends may Hunt him or threaten his loved ones (DNPCs).

Progression: As the campaign progresses, Sensitives tend to grow in one of two ways. First, their abilities may expand, becoming more reliable, allowing them to perceive more things more accurately, or the like. Second, a Sensitive may step beyond the world of arcane perceptions into greater arcane power, becoming Mystic Detectives or Wizards.

SHAMAN

"Your Way was the Way of the shaman. The magician's Way, though not its mage's aspect. Intuition, rather than ritual. Do you see?"

—Charles de Lint, *Moonheart*

In Urban Fantasy, a Shaman is a type of mystic whose powers relate to spirits and the Spirit World. By calling on the spirits of a thing or place, a Shaman can commune with them to gain knowledge, or control them to gain power. Compared to a Wizard, who tends to get his powers through study, a Shaman is more likely to be chosen by the spirits and to learn his powers through intuition, meditation, the spirit of a deceased Shaman, or the like.

Often a Shaman has a particular spirit — his totem or spirit guide — to help and advise him. He may even identify himself with this totem ("I'm a Raven Shaman" "I am a Shaman of Bear") and have special powers based on or deriving from that totem. Traditional Shamans have animals native to the lands of their peoples as totems, but Urban Fantasy sometimes goes beyond that to create "street shamans" with totems such as Rat, Roach, or Sewer Gator.

Typical Goals And Motivations: Shamans serve the spirits as much as they work with or control them. This means they often have to do things on their behalf. This may include protecting an area the spirits like, communicating the Spirit World's message to mystics who aren't directly attuned to it, defeating dark or evil spirits, cleansing corrupted spirits, and the like. Shamans often favor a calming approach to problem-solving, emphasizing communication, negotiation, and compromise over violence.

Typical Abilities: As spellcasters, Shamans can have a wide variety of powers. See *The Ultimate Mystic*, pages 109-13, *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire II*, pages 108-32, or page 167 of this book for some examples (though spells and abilities from other books

SENSITIVE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	+3 INT
3	Deduction
10	<i>Second Sight:</i> Detect Magic (INT Roll), Discriminatory

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 16

Optional Abilities

Cost	Power
27	<i>Advanced Second Sight:</i> Detect Magic (INT Roll), Discriminatory, Range, Sense, Targeting
8	<i>Limited Second Sight:</i> Detect [some limited category of mystical phenomena, such as ghosts] (INT Roll), Discriminatory
9	<i>Foresee The Future:</i> Clairsentience (Sight Group), Precognition (40 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½), Extra Time (minimum of 1 Turn; -1¼), Precognition Only (-1), Vague And Unclear (-½)
13	<i>Clairvoyance:</i> Clairsentience (Sight Group), x8 Range (800") (35 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½), Extra Time (minimum of 1 Turn; -1¼)

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
	None

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

may need to be toned down or changed to fit an Urban Fantasy setting). Traditional shamanic powers include going into a trance to talk to spirits or enter the Spirit World, healing, transforming one's self into an animal, and in some cultures casting or dispelling curses.

Some Shamans have to undergo physical as well as spiritual tests to obtain their powers. Instead of being crotchety old spellcasters, these Shamans tend to be athletic, fit, and possess a variety of combat and outdoor survival skills. Some may have studied their peoples' fighting skills as well.

Suggested Disadvantages: Shamans often become Hunted by evil spirits whom they've thwarted, since even a powerful Shaman usually can't destroy a spirit permanently. Their totem may provide Disadvantages as well as powers; for example, a Magpie Shaman might be greedy

SHAMAN PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
4	+2 CON
5	+5 INT
3	Deduction
2	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 11-
2	KS: The Mystic World 11-
3	KS: Shamanism (INT Roll)
3	Persuasion
2	PS: Shaman 11-
6	6 Character Points' worth of abilities from the following list: Acting, Animal Handler, Combat Skill Levels, Conversation, Interrogation, Mimicry, Navigation, Penalty Skill Levels, Riding, Skill Levels, Sleight Of Hand, Stealth, Survival, Tracking, Trading, Ventriloquism, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Well-Connected, Contacts, Favors
40	40 Character Points' worth of shamanic spells and powers

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 70

Optional Abilities	
Cost	Power
4	Enter The Spirit World: Extra-Dimensional Movement (to any point in the Spirit Realm corresponding to the caster's current location in the real world) (22 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½)
50	Totem Form: Multiform (one animal form built on no more than 250 Character Points)
12	Outdoorsman Shaman: Add the Skills Survival (4 points' worth), Stealth, Tracking, and Weapon Familiarity (2 points' worth)
2	Street Shaman: Add Survival (Urban)

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
	None

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

and easily distracted by shiny objects, whereas a Shark Shaman would be bloodthirsty and cruel. Some Shamans have to take vows to obtain their powers, and if restrictive enough these could rise to the level of Disadvantages.

Progression: Shamanism is a way of life as much as it is a "profession," so it's rare for Shamans to progress into other "jobs." Instead, they focus on deepening their own wisdom and understanding of the Spirit World. In game terms they tend to buy more shamanic abilities and powers, and improve their rolls with Shaman Skills.

VAMPIRE

[Vampires] were utterly without conscience, ruthless instinct incarnate. The only reason they followed society's rules was because it was a game to them. And ... vampires knew about rules. Their continued existence depended upon rules which, if challenged, meant death or pain, the biggest rule of course being no sun. They needed blood daily to keep sane. Anyone's would do, and taking it from the living was the only joy they found. And they were powerful, having incredible strength and endurance, and the ability to heal with an unearthly quickness. It was hard to destroy them except for the traditional beheading and staking through the heart.

—Kim Harrison, *Dead Witch Walking*

Masters of the night, Vampires are deadly predators — and in some settings, potentially valuable allies. A Vampire who can keep its natural instincts under control makes a great PC (particularly if you roleplay some of the inherent conflicts he suffers from), and in a Mystic World of shifting factions the vampires may sometimes need the PCs' help.

Typical Goals And Motivations: A Vampire is often motivated, first and foremost, by the desire to maintain his existence (which may already have gone on for centuries). He puts a lot of time and effort into protecting himself and compensating for his weaknesses: making sure his coffin is secure and well-hidden (and that he has backups if necessary); that he can avoid the sunlight without difficulty; and most importantly that he has a supply of blood to feed on. For evil Vampires that's not a problem (since they can hunt and kill humans), but good Vampires may have to arrange for access to a blood bank, the voluntary assistance of friends, or the like.

Typical Abilities: This Package Deal represents the abilities typically possessed by the "traditional" Vampire in an Urban Fantasy setting. If you want Vampires that are more "realistic," less vulnerable, more bestial, or the like, you should adjust it accordingly. In campaigns where characters are built on low amounts of Character Points, this Package Deal may need to be trimmed down or excluded.

Suggested Disadvantages: This Package Deal also includes the traditional Vampire's restrictions, hindrances, and weaknesses. For ease of game play you may want to remove some or make them weaker. In particular, a Vampire's inability to be active in sunlight can cause serious problems in a campaign.

Progression: Since Vampire is in effect a Racial Package Deal, it doesn't really have "progression"; a Vampire can take up any profession or hobby he likes... assuming his being an undead stalker of the night doesn't interfere.

WIZARD

The necromancer brought both arms down in a sharp, sweeping gesture and a sizzling, bright blue bolt of thaumaturgic energy lanced down toward the ground at the foot of the altar.[.] There was a bright, blue-violet flash, a lot of sparks, and clouds of billowing smoke shot through with heat lightning... and then a deafening, bloodcurdling howling filled the studio as the demon materialized.

—Simon Hawke, *The Wizard Of Sunset Strip*

Whether he's a professor at Cagliostro University, a leather-clad street punk with a Gift for the Arts Arcane, an elf with magic in his blood, an old man with a penchant for dressing like Gandalf and the spells to match, or something else altogether, the Wizard is one of the most iconic — and often most powerful — characters in Urban Fantasy. Able to wield the potent forces of magic, he can more radically affect the campaign setting and its people than just about any other type of character.

Depending on the type of campaign, Wizards can come in many varieties. In a Low Urban Fantasy campaign, if they exist at all they're likely to be subtle, and their powers equally so. In a High Urban Fantasy campaign, they can be as flamboyant as you can imagine — the power of Merlin filtered through modern mass-media, consumerist, fast-paced society can produce some unusual results. They may even specialize, much as they do in standard Fantasy campaigns: necromancers mess around with the undead and demons; female Wizards may be referred to as Sorceresses or Witches and have their own special lore they hide from men; Conjurers concentrate on spells to summon beings from other planes. The Cybermancer, described above, is essentially a sort of specialist Wizard; in an Open Magic campaign there might also be Corporate Wizards, Street Wizards, Military Mages, Eco-Wizards, and plenty of others.

VAMPIRE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
10	+10 STR
24	+8 DEX
10	+5 CON
3	+3 INT
8	+4 EGO
10	+10 PRE
3	+6 COM
3	Stealth
7	<i>Fangs:</i> HKA 1 point (½d6 with STR), Penetrating (+½)
33	<i>Drink Blood:</i> RKA 1d6, NND (defense is not having blood or protective skin or equipment too thick to bite through; +1), Does BODY (+1), Continuous (+1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); No Range (-½), Fangs Must Do BODY First (-½)
10	<i>Claws:</i> HKA ½d6 (1d6+1 with STR)
47	<i>Hypnotic Gaze:</i> Mind Control 8d6, Telepathic (+¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Eye Contact Required (-½)
60	<i>Undead Body:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%
2	<i>Undead Body:</i> Damage Resistance (3 PD/1 ED)
21	<i>Hard To Slay:</i> Healing 3d6 (Regeneration; 3 BODY per Day), Resurrection (others can stop resurrection by burning the body, driving a stake through the vampire's heart, or cutting off its head and filling its mouth with holy wafers), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Self Only (-½), Extra Time + Increased Time Increment (3 BODY/Day; -2¼), Resurrection Only (-½)
47	<i>Undead Vitality:</i> Life Support: Total (except Diminished Eating; including Longevity: Immortality)
2	<i>Swift:</i> Running +1" (7" total)
5	<i>Vampire's Eyes:</i> Nightvision
27	<i>Mist Form:</i> Desolidification (affected by wind, heat, or cold); Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-½)
30	<i>Wolf and Bat Forms:</i> Multiform (assume 125-point wolf or bat form)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 362

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Dependence: must sleep each night in a coffin containing earth from its gravesite (or any cemetery, if inapplicable) or suffer Weakness (Extremely Difficult to obtain)
20	Distinctive Features: No Reflection (Not Concealable; Causes Major Reaction)
20	Enraged: at the sight or smell of blood (Common), go 11-, recover 11-
20	Psychological Limitation: Cannot Enter A Dwelling Without Invitation (Common, Total)
20	Psychological Limitation: Aversion To Garlic (Common, Total)
15	Psychological Limitation: Must Obey Sire's Orders (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Will Only Cross Running Water Via Bridges (Uncommon, Total)
10	Psychological Limitation: Considers Humanity Cattle (Common, Moderate)
25	Susceptibility: to holy objects and places, takes 2d6 per Phase is in contact with them (Common)
35	Susceptibility: to direct sunlight, takes 2d6 per Segment (Very Common)
10	Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Water Attacks (Uncommon)
10	Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Water Attacks (Uncommon)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 205



Typical Goals And Motivations: Wizards’ motivations vary just as much as they do. However, most of them have a streak of curiosity about matters magical (if not about everything under the sun), and they’re often tempted by the promise of new lore, greater powers, or spells no one else knows. Some give in to the lure of power, become menaces to society with almost no equal.

WIZARD PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities	
Cost	Ability
5	+5 INT
10	+5 EGO
5	+5 PRE
5	Cramming
3	Deduction
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore (INT Roll)
3	KS: The Mystic World (INT Roll)
2	PS: Wizard 11-
6	6 Character Points’ worth of abilities from the following list: Acting, Bribery, Bureaucratics, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Cramming, Gambling, High Society, Interrogation, Inventor (Spell Research), Penalty Skill Levels, Skill Levels, Sleight Of Hand, Stealth, Trading, Ventriloquism, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Well-Connected, Contacts, Favors
50	50 Character Points’ worth of spells and mystic powers

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 92

Optional Abilities	
Cost	Power
10	Second Sight: Detect Magic (INT Roll), Discriminatory
1	Fringe Benefit: License to Practice Wizardry

Disadvantages	
Value	Disadvantage
	None

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

Typical Abilities: Wizards are defined by their powers: their ability to cast spells and wield other magics. Exactly how this works depends on the campaign setting, its magic system, and similar factors (see Chapters Three and Four), but regardless of what the game’s like the Wizard possesses a strong measure of power. Beyond that, a Wizard might be studious (lots of KSs) or a natural talent, a sedentary person or an athlete, a nervous recluse or a bold adventurer.

Suggested Disadvantages: Wizards often find themselves Hunted by enemies, spirits they’ve somehow angered, or the like; others have Rivals among the denizens of the Mystic World. Psychological Limitations like *Pride* and *Intellectual Vanity* and *Showoff* afflict more than a few of them. Some suffer from Physical Limitations like lameness or blindness, creating a contrast between their physical and mystical prowess.

Progression: Wizards usually remain Wizards throughout their adventuring careers, since there’s always another spell to learn or Knowledge Skill to improve. However, they often broaden from a relatively narrow focus early in life to a greater awareness of and facility with the overall body of magic. As adventurers they may also pick up odd Skills (such as Combat Driving or Lockpicking) here and there.

GAME ELEMENTS



Here are some notes on other *HERO System* elements that might appear in Urban Fantasy campaigns.

CHARACTERISTICS

Most *HERO System* gamers start designing their characters by purchasing Characteristics. Several Characteristic-related issues have implications for *Urban Fantasy Hero* games.

Normal Characteristic Maxima

Urban Fantasy Hero campaigns typically impose Normal Characteristic Maxima as a default for the campaign; characters must abide by the restrictions without getting any Disadvantage points for doing so. But in some cases the GM may want to reconsider that decision. For some High Urban Fantasy games in particular — ones where all the PCs are vampires, werewolves, and the like — the Normal Characteristic Maxima rules may not make much sense, and may even inhibit the “feel” the GM wants to create. In campaigns like that, allowing characters to buy high Characteristics without any cost doubling may work well.

Characteristic Ranges

Urban Fantasy Hero is a Heroic genre, and therefore most characters will have most of their Primary Characteristics in the 10-20 range. This can cause problems of uniformity, with most characters having Characteristics that are in very similar ranges, if not identical. Furthermore, because some Characteristics cost relatively few points to increase, it’s not uncommon to see characters with unusually high ratings in Characteristics not associated with that character type — such as technologists with STR 15-20.

This potential uniformity is an important feature of the *HERO System*, one that allows players to build whatever characters they want. But it may cause problems in some campaigns, particularly those where GMs and players want to emphasize the differences between the various major archetypical characters. If “Characteristic uniformity” causes a problem in your game, here are some possible solutions:

- Lower the Normal Characteristic Maxima breakpoint. If characters have to start paying double at 15 instead of 20, Characteristics in the 18-20 range

become rarer. For a Low Urban Fantasy campaign featuring characters who are “just ordinary folks” coping with the apocalypse and its immediate aftermath, a doubling point of 13 might even be appropriate. However, if you do this the PCs may end up with fewer points to spend on Skills and abilities, which causes problems of its own.

- Lower the Normal Characteristic Maxima breakpoint selectively by character type. Choose one Characteristic that’s important for each character archetype (typically INT for wizards, STR for trolls, and so on). That archetype can buy that Characteristic up to 20 for the normal cost, but must pay double at a lower breakpoint (such as 15) for all other Characteristics. For example, maybe trolls can buy STR 20, but all other character types must pay double for each point of STR above 15. This heightens each archetype’s natural strengths, but may cause difficulties when you try to build some character concepts.

- Sever the relationship between a Primary Characteristic and one or more of the Figured Characteristics it affects. If characters only get ED and REC from CON, and not END or STUN, they may be more likely to keep CON at a lower level than they otherwise would so they can put points into END and STUN. Again, this may lead to characters spending too many of their points on Characteristics.

- Assign a useful bonus to a Characteristic that makes characters want to buy it in unusual amounts, instead of amounts ending in 0, 3, 5, and 8. For example, suppose you establish a house rule saying that if two characters have the same DEX (a not uncommon occurrence in a *Urban Fantasy Hero* campaign), the character with the highest INT gets to act first in a Phase. This prompts at least some characters to spend a little more on INT, since an INT of 16 is better than one of 15 even though they both generate the same INT Roll and PER Roll. Proceed with caution, however; most such changes indirectly benefit some character type more (wizards, in this case, since they already want to have a high INT), and you may accidentally create a game balance problem. Similarly, you could rule that in Skill Versus Skill Contests involving Skills based on the same Characteristic, ties go to the character with the highest Characteristic.

- Forbid some archetypes to buy Characteristics beyond a defined maximum (or at least, not without special permission). For example, maybe the GM decides technologists cannot buy STR above 15, and warriors can’t buy INT above 15. This may significantly inhibit the creative freedom that is a hallmark of the *HERO System*, but it can really distinguish the archetypes from each other.



SKILLS

As in other Heroic genres, Skills play an important part in *Urban Fantasy Hero*. In many ways, an Urban Fantasy character's Skills define him (in game terms) more than any other game element. This section contains both general Skill rules for the Urban Fantasy genre, and specific notes on how various Skills function in *Urban Fantasy Hero*.

See *The Ultimate Skill* for advanced rules for all Skills, many of which are appropriate for Skill-heavy Urban Fantasy campaigns. For example, the *Divination* Skill might work well in some Low Urban Fantasy games. *The Ultimate Mystic* also has useful information on Skills for mystic characters (a few paragraphs of which are reprinted here).

COMBAT SKILLS

Compared to many genres, Combat Skills and combat-related Skills (like Combat Driving or Fast Draw) tend to be relatively rare. They're certainly not non-existent; many an Urban Fantasy character is a skilled warrior or has military experience. But plenty of Urban Fantasy heroes are pretty much just ordinary folks who've never fired a gun, picked up a knife outside the kitchen, or been in a dangerous crisis situation. Players should keep this in mind when designing characters, and GMs while designing campaigns.

SCHOLARLY SKILLS

As in almost any campaign involving magic, scholars' Skills — Cramming, Cryptography (Translation Only), Deduction, Knowledge Skills, the ability to read and speak old Languages — can come in very handy. If looking up obscure occult facts in musty tomes hidden away in libraries and used book stores is an important element of the campaign, the GM might want to consider adding the *Research* Skill from page 371 of *The Ultimate Skill* to the Skill List (and perhaps *Instructor* from that book as well).

STAGE MAGICIAN SKILLS

Some Urban Fantasy spellcasters take the time and effort to learn the Skills of actors, stage magicians, and con-men — Acting, Disguise, Forgery, Persuasion, Sleight Of Hand, and so on — for two reasons. First, they can use them to hide "real" magic or "explain" it as some sort of prestidigitation trick. Second, they're often useful in and of themselves when a character needs to bluff his way past a suspicious guard, trick an enemy, or the like.

Similarly, Gambling is a popular Skill among Urban Fantasy characters who are used to handling cards... particularly if they have Luck or other abilities that make them more likely to win. The connection between playing cards and tarot cards also gives rise to character and plot ideas.

ANALYZE MAGIC

Analyze Magic is a valuable Skill in campaigns that feature lots of magic, such as most High Urban Fantasy games. It allows a character to evaluate the magical abilities and powers of a spellcasting character. Usually wizards are the only ones who know it, but it's possible for anyone to learn to use it through direct observation.

Analyze Magic has several uses. First, a character who sees another character cast a spell can make an Analyze Magic roll to identify the spell in question and its effects (this is an Action that takes no time). The GM may impose a penalty on the roll if the character doesn't have an appropriate KS of the style of magic being used or hasn't in some way been exposed to that type of magic. Even if the character can't identify the spell and its effects precisely, he can figure out what a spell does generally (if it isn't immediately obvious). For example, an occult investigator could tell that a cult ritual is meant to summon a demon, or a sorcerer could recognize that a supposed blessing is actually a spell to influence the target's mind.

Second, a character who can cast spells or use magic himself can employ Analyze Magic to evaluate the other character's power relative to his own, deduce who trained him, and perhaps to gain a tactical advantage over him. With a successful Analyze Magic roll, a character might identify a spellcaster's mentor or school ("Only students who studied under Professor Stone at Cagliostro University create fire using that particular gesture"), his knowledge and raw power ("He says the words so sloppily! He is not trained well, for all his power..."), and perhaps even deduce secret aspects of the magic or gain a tactical advantage ("He couldn't cast such spells without a demon's help — which tells me just how to fight him!"). See the accompanying table for more information.

Analyze Magic does not allow a character to design a new spell, or operate an unfamiliar magic item; for such feats, see Inventor (Spell Research) and Power: Magic, below. Analyze Magic may, however, act as a Complementary Skill for those tasks. For instance, a mystic trying to reconstruct a spell he saw another mystic use has a better chance of success if he Analyzed the spell when he saw it cast.

ANALYZE MAGIC EFFECTS

Makes Roll By Information Gained

0 (exactly)	The character has a general idea of how skilled or powerful the target is in comparison to him ("He's better than me," "I could do better than him easily")
1 or 2	The character knows where, how, and by whom the target was trained or manufactured (if applicable)
3 or more	The character can discover distinctive mannerisms about the target which grant him +1 DCV against any attacks (or +1 on Skill Versus Skill rolls) made by the target
Half or better	The character gains +2 for all relevant rolls against the target (see text)

CONCEALMENT: INCONSPICUOUSNESS

She had that stillness down pat, the ability to sit so quiet she became pretty much invisible.

—Moth thinks about Katy in Charles de Lint's *Someplace To Be Flying*

A spell of inconspicuousness would be great, but it called for fern seed. Not only didn't I have time to gather enough, but also it wasn't the right season.

—Rachel Morgan suffers a setback in Kim Harrison's *Dead Witch Walking*

In some settings, particularly certain types of Low Urban Fantasy games, some characters have an exceptional ability to go unnoticed. They're not invisible, they're not deliberately hiding — they just "blend in," becoming so inconspicuous that if you're not specifically looking for them you tend to overlook them even when they're close by. To simulate this ability, a character can use Concealment. The more distractions there are in the vicinity, the easier it is to become inconspicuous: a cluttered room is +1; an area full of people is +3 or more. On the other hand, in areas with few or no distractions related to humanity (like, say, the middle of a meadow), the character suffers a -2 or greater penalty. If the character stands still, he gets a +2 bonus; if he moves at faster than a slow walk, he suffers a -2 (or greater) penalty. With the GM's permission, a character can buy Concealment *Only For Inconspicuousness* (-1) if he has this ability but doesn't know anything about the other skills Concealment provides.

INVENTOR (SPELL RESEARCH)

I was spelling; I'd made a mess. Half-chopped plants, dirt, green-stained bowls... [i]t looked like Yoda's kitchen meets the Galloping Gourmet. But I had my detection amulets, sleep inducers, even some new disguise charms to make me look old instead of younger. ... As soon as I found a strong enough spell to break into the I.S. records vault, Jenks and I were out of here.

—Rachel Morgan does some spellcrafting in Kim Harrison's *Dead Witch Walking*

Few mystics have any use for Inventor as a technological Skill. On the other hand, mystics often use its magical analog, *Spell Research*. This Skill enables a mystic to devise new spells, or activate unfamiliar magic items. Like Inventor, Spell Research is an Intellect Skill. Spell Research does not itself grant a character any arcane knowledge; the Skill represents the spark of genius that enables a mystic to go beyond what he has learned.

Before he can use Spell Research, a mystic may need an appropriate Knowledge Skill about his style of magic and other arcane subjects. Devising a new spell takes a long time and might require a special "laboratory" as well, but this depends on the nature of magic in a setting. An alchemist, for instance, absolutely needs a lab stocked with a wide variety of substances and equipment. A Hindu holy man, on the other hand, might need nothing more than a quiet place to meditate for a few months.

SPELL RESEARCH BASE TIMES

Category Of Spell	Base Time Multiplier	Modifier
Very Simple	1 Hour	+2
Simple	6 Hours	+1
Average	1 Day	+0
Complex	1 Week	-2
Very Complex	1 Month	-4

The Base Time Multiplier indicates the amount of time multiplied by the Active Points in the spell divided by 10.

The time required to research a new spell depends on the spell's complexity, as indicated in the accompanying Spell Research Base Times table. (Of course, the table only provides a guideline; the GM makes the final decision and may want to alter the table to suit his campaign.) This assumes access to a reasonably complete arcane library or other necessary materials; worse/better libraries may add/subtract from the time needed as well as providing Skill Roll bonuses (if bought as "laboratories"). At the end of the time period, the character makes a Spell Research roll, at a penalty of -1 per 10 Active Points in the spell (again, the quality and contents of the library may modify this penalty). If the roll succeeds, the character has created a new spell, which he must pay for according to the standard rules of the campaign. If it fails, he has not yet found or created the spell and can try again using the standard rules for that. If it fails badly (by 4 or more), he's created the spell incorrectly, with potentially disastrous consequences to himself that won't become apparent until he tries to use it. Modifying an existing spell (say, to add an Advantage, remove a Limitation, or increase the dice of effect) is easier than creating one from scratch; in that case typically only the Active Points involved in the change need to be used to determine the Skill Roll penalty.

The applications of Spell Research overlap with Magic (see *Power: Magic*, below). In some campaigns, the GM might prefer Spell Research to Magic. In others — for instance, a setting where magic is highly scholarly, and reliable if you fully understand a spell — he might decide that Magic is unnecessary. In such a case, Spell Research can also take Magic's place as the control Skill for mystical Power Pools.

See Chapter Four of *Fantasy Hero* for more information on magic and creating spells.

KNOWLEDGE SKILL

Urban Fantasy characters are often experts on esoteric subjects most people are totally ignorant of (or may not even believe exist!). Scholars and Wizards in particular should possess appropriate Knowledge Skills. Here are some typical Knowledge Skills appropriate for Urban Fantasy characters.

KS: Arcane And Occult Lore

While it's possible for scholarly characters to have some very detailed KSs relating to mystic subjects, the overall Skill that covers mystic subjects is KS: Arcane And Occult Lore. It provides a broad base of knowledge about magic and related topics including: Basic Demonology And Mystic Beings; Basic Divination; Famous Mystics (the great mystics of the past and present); General Mystic Lore; Legends (myths and folklore); Mystic Botany (magical uses of herbs); Mystic Gemology (magical properties of gems and minerals); Runes, Glyphs, and Sigils (symbols and diagrams used in magic); and Types/Categories of Magic.

Generally speaking, almost any character who's a practicing mystic should have this KS at some level, even if it's just 8-. They need its basic grounding in the world of the arcane to do their thing, just like an astrophysicist needs a knowledge of basic physics. But beyond that, a mystic may find occult lore useful in many other situations. For example, knowledge of Runes, Glyphs, and Sigils might enable a mystic to recognize a warning symbol painted on a door, or the runes carved in a staff might tell how to invoke its magic. In some cases a character can use KS: Arcane And Occult Lore as a Complementary Skill with Analyze Magic, Magic Skill, or Inventor (Spell Research).

KS: The Hidden History

In some settings, mystical conspiracies work behind the scenes to shape world events. A character with this Skill knows about these Secret Masters, their past deeds, and their plans for the future. The related KS: Conspiracy Theory deals with beliefs about Secret Masters, possibly but not necessarily mystical — but with no indication which conspiracy theories are true (if any).

KS: The Mystic World

This Knowledge Skill deals with the secret subculture of magic and occultism that extends around the world. Mere Streetwise does not deal with this material very well; at most, Streetwise reveals which weirdoes the punks and lowlifes know to avoid.

The Mystic World contains more than just sorcerers. In fact, in more "realistic" campaigns (such as many Low Urban Fantasy games), locating a real sorcerer through KS: Mystic World is a challenging feat (-0 to -5, depending on how zealously the sorcerer maintains his secrecy). A character with an 11- rating in KS: Mystic World can automatically locate published occultists, the more public cult leaders, and libraries and museums with major occult collections. With a successful Skill Roll, he can separate the dabblers, the deluded, and the charlatans from the people with real power or knowledge, and locate private collectors and little-known sites of mystical power. The Mystic World also serves to keep characters abreast of interesting current events among their fellow mystics.

KS: The Spirit World

Also called “Who’s Who and What’s That.” The possessor of this KS knows the lore of ghosts, demons, angels, elementals, and other spirits to a much greater extent than one who simply has KS: Arcane And Occult Lore. Characters can take more specific KSs of types of spirits (such as KS: Elementals or KS: Demons) for more detailed knowledge of them. Related fields of knowledge include Monsters, Vampires, and Mythic Creatures.

POWER: MAGIC

The *Magic* form of the *Power Skill* is often used in Urban Fantasy games where magic is fundamentally unreliable. Spells may Require A Skill Roll to activate; a Magic Pool may take a Skill Roll to change. But characters can use Magic for other things.

Like any *Power Skill*, a mystic can use Magic in attempts to cast his spells in some unusual way. If some feat seems plausible given the special effects of a spell, a successful Magic Skill Roll can let the character bend the letter of the rules.

Example: *Mark Vizzini is a wizard in an “Open Magic” Urban Fantasy campaign. He knows a spell called Dust Devil, which creates a miniature cyclone to trap the target in an Entangle. Noticing the wind created by the spell as a “side effect,” one of his friends suggests that he could use the spell to pick up a whole bunch of papers scattered on the ground and put them in piles on tables. That has nothing to do with Entangling anyone, but it fits the special effects of the spell and doesn’t have any real effect on game balance, so the GM decides to allow it. He rules that Mark can try it, but he has to succeed with a Magic roll at -2. If he fails, he might scatter the papers even worse, lose some, or tear them into pieces.*

Gamemasters can also let characters use Magic to activate magic items without the need for the character actually to know how the item works. The character suffers a -1 per 10 Active Points penalty to the roll as he tries to activate the item by intuition, force of will, and/or dumb luck. (If the character has time to study the item, Analyze Magic or Spell Research become the relevant Skills, without Active Point penalties.)

Magic is usually an Intellect Skill, but different systems of magic may suggest alternate base Characteristics. If magic depends on force of will, Magic should be based on EGO. If personal charisma governs magic (for instance, persuading or bullying spirits to work your will), PRE might be the proper Characteristic.

For some settings, GMs may want Magic to absorb and replace Analyze Magic and Spell Research. The latter two Skills presuppose a system where studying magic, working magic, and inventing magic are quite different activities, posing different mental challenges. That may not be the case in settings where magic depends on intuition, an inborn supernatural gift, or the favor of the gods... or the GM simply doesn’t want to ask characters to buy three Skills instead of one.

PERKS

Since Urban Fantasy campaigns take place in the modern day, most Perks are entirely appropriate for characters. Below are a few notes on new ones or special applications of existing ones. As with Skills, *The Ultimate Mystic* has plenty of additional ideas you can use for Perks.

CONTACTS

Rare is the Urban Fantasy character who doesn’t have a contact or five. Not all of these rise to the level of Contacts in the *HERO System* sense, of course, but they definitely can if the character wants to call on them for help frequently. Nor do Contacts necessarily have to be restricted to other humans; a character could have friends among the secret vampire community, the faerie-folk, or other parts of the Mystic World. (See *The Ultimate Mystic* for special rules for “Spirit Contacts.”)

FOLLOWER

Bob the Skull grumbled something in Old French, I think.[.] He yawned, and his bony teeth rattled when his mouth clicked closed again. Bob wasn’t really a human skull. He was a spirit of air — sort of like a faery, but different. He made his residence inside the skull that had been prepared for him several hundred years ago, and it was his job to remember things.[.] He had worked with dozens of wizards over the years, and it had given him a vast repertoire of knowledge — that, and a really cocky attitude.

—Harry Dresden describes his “familiar,” Bob the Skull, in Jim Butcher’s *Storm Front*



For spellcasters, the classic follower is the *familiar*: a companion spirit, usually in the form of an animal (such as a black cat, an owl, or a serpent), who assists the wizard in his work. It may act as a second set of eyes and ears, a scout, a source of knowledge, or even as an “arcane battery” to make his spellcasting easier. See page 25 of *The HERO System Bestiary* for a short (and definitely non-exhaustive) list of possible abilities for familiars; that book also has character sheets for many animals that make good familiars.

Besides familiars, many other types of Followers are appropriate for Urban Fantasy characters. In games where there’s an extensive tradition of teaching magic, a character could have an apprentice as a Follower... or an enfeebled old teacher of his who’s passed the point of adventuring himself but still has many useful skills, powers, and bits of lore. And what would a wizard’s sanctum be without an impassive servant or a golem to keep things running smoothly?

FRINGE BENEFIT

In Open Magic campaigns where mysticism is common knowledge, the practice of magic may be regulated by the government the same way law, medicine, nursing, and private investigation are in the real world. In that case, characters may have to purchase a Fringe Benefit, *License To Practice Wizardry*, if they want to cast spells or offer their arcane services to the public without breaking the law. Typically this costs 1 Character Point (like most Licenses), but if important enough in the setting may cost 2 Character Points (like a Private Investigator’s License).

Spellcasters who don’t have a License may be subject to a fine, imprisonment, or possibly even execution, depending on the setting and the severity of their crimes. A GM could even build a campaign around this concept, with the PCs as “spell cops” or “arcane bounty hunters” who track down and stop unlicensed mystics.

MONEY

This is one Perk that isn’t necessarily appropriate for Urban Fantasy characters. While a few are wealthy, most suffer from the same financial worries that everyday people do. They have to make rent, pay off their cars, buy food, and maybe get a little entertainment here and there. On top of that they’ve got to shell out for talismans, spell components, conjuration insurance, and other expenses unique to the Mystic World. Monetary woes make a great motivator for adventurers, after all...

VEHICLE AND BASE

“But you’re a stranger here, in this small spot of earth, where I’ve had centuries to weave and knit every possible spell of advantage. You’ve stumbled into my place of power, foolish woman.”

—Frau Totenkinder explains the situation to Baba Yaga in *Fables*

Urban Fantasy characters don’t usually have special Vehicles, just ordinary cars (at best — some simply rely on public transportation). But having a Base isn’t all that uncommon. A typical Urban Fantasy Base is simply a place where the character lives and has concentrated his power: a *sanctum*, if you will. It’s usually guarded by warding-spells, and possibly even mystic sentinels such as a golem or a bound demon. The character keeps his mystic tomes and paraphernalia there, and his spells might even be more powerful when cast there (in game terms, the Base has an Aid Magic it can use on him).

TALENTS

“[H]ow is it that I can understand everything you say? It’s almost as if you were speaking modern English. You should be talking in Old Norse or something, shouldn’t you?”

“We are,” said the King[.] “I thought you were, too. And what’s English?”

At this point the wizard made a sound like a slate-saw. The King raised an eyebrow, then translated for Hildy’s benefit. “He says it’s a language-spell he put on us all. He says it would save a great deal of trouble. Unfortunately ... he couldn’t put one on himself.”

—Hildy Frederiksen talks with the awakened Vikings in Tom Holt’s *Who’s Afraid Of Beowulf?*

Talents are a superb way to represent minor mystical powers and abilities common to many Urban Fantasy characters. The following Talents, in particular, tend to crop up in Urban Fantasy stories or to make great powers for Urban Fantasy PCs:

- Animal Friendship (from *Fantasy Hero*)
- Beast Speech (from *Fantasy Hero*)
- Bump Of Direction
- Combat Luck
- Danger Sense
- Divine Favor (from *Fantasy Hero*)
- Fascination (from *Fantasy Hero*)
- Simulate Death
- Speed Reading
- Universal Translator

Beyond that, it’s perfectly appropriate for Urban Fantasy adventurers to have other Talents just as special abilities with no magical explanation. An Urban Fantasy hero who was once in the military might have Combat Luck or Lightsleep, for example, while another might be blessed with Eidetic Memory.

DANGER SENSE

Danger Sense is a particularly appropriate Talent for many mystics. See page 43 of *The Ultimate Mystic* for expanded discussion of Danger Sense as it applies to magic-using characters.



POWERS AND POWER MODIFIERS

In *Urban Fantasy Hero*, Powers (and Power Modifiers) most frequently show up as the basis for magic spells. It's certainly possible to have a character with some extra Running because he's fast or a die or two of Hand-To-Hand Attack because he's a good brawler, but more exotic Powers are usually restricted to mystic abilities of some sort. Here are some notes on a few that have special applications for the Urban Fantasy genre.

See pages 45-64 of *The Ultimate Mystic* for more notes on Powers and Power Modifiers that you may find useful in Urban Fantasy campaigns.

CLAIRSENTIENCE

Clairsentience lets you create powers of far-seeing, crystal balls, and the like, but its most common use in Urban Fantasy is for precognition (and, less commonly, retrocognition) — the ability to foresee the future (or view the past). Either form is bought with a -1 Limitation, as described in the main rulebook; at the GM's option, a character can use a single Clairsentience power either way by instead taking the Limitation *Precognition And Retrocognition Only* for -½.

Whatever methods a character uses for scanning (see below), remember that Precognition and Retrocognition only give sensory impressions, which the character — and player — must interpret for himself. Gamemasters should try to merely describe what the character sees (or hears, smells, and so forth) without explaining it in any way. This is particularly true with *Vague And*

Unclear Precognition and Retrocognition, where the information received may be “fuzzy” or subject to multiple plausible interpretations.

Scanning Physical Objects And Locations

Precognition and Retrocognition can work in either of two ways. Depending on how the GM defines magic as working in his campaign, one method may apply in the game exclusively, or either method may be available to characters. In the latter case, typically a character must choose which way his Precognition or Retrocognition works when he buys the power and cannot change it thereafter. However, the GM can let characters switch between methods at will, either by default or if they buy a +½ Advantage, *Variable Physical Scanning*, for the power.

The first way is to scan a *location's* past or future. Using this method, a character can see who (or what!) enters and leaves a given spot, but cannot establish a perception point beyond the normal range for his Clairsentience (nor can he move his perception point unless he's bought the *Mobile Perception Point* Adder). If something moves outside the radius of his perception, the character has to move himself, then establish another perception point at a location where he can perceive the person or object he wants to “follow.” In short, using Retrocognition to follow a person in a fast car is almost always impossible.

Alternatively, a character can follow the timeline of a *specific object or person*. Theoretically, a character could watch someone's timeline back to his birth on another planet! But this assumes, of course, that the Clairsentience has sufficient range, and/or that the perception point is both (a)

Mobile, and (b) fast enough to follow the object or person. The GM may waive these requirements in the interest of dramatic sense. In that case, how far away the subject might have been (or will be) from his present location doesn't matter, as long as he's within range of the character's Clairsentience when the character uses the power. Even if the GM allows this, the character cannot perceive into other dimensions, including when the subject uses time travel powers, unless he's bought the *Dimensional Sense Modifier* for his Clairsentience. Furthermore, the character cannot switch targets in the past or future: he cannot, say, follow one person's timeline back to a meeting with another person in Marrakech then switch to the other person and see where that person went after the meeting. However, the GM can allow this if the character buys a +½ Advantage for his Precognition or Retrocognition, *Transferable Subject*.

Scanning The Timeline

Just as normal Clairsentience can't scan a broad zone of space instantly, Precognition and Retrocognition can't scan a long timeline instantly. A character using them views events in "real time" — for every 1 Segment of time spent viewing, 1 Segment's worth of viewed actions occur.

Two methods for scanning over time more quickly than 1 Segment per Segment are available to characters. Depending on how the GM defines magic as working in his campaign, one method may apply in the game exclusively, or either (or neither) method may be available to characters. In the latter case, typically a character must choose which way his Precognition or Retrocognition works when he buys the power and cannot change it thereafter. However, the GM can let characters switch between methods at will, either by default or if they buy a +¼ Advantage, *Variable Timeline Scanning*, for the power.

First, a character can scan through long periods of time at a faster than the default one Segment per Segment rate. A second-by-second trace of a subject's timeline can be sped up, like a VCR on fast forward or reverse, but details get lost. Quickly scanning whole decades of a subject's timeline just isn't practical.

Locating information by looking through time takes a PER Roll, and fast scans impose negative modifiers. Gamemasters can use the Time Chart for modifiers. Scanning the past or future in "real time" speed, one Segment per Segment, imposes no modifier. A faster scan, one Phase per Segment, imposes a -2 modifier on the PER Roll; 1 Turn per segment gives a -4 modifier; 1 Minute per segment gives a -6 modifier; and so on. Long-lasting, fairly static events give opposing bonuses: +2 for an event lasting a full Phase, +4 for a Turn, and so forth. Using this as a guideline, GMs can create reasonable modifiers for fast scans. Characters may well decide to just scan short sections of a timeline and hope they get lucky.

Second, a character can use a "selected highlights" version of scanning to search for only the most important events in a person's or object's existence. It's not as precise and controllable as

deciding to scan, say, everything that happened between four and three weeks ago, but when it works it saves the character a lot of time. In this system, each use of Precognition or Retrocognition picks up one important event from the subject's timeline. For objects, significant events include its creation, its use in a powerful magic spell or a murder, its destruction, or getting a new owner. For people, any event charged with strong emotion has importance: birth, death, family tragedy, love's first kiss, sheer terror, and so on.

The chief problem with this method is getting the right scene. The less important an event was to the subject, the harder finding the event will be. Suppose a character tries to solve a murder with Retrocognition, using objects at the scene of the crime as subjects. The murder weapon is perfect: it was intimately involved in the crime and very close to the killer. It would probably allow an unmodified PER Roll to spot the murderer's face. A vase shattered in the course of the murder wouldn't be as good: it suffered a significant event (breaking), but it wasn't closely involved in the crime itself. Seeing the details of the crime from the vase's point of view would suffer a severe penalty, if it was possible at all. (See also *Psychometry*, below.)

Dream Clairsentience

One common form of Precognition/Retrocognition in Urban Fantasy is characters who learn or view things by dreaming them. In *HERO System* terms, this means buying the Power with the Limitation *Only Through Dreams* (-1). The GM can determine how this works in his campaign, but in general the following guidelines apply.

First, the character must have a minimum of four hours of uninterrupted sleep to use Dream Precognition/Retrocognition. (This does not qualify for an *Extra Time* Limitation, though the GM may increase *Only Through Dreams* to -3 to make it match that Limitation.) However, at the GM's option, less sleep may still grant a vision of the future (or past), but at greatly reduced clarity. (In this case, longer periods of sleep may make the vision easier to understand.)

Second, a character using Dream Precognition/Retrocognition has no control over what he scans. His dreams might feature any of the methods of scanning outlined above, without the need to pay for an Advantage. The GM determines what the dream shows, and how it shows it. A dream might veer from the character himself, to a distant landscape, to a historical event, to a weird realm of living symbols. It will all be connected through some sort of narrative based in dream-logic, of course, but that still leaves the GM a lot of room to work.

Third, *Only Through Dreams* Precognition/Retrocognition usually also takes the *Vague And Unclear* (-½) Limitation. Dreams are rarely straightforward explanations of coming (or past) events, even for an accomplished wizard; they're filled with symbolism, psychological junk leaking over from the conscious mind, and other obstacles the character has to deal with. At the GM's option,

a character may be able to understand his Dream Precognition/Retrocognition better if he succeeds with a PS: Dream Interpretation roll.

Psychometry

Some mystics can read the emotional traces, signatures, or residues that cling to objects or places. This ability is known as *psychometry*. Sometimes psychometric readings are only feelings or impressions; at other times they're full-blown visions of some past event.

In *HERO System* terms, you build psychometry by buying Retrocognition with the Limitation *Psychometry* (-½). This is basically just the *Focus* Limitation slightly redefined; it means the character can only view the past through objects, and can only see the past associated with (or sometimes near) those objects. (At the GM's option, characters can also use Telepathy to simulate psychometry, but in a much more limited way. For example, using Psychometry Retrocognition on a bloody dagger used to kill someone would give the mystic a vision of a knifing murder, whereas Telepathy would only detect the traces of the extreme hatred and fear associated with the act. In other words, Psychometry Retrocognition provides both a more extensive and a clearer psychometric "picture" than Telepathy.)

Not all objects have the same "psychometric value." For example, a mirror broken during a murder may hold traces some of the fear or hatred associated with the killing, but it's just "fear" or "hatred" — what caused that fear or hatred won't usually be apparent, since the object was only indirectly involved in the act in question. On the other hand, the murder weapon contains strong traces of the emotions involved, and will probably even grant the character a vision of what happened during the murder — as the instrumentality of the killing, the weapon is so central to the event and its emotions that it carries traces of everything that happened.

In some cases Psychometry Retrocognition powers allow a mystic to gain information about a person by examining an object that's important to him or which he's handled or used frequently (for example, a favorite piece of jewelry, a car, a favored weapon). Usually this is limited to a general emotional/spiritual description of that person (he's evil, he's generally happy, he's mystically powerful) or the circumstances in which he tends to use or handle the object.

Sense-Affecting Powers

For purposes of the Sense-Affecting Powers, Precognitive Clairsentience and Retrocognitive Clairsentience should be considered separate from each other and from normal Clairsentience. Thus, a Flash versus Clairsentience affects a character's ordinary Clairsentience (Sight Group), but not his Precognition or Retrocognition; a Flash versus his Precognition doesn't affect his Clairsentience (Sight Group) or Retrocognition. If a character has two or more Clairsentience-based abilities, it's up to the GM to decide whether they're affected together or separately by Powers like Darkness and Flash.

ENHANCED SENSES

One thing that tends to set mystically powerful or sensitive characters apart from their mundane brethren is that they can perceive things others cannot. Sometimes this involves Talents like Danger Sense, but in other cases characters use Enhanced Senses to create their own perceptive powers. The most common such Sense is Detect Magic, which most (if not nearly all) spellcasters have to some degree. See page 113 of *Fantasy Hero* or page 49 of *The Ultimate Mystic* for discussion of what Detect Magic can do. *The Ultimate Mystic* also discusses the possibility of creating a "Mystic Sense Group," which would be appropriate for many Urban Fantasy settings.



HEALING

Hank tried to rise but the movement brought a white-hot flare of pain that almost made him black out again. The girl went down on one knee beside him, her face close to his. She put two fingers to her lips and licked them, then pressed them against his shoulder, her touch as light as a whisper, and the pain went away. Just like that, as though she'd flicked a switch.

—an animal-girl heals Hank in Charles de Lint's *Someplace To Be Flying*

"You have gifts, Joanne Walker, that your spirit cries out to use. Healing is chief among them."

—Joanne Walker's spirit guide explains some things to her in C. E. Murphy's *Urban Shaman*

Powers of healing and soothing are a common attribute of some types of Urban Fantasy spellcasters, such as shamans. The ones possessed by mystical creatures (such as faeries) may work almost instantaneously and heal injuries completely. Humans' powers tend to be more restricted, requiring Concentration, Extra Time, and perhaps a Skill Roll. They're also not as thorough in some cases, perhaps only easing pain so that natural healing can begin (or can work faster). (In game terms, "easing pain" may not even involve the *Healing* Power; instead it might be a Tough Group Flash to temporarily numb the nerves, or a Minor Transform that wears off over time.)

LUCK

Luck is a superb Power for representing the conscious or subconscious powers of mystic characters. Whether they know they're doing it or not, they "reach out" to alter probabilities around them and make things go their way. See *Lines Of Contention* in Chapter Four for an example of using Luck as an aspect of a magic system.

MIND CONTROL

Kieran reached inside himself to find where his strength lay and drew it up. He leaned against the window on the driver's side, his eyes blazing in the darkness with a strange feral glow[.]

"Don't call in," he said[.]

The man's finger hesitated on his radio's control. The witchlight flickered in Kieran's eyes and before the man knew what he was doing, he'd taken his hand from the radio's controls and used it to roll down his window. A fine sheen of sweat beaded his brow.

"I... I won't call in," he said slowly, his voice slightly slurred[.]

Kieran smiled. He'd been lucky with this one. It wasn't easy to bend someone to your will this quickly. You had to catch them off guard, otherwise it took considerable preparation. Or power.

—Kieran Foy mentally controls a potential enemy in Charles de Lint's *Moonheart*

In most Urban Fantasy stories, Mind Control and other abilities that involve dominating someone's will are regarded as evil, or at least morally dangerous territory. Heroes rarely have Mind Control powers, and if they do they use them reluctantly and only in desperate circumstances. Even then Mind Control tends to be difficult to use (Limitations such as Concentration, Extra Time, and Increased Endurance Cost are appropriate, if not required.) Mental control is a tool of the wicked and cruel, not the heroic.

DISADVANTAGES

Most types of Disadvantages are appropriate for Urban Fantasy games, when properly tailored. For example, it's not likely an Urban Fantasy spellcaster would be Susceptible to argonite meteor rocks like a superhero, but he might be Susceptible to holy ground or objects if his powers have a demonic or vampiric connection.

See pages 67-72 of *The Ultimate Mystic* for more information and ideas on Disadvantages for mystic characters.

ACCIDENTAL CHANGE

Typically associated with lycanthropes and some vampires in Urban Fantasy, Accidental Change often has a humorous component as well. For example, besides "were-ing out" during the full moon, a werewolf might also Accidentally Change to wolf form whenever a car passes close by him and be compelled to chase it for a block or two.

DISTINCTIVE FEATURES

"Maybe you should try and turn down that shine of yours a watt or two," he said before I could go. "My guess is that's what's making people so uncomfortable around you."

I just started at him, not really sure what I was hearing.

"What did you say?" I asked.

"Come on," he said. "Don't tell me you don't know. You've been touched by something — call it whatever you want. A mystery, the spirits, some kind of otherness. It's left a shine on you that most people aren't going to see, but they'll feel it and it's going to make them feel edgy and weird. It's like the world's shifting under their feet and no one likes that feeling."

—Saskia Madding learns something about herself in Charles de Lint's *Spirits In The Wires*

Distinctive Features are a common Disadvantage in many Urban Fantasy games. In a Low Urban Fantasy game, any sort of fantastic creature or the like probably qualifies for this Disadvantage. On the other hand, in an Open Magic setting people are much more used to weirdness, so being a troll or demon may not be unusual enough to be Distinctive Features.

In many Urban Fantasy campaigns, taking a *Mystic Aura* as a Distinctive Feature may be appro-



prate. Supernatural creatures and powerful mystics may have an aura other mystics can perceive with Detect Magic or similar abilities. It reveals the character's true nature despite any mundane disguise. A shapeshifted demon's ineradicable aura of evil is a good example. Some styles of magic (such as Necromancy) mark their practitioners with a mystic aura, too. A mystic aura's value as a Disadvantage depends on how extreme a reaction it provokes from other mystics. A demon's aura probably inspires immediate fear or hatred from any mystic who isn't evil; a pyromancer's fiery aura is simply a (in)convenient way for other wizards to identify him, unless pyromancers are exceptionally unpopular. Of course, in some settings mystics don't have "visual cues" or "mystic vibes" that other mystics can perceive, so check with your GM before taking a Mystic Aura to make sure it fits the game.

Example: *Shaman's Aura:* Native American detective Sarah Redhawk's totem animal is a falcon. Anyone with visual mystic senses sees her as both a human and a falcon. So does anyone on the Astral Plane. To a mystically savvy person, this is a clear sign she's a shaman.

Distinctive Features: Totem Aura (Not Concealable; Causes Major Reaction; Detectable Only With Unusual Senses). 10 points.

Similarly, a mystic might have an "aura of weirdness" that makes non-mystics uncomfortable around him. This typically imposes a -1 or greater penalty on Interaction Skill rolls and the like. Depending on how this "ability" functions and the GM's preferences, it might be a Distinctive Feature or a Social Limitation.

HUNTED

The man with the naked sword in his hands appeared out of the darkness without a warning rustle of sound or whiff of magic to announce his presence. He was tall, like me, but broad and heavy-chested, and he carried his weight with a ponderous sort of dignity. ... His eyes were grey, touched with crow's-feet at the corners, and dangerous. Moonlight glinted off those eyes in the same shade it did from the brighter silver of the sword's blade. He began to walk deliberately toward me, speaking in a quiet voice as he did.

"Harry Blackstone Copperfield Dresden. Irresponsible use of true names for summoning and binding others to your will violates the Fourth Law of Magic," the man intoned. "I remind you that you are under the Doom of

Damocles. No further violations of the Laws will be tolerated. The sentence for further violation is death, by the sword, to be carried out at once." ...

"Your point being?" I did my best to keep from looking nervous or impressed. Truth be told, I was both. Morgan was my Warden, assigned to me by the White Council to make sure I didn't bend or break any of the Laws of Magic. ...

"My point," he said, scowling, "is that it is my assigned duty to monitor your use of power, and to see to it that you do not abuse it."

—Harry Dresden's confronted by his Warden, Morgan, in Jim Butcher's *Storm Front*

As in so many genres, Hunted is one of the most common Disadvantages in Urban Fantasy. Characters seem to attract the malign attentions of faeries, ghosts, vampires, rival werewolf clans, aggravated flying carpet cabbies, insane cultists, and other wizards almost without trying. In some cases a Hunted is wrapped up in a character's "origin" — how he learned magic or discovered he had mystical powers.

PHYSICAL LIMITATION

The stereo system was state of the art, though not an expensive brand. ... The music continued for a few seconds more, and then it began to skip over a section about two seconds long, repeating it over and over again.

I grimaced. Like I said, I have this effect on machinery. It has something to do with being a wizard, with working with magical forces. The more delicate and modern the machine is, the more likely it is that something will go wrong if I get close enough to it. I can kill a copier at fifty paces.

—Harry Dresden laments his effect on technology in Jim Butcher's *Storm Front*

Besides the usual run of Physical Limitations like being lame, deaf, or blind, which are perfectly acceptable in an Urban Fantasy campaign, one Physical Limitation that tends to crop up in the genre is called *Gremlin*. It represents the fact that the character and technology don't get along so well. Whether it's due to his being a fantastic creature of some sort, or because of the mystic energies that surround him, he makes technology malfunction: cars won't start (or stall out); CD and DVD players only show static; computers malfunction in a variety of ways.

In game terms, the frequency of Gremlin depends on (a) how often the character comes into contact with high technology, and (b) how frequently the "interference" tends to occur. For most characters Infrequently or Frequently are best. The severity of the Disadvantage represents the strength of its effect, rated in dice of Unluck: Slightly is 1d6; Greatly is 2d6; and Fully is 3d6. When the character comes into contact with technology in a way the GM believes triggers his Gremlin, the character rolls his Unluck dice. The amount of Unluck that comes up indicates how badly the machine malfunctions. However, even if no Unluck is rolled, the character's mere presence may still cause TVs and telephones to be static-y, cars to backfire, and so forth.

Gremlin As A Power

Some characters may want to have Gremlin not as a Disadvantage but as a power — an ability they can call on at will, and perhaps more importantly shut down at will. The easiest way to do this tends to be Suppress, usually from 1-3d6 (similar to the amount of Unluck dice as outlined above), Damage Shield, Invisible Power Effects, Reduced Endurance, Persistent, Always On, Only Affects Technology (-1). That simulates the typical effect pretty well, since it doesn't take much in the way of points of Suppress to shut down everyday technological items. However, the character should tailor it to suit his own ideas if he has something atypical in mind.



PSYCHOLOGICAL LIMITATION

Paranoid? Probably. But just because you're paranoid doesn't mean that there isn't an invisible demon about to eat your face.

—the wisdom of Harry Dresden,
in Jim Butcher's *Storm Front*

Wizards, mystics, and fantastic creatures tend to be rather odd — after all, they're on one extreme of humanity, and they see and study things Man Was Not Meant To Know. As a result, they may suffer from all sorts of psychological maladies, ranging from mild personality quirks to outright madness. And beyond that, they're just as likely to fall in love, develop burning envies or bitter hatreds, and be scared of heights as ordinary folks.

EQUIPMENT

Equipment raises some interesting issues for Urban Fantasy campaigns. On the one hand, modern-day characters, be they wizards or just ordinary folks, have easy, and usually cheap, access to all sorts of gear: firearms; body armor; cell phones; cars; computers. But on the other hand, Urban Fantasy characters rarely rely on weapons and body armor. Sure, occasionally there's one who keeps a small pistol or a knife for protection, but generally speaking they don't go around carrying assault rifles, combat shotguns, grenades, and other such implements of destruction.

This can create problems for *Urban Fantasy Hero* games. Unlike a novel or a movie where the author can simply decree that the protagonist won't carry a gun, in a roleplaying game the characters aren't under direct "authorial control." It's not at all uncommon for Urban Fantasy characters to load up on guns and other tactical gear, since (a) they can, and (b) it's a perfectly logical, sensible thing to do in gamerthink terms.

Obviously there are some GMing-related ways to resolve this situation, such as giving the PCs adversaries who can't be opposed with guns (ghosts, for example, can't be shot) or having the authorities keep such a close eye on them that they can't tote an arsenal's worth of firepower around. But some GMs may find it easier to restrict access to equipment from the beginning. The best way to do this is to appeal to "genre common sense," but if that doesn't work a rules-based solution may be required.

One possibility is to use the Resource Points rules from pages 150-54 of *Dark Champions*. They allow PCs access to resources that are common in the modern day — gear, contacts, vehicles, and so on — while restricting the amount of points characters can spend on them. Set the Equipment Points total at a fairly low level and characters won't be able to buy too much ordnance.

BALANCING MAGIC AND GEAR

Another consideration for campaigns that allow characters to have combat-effective spells is this: is it fair to make characters pay Character Points for spells when they get guns and other gear for free? If a spell is no more effective than a gun, but characters get guns for free, some players will forego spells and stock up on firearms, thus saving Characters Points they can spend elsewhere. Generally speaking this doesn't suit the "feel" of Urban Fantasy, so the GM may need to take steps to keep it from happening.

For example, consider designing the magic system so that spells *don't* cost Character Points. Instead, perhaps a character has to buy a Perk, or a single Skill, or the like and can then cast any spell he wants (or any spell of a given type). Taken too far this can also be unbalancing, but done right it can add a lot of flavor to the game while simultaneously solving the problem.

Another possibility is to make spells cheaper than their full Real Point cost somehow. Perhaps characters can buy them in Power Frameworks, or using a spell divisor to reduce the cost after all Power Modifiers are applied. The GM can choose the method most suitable to his campaign and players to ensure a balance between spells and sixguns.

ENCHANTED ITEMS

Of course, in an Urban Fantasy game, the possibility also exists that characters will have enchanted items as well as mundane equipment. This can add a lot of flavor to a character or a campaign... but like ordinary gear it can also pose problems of abuse.

The default for most Urban Fantasy Hero campaigns is that characters have to pay Character Points for any enchanted items they want at the start of the campaign. After the game is underway, they can typically keep any they acquire during their adventures (though that doesn't mean they'll know how to use or control them!). See pages 274-88 of *Fantasy Hero* for a general discussion of the creation and use of enchanted items in *HERO System* terms, though some of that information may be more applicable to traditional "warriors and wizards" Fantasy than Urban Fantasy. The book *Enchanted Items* has hundreds of possible items you can use, but you may need to adapt them to the Urban Fantasy setting — for example, instead of an enchanted sword a character might have a magical switchblade knife.

Alternatively, if you're using the Resource Points rules as discussed above, if it's appropriate to the setting you might set up a category for enchanted items: call it Enchanted Item Points. Each character would get a defined number of "EIPs" at the start of the campaign and could buy more for the same cost as Vehicle/Base Points. That way every character can have a few distinctive items without having to spend all of his Character Points on them, and the GM doesn't feel too guilty about breaking one or taking one away because the character can use his EIPs for some other item later.



“Oh,” I said. My voice shook a little.

“Are you afraid, boy?” Cassius whispered.

“You’re about the fifth scariest person I’ve met today,” I said.

His eyes became very cold.

“Don’t knock it,” I said. “That’s really better than it sounds.”

—Harry Dresden confronts
Cassius in “Dead Beat”

CHAPTER

3



**STORIES OF MAGIC
AND WONDER**

**GAMEMASTERING
URBAN FANTASY**

CREATING A CAMPAIGN



Nobody tells you the really important stuff so in the end you have to imagine it for yourself. It's like how things connect. A thing is just a thing until you have the story that goes with it.

—Charles de Lint, “Heartfires”

In many ways, creating an Urban Fantasy campaign is easy. Compared to inventing an entire alternate world for a traditional Fantasy Hero game, or a galaxy for a Star Hero game, it's a piece of cake. Since the setting is the modern world, you don't have to create most things or explain the setting to the players — you all live in it. All that's necessary is deciding how magic works and how it's affected the world, if at all. While that's not necessarily a simple thing, it usually involves a lot less work than creating a whole world from scratch.

THE MAGIC

At the beginning of Chapter One there were three questions that define Urban Fantasy settings:

1. What types of magic (and other fantastical elements) exist in the setting?
2. How powerful is magic in the setting?
3. How commonplace (and well-known to the general public) is magic?

The most important thing you need to do when creating an Urban Fantasy setting is to answer these questions, and then deal with the implications of those answers. This section reviews the basic considerations. (For more detailed information on creating spells and magic systems in *HERO System* rules terms, see Chapter Four of *Fantasy Hero*.)

Types Of Magic

The first, and usually easiest, question is “what types of magic exist in my Urban Fantasy setting?”. It's common in Fantasy Hero games to categorize magic into different types: Alchemy, Necromancy, Sorcery, Ritual Magic, Voodoo, whatever makes the most sense for the setting. That approach works well for many Urban Fantasy games, though in the lower-powered settings the traditional Fantasy magic styles may not be very appropriate. In an Open Magic game there's nothing wrong with having potion-selling alchemists set up shop right next to the electronics outlet and the dress boutique. But in

a Hidden History or Low Urban Fantasy setting, the odds of there being functional, Fantasy-style Alchemy are pretty slim... and even if potions do exist they're rare and precious things, not for sale in any store.

SOURCE OF MAGIC

For the lower-powered games, many GMs find it more helpful to consider the *source* of magic rather than the “categories” of spells that characters can cast. Typically the choices are one's self, objects, and ambient magical energy.

Perhaps the most common source of magic in Urban Fantasy stories is the spellcaster himself. In these settings magic is a sort of innate “talent” or “energy” that some people have, but others do not (just like some people are artistic, and some not). Casting spells thus becomes a matter of personal control and willpower. Wizards may have to follow rigid codes of conduct — such as being vegetarian, abstaining from sex, keeping themselves in peak physical condition, or not crossing bodies of water in boats or by swimming — to keep their power strong and their minds “attuned” to spellcraft. To put it another way, there may be activities or external forces that can interfere with spellcasting, so the wizard does his best to avoid them or minimize his contact with them. Since magic is a personal force, spells usually cost END (often a lot of it) and may have Side Effects that involve sacrificing BODY to power them.

Another possible source of magic is objects: crystals, plants, ancient artifacts, crafted fetishes and talismans, or the like. A wizard's power thus comes from knowing (or sensing) which objects have mystic power and how to draw it out/use it. This can be thought of as similar in some ways to fictional depictions of Voodoo, or to the magic systems found in some traditional Fantasy role-playing games (though it's probably not as effortless or powerful as those).

Last but not least, magic may be an ambient form of “energy” the spellcaster can “tap” to cast spells. Magic may exist in limited places — only along ley lines, only near bodies of water, only where lots of people live (or have lived) — or may be all around us. Casting spells thus becomes a matter of will; the caster has to “impress” his desires “upon” the magical force and “shape” it to do what he wants. Depending on how “thick” or “rich” the magic is in a particular area, spellcasting may be easier or harder. (See *Magic As A Natural Resource* on page 221 of *Fantasy Hero* for more thoughts on ambient magical energy.)



The Power Of Magic

The second issue to consider is how powerful magic is. Typically this relates to the type of campaign. In an Open Magic or other High Urban Fantasy setting, spells are easy to cast, can accomplish many things, and significantly affect the world. In Low Urban Fantasy campaigns, particularly Hidden History ones, it may barely be noticeable (or provable), and in most situations isn't nearly as effective as technology.

Broadly speaking, you can think of Urban Fantasy magic as falling into one of three “power categories”: Powerful; Average; and Realistic (or “Weak”). This doesn't necessarily match the power level of the campaign: a Low Urban Fantasy campaign might feature powerful but subtle magic even though the characters are Heroic-level or even Competent Normal. Similarly, the descriptive names can be deceiving; Realistic magic can be plenty powerful, it just tends to seem “Weak” in comparison to the other types.

Powerful Magic

In a “Powerful” magic setting, such as many Superheroic campaigns, magic tends to be as fast and flashy as any other superpower or ability: the wizards waves his hands and it's done (whatever “it” happens to be). Super-mages apply few, if any, Limitations to their spells and make extensive use of Power Frameworks. On the other hand, Superheroic magic also tends to be direct: super-mages don't curse someone from a hundred miles away, they fly in and blast him with a mystic bolt.

In terms of game mechanics, very little separates a super-shaman from a super-kabbalist — or

a mutant, for that matter. The differences between mystic traditions become mere details of special effects or visual style. For instance, perhaps an image of the Thunderbird flashes around the shaman when he casts a lightning bolt, while the sigil of an angel briefly glows before the kabbalist. In *HERO System* terms, though, their lightning bolts differ not a whit from those of the supervillain Thunderbolt (who got his powers from a reactor) or the weather-controlling heroine Tempest.

The distinction between Average and Powerful magic isn't absolute. Novice super-mages, in particular, may apply significant Limitations to their spells. But their magic remains as quick and easy to use as any other superpower. A super-mage defines his *Focus* Limitation with a wand, while a Average-level mystic might need a wand, a magic circle, and a brazier of incense. Thus, to convert spells described in *HERO System* products like *The Fantasy Hero Grimoires* to Superheroic forms, just strip away most (if not all) Limitations and adjust the Active Points to the level of the campaign.

Average Magic

The differences between magic styles are most pronounced in settings with “Average” magic, which tend to be Heroic-level campaigns. In such games characters have fewer Character Points to spend and thus have to represent the restrictions on magic styles with Limitations to make spells more affordable. Mystics use the full panoply of ceremonies, tools, special times and places, and other paraphernalia when they cast spells. Mystics may know spells for attack and defense they can use in combat, but heavy Limitations still prevent them from becoming front-line fighters.

Typically, each arcanum features a range of magical effects and special feats of magic unique to it, which are denied to other styles of magic. A shaman can astrally project; a Hermetic magus, Hindu sadhu, necromancer, or alchemist cannot. The shaman summons totem-spirits; the Hermetic summons demons and elementals; the necromancer summons ghosts; the alchemist and sadhu cannot summon spirits at all. Even the feats of magic common to most magical traditions, such as healing disease or seeing omens of the future, use such different methods that no one could possibly mistake one sort of mystic for another. These differences not only help to distinguish the arcana, they give characters a motivation to study multiple styles.

“Realistic” Magic

In the real world, self-styled magicians don’t claim they can throw lightning bolts or turn people into toads. The contemporary magician says his powers are entirely nonphysical. He manipulates minds, unseen spirits, and luck. He can’t *prove* his spell was responsible for the result. His “mind reading” could be a lucky guess. It could be a coincidence that someone fell ill or suffered an accident after a “curse.” A determined skeptic could always explain the result as luck, mundane skill, psychological pressure, or even a fraudulent set-up by the mystic and accomplices unknown.

Example: *Three mystics all try to open an office safe by invoking Surgat, a demon with power over locks. The Powerful mystic waves his hand and says, “Open in Surgat’s name!” The safe glows and springs open. The Heroic-level mystic paints Surgat’s sigil on the safe door and chants a five-minute incantation in Latin. The demon appears, receives its traditional offering of three hairs from a fox, and opens the lock. The “realistic” mystic draws the demon’s sigil, chants the incantation, and burns the fox hairs, then searches the office. He finds the combination to the safe taped under a desk drawer. Coincidence? Maybe. But the “realistic” mage knows the combination wouldn’t have been there if he hadn’t conducted the ritual. In all three cases, the basic Power is the same: a Transform, “locked to unlocked.” The methods and effects, however, are quite different.*

“Realistic” magic suffers far greater restrictions than other power levels of magic. All effects must be deniable, all Powers undetectable by normal senses. Attacks are usually limited to Mental Powers and powers with Invisible Power Effects. They’re usually not effective in combat because they require time, ritual acts, and preparations; they’re more likely to be “curses” and similar sorts of spells cast at a distance. Defenses against physical attacks are even more restricted: a “realistic” mystic could give himself some extra DCV or Combat Luck, perhaps, but if an enemy holds him down and stabs him, he has no deniable way to resist the damage.

For all that, “realistic” mystics can wield great power. Their magic may be subtle and slow in its effects, but an accident can kill someone just as dead as a fireball, and it’s a lot harder to trace the attack to its source.

Standard spells found in books like *The Fantasy Hero Grimoires* often do not translate into “realistic” terms. In many cases, you have to create a spell that achieves a similar purpose, but with deniable special effects. See *Lines Of Contention* in Chapter Four for some examples.

MAGIC AND TECHNOLOGY

Related to the question of magic’s raw power is the issue of how magic and technology interact. Since technology’s so prevalent in the modern day, it won’t take long before your campaign confronts issues like “does body armor stop a spell?”, “can my Lockpicking Spell affect this electronic lock?”, and “are the people in that car protected from my Lightning Bolt Spell?”.

Normal Interaction

On one end of the spectrum are settings where magic and technology interact normally — each can affect the other. This tends to be the default in roleplaying game settings because it maintains character parity. If one force or another is more powerful, then player characters tend to gravitate toward using that force, to the eventual detriment of the campaign. Additionally, the universal mechanics of the *HERO System* make it easy to compare one type of force to the other to ensure equality (or inequality).

In this sort of setting, wands can be evaluated to determine their effectiveness in relation to pistols, defensive spells to body armor, sensory spells to binoculars and chemical sniffers, flying carpets to cars, and so on. However, you should keep two things in mind. First, just because magic and technology can easily be compared and contrasted doesn’t mean they can do the same things. A magic wand and a pistol can both kill you, but the wand shoots lightning bolts, and no technological weapon can do that. On the other hand, accelerating a physical missile to killing velocity the way a gun does might not be possible with a spell. But some settings might be totally interchangeable, with electricity guns and Gunfire Spells right alongside the magic wands and pistols.

Second, just because magic and technology are comparable doesn’t mean they’re *compatible*. In some settings a character can, for example, wear body armor and use a defense spell at the same time. In others, wearing a technological device like body armor would make it more difficult or impossible to use a defensive spell at the same time, or perhaps reduce the effectiveness of the spell. Many GMs like to include this sort of element in their Urban Fantasy magic systems because it prevents a character from becoming extremely powerful by combining magic and technology.

Irregular Interaction

At the opposite end of the spectrum are settings where magic and technology don't interact normally. This could mean several things.

First, it could mean that magic and high technology (meaning anything more advanced than, say, technology as of the year 1850) cannot affect one another. A Magic Shield Spell provides fine protection against magic, and even knives... but a modern bullet goes through it as if it weren't there. A Lockpicking Spell works fine on ordinary key locks, but is useless against electronic locks. On the other hand, body armor offers no protection at all against attack spells. Taken to an extreme, magic and technology might be *totally* incompatible, with spells unable to affect even knives and simple locks, and technology unable to resist the effects of magic. (Though that may raise some chicken-or-the-egg concerns about which force has primacy in which situation.)

A less dire situation is one in which magic and technology aren't incompatible, but simply "interfere" with one another to some degree. In this case a Magic Shield Spell works against modern bullets, but only at half effect; a Lockpicking Spell works against electronic locks provided the caster succeeds with his Magic roll at a -4 penalty. Devising some rules for how this works requires a little effort on your part, as well as careful consideration of how they might affect game balance, but the reward is a flavorful system that adds depth and excitement to the campaign.

The Effect Of Power Levels

The question of how magic interacts with technology may depend in part on how powerful magic is. If spells are powerful and easy to cast they may largely replace firearms and other personal weapons, at least among members of the Mystic World. If magic is versatile, it could easily "trump" technology regardless of how they interact. A great security system may not be susceptible to spells of alteration, but it's useless if magic can make a character invisible and intangible. (Though of course a facility that's aware of the "mystic threat" may have counter-spells to stop spellcasters.) If ordinary weapons are limited to physical effects (like creating stab wounds and bullet holes), they might take a back seat to magic if there are spells that can cause similar injuries *and* make people fall asleep, turn them into toads, or trap them in shackles of mystic force.

Commonality Of Magic

While the types and power level of magic focus on the "nuts and bolts" issues that tend to have the most impact in game terms, for campaign creation purposes the most important issue — and generally the most fun to think about — is how common and well-known to the public magic is.

The answer to that question depends first and foremost on the subgenre of your campaign. Open Magic/High Urban Fantasy typically depends on there being a lot of magic, generally known to the public and relatively powerful. Low Urban Fan-

tasy usually has much less magic and little, if any public knowledge of it. Hidden History campaigns tend to be the extreme, with perhaps no more than a few dozen people around the world having knowledge of true magic, and maybe twice that number on the "fringes" of the Mystic World who suspect something but can't prove it.

This general issue raises a number of more specific questions.

HISTORY OF MAGIC

How long has magic been around? For many Urban Fantasy settings the answer is "forever." That means you can have an extensive history of magic, with spells and artifacts from centuries or millennia ago popping up in your modern-day campaign. You can refer to ancient Egyptian wizardry, to the grimoires of medieval magicians, to the formulae of alchemists and the spells of the kabbalists. This adds depth and flavor, but it has some implications for you to consider.

First, if magic's been around a long time but there isn't much public knowledge of it, how's it been kept secret? If magic's difficult to learn/use and only a few people know about it (like in most Hidden History settings), then it's not too implausible for most people to think it's all nonsense and children's stories. Easier to learn/use or more prevalent magic would be much, much harder to keep secret, "realistically" speaking. You may need to provide some sort of in-setting explanation, like a spell wizards can use to erase memories of arcane events. Or possibly magic is so dangerous to the user's sanity that most people reflexively dismiss it, forget about it, or find ways to "explain it away" as a mental self-defense mechanism. (Though that in turn implies that many, if not all, wizards are insane....)

Second, has the existence of magic affected human civilization in any way? For example, if magic's powerful but can only be used by a specific culture, or a small group of persons, have wizards taken over the world or otherwise altered real-world human history? Even if they don't want to conquer entire continents they could manipulate economies, politics, and the media to suit their own desires and purposes (or perhaps as a way of "warring" with one another). Given the right set of circumstances this isn't only possible, it's practically necessary if you want your setting to seem "realistic" to the players. Rarely, if ever, in human history has a group of people possessing overwhelming, irresistible power failed to use it for their own benefit somehow.

Magic And Technology

Third, if magic has been a part of human society and culture for a long time, how has it affected the development of technology, if at all? If magic isn't powerful, is difficult to use, or is only known to a handful of secretive people, this is an easy issue to deal with: technology is invented because anyone can use it easily, and it can do things magic cannot. But when magic is powerful and/or easy to learn and use, it raises the question of why technology's necessary. In



some settings magic may even replace technology to a large extent. For example, in Poul Anderson's *Operation Chaos*, people drive flying broomsticks instead of cars, use kachinas to predict the weather, and are trying to harness Fire and Air magic to build rocketships.

A trickier, but perhaps more “realistic,” approach is to consider how the existence of magic might have affected the development of technology over the ages. The easiest way to proceed is to determine what magic *can't* do and assume technology would evolve to fill those gaps. For example, easy-to-use, effective magic might take the place of the plow and simple devices like the lever or the pulley. But suppose magic cannot effortlessly lift heavy objects — the effect on a caster using magic to lift something heavy is the same as if he were doing it physically. Suddenly there's a technological niche to be filled: there have to be wagons and other vehicles to carry loads with. That in turn could eventually lead to steam power and the internal combustion engine, and suddenly you've got cars existing alongside working crystal balls.

Technology may also develop for reasons of reliability or safety. A wizard could cast a spell to summon a demon to carry heavy loads effortlessly... but the spell doesn't always work, and the possibility exists that the demon could slip its chains and wreak havoc on its surroundings. Wouldn't it be better to just have a wagon? Wizards may still prefer to use demons (to show off their power, as a point of pride, or because of a vow, for example), but the average joe is content with a technological vehicle.

A related issue you might want to consider is

whether the existence of magic made it possible to develop technologies earlier than in the real world. If that's the case, in the early twenty-first century mankind might have access to things that now seem like science fiction, such as flying vehicles, energy pistols, or sources of clean, inexhaustible energy. If nothing else, such gadgetry may mean that non-magic-using PCs can meet wizard PCs on an equal footing.

Lastly, can magic and technology mingle? Is it possible to have a device that runs partly on dweomers, partly on diodes? That could radically change how society looks and operates as a techno-wizard repairs a PC's computer because someone cracked the case and all the magic smoke got out, enchanted robots transform industrial pollutants into valuable raw materials, and Steyr AUG Assault Wands fire either bullets or bolts of arcane force at the flip of a selector switch.

RETURNED MAGIC

In other *Urban Fantasy Hero* settings, magic hasn't been around forever. There *used* to be magic, back in medieval times perhaps, but it died away for some reason. Perhaps the rise of technology cancelled out the forces that allowed magic to work, or the stars aligned themselves to ruin spell-casting, or some god or monster used up all the magic. But whatever the reason, magic has now returned! Maybe the stars re-aligned, or someone broke down the “dam” holding back magical energies, or a long-prophesied date finally arrives.

Besides the issues of “why did magic go away” and “why did it return” (which may be central mysteries of the campaign the PCs have to solve eventually), re-introduced magic comes with several questions and implications of its own. First, when

did it come back in relation to when the campaign starts? If magic has *just* returned, the PCs are going to find themselves in a rather chaotic world where the rules have changed and no one's entirely sure what the new rules are. That can make for exciting adventures and in-depth roleplaying, but it may not be what every gaming group wants, especially since it means there probably isn't any sort of "magical tradition" to fall back on or draw inspiration from. If it's been years, decades, or centuries since magic came back into the world, magical traditions and a Mystic World will certainly have evolved. For example, colleges may offer degrees in Thaumaturgy, and world governments may have found ways to employ magic for military or espionage purposes. On the streets, a "magic mafia" may have evolved, displacing traditional organized crime. The downside is that if magic's been around long enough, in effect the setting's not much different from one where magic's already existed — you're not able to take advantage of some of the story possibilities offered by "magic has returned." The central mysteries of how and why it returned may still exist, but otherwise the PCs live in an established magical society.

You may also want to consider this: if magic went away once, could it go away again? Is the "level" of magic static, or does it increase or decrease over time, or even fluctuate from year to year? The answers to those questions could have a major impact on the campaign setting and how it develops... and may present more "deep mysteries" for the PCs to solve.

Social Implications

Second, what changes, both immediate and long-term, occur in society because magic now works? There are countless issues you could explore in this area; here are just a few of the more prominent ones:

- how does the government react to magic? Does it try to regulate the practice of spellcasting, perhaps even to the point of outlawing wizardry (or some types of wizardry, like necromancy)? Do spellcasters have to have licenses to practice their craft? Are all mystically-powerful people "recruited" into the military or some other branch of the government... and if so, is there an underground that tries to hide them?
- how are organizations that claimed to keep magical traditions alive during the non-magical years — Neo-Pagan religions, secret societies, surviving offshoots of the Golden Dawn, whatever appeals to you — affected? Were they right all along, and thus does their existing familiarity with ritual practices and magical lore make them a real force to be reckoned with in the Age of Magic? Were they totally wrong, perhaps causing their organizations to fall apart now due to recriminations? Were they the cause of the return of magic?
- how does the return of magic affect religion? Will established religions embrace magic, or reject it as evil and corrupting? (And if the latter... are they right?) Will religious officials, as keepers of a ritual and semi-mystical tradition, automatically have magic powers? Do holy objects and holy

ground have magical effects, or is that just wishful thinking on the part of the faithful?

- how does magic affect the economy? Are stock market fluctuations a thing of the past now that divination spells are possible? Are magic services and enchanted items common enough to be bought and sold? If spells can effortlessly create money, gold, diamonds, or other valuables, does that cause economic turmoil that can only be corrected by shifting to some type of currency magic can't affect? Can some goods, products, or services be provided by spells, eliminating some sectors of the economy altogether (and perhaps replacing them with spellcasters-for-hire)?
- do some cultures or societies become more prominent because of magic? For example, are some Third World nations where mystic practices have remained common to the present day now as powerful as First World military powers? Are some races or cultures inherently more magically powerful than others?
- how does magic make life easier (or harder) for people? Do spells provide foolproof contraception? Can everyone teleport to work or school, making traffic jams a thing of the past? Can people do all their chores with a simple spell, freeing enormous amounts of time for leisure activities? Do imp infestations make life a living hell for people until the conjuror-exterminator is called?

MAGICAL RACES AND CREATURES

In the highest of High Urban Fantasy games, magical beings and races — trolls, faeries, dragons, and on and on — exist out in the open. This creates other issues you need to resolve, or at least bring to the PCs' attention.

First, where do mystical creatures come from? Some, like faeries or unicorns, may have always existed in hidden places in the wild, or have returned to Earth from other realms. But what about "humanoid" creatures like trolls and goblins? Are they related to Humans, or perhaps even Humans transformed by magic?

Second, are mystical creatures more or less the same around the world, or do they differ from land to land, culture to culture? Do trolls exist everywhere, or only northern Europe? Does Japan have oni, and if so are they able to leave the island to visit North American Indian animal-people?

Third, if mystical creatures mingle with ordinary Humans, how strong is prejudice against them? In a world where prejudice still exists on the basis of skin color, religion, and other meaningless intangibles, it would unquestionably exist between intelligent humanoid species. Would Human physical laborers protest about jobs being "stolen" from them by much stronger Trolls? Would Orc children be barred from schools, and their families forced to live in ghettos? Would "oppressed mystic minorities" form civil rights organizations, organized crime groups, and private support networks the way immigrants do?

CHARACTER GUIDELINES

Before you do the preliminary work to create your *Urban Fantasy Hero* world, you should consider the nature and power of the PCs. As the protagonists of the campaign, the characters who occupy center stage all the time, the PCs have a greater effect on the game than any other factor.

The player characters' level of power, and thus the type of characters you can expect players to create, depends largely on how many Character Points the players build them on. A game where you allow players to build 200- or 250-point characters provides you with a wider range of PC types and abilities than one with 100- or 150-point characters — but it's also likely to increase any problems you may have challenging the PCs and maintaining game balance. When deciding how many points PCs can start with, you should consider the following issues:

SUBGENRE

First, what subgenre(s) does your campaign emulate? Low Urban Fantasy campaigns, including Hidden History games, almost always feature lower-powered characters. At most such characters are built on 75 Base Points + 75 points from Disadvantages, but it's possible to run Low Urban Fantasy with characters built on only 25-50 Character Points total if you want to. High Urban Fantasy games and some cinematic Low Urban Fantasy campaigns use higher point totals so the PCs can afford plenty of spells, enchanted items, and other unusual abilities. These are just guidelines, though — there's no reason you can't have high-powered PCs in an otherwise "realistic" campaign, particularly when you want the characters to have spells and other abilities that may get expensive.

HEROES VERSUS THE WORLD

How do you want the PCs to compare to the world around them? Low-powered heroes may have trouble dealing with street criminals, not to mention summoned infernal beings! On the opposite end of the spectrum, some powerful heroes may be able to stand toe-to-toe with national governments, squads of soldiers, or the like. If the PCs can easily dispense with everyday opposition, that colors their perception of the world and influences their role within it.

Think about the types of adventures you want to run and what you expect the PCs to do over the course of the campaign. That tells you a lot about the type of PCs that best fit your game. For example, if you plan for a Low Urban Fantasy campaign where the PCs are "street mages" involved in a "secret mystic war" against a coven of evil witches, you want your PCs to regard the average lesser demon (the witches' preferred servant of choice for dirty work) and street thugs as a threat — if the heroes are significantly more powerful than that, your scenarios won't pose much of a challenge to them. While any one PC should be more powerful and skilled than any one typical demon or

thug (they are the heroes of the story, after all!), two or three adversaries should probably be a match for a PC. On the other hand, a campaign of more epic scope or fantastic adventure may require PCs of greater competence and ability.

POWER LEVELS AND EFFECTIVENESS CEILINGS

You should decide whether you want to impose restrictions on the amount of power, CV, Skills, and the like that characters can have. Characters built on large numbers of Character Points may not be nearly as powerful as those points imply if you limit what they can spend points on.

In a *Urban Fantasy Hero* context, point ceilings — restrictions on how many Active Points a power or ability can have — are most likely to be appropriate in Open Magic games and other settings where characters may have access to powerful spells and enchanted items. You may also have some concerns over the use of equipment (see below), but rather than imposing a power ceiling you should try to find plausible in-game reasons to restrict characters' access to equipment, such as technological devices not working properly in the presence of strong magic.

Effectiveness ceilings — restrictions on characters' CVs, DEXs, Skill rolls, Combat Skill Levels, DCs, or the like — are more common in *Urban Fantasy Hero* games than point ceilings. An effectiveness ceiling helps you control the PCs' overall power, making it easy for you to know what can challenge them and what can't. It also encourages characters to broaden and diversify their abilities, since the ceiling stops them from spending all their Experience Points on the same things game after game. But effectiveness ceilings can lead to problems of their own. First, they may restrict the types of weapons characters can use (since simulating some weapons properly requires a lot of DCs), and that may not make sense, "realistically." Second, over the course of a long campaign, you may soon wind up with a lot of characters who look identical to each other, or who try to find ways around the effectiveness ceiling even when those ways make no sense given their character concepts. You may need to increase the ceiling slowly over the course of the campaign, at least in one or two areas for each character type (for example, maybe you allow road warriors to buy more DEX and SPD than other characters can, and gunslingers more Range Skill Levels).

Normal Characteristic Maxima

Intertwined with the concept of effectiveness ceilings are the Normal Characteristic Maxima rules, which impose a sort of ceiling on how many points characters can spend on Characteristics. Typically *Urban Fantasy Hero* games feature NCM as a campaign default, for no Character Points, but the GM might choose not to use that rule in some High Urban Fantasy games. See the *Characteristics* section of Chapter Two for more information on using Normal Characteristic Maxima.

The Arms Race

Weapons and fighting skills aren't a prominent part of the *Urban Fantasy Hero* genre in literature, but in a gaming context players often like to make sure their characters are well-armed. It's not uncommon for an "arms race" to develop in the campaign sooner or later (though it may involve magic more than mundane gear). The players start trying to get more and bigger weapons for their characters, and they cry foul when the GM doesn't reward them with "treasure" in the form of assault weapons, grenades, and perhaps even enchanted items. Some of them even spend a lot of Character Points on Skills related to building or repairing weapons just to ensure they've got as much access as possible to the maximum firepower.

There isn't necessarily anything wrong with this; it may add flavor to the game. But the arms race becomes a problem if the PCs acquire so much weaponry that they have little difficulty defeating their opposition. All good stories involve a challenge of some kind that the main characters have to overcome. If your *Urban Fantasy Hero* PCs can cut through legions of cultists without breaking a sweat because they've got a minor arsenal's worth of weaponry, there's no challenge for them, and therefore everyone has less fun. Dealing with this conflict — wanting to give the characters more "toys," but not so many that they wreck the game — is one of the hardest things for *Urban Fantasy Hero* GMs to do.

Some suggestions to help you reduce or eliminate this problem:

- **Give the characters "toys" with limited uses:**

Giving the characters an unlimited supply of grenades can easily unbalance a campaign. Giving them half a dozen grenades that they have to save for only the most crucial situations is fun.

- **Give them "toys," but don't let them use them for very long:**

Just because the heroes find weapons doesn't mean they get to use them forever. They may have a limited supply of ammunition, the authorities may take the weapons away if they get the chance, or a weapon may be on the verge of breaking down after just a few shots. And of course an enemy can always steal the PCs' gear.

- **Substitute equipment damage for character damage:**

When a character takes major damage from an enemy's attack, have that attack damage or destroy a weapon or other piece of equipment, rather than the character. You might even give the player a choice between character damage and equipment damage — a player who doesn't want to give up his character's gear can always opt to have his character take the actual damage. Similarly, you can have NPC attackers target the PCs' weapons.

And don't forget — the bad guys can have powerful "toys," too. Anything the PCs use against their enemies, their enemies can use against them (though this also gives the PCs an opportunity to get those weapons by defeating their foes). Pointing this out to the PCs may cause them to rein themselves in voluntarily.





EXPERIENCE POINTS AND CHARACTER GROWTH

You should also consider how, and how fast, you want the characters to grow in competence and power. If you're planning a long-term campaign with frequent game sessions and generous Experience Point awards, building PCs with a relatively small amount of Character Points doesn't cause as many problems, since the players know their characters will become more powerful at a fairly steady pace. On the other hand, if you can't run game sessions on a regular basis, or you prefer to control character growth by minimizing the number of Experience Points you award, it may work better if the PCs start out fairly powerful. Otherwise they're likely to become aggravated when they constantly run up against situations their characters *should* be able to cope with, but can't because they don't yet have the points to buy all the Knowledge Skills, Talents, and abilities they should have based on character conception.

Generally speaking, an *Urban Fantasy Hero* character built on, say, 150 Character Points plus 150 Experience Points tends to be better developed than a starting character built on 300 Character Points. The latter character probably has a larger attack, or more attacks, but the experienced character is more

well-rounded as a person. The gradual acquisition of Experience Points leads to different spending patterns than giving a player a large lump of Character Points to spend all at once. Starting at relatively lower power levels, but building over the course of the campaign, may be the best approach for many *Urban Fantasy Hero* games.

CAMPAIGN TONE

A campaign's *tone* refers to its morality, realism, and outlook, and the importance of the player characters.

MORALITY

Establishing the proper moral tone for your *Urban Fantasy Hero* campaign may be the single most important thing you can do to define the game for your players. The moral tone of the setting should strongly influence how the PCs conduct themselves. Are the PCs definite "good guys" opposing definite "bad guys," or are they just one faction among many in the grey Mystic World? For a gaming campaign it often works best if they're at least a little heroic, if not outright good guys. A hero has to have something more going for him than money, or power, or survival. When push comes to shove, he's got to be willing to lay his life on the line for something he believes in, even if that something is getting revenge on a villain who's hurt him (and thus saving the rest of the city from that villain's depredations). A character who won't risk his life to save someone (or something) worth saving — such as a valuable ley-line node or a rare enchanted item — is a character you don't want in your campaign. Getting him to truly participate in the stories your group is telling will be like pulling eyeteeth. Characters who can't see beyond themselves, beyond their own thoughts and desires, are death to any vibrant, active *Urban Fantasy Hero* campaign.

Improving The World

One of the central themes of *Urban Fantasy Hero* is discontent with the way the city or society currently are, and trying to make them better — whether that's by bringing a little magic back into the world, or just making people aware of the magic that already exists. The PCs should be a force for hope, standing firm in the face of all the forces that threaten to crush modern men and leech what little magic may remain out of the city. They shouldn't be glorified thugs with greater firepower, crushing anyone who gets in the way of their "fun."

You should convey to the PCs that they can and do make a difference. They need to have long-lasting or permanent triumphs, both with individuals and with organizations (and/or society as a whole) to validate their existence as heroes. Not every game will involve a permanent solution to some problem, but at least some games should.

REALISM

The issue of how “realistic” a *Urban Fantasy Hero* campaign should be is one of the trickiest you’ll grapple with as a GM. On the one hand, the Urban Fantasy takes place more or less in the “real world” — not in a Fantasy realm, on some distant planet, or in a world where super-humans are commonplace (unless you have an Open Magic game with fantastic beings all over the place). That creates certain expectations of “realism” that you have to maintain. Guns and gear have to behave like the players expect them to behave. Cars need fuel if you want to head on down the road.

But at the same time, the action-adventure genre is often “romantic” in the dramatic sense of the term: unrealistic, given to the outrageous and improbable in the name of storytelling, excitement, and fun. While practical issues (like paying the rent) may factor into an *Urban Fantasy Hero* game, you don’t want to go too far lest you turn the game into Mercantile Accounting 101. There are times when it’s more fun to “wing it” and not worry too much about whether the PCs have enough money, or whether they can “realistically” defeat the leader of the Dragon Mafia.

OUTLOOK

What sort of overall perspective does your campaign have — optimistic or pessimistic? In the former, the PCs can generally expect things to turn out right, and they know there’s always *some* hope for victory or success even when things seem darkest. In the latter, the PCs have to face up to the cold, hard realities of life: things don’t always go their way, they can’t always overcome the odds, and whether they succeed or fail is entirely up to them (and, perhaps, luck).

In *Urban Fantasy Hero*, a campaign’s outlook usually depends on its subgenre — the more “cinematic” the game, the brighter the outlook for the PCs. In some ultra-“realistic” Low Urban Fantasy campaigns, PCs can rarely expect things to go their way 100%, but in cinematic games usually everything turns out all right in the end — and the hero gets the girl to boot!

IMPORTANCE OF THE HEROES

Last, but perhaps most crucially, how important are the PCs? Obviously in any campaign the characters are the focus of the story, but how important are they *within the campaign world*? Can they affect the outcome of major events, such as wars? Does the fate of the world rest on their shoulders? In part, this may relate to the subgenre of the campaign, or the characters’ level of power or backgrounds — but even in a Hidden History campaign with relatively weak characters, a single spell cast in the right place at the right time can change the world, even if the most people aren’t aware of it.

CAMPAIGN THEME

The *theme* of a campaign is the underlying subject or focus of all the adventures. It isn’t strictly necessary to have one, but a campaign without a theme may seem disconnected and unfocused. For example, a High Urban Fantasy campaign may focus on the responsible use of power. Over the course of the campaign, the PCs may encounter many different characters and situations, triumph over adversity, suffer setbacks. But regardless of the type of adventures they or the outcome of those adventures, the underlying theme remains the same: the heroes have to find ways to use their power responsibly to accomplish their goals, not just run roughshod over the world and other people simply because they can.

It’s possible to have more than one theme in a campaign. Adventures can cycle among a couple of different underlying subjects. You shouldn’t get carried away with multiple themes, though, since having too many isn’t much better than having none at all.

Be careful not to confuse theme with message. “Responsible use of power” is a theme; “people can do bad things with power” is a message. You can return to a theme, look at it from various angles, and develop it in depth. But once you’ve stated a message, the only thing to do is state it again.

Common themes in *Urban Fantasy Hero* include:

AWAKENING TO MAGIC

The mysteries tended to roam a smaller and smaller area as they grew older, dwindling in stature, in magic, until sometimes they simply faded away. But tonight Old Hornie would be sent out into the world again like a gust of fresh air. He’d blow through the hearts of men and make them sit up and see again, even if only for a moment.

Mortals were such that just the smallest taste of that sight would send them questing the rest of their days to recapture it. And while that questing would remain unconscious in most, while it would be only a tiny part of their overall being, it would be enough to return a spark of old glory to hearts that were dimmed. It wasn’t the magic of the mystery that was important, nor the finding of it, but the quest itself.

—Mally contemplates a new awakening to magic in Charles de Lint’s *Greenmantle*

In Urban Fantasy stories, awareness of magic, and one’s ability to use it, is a potent theme that doesn’t just underlie many stories, it drives much of the action in them. Sometimes it’s a question of learning that magic exists and dealing with the consequences (whether that means adjusting one’s world-view to the new paradigm, or fighting off mystic adversaries). In other stories awakening to magic means learning that one has magical powers and must use them to oppose evil — the growing-into-power that’s a feature of so many stories of heroism and triumph.

THE INTERACTION OF MAGIC AND MUNDANE

Between the Elflands and the world is a place where magic runs amok...

—from the cover of *Borderlands*

How magical things, places, and beings get along with mundane things, places, and beings is the question at the heart of many Urban Fantasy stories. If the woods and fields so important of old have their own spirits, do the cities and Internet so important of today do so as well? Can mundane and magic forces co-exist peacefully, or are they destined to always conflict? On a more practical level, what happens when a bullet hits a Magic Shield?

SURVIVAL

Urban Fantasy characters often confront issues of survival. These may range from the relatively mundane (“If I don’t get the Wizards’ Council off my back I’ll never be able to get a job that’ll pay the rent”) to the utterly serious (“If I don’t perform this ritual at the right time, the Demon of the Third Sun will eat my soul”, “If we don’t stop this invasion of goblins everyone in the city’s gonna die!”). In many cases this theme is a deeply personal one, reflecting danger not just to a character’s life but to his soul or his world-view.



CAMPAIGN TYPES

After, or at the same time as, choosing a theme, you need to decide on the type of campaign you want to run. Often one decision leads to another; a game focused on how magic returns to the world and its effects probably emphasizes Awakening and Interaction more than Survival.

Subgenre

Chapter One describes the various Urban Fantasy Hero subgenres. Each subgenre has benefits and drawbacks from a gaming perspective; keeping these in mind as you create a campaign should let you maximize the former, and minimize the latter.

HIDDEN HISTORY

Creating a good Hidden History setting involves more work than many types of Urban Fantasy campaigns, because you can’t just make it all up off the top of your head (though you might be able to adapt it from a gaming supplement, novel, movie or the like... provided your players aren’t familiar with the same material). As the name implies, a Hidden History game needs a secret background history, and that means doing research. You have to take some real-world event or events, find connections to other things, establish mystic reasons for mundane events, and build a campaign framework around that. To make it work you’ll probably need to emphasize some historical details, de-emphasize or ignore others, and perhaps even make a few up, to get where you want to be. This isn’t necessarily as hard as it sounds — conspiracy theorists do basically the same thing every day — but doing it well usually involves a lot of research, the preparation of campaign notes and handouts, and the like.

Example: Jason wants to run a Hidden History campaign. He’s aware that the renowned Irish poet William Butler Yeats was a prominent member of the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and plans to use that as the foundation for building his secret history.

First, he decides that in his secret history, Yeats will actually be one of the more powerful and influential members of the Golden Dawn, a master sorcerer who hid his power to avoid notoriety and remain able to mingle with Victorian society. Rather than set down his spells and lore in ordinary grimoires, Yeats concealed them within his poetry. Ever since, knowledgeable wizards have parsed Yeats’s work for spells, and the finding of any new manuscript or scrap of writing by him inevitably touches off a mystic shadow war as the member of the Mystic World fight for possession of or access to it.

One of Yeats’s poems, “The Stolen Child,” doesn’t contain spells but is a warning to humanity about the theft of human children

by malign faerie-folk. The PCs will be Victorian-era children who were kidnapped by (possibly) faeries. Having grown up in Faerie, they have only recently escaped their captors and re-appeared in the modern world, aged only into their twenties. They now find themselves at the heart of the greatest conflict to shake the Mystic World in a century, as spellcaster and scholars vie for control of them and the powerful wisdom they possess as the result of growing up in the Otherworld. But their power is raw, not fully formed or easily used. Unless they, too, can uncover the wisdom in Yeats's work and learn how to use their gifts, they may not survive.

Besides reading extensively in Yeats's poetry and making notes about which poems reveal what lore, Jason studies Yeats's life looking for other incidents, events, and people he can work into his campaign's background (beyond the obvious ones, like S.L.M. Mathers and Aleister Crowley). These would include Lady Gregory and various other figures in the Irish literary and nationalist movements. The Abbey Theater building, which Yeats helped found, will also play a crucial role as a focus of mystic forces and repository of wisdom. Its burning in 1951 was the result of a mystic conflict; some doubt exists as to whether the rebuilt structure remains as potent as the original (some mystics may even try to partly destroy and rebuild it again to suit their own views and desires).

Jason also decides that certain key NPCs in the campaign will represent "embodiments" or "reincarnations" of prominent figures from the Irish myths and legends that fascinated Yeats, such as Finn and Oisín, and that the events of the campaign will in some ways mirror or follow the course of those legends. The spirit Leo Africanus, who allegedly appeared to Yeats in a 1912 seance, becomes the main overarching villain of the campaign as it attempts to manipulate various human actors so it can manifest in full physical form to wrack Earth with evil.

LOW URBAN FANTASY

Once you step away from the Hidden History style of campaign, Low Urban Fantasy is often the easiest sort of campaign to create. Typically you don't have to create a detailed magic system and a lot of spells, monsters, or anything like that. Instead, you want to create rich, detailed NPCs whom the PCs will enjoy interacting with and whose personalities are so well-known to you that you can easily figure out what they're planning and how they'll react to campaign events.

In some cases, the most difficult thing about creating a Low Urban Fantasy campaign is dealing with PCs and NPCs built on very low Character Point totals. It's so easy to get into the mindset of action, adventure, power, and combat magic that fill most games in most genres that creating scenarios for more or less ordinary people can pose

a challenge. Instead of revolving around action scenes, the stories tend to focus on character interaction, nonviolent "conflicts" such as solving mysteries or uncovering secrets, preparing and conducting important magical rituals despite various obstacles, and the like. Thus, you need to make sure that not only your NPCs but the players' characters have lots of background "hooks" that can inspire scenarios, and which serve to engage the PCs in the events you set in motion.

MONSTER HUNTERS

In many respects, a Monster Hunters campaign follows the tropes of action-oriented genres such as Dark Champions. The characters usually are relatively restricted (they're typically more or less normal humans with weapons, gear, and perhaps training), but their foes are not. They may face demons, vampires, ghosts, and other horrors whose power significantly dwarfs theirs, so you have to make sure the events of the scenario give them the information or enchanted items they need to have a chance of emerging triumphant.

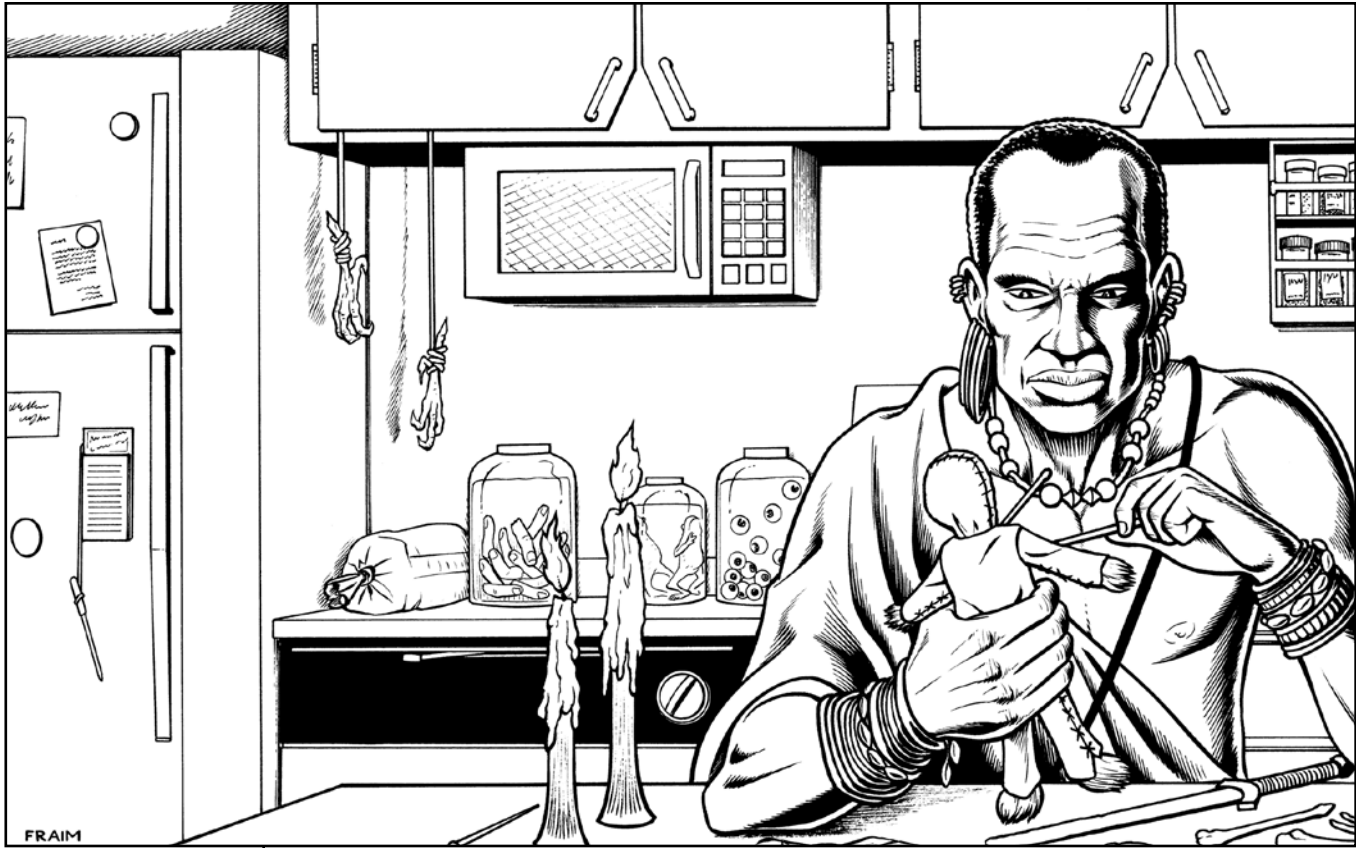
Creating memorable monsters for your campaign may create problems. *The HERO System Bestiary* and other "monster books" from Hero Games can take some of that burden off your shoulders, but if you don't plan in advance your campaign can quickly degenerate to, "Another vampire? ::yawn:: OK, I stake him, then go for a drink." You can minimize this problem by planning story arcs and the course of the campaign in advance. Figure out who your main villain or villains will be, then set up the general progression of the campaign to slowly escalate from regular monsters, to more powerful ones, to the "Big Bad" himself, with a unique monster or two thrown in along the way for spice (and so the game doesn't become too predictable). But be prepared to diverge a bit along the way if an NPC monster becomes particularly "popular" with the heroes or an unexpected event (such as a PC death) threatens to derail your story structure. Leave yourself a few "outs," gaps you can fill with one-shot adventures or necessary expansions to your storyline.

MONSTER WARFARE

Since Monster Warfare is all about an existing/ongoing conflict between two or more sides in a mystic underworld, your first task as GM is to determine who the major factions are. How many of them are there, what does each of them want, what territory does each one control, and what resources can they bring to the battlefield? That's your primary campaign framework.

Next, create the main members of each faction — the leaders, the prominent lieutenants, the notable footsoldiers, assassins, and legbreakers. Give them distinctive personalities, personal agendas (which may or may not agree with those of their faction), special abilities, and perhaps a link to one of the PCs.

Now get ready to drop the PCs into this fine stew you've created. Explain the basics of the setting to the players, and perhaps even give



them a handout telling them who's who, what's what, and the current state of the war (and if appropriate, how things got to that point). Once the players have designed their characters (hopefully with an eye to the information you've already provided, so you can work them into the setting/story easily), adjust things as necessary to give them a position of prominence. Then start the ball rolling and let events unfold as the heroes fight the war... or try to stop it.

OPEN MAGIC

Open Magic campaigns provide you with the full scope of what the Urban Fantasy genre has to offer. You can mix in whatever you want: wizards' universities; vampire citizenry; military magi; dragon politicians; demonic pizza delivery chains; you name it. Or you can go more low-key, keeping the world pretty much as it is but with known human spellcasters of great power. The downside is that you're going to need to think about creating an entire magic system, a generous selection of spells, and other resources for the players. To save time and trouble, consider using (or adapting) a magic system and spells from Chapter Four of this book or other *HERO System* supplements.

RUNNING THE GAME



Your job as GM doesn't end when you create the campaign and develop the setting. Quite the reverse: now you have to actually run the games while your players enjoy what you've created... and help you flesh out your quasi-fictional universe.

ADVENTURE STRUCTURE

There are two main approaches to adventure design: plotted and unplotted. In a plotted adventure, you have a specific story in mind, which the PCs follow to the climax. In an unplotted adventure, there is no plot, merely a situation; what happens depends entirely on the PCs' actions. Each method has its advantages and disadvantages.

PLOTTED ADVENTURES

Plotted adventures have the great advantage of a satisfying story structure. The action builds from the hook to the climax, encounters exist to provide tension or move the story along, and the heroes are at the center of events. You can use all the tricks developed by writers over the past three millennia: foreshadowing, suspense, conflict, jump cutting, catharsis. You can borrow plots and plot ideas from a vast array of sources, from Shakespeare to Stephen King. You can tailor the opposition to the characters' power level and personalities.

On the downside, plotted adventures can become too rigid in structure — you know where you want the story to go, so you force the heroes to go there. Players may feel you're railroad-ing them, or that their actions don't really have an effect. If they suspect you'll let them succeed regardless of what they do (because story progression requires it), the story loses all suspense and drama — the players start to use "metagame thinking" to deduce the plot and figure out what their characters should do, rather than acting as their characters would behave in that situation.

To avoid the problem of "railroading," plan out several possible resolutions for the adventure (and for each major scene within the adventure) depending on what the characters do. If the story involves discovering that a sorcerer has discovered a long-lost grimoire hidden in the stacks at the Harvard library, the climax might consist of a battle with the sorcerer... after the PCs find a way to counteract or neutralize the advantage his new spells give him. But no matter how many options you prepare, be ready to abandon all of them when the players think up something you didn't. The most profound truth in gaming is "the players never do what you expect."

UNPLOTTED ADVENTURES

Unplotted adventures, by contrast, have no set storyline. You merely establish a situation and let the players determine the action. The situation can be dynamic or passive. In a dynamic situation, things happen and it's up to the players to cope with them — the enemy is attacking, counterintelligence agents are closing in on the PCs, or the like. A passive situation is one in which things are stable (at least until the PCs show up) — the vampires are slowly but surely winning their war against the werewolves, the Trismegistus Corporation's new product seems like a wonder drug but actually poses a secret threat to world safety. In either case, if there are villains, they follow whatever motives you wish to give them, rather than filling the role of Antagonist in a story. The World exists, running along on its own, and the PCs must make their own decisions about what to do and how to do it.

Unplotted adventures have the advantage of feeling realistic — after all, the real world doesn't neatly follow classical dramatic structure, and every person is an NPC to other people. They give the players a great deal of influence over the course of the adventure, and let them choose to do what they enjoy. If you've prepared your campaign well, unplotted adventures are a good way to show off the scope and depth of your *Urban Fantasy Hero* setting.

But unplotted adventures have their own disadvantages. Often the action becomes just a series of combats or short-term missions. In a dynamic situation, the players may find it frustrating to be at the mercy of events. The need to either create new encounters on the fly or prepare a vast amount of background and NPCs which you may never use might overwhelm you. Finally, the structure of unplotted adventures can be unsatisfying — the heroes may overcome the main opposition early and spend the rest of their time mopping up underlings, or they fail to acquire crucial information or gear and end up outclassed at the climax.

Plotted and unplotted adventures aren't completely incompatible. Characters may start out in a seemingly unplotted situation, but encounter various hooks for stories. Depending on which ones they follow up, they can get involved in plotted stories. In the course of going through those story plots, they exist in an unplotted environment, so if they diverge from the story they don't wander off into "blank hexes."

Plotting

The most dependable basis for an adventure plot is the tried and true three-act structure, familiar from classic plays, comic books, films, and almost every other type of story. The first act is the adventure hook, in which the heroes become involved in the story and encounter initial obstacles. The second act presents more obstacles for the heroes to overcome (often with an intriguing twist or turn of events), and the third act is the climax and resolution of the story.

THE FIRST ACT: ADVENTURE HOOK

Adventure hooks come in various forms. The simplest is to have an NPC hire, order, or beg the heroes to do something — “After you arrive for the meeting, the head of the Council shows up and asks you to do something for him.” That’s a standard hook for all sorts of *Urban Fantasy Hero* stories; it’s quick and gets the story moving. Alternately, someone can beg the heroes for help — if they’re properly heroic, how can they resist? And of course, the actions of an enemy can draw the heroes into an adventure, the way they draw in Harry Dresden during the course of many of his stories.

Some adventure hooks are situational; almost any circumstance the PCs find themselves in can draw them into an adventure. Being out of money means the heroes need to find a way to earn some cash, so they respond to a mysterious rumor of “help wanted.” The heroes are caught in the crossfire when two rival vampire clans battle for “turf.” Ready, set, go!

Finally, objects often serve as adventure hooks. A cryptic clue or message can draw the heroes into danger; Alfred Hitchcock loved that method in his films. Another useful Hitchcock hook is “The MacGuffin.” A MacGuffin is an object of value or importance to someone. If the heroes have the MacGuffin (or if someone thinks they have it), then all sorts of trouble results from other people trying to buy, steal, or destroy it. Urban Fantasy stories are *full* of MacGuffins in the form of enchanted items, long-lost wizards’ workbooks, and the like.

Sometimes the

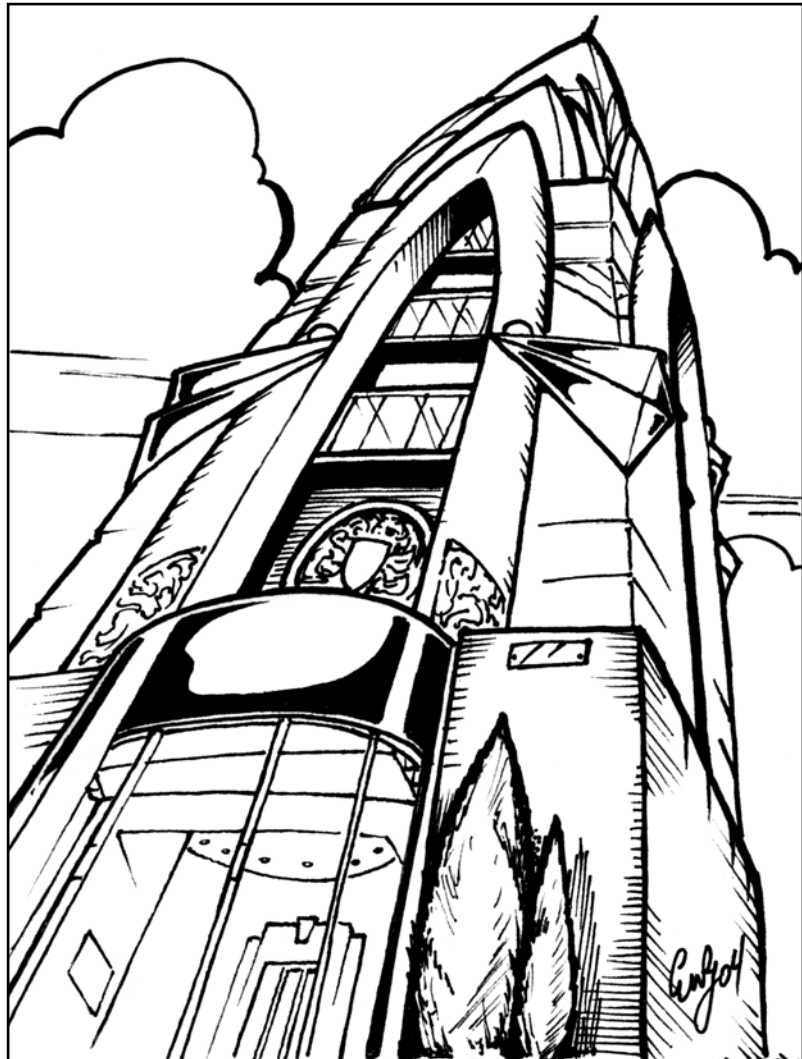
adventure hook is not the same as the ultimate goal of the adventure itself. Many times the heroes get involved because they think they understand what’s going on, and then learn better and must change their goals as a result of events in the story. As an example, suppose a corporation hires the PCs to protect it from a group of vampires. As they encounter the bloodsuckers and learn more about the situation, the PCs discover that the corporation stole something that belonged to the vampires, which caused the whole conflict. But the corporation could use the vampires’ relic to invent a drug that could cure cancer. So the PCs have to find a replacement so the vampires can have their relic back... and so on.

THE SECOND ACT: OBSTACLES

The second act of an adventure focuses on obstacles the heroes must overcome. Obstacles are many and various, but fall into three main categories.

Foes

The first are actual *foes* — people or things specifically trying to make the heroes fail, or do them harm. If the foe wants to kill the heroes or stop them from accomplishing their goal, he’s a villain. If he just wants to beat them to the goal, or surpass their accomplishments, he’s a rival. Finally,



there are adversaries — people whose goals are opposed to the PCs' plans even if they aren't aware of them. (In this context, *HERO System* Hunteds can qualify as either adversaries or villains, but Rivals are usually rivals.) For example, suppose the heroes in a *Urban Fantasy Hero* game want to find an ancient spell said to have been uncovered during Howard Carter's excavation of the tomb of King Tut. Villains include people who want to stop the PCs from succeeding (the secret society of sorcerers who stole the spell, for example), rivals include other spellcasters who want to find and recover the spell first, and adversaries include the Muslim fanatics who object to the "blasphemous" PCs setting foot on sacred Egyptian soil.

At times friends can be foes, if they don't agree with the goal the heroes are pursuing, or have been duped into believing the heroes are a danger. A friend may even betray the PCs. Sometimes friends are correct, and it's the heroes who've been duped.

Features Of The Setting

The second type of obstacles the heroes must face are *features of the setting* which would exist regardless of the heroes' actions, such as natural obstacles and mysteries. In *Urban Fantasy Hero*, natural obstacles usually aren't very common, since the action takes place in city environments that are designed for easy movement. On the other hand, mysteries — either something the heroes must solve to continue toward the goal, or the key to the goal itself — are quite common. Sometimes mysteries (or puzzles) are features of the setting, and sometimes they're the work of the party's opponents, but they all have a common feature: the characters must solve them by thinking rather than force (although sometimes the solution involves a particular use of force). In situations with changing goals, solving a mystery may finally point the heroes at their ultimate objective. Regardless of the type of puzzle, you should make it fair and logical, since the players have to solve it. An unfair puzzle just makes them angry.

Internal Obstacles

A final kind of obstacle lies within the heroes themselves — *internal obstacles*. Overcoming personal flaws, sacrificing something for the greater good, or learning a lesson are all obstacles, often more difficult to surmount than any street gang or enemy mage. In game terms, Disadvantages such as Dependence, DNPC, Enraged/Berserk, Psychological Limitation, and perhaps Rivalry often represent internal obstacles. An honorable man who must break his word to achieve his goal faces an internal obstacle; so does a devious one who has to trust others to succeed. You should tailor the internal obstacles to the players: some players routinely sidestep their characters' Psychological Limitations if they can manage an EGO Roll, while others want to remain true to the characters they create.

THE THIRD ACT: CLIMAX AND CONCLUSION

Once the characters have surpassed or neutralized all the obstacles, the story proceeds to its *climax*, in which the heroes confront the main villain or surmount the ultimate barrier to reach their goal and win the reward. The goal may not be the one they originally signed up to accomplish, but it's the one that concludes this particular adventure.

Climaxes should be, well, climactic. This is the time for you to "blow the budget" and strive to make everything as tense and impressive as possible. If the heroes must foil the villain's plans, put a time limit on them and create all kinds of distractions. If they fight the villain directly, set the battle in an exotic or impressive location — a skyscraper rooftop, a necromancer's lair, or the like. Since this is a roleplaying game, an exciting setting is no more expensive or difficult to arrange than a boring one.

Even if it isn't full of physical action, try to make the climax tense and dramatic. If the heroes have to prevent a war or persuade someone, set the scene right on the edge of disaster — the rival vampire clan is only minutes away from attacking the heroes' stronghold, and they have to convince their clan leader *right now* that they aren't the ones who've been trapping and slaughtering enemy vamps. If a judge is sentencing the PCs, crucial evidence should arrive after the opposition has presented seemingly iron-clad arguments against the heroes... and just in time to save them from prison.



VILLAINS AND NPCs



One of the most important aspects of any scenario is the villain(s) — the adversaries and enemies the characters encounter or pursue during the course of the game. Closely related to the villain are the NPCs: other characters the PCs encounter who may be helpful, hostile, or annoying. A good villain or NPC can make a lackluster scenario enjoyable, and a poor one can diminish the impact of an otherwise wonderful adventure.

VILLAINS

When you think of a Urban Fantasy story, often you think of the villains as much as you do the heroes — the black-hearted evil wizard, the vampire lord who secretly rules the city, the murderous cultist. This isn't limited to *Urban Fantasy Hero*: Lucifer in Milton's *Paradise Lost* is by far the most striking character in the whole epic poem.

In a *Urban Fantasy Hero* game, the PCs' adversary often drives the plot, and consequently should be more than just some game stats on a sheet. What makes a good villain? What makes a good *Urban Fantasy Hero* villain?

Villain Qualities

In *Urban Fantasy Hero* (and other genres, for that matter), good villains have certain qualities that set them apart.

COMPETENCE

The best villains in fiction are competent, often extraordinary in their abilities. They're powerful, clever, and subtle; overcoming them is a worthwhile challenge for the good guys. A villain who isn't competent or powerful isn't very interesting. But of course, "power" doesn't necessarily mean sheer muscle or available firepower. A weak but clever opponent who can maneuver the heroes into a situation where they can't use their superior abilities is just as powerful as one who can bat them aside with casual ease.

Exactly how powerful the villain is depends on the campaign's scale and tone, the abilities of the PCs, and the role you intend for the villain. Role is perhaps most important. What part will the villain play in the campaign? Is he the Big Bad Guy behind all the heroes' problems? In that case he must be powerful indeed, with underlings and henchmen who can each serve as the main villain of adventures themselves. If he's one of those henchmen, then the villain should be only slightly more powerful than the heroes. If he's only a one-shot opponent in a casual encounter, he can be the same level or even weaker than the PCs.

MENACE

Just being powerful doesn't make a good villain. Blue whales are immensely powerful animals, but nobody's afraid of them because they're shy and don't harm humans. A villain requires credible menace: the heroes must believe he's not only able, but willing, to cause harm.

The best way to create this sense of menace is to give the villain the chance to demonstrate his power without directly harming the PCs. This may involve nothing more than a visible demonstration of the villain's power — such as giving the characters a glimpse of his werewolf army — or you could have him take action against someone other than the PCs. For example, he could harm a character's DNPC, kill a favorite NPC, or reveal information to the characters that makes it plain he could attack them at any time.

SYMPATHY

The best villains have a streak of humanity — or at least some admirable traits. They may be people the heroes might have been friends with in other circumstances, or at least enemies they can maintain a grudging respect for. Otherwise, they're just cardboard cutouts; it's not hard to hate, or oppose, someone who's unlikeable and villainous in all aspects.

MOTIVATION

Hardly anyone gets up in the morning and says "How can I be evil today?" Even the worst villains justify their own actions to themselves. The motives of villains are the same as those of most people: they want things (desire); they fear things (fear); and they believe things (conviction).

Wanting something is easy to understand. Everyone wants something. Villains may be motivated by a desire for wealth, lust for the opposite sex, a simple urge to survive, or even love for another person or being. Sometimes a villain's desires aren't quite normal — twisted sexual urges, mad plans to conquer the world, or the obsessive pursuit of some object. But other villains can have quite prosaic desires, such as revenge. In *Urban Fantasy Hero*, the motivation may be as simple as obtaining enough food, fuel, or ammunition to survive in comfort while others starve and suffer.

Fear is another powerful motive. Most living things fear death, most humans fear poverty and hardship, a ruler might fear losing power, a bigot fears and hates members of another race, an official in a tyrannical regime might fear the consequences of failure. Even the most powerful villain can still have fears: the evil wizard living in the ruins of Deecce fears the barbarian tribes living

nearby, who possess lore that contains the secret of his one vulnerability. Often people (not just villains) take great risks to avoid or overcome the things they fear; as long as the consequences are not as bad (in their opinion) as the thing they fear, it's a rational choice.

Finally, most humans have beliefs about right and wrong. Even villains do, although their beliefs may not match everyone else's. People often endure great danger and make tremendous sacrifices in the name of what they believe in; villains may do the same.

These three motives can feed on and strengthen one another. A villain who's greedy for wealth may also fear losing his property and sources of income, and may believe he's doing the right thing by stimulating economic growth and providing employment.

The motives for villains are not necessarily different from those of heroes. What separates heroes from villains is how they try to achieve their goals. Bringing unity and peace to the world is a noble goal. Exterminating all other races is not a heroic way to accomplish it.

In some campaigns, the distinction between the heroes' motives and those of the villains is all but invisible. Urban Fantasy heroes may be so focused on surviving that they're little better than marauders themselves.

Villain Archetypes

Here are a few more examples of archetypical Urban Fantasy adversaries.

THE ANCIENT VAMPIRE

I kept waiting for Bela Lugosi to sweep around the corner in his cape. What was sitting against one wall was almost as good.

She had been about twelve or thirteen when she died. Small, half-formed breasts showed under a long flimsy dress. It was pale blue and looked warm against the total whiteness of her skin. She had been pale when alive; as a vampire she was ghostly. Her hair was that shining white-blond that some children have before their hair darkens to brown. This hair would never grow dark. ...

She smiled at me. No fang showed. She looked so human, eyes sparkling with humor, face rounded and pleasant. See how harmless I am, just a pretty child. Right. ...

She stood there without moving and opened her mind to me. It felt like she had opened a door that had been locked. Her mind crashed against mine, and I staggered. Thoughts ripped into me like knives, steel-edged dreams. Fleeting bits of her mind danced in my head; where they touched I was numbed, hurt. I was on my knees, and I didn't remember falling. I was cold, so cold. There was nothing for me. I was an insignificant thing, beside that mind.

—Anita Blake meets the master vampiress Nikolaos in Laurell K. Hamilton's *Guilty Pleasures*



In settings that feature lots of vampires, particularly Monster Warfare ones or ones where vampires represent a major “faction” in city life, there’s always one who’s in charge of the rest. Hundreds or even thousands of years old, he’s older than any other vampire in the city... and among Urban Fantasy vampires, age brings power. The Ancient Vampire is not only immensely strong, fast, and tough, he possesses other abilities rare even among his kind: spells, mental powers, demonic pacts, whatever’s appropriate for the setting.

Useful Features: Urban Fantasy novels and movies have presented a wide variety of vampires, so it’s easy for you to tailor the Ancient Vampire to your tastes by drawing on them (as well as on legends and myths) for inspiration. You can make him suave and sophisticated, bestial and barbaric, mighty and mystical, or whatever you prefer. To really confuse your players, you can use vampires from non-European cultures (such as the Chinese and Malaysian vampires in the *Asian Bestiaries*).

Potential Problems: Assuming you stick fairly close to the European vampire model, vampires have many well-known weaknesses and vulnerabilities the PCs can exploit. Of course, one way that the Ancient Vampire is often distinguished from his lesser blood-sucking minions is that he’s “aged out of” many (or all) of those problems — so he just laughs at the PCs’ crucifixes, garlic, and holy water.

Variations: See above.

THE CULT LEADER

A Johannine priest was holding service. Altitude or no, we couldn’t mistake his white robe, high-pitched minor-key chanting, spread-eagle stance which he could maintain for hours, the tau crucifix that gleamed tall and gaunt behind the altar, the four talismans — Cup, Wand, Sword, and Disc — upon it. Two acolytes swung censers whence came the smoke that sweetened and, somehow, chilled the air.

—Steve and Ginny Matuchek have an encounter with the Johannines in Poul Anderson’s *Operation Chaos*

Urban Fantasy settings often feature secret cults and similar organizations — the existence of magic brings out all sorts of strange beliefs, not to mention methods of tapping that power which aren’t necessarily wholesome or safe. Often, these cults are a haven for the mentally disturbed or other societal rejects as well. But at the head of the cult stands the Cult Leader, a messianic or powerhungry figure who’s determined to control his “flock” and obey the tenets of his faith... which usually isn’t kindly-disposed toward Our Heroes.

Useful Features: The Cult Leader usually has fanaticism on his side, both his own and that of his followers. (Though a few might be charlatans who’ll bolt and run when the cozy situation they set up gets disrupted by the PCs.) The cultists will literally do anything, even put themselves

in deadly danger, if the Cult Leader tells them to. Depending on the nature of the cult, the Cult Leader may also have seemingly normal minions “working undercover” in the city to spy for him, giving him a leg up on the PCs (at least at first).

Potential Problems: One Cult Leader can seem very much like the next, so use this archetype sparingly and make an effort to differentiate the cults and their commanders. A Cult Leader may also be a little too personally fragile to oppose the PCs directly, which makes him seem vulnerable.

Variations: Not all cults necessarily have to be violent or weird; some might be neutral toward the PCs, or even helpful. They could serve as a source of aid, hire the PCs to recover sacred relics or long-lost grimoires from enemy organizations, and so on.

THE EVIL WIZARD

“This is the King’s chair,” the boy whispered.

“That’s right.” Leon swallowed, and his voice was steadier when he went on: “And anybody who sits in it... becomes the King. Let’s play a game of cards.” He unlocked the desk and took from it a handful of gold coins and a polished wooden box the size of a Bible.

He dropped the coins onto the carpet. “Pot’s not right.”

Scotty dug the holed chips and flattened pennies out of his pocket and tossed them onto the floor in front of the chair. He grinned uncertainly at his father. “Pot’s right.”

Defaced currency against gold, Leon thought. The pot is indeed right.

Crouching in front of the boy now, Leon opened the box and spilled into his hands a deck of oversize cards. He spread them out on the carpet, covering their bets, and waved at them. “Look,” he said softly. A smell like incense and hot metal filled the room.

Leon looked at the boy’s face rather than at the Tarot cards. He remembered the night he had first seen a deck of this version, the suppressed Lombardy Zeroth version, in a candle-lit attic in Marseilles in 1925; and he remembered how profoundly disturbing the enigmatic pictures had been and how his head had seemed to be full of voices, and how afterward he had forced himself not to sleep for nearly a week.

—Georges Leon prepares to sacrifice his son’s life to extend his own in Tim Powers’s *Last Call*

Regardless of the level of magic in the campaign, one of the classic Urban Fantasy villains is the Evil Wizard — a person who’s trying to gather or use magical power for selfish or cruel ends. The higher the level of magic, the more grandiose his goals tend to be. A Hidden History wizard may simply want to extend his lifespan, make himself rich, or grab the reins of power behind the scenes; an Open Magic wizard wants to conquer the whole world with his dragon armies. Often the Evil Wizard practices a type of magic that’s illegal, forbidden, or morally suspect (such as Necromancy, Demonology, or Black Magic).

Useful Features: Between his magical powers and the resources they bring him, the Evil Wizard can be or do just about anything you need him to. Do you want your PCs to fight an army of trolls? The Evil Wizard can oblige. Would you rather they fight vampires, or golems, or mind-controlled humans? In that case the Evil Wizard has recruited them as his followers, or made them, or ensorcelled them.

Potential Problems: The Evil Wizard may actually be *too* powerful for the PCs to tackle easily. If necessary, give him an “Achilles’s heel” for the PCs to hear rumors of, investigate, discover, and exploit. Just learning about it may require a session or two’s worth of adventure!

Variations: You can draw on Fantasy fiction for all sorts of ideas for tailoring the Evil Wizard to suit your needs. He might specialize in a particular type of magic (which could limit his powers and thus address the problem discussed above), or be a lich, for example.

THE UNSEELIE QUEEN

The Queen of Air and Darkness waited for her, all her playacting stripped away. She was still in the jumpsuit and long coat, but they were a mockery now, human clothes on an inhuman creature. She seemed to be outlined in burning black. Eddi knew that if she had come to attack the queen, nothing would have penetrated that blackness.

—Eddi McCandry confronts the Unseelie queen in Emma Bull’s *War For The Oaks*

In Urban Fantasy settings featuring the faerie-folk, it’s not uncommon for the Seelie and Unseelie Courts — the “good” and “wicked” faeries, crudely speaking — to co-exist, and perhaps to fight one another. The leader of the Unseelie faeries is almost always a queen, cruel and malicious and immensely powerful. She can look like anything she wants: a regal, majestic woman of stunning beauty; a devilish female of immense power; a little girl whose otherworldliness gives rise to horror; a terrifying hag.

Useful Features: Faeries are powerful, and the Unseelie Queen is the most powerful of all. You can basically have her do anything you want, appear wherever and in whatever guise you need, and act in whatever way pleases you. After all, faeries are capricious, and their Queen could do nearly anything if the mood takes her.

Potential Problems: The Queen’s power dwarfs even that of the Ancient Vampire, which means directly opposing her — or even just annoying her — could be very, very bad for the PCs’ help. They have to find ways to fight her indirectly, or to weaken or distract her, if they want to have any hope of defeating her.

Variations: For a change of pace, perhaps there’s an Unseelie Prince instead. He replaces the Queen’s cool sophistication with a sense of strength and masculine power kept in check, and is more likely to challenge the PCs to physical fights or other contests than she is.

NON-PLAYER CHARACTERS

The world isn’t divided evenly into heroes and villains. Most people in a campaign setting are simply non-player characters — NPCs.

In most cases what you need for a good, enjoyable NPC is a realistic, well-developed character. But that isn’t always true. Realistic, well-developed NPCs tend to take over the story, leaving the heroes as spectators. It’s actually more effective to keep many of your NPCs one-dimensional, but make them into memorable one-dimensional characters. Give them a distinctive habit or a manner of speaking for the heroes to remember. Players often forget NPC names, but they recall “the guy with all the tattoos” or “the spooky man in the grey trenchcoat.”

Nonplayer characters have the same motivations as villains — desires, fears, and beliefs — and these motives provide a good way to give them a little personality. The PCs can bribe a greedy security guard, but one who’s scrupulously honest reacts poorly (to say the least) to bribe offers. Obviously, not every NPC needs to be this well-developed, but it’s worth coming up with one or two motivations for any NPC the heroes directly interact with.

Important NPCs need as much care and feeding as villains — a hero’s DNPC, Rival, or Hunter should have some independent goals and a recognizable identity. Dependent NPCs usually are nice people (though one can have



a good deal of fun with a hero who feels protective of a cranky or irritating NPC). Rivals should have a mix of good and bad traits, and above all should be competent enough for the Rivalry to mean something — if the hero always wins, it's scarcely a Rivalry.

If a hero is Hunted, you should give some thought to the motives of the Hunter, even if it's a large organization. *Why* is the Council of the Dragon Awakened Watching the character? What does it want to find out? Even when the Hunter is a group, it's useful to give that group a face in the form of a "case officer" or some other member of the group who is the one the heroes have the most dealings with. For example, every time the Council confronts the heroes, its members are led by a handsome warrior named Dark who wields a glittering magical blade. The Council's various minions may track the PCs, ambush them, or attack them, but it's Dark who leads the attacks, who tries to capture the PCs and interrogate them, and so on.

NPC Archetypes

These are some standard character types who turn up again and again in *Urban Fantasy Hero* stories. You can use them as-is, or play against the stereotype by creating NPCs very different from these.

THE FAMILIAR

"I'm not sure I can get a sitter on notice that short. This is final exam week at the high school."

"Well, if you can't, what about Svartalf?" I suggested. "You won't be needing a familiar, and he can do the elementary things, keep guard, dash next door and yowl a neighbor awake if she gets collywobbles—"

—Steve and Ginny Matuchek plan an evening out in Poul Anderson's *Operation Chaos*

Among many types of spellcasters, particularly witches, having a familiar isn't uncommon. The typical familiar is a cat (black or otherwise), but Fantasy literature has opened up the field considerably. Harry Potter has his owl, for example, and various other birds, reptiles, small mammals, and even minor demonlings and other mystic creatures show up as familiars from time to time. Familiars are usually bought as Followers, often have various minor mysti-

cal powers, and may even grant special abilities to their masters. (See the *Familiar* template on page 25 of *The HERO System Bestiary* for some suggested powers for familiars.)

Variations: Urban Fantasy opens up the familiar field even further. A character could have a tiny smog elemental, a Pomeranian hellhound, an enchanted sentient motorcycle, or all sorts of other "modern-day magical things" as his familiar.

THE SPIRIT GUIDE

The drumbeat accelerated. "That's my heart, isn't it?"

"Yep," the voice said.

Are you a spirit guide?"

There was a pause that felt considering. "Yep."

Yeah, that's what I thought. "Are spirit guides supposed to say 'yep'?"

He laughed. "Yep." ...

A small coyote bounded in front of me, like he'd always been there. I looked behind us. His tracks were tangled with mine, across the sand. He yipped, and I looked forward again. He smiled a coyote smile, and leaped out across the sand in a long, lean run. "I can't keep up with a running dog!"

"I'm not a dog. Come on."

—Joanne Walker meets her spirit guide in C.E. Murphy's *Urban Shaman*

In the shamanic tradition, spellcasters often have *spirit guides* — mystical animals, if you will, who provide wisdom and guidance and in some ways embody the shaman's power. This concept, too, appears in Urban Fantasy, where spirit guides are similar in some ways to familiars (though they rarely grant any mystic abilities, instead substituting cryptic but useful advice). Like familiars, spirit guides are a great source of humor and a good "hook" to get a character involved in a story.

Variations: Instead of an animal spirit, a character (such as a necromancer, or one who can see/speak to the dead) might have a human spirit as his guide. This provides even more potential for humor, and allows the GM to give the guide a personality (often a cranky, curmudgeonly, or lustful one).



CHAPTER

4



MAGIC IN THE STREETS
AN URBAN FANTASY
SOURCEBOOK

HUDSON CITY SHADOWS



There's more to the mean streets of Hudson City than street criminals and gang-bangers. Lurking in the shadows of the everyday world is the Mystic World of wizards, and things worse than wizards — things that can imperil a man's very soul instead of just his wallet or his health.

BACKGROUND

The world of *Hudson City Shadows* is pretty much exactly like the “real world,” with one major exception: magic exists, and there are those who can work it for their own purposes. Magic has always existed, but in centuries past it was hidden and less common than today. Wizards knew less, and the inability to transmit knowledge easily meant that many spells were discovered, lost, and perhaps re-discovered repeatedly over the years. Superstitious folk persecuted spellcasters, driving them away and even slaying them at times.

This sorry state of affairs continued until the late nineteenth century, when the first serious scientific studies of arcane phenomena were conducted. Often in spite of their prejudices, scientists and other rational folk were forced to acknowledge the existence of magic and magical creatures. That in turn led to questions about how they fit into society.

Perhaps all the attention paid to the Mystic World gave it power, or perhaps people simply began acknowledging things they'd seen around themselves all along but had ignored or explained away. In the following decades wizards and magical beings were seen more and more often, and became more and more accepted. The Twenties and Thirties saw what many described as an “explosion” of arcane events, as talented wizards hired themselves out as “mystic detectives” to deal with hauntings, possession, curses, and other troublesome matters their mundane gumshoe brethren couldn't handle. The best-known of these adventurers was Hudson City's own Arthur Caine, *a.k.a.* “Mister Arcane,” whose exploits were chronicled not only in newspapers but the pulp magazines — both eagerly read by a public fascinated with the Secret Sciences and those who dived into them.

But it was World War II that really brought magic into the forefront of the popular imagination. Though the full story didn't come out for years, even decades, the US government (and to some extent, all the combatants) realized that it might be able to put wizards and mystical creatures to tactical use on the battlefield. While it never had “wizard platoons” as some people

have claimed, it quietly recruited a large number of wizards, lycanthropes, and other beings to fight for the Allies. Many a crucial covert mission was performed by spellcasters, and the arrival of a wizard in the middle of a firefight often meant a quick victory. The most spectacular mystic confrontation of the War occurred in August, 1944 during the liberation of Paris, when the American wizards Robert Stansfield and Patricia McCullough openly duelled with three German mages. The resulting pyrotechnics — lightning bolts, gouts of fire, conjured elemental pitted against conjured elemental — were witnessed by thousands, captured on film by several different reporters, and destroyed four large buildings. The Americans won the day, though Stansfield suffered an injury that left him walking with a limp for the rest of his life. Both he and McCullough became popular war heroes, and McCullough went on to become a film star after the War.

The mystics who fought in the War returned home to an America bursting with pride and optimism. Now more aware than ever of what they could do with their powers, and eager to retain something of the life of excitement they'd experienced in the war, they became a much more visible part of society. Some hung out shingles and became the new generation of mystic detectives, while others started up small magic-based businesses.

As the decades passed and the mass media and mass consumer economy became ever more potent forces in American life, magic became an accepted part of society in most places, though some deeply religious people still objected to “the Devil's workings.” As of 2008, most wizards are open about their abilities, and many use them to make excellent livings either by working for corporations or finding their own self-employed niche. The government acknowledges, and attempts to regulate, the practice of magic, though as always the Mystic World remains somewhat elusive. The historian Thomas Kirk has perhaps described the situation best:

In the modern world, magic is like crime. Everyone acknowledges that it exists and accepts it, even if they don't necessarily like it. Sometimes it affects a person's life, perhaps severely, but most people rarely, if ever, meet anyone involved with it or take part in criminal doings. The average person prefers not to have anything to do with it... but some people are fascinated by it.

HUDSON CITY AS AN URBAN FANTASY SETTING

Hudson City (which is described in the book of the same name) makes a fine venue for Urban Fantasy games. It just requires a few changes to make it more dramatically appropriate for Urban Fantasy than *Dark Champions* action-adventure.

First and foremost, get rid of all the costumed crimefighters/criminals and other weird characters described in *Dark Champions*, *Hudson City*, and *Predators*. They're perfect for vigilante crime-fighting, but they make no sense in an Urban Fantasy game. Hudson City Shadows keeps just two — the crimelords Charlemagne and Strad — plus the usual complement of “mundane” organized crime, in case you want to weave some storylines about crime into your campaign. Additionally, some of the organizations and entities described below, particularly the Vampyri, can function as “mystic organized crime.”

Second, you need to “magic the place up” a bit. In the world of Hudson City Shadows, magic isn't as overt, or as fundamental a part of American life, as in the world of the Sixth Sun (see later on in this chapter), but it does exist and is publicly acknowledged. People can hire mystic “troubleshooters” and other “magic service industry workers” to get rid of a haunt, tell their fortune, make them more charismatic for a couple of hours before a job interview... or, if you're less scrupulous (and the mage is too), cast a curse on someone. For major tasks you can hire a wizard to conjure an elemental or demon, though that's expensive enough that usually only corporations and the wealthy do it. So, with all that in mind, the “facade” of Hudson City needs to change some. As you describe the city to your players, add some mystical touches. Mention businesses here and there that provide arcane services (usually their signs and advertisements feature some obviously magical reference, such as a stylized purple flame, runes, or the Eye of Horus). Occasionally mention that they see a wizard on the street (most, though by no means all, wizards dress distinctively or have “symbols of office” — a staff, amulet, ring, or other object that marks them as members of the Mystic World). Instead of using an ordinary crime to spark a scenario, give it a mystic element: someone murdered by black magic (a crime so heinous it usually merits the death penalty if the murderer's caught); a fire caused by an elemental that got out of control; a magical battle between rival wizards.

Those two things should be enough to demonstrate to your players that they're not in the same old Hudson City anymore. Overall the city can be just as corrupt and crime-ridden as ever (since mundane matters may have little or no effect on the Mystic World), or if you prefer you can tone that aspect of the city down a bit so the PCs don't get distracted. Or maybe you can mix the two, creating a hybrid “Dark Urban Fantasy Champions” campaign that has the players fighting both crime *and* evil wizards....





Mystic Locations

Pages 129-30 of *Hudson City* discuss the Mystic World in the city. All that information holds true in *Hudson City Shadows*. Here are a few more locations; see *The Mystic World*, below, for information on more people.

LEY LINES

The *Lines Of Contention* setting/scenario later on in this chapter focuses on the ley lines in Hudson City. While that's a very different version of mystic Hudson City, with a very different magic system, if you'd like you can assume that the ley lines are the same, and have the same effect in, the world of Hudson City Shadows.

COUNCIL OF SOLOMON HEADQUARTERS

The Council of Solomon, a body that attempts to regulate and provide standards for mages (see below), maintains its headquarters in a refurbished Victorian-era building near the intersection of Heally Street and 14th Avenue in Blackbridge. The headquarters includes summoning chambers and other facilities for use by any mage in good standing with the Council, so the building and surrounding area often give off a magical "glow" visible to those able to perceive such things.

THE PIT

In 1936, Mister Arcane brought his mystical knowledge and powers to bear in a fight against an evil voodoo cult. During their final confrontation at the cult's lair (a building near the intersection of South River Drive and South Jackson Street in Crown Point) the cultists summoned a *loa* (spirit) of fire, a dark aspect of the greater loa Ogou — basically, a type of fire elemental. Mister Arcane invoked a binding, but before he could finish it the cultists attacked him. Their interference, combined with the strange nature of the being he sought to bind, caused an unexpected result: an explosion. The spirit detonated, killing nearly all of the cultists and nearly finishing off Mister Arcane himself! The explosion left a large, deep crater that still exists to this day. Seething with strange magical energies that scholars do not completely understand, "the Pit" (as Hudsonites call it) has been walled off by the city and is guarded around the clock by a police contingent that always includes at least one mage. Many mages, particularly those of evil or selfish bent, yearn to experiment with the Pit in the hopes of finding a way to harness its power.

DRYAD WOODS

In north LeMastre Park there's a fairly thick woods between the tennis courts and the playing fields. Since the Twenties it's been growing at an unusual rate, gobbling up nearby fields at an unusual... perhaps supernatural... rate. As of 2008, the forest is about 15% larger than it was in 1920, despite city efforts to halt (or even cut back) the growth. Several residents have reported seeing

mysterious, beautiful female figures in the forest, and as a result it's come to be known as Dryad Woods. Members of the Mystic World acknowledge that there's something going on in the Woods, but not all of them agree that it's dryads... and some seem to think it's decidedly more dangerous than that.

AVENUE OF THE ELMS

In *Hudson City Shadows*, the Avenue of the Elms (*Hudson City*, pages 184-85) was preserved from Dutch elm disease because a powerful "nature magic" protects the area. Spells involving plants or animals which are cast there are up to 25% more powerful, and the whole area radiates a feeling of peace and tranquility that makes it even more popular than it is in "normal" Hudson City. The Printer's Devil bookshop specializes in matters occult and arcane (though not exclusively; it does carry ordinary reading fare), and owner Rhona Wainwright is known to be a powerful witch.

Mystic Items

Here are a few more mystical items to supplement the list in *Hudson City*:

THE FIRE VASE

The collection of the Museum of World Art includes a strange vase recovered from an archaeological dig in China in 1930. Known as the Fire Vase, it's made of the most delicate porcelain and painted a fiery red-orange in a way that suggests both flames and flowers. Mystics can sense power within it, and experimentation has shown that it has power over Pyromancy. If someone casting a fire spell holds the Vase, or uses it as part of a ritual, the spell becomes more powerful. (In game terms it's an Aid Fire Magic 4d6, OAF Fragile.) The Fire Vase is kept in a highly secure display case in the Museum's collection of Oriental porcelain.

MISTER ARCANE'S HAT AND CUFFLINKS

Legend in the Mystic World claims that the legendary Thirties wizard Mister Arcane left behind two powerful artifacts. The first is his fedora, which is said to make the wearer smarter and more observant. (In game terms, it provides +3 INT and +1 to PER Rolls with all Sense Groups.) The second is a pair of gold cufflinks he often wore to fancy events, which supposedly protect the bones of the hand from being broken and make it difficult to restrain the wearer. (In game terms, they provide +5 PD that Only Protects The Hands, and +10 STR, Only To Break Free From Grabs/Entangles/Restrains.) The current location and owner of both items is unknown; more than one mystic believes they're both nothing but stories.

THE OAKMONT FOUNTAIN

In the Westhurst neighborhood, not far from LeMastre Park, stands the Oakmont House, a large apartment building (or more accurately, block of four apartment buildings) constructed at the turn of the twentieth century. In the “courtyard” formed by the four buildings there’s a garden/park for the exclusive use of the Oakmont residents. At the center of the garden is a fountain that was built in the early Twenties. Ever since the death of Emma Benson, a woman who particularly loved the fountain, in 1957, the waters in the fountain have possessed strange properties. Most of the time when drunk they’re just ordinary water... but sometimes they particularly invigorate the drinker (Aid END), and they’ve even been known to reverse the effects of aging or heal injuries! Mages engaged in alchemical experimentation and the production of magical inks have also found the waters to possess great mystic potency.

Needless to say, the demand for Oakmont waters has created problems for the residents (though the House remains an elegant, even “trendy,” place to live). Special security measures (including heavy, enchanted gates) prevent outsiders from taking water for themselves (though several are caught every month trying to break in). Residents get one liter of water per month, and the Oakmont Residents’ Association bottles more for sale at high prices to an exclusive clientele (thus helping keep rents remarkably low). (In game terms, a character who wants to live at Oakmont House must pay for a 1 Character Point Perk.)

WOLVERTON’S TALISMANS

During the Sixties and Seventies, one of the most powerful — and quixotic — wizards in Hudson City was Allen Wolverton. Known for his mastery of Demonology and Fulmomancy, Wolverton was one of the most colorful, vibrant figures of the era. He wore nothing but royal blue clothing, carried a crystal wand whose power was evident to any mystic but which he never used in public, and kept as his familiar a raven-black owl that rode on his shoulder and occasionally pronounced cryptic utterances in various human languages.

In the latter years of his life, perhaps as part of a ritual or perhaps because he was suffering from dementia, Wolverton hid throughout Hudson City dozens of talismans and amulets. Shielded from mystical detection, these objects all have potent enchantments and are usable by anyone (though they do seem to be even more powerful in the hands of a trained wizard). Pursuant to the terms of Wolverton’s will, a 200-page long epic poem filled with weird imagery and mystic connotations and containing clues to the locations and nature of the talismans was published after his death; it remains in print locally to this day. Scholars who’ve studied the poem claim that it hints at upwards of three dozen talismans secreted throughout the city. To date only nine have been found — six through accurate interpretation of parts of the poem, three by dumb luck — and the

search for the others remains a pursuit (and often an obsession) for many Hudsonites and mystics. Several websites, of varying degrees of usefulness, are dedicated to the subject.

THE MAGIC OF HUDSON CITY SHADOWS

Magic in the world of *Hudson City Shadows* consists of seven types of magic, known to mages as *spheres*:

Cryomancy, or ice magic

Demonology, the conjuration of infernal and elemental beings

Fulmomancy, the magic of lightning and storms

High Magic, the magic of “light and the power of the celestial realm”

Pyromancy, or fire magic

Sorcery, or magics of illusion and the mind

Tenebromancy, or shadow magic

Within a sphere, spells are “subdivided” into two types: *cantrips*, spells that can be rapidly and easily cast (and thus are also known as “combat magic”); and *rituals*, which require a lot of time and preparation but tend to be more powerful than cantrips.

Magic in *Hudson City Shadows* isn’t taught at universities (though it is the subject of much academic study). Instead it’s passed on from one mage to another through the ancient system of apprenticeship. During the course of his career a wizard typically takes on at least one, and perhaps many, apprentices, and on his death he leaves his grimoires, workbooks, and mystic paraphernalia to one or more of them. In times past this method created a great risk for loss of knowledge due to fire, a mage’s premature death, or the like. Modern technology (photocopiers and fire safes, for example) have largely eliminated this problem, though despite the best efforts of computer scientists it remains impossible to store spells on computer hard drives or similar media. Raw mystical lore (such as the names of demons, or a list of materials required to cast a specific ritual) can be computerized, but spells themselves cannot for reasons that no one fully understands. Thus wizards remain dependent on such relatively old-fashioned methods as writing their spells by hand in books.

MAGIC AND TECHNOLOGY

In the world of *Hudson City Shadows*, magic cannot manipulate or subtly affect technology. For example, there are no spells that can deactivate an alarm, search a computer, start a car, or make someone invisible to cameras. However, magic can be used to damage or indirectly affect them. For example a Chillbolt spell could smash an alarm system or a computer, an Icy Ground spell could make it harder to drive over the affected area, and an Ignite could set the flammable parts of a device on fire.

MAGIC AND DURABLE MATERIALS

While magic is highly effective against flesh and bone, it doesn't work as well against certain other substances. Scholars theorize that these materials have some sort of atomic-level "anti-magic field" that protects them, but no one can say for sure.

Wood — such as many doors and types of furniture — is considered to have 20% more DEF for purposes of resisting magic, and to have Power Defense equal to its DEF. Packed earth (such as a sand dune or large planter) and concrete/cement/asphalt are the same. If a spellcaster is surrounded by wood or earth (such as being locked in a cabinet, or buried up to his waist or higher in earth), he suffers a -2 penalty on all magic-related Power rolls.

Stone, in either raw or worked form, has 40% more DEF for purposes of resisting magic, Power Defense equal to its DEF. If a spellcaster is surrounded by stone (such as being locked in a stone chamber), he suffers a -4 penalty on all magic-related Power rolls.

Metal, in either raw or worked form, has 60% more DEF for purposes of resisting magic, Power Defense equal to its DEF. If a spellcaster is surrounded by metal (such as being locked in a metal cabinet, or wrapped in chains), he suffers a -6 penalty on all magic-related Power rolls.

Magic In Game Terms

A Hudson City Shadows character needs two things to buy and cast a spell.

First, he needs a *Power Skill* for each of the spheres of magic he wants to learn spells from. For example, a character needs a *Demonology Skill* to use Demonology spells. If a character doesn't have the appropriate type of Skill, he cannot learn spells from that sphere. (Some spheres impose additional Skill restrictions; see below.)

Second, he must pay for the spell. The cost for each spell is its Real Cost divided by 3 (standard rounding rules apply). With the GM's permission characters can buy spells in Power Frameworks, though they must have one Framework per sphere — spells of different spheres cannot be bought in the same Framework.

CREATING SPELLS IN GAME TERMS

All spells in the world of the Hudson City Shadows follow certain rules of creation and use. These rules are reflected in how they're bought in *HERO System* terms. The sample

spells presented below represent just a small fraction of the incantations found in wizards' grimoires around the world; players and GMs should work together to create more, if desired.

Skill Roll

All spells require a Power roll to cast (though the *Power Skill* varies from sphere to sphere, as discussed above). In other words, they have the *Requires A Magic Roll* Limitation. Usually they do not have the *Side Effects* Limitation as well, but sometimes they do.

Gesturing And Incanting

Almost all Hudson City Shadows spells require the Limitations *Gestures* and *Incantations*.

Ritual Limitations

Cantrips have relatively few Limitations (which is one reason they're effective in crisis situations). Rituals, on the other hand, have lots of them. A typical ritual has Concentration and Extra Time at a minimum; Focus is also common, and Increased Endurance Cost not unheard of. Many rituals have Requires Multiple Users, but others can be cast by a single wizard.

Endurance

Magic is powerful, and thus tends to be tiring to use. Few spells cost no END, or even have the *Reduced Endurance* Advantage at ½ END value. The *Costs Endurance* and *Increased Endurance Cost* Limitations are common, though not required.

Hudson City Shadows wizards may buy Endurance Reserves or the like to provide END for their spells. It's common for casters, especially weaker ones, to buy Reserves through a Focus (typically a staff, wand, amulet, talisman, or fetish of some sort); more powerful casters often have personal Endurance Reserves that cannot be taken away. If a caster has an Endurance Reserve of any kind for his magic spells, he can cast them using his personal END instead, but they cost *triple* their normal END cost.

Some Powers Are Rare

Although it's not a hard-and-fast rule, as a system design parameter Movement Powers, Body-Affecting Powers, and particularly Defense Powers are rare in Hudson City Shadows magic. There are plenty of spells that offer protection against other spells, but no one has yet found a way to create a magical defense that blocks knives, bullets, fists, car crashes, or other mundane forms of damage. (However, the GM might permit magic in the form of Combat Luck, Danger Sense, or other "indirect" defenses.)

Cryomancy

Cryomancy spells manipulate or affect ice and cold; many wizards call it “Frost Magic.” Scientists who study magic believe that Cryomancy spells rapidly draw heat from an area to create ice and cold effects. Wizards, generally speaking, don’t care about scientific explanations as long as the spell does what they want.

BLIZZARD

Effect: Change Environment, -3 Temperature Levels and -3 Sight Group PER Rolls
Target: 16” Radius
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 225”
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell creates an area of intense cold and swirling snow. While the blizzard doesn’t injure anyone caught within it, it does chill and blind them.

Game Information: *Change Environment 16” radius, -3 Temperature Levels and -3 Sight Group PER Rolls, Multiple Combat Effects (45 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Cryomancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 16 points.*

CHILLBLAST

Effect: Energy Blast 8d6
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 200”
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell creates an intense, powerful beam of “cold energy” that can injure people and damage objects. Affected targets appear to have been affected by intense natural cold — flesh shows signs of severe frostbite, objects seem to have been frozen and shattered, and so forth.

Game Information: *Energy Blast 8d6 (40 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Cryomancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 16 points.*

CRYOMANTIC SHIELD

Effect: Force Field (25 ED), Only Versus Pyromancy
Target: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 1

Description: This cantrip creates a field of cryomantic energy around the caster that protects him from Pyromancy spells. (At the GM’s option, a wizard can cast this spell on another person, but this requires him to succeed with his Cryomancy roll at a -3 penalty; the wizard still pays the END for the spell.)

Game Information: *Force Field (25 ED), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (31 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Versus Limited Type Of Attack (Pyromancy spells; -½), Requires A Cryomancy Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

FREEZE

Effect: Change Environment (freeze liquids), Long-Lasting
Target: Special (see text)
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 405”
Magic Roll Penalty: -10
END Cost: 10

Description: With this spell, the caster can instantly freeze one or more bodies of liquid within a 250” radius. He can choose to freeze some (such as all the glasses of beer in a bar) but not others (such as the water in the faucets behind the bar), but must be able to establish Line Of Sight to all the targets he want to affect unless he wants to affect all of them within 250”. The ice lasts as long as it normally would given prevailing environmental conditions.

At the GM’s option, a character who uses this spell on a single large body of water (such as a lake) can freeze the surface of the entire body of water thick enough for humans (and perhaps larger creatures) to walk on it safely, even if the body of water is larger than the spell’s defined radius.

Game Information: *Change Environment 250” radius (freeze liquids), Long-Lasting, Selective (+½) (97 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Instant (-½), Requires A Cryomancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 32 points.*

HAILSTORM

Effect: Energy Blast 6d6, Indirect
Target: 4" Radius
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 200"
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 7

Description: This cantrip invokes a brief but intense hailstorm over a 4" radius area. The large hailstones batter and bash anything within that area.

Game Information: *Energy Blast 6d6 (physical), Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1), Indirect (always from above; +¼) (67 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (200"; -¼), Requires A Cryomancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 24 points.*

ICE WALL

Effect: Entangle 5d6, 5 DEF, Only To Form Barriers
Target: 5" line
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 50"
Magic Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 5

Description: This cantrip allows the caster to create a 6.5 foot tall wall of thick, solid ice. The wall melts eventually (if the environmental conditions are warm enough), but it's so sturdy and strong this could take hours or days. The wall isn't transparent; it blocks sight.

Game Information: *Entangle 5d6 (standard Effect: 5 BODY), 5 DEF (50 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Only To Form Barriers (-1), Requires A Cryomancy Roll (-½), Wall Must Contact The Ground On At Least One Edge (-¼). Total cost: 14 points.*

ICY GROUND

Effect: Change Environment (create ice sheet), -4 to DEX Rolls
Target: 32" Radius
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 195"
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell coats the ground with a sheet of slippery ice, making it difficult for people and creatures to walk or keep their footing. The sheet disappears as soon as the caster stops paying END to maintain it.

Game Information: *Change Environment (create ice sheet) 32" radius, -4 to DEX Rolls to move on the sheet (39 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Affects Characters Who*

Are Moving On The Ground (-¼), Requires A Cryomancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 14 points.

Demonology

Demonology is one of the more "suspect" of the magical arts in the world of Hudson City Shadows. While it can be used for noble or innocent purposes — elementals, after all, are neither good nor evil — the dark connotations of trafficking with the infernal realms raises questions in the minds of many, particularly the religiously devout. Scholars and laymen alike wonder why wizards cannot similarly conjure angels or other heavenly beings.

BANISH

Effect: Dispel Summon 20d6
Target: One Summoned creature
Casting Time: 1 Turn (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 300"
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: This spell — sometimes classified as a cantrip, sometimes a ritual — is the demonologist's last line of defense in case one of his charges cannot be controlled or escapes control... or a rival wizard sends a demon after him! It severs the magical "ties" that connect a Summoned being to its current location and plane, thus sending it back to wherever it was when first Summoned. (See page 122 of *Fantasy Hero* for more information about banishing.)

Game Information: *Dispel Summon 20d6 (60 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Demonology Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 13 points.*

Options:

1) Rapid Banish: This version of the spell can be cast much more quickly, but is much less effective. Change to Dispel Summon 14d6 and Extra Time (Extra Phase; -¾). 42 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

CONJURE DEMON

Effect: Summon one demon built on up to 500 Character Points
Target: One demon
Casting Time: 20 Minutes
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 15

Description: The most stereotypical... but also the most dangerous... Demonology spell is the ritual to summon a demon. Demonologists maintain books describing the types of demons they can

conjure, and listing dozens or hundreds by name. The wizard must know about the demon he wishes to summon, and if possible call him by name, if the ritual is to succeed. (In game terms he has to make a KS: Demons roll; this isn't affected by the spell's Active Points.)

Once he's studied and visualized the demon, the wizard prepares his materials. He creates a Warding (see below) and places within it a specially-worked iron brazier burning sulphur treated by alchemy. He steps outside the Warding, lights the brazier (often with a spell), and then begins casting the spell. The demon consumes the sulphur and brazier as it arrives. (At the GM's option, characters can try to summon a demon with an imperfect brazier or no brazier at all, but this imposes a -3 penalty on both the Demonology roll and the EGO Roll to control the demon after it arrives.) After the demon manifests, the wizard must control it somehow (willpower, bribery, persuasion, force...) to get it to do what he wants.

Game Information: *Summon one demon built on up to 500 Character Points, Expanded Class (demons; +½) (150 Active Points); OAF Expendable (sulphur burned in a specially-worked iron brazier, Very Difficult to obtain;*

-1½), Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (20 Minutes; -2½), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Demonology Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Requires A KS: Demons Roll (see text; -¼). Total cost: 20 points.

CONJURE ELEMENTAL

Effect: Summon one elemental built on up to 485 points
Target: One elemental
Casting Time: 20 Minutes
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 14

Description: This ritual calls forth a being embodying one of the four Classical Elements: Air, Earth, Fire, Water. (Some wizards say they can conjure elementals of ice, shadow, or other substances, but most mages scoff at these claims.) The elemental is not under the control of the caster; he must compel or persuade it to serve him. For this reason a wise caster invokes a Warding (see below) before calling an elemental into being.

As part of the conjuration, the mage must provide the elemental with something it desires for it to "eat" as it manifests. Typically this means bottles of pure oxygen for an Air elemental, fine stone or gems for an Earth elemental, fine wood for a Fire elemental, and purest water for a Water elemental. However, not all spellcasters can afford such things and have to make do with whatever they can lay their hands on. At the GM's option a particular "succulent" offering might give the caster an EGO Roll bonus in his contest with the elemental, while a "bland" or poor one might cause him to suffer a penalty. Also at the GM's option, characters can try to summon an elemental with no materials at all, but this imposes a -3 penalty on both the Demonology roll and the EGO Roll to control the demon after it arrives.

See *The HERO System Bestiary* for character sheets for elementals. Additionally, elementals in the world of Hudson City Shadows have a Physical Limitation, *Restricted By Magic Circles*, which is the same as demons' *Restricted By Pentagrams*.

Game Information: *Summon one elemental built on up to 485 Character Points, Expanded Class (elementals; +½) (145 Active Points); OAF Expendable (materials desirable to the elemental, Easy to obtain, see text; -1¼), Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (20 Minutes; -2½), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Demonology Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼). Total cost: 21 points.*



WARDING

Effect:	Change Environment (create warded area)
Target:	1" Radius
Casting Time:	5 Minutes (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	No Range
Magic Roll Penalty:	-4
END Cost:	0

Description: Warding is sometimes referred to as a “pre-ritual” — a ritual cast in preparation for another ritual (specifically, Conjure Demon or Elemental). It creates an area with special mystic power to constrain various types of summoned beings. The caster has to specify which type of being a Warding affects, demons or elementals; a single Warding cannot restrain both.

To create a Warding, a wizard must obtain special paints, inks, or powders. Prepared by alchemical processes, these substances are expensive. Depending on the type of Warding he’s creating, he may also need candles, censers of incense, or other materials (also not cheap). He can only cast the spell on a level surface at least 2” in radius. Typically he uses the floor of a summoning-chamber, but any level surface that he can paint/draw on will do.

The minimum time required to cast Warding is 5 Minutes. At the GM’s option, characters who take more time (meaning they’re more careful about drawing the warding-lines and performing other preparations) gain a bonus to their Demonology roll, per the usual rules for taking extra time. Or he can try to draw the circle more quickly, suffering the usual penalties for speedy use of a Skill.

Once all preparations are complete, the caster makes his Demonology roll. If he succeeds, he’s created a working Warding that triggers demons’ (or elementals’) Physical Limitation regarding such things. If he fails, the Warding was improperly drawn; he must start over. If he fails badly (by 4 or more), he *thinks* he created a Warding... but in fact it’s broken and anything he summons is free to attack him, flee, or do whatever else it wants!

Game Information: *Change Environment (create warded area), Long Lasting, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) (37 Active Points); OAF Fragile Expendable (magic circle, pentagram, or the like drawn on the floor with easily-disturbed enchanted paints, inks, or powders, plus candles and other materials, Very Difficult to obtain; -1¾), Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), No Range (-½), Requires A Level Surface (-0), Requires A Demonology Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 4 points.*

Fulmomancy

Fulmomancy is the magic of storms, lightning, and weather control in general. It’s a fairly limited field, all things considered, but its spells are powerful and spectacular. Many a military field mage specializes in this sphere.

CALLING DOWN THE LIGHTNING

Effect:	RKA 3d6, Indirect
Target:	One character
Casting Time:	Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	280"
Magic Roll Penalty:	-6
END Cost:	6

Description: This cantrip calls down from the sky a tremendous bolt of lightning to strike the caster’s foes. If the target is inside, the bolt must first blast through the roof or other obstacles, diminishing its effect considerably.

Game Information: *RKA 3d6, Indirect (always comes from the sky; +¼) (56 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Fulmomancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 17 points.*

LIGHTNING BOLT

Effect:	RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing
Target:	One character
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	225"
Magic Roll Penalty:	-4
END Cost:	4

Description: This simple but effective attack spell projects a bolt of lightning from the wizard’s hand to the target.

Game Information: *RKA 2d6, Armor Piercing (+½) (45 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Fulmomancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 18 points.*



LIGHTNING STORM

Effect: RKA 2d6, Indirect
Target: 4" Radius
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 200"
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 7

Description: This cantrip causes a field of dark storm clouds to spring into existence above the target 4" radius area and rain down a shower of lightning bolts to electrocute anyone within that area.

Game Information: RKA 2d6, Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1), Indirect (always from above; +¼) (67 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (200"; -¼), Requires A Fulmancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 24 points.

STATIC FIELD

Effect: Change Environment (-4 to Radio Group PER Rolls)
Target: ¼ kilometer Radius
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: When a wizard casts this cantrip, he creates a field of static electricity for a one-quarter kilometer radius around himself. (The spell takes a Full Phase to cast and to maintain, so he can't move or do anything else while it's active.) The static makes it difficult to use Radio Sense Group devices and abilities; anyone (including the caster) has to succeed with a PER Roll at -4 just to hear/see what's being broadcast to him, or to transmit.

Game Information: Change Environment 1" radius, -4 to Radio Group PER Rolls, Mega-Scale (1" = .25 km; +¼) (17 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), No Range (-½), Requires A Fulmancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 4 points.

WEATHER CONTROL

Effect:	Change Environment (alter the weather), +/-10 Temperature Levels, Multiple Combat Effects, Varying Combat Effects, Varying Effect
Target:	4 km Radius
Casting Time:	20 Minutes
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	No Range
Magic Roll Penalty:	-8
END Cost:	32 per hour

Description: This ritual allows a wizard to take control of the weather in a four kilometer radius around himself. The effects, being artificial, disperse fairly quickly once the caster stops paying END. It costs 32 END per hour to maintain; the GM should apportion that as evenly as possible over the hour if necessary.

Once a wizard changes the weather, it stays that way until he stops paying END. The change, being magical, disperses fairly quickly once he stops paying END. If the caster wants to change the weather again while maintaining the spell, he can do so, but this takes at least 20 minutes (if not more), and at the GM's option, temporarily doubles the END cost.

Game Information: *Change Environment (alter the weather) 4" radius, +/-10 Temperature Levels, Multiple Combat Effects, Varying Combat Effects, Varying Effect (+1), MegaArea (1" = 1 km broad and wide; +¼), Delayed Endurance Cost (once per Hour; +½) (157 Active Points); OAF Expendable (several small gems, Very Difficult to obtain; -1½), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (20 Minutes to cast; -1¼), Gestures (two hands throughout casting; -1), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), No Range (-½), Noisy (-¼), Requires A Fulmancy Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 19 points.*

High Magic

High Magic, sometimes also known as Astromancy, is one of the least-understood spheres of magic. Standard reference works describe it as "the magic of light and the power of the celestial realm," though this implies a holiness and sanctity that have nothing to do with the sphere. High Magic spells call on a sort of "stellar light" to create all sorts of dazzling, deadly effects. It can also "read the stars," giving the mage glimpses of the future.

ASTRAL FIRE

Effect:	Force Field (15 ED/10 Power Defense), Only Versus Tenebromancy
Target:	Self
Casting Time:	Half Phase
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-3
END Cost:	1

Description: This cantrip surrounds the caster with a field of silvery fire that shields him from the direct attacks of Tenebromancy. It does not, however, allow him to see through a Tenebromantic Field. (At the GM's option, a wizard can cast this spell on another person, but this requires him to succeed with his High Magic roll at a -3 penalty; the wizard still pays the END for the spell.)

Game Information: *Force Field (15 ED/10 Power Defense), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (31 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Versus Limited Type Of Attack (Tenebromancy spells; -½), Requires A High Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

BEDAZZLE

Effect:	Sight Group Flash 8d6
Target:	One character
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	200"
Magic Roll Penalty:	-4
END Cost:	4

Description: The simplest, and often most effective, cantrip of High Magic is to project a flash of silvery starfire at a target, blinding him.

Game Information: *Sight Group Flash 8d6 (40 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A High Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 16 points.*

Options:

1) Lesser Bedazzlement Field: Some wizards learn a version of this spell that affects many people. Add Explosion (+½). 60 Active Points; total cost 24 points.

2) Greater Bedazzlement Field: The most powerful version of this spell creates an immobile field

of blinding starfire. Change to: Sight Group Flash 4d6, Area Of Effect (8" Radius; +1½) (50 Active Points); same Limitations. Total cost: 20 points.

READ THE STARS

Effect: Precognition, Vague And Unclear
Target: Self
Casting Time: 20 Minutes
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This unusual ritual grants a caster glimpses of the future by allowing him to read the course of events to come in the stars. To cast it, a wizard must have books of astromantic lore and calculations, paper and pen for writing down horoscopes and observations, special lenses for viewing the stars, and a clear night for viewing them (which is difficult to obtain in any modern city due to smog and light pollution).

Game Information: *Clairsentience* (Sight Group), *Precognition* (40 Active Points); *OAF* (see text; -1), *Gestures* (-¼), *Incantations* (-¼), *Instant* (-½), *Only Works At Night With A Clear View Of The Stars* (-1), *Precognition Only* (-1), *Requires A High Magic Roll* (-½), *Vague And Unclear* (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

STARFALL

Effect: Energy Blast 8d6 + Sight Group Flash 4d6, Indirect
Target: Explosion
Casting Time: Extra Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 50"
Magic Roll Penalty: -10
END Cost: 10

Description: This powerful (but tiring) cantrip calls down a flare of starfire that injures and dazzles everyone in a wide area (though the further a target is from the point of impact, the less he's affected). It's particularly effective against enemies who are hiding behind cover.

Game Information: *Energy Blast 8d6, Explosion* (+½), *Indirect* (always from above; +¼) (70 Active Points); *Concentration* (½ DCV; -¼), *Extra Time* (Extra Phase; -¾), *Gestures* (-¼), *Incantations* (-¼), *Requires A High Magic Roll* (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), *Spell* (-½) (total cost: 21 points) **plus** *Sight Group Flash 4d6, same Power Modifiers plus Linked* (-½) (35 Active Points; total cost 9 points). Total cost: 30 points.

STARFLARE

Effect: Energy Blast 6d6 + Sight Group Flash 3d6
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 50"
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This cantrip projects a bolt of bright celestial energy at the target that simultaneously injures and dazzles him.

Game Information: *Energy Blast 6d6* (30 Active Points); *Gestures* (-¼), *Incantations* (-¼), *Limited Range* (50"; -¼), *Requires A High Magic Roll* (-½), *Spell* (-½) (total cost: 11 points) **plus** *Sight Group Flash 3d6* (15 Active Points); same Limitations **plus** *Linked* (-½) (total cost: 5 points). Total cost: 16 points.

Pyromancy

Perhaps the flashiest and deadliest sphere, Pyromancy — or Fire Magic — is also sometimes considered one of the most limited spheres. With a few exceptions, most of its best-known spells are used to attack and injure targets. However it does have a variety of utilitarian spells (Ignite being one of them, despite its offensive potential).

EXTINGUISH

Effect: Dispel Fire 12d6
Target: One fire
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 225"
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This cantrip extinguishes fires both mundane and magical, snuffing them out instantly. For fire spells and powers possessed by characters, use the Active Points in the power to determine whether the Dispel works. At the GM's option, separate fires caused by a character's power may also use this rule, instead of the one for natural fires.

For natural fires, if a fire fills one hex or less, use its Active Points (typically for an RKA, Continuous) to determine whether the Dispel works (see pages 444-45 of *The HERO System 5th Edition, Revised* for suggested damage ranges for fires). If it fills more than one hex, the character can either extinguish it one hex at a time, or in larger "pieces." To determine the Active Points for a multi-hex fire, apply an appropriate Advantage (Area Of Effect, typically) to the Powers used to create the fire.

Extinguishing a fire doesn't get rid of the smoke it generated, or reverse any effects it may already have caused (like heating an area or weakening the structure of a building).

Game Information: *Dispel 12d6, any Fire power one at a time (+¼) (45 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Fire Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 18 points.*

FIREBALL

Effect: RKA 2½d6
Target: Explosion
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 300"
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: A favorite of many wizards, this cantrip projects a tendril of fire from the caster's hand toward the target area. As it travels it becomes larger, and when it hits the target area it explodes in a deadly flash of flame.

Game Information: *RKA 2½d6, Explosion (+½) (60 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Fire Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 24 points.*

FIREBLAST

Effect: RKA 2½d6
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 200"
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell creates a "beam" of fire that blasts the caster's target. At the GM's option it may set flammable objects on fire; if so, the chance depends on how flammable they are.

Game Information: *RKA 2½d6 (40 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Pyromancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 16 points.*

FLAMECLOAK

Effect: RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing, Damage Shield
Target: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: When a wizard chants the words of this cantrip, a fiery aura surrounds him. He feels nothing, but anyone he touches (or whom he grabs) feels the effects of the deadly flames.

Game Information: *RKA 1d6, Armor Piercing (+½), Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½) (45 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Pyromancy Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 18 points.*

IGNITE

Effect: 1 point RKA, Penetrating
Target: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Uncontrolled (until runs out of fuel or is extinguished)
Range: 30"
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 0

Description: One of the first spells learned by most mages, Ignite sets a flammable object on fire. Typically it's just used to light candles and such, but it does have combat applications (such as setting an enemy's clothes on fire).

Any flammable object that touches an object lit on fire with Ignite also catches fire (the Sticky effect). The flames keep burning until they run out of fuel or air, or someone puts them out. Dousing one burning person or object doesn't affect any of the others; each person or object must be extinguished individually.

At the GM's option, characters may buy this spell Linked with other Pyromancy spells, to represent the fact that fire attacks tend to set objects on fire.

Game Information: *RKA 1 point, Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), Continuous (+1), Penetrating (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Sticky (only affects flammables; +¼), Uncontrolled (spell ends when it runs out of fuel or oxygen, or someone extinguishes the flames; +½) (21 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (30"; -¼), Requires A Fire Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 6 points.*

IMMOLATE

Effect: RKA 1d6
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: LOS
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: This highly-feared cantrip allows a mage to set any target he can see on fire. The target keeps burning until the caster stops focusing on him (i.e., stops paying END) or the target somehow douses the flame on his own (such as by leaping into the water).

Game Information: *RKA 1d6, Continuous (+1), Line Of Sight (+½) (37 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Fire Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½), Target Can Stop Spell By Dousing Flames (see text; -½). Total cost: 12 points.*



PYROMANTIC SHIELD

Effect:	Force Field (25 ED), Only Versus Cryomancy
Target:	Self
Casting Time:	Half Phase
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-3
END Cost:	1

Description: This cantrip creates a field of cryomantic energy around the caster that protects him from Pyromancy spells. (At the GM's option, a wizard can cast this spell on another person, but this requires him to succeed with his Pyromancy roll at a -3 penalty; the wizard still pays the END for the spell.)

Game Information: *Force Field (25 ED), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (31 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Versus Limited Type Of Attack (Cryomancy spells; -½), Requires A Pyromancy Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

Sorcery

Sorcery — the magics of illusion and the mind — is as feared as Demonology, if not moreso. After all, it's pretty obvious when some wizard's summoned a demon... but a person may be under a spell of Sorcery and not even know it! Wizards tend to keep quiet about how much Sorcery they know to keep from frightening people.

DOMINATION

Effect:	Mind Control 10d6, Telepathic
Target:	One character
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	LOS
Magic Roll Penalty:	-6
END Cost:	6

Description: The most feared spell of Sorcery allows a wizard to take over another person's mind. The more the victim objects to a particular action, the harder it is to assert and maintain control over him, but there are recorded instances of mages using this spell to force people to commit "suicide."

Game Information: *Mind Control 10d6, Telepathic (+¼) (62 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Sorcery Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 25 points.*

FEAR

Effect:	Mind Control 12d6, Only To Cause Fear
Target:	One character
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	LOS
Magic Roll Penalty:	-6
END Cost:	6

Description: Instead of taking control of a victim, a wizard can simply afflict him with terror. See the accompanying table for suggested results.

Game Information: *Mind Control 12d6 (60 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Sorcery Roll (-½), Set Effect (only to cause fear; -1), Spell (-½). Total cost: 17 points.*

FEAR EFFECTS

Fear	Mind Control Roll Needed
Apprehensive/Uneasy	Greater than EGO: Ego Roll at +5 to maintain composure; if failed, character avoids the situation or phenomenon causing the fear. Danger Sense automatically triggered.
Fearful	EGO +10: As Greater than EGO, but the EGO Roll is unmodified
Terrified	EGO +20: As Greater than EGO, but the EGO Roll is at -5
Blind Panic	EGO +30: Character moves away from feared object or phenomenon as fast as possible

This table represents what happens when Shadow Destroyer uses his Shadows Of Terror power. Victims who fail their EGO Roll normally flee, though they may be paralyzed with fear or may lash out at Shadow Destroyer in panic. In combat, they do not usually attack Shadow Destroyer; at best they constantly Dodge his other attacks, but most likely they try to get away from him. If trapped and unable to flee, they become paralyzed with fear or act in whatever way the GM considers appropriate. If subjected to interrogation, they answer questions willingly (the GM may allow a separate EGO Roll to resist particularly damaging questions). A successful Fear attack automatically triggers the target's Danger Sense, if any.

GLAMOUR

Effect:	Sight, Touch, and Hearing Sense Groups Images
Target:	2" Radius
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	125"
Magic Roll Penalty:	-2
END Cost:	2

Description: This cantrip allows a mage to create illusions so believable they even appear real to the touch.

Game Information: *Sight, Touch, and Hearing Sense Groups Images, Increased Size (2" radius; +¼) (25 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Sorcery Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 10 points.*

INVISIBILITY

Effect:	Invisibility to Sight Group
Target:	Self
Casting Time:	Half Phase
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-2
END Cost:	2

Description: This spell renders the caster invisible, making it easy for him to slip by guards. However, he still shows up on cameras, closed-circuit TV, and the like.

Game Information: *Invisibility to Sight Group (20 Active Points); Does Not Work Against Cameras (see text; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Sorcery Roll (-½). Total cost: 8 points.*

MINDBLAST

Effect:	Ego Attack 4d6
Target:	One character
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	LOS
Magic Roll Penalty:	-4
END Cost:	4

Description: One of the most basic Sorcery attack spells, Mindblast allows a mage to inflict intense mental agony on another being.

Game Information: *Ego Attack 4d6 (40 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Sorcery Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 16 points.*

MINDREADING

Effect:	Telepathy 10d6
Target:	One character
Casting Time:	Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Constant
Range:	LOS
Magic Roll Penalty:	-5
END Cost:	5

Description: One of the most basic — and most useful — spells of Sorcery, Mindreading allows a mage to peer into another person's mind and discern his thoughts, memories, loves, and fears. Wizards use it to interrogate captives, glean useful information from passersby, and discover secrets with which to blackmail someone.

Game Information: *Telepathy 10d6 (50 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Sorcery Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 20 points.*

MINDSCAPES

Effect: Mental Illusions 10d6
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: LOS
Magic Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 5

Description: Unlike Glamour, which creates an illusion that many people can perceive at once, Mindscapes projects an illusion directly into the target's mind so that only he can perceive it, which often makes it much more effective against him.

Game Information: *Mental Illusions 10d6 (50 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Sorcery Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 20 points.*

SEEMING

Effect: Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, and Touch Groups, any humanoid form), Imitation
Target: Self
Casting Time: 1 Minute
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell sheathes the caster in an illusion that alters his appearance (even to the point of imitating other people with great accuracy). He can only change his height three inches up or down, and cannot give himself non-human attributes like wings or claws (though he could make minor cosmetic changes, such as giving himself bright red eyes or purple skin).

Game Information: *Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, and Touch Groups, any humanoid form), Imitation (36 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout casting; -½), Extra Time (1 Minute to cast; -¾), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), No Nonhuman Attributes (see text; -¼), Requires A Sorcery Roll (-½). Total cost: 9 points.*

Tenebromancy

Tenebromancy, or Shadow Magic, is the opposite of High Magic. It creates and manipulates a “dark force” that science cannot explain and which functions in some ways like energy and some ways like matter. Tenebromancy spells usually involve blocking the senses or interfering with the target's ability to function in other ways. Despite the claims of some persons, Tenebromancy is no more inherently “evil” than High Magic is inherently “good.”

DARK MALADY

Effect: Drain Characteristic 3d6
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 40"
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell infuses the target with dark force, causing all sorts of strange aches, pains, and conditions. Depending on how the wizard “tunes” the spell, it can affect anything from muscles, to coordination, to intellect, to resistance to injury.

Game Information: *Drain Characteristic 3d6, any one Characteristic at a time (+¼), Limited Range (40”; +¼) (45 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Tenebromancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 18 points.*

SHADOWBLAST

Effect: Energy Blast 6d6 + Drain BODY 1d6
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 150"
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell fires a bolt of dark force at a designated target. In addition to the bolt's impact, the dark force energy “eats away” at the target, causing horrific (but usually temporary) pain.

Game Information: *Energy Blast 6d6 (30 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Tenebromancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½) (total cost: 12 points) **plus** Drain BODY 1d6, Ranged (+½) (15 Active Points); same Limitations plus Linked (-½) (total cost: 5 points). Total cost: 17 points.*

SHADOW BONDS

Effect: Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF, Vulnerable (High Magic)
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 200"
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell forms the dark force into rope- or chain-like strands that wrap around the target, imprisoning him.

Game Information: *Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF (40 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Tenebromancy Roll (-½), Spell (-½), Vulnerable (High Magic; -1). Total cost: 11 points.*

SHADOW SHIELD

Effect: Force Field (15 ED/10 Sight Group Flash Defense), Only Versus High Magic
Target: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 1

Description: This cantrip surrounds the caster with a “mantle” of shadowy energy that protects him against High Magic attacks (including their dazzling brightness). (At the GM’s option, a wizard can cast this spell on another person, but this requires him to succeed with his Tenebromancy roll at a -3 penalty; the wizard still pays the END for the spell.)

Game Information: *Force Field (15 ED/10 Sight Group Flash Defense), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (31 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Versus Limited Type Of Attack (High Magic spells; -½), Requires A Tenebromancy Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

TENEBROMANTIC FIELD

Effect: Darkness to Sight Group
Target: 4" Radius
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 200"
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This cantrip creates an area of impenetrable shadow with a 4" radius. Those outside it cannot see into it; those inside it cannot see out.

Game Information: *Darkness to Sight Group 4" radius (40 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Tenebromancy Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 16 points.*

TENEBROMANTIC ORB

Effect: Darkness to Sight Group, Usable As Attack
Target: 1" Radius
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 50"
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This spell surrounds the target in an ovoid field of impenetrable shadow. The field moves as he moves, making it impossible for him to escape.

Game Information: *Darkness to Sight Group 1" radius, Usable As Attack (defense is knowing any Tenebromancy or High Magic spell; +1), Ranged (+½) (25 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Tenebromancy Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 10 points.*

Other Spells

Besides the spheres described above, many wizards know a variety of simple, utilitarian spells that make their lives easier: spells to protect grimoires; rituals that allow them to properly prepare tools and materials for other rituals; minor wardings against all manner of ills; rituals to remove curses; and the like. Generally speaking there’s no need to write these up in *HERO System* terms; if necessary you can let a wizard invoke them by making a roll with an appropriate *Magic Skill*.

Furthermore, the spheres don’t necessarily encompass all magical traditions. Non-Western cultures and schools of mystic thought may characterize things differently, and can even have other spells and *Magic Skills* if desired. For example, Juanita Barbaroux, one of the characters described below, has some spells and powers from the tradition of Voodoo. Gamemasters who want to expand on the Hudson City Shadows magic system by drawing on spells from other settings (such as the Sixth Sun later in this chapter, or the *Fantasy Hero Grimoires*) are free to do so.

THE MYSTIC WORLD

Often known to its members as “the Shadow World,” the Mystic World of *Hudson City Shadows* is, to continue the analogy begun above, much like the criminal underworld: everyone knows it’s there, and sometimes you get involved with it (whether you want to or not), but most people don’t know much about it and prefer to avoid it as much as possible. It exists amidst and “behind” the mundane world. Sometimes it intrudes into mundane affairs — such as when a wizard advertises his services publicly, or battles a colleague in the street — but usually it’s content to keep to itself.

Broadly speaking, the members of the Mystic World fall into four categories: human mages; the mysterious Vampyri; the Fae Folk; and haunts.

Human Mages

Mages are humans who can cast spells, read the future, or have other mystic abilities. Roughly half of them are minor mystics with at most one or two powers. These tend to be lesser ones like fortunetelling, finding lost objects, or speaking to ghosts (though “lesser” doesn’t mean they can’t be powerful in the right circumstances, or don’t allow their possessor to make a living with them). The remainder are true spellcasters, sometimes referred to as “wizards,” who use the magic system outlined above to some degree. Most wizards know only a few spells, since magic isn’t a simple thing to learn and often takes a toll on both body and soul... but some are highly-accomplished experts able to cast dozens of different spells.

Mages in general, and wizards in particular, tend to be an individualistic, quirky, even iconoclastic group. They can work together, but often prefer to fly solo. Quarrels, rivalries, and outright hatreds between two wizards aren’t uncommon, and sometimes even flare into “wizards’ duels” that tend to wreak havoc on everyone and everything around them. (Though most wizards try to avoid such things, since using magic to injure someone is a major felony, and using it to kill is a capital offense in most states.)

THE COUNCIL OF SOLOMON

The organization that purports to “govern” mystics in Hudson City (and throughout the United States, and in some cases beyond) is the *Council of Solomon*. Founded in 1912 in New York City, the Council was established in an effort to restrain the worst excesses of human mystics so that the government (or mobs) wouldn’t try to investigate or regulate the Shadow World any more than it already did. (Though in the century since then many more government regulations pertaining to mages have been passed despite the

Council’s existence.) Over the years the Council’s role expanded, and it now serves several functions.

First and foremost, the Council is a regulatory body for mages (though one that must lead by example, since it has no enforcement powers and is a voluntary organization). Its *Mage’s Code* stands as the primary body of ethical dicta for human mystics of all sorts. Among other things the Code states that mages shall not use their powers to harm others or to commit crimes. It also establishes rules governing the interactions of wizards in an attempt to prevent duels (a task at which it’s largely been successful).

Second, the Council acts as an advocacy and lobbying group for the Mystic World. When the government considers laws that impact mages, there’s a public relations issue affecting wizards, or mages’ civil rights are at issue, the Council is there to argue on the Mystic World’s behalf, testify before Congressional committees, appear on television, and if necessary file lawsuits — though even the most potent Demonology spells can’t affect lawyers, theirs being a sorcery that defies the power of the Mystic World.

Third, the Council serves as a sort of “Better Business Bureau” for mages’ businesses. The Council will review the business practices and mystic skills of any member, and if it finds him worthy extends its approval. Many commercial mages proudly display the Council’s official seal to show potential customers that they can be trusted.

Fourth, the Council provides a wide variety of services for member mages. The most important of these is affordable health insurance (since most mages work for themselves or for small companies). That benefit alone prompts many mages to join the Council and obey its rules who otherwise might not. Others include the use of the Council’s library, summoning room, and other mystic facilities, a small mystic business loan program, training seminars, and the like.

As of 2008, the President of the Council is Asenath Finch, a tall woman of imperious manner and precise conduct. Though grey-haired and in her mid-sixties, she remains fit, intelligent, and more than capable of handling the job of trying to wrangle the Council’s members. A wizard of some power, she specializes in Fulmomancy and Pyromancy, though she has some skill with all of the spheres. Assisting her is the Governing Council (a body of 13 mages, each elected for staggered three-year terms) and a medium-sized clerical staff.

The Council’s Hudson City headquarters is discussed briefly on page 77. The Council’s symbol — a six-pointed star inside an inverted triangle — hangs over the front door and adorns most of its paperwork, official correspondence, and the like. Membership in the Council is a 1 Character Point Fringe Benefit.

AMBROSE STONE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
10	COM	0	11-	
6	PD	4		Total: 9 PD (3 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 9 ED (3 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
8	REC	6		
40	END	7		
22	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 69

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Spells	END
	Demonology	
4	Banish	
7	Conjure Demon	
7	Conjure Elemental	
1	Warding	
	Fulmancy	
6	Calling Down The Lightning	
6	Lightning Bolt	
1	Static Field	
6	Weather Control	
	High Magic	
5	Bedazzle	
5	Starflare	
	Pyromancy	
6	Extinguish	
8	Fireball	
5	Fireblast	
2	Ignite	
4	Immolate	
	Sorcery	
8	Domination	
3	Glamour	
3	Invisibility	
5	Mindblast	
7	Mindreading	
3	Seeming	
	Powers	
10	<i>Third Eye:</i> Detect Magic 13- (Sight Group)	0
7	<i>Stone's Tarot:</i> Clairsentience (Sight Group), Precognition; OAF (-1), Concentration (½ DCV throughout use; -½), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Precognition Only (-1), Vague And Unclear (-½)	4
10	<i>Wizard's Luck:</i> Luck 2d6	
	Perks	
1	Fringe Benefit: Member of the Council of Solomon	
	Talents	
3	<i>Amulet Of Enduring Luck:</i> Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED); OAF (-1)	0

Skills

6	+2 with Magic Spells
1	Criminology 8-
3	Deduction 13-
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 13-
3	KS: Demons 13-
3	KS: The Mystic World 13-
2	Language: Latin (fluent conversation; English is Native)
13	Power: Demonology 18-
17	Power: Fulmancy 20-
13	Power: High Magic 18-
17	Power: Pyromancy 20-
13	Power: Sorcery 18-
2	PS: Drawing 11-
2	PS: Painting 11-
2	PS: Papermaking 11-
3	Stealth 12-
1	Streetwise 8-
3	Trading 12-
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 244

Total Cost: 313

100+ Disadvantages

10	Hunted: the Council of Solomon 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
10	Hunted: Alexander Burnside 8- (As Pow, Kill)
10	Hunted: Cynthia Athame 8- (As Pow, Kill)
15	Psychological Limitation: Determined To Do The Right Thing No Matter What The Cost (Common, Strong)
5	<i>Wizard's Luck:</i> Unluck 1d6
163	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 313

Background/History: Originally hailing from Dallas, Texas (he still has a trace of the accent), Ambrose Stone came to Hudson City after a brief and unpleasant stint in the US Army, which bounced him out for repeated insubordination and failure to follow orders. (He's never been good with authority figures.) He considered going to college, but destiny had another plan in mind.

One day when Stone was walking down the street, trying to figure out where he'd get enough money to eat that week, he saw a middle-aged man being mugged by a group of kids. Unwilling to stand by and do nothing, he waded in and took out three of them before the weight of numbers turned the tide against him. The situation might have turned out very badly, but he'd delayed the punks long enough for a cop to notice what was going on.

Harold Wicherly, the man he'd rescued, was very grateful... and more importantly, was a wizard of some power. Sensing mystic potential within Stone, he offered to take him in as an apprentice. Intrigued by the idea of becoming a wizard — not to mention free room and board — Stone accepted. Years of work and study followed, but at the end Stone, to his own surprise, was a talented and powerful wizard.

When his apprenticeship ended, Stone wasn't sure what he wanted to do with his life, but he knew one thing: he didn't want to go to work for a

AMBROSE STONE
PLOT SEEDS

A client hires Stone to investigate a man the client believes is using magic to ruin his business. When Stone discovers the target is a high-ranking member of the Council of Solomon and a thoroughly unscrupulous individual, he realizes he may have gotten in over his head and asks the PCs for help.

One of the mages sent by the Council of Solomon to spy on Stone finds him lying on the floor in a coma! Clutched in his hand are several scraps of parchment covered with mysterious scribbles. The PCs, who are friends of Stone or somehow owe him one, have to investigate to find out what put Stone into a coma... because without knowing that, they can't devise a counterspell to wake him up.

Stone wants to go on vacation to the Caribbean, so he hires the PCs to "fill in" for him with his clients. Wackiness ensues.

corporation or the government. Although he had no investigative skills at the time, he hung out a shingle as a “mystic detective,” helping people with all sorts of mystic problems. Since then he’s eked out a living finding clients’ lost objects, driving away haunts, dispelling curses, and so on. Occasionally he’s even gotten involved at investigating actual crimes as favors to friends in the police department (primarily Detective Lieutenant Karen Wilson, on whom he has a *major* crush). He rarely makes much money and has perpetual “cash flow problems,” but he’s living life on his own terms and helping people who need help, so he’s content.

Personality/Motivation: Despite his oft-expressed baser inclinations, at heart Ambrose Stone is a noble, even heroic, man. He affects an air of cynical detachment, but the truth is he can’t stand to see bad people triumph over good people, powerful people abuse weaker people, or people in distress suffer. Though he’ll complain about it every step of the way, he does whatever he can to ensure that he does “the right thing” and that wrongdoing is stopped (and punished). This is one reason for his perpetual money problems — he puts himself on the line for clients and other people who can’t afford to pay him.

Quote: “Yes, ma’am, I can help you with that. I charge \$100 a day, plus expenses.”
::pause:: “Please stop crying, ma’am. I’ll do what I can, I promise.”

Powers/Tactics:

Ambrose Stone is an accomplished wizard with experience in both the scholarly and practical aspects of wizardry. His primary areas of expertise are Fulmomancy and Pyromancy, though he’s also well-versed in Demonology, High Magic, and Sorcery. (His knowledge of Cryomancy and Tenebromancy are minimal.) If

possible he prefers to avoid combat, in part because he’d rather show off his intelligence by outsmarting his adversaries than show off his

spells. But he has used magic in self-defense in the past (and been cleared of any charges by the HCPD). He usually opens combat with a Lightning Bolt or Fireblast in the hopes of ending things quickly, or a Mindblast if he wants to capture his opponent unharmed.

In addition to his spells, Stone owns two enchanted items. The first, a gift from his mentor Harold Wicherly, is an amulet that augments his natural luck to keep him from being hurt. It’s not foolproof, but it’s been a big help to him many times. The other is a deck of Tarot cards he made himself (he taught himself papermaking and art so he could create the deck from scratch). When he uses the deck to perform readings, he often gets remarkably accurate insights into coming events. Sometimes this disturbs him, so he doesn’t use the deck as often as he otherwise might.

Due to a couple of unfortunate incidents where he’s had to skirt the Council of Solomon’s ethical code to help a client, and one as yet unresolved misunderstanding concerning a fight with a group of Vampyri, Stone is not on the best of terms with much of the Mystic World. The Council keeps a close eye on him, often deputizing a member to follow him around and monitor his use of magic. He bitterly resents this, but any attempt to get out of it would just make things worse, so he grits his teeth and puts up with it, hoping the Council will eventually realize that he’s one of the Good Guys.

Campaign Use: Ambrose Stone is a resource for the PCs to call upon if necessary, and a potential ally if they get into trouble they can’t handle. If they’re working on the side of the Light he’ll find a way to help them if they ask him to, no matter what it takes.

To make Stone weaker, reduce his Magic rolls by 2-3 points each so his spells are more likely to fail. To increase his power, give him rolls and spells for Cryomancy and Tenebromancy, and perhaps another Fulmomancy spell or two.

Stone generally only Hunts people whom he’s hired to Hunt, and then only to find out things about them or capture them for a bounty. He prefers to rely on research and dogged detective work more than magic, though he often conjures imps and other minor demons to follow people and report back to him so he can take care of other business.

Appearance: Ambrose Stone is a white man who looks like he’s in his mid-thirties; he’s got short black hair but his face is cleanshaven. His eyes are green; some people claim they glow faintly when he gets angry, though he denies it. He typically wears a sportcoat, button-down shirt, jeans, and cowboy boots. Around his neck he wears an amulet in the shape of a pentagram.



CYNTHIA ATHAME

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
14	COM	2	12-	
8	PD	5		Total: 13 PD (3 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 11 ED (3 rED)
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
40	END	5		
30	STUN	4		Total Characteristics Cost: 91

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Spells	END
	Demonology	
4	Banish	
1	Warding	
	High Magic	
4	Astral Fire	
5	Bedazzle	
2	Read The Stars	
	Pyromancy	
6	Extinguish	
5	Fireblast	
2	Ignite	
	Sorcery	
3	Invisibility	
3	Seeming	
	Powers	
32	<i>Well-Made Athame:</i> HKA 1d6 (1d6+1 with STR), Affects Desolidified (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1) plus HKA +2d6, Affects Desolidified (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); OAF (-1), No STR Bonus (-½), Only Affects Mystic Beings/Monsters (-1)	0
5	<i>Well-Made Athame:</i> another Athame (total of two)	0
	Martial Arts: <i>Karate</i>	
	Maneuver	OCV DCV Notes
4	Atemi Strike	-1 +1 2d6 NND(1)
4	Block	+2 +2 Block, Abort
4	Disarm	-1 +1 Disarm, 25 STR
4	Dodge	+0 +5 Dodge all attacks, Abort
3	Legsweep	+2 -1 4d6; Target Falls
4	Knifehand Strike-2	+0 HKA ½d6 (1d6 with STR)
4	Punch/	
	Snap Kick	+0 +2 5d6 Strike
5	Side/Spin Kick	-2 +1 7d6 Strike
1	Use Art with Blades	

7	<i>Strength Of Will:</i> Mental Defense (10 points total)	0
10	<i>Third Eye:</i> Detect Magic 12- (Sight Group)	0
	Perks	
5	Money: Well Off	
	Talents	
6	Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)	
	Skills	
10	+2 HTH	
10	+2 DCV	
3	Combat Driving 12-	
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 12-	
5	KS: Mystic Beings/Monsters 14-	
6	KS: The Mystic World 15-	
11	Power: Demonology 16-	
11	Power: High Magic 16-	
15	Power: Pyromancy 18-	
7	Power: Sorcery 14-	
5	Rapid Attack (HTH)	
5	Stealth 13-	
3	Streetwise 13-	
10	Two-Weapon Fighting (HTH)	
5	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms, Off Hand	

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 242

Total Cost: 333

100+ Disadvantages

5	Distinctive Feature: various scars (see text) (Easily Concealed; Noticed And Recognizable)
50	Hunted: pretty much everyone in the Mystic World, including the Council of Solomon and the Vampyri (Mo Pow, NCI, Capture or Kill)
20	Psychological Limitation: Hatred Of Demons And Other "Monsters" And Those Who Use Them (Common, Total)
15	Psychological Limitation: You're Either With Me Or Against Me (Common, Strong)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Frequently, Major)
128	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 333

Background/History: No one knows her real name — a fact she keeps carefully concealed, lest it be used to enspell her — but many in the Mystic World know her story. When she was just a little girl, something attacked her family. She's never said exactly what. Most mystics think it was the Vampyri, but others favor demons, Unseelie fae, or even stranger horrors. Whatever it was, it slaughtered her parents and siblings; she only survived by hiding underneath a bed.

Many people would be scarred for life by such an incident, unable to truly live out of fear that it might happen again. Cynthia Athame was scarred, all right — but in a very different way. Hardened and matured by grief, she decided she wasn't going to let anyone else suffer the way her family did. She began training, studying both mysticism and hand-to-hand combat. By the time she turned 18,

**CYNTHIA ATHAME
PLOT SEEDS**

The classic Cynthia Athame plot: word gets out that Cynthia's targeted a specific person or being. The target's a friend of the PCs, someone they're hired to protect, or begs for their help. Now they're "co-laborators" and just as worthy of death in her eyes as the target is....

A series of murders is committed around the city. The cause of death is wounds created by a knife suspiciously like Cynthia Athame's. She insists she didn't do it, and on the surface at least the victims have no connection to the Shadow World. She offers to help the PCs catch the real killer.

The PC most likely to be sympathetic to Cynthia Athame's cause and beliefs wakes up one morning to find her two athames on his bedside table. What's happened?

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Handgun	+0	+0	2d6	1d6	10	8	See text
Shotgun	+0	+0	2½d6	1d6	12	5	AE1, RR, RP

Armor

Body Armor (DEF 6, Activation Roll 11-)

Gear: Flashlights (at least two, in various sizes), candles, matches, crucifix, plastic vials of holy water



she thought she was ready for her mission. Using some of her not-inconsiderable inheritance, she commissioned the creation of two enchanted weapons: a pair of *athames*, silver daggers used in certain magical rituals... and to oppose dangerous mystic beings.

New weapons in hand, Cynthia began a one-woman crusade that's lasted to this day. She's cut a swath of destruction through the Mystic World so broad that virtually everyone in it hates her. Many mages (not to mention the mystic beings she hunts) actively try to find and kill her; others simply wish they'd succeed at that task, and as soon as possible. A

few mystics — perhaps more than anyone would like to admit — agree with her on some level. They help her in minor ways, such as letting her “hide out” in their basements or attic apartments when the heat gets too hot, or providing her with research materials and other resources.

Personality/Motivation: Cynthia believes that demons, Vampyri, the fae, ghosts, and other mystic beings and “monsters” are deadly dangers to humanity and have to be eradicated. She believes this so strongly she's dedicated her life to the task and has difficulty talking or thinking about anything else. Even worse, she thinks that everyone should agree with her, and that anyone who doesn't is a “sympathizer” no more deserving of mercy than any imp or zombie.

Quote: “You can side with that inhuman monster if you want. But that loyalty cuts both ways... just like this knife.”

Powers/Tactics: Besides being an accomplished battle-wizard (mainly with spells of Pyromancy and general application that help her with her crusade), Cynthia Athame is a highly-trained personal combatant. Her preferred weapons are her two *athames*, which are enchanted to inflict

hideous wounds on mystic beings (even incorporeal ones). She fights with one in each hand, using her Two-Weapon Fighting to fillet her foes. If disarmed she tries to get her weapons back as quickly as possible, relying on her Karate training in the meantime.

If she's expecting serious opposition, Cynthia often equips herself with more weaponry. She dons light body armor, a high-powered handgun loaded with silver, cross-implanted blessed bullets, and a shotgun whose shells contain silvered shot. If that's not enough, she'll obtain the best weapons she can for the situation.

Campaign Use: Cynthia Athame could help or hinder the PCs. If they've got a Vampyri, Unseelie fae, or other mystic menace in their crosshairs, she'll be glad to help them put their target in his grave. But if they're trying to defend a mystic being from her, or are known associates of any, then they're on her list, and even if she can't kill them right away she'll happily interfere with them.

To make Cynthia more powerful, expand her repertoire of spells. Right now she's got a few attack spells, some Demonology spells that defend her against monsters, and a couple spells that help her with her missions. Giving her more attack and utility spells would make her even more of a force to be feared. To weaken her, remove all but her Demonology and Sorcery spells.

Cynthia Athame spends her whole life Hunting targets, and she's very, very good at it. Despite what some people think, she's not rash; she knows how powerful her targets are and spends a lot of time studying and stalking them before she attacks. She'll use the same methods on the PCs.

Appearance: Cynthia Athame seems surprisingly inoffensive for one so deadly. Only 5'4" with a trim, athletic body, she looks more like a model than one of the most feared killers of the Shadow World. She keeps her auburn hair cut short and always wears earrings in the shape of two tiny silver daggers. They match her preferred weapons, the two enchanted silver daggers she always carries. She typically wears comfortable but durable clothing with a jacket, large pockets, or other means to hide her weapons. She has a small scar on her left cheek, and several other larger scars here and there on her body, but she can easily keep them hidden with makeup or clothing.

JUANITA BARBAROUX

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
18	EGO	16	13-	ECV: 6
18	PRE	8	13-	PRE Attack: 3½d6
18	COM	4	13-	
4	PD	2		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	2		
40	END	7		
25	STUN	3		Total Characteristics Cost: 72

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Spells	END
	Demonology	
4	Banish	
7	Conjure Demon	
7	Conjure Elemental	
1	Warding	
	Fulmocracy	
6	Calling Down The Lightning	
6	Weather Control	
	Sorcery	
8	Domination	
6	Fear	
3	Glamour	
3	Invisibility	
5	Mindblast	
7	Mindreading	
7	Mindscares	
3	Seeming	
	Tenebromancy	
6	Dark Malady	
6	Shadow Blast	
4	Shadow Bonds	
5	Tenebromantic Field	
3	Tenebromantic Orb	
	Voodoo	
4	Agony ("Voodoo Doll")	
12	Curse Of Palsy ("Voodoo Doll")	
5	The Evil Eye	
11	Hex	
	Powers	
7	<i>Loa Bracelet:</i> Aid Characteristics 2d6, any one Characteristic at a time (+¼), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼); OIF (-½), Self Only (-½), 1 Charge (-2) [1]	
10	<i>Third Eye:</i> Detect Magic 12- (Sight Group) 0	
	Perks	
5	Money: Well Off	

Skills

3	Acting 13-
3	Conversation 13-
3	High Society 13-
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 12-
3	KS: Demons 12-
3	KS: The Mystic World 12-
1	Language: Haitian Creole (basic conversation; English is Native)
1	Language: Latin (basic conversation)
3	Persuasion 13-
13	Power: Demonology 17-
11	Power: Fulmocracy 16-
19	Power: Sorcery 20-
15	Power: Tenebromancy 18-
19	Power: Voodoo 20-
3	Seduction 13-
3	Stealth 12-
1	Streetwise 8-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 258

Total Cost: 330

100+ Disadvantages

10	Hunted: the Council of Solomon 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
10	Hunted: the FBI 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
20	Psychological Limitation: Greedy And Self-Interested (Common, Total)
10	Psychological Limitation: Temperamental (Common, Moderate)
180	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 330

Background/History: Hailing from New Orleans, Juanita Barbaroux is the daughter of a woman who served the community as a *mamaloï* — a sort of Voodoo priestess, wise woman, and purveyor of magical charms and services. Like nearly all of the women in her family before her, Barbaroux was born with the gift for magic. But the thought of staying in New Orleans all her life and becoming fat and broken-down while scraping by on a few dollars earned here and there for love potions didn't interest her. When she was 16 she ran away to Hudson City, determined to find ways to turn her talent into true power.

After "ingratiating" herself with a lonely old wizard, Barbaroux began studying magic in earnest. When she felt she'd learned most of what the old man could teach her, she moved on, finding other mages willing to apprentice her for a time. She stayed with each just as long as she thought it was in her best interest, then dropped them like hot potatoes and went looking for a better deal.

Eventually Barbaroux reached the point where she was tired of studying and ready to try out her powers for real. Moving effortlessly between the Shadow World and the Mundane World thanks to her good looks and charm, she became a sort of mystic con-woman, using her powers and personality to obtain riches, luxuries, and whatever else she desired. She's made a lot of enemies over the years, but still has plenty of friends... since even some of her victims remain so captivated by her that they'd do anything she asked of them.

JUANITA BARBAROUX PLOT SEEDS

The classic Juanita Barbaroux plot: a friend of the PCs has a new "companion" — Barbaroux! He's absolutely smitten with her and willing to do whatever she wants... which could quickly lead to his ruin. The PCs have to find a way to expose her true intentions without alienating their friend.

One of the PCs has met and begun a relationship with a special new woman... who turns out to be Anelle Barbaroux, Juanita's sister! Although she's not nearly as powerful mystically, she's just as pretty (if not prettier), and Juanita's intensely jealous. She decides to break up the relationship, whatever it takes.

Juanita Barbaroux comes to the PCs for... help? She insists that she's discovered a plot by a group of evil Voodoo *bokors* (sorcerer-priests) to take over the Shadow World. She has no more desire to live under their rule than the PCs would, so she wants them to help her stop the plot. But is she telling the truth, or is there a deeper scheme at work?

Personality/Motivation: Juanita Barbaroux is a sybarite and a parasite. Eager for money and all the finer things in life, she has no qualms about using her spells, smarts, seductive talents, and sexuality to get what she wants — and she wants it all. Nor does she care whom she hurts in the process; the only really important thing is herself. She's not violent by nature, and in fact prefers to use her intelligence, misdirection, and persuasiveness to get what she wants, but she's got a fiery temper and has been known to turn her powers on those who reject her, thwart her, or simply annoy her too much.

Quote: “Please, *cher*, you could do this one little favor for your Juanita, couldn't you?”

Powers/Tactics: Juanita Barbaroux is a skilled wizard specializing in Sorcery, Tenebromancy, and Demonology. She's also well-versed in the special “Voodoo” tradition practiced by the women of her family for centuries. (Barbaroux's “Voodoo” spells use the Black Magic spells from pages 161-63, but with the Limitation *OAF* to represent the Voodoo paraphernalia she has to use to cast them.) She wears a special gold bracelet made for her by her mother — a Loa Bracelet that allows Voodoo loas (gods/spirits) to temporarily “ride” (possess) her in a mild way that enhances her abilities without taking away her awareness or ability to cast spells.

Barbaroux is *not* a member of the Council of Solomon. Several of its members, having fallen afoul of one scheme or another of hers, have the organization keep tabs on her in the hopes of finding a way to get revenge.

Campaign Use: Juanita Barbaroux can play whatever role you need her to: unwilling (or unwitting) helper of the PCs; their direct adversary; their competitor; their foil. She might even become a PC's romantic partner... assuming any of the heroes is willing to take on the enormous task of trying to reform her.

The best way to make Barbaroux more powerful is to expand her Voodoo abilities, which are colorful and fun. See *The Ultimate Mystic* or Hero Plus Adventure #17, *Strange Magics: Voodoo*, for more information on Voodoo and its spells. To weaken her, reduce her Magic rolls so she's a less capable combat wizard, forced to rely on taking extra time and other ways to obtain Skill Roll bonuses.

Barbaroux rarely Hunts anyone, unless they have something she wants. Even then she puts as little effort into it as possible. She'd rather use Voodoo spells and conjured demons to spy on and harass the PCs than stir herself from her home.

Appearance: Juanita Barbaroux is a beautiful woman in her mid-to-late twenties, with *café au lait* skin that betrays her Caribbean heritage. She's 5'9" tall, with black hair cascading down to her mid-back and smoldering dark eyes that are quick to flash with anger. She speaks with a lovely sort of Creole accent that's only partly affectation. Whatever clothing she chooses to wear, it's expensive, stylish, and elegant, and she always has an intricate, heavy gold bracelet on her left wrist.



ALEXANDER BURNSIDE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
12	DEX	6	11-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
12	COM	1	11-	
4	PD	2		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	8		Phases: 4, 8, 12
8	REC	6		
50	END	12		
22	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 82

Movement: Running: 3"/6"

Cost	Spells	END
	Cryomancy	
5	Chillblast	
4	Cryomantic Shield	
11	Freeze	
5	Ice Wall	
5	Icy Ground	
	Demonology	
4	Banish	
7	Conjure Demon	
7	Conjure Elemental	
1	Warding	
	Fulmancy	
6	Calling Down The Lightning	
6	Lightning Bolt	
1	Static Field	
6	Weather Control	
	High Magic	
4	Astral Fire	
5	Bedazzle	
2	Read The Stars	
10	Starfall	
5	Starflare	
	Pyromancy	
6	Extinguish	
8	Fireball	
5	Fireblast	
6	Flamecloak	
2	Ignite	
4	Immolate	
4	Pyromantic Shield	
	Sorcery	
8	Domination	
6	Fear	
3	Glamour	
3	Invisibility	
5	Mindblast	
7	Mindreading	
7	Mindscapes	
3	Seeming	

Tenebromancy

6	Dark Malady
6	Shadow Blast
4	Shadow Bonds
4	Shadow Shield
5	Tenebromantic Field
3	Tenebromantic Orb

Powers

10	<i>Third Eye</i> : Detect Magic 13- (Sight Group) 0
-6	<i>Limp</i> : Running -3" (3" total)
-1	<i>Limp</i> : Leaping -1" (1" total)

Perks

1	Fringe Benefit: Member of the Council of Solomon
15	Money: Filthy Rich

Skills

9	+3 with Magic Spells
2	Cryptography 13-; Translation Only (-½)
3	Deduction 13-
3	High Society 13-
3	Persuasion 13-
17	Power: Cryomancy 20-
17	Power: Demonology 20-
17	Power: Fulmancy 20-
17	Power: High Magic 20-
17	Power: Pyromancy 20-
17	Power: Sorcery 20-
17	Power: Tenebromancy 20-
3	Stealth 11-
1	Streetwise 8-
3	Trading 13-
3	Scholar
2	1) KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 13-
2	2) KS: Art History 13-
2	3) KS: Demons 13-
2	4) KS: History 13-
2	5) KS: History Of Magic 13-
2	6) KS: The Mystic World 13-
2	7) KS: World Mythology And Lore 13-
3	Linguist
1	1) Language: Arabic (fluent conversation; English is Native)
1	2) Language: German (fluent conversation)
1	3) Language: Greek (fluent conversation)
1	4) Language: Latin (fluent conversation)
1	5) Language: Spanish (fluent conversation)

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 389

Total Cost: 471

100+ Disadvantages

10	Hunted: the Council of Solomon 8- (Mo Pow, NCI, Watching)
15	Psychological Limitation: Intellectual Arrogance And Vanity (Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Powerhungry (Common, Strong)
15	Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (see text) (Frequently, Major)
316	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 471

ALEXANDER BURNSIDE PLOT SEEDS

The PCs have to perform a crucial ritual for some very important (and beneficent) purpose. Unfortunately the ritual requires an artifact that's in Alexander Burnside's collection, and he refuses to let them use it (since he thinks they'll steal it, and he's just generally contrary). So the PCs have to mount an infiltration mission against the most powerful wizard in Hudson City...

Burnside decides the Vampyri septs in Hudson City pose too great a threat to his own schemes; they need to be weakened or destroyed. Rather than expose himself or his organization any more than necessary, he plans to use the PCs at his catpaws.

Burnside becomes infatuated with a female PC and begins doing her favors (whether she wants him to or not!), sending gifts, looking out for her, and generally interfering in her life as a way of showing his affection. How will she react... and what will come of it?

Background/History: Alexander Burnside was born with it all: money, connections, power, and a talent for magic. The scion of an old Virginia family, he's never wanted for anything. When a wizard friend of the family's sensed his arcane potential, he was apprenticed to Randolph Winston, one of the most noted mages of his day, to learn all he could about magic.

And Burnside learned well. Today he's regarded as one of the most knowledgeable and powerful wizards in Hudson City, if not America. The combination of his personal power, money, and social influence make him a force to be reckoned with.

Personality/Motivation: Some people born into Alexander Burnside's situation develop a sense of *noblesse oblige*, a desire to use the abilities and resources they've been given to help others. Burnside is not such a person. Having been given so much, he takes it as the normal state of affairs that he should have whatever he wants... and he wants a lot. Power, both mystical and social, is Burnside's most treasured possession, and he'll stop at nothing to obtain it. While he presents a facade of upper-class respectability — he attends charity functions and all the right parties, dines at the best restaurants with lovely companions, and so on — he actually leads a sinister double life. In his quest for greater magical ability he's allied himself with dark powers, demons (and worse) that he's called up to advise him and do his will. On the mundane front he has ties to a number of criminal groups (not always with their knowledge), and his money and prestige give him a lot of weight to throw around in other circles. If he desires something, he goes after it... and woe to anyone who gets in his way. He's unfailingly polite, and rarely does his own dirty work, but he'll do whatever he must to triumph.

Quote: "You might want to reconsider that, Mr. Stone. Life could become very difficult for you otherwise."



Powers/Tactics: Alexander Burnside is one of the most puissant wizards in Hudson City, with a large repertoire of spells and a vast fund of arcane lore in his mind. His library of mystic tomes and collection of occult artifacts is enormous (and a great source of pride for him). As if that weren't enough, he's as rich as Croesus and socially connected to everyone who's anyone from Highlands to Irish-town.

Burnside rarely engages in violent activity, for many reasons. If forced into combat he usually relies on Sorcery to confuse his enemies so he can make his escape. If cornered or angered he'll unleash more potent forces.

Burnside walks with a limp, the result of an injury inflicted by a demon during a summoning gone wrong. He uses a cane to walk steadily; most people assume it's an enchanted item of some sort, but it's totally ordinary.

Campaign Use: Alexander Burnside is the suave, sophisticated, powerful master villain of *Hudson City Shadows* — the one the PCs instinctively dislike but can't prove anything against or truly come to grips with. Instead they have to content themselves with unraveling his individual schemes and preventing him from becoming a worse threat, all the while gradually chipping away at the foundations of his power until he topples.

To make Burnside more powerful, give him enchanted items: a djinni bound to his cane; a lens that can see through walls; a charm that provides him with lots of Luck. To weaken him, get rid of at least a third (if not more) of his spells, and/or decrease his Magic rolls.

If Burnside's Hunting the heroes, watch out! He'll start with simple civil assaults — having them investigated by the IRS, suing them (through proxies, of course) over anything he can think of, getting them fired, and generally making their lives miserable. Then he'll turn to magical assaults: sendings; haunted nightmares; attacks by summoned demons. In the end, if the target has angered him enough he *will* destroy him... unless Burnside himself is destroyed first.

Appearance: Alexander Burnside is a dignified-looking man in his late forties or early fifties. His black hair has gone grey at the temples, but is carefully styled; he has no facial hair. His eyes are dark, and his face usually has an expression of subtle, crafty cruelty. He wears elegantly-tailored men's suits, usually in shades of grey, and white shirts with French cuffs and heavy cufflinks. He walks with a slight limp on his right side, relying on an elegant, gold-headed ebony cane for support.

JIM SCHOEN

8 STR	10 DEX	11 CON	10 BODY
15 INT	13 EGO	15 PRE	10 COM
2 PD	2 ED	2 SPD	4 REC
22 END	19 STUN		

Abilities: Cryptography 12-; Translation Only (-½); Deduction 12-; Persuasion 12-; Trading 12-; Linguist (German, Greek, Latin, all fluent conversation); Scholar (KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 16-; KS: Art History 11-; KS: Books 14-; KS: History Of Magic 14-; KS: Mystic Beings 14-; KS: The Mystic World 11-; KS: Occult Books And Talismans 14-; KS: World History 11-); Money: Well Off; x

25+ Disadvantages: Psychological Limitation: Fascinated By Mystical Lore; Social Limitation: Public Identity (anyone in the Mystic World knows where to find him)

Description: Although few people in the mundane world are aware of it, one of the most important members of the Mystic World in Hudson City isn't a mystic at all. Jim Schoen, owner of the Owl's Roost Bookstore at Onslow Avenue and Cayuga Street, isn't a mage, much less a wizard — if he has any mystic abilities at all they haven't surfaced yet, and given that he's in his mid-fifties the odds are they just plain don't exist. But despite that, Schoen's been fascinated by matters occult and arcane all his life. He's been reading on the subject since he was a teenager; that's what led him into his profession, used bookseller.

For the most part, the Owl's Roost is just a typical used book store (though it's much larger than average): its shelves are filled with used books of every type, size, and condition; it's slightly disorganized; it's a favorite haven of many locals. To keep up with the competition from big box stores the Schoens even recently added a small coffee bar to the premises. What sets it apart is something that isn't apparent at first glance — you have to look for it. As one browses the nonfiction selections, particularly in the areas of history, anthropology, and religion, one notices a large number of books on mystic and occult subjects. These range from semi-goofy paperbacks churned out for mass-market consumption to more serious books in the field (such as the works of Aleister Crowley and Eliphas Levi). In fact, if you went to all the trouble to make comparisons, you'd discover that the Owl's Roost has one of the largest collections of books on occult and arcane subjects in the United States.

And that's not all. Once all that's sunken in you'll probably notice the heavy metal door set into one wall of the store. Not only does it have an electronic lock, but if you had the Third Eye you'd perceive enchantments of protection as well. The door leads to a special climate-controlled room where the Schoens keep their most valuable books: rare editions of occult masterpieces; ancient, crumbling grimoires; and much more. All of them are valuable (some immensely so), and more than a few are potentially dangerous. The Schoens show them only by appointment to

known customers (or customers who can prove their bona fides, such as with an appropriate letter of introduction), and they'd never sell one to someone they thought would misuse it.

Jim Schoen himself is an expert on the occult with few peers — even most mages aren't as knowledgeable as he. As such he's become an important "resource" for the Shadow World... and not always voluntarily. There are mystics out there who are willing to obtain valuable information however they can, after all. Mages friendly to the Schoens — and there are many — make a point of stopping by the Owl's Roost frequently to check up on them and protect them as they may, but it's an imperfect situation that worries Jim and his wife constantly.

Though he can become quite somber when discussing deep matters of magic, Jim Schoen is ordinarily a friendly, talkative sort who enjoys engaging his customers in conversation. He's highly conversant with books in general and has an uncanny knack for being able to recommend just the right book based on a customer's expressed interests (whether he has that book in stock or not). When not interacting with his patrons he spends far too much time playing card games on the computer instead of doing shop work, much to the (semi-feigned) exasperation of his wife Margaret.

Still sporting a leonine head of blonde hair even though he's approaching sixty, Jim Schoen's a white man 5'10" tall with a slightly paunchy build and bifocal glasses. He dresses casually, in button-downs and jeans, to run the Owl's Roost Bookstore.



The Vampyri

Nearly two million years ago, two members of a species that would one day evolve into *Homo sapiens* knelt on an East African plain next to the remains of an antelope-like creature that had been slaughtered and eaten by a predatory cat. Neither of them had eaten in over a day, and the remaining scraps of carrion promised a fine meal. They set to work using sharpened chips of stone to remove what flesh they could.

Then one of them glanced up. He looked at his companion, who kept working hurriedly, lest the cat return and find them there. He could see a throbbing in his companion's neck, betokening the rich blood his body held. Rich blood... and flesh no doubt as succulent, and fresher, than what lay on the ground before them.

Incision flashed through his mind, quickly replaced by resolve. Gripping his stone cutter even more tightly, he leapt onto his companion, slashing at his throat with the cutter. He bore his companion to the ground, bashing his head hard on a rock to finish the job. Then he drank the sweet warm blood... and when he was done, began cutting the flesh from the new carcass for an even greater feast.

It was the dawn of mankind... and of mankind's greatest enemy. Evil acts oft attract the swirling dark magics that exist in the world, and there was much magic in those early days when true evil as yet rarely supplanted animal instinct. Though he did not know it, he was changed, slowly and subtly but as surely as the advance of a glacier, becoming something both more and less than what he was. In time he found others like himself, drawn by a mutual sympathy for what they now were. They began to prey on the proto-humans, hunting them as they hunted the smaller animals, but out of ill-understood instinct never taking so many of them that the herd would wither away. They evolved alongside their prey, staying always smarter, faster, and stronger than they. As humans developed civilizations, so did they, of a sort — shadow civilizations lurking in the dark corners of human realms, ever near their prey. In time humans created stories to explain these haunters of the night, attributing to them strange powers. It was from one such body of legends that they took the name by which they now call themselves: the *Vampyri*.

VAMPYRI NATURE

The Vampyri (singular *Vampyr*) are the second sentient humanoid species to evolve on Earth. Coming from the same *Homo habilis* stock as Humans, they share an almost identical appearance and internal structure... with a few key differences that they sometimes must strive to hide. These differences result mainly from the inherently magical and evil nature of the Vampyri. Unlike Humans, who evolved according to the laws of Science, the proto-Vampyri were affected and altered by some of the dark magic in the world and thus evolved as much according to the laws of Magic as Science.

First, all Vampyri are polydactylic — they have six fingers on both hands. (A few are only polydactylic on one hand; such Vampyri are regarded as “cursed” and unlucky and thus have a hard time in Vampyri society, often becoming loners). When mingling with Humans they may try to hide this condition with special gloves, by not openly displaying their hands any more than necessary, and the like. (If necessary, the GM can have a Vampyri make a Stealth roll to simulate how well he's hiding his extra fingers.)

Second, the Vampyri lack something that all Humans possess, wise Humans treasure, and wicked Humans sell: a soul. What happens to a Vampyri when he dies no one knows, not even the Vampyri themselves (though they have much speculative legendry on the subject). All that can be said for sure is that the lack of a soul causes a Vampyri corpse (including bones) to decay at a *much* faster rate than that of a Human. Typically within hours of death nothing's left of a Vampyri but dust, and some wizards have reported almost instantaneous mouldering (this seems most likely to occur when death results from a violent magic spell, like Lightning Bolt or Fireblast).

VAMPYRI PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
3	+3 STR
9	+3 DEX
6	+3 CON
3	+3 INT
4	+2 EGO
3	+3 PRE
1	+2 COM
4	Language of Human region the Vampyri grew up in (idiomatic; Vampyric is Native)
3	Stealth
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons
9	Ambidexterity (no Off Hand penalty)
1	<i>Vampyri Lifespan</i> : Life Support (Longevity: double normal lifespan)
5	<i>Vampyri Eyes</i> : Nightvision
3	<i>Vampyri Senses</i> : +1 to PER Rolls with all Sense Groups

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 58

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
5	Distinctive Features: inherently magical and has no soul (Concealable With Difficulty; Always Noticed and Causes Major Reaction [fear/distaste]; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
10	Distinctive Features: polydactylic (Concealable With Difficulty; Noticed And Recognizable)
25	Psychological Limitation: Regards Humans As Prey (Very Common, Total)
10	Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Vampyri living among Humans) (Occasionally, Major)

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 50

Third, as beings who have evolved and exist due to magic, Vampyri are subtly, inherently magical. This makes it much easier for them to learn magic than it is for Humans, but on the other hand human mages with the Third Eye can perceive their unusual nature (and lack of soul), which often interferes with their ability to mingle among mankind unnoticed. Some of them know a special, rare spell that make it seem, to the Third Eye, as if they're Human.

Fourth, the Vampyri require a certain percentage of Human flesh and/or blood among their diet to maintain top health. They don't have to consume Human meat/blood every day, but they need it at least once a week. Since they can't raise Humans on farms, they have to live in Human societies (primarily large cities) in a sort of parasitical relationship that few Humans are even aware of. Vampyri leaders have always been careful not to let the Vampyri population in an area grow so large that evidence of its predations cannot be hidden using the traditional cunning Vampyri methods. Thus the Vampyri have always been far less numerous than their Human prey; in the modern day, the number of Vampyri living in a city or region is usually no more than a tenth of a percent of the number of Humans (and often less).

VAMPYRI SOCIETY

The Vampyri organize themselves into *septs*, a term equivalent to "clan." As with Humans, septs usually began as extended families living in the same city or region. Modern travel has allowed the Vampyri to spread out and mingle among themselves to a far greater degree than ever before, and as a result the Vampyri population in Hudson City (or any equivalent metropolis) is much more "mixed" than it would have been even a century ago. Still, it's not uncommon for one or two septs to be the most powerful in any given city, and those families' leaders to be the *de facto* leader of all Vampyri in the city regardless of sept.

Family Life

The Vampyri who belong to a sept take its name as their surname; most sept names are rendered in Human tongues as four-letter words with a single central vowel sound. Within a given sept are multiple families. Vampyri families tend to be small, for two reasons. The first is the rigid population control exercised by Vampyri leaders; for a Vampyri couple to have more than one child is extremely rare. Second, Vampyri women are only fertile for a few weeks a year and can control when this occurs, so it's quite easy for them to avoid becoming pregnant if they desire (or vice-versa).

Because of this controllable fertility and the fact that sexual dimorphism is much less pronounced among Vampyri than among Humans, gender equality is the norm in Vampyri society. Vampyri women engage in the same professions and pursuits as their men, including the Hunt. Children are usually raised by middle-aged or elderly women in the family or sept who've "retired" to take on that duty.

Vampyri feel no romantic attraction whatsoever for Humans, any more than a Human would for a cow or a zebra.

Language, Math, And Symbolism

The Vampyri have their own language, Vampyric, with its own alphabet, which they do not teach to Humans. They keep all the books and papers written in their language secret (though experience has shown them that there are so many Human ways of writing that Humans think Vampyri script is just some Human alphabet they're not familiar with). In the event a Human had the opportunity to learn it, it costs twice as much as an ordinary Human language (*i.e.*, 2 Character Points per level of fluency) because it's so difficult for Humans to understand and speak.

Vampyri math is duodecimal — in other words, it's based on 12 rather than 10. The numbers 6 and 12 have the same sort of significance for Vampyri as 5 and 10 do for Humans, and for the same reason: the number of fingers on two hands. Vampyri symbolism, philosophy, and occult lore stress the power of sixes (and twelves, and to a lesser extent threes). For example, Vampyri summoning-circles are hexagonal rather than round or triangular. Mystically the twelve fingers of the Vampyri hands are linked to the twelve hours of the day, twelve hours of the night, twelve months of the year, and twelve signs of the zodiac (though the Vampyri have different names and



connotations for their zodiac than Humans do).

The gestures made to cast a spell vary based on the hour and month, since that indicates which fingers are most important.

The Vampyri have little in the way of religion. They revere their dead ancestors, burning incense to them on the sixth day of the week. At least once in a Vampyri's lifetime he's supposed to make a pilgrimage to his sept's ancient homeland (if he doesn't live there). They have no gods, though they do recognize their own demons and sometimes propitiate them with rituals.

The Hunt

The central activity of Vampyri society is hunting — or as the Vampyri refer to it, “the Hunt,” as if it were a religious event. The Vampyri survive not by commerce, not by manufacturing, not by agriculture, but by preying upon Humans... and so the process of taking that prey is all-important to them.

By Vampyri tradition, the Hunt must be conducted using only one's bare hands and/or medieval-level weaponry. The Vampyri regard firearms as distasteful, even repugnant, partly because they make it too easy for the prey to fight back and partly because the smell of gunpowder offends sensitive Vampyri noses. For most Hunters (as the Vampyri call the members of their society who actually go out and kill Humans for food), the preferred weapons are the bow (they use arrows with distinctive six-vaned arrowheads) and a long-bladed dagger known in Vampyric as a *hlessari*.

To minimize the risk of discovery, the Vampyri prefer hunting targets who aren't likely to be missed — though the “macho” culture of the Hunters also makes them want to go after challenging targets. A Hunter usually attacks from ambush, preferring a quick, clean kill with as little chance for the Hunter to be injured or outsiders to interfere. If at all possible, Hunters prefer not to kill anyone other than their prey — that would be wasteful — but they'll do it if they must to preserve Vampyri secrecy.

A Hunter takes the body of his victim to a place of safety and security as quickly as he can (though he may indulge in a drink of blood while it's still as warm and fresh as possible). The Vampyri maintain many such places in Hudson City and other metropolises: out-

of-the-way facilities; apartments in buildings where no one pays attention to anyone else; and so on. There the edible meat is taken from the corpse and given to the Hunter (or whomever he chooses). The non-edible remains are cremated, leaving only grey-white ash that's useless to police investigators.

Every twelve years the Vampyri hold a *Great Hunt*, an event that draws the greatest Vampyri Hunters from all over the world. It's held in a large city chosen in advance by Vampyri elders. Typically cities in America or in war-torn regions are preferred (since that makes it easy to hide the killings), but the Hunters also enjoy variety in their hunting grounds. The goal of the Great Hunt is to be named the *Vsaljhc*, the “Supreme Hunter” of the Vampyri. To attain that title, a Hunter must achieve the highest point total for legitimate kills during the month-long competition. (“Legitimate” meaning “for purposes of food”; wholesale slaughters don't count.) Hunters earn points both for volume and quality of kills. Bagging a lot of prey is worth a lot of points, but so is killing a challenging target. A Hunter who kills five difficult targets — trained people who can fight back, like many cops, soldiers, and mages — earns as many or more points as one who kills 20 ordinary targets.

What Humans Know

Most Humans are totally unaware of the existence of the Vampyri. They've heard the stories about vampires, and maybe even seen one on television (see sidebar, page 106). But the true source of those legends isn't known to them. Mages are a different story. Anyone with a *KS: The Mystic World Skill* may at least have heard of the Vampyri, though only someone with a high roll in that Skill is likely to have serious, accurate knowledge of the Vampyri or to have encountered one. Mages who do know about the Vampyri don't talk about them to non-mystics; like demons, ghosts, and other mystic beings, the Vampyri are something mundane people don't need to know about. And even if some mage did try to convince the police or FBI that a secret group of non-Humans live among humanity and preys upon it for food, the odds are he'd be laughed out of the building.

HERZEK VASC

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
15	CON	10	12-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
18	INT	8	13-	PER Roll 13-
15	EGO	10	12-	ECV: 5
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
14	COM	2	12-	
6	PD	3		Total: 6 PD (0 rPD)
5	ED	2		Total: 5 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	16		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
6	REC	0		
30	END	0		
30	STUN	2		Total Characteristics Cost: 84

Movement: Running: 6"/12"

Cost	Powers	END
1	<i>Vampyri Lifespan:</i> Life Support (Longevity: double normal lifespan)	0
5	<i>Vampyri Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0
3	<i>Vampyri Senses:</i> +1 to PER Rolls with all Sense Groups	0
Perks		
3	Fringe Benefit: leader of the Hudson City Vampyri	
Talents		
9	Ambidexterity (no Off Hand penalty)	
Skills		
8	+1 with All Combat	
3	Climbing 12-	
3	High Society 13-	
2	CK: Hudson City 11-	
3	KS: The Vampyri 13-	
4	Language: English (idiomatic; Vampyric is Native)	
3	Persuasion 13-	
2	PS: Butchering 11-	
3	Stealth 12-	
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons	

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 56

Total Cost: 140

100+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: inherently magical and has no soul (Concealable With Difficulty; Always Noticed and Causes Major Reaction [fear/distaste]; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
- 10 Distinctive Features: polydactylic (Concealable With Difficulty; Noticed

And Recognizable)

- 25 Psychological Limitation: Regards Humans As Prey (Very Common, Total)
- 10 Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Vampyri living among Humans) (Occasionally, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

Description: Herzek Vasc is the leader of the Vampyri of Hudson City — the elder to whom all other Vampyri look for leadership and advice, and to whom even the most headstrong of young Hunters defer out of respect. Decades ago he was one of the greatest Hunters of the Vampyri; he competed in the Great Hunt not just once but three times, an almost unprecedented feat. But time takes its toll even on the Vampyri, and the day came when Vasc was content to retire from the field and put his wisdom to work for his people.

Like most Vampyri elders, Vasc is obsessed with secrecy and security. He recognizes the Hunters' need both to feed their families and to prove themselves, having once been the same way, but he also knows that revealing the existence of the Vampyri to the world will kill his people far more quickly and painfully than starvation. The rise of modern policing and advances in forensic science have made the task of hiding the Vampyri far harder than it was even fifty years ago, and Vasc often feels himself struggling to stay one step ahead of the Humans. He wonders sometimes if there might not be a way for the two species to live harmoniously, but as quickly as the thought comes into his mind he dismisses it as sheer nonsense.

Appearance: Herzek Vasc is a middle-aged man with short dark hair, dark eyes, and a dark complexion. His face is broad and sturdy; he has a black moustache. He's got the rugged, handsome look of a man who's spent a lot of time outdoors and knows how to handle himself. He's polydactylic, with six fingers on both hands. He usually wears "casual dressy" men's clothes, such as sportcoats, but there might be a glimpse of a knife hilt showing underneath his jacket when he turns the right way.

**EQUIPMENT**

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Vampyri Bow	+0	+0	2d6	1d6-1	13	12	
Hlessari	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1		10	Can Be Thrown (-1 OCV)

Armor

None

Gear: Gold Patek Philippe watch

TRUE VAMPIRES

While the Vampyri may be the source of vampire legends in the world of *Hudson City Shadows*, that's not to say that "true" vampires don't exist. Responding to the popular legends, various film and novel versions of Dracula, and lately the rise in "vampire romance" novels and television shows, mages long ago devised a spell that would transform a person into a "real" vampire. People who actually go through with this are uncommon — like gender-alteration surgery it's extremely expensive and, if the mage is responsible, only done after the client has received extensive counseling — but it does occur. The authorities usually require that anyone who wants to become a vampire prove that he has a reliable, ongoing source of blood to feed on; they don't want bloodsuckers roaming the streets assaulting people.

SOREN SKEL

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
20	STR	10	13-	Lift 400 kg; 4d6 [4]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
18	CON	16	13-	
12	BODY	4	11-	
15	INT	5	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
15	PRE	5	12-	PRE Attack: 3d6
12	COM	1	11-	
7	PD	3		Total: 10 PD (3 rPD)
6	ED	2		Total: 9 ED (3 rED)
5	SPD	32		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
8	REC	0		
40	END	2		
35	STUN	4		Total Characteristics Cost: 112

Movement: Running: 9"/18"

Cost	Powers	END
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	Martial Arts: <i>Knifefighting</i>			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Damage/Effect
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge, Affects All Attacks, Abort
3	Grab	+0	-1	Grab One Limb, +10 to STR for holding on
4	Slashes	+0	+2	Weapon +2 DC Strike
5	Stabs	-2	+1	Weapon +4 DC Strike
5	Thrusts	+1	+3	Weapon Strike
	Martial Arts: <i>Vampyri Archery</i>			
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Rng Notes
4	Accurate Shot	+2	-2	+2 Weapon Strike
4	Basic Shot	+0	+0	+2 Weapon +2 DC Strike
5	Distance Shot	+0	-2	+6 Weapon Strike, +1 Segment
4	Quick Shot	+1	+0	+0 Weapon +2 DC Strike
4	Trained Shot	+2	+0	+0 Weapon Strike
1	<i>Vampyri Lifespan:</i> Life Support (Longevity: double normal lifespan) 0			
6	<i>Fast:</i> Running +3" (9" total) 0			
5	<i>Vampyri Eyes:</i> Nightvision 0			
3	<i>Vampyri Senses:</i> +1 to PER Rolls with all Sense Groups 0			

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Vampyri Bow	+0	+0	2d6	1d6-1	13	12	
Hlessari	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1		10	Can Be Thrown (-1 OCV)
Armor							
None							
Gear:							
Archery Gloves							

Talents

- 6 Combat Luck (3 PD/3 ED)
- 9 Ambidexterity (no Off Hand penalty)

Skills

- 24 +3 with All Combat
- 3 Climbing 13-
- 3 Fast Draw (Common Missile Weapons) 13-
- 2 CK: Hudson City 11-
- 2 KS: The Vampyri 11-
- 4 Language: English (idiomatic; Vampyric is Native)
- 2 PS: Butchering 11-
- 3 Sleight Of Hand 13-
- 5 Stealth 14-
- 3 Tracking 12-
- 4 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 131

Total Cost: 243

100+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: inherently magical and has no soul (Concealable With Difficulty; Always Noticed and Causes Major Reaction [fear/distaste]; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
- 10 Distinctive Features: polydactylic (Concealable With Difficulty; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Regards Humans As Prey (Very Common, Total)
- 15 Psychological Limitation: Wants To Become The *Vsaljhc* (Common, Strong)
- 10 Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Vampyri living among Humans) (Occasionally, Major)
- 78 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 243

Description: Soren Skel is the most skilled Vampyri Hunter in Hudson City, and one of the most skilled in the world. He has high hopes of winning the next Great Hunt and practices his hunting skills every day, even if he doesn't intend to go on an actual Hunt that day. He's studied archery and knife-fighting with some of the greatest masters among his people, and even a few Human martial artists (though he'd never admit that to his fellow Vampyri). He almost feels sorry for his prey sometimes, because they're so hopelessly outmatched... but then he thinks about how delicious they taste and plans his next Hunt.

Like many Vampyri Hunters, Skel is a headstrong, aggressive risk-taker. He's eager for challenges and goes out of his way to find them, even though they're more likely to expose him to capture and his people to the public. Herzek Vasc has spoken to him several times, trying to rein him in, but all Skel can think about is taking the title of *Vsaljhc*.

Appearance: Soren Skel is a young man in his mid-twenties with shoulder-length dark hair, dark eyes, and a dark complexion. His face is thin and angular, all flat planes and sharp points in the right light, giving him a deservedly cruel look. He usually wears custom-tailored skin-tight leathers in dark colors; they're specially reinforced on the left arm to protect it from bowstrings, and the right hand is covered with an archer's glove. He's polydactylic, with six fingers on both hands.



VAMPYRI HUNTER

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
14	DEX	12	12-	OCV: 5/DCV: 5
14	CON	8	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 12-
12	EGO	4	11-	ECV: 4
13	PRE	3	12-	PRE Attack: 2½d6
12	COM	1	11-	
4	PD	1		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	6		Phases: 4, 8, 12
6	REC	0		
28	END	0		
25	STUN	0		
Total Characteristics Cost: 44				

Movement: Running: 7"/14"

Cost	Powers	END
1	<i>Vampyri Lifespan:</i> Life Support (Longevity: double normal lifespan)	0
2	<i>Fast:</i> Running +1" (7" total)	0
5	<i>Vampyri Eyes:</i> Nightvision	0
3	<i>Vampyri Senses:</i> +1 to PER Rolls with all Sense Groups	0
Talents		
9	Ambidexterity (no Off Hand penalty)	

Skills

- 3 +1 with Bows and Knives
- 3 Climbing 12-
- 2 CK: home city 11-
- 4 Language: local language (idiomatic; Vampyric is Native)
- 2 PS: Butchering 11-
- 5 Stealth 13-
- 4 WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons
- 6 Other Skills of GM's choice

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 49

Total Cost: 93

100+ Disadvantages

- 5 Distinctive Features: inherently magical and has no soul (Concealable With Difficulty; Always Noticed and Causes Major Reaction [fear/distaste]; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses)
- 10 Distinctive Features: polydactylic (Concealable With Difficulty; Noticed And Recognizable)
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Regards Humans As Prey (Very Common, Total)
- 10 Social Limitation: Harmful Secret (Vampyri living among Humans) (Occasionally, Major)

Total Disadvantage Points: 150

Description: This character sheet represents a typical Vampyri Hunter. The GM can add a Skill or two, alter the Characteristics slightly, or give him some special weapons to individualize him if necessary. (For the typical Hunter, use Soren Skel's weaponry.)

The Fae Folk

The third major mystic “faction” in Hudson City are the Fae Folk — faeries who came over to the New World in the hearts, minds, and sometimes ships of immigrants from Ireland, Scotland, and England. They’re not as numerous, diverse, or powerful as their brethren back home, but there are more than enough of them to make them major players in the Mystic World.

Broadly speaking, the Fae Folk of Hudson City can be divided into two camps. The *Unseelie Court*, led by the beautiful but malevolent Midnight Queen, are actively hostile toward humanity. They don’t like people, and may even prey on them for food from time to time. Faerie law generally prevents them from slaughtering humans for no good reason, but woe to the person who crosses paths with an Unseelie faerie! At best he can expect a malicious prank. Their “opposite” number is the *Seelie Court*, ruled by handsome Prince Oberon. Seelie faeries are not “good” *per se*, though some of them do like and look after humans. It’s more accurate to say they’re indifferent — they don’t go out of their way to harm humans (though they usually enjoy the occasional trick, and may reward a human who responds to his humiliation good-naturedly).

Compared to mages, the Vampyri, or typical haunts, faeries are *incredibly* powerful. They can appear and disappear at will, weave potent illusions, transform people and objects, grant wishes, inflict harm and even death, put curses on people, and travel vast distances in the blink of an eye... and that’s just for starters. Any human (or Vampyri) who mingles with them does so at his own peril — but fortunately they usually don’t want to have much to do with humans. Most of the time they keep to themselves; the average human, even the average mage, never meets one in his lifetime. But there are exceptions, such as the lucky person who has a brownie come to live with him and do his homework, or a person out for a walk who becomes the victim of a faerie prank.

Faeries interact with humans most significantly when one of the periodic conflicts between the Seelie and Unseelie Courts flares up. The two groups despise one another, and

the hatred between Oberon and the Midnight Queen is so sharp it could etch diamond. For the most part the boundaries between the two Courts are well established, and the rules for how they interact set down by ageless tradition and potent faerie magic. The Seelie Court mostly lives on the Northside, and the Unseelie Court on the Southside, though there are pockets here and there where the situation is different. LeMastre Park is neutral territory. If a dispute arises between the Courts, or one faerie somehow gives offense to another, a war may result. To aid them in fighting these wars, both sides recruit humans, who bring to the battle a physical prowess and durability that faeries lack. The upside to this is that the winning side rewards its human helpers lavishly (and even the losers give their humans gifts, since that’s part of the bargain and ensures more humans will want to “sign up” for the next fight). The downside is that a human who voluntarily inserts himself into faerie matters this way is fair game for any faerie to attack... so his side always gives him at least one “bodyguard” to protect him against its enemy.



PRINCE OBERON

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
15	STR	5	12-	Lift 200 kg; 3d6 [3]
24	DEX	54	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
23	INT	16	14-	PER Roll 14-
23	EGO	32	14-	ECV: 8
35	PRE	40	16-	PRE Attack: 7d6
20	COM	5	13-	
6	PD	3		Total: 6 PD (6 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 6 ED (6 rED)
6	SPD	46		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	8		
40	END	5		
30	STUN	4		Total Characteristics Cost: 231

Movement: Running: 12"/24"
Teleportation: 30"/60"

Cost	Powers	END
50	<i>Faerie Power:</i> Endurance Reserve (250 END, 25 REC)	0
500	<i>Faerie Powers:</i> Variable Power Pool, 200 base + 100 control cost, Cosmic (+2)	var
81	<i>Shapechanging (Any Form):</i> Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, Touch, and Smell/Taste Groups, any shape), Imitation, Instant Change, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
6	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Damage Resistance (6 PD/6 ED)	0
30	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%; Does Not Work Against Iron Attacks (-1)	0
60	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%	0
15	<i>Faerie Mind:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
20	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Power Defense (20 points)	0
50	<i>Faerie Nature:</i> Life Support (Total, including Longevity: Immortality)	0
45	<i>Faerie Concealment:</i> Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
12	<i>Swift As The Wind:</i> Running +6" (12" total)	1
90	<i>Vanishing:</i> Teleportation 30", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0

Skills

3	Concealment 14-
3	Conversation 16-
5	Gambling (Card Games, Dice Games, Chess) 14-
3	High Society 16-
5	CK: Hudson City 16-
2	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 11-

3	KS: Legends And Lore 14-
3	Persuasion 16-
3	Riding 14-
3	Seduction 16-
3	Stealth 14-
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 972

Total Cost: 1,199

100+ Disadvantages

20	Psychological Limitation: Capricious Faerie Nature (Very Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Hates The Midnight Queen (Common, Strong)
20	Susceptibility: takes 2d6 per Turn from iron (Common)
20	Susceptibility: takes 2d6 per Turn from salt (Common)
1,024	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 1,199

Description: Oberon is the leader of the Seelie Court in Hudson City. Possessed of somewhat less capriciousness than most of his subjects, he keeps a (relatively) steady hand on the keel and makes a good leader for the Seelie faeries. However, he possesses a noteworthy pride and is quick to take offense if not treated with deference and flattery. His touchiness in this area has led to more than one of the local faerie wars.

Over the decades Prince Oberon has developed something of a fascination for humanity. Although he finds humans to be gross and crude in many ways, he's intrigued by their customs, their freewheeling nature, and their creativity (which is so different from that of faeries). Every now and then he becomes obsessed with some human practice or hobby and tries it out, much to the chagrin (and secret amusement) of his court. Many faeries still shudder at remembrance of his interest in motorcycling, but his last hobby, Texas Hold 'Em poker, remains popular with some segments of the Seelie Court.

Prince Oberon usually adopts the form of a young, blonde-haired, incredibly handsome human male. His clothing varies depending on his mood, but it's always in the best of taste and incredibly expensive — sometimes he appears in a five thousand dollar men's suit, sometimes in medieval royal robes, sometimes in elegant casual wear. In times of battle he wears plate armor made of silver with gold filigree and other elegant touches. He usually wears no jewelry except for a beautiful ring with a green stone on his left ring-finger.

THE MIDNIGHT QUEEN

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
25	DEX	60	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
15	CON	10	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
25	INT	20	14-	PER Roll 14-
23	EGO	32	14-	ECV: 8
35	PRE	40	16-	PRE Attack: 7d6
30	COM	15	15-	
6	PD	4		Total: 6 PD (6 rPD)
6	ED	3		Total: 6 ED (6 rED)
6	SPD	45		Phases: 2, 4, 6, 8, 10, 12
8	REC	6		
40	END	5		
30	STUN	7		Total Characteristics Cost: 247

Movement: Running: 12"/24"
Teleportation: 30"/60"

Cost	Powers	END
50	<i>Faerie Power:</i> Endurance Reserve (250 END, 25 REC)	0
550	<i>Faerie Powers:</i> Variable Power Pool, 220 base + 110 control cost, Cosmic (+2)	var
107	<i>Pishogue:</i> Multipower, 107-point reserve	
10u	1) <i>Personal Pishogue:</i> Mental Illusions 14d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	
11u	2) <i>Group Pishogue:</i> Images to Sight, Hearing, Smell/Taste, and Touch Groups, -6 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (16"; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	



26	<i>The Midnight Tiara:</i> Multipower, 90-point reserve; all OAF (-1), Only Applies To Faerie Magic (-½), 4 Charges for entire Multipower	[4]
4u	1) <i>Enhance Faerie Magic:</i> Aid Magic 6d6, any one Magic spell/power at a time (+¼), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼); OAF (-1), Only Applies To Faerie Magic (-½)	
4u	2) <i>Weaken Faerie Magic:</i> Drain Magic 6d6, any one Magic spell/power at a time (+¼), Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼); OAF (-1), Only Applies To Faerie Magic (-½)	
6	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Damage Resistance (6 PD/6 ED)	0
30	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%; Does Not Work Against Iron Attacks (-1)	0
60	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%	0
15	<i>Faerie Mind:</i> Mental Defense (20 points total)	0
20	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Power Defense (20 points)	0
50	<i>Faerie Nature:</i> Life Support (Total, including Longevity: Immortality)	0
45	<i>Faerie Concealment:</i> Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
12	<i>Swift As The Wind:</i> Running +6" (12" total)	1
90	<i>Vanishing:</i> Teleportation 30", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
51	<i>Shapechanging:</i> Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, Touch, and Smell/Taste Groups, any shape), Imitation, Instant Change, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	

Skills

6	+2 with <i>Faerie Powers</i> VPP
5	<i>The Midnight Tiara:</i> +2 with <i>Faerie Powers</i> VPP; OAF (-1)
3	Concealment 14-
3	Conversation 16-
3	High Society 16-
2	CK: Hudson City 11-
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 14-
3	KS: Legends And Lore 14-
3	Persuasion 16-
3	Seduction 16-
3	Stealth 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 1,208

Total Cost: 1,455

100+ Disadvantages

20	Psychological Limitation: Capricious Faerie Nature (Very Common, Strong)
15	Psychological Limitation: Hates Prince Oberon (Common, Strong)
20	Susceptibility: takes 2d6 per Turn from iron (Common)
20	Susceptibility: takes 2d6 per Turn from salt (Common)
1,280	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 1,455

Description: Take all the Unseelie faeries in Hudson City. Then take all the evil, all the spite, all the malice that dwells within them. All of that wickedness and cruelty is but a fraction of that found within the heart of their ruler, the Midnight Queen. Some legends claim she's a fallen goddess who takes out her bitterness at her fate on all around her; others say she's some sort of strange Irish demon. Both may be wrong, or perhaps both are correct; her evil is ever-present regardless of its source.

Compared to the more physical Prince Oberon, the Midnight Queen is more cerebral, more cunning, more of a schemer. She's a mistress of faerie magic, more powerful even than he on that score. Illusions and other such trickery are her favorite powers, but she has no qualms about using more direct curses and afflictions... in fact, she enjoys it.

The Midnight Queen always has one powerful enchanted item with her: the *Midnight Tiara*. It enhances or weakens faerie magic (her own, or others') up to four times per day, and makes casting faerie spells easier. Unlike most enchanted items in the world of *Hudson City Shadows* it is *not* a Personal Focus — a PC who got his hands on it could use it. Anyone who does so earns an enemy for life, though.

The ruler of the Unseelie Court in Hudson City looks like an eerily beautiful human woman with icy-pale skin, jet-black hair that falls to her waist, and violet eyes. She wears revealing gowns of purple, dark blue, or black, and the Midnight Tiara (a tiara-like silver crown) upon her head.

FAERIE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
5	STR	-5	10-	Lift 50 kg; 1d6 [1]
20	DEX	30	13-	OCV: 7/DCV: 7
10	CON	0	11-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
25	PRE	20	14-	PRE Attack: 5d6
14	COM	2	12-	
5	PD	4		Total: 5 PD (5 rPD)
5	ED	3		Total: 5 ED (5 rED)
5	SPD	30		Phases: 3, 5, 8, 10, 12
10	REC	14		
60	END	20		
18	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 158

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Teleportation: 20"/40"

Cost	Powers	END
250	<i>Faerie Powers:</i> Variable Power Pool, 100 base + 50 control cost, Cosmic (+2)	var
5	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Damage Resistance (5 PD/5 ED)	0
30	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%; Does Not Work Against Iron Attacks (-1)	0
60	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%	0
11	<i>Faerie Mind:</i> Mental Defense (15 points total)	0
15	<i>Faerie Form:</i> Power Defense (15 points)	0
50	<i>Faerie Nature:</i> Life Support (Total, including Longevity: Immortality)	0
45	<i>Faerie Concealment:</i> Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0
60	<i>Vanishing:</i> Teleportation 20", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)	0

Skills

3	Concealment 13-
3	High Society 14-
5	AK: local area where the faerie lives 15-
3	KS: Legends And Lore 13-
3	Stealth 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 543

Total Cost: 696

75+ Disadvantages

20	Psychological Limitation: Capricious Faerie Nature (Very Common, Strong)
20	Susceptibility: takes 2d6 per Turn from iron (Common)
20	Susceptibility: takes 2d6 per Turn from salt (Common)
561	Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 696

OPTIONS

Cost Power

- +25 *Faerie Power*: Reduce END to 20 and buy Endurance Reserve (200 END, 20 REC)
- +125 *Powerful Faerie*: Increase VPP to 150 base + 75 control cost
- +87 *Power Within His Domain*: Faerie also buys VPP +50 base + +25 control cost; Only Works In Faerie's Domain (his secret lair, special territory, or other area where he's at his most powerful; -1)
- 107 *Pishogue*: Multipower, 107-point reserve
- 10u 1) *Personal Pishogue*: Mental Illusions 14d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
- 11u 2) *Group Pishogue*: Images to Sight, Hearing, Smell/Taste, and Touch Groups, -6 to PER Rolls, Increased Size (16"; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
- 43 *Shapechanging (Limited Forms)*: Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, Touch, and Smell/Taste Groups, four predefined shapes), Instant Change, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
- 81 *Shapechanging (Any Form)*: Shape Shift (Sight, Hearing, Touch, and Smell/Taste Groups, any shape), Imitation, Instant Change, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)
- 40 *Full Faerie Invisibility*: Invisibility to Sight Group, No Fringe, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½); Always On (-½)
- 13 *Faerie Wings*: Flight 10"; Restrained (-½)
- 9 *Faerie Wit*: faerie buys Conversation, Persuasion, and Seduction
- 3 *Faerie Equestrian*: faerie buys Riding
- 3 *Faerie Consumption*: Removed Diminished Eating from Life Support (the faerie has to eat normally, though what he has to eat varies from faerie to faerie)
- var *Faerie Factionalism*: Hunted (by enemy shee or some other type of faerie) or Rivalry (with another faerie in his shee)
- var Remove Susceptibilities, possibly replacing them with Psychological Limitations indicating simple dislike of those substances
- 25 Psychological Limitation: Dislikes Sunlight And Avoids It As Much As Possible (Very Common, Total)

Ecology: The faerie-folk live all over the British Isles (and in the world of *Hudson City Shadows*, many other places as well), in many different environments; see below for further information on their homes and realms. As magical beings, they don't have to sleep, breathe, or worry about the weather. Most of them don't have to eat, either, but they do so anyway for the joy of tasting food and drink. Some kinds do require specific types of sustenance... including things like human flesh and blood.

Personality/Motivation: By human standards, faeries tend to be capricious in the extreme, varying from helpfulness to wickedness at the drop of a hat. They also tend to react to human customs and practices in unusual ways; for example, a kindly faerie may leave and never return, or even turn malicious, if thanked or given a gift. See *Tuala Morn* for more information on faerie nature.

Powers/Tactics: Faeries possess vast magical powers. Though faeries of higher rank or station have more power than lesser faeries, even the weakest sprite or pixy has arcane abilities exceeding those of the strongest mage.

Among the powers possessed by most faeries are: the ability to become invisible (or make other people and things invisible); the ability to move from one place to another in the blink of an eye (Teleportation); the power to trick the senses with *pishogue* (illusions, glamours); the ability to Transform beings and things into other beings and things (turning a man into a beast of some sort is a popular faerie punishment for boorish Humans, and faeries often turn oak leaves into gold to trick the greedy); the ability to enchant objects or grant magical powers to people; the ability to grant wishes; the power to change their shape into animals, natural objects, and sometimes just about anything (referred to as *faet fiada*, "the look of an animal," among the gods of Ireland, the Tuatha dé Danaan), and the ability to heal wounds (or inflict pain). In game terms, the typical faerie has a large Variable Power Pool for his magical powers. Technically there are some restrictions on this Pool (for example, it can't create things made of iron, or technological devices), but they so rarely come into play in faerie stories that they're not listed as Limitations.

Furthermore, faeries rarely suffer any injury from mortal weapons (though enchanted ones could cause them harm), and they possess a broad immunity to many types of magic. But they do have a strong distaste for two things: iron and salt. A quantity of either presented strongly will drive them away or ward an area against them (and earn their enmity for the user), and weapons of iron can kill them permanently.

Campaign Use: See *Tuala Morn* for more information about the faerie-folk, including character sheets for many specific types of faeries.

Appearance: As masters of illusion and shapechanging, faeries can look like nearly anything they want to — from tall, beautiful, noble-looking elves like the Daoine Sidhe, to ugly, misshapen goblins, to the tiny winged sprites of Victorian fancy. They may go naked or wear clothes; in the latter case they favor colors like green, red, white, and brown.

The Haunts

The fourth major group in Hudson City's Mystic World is the *haunts* — various incorporeal spirits. These include ghosts and poltergeists (the restless spirits of the dead), atavisms (spirits brought into existence by strong emotions, usually negative ones), and corrupted nature spirits. They're not a group in the sense of working together, or competing with the other three "factions" — in fact, most of them are totally individualistic — but they share many characteristics and are often thought of collectively by mystics. Hudson City's size, age, and diverse population make it something of a mecca for haunts. Many a mage earns part or all of his living talking to haunts, destroying them, forcing them to go away, or the like. Some haunted locations are famous, even tourist attractions.

Haunts' goals and motivations vary wildly. Ghosts usually have some reason for lingering on Earth instead of passing into the afterlife. There may be a task they desperately want to see accomplished, or strong emotions like love, envy, or hatred keep them around. Poltergeists tend to be angry at something or someone, and use their powers to express that anger by moving and throwing objects, manifesting strange physical phenomena (like rains of blood onto a house), and even trying to harm the living. Atavisms express the emotion they embody using their various powers, which can include the ability to induce that emotion in others for purposes of causing havoc. Corrupted nature spirits — recorded examples of which have included sewer spirits, rat spirits, roach spirits, smog spirits, and tenement spirits — are perhaps the most dangerous of all. They have strong spirit powers, and the corruption inflicted upon them by the urban environment usually also drives them "insane" as well, making them psychotically interested in hurting people and causing trouble.

For a character sheet for a Ghost, see page 120 of *The HERO System Bestiary*. You can easily adapt it to create atavisms and other potentially malign spirits.

CHARACTER CREATION

Characters in *Hudson City Shadows* campaigns are typically Powerful Heroic characters, built on 100 Base Points plus up to 100 Character Points from Disadvantages. Normal Characteristic Maxima is imposed as a campaign default. Characters get ordinary equipment for free, but they have to pay Character Points for enchanted items or unusual items of equipment (alternately, the GM could use the Resource Points rules, as discussed on page 49). The rules for buying spells are on page 79, though there's no requirement that characters be spellcasters — they could be mundane people mingling with the Mystic World for some reason, or mages with minor arcane powers but not the ability to cast true spells.

PLOT SEEDS

Here are a few adventure and campaign ideas to get you started.

CAMPAIGNS

The Hunted, The Hunters: A Monster Hunters campaign that pits the PCs against the Vampyri. When the campaign begins, none of the PCs has heard of the Vampyri... but after the mysterious disappearance of a beloved friend a few adventures into the campaign, they catch a glimpse of that side of the Mystic World. As they investigate and learn more, they find themselves involved in outright warfare against an adversary whose warriors are stronger, faster, and deadlier than they are — but who have to be stopped.

The Greensward Wars: In this Monster Warfare campaign, the PCs find themselves caught up in the eternal struggle of the Fae Folk of Hudson City. The GM defines five or more factions for each of the Seelie and Unseelie Courts, representing differences of opinion (and often of species) among the faeries as to how the war should be fought and other important matters handled. Inevitably the campaign winds its way toward a final confrontation, the Battle of Hangman's Hill, where one side or the other will find itself cast down in a defeat so thorough it won't recover for centuries....

Upsurge: For some reason, the amount and strength of magic in the world begins increasing dramatically. At the beginning of the campaign the PCs are basically "mystic troubleshooters" helping people deal with an increasing tide of occult problems, but as the campaign grows the central mysteries of what's happening, why it's happening, and who's responsible (or trying to use the new power for his own benefit) take central stage.

ADVENTURES

Preying Upon Pearls: Once again twelve years have passed, and the time of the Great Hunt of the Vampyri has arrived. This time the Vampyri elders have, after due consideration

and consultation, selected Hudson City as the hunting ground. As some of the more “challenging” targets the city has to offer, the PCs soon find themselves attacked at every turn. Is there anything they can do to protect the city short of slaughtering every single Vampyri Hunter — every single well-trained, highly-armed, faster and stronger than they are Hunter?

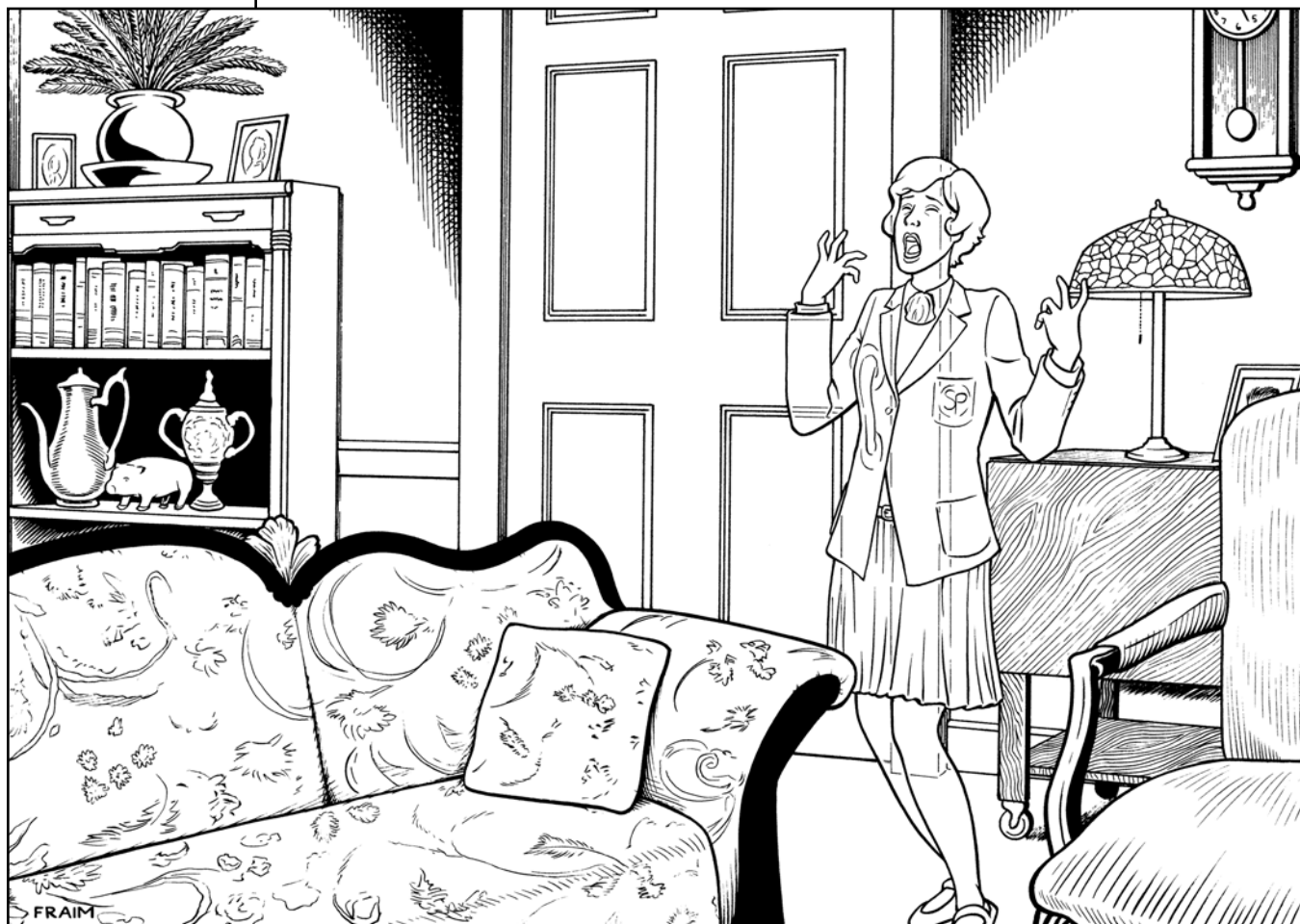
Damsel In Distress: A woman comes to the PCs seeking help. She claims that ghosts are following her around trying to kill her — pushing her in front of cars, toppling heavy objects out of windows toward her, trying to trip her so she falls into sharp things or exposed wiring, and so on. She claims to have no idea why she’s been singled out for this murderous treatment from beyond the grave. Is that the truth, or is there something more sinister going on?

Nick Of Time: A well-dressed gentlemen approaches the PCs while they’re relaxing in a club, bar, or other public venue. Handsome, sophisticated, and polite, he claims to be the Devil and asks to speak with them. If necessary, he can offer proof of his identity in the form of demonstrations of power (though nothing that he does would necessarily be beyond the capabilities of a mage who spent a lot of time preparing and practicing with new spells). Once he gets them in private, Nick Scratch (that’s the name on his business cards) tells the PCs the world is going to come to an end in just a few

days... unless they team up with him to save it! Naturally the PCs are suspicious, but the story seems highly plausible. Can they afford to ignore him?

On The Run: A messenger for the Council of Solomon delivers a writ to one (or all) of the PCs charging them with “arcane crimes most foul” and demanding their immediate appearance before the Council’s ruling tribunal. In past cases such accusations have usually led to the execution of the offending mages, since using magic to commit crimes is a serious (usually capital) offense and the authorities usually look the other way if the Council sees the need to “police its own.” For the sake of their skins the PCs have to go on the lam... and while they’re running from every mystic bounty hunter and Council flunky out there, find out what they’re actually charged with, who made the accusation, and what’s really going on.

Slayage: A pretty young blonde girl shows up in town armed with a combination of old-fashioned weaponry (daggers, axes, swords, wooden stakes...) and the latest in fashionable gunwear. She says she intends to kill every last vampire (i.e., Vampyri) in Hudson City, and in fact that it’s her “destiny” to do so. At first glance she looks pretty helpless, but she has the skills and determination to at least make a run at living up to her statements. Will the PCs help her... or try to stop her before she upsets the applecart and makes Hudson City a dangerous place for anyone to live in?



INVASIVE SPECIES



Invasive Species [in-vey-siv spee-sheez]
noun, plural A non-indigenous species of plant or animal that heavily colonizes a particular habitat, adversely affecting the environments it invades economically, environmentally, or ecologically. Environmentally-conscious groups or government organizations concerned with the economic welfare of a particular area often target invasive species for destruction.

INTRODUCTION

Reno, Nevada. The Biggest Little City in the Word. A casino built on top of a trailer park. An impossible, fevered dream had by a madman suffering from sunstroke. A raft of humanity floating in a vast ocean of dead, brown desert. A place of dust, perspiration, and second chances. A town where everyone is a newcomer, nobody is a stranger, and the slot machines blink and clang 24 hours a day. Yet beneath Reno's veneer of brightly-lit casinos, decaying cowboy gentility, and sprawling suburban mini-mansions, sinister forces older than mankind struggle against one another in the city's back alleys, deserted trailer parks, and junkyards for the only resource that truly matters: edible tourists.

Danger is everywhere in Reno for the unwary. The brothels outside of town contain prostitutes who aren't entirely human... and whose pleasures are invariably lethal. The Nevada shrub-steppe contains the shallowly-buried remains of beings who refuse to stay dead. The dimly-lit paths between nightclubs hide things that even the native Paiute are frightened to speak of. Biker gangs do more than terrorize teenagers whose cars have broken down along the deserted highways north of town: they eat them. Beautiful women who aren't women at all stalk the casinos in the guise of whores, looking for unwary men. Recently, immigrants from Mexico and India have brought their own carnivorous terrors with them, escalating the tensions between these species and increasing the chance that all of Reno's monstrosities will fall victim to the Danites: a secretive organization of Mormons dedicated to destroying all supernatural creatures.

Like the russian olive, mustang, and tamarix, these newcomers are invasive species, competing for resources against more established members of the urban ecosystem. Which, if any, will survive is for you to decide.

A BRIEF PUBLIC HISTORY OF RENO

"If the Devil were set at liberty and told to confine himself to the Nevada Territory, he would get homesick and go back to Hell again."

—Mark Twain

Reno, Nevada is a community of 210,000 near the state's western border with California. Famous for its casinos, nightlife, and the 14 different ski slopes within two hours of its city limits, it's historically a tourist destination for inhabitants of the San Francisco Bay area in the same way that Las Vegas is a destination for Angelinos — only far smaller and less ostentatious, as the cultural aesthetics of northern and southern Nevadans in many ways reflect those of their cousins from the other side of the border. In recent years, however, the rate of tourism from the west has dwindled due to a slowing economy and the rise of gaming on California Indian reservations. This decline has been somewhat offset by continued job growth in the areas of logistics (Internet giant Amazon, mega-bookseller Barnes and Noble, and many others maintain hubs in the area), light manufacturing, and energy production, but the trend for Nevada in general — and Reno in particular — is economically, socially, and demographically downward. With an agricultural sector affected by federal government policies, and schools, police, and other basic services starved into emasculation by a declining, gambling-based tax base, it seems almost certain the Silver State will follow its western neighbor downward into a spiraling collapse.

The demographic makeup of the Reno area — which includes its sister city of Sparks and the bedroom community of Spanish Springs — is primarily white and Hispanic with sizable populations of American Indians, Asians (primarily from India), and blacks. There's little overt racism, though extensive immigration from Mexico in recent years has strained relations between working-class whites and Hispanics as the competition for jobs intensifies. The Reno-Sparks Indian Colony is an urban tribe comprised of members with Washoe, Paiute, and Shoshone heritage. Essentially an autonomous city-within-a-city, it lies in the shadow of the massive Grand Sierra Resort: itself an almost city-sized monument to gambling, corruption, and vice. Virginia Street in downtown Reno is home to the Strip, an accumulation of dozens of brightly lit casinos including Circus Circus, Harrah's, the Eldorado, Fitzgerald's,



and the Silver Legacy. The southern part of the city clustered around Kietzke Lane is home to a large number of malls, car dealerships, and big box stores. Around the edges of this modern urban sprawl ranchers — whether white, Hispanic, black, or American Indian — struggle against overwhelming odds and an indifferent urban populace to hold onto the archaic lifestyle they love.

Native peoples have lived in the fertile Truckee Meadows for thousands of years. The modern history of Reno began when military man John Fremont and legendary frontiersman Kit Carson led their well-documented Second Expedition through the area in 1842. The United States Congress published their reports for consumption by the general public. As a direct result, Mormon settlers began colonizing the region in the early 1850s. Subsistence farmers dedicated to living out the tenets of their harsh faith, these early pioneers soon discovered there was money to be made selling supplies to travelers along the California Trail, which follows the Truckee River westward through the area. When gold was discovered in the area modest mining communities began to form, but the discovery of silver in 1859 led to one of the greatest mineral bonanzas of all time — the Comstock Lode — and the subsequent founding of Virginia City.

With the booming of the mining industry the population of Truckee Meadows began to explode. To provide the necessary connection between Virginia City and the California Trail a toll bridge was constructed across the Truckee River in 1859. A small community soon sprung up at the foot of the

bridge to provide services to weary travelers. These included a mill, kiln, hotel, restaurant, and livery. In 1864 this town, Lake's Crossing, became the capital of newly-formed Washoe County. In 1868 the Central Pacific Railroad built a depot at Lake's Crossing. Linked to the modern outside world by the Transcontinental Railroad, the inhabitants decided to rename their community Reno in honor of Jesse L. Reno, a Union officer killed in the Civil War.

As the mining boom waned in the early twentieth century, Nevada's centers of activity switched to the non-mining communities of Reno and Las Vegas (though the state still produces almost 7% of the world's gold). In 1931 the state legalized casino gambling and passed liberal marriage and divorce laws. Las Vegas became the marriage capital of America, while Reno became its "anti-romance" capital. Divorces were so common in the city that columnist Ernie Pyle once said, "All the people you saw on the streets in Reno were obviously there to get divorces." This business died down as other states eased their requirements for divorce, but gambling remained the town's major industry. Beginning in the 1950s the state also began to relax its business taxation to encourage investment. Combined with a main east-west railway line, Interstate 80, and relatively inexpensive land, this helped to create ideal conditions for warehousing and distribution of goods to all eleven of the western states. Today, Reno has the largest concentration of warehouses and supply yards per capita in the United States.

THE HIDDEN HISTORY OF RENO

"When the ancients saw a scapegoat, they could at least recognize him for what he was: a pharmakos, a human sacrifice. When modern man sees one, he does not, or refuses to, recognize him for what he is; instead he looks for "scientific" explanations to explain away the obvious."

—Thomas Szasz, *Ceremonial Chemistry*

The mystical significance of Reno and Northern Nevada are neither widely known nor well understood, though evidence of their roles in the worlds of modern myth and magic are clearly evident to anyone who undertakes the most cursory research. Certainly someone in the mid 1800s knew. The city itself was named after an enigmatic figure whose personal contradictions and egalitarianism helped to shape it. A French American (Reno is an Americanization of Renault), Jesse Lee Reno was also a renegade Virginian who fought against the Confederacy on behalf of the Union — even though Stonewall Jackson was one of his closest friends. He was also a 33rd Degree Mason. A graduate of West Point, Reno was a professor of mathematics whose son would later invent the escalator (a fundamental component of the modern casino). He fought under Sydney Johnson in the Utah War against Mormon settlers in that region — only to have Mormon settlers in another region name a city after him. (Both Mormon Church founders Joseph Smith and Brigham Young were, naturally, themselves full Masons. But more on that later.) Though born a Virginia gentlemen and a member of the officers' class, he was also known as "the soldier's soldier" by his men, as he fought alongside them without sword or any sign of rank in a gesture of classlessness. A man of resoundingly good cheer, he was mortally wounded at Fox's Gap (the fox being an ancient symbol of wisdom) during the Battle of South Mountain. (Where, notably, Union soldiers dumped the bodies of 66 Confederates down a well belonging to a Mr. Wise in a neo-Masonic sacrificial gesture.) Brought into the command post of Brig. Gen. Samuel D. Sturgis, he exclaimed happily "Hallo, Sam, I'm dead!" Sturgis (who would later have another mystically significant community named after him — Sturgis, South Dakota, home to the world's largest biker rally) replied that surely it wasn't that bad, to which Reno responded: "Yes, yes, I'm dead — goodbye!"... and promptly died.

Reno had been killed by a shot fired by a marksman from the *Twenty-Third* North Carolina Volunteers. Twenty-three is, of course, the number of magical conspiracy and coincidence as first noted by author and drug addict William S. Burroughs, most famously the creator of *The Naked Lunch*. (This brings us full circle, as arguably the city of Reno was founded so travelers could enjoy a shower ["Naked"] and a meal ["Lunch"].) Like

any good hero Reno was posthumously promoted; in his case to Major General. Three military outposts were subsequently named after him, and later, three municipalities (Reno, Nevada; Reno, Pennsylvania; and Reno County, Kansas). Three is, of course, the mystical number symbolizing interaction, egalitarianism, and life, while two represents dualism, the adversary, and hidden things. Naturally, when put together they form 23... but enough of that. Suffice to say that all the evidence indicates the modern city of Reno was founded as the direct result of a joint Masonic-Mormon ritual known as the Killing of the Sun King: the same ritual which would later be used in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy. (Who was definitely Catholic; unlike John Fremont, who may or may not have been Catholic. But he definitely lost his bid for the presidency for being, depending on whom one asked, a feminist, socialist, advocate of free love, temperance movement member, or Catholic. In any case he was suspected of keeping secrets. That much at least was true.) But whereas Kennedy's killing was engineered to deliberately cause a massive social paradigm shift, Reno's assassination — and the subsequent founding of the city that bears his name — was undertaken to manufacture a magical vortex capable of attracting evil supernatural creatures from across the continent... and even around the world.

Reno is a trap, a grave for the world's black Mythologies. It's a killing field for Sesquac and Vampire, La Llarona and Werewolf, Chupacabra and Chordewa — all sponsored by a secretive branch of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints known as the Danites. A city that the infamous Children of Cain believe to be their domain... even as the angry fist of God hunts them down and strikes them.

Or maybe things aren't that simple.

The presence of supernatural evil in the Truckee Meadows predates the Masonic slaying of Jesse Lee Reno by thousands of years. The native Paiute and Washoe knew of all sorts of dangerous creatures and spirits (though only a few seem to have survived into modern times). For example, there have been no reported sightings of the giant cannibals Tse'nahaha or Pu'wihi in over 100 years, and pterodactyls haven't been seen in the Black Rock Desert for decades. It's also possible that some of the creatures considered to be "native" to the region actually immigrated to the Truckee Meadows region after the mystically-tinted founding of Reno, or may be recent manifestations of supernatural evil. Though the existence of the Sesquac and Liver Woman in the region are substantiated by a certain amount of ethnographic research, there's no evidence of the existence of the debauched nature spirits known as Dust Coyote before the 1980s.

Of course, all of this could have been avoided with a simple reading of Kit Carson's *Secret Diaries And Western Observations*... if you're able to find one. Carson is believed to have only printed around a dozen copies of this rare and enigmatic book in the final year of his life, and then only

as presents for his closest friends. Two copies are known to have been destroyed in fires, one is believed to be in the secretive Mormon archives in Salt Lake City, and the rest are in the hands of private collectors and occultists. Carson, one of the greatest of the mountain men in both accomplishment and character, was fluent in seven American Indian languages, including Paiute and Ute. Although it's not widely discussed, he'd also previously navigated the trails the second Fremont expedition had been hired to "blaze." (Actually, both Carson and Fremont were predated by the Jedediah Strong Smith Expedition, which came through the area in 1826. But his journals didn't get mass-marketed by Congress.) Not an overly wordy man, Carson chose to keep many of the more alarming things he discovered in western Nevada to himself. His partner General John C. Fremont (*another* French-American-Virginian-Mason mathematics professor Union officer who also happened to be distant relative of George Washington, possibly the greatest Mason of them all), while an overly wordy man, omitted a great deal of alarming information from his report and swore his men to secrecy — partly because he feared no one would believe him, but also because he had political aspirations... and probably because he was another Mason.

Unfortunately, Fremont didn't extract the same promise from the wily and mischievous Carson, who used all of his considerable knowledge to craft a tome of mystery and power. Familiarity with the contents of his book — whose words are rumored to mysteriously update with the passage of each year — is the only way any one man (or entity) can hope to fully comprehend what's transpiring in Reno. Possessing an actual copy could prove to be the ultimate salvation of any of its five Mythologies — or their ultimate downfall.

SENSE AND SENSIBILITY IN INVASIVE SPECIES

"Never allow anyone the luxury of assuming that because the dead and deadening scenery of the American city-of-dreadful-night is so utterly devoid of mystery, so thoroughly flat-footed, sterile and infantile, so burdened with the illusory gloss of 'baseball-hot-dogs-apple-pie-and-Chevrolet' that it's somehow outside the psycho-sexual domain."

—James S. Downard, *King-Kill/33-Degree*

A feeling of desperation and malaise permeates the world of *Invasive Species*, existing alongside a sort of ill-defined, decadent eroticism. The good times — the eras of the settler, the cowboy, the miner, and the booming casino — are gone, leaving only a slow, painful dwindling as the desert and its entropic agents reclaim a once-thriving community and return it to the dust. Everyone searches for what pleasures they can find as this world winds down. Whether predator or prey, every character knows he's doomed and his actions are ultimately pointless. (The Danites are the one exception to this.) Death, as symbolized by the endless oceans of sand and scrub brush that surround the city, are fated to one day claim even those who themselves lay claim to immortality.

Competition for the dwindling tourist trade has not only pitted casino against casino, nightclub against nightclub, hustler against hustler, and call girl against call girl, but different sorts of supernatural creatures against one another. Usually this is because a particular type of monster's style of hunting or preferred prey overlaps with another's, but traditional animosities, racism, and the general tendency of evil creatures to not play well with others are also factors. The *Demimonde* and *One-Percenters* have been feuding since the days when gunfighters threw down in the streets of Virginia City — and the native monsters who call themselves *the Homeless* ambush both at every opportunity. All three Mythologies have recently forged a loose alliance with the goal of driving newcomers out of the city... but it's an uneasy coalition that's often violated. *La Raza Misteriosa* pretends to be neutral in the conflicts between the other monsters while working secretly to destroy them all. Comprised of creatures that are either weak or few in number, the *Yama Doota* just wants to be left alone to hunt... but this is, of course, impossible when there isn't enough prey to go around.

Hovering over this bloody underground melodrama are *the Danites*, a secret order of Mormon monster hunters dedicated to the eradication of all Children of Cain (their term for supernatural creatures). These grimly determined men of faith have the knowledge, equipment, and contacts necessary to put an end to the Mythologies once and for all. Indeed, the entire reason for Reno's existence is to create the perfect killing ground for them to do so. Dying in the service of this noble cause is not only an acceptable fate for a Danite — it's also the most

desirable one. According to their lore, God has made a special place in Paradise for those who slay the progeny of the First Murderer. One day, when the last monster has been destroyed and the last Gentile has come to understand the teachings of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, a new city will rise from the dust covered ruins of Reno. It will be a metropolis crafted by the hand of the Lord for his resurrected Danite warriors and their families.

The war between the Mythologies, Danites, and anyone else foolish enough to get caught in the middle is an invisible conflict in which all sides wish to remain in the shadows, hidden from the scrutiny of the greater world. There may be other groups aware of this situation that have the means to do something about it — the Catholic Church and Federal Government both spring to mind — but at the moment they're ignoring the situation. This is exactly the way everyone concerned wants it. Every effort should be made by the PCs in *Invasive Species* to keep the true nature of reality secret. Otherwise, everybody loses: the world goes mad, the Mythologies all get destroyed, and the Danites never get their heavenly reward or their shining city on the hill.

There are three primary types of campaign that can be run in this setting: Sons of Daniel; Renegades; and Taking Care of Business.

SONS OF DANIEL

The first and simplest campaign is one in which the PCs are Danite monster hunters going about their business of destroying supernatural evil (or "supernaturals" for short). In this game the war between the older and newer Mythologies serves as background color for the action, but is otherwise unimportant. The PCs are in the business of destroying these monsters, not taking sides... unless it serves their goal of eventually destroying all five Mythologies.

RENEGADES

The second type of campaign is one in which the PCs are a mixed group of renegade creatures who've abandoned their murderous ways, but are now hunted by the Danites *and* their own kind. Perhaps they're trying to negotiate a treaty between the warring factions and put an end to the Native-Newcomer War (see below), convince them to cease hunting humanity, or simply survive. They may even be fighting their own kind in an attempt to protect normal people from their predations. No matter what they will only have one another to rely upon, since nobody's going to thank them for their efforts.

TAKING CARE OF BUSINESS

Finally, in the most complex sort of campaign the PCs could play creatures of a particular Mythology or allied Mythologies who prey upon humanity while engaging in a multisided war with the Danites, enemy Mythologies, and even their own "allies" from time to time. This is a morally ambiguous sort of campaign to play, as the PCs can hardly be considered noble or their cause particularly worthy. The GM should consider the maturity level of his Players before allowing this campaign.

MAGIC IN INVASIVE SPECIES

"Books are a uniquely portable magic."

—Stephen King

"Magic" in the sense it's understood in most Urban Fantasy settings doesn't exist in *Invasive Species*. There are no spells or potions (not ones that work, anyhow). Religious symbols offer no protection from vampires, the characters aren't able to hurl fireballs at one another, and the creatures of the various Mythologies aren't inherently impressed by stern words from devout priests. The only artifacts that exist are books like Carson's *Secret Diaries And Western Observations* — and these are only "artifacts" in the sense that they're very, very rare. The importance of such relics springs from the information contained within their pages, not any sort of enchantment. A digital copy of Carson's work carried on an e-book reader would be as useful as the original copy written in his own hand.

Rather than existing as a force than can be employed as a weapon, "magic" in *Invasive Species* is a hidden set of rules that can be employed to effectively combat supernatural creatures. Whether the creatures themselves are actually magical is purely up to the GM. For example, lycanthropy and vampirism could be thought of either as magical conditions or poorly understood, but ultimately explainable, diseases. With their shape-shifting powers and cannibalistic habits, Chupacabra and Liver Woman could either be magical creatures, undiscovered humanoid races existing parallel to our own species, or the mutant offspring of humanity. Dust Coyote could just as easily be a form of psychological illness suffered by drug users as it could be corrupt nature spirits. Maybe they're all refugees from another dimension, cast ashore in Nevada like shipwreck survivors on a beach. Or the Danites could be right: they're all Children of Cain, the accursed offspring of the First Murderer. Regardless, understanding the habits, ecology, and weaknesses of the creatures of the Mythologies is of paramount importance in this game. In game terms, the higher a score a Character has in Skill KS: The Secret World, the more "magic" he knows.

A second form of "magic" in this setting is a deep understanding of the setting itself — and perhaps some answers to its mysteries. Who exactly are the conspirators that sacrificed Jesse Lee Reno and established the doomed city that bears his name? The Mormons? The Masons? The Illuminati? Or was it some deeper, more ancient conspiracy? What exactly is the mysterious force that has drawn the Mythologies to Reno? Is it really on the Danites' side... or that of the the monsters? Is it on anyone's side at all? What exactly was it that the Fremont Expedition discovered in Truckee Meadows that the brooding Fremont felt the need to suppress his entire life — and the mischievous Carson to reveal on this deathbed? Was it

an entrance to subterranean Buenaventura — the mythical river said to run from Lake Superior to the Pacific Ocean? The river was considered a scientific fact prior to the second Fremont expedition, which exposed it as a “fable.” But did it? Was it the existence of dinosaurs in the Smoke Creek Desert? Red-haired giants in the Limbo Mountains? Are there trans-dimensional “shortcuts” in the unexplored Aztec tunnels beneath Reno’s sewer system? Or is the geography of the region itself magical, containing caves that lead to alternate dimensions and mountainside forests whose unexplored depths contain ruins from pre-human civilizations?

Ultimately, it’s up to the GM to decide and the PCs to discover.

THE NATIVE-NEWCOMER WAR

The current three-way conflict between the “Native” Mythologies (the Homeless, One-Percenter, and Demimonde), the “Newcomers” (La Raza Misteriosa, Yama Doota), and the Danites is known simply as the Native-Newcomer War. This struggle is in its second year and has already come dangerously close to exposing the existence of all three factions to the general public several times — a situation all involved are eager to avoid.

So far the war is a draw. Much to the Danites’ disappointment, the monsters haven’t wiped one another out. Also, though the conflict has made the Mormon monster hunters’ job a bit easier, they’ve been losing hunters at a greater rate. (It’s a sacrifice the organization is willing to make.) Neither group of Mythologies has been able to gain an upper hand, either. The fight would seem to favor the Natives, with their greater resources, more powerful members, and established presence in the area. But the three allied Mythologies don’t function well together because of their long-standing animosity toward one another. The Newcomers don’t have this problem. Additionally, La Raza Misteriosa can draw upon its large *familia*: loyal, knowledgeable, and well-armed mortals who are considered full members of the Mythology.

Who will win this shadowy, hidden conflict?

THE MYTHOLOGIES

“Myth is neither a lie nor a confession: it’s an infection.”

— Roland Barthes, *Mythologies*

Like is attracted to like. Whether it’s the color of a man’s skin, the language he speaks, or flavor of his religion, all men gravitate toward those like themselves. It’s as natural as breathing. In the same way supernatural creatures, whether of the same type or from the same culture, tend to associate more readily with one another than they do with dissimilar monsters — or those that spring from a different flavor of ethnic nightmare. Thus the mighty Sesquac is more likely to cooperate with enigmatic Dust Coyote, or the cunning Chupacabra with tragic La Llarona, than they are even with horrors whose habits or traits more closely reflect their own. Groupings of these creatures are known as *Mythologies*, as their membership invariably springs from a single cultural tradition. In some cases a Mythology may be comprised of only a single type of creature (along with their human minions). For example, all members of the Demimonde are female vampires, often of Slavic decent, while all One-Percenter are male, Caucasian werewolves. In other cases a Mythology is comprised of a variety of different creatures. Sometimes the number of species within a Mythology is on the increase; in other cases it’s declining. There are currently three race-members of La Raza Misteriosa, but that number is likely to increase so long as the pace of Mexican immigration remains steady. On the other hand, the Homeless are on the decline. While Dust Coyotes remain prolific, it’s likely that the Danites will exterminate the Sesquac and Liver Women before the end of the decade. It’s up to each individual GM to create, add, or remove new race-members as he sees fit.

Mythologies exist in practical terms for one reason: to promote the interests of their members. This can mean anything from training newer members to hunt, to protecting one another from the Danites, to negotiating agreements with rival Mythologies. In game terms belonging to one means having the appropriate *Membership* Perk.

MYTHOLOGY CHARACTER CREATION

Each species of creature (or *supernatural*) described below is presented as a Package Deal, rather than a character sheet, so players can easily create a PC of that type. Gamemasters wishing to create adversaries for them can do the same with little trouble. Generally speaking, PCs created using a supernatural Package Deal should get an additional 50 Base Points with which to increase Attributes, add additional Skills, and the like. They may also be given additional Disadvantage Points at the GM’s discretion.

All Package Deal Skills are purchased as Characteristics-based and all powers are listed *without* Characteristics such as STR factored in. It’s up to the Player and GM to determine the appropriate level of the Skill or Power once the character is completed.

The Homeless

“There is no death, only a change of worlds.”

—Washoe Proverb

Membership: There are three species belonging to the Homeless: Dust Coyotes; Liver Women; and the Sesquac. Though the population of Dust Coyotes on the outskirts of Reno is quite large, possibly numbering in the hundreds, determined hunting by the Danites within the city has reduced the numbers of Liver Women and Sesquac to a handful. There are probably less than a dozen of the shaggy humanoids and perhaps three or four of the cannibalistic, shape-shifting witch-women left in the Truckee Meadows area.

Background/History: The Homeless are the remnants of the indigenous nightmare creatures that hunted and preyed upon the native Washoe, Paiute, and Shoshone peoples who inhabited the Reno area. At the time of the Fremont Expedition they numbered in the thousands and included a dozen powerful “tribes” of creatures that gathered annually on the shores of secluded High Rock Lake to sacrifice human children to their dark gods. They were powerful, feared, and abundant. Now they have largely vanished, driven from their traditional hunting grounds by the combined actions of the Demimonde, One-Percenters, Danites, and American Indian shamans. Most have either perished or fled, but a trace population remains in the area, preying upon humans as they always have.

Group Relations: Normally, the three species that belong to the Homeless have very little to do with one another. Dust Coyote stay completely outside of the city limits, preying upon hunters, off-roaders, lost children, and the odd backpacker. Liver Women can appear entirely human, and are thus able to move freely within Reno. Sesquac can pass as human under limited circumstances, feeding off of Reno’s abundant population of derelicts, clubbers, and night owls as best as they’re able. As was the habit of their ancestors, they meet secretly once a year on the shores of their sacred lake to sacrifice human children, commune with the evil deities they revere, and plan what (if any) actions to take in the next year against their human and supernatural foes.

In recent years a truce has been called between the Homeless and their traditional foes the Demimonde and One-Percenters so that the three Mythologies can focus their energies upon fighting the Danites, Las Raza Misteriosa, and Yama Doota. This situation is understood to be strictly temporary, and the three groups have not as of yet coordinated any sort of action against their foes, but greater cooperation isn’t out of the question.

Tactics: The Homeless only gather once a year, so their “tactics” as an organization are fairly limited. Liver Women and Sesquac are solitary creatures, unaccustomed to working together or with anyone

else, while Dust Coyotes hunt in packs exclusively comprised of their own kind. All three species are extremely technophobic. Only Liver Women understand a telephone well enough to operate one — and even then they’re reluctant to do so. This makes any sort of coordination between the three species difficult, to say the least. Generally, members of the Homeless come to one another’s aid only when they stumble across a fellow member of their Mythology in trouble, or when one contacts another in person. Otherwise it’s every monster for itself.

Campaign Use: The Homeless aren’t a modern, structured group like the other Mythologies. Generally they’re encountered as solitary monsters (or in the case of Dust Coyotes as a swarming pack), but never as part of an organization. Thus they make excellent starter opponents in a Sons of Daniel campaign. Beginning monster hunters can track a carnivorous Sesquac through the back alleys and sewers, investigate a trail of infant killings leading them to a confrontation with a villainous Liver Woman, or battle Dust Coyotes in the hills north of Carson City. Individualistic and anachronistic, species belonging to the Homeless are also excellent candidates for PCs in a Renegades campaign, where their powers easily complement those of others. With its great strength and endurance a Sesquac makes an excellent “brick,” while a Liver Woman’s shape-shifting powers allow her



to be an excellent spy. Dust Coyotes are perpetually filthy and self-indulgent, making them excellent candidates for comic relief — as much as such a thing is possible in *Invasive Species*.

Because they're neither technologically savvy nor well-organized, the Homeless are a poor choice for a Taking Care of Business campaign, where they'll always be hopelessly overmatched by the other Mythologies and the Danites. But it's always possible that with some outside help, this could change....

DUST COYOTES

Dust Coyotes are corrupt desert spirits who have possessed the bodies of men, reducing them to the level of degenerate animals. They're largely nocturnal, living in packs of one to two dozen around the edges of civilization where they can safely attack and eat anything foolish enough to wander away from the relative safety of the suburbs. Generally this means cats, dogs, and small children, but Dust Coyotes attack adult humans if they have the advantage of numbers and the humans appear to be unarmed.

Dust Coyotes are self-indulgent and debauched to a level that would shock Oscar Wilde, the Marquis de Sade, or any of the other great wastrel villains of myth and legend. They crave alcohol, fresh meat, drugs, and sex in vast quantities, and upon occasion have a hard time telling the difference between them. Periodically a pack of Dust Coyotes appoints a "king" who leads them on a "quest" to gain the objects of their desire, at which point they descend into a degenerate orgy of self-indulgence. These quests can be anything from raiding a liquor store, to attacking a sorority, to attending the Burning Man counterculture festival (where their activities go completely unnoticed).

Dust Coyotes have lost all understanding of technology or normal human behavior. They go naked save for an obscuring cloud of brown dust. Kit Carson described an encounter with one this way:

"At first we thought it was an animal of some sort, but as we approached it proved to be a filthy man scuttling along in an almost canine gait. He turned, cocking his head sidewise as he did. Though tall, he was bent so far forward that his spindly arms swung near to the ground, causing handfuls of long, filthy nails to scrape against the earth. It was difficult to make out his features. Dust seemed to hover around like naked body like some sort of brown field, obscuring any attempt to make out the particulars of his person. Then the cloud around its face wavered for a moment, allowing a distinctively canine muzzle to emerge as if from a pool of stagnant, brown water. It opened its jaws, revealing a row of jagged, yellow teeth.

"At this point, several of the men opened fire...."

These creatures are only able to speak broken English or Spanish, but often speak Paiute,

Washoe, or another native language quite fluently (though with an archaic accent). They're tough, fast, resistant to damage, and have many of the abilities of a normal coyote, including tracking prey by smell. In combat they attack ferociously using their ragged claws and teeth, but will quickly retreat if confronted with superior force. Dust Coyotes always attack in packs. They're vulner-

DUST COYOTE PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
15	+5 DEX
6	+3 CON
5	+5 PRE
-1	-2 COM
3	+3 PD
1	+1 ED
10	+1 SPD
10	+2 HTH
5	Obscuring Dust Cloud: +1 DCV
3	Concealment (INT Roll)
3	AK: Truckee Meadows (INT Roll)
3	Stealth (DEX Roll)
3	Tactics (INT Roll)
3	Teamwork (DEX Roll)
1	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Homeless
8	Claws: HKA ½d6; Reduced Penetration (-¼)
5	Teeth: HKA 1 point
44	Dust Coyote Bite: Major Transform 7d6 (human into dust coyote; heals back through complete submersion in water), Trigger (whenever Teeth attack(s) do half or more of target's positive BODY, activating Trigger takes no time, Trigger immediately automatically resets; +1), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Activation Roll 8- (-2), All Or Nothing (-½), No Conscious Control (character controls use of Teeth, but Transform always occurs under the specified conditions; -1), Limited Target (male humans; -1), No Range (-½)
30	Supernatural Physique: Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%
10	Swift: Running +5"
3	Coyote Senses: +1 PER with all Sense Groups but Sight Group
6	Coyote Nose: +3 PER with Smell/Taste Group
5	Coyote Nose: Tracking for Normal Smell
5	Coyote Eyes: Nightvision

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 186

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
25	Distinctive Features: Dust Coyote (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction)
25	Hunted: Danites 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: at least two other Mythologies at any given time 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
20	Psychological Limitation: Fear Of Water (Common, Total)
35	Susceptibility: takes 3d6 damage instantly from water (Very Common)

Total Cost of Package Disadvantages: 125

able to — and incredibly frightened of — water (though not snow), hiding in caves during rainstorms to avoid its deadly touch.

Upon occasion the bite of a Dust Coyote transfers enough of its “spirit stuff” into an adult male victim to create another Dust Coyote. In game terms, this is Major Transform 7d6 that only heals back through complete submersion in water (assuming the victim lives). Healed Dust Coyotes thankfully have no memory of their experience save for shocking nightmares that typically drive them to a life of celibacy, abstinence, and asceticism.

LIVER WOMEN

In their normal form (assuming they have one), the repugnant creatures known as Liver Women appear to be unthreatening, small women of indeterminate ethnicity and matronly wisdom: in short, exactly the sort of person anyone would trust with her children while working, shopping, or going on vacation. To make matters worse, Liver Women really are exceptional babysitters and feminine advisers, masters of common sense medical advice who are filled with exceptional suggestions on raising troublesome children, handling difficult husbands, and the like — all at a very affordable price. Any harried, lower-income mother stumbling across an advertisement for a Liver Woman's services stapled to a telephone pole or the bulletin board of her local laundromat will think that God has, at last, smiled upon her... until three weeks later when the Liver Woman vanishes, leaving dead children in her wake.

Liver Women are shapeshifters who require human livers to retain their powers. These don't actually have to be the livers of children, but the creatures prefer their taste and have thus built an entire “hunting” method around acquiring them. They must consume at least one liver a month or their powers weaken, leaving them frozen in their current form. To “eat” a liver a Liver Woman extends the nail of her right index finger to a length of two feet, with razor-sharp tip and edges and has a hollow center. She plunges it into the stomachs of her victim and “drinks” out his liver without leaving a mark. (The long nail can also be used as a slashing weapon, but Liver Women prefer to avoid combat in favor of simply changing shape and vanishing into the crowded city before their victims are discovered.)

Liver Women can assume the form of any woman that's roughly 5'2" in height and weighing around 110 pounds. This includes changing facial features, fingerprints, eye color, and even adding or removing tattoos and other marks. They can also appear to be any ethnicity from Scandinavian to Sub-Saharan African, though for reasons known only to them they usually take the form of American Indians or Hispanics. What all this

means is that the police or enraged family members might question the Liver Woman just minutes after she kills someone and have no suspicion they're talking to the killer!

Due to a series of clever stings engineered by the Danites over the last few years, Reno's remaining Liver Women no longer operate in the largely white communities of Sparks or Spanish Springs. Instead they focus on Reno's sizable — and often illegal — Mexican immigrant community, where their activities often go unreported to the authorities for fear of attracting unwanted attention. The Danites are concerned about this but, as a mostly Anglo and English-speaking organization, lack the ability to function within that community. President-Bishop Avard is reputedly considering a joint operation between the Danites and Opus Dei, the branch of the Catholic Church tasked with monster hunting, to wipe out the Liver Woman population of Reno once and for all.

LIVER WOMAN PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
15	+5 DEX
5	+5 PRE
3	+3 PD
1	+1 ED
10	+1 SPD
5	+1 HTH
3	Concealment (INT Roll)
3	Conversation (PRE Roll)
3	CuK: Reno (INT Roll)
3	KS: Children (INT Roll)
3	Paramedics (INT Roll)
3	Persuasion (PRE Roll)
3	Stealth (DEX Roll)
1	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Homeless
20	<i>Supernatural Understanding</i> : Universal Translator (INT Roll)
15	<i>Liver-Claw</i> : HKA ½d6 (plus STR), Penetrating (+½)
30	<i>Supernatural Physique</i> : Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%
7	<i>Maternal Wisdom</i> : +10 PRE, Only Works On Young Mothers (-½)
33	<i>Shapeshift</i> : Shape Shift (Sight and Hearing Groups, any small human woman), Instant Change, Makeover

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 166

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
25	Hunted: Danites 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: at least two other Mythologies at any given time 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
10	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Liver Woman) (Frequently, Minor)

Total Cost of Package Disadvantages: 55

SESQUAC

Sesquac are enormous, shaggy humanoids whose facial features are a blend of man and ape. They stand almost seven feet tall and are covered from head to foot in coarse reddish hair. They're capable of feats of enormous strength, and their mouths are a nightmare of razor-sharp teeth that can rend flesh with ease. In combat they use their enormous strength to batter the life from their opponents, and then quickly devour them — bones, clothing, jewelry and all.

When dressed in human clothing under the cover of darkness, even female Sesquac can pass for large, bearded men — a fact the Sesquac use to their advantage when hunting victims through the nearly deserted alleyways and side streets of after-hours Reno. They live in the city's sewers and deserted buildings, sleeping during the day and emerging at night to stalk derelicts, streetwalkers, and other unfortunates.

Sesquac typically wear filthy trench coats, large brown boots, trousers, and wide brimmed hats they can pull down to cover their features. They're both omnivorous and perpetually hungry. They spend as much of their time foraging

through restaurant dumpsters as they do eating drunken gamblers from Sacramento — though human flesh is by far their favorite food. The indigenous homeless population of Reno is well aware of the existence of Sesquac, whom they call "shaggy men," and give their territories a wide berth. This is why newly-arrived derelicts are often surprised to find blocks of the city's begging and foraging turf unoccupied... but they don't stay surprised for very long.

Sesquac are surprisingly intelligent and knowledgeable about the mysteries of the Truckee Meadows. They traditionally serve as the "memory" of the Homeless, orally passing on the secrets of the Mythology from one generation to another (all Sesquac are illiterate). But with the dwindling of this species, even the other Mythologies are becoming worried that this vast reservoir of knowledge will be lost forever.

The One-Percenters

"All werewolves are of evil disposition, having assumed a bestial form to gratify a bestial appetite; but some, transformed by sorcery, are as humane and are consistent with an acquired taste for human flesh."

—Ambrose Bierce, *The Devil's Dictionary*

SESQUAC PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
25	+25 STR
30	+15 CON
24	+12 BODY
15	+15 PRE
5	+5 PD
3	+3 ED
5	+1 HTH
3	Concealment (INT Roll)
3	Disguise (INT Roll)
5	CuK: Reno (INT Roll +2)
5	KS: Lore and Law of the Homeless (INT Roll +2)
5	KS: The Secret World (INT Roll +2)
3	Stealth (DEX Roll)
4	Survival (Urban) (INT Roll +1)
1	Fringe Benefit: Membership: the Homeless
10	Teeth: HKA ½d6 (plus STR)
9	Tough Skin: Armor (3 PD/3 ED)
6	Long Legs: Running +3"
5	Sesquac Eyes: Nightvision
6	Sesquac Senses: +2 PER with all Sense Groups
4	Long Arms: Stretching 1", Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Always Direct (-¼), No Noncombat Stretching (-¼), No Velocity Damage (-¼)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 176

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
20	Distinctive Features: Sesquac (Concealable; Extreme Reaction)
25	Hunted: Danites 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: at least two other Mythologies at any given time 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
15	Psychological Limitation: Craves Human Flesh (Common, Strong)

Total Cost of Package Disadvantages: 80

Membership: The lycanthrope biker gang known as the Once-Percenters is comprised of two dozen physically large white males, plus a dozen or so prospects, girlfriends, and other hangers-on. The actual membership of the gang varies between one and three dozen, depending on factors such as infighting, conflicts with other Mythologies (traditionally the Demimonde), and the like.

Background/History: Werewolves came to North America with the first large wave of German emigration in the 1840s. Constitutionally unable to assimilate into the general population or hide among it as effectively as vampires, they soon gravitated to the lawless western frontier, where their ravages would either go unnoticed or be blamed on American Indians. Still, certain settlers (*i.e.*, the Danites) were knowledgeable enough to spot them no matter where they went, and soon the newly-arrived Lycanthrope-Americans were forced to remove themselves to places even further from human society: mountaintops, deep deserts, the frozen waists of the Yukon.

Sometime in the 1870s a werewolf named Lujo "Old Man" Eller grew tired of living a life of exile in the Jackson Mountains 150 miles north of Reno. He decided to rejoin civilization... in a sense. The mountains and deserts of northwestern Nevada had long been a haven to misfits of all sorts, and Eller resolved to gather together a group of his own — a gang of infected cannibal outlaws! He began ambushing mountain men, rustlers, and cowboys in the Roop County territory between Pyramid Lake and the California border, kidnapping and transforming dozens of them into werewolves.



Possessing supernatural strength, inhuman endurance, and a seeming immunity to gunfire, the Eller Gang was the terror of the Truckee Meadows for almost a decade — until a posse led by Danite Elder Luther Young gunned down Lujo and most of his men in a hail of silver bullets. But by then it was too late. The survivors simply infected a dozen more men and re-branded themselves as the Elgar-Ginn Gang... until Danite monster hunters brought them down too.

The Smith Bunch. The Walker-Erickson Gang. The Oxley-Palmer Gang. The pattern kept repeating itself straight up to World War I, when werewolf activity in the Reno area seemed to vanish. For a time the Danites believed they'd finally exterminated the creatures. But they were mistaken — the lycanthrope outlaws were only biding their time. With the passage of Prohibition in 1920 they reemerged as the Sparks Outfit, a gang of tommy gun-toting bootleggers hell-bent on smuggling as much rotgut Mexican liquor into northern Nevada as possible. As popular with hard-drinking locals as they were despised by law enforcement (not to mention the Danites), the "excesses" of the Sparks Outfit were overlooked by many, allowing a war between themselves and Mormon monster hunters to openly rage on the streets of Reno. (Most citizens believed the Danites were either the FBI or radical Prohibitionists.) This continued straight into the Great Depression, which was a boom time for the lycanthropes. With an almost limitless supply of drifters available for their consumption, the werewolves of the Sparks Outfit simply vanished into the confusion.

World War II brought an end to this cycle of

violence, cannibalism, and vigilantism as most of the people involved, whether werewolf or monster-hunting Mormon, was promptly drafted into the military. When the war ended, many returning soldiers had a hard time readjusting to society. Some of them purchased secondhand motorcycles and began to aimlessly roam the backroads of the West, joining up with kindred souls for companionship. This led to the creation of most of the modern outlaw motorcycle gangs, including the One-Percenter. Originally a normal California motorcycle club comprised of veterans, the One-Percenter had the misfortune of adding several surviving members of what had been the Sparks Outfit to its ranks in 1948. By 1949 every member of the group was contaminated with lycanthropy and, like many such groups, found itself somehow irresistibly drawn back to Reno, where it has remained ever since.

Organization and Structure: In 1947 the president of the American Motorcyclist Association (or AMA) commented that 99% of motorcyclists were law-abiding citizens, and the last one percent were outlaws. Thus was born the term "one percenter" that the werewolf biker gang uses for its name. Aside from the fact that they're cannibal werewolves, in many ways the One-Percenter are fairly typical outlaw bikers. The "club" has a president, vice president, treasurer, secretary, road captain, and sergeant-at-arms, maintains a clubhouse in downtown Reno, and is organized as a 501c charitable organization. (It has a long history of donating to veterans groups in the Reno area, one of the ways it maintains a facade of legitimacy.) They sell drugs, wear colors, and have elaborate initiation rituals (see below). Also rather typically,

the One-Percenters defend their Reno “territory” from other outlaw bikers with a ruthless determination backed by supernatural muscle. Because of this, even much larger and more powerful gangs instinctively give One-Percenters a wide berth (though rival clubs may attempt to operate in Reno covertly).

To become a member of the One-Percenters a “prospect” must be male, white, large, know how to ride a motorcycle, and have at least one other useful skill, such as being a mechanic or knowing how to “cook” crystal meth. The prospect is then put through a two-year vetting process in which he proves himself worthy of his colors. Typically this begins with drug smuggling or dealing, advances to grand theft of some variety, and culminates with the prospect committing an act of murder on behalf of the club. At this point the full members of the club take the prospect deep into the desert in which he’s bound to a stake with chains, bitten by the club president, and abandoned for a period of several weeks, during which his first transformation into were-form occurs. If he lives, he becomes a full member.

The current president of the One-Percenters is Jay Carl Dobkins, a grizzled veteran outlaw who’s seen his gang through years of battles with rival motorcycle clubs, the Danites, and the other Mythologies. His philosophy of leadership can best be thought of as conservative: he wants to keep the club at its current number of roughly two dozen werewolf full members, avoid conflicts with both law enforcement and the Danites whenever possible, and work with the Demimonde and the Homeless to push La Raza Misteriosa and Yama Doota out of the area. Yet like every previous leader of the One-Percenters he must constantly look over his shoulder, because the club rules allow any of the other five officers to challenge him to a battle to the death for leadership of the organization at any time.

Group Relations: Werewolves are extremely violent, emotional, and territorial creatures — and the relations between full members of the One-Percenters reflect this. Lycanthropes are at best terse in their dealings with each other, so Dobkins has to constantly keep his followers focused outward to maintain order, lest they begin battling one another for position within their “pack.” He’s done this in part by increasing the numbers of “Hunts” the One-Percenters go on each month (see below). He’s also taken his Mythology into a state of open warfare with La Raza Misteriosa and Yama Doota, tracking and destroying their members as best as he can even as his own people are, in turn, being trailed by the Danites. To do this he’s increased both the number of prospects and girlfriends associated with the organization (a risky proposition considering the secrets they’re concealing). There are currently human followers of the One-Percenters scattered throughout Reno’s casinos,

nightclubs, and strip joints, ready to call in the gang the moment they spot likely Mexican or Indian “intruders” — not that they have any idea what that means. Dobkins has taught his human followers to identify members of other Mythologies without explaining what they are.

Non-werewolf members of the One-Percenters are completely disposable. Indeed, the vast majority of the club’s girlfriends are eaten in the first six months, and most prospects are killed within their first year in some horrible way or the other. The club also has a number of sympathizers scattered throughout Reno — family members, bartenders, motorcycle shop owners, and the like — who it can call upon to help it in emergencies.

Traditionally, the One-Percenters have extremely poor relations with the Homeless (whom they regard as subhuman) and the Demimonde (whom they’ve regarded as dangerous rivals since the days of the Eller Gang). Members of these Mythologies have been killing one another for almost 150 years. In the last two years, however, these established enemies have been forced into an uneasy coalition as competition for resources has increased due to the growing power of La Raza Misteriosa and Yama Doota. So far this truce has held, though how long it will remain is anybody’s guess.

Tactics: Whether in human, half-human, or wolf form One-Percenters fight as crazed individuals, rather than as a group. Dobkins has tried to instill more of a sense of discipline into his men and convince them to use firearms when in humanoid form, but so far the results of his efforts have been minimal. One-Percenters still love to shift to their half-human form and charge into battle like lunatics, relying on their werewolf abilities and superior size to see them through any situation they encounter and disdaining any weapon more complex than a club of some sort. Since this generally works out in their favor, few of them see any reason to change.

Three or four times a month the One-Percenters go on a Hunt: they climb onto their bikes and ride out into the vast Nevada desert in search of helpless victims to rob, rape, and eat. Typically this means a tourist who’s pulled over take pictures, college student backpackers, or a family camping out in the desert. Sometimes they stay in human form to do this, but they also delight in transforming into their half-human form and attacking on motorcycle. Upon occasion they transform into wolves and attack cattle and sheep. The One-Percenters are careful to cover their traces, burying any human remains and disposing of stolen cars and other vehicles through the black market, but lately their activities are beginning to attract attention. Too many people have been vanishing in the wild areas of Washoe and Pershing Counties, causing both the ranchers and rural law enforcement to “cowboy up” with larger and more powerful firearms than normal.

Campaign Use: Like all creatures of the Mytholo-

gies, the One-Percenters are murderous monsters who prey upon innocent people and commit unspeakable crimes. They travel in a pack, which makes them more dangerous than solo monsters such as the Sesquac and Rakshasa, and have a better organization than most of the Mythologies. They're also considerably more visible. Besides being watched by the Danites, Demimonde, La Raza Misteriosa, and other Mythologies, the One-Percenters are often under observation by local and federal law enforcement due to their mundane criminal activities.

Mostly, though, the One-Percenters are just vile. Player Characters in a Sons of Daniel campaign can take considerable pleasure in shooting them off of exploding hogs using silver impregnated shotgun shells, decapitating them with razor wire slung at neck level, or even throwing down with them in the middle of Circus Circus's arcade. It's possible that a prospect may escape from his bonds during the final phase of his initiation and turn against the One-Percenters, joining up with likeminded souls in a Renegades campaign. Or maybe the PCs are just interested in Taking Care of Business: riding through the desert with the wind in their beards, taking what they like when they like from who they like, and battling anyone stupid enough to try to stop them.

For a One-Percenter character, use the Lycanthrope Package Deal from page 29 but add the following Skills: +2 HTH; Combat Driving (DEX Roll); Concealment (INT Roll); AK: Truckee Meadows 11-; CK: Reno 11-; TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles; WF: Small Arms, Knives; Fringe Benefit: Membership: The One-Percenters (2 points) (total cost: +28 points). Also add the *Psychological Limitation: Repulsed By Wolfsbane* optional Disadvantage.

The Demimonde

"A vampire lives in a constant state of desire and disgust. His nature often revolts him, but he doesn't have the will to deny his indulgences. There's the killing, but there's also the pleasure, the sensuality, the lust — the sheer ecstasy of it all."

—Lacroix, *Forever Knight*

Membership: The greater vampiress Illyeshazy Onella and three dozen lesser vampiresses, plus numerous mesmerized henchmen, half-vampires, and the like. All full members of the Demimonde are female — the strain of vampirism that made its way to the Truckee Meadows can only be spread to women.

Background/History: Illyeshazy Onella was born into a noble Hungarian family on the decline in the winter of 1788. Never particularly numerous, the Illyeshazy clan had suffered through a succession of tragic accidents, illnesses and childless marriages throughout the eighteenth century, reducing their once proud tribe to a pitiable few. Yet, though their fortunes were at low ebb, the Illyeshazy did their best to give young Onella every advantage possible for a noblewoman of her time. She was a healthy, high-spirited, and extremely intelligent girl, and seemed a likely candidate for reviving their fortunes. They spent the remnants of their wealth on expensive tutors and instructors who taught her French, German, Latin, and the customs and manners of the Hapsburg Court in Vienna. Among her many teachers was the eccentric and largely nocturnal alchemist Carl Reichenbach, with whom she formed a particular (and peculiar) friendship.

Upon reaching the age of 16 Onella was sent to Vienna to become a lady in waiting to Maria Teresa of Sicily, at that time the Empress of the Austro-Hungarian Empire. She spent the happiest year of her life in and around that most civilized of European capitals, flirting with handsome courtiers, touring the countryside, and — as she was taught — keeping her eyes open for eligible noblemen to marry. Unfortunately, larger things were at work in the world in 1805. The Napoleonic Wars raged across Europe, killing hundreds of thousands and forever changing national boundaries. Austria opposed the France at this time, resulting in her invasion and the violent occupation of Vienna. An unfortunate victim of events beyond her control, young Onella and several of her friends were caught away from the safety of the court by a gang of drunken French soldiers and subjected to a very violent and public rape.

Her reputation ruined and her spirit broken, Onella returned to the family estate in Hungary, locked herself in one of its towers, and refused to speak to anyone. The experience had forever changed her. She found that she was repulsed by the touch of men; indeed, she burned with a loathing for the entire gender. She felt like her hatred was so great that only by locking herself

away could she possibly contain it. Desperate to help Onella, the Illyeshazy summoned her old tutor Reichenbach to their estate, hoping the sight of her unusual friend would revive her. Which it did... though not in the manner they intended.

Oddly, the tormented young woman felt no hatred for Reichenbach. She actually found his presence comforting: not like a man's at all. Seeing the state his former student was in, the old alchemist decided to let her in on his secret. Reichenbach wasn't truly a man at all, but a vampire! Years before he'd captured one of the infamous monsters in the sewers of Bohn and, using his alchemical abilities, had injected its essence into himself, gaining all of its powers while managing to spare himself some of its weaknesses. If Onella *really* wanted revenge upon the male gender, he could do the same for her. As a vampire she would be stronger and faster than any man, have vast supernatural powers, and be practically indestructible so long as she avoided the sun.

Onella accepted, reluctantly leaving for Germany with Reichenbach the next morning. To her amazement she loved being a vampire! In fact, her transformation even removed her loathing of men (though not her hatred of them). She could no more hate them than glut-ton could hate pastries. Men were simply *delicious*! With Reichenbach's assistance the young noblewoman set herself up as an expensive courtesan in Berlin, seducing and destroying as she saw fit. Life was cheap and diseased in the Napoleonic era; nobody missed the odd officer or was suspicious when a foppish nobleman died of something mysterious.

And so life went for Illyeshazy Onella until one day in 1838 when she learned of the death of the last member of her family. Feeling an invisible cord she'd never even known existed severed, she impulsively decided to move to the new world. Four months later a ship of dead men was found floundering on a sandbar off the coast of Long Island. The New York newspapers reported that the bodies of the men had odd marks on their necks, but the authorities believed this to be a disease of some sort. Others knew better.

Surrounded by strangers and in a strange land, Onella found herself oddly lonely. Perhaps it was the death of her biological family. Or maybe it was the ocean she'd placed between herself and Reichenbach, her only friend. Whatever the reason, she resolved to create a new clan — one entirely made up of undead women like herself! This turned out to be financially advantageous in New York, where high-end prostitutes typically worked together in brothels. Within a few months the former Hungarian noblewoman had set herself up as an upscale madam with a dozen girls working under her. For the first time she also began the careful process of creating new vampires, and discovered that her strain could only be transmitted to other women — and only by transfusion. A simple bite wouldn't do.

Unfortunately for Onella, she wasn't in Eastern Europe anymore. New Englanders have a tradition of founding secret organizations dedicated to rooting out evil... especially evil's that spring from pagan monstrosities. Their membership often includes ministers, politicians, professors, and doctors. One of these groups, the Keepers of



the Invisible World, knew exactly what the appearance of an abandoned plague ship on their shores meant. They kept a sharp eye out for the signs of a vampire nest: missing men, unexplained illnesses, and the sudden appearance of a mysterious European. In 1849 they located and set fire to Onella's house of ill repute, forcing many of her fledgling vampiresses to emerge into broad daylight where they were destroyed. Onella and a few of her followers fled into New York's sewer system through a trapdoor and escaped.

Knowing the East wasn't safe for them anymore, the lady vampires began the long process of wandering westward. Traveling at night or in specially-constructed carriages, they moved from town to town, agents of the Keepers always at their heels. Eventually they vanished into the western wilderness, where their pursuers assumed a American Indian shaman or some other catastrophe had destroyed them all. Instead, Onella and her girls found themselves inexplicably drawn to the western boomtown of Virginia City, where they established a brothel north of the new city. To their surprise they discovered that their kind weren't alone on the American frontier. Werewolf outlaws, shapeshifting Indians, red-haired cannibals, and others competed with them to harvest the crop that is humanity — sometimes peacefully, sometimes not. Yet under the leadership of their immortal mistress they persevered, over time becoming arguably the most powerful of the Mythologies to dwell in the Truckee Meadows area.

Structure and Organization: All true members of the Demimonde are women, as the particular form of vampirism spread by Illyeshazy Onella doesn't seem to affect men. Why this is remains something of a mystery, though Onella believes it has something to do with the fact she was "uplifted" to vampirism right after her childhood rape. Additionally, Carl Reichenbach seems to have used his alchemical skills to modify and improve the original European vampire strain. Members of the Demimonde aren't susceptible to attacks by holy objects or symbols, aren't harmed by water (running, holy, or otherwise), and can enter any building they like — invited or not! However, they still have a strong aversion to garlic, probably because of that plant's nourishing, healing properties. They can also be destroyed by sunlight; a fact their enemies take advantage of every chance they get.

The lady vampires conduct their activities out of two neighboring "ranches" just over the Washoe County line southeast of Reno: the Demimonde (from which their Mythology takes its name) and the Pussycat Ranch. Female prostitution in brothels is a legal, taxed enterprise in Storey County, and Onella runs her operation in a seemingly open and lawful manner. In fact, she and her girls are far more scrupulous about paying the various taxes than many similar operations, where large sums of cash change hands on a regular basis. She belongs to the Virginia City Chamber of Com-

merce and has even been named Businesswoman of the Year on several occasions.

Whorehouses provide an excellent cover for vampiresses. Most legal Nevada brothels are dark, private places where the commercial activity primarily occurs at night and of the workers have nocturnal schedules. Never seeing them in broad daylight doesn't provoke comment from anyone. More often than not, the brothel's customers are married men from outside of the state who haven't exactly made a point of telling their families where they're going. Victims are plentiful, and the girls are careful never to "snack" on any of their regulars.

The operation is split into two parts. The Demimonde brothel exclusively handles upscale customers. It contains the prettiest, most exotic, and most highly-skilled girls (including Onella herself). It provides most of the operation's income, though necessarily fewer victims. The Pussycat Ranch also contains surprisingly pretty girls but is inexpensive, catering to truck drivers, railroad workers, and the like. It operates at a loss but provides abundant victims. Additionally, Nevada law allows licensed sex workers to work as escorts even in counties where prostitution is illegal, so long as no payment for sex is involved. (Wink wink.) The vampiresses refer to this as "dining out."

The goals of the Demimonde are simple: survive; live well; don't attract a lot of attention. "Controlling" the number of Homeless and One-Percenters has traditionally been a part of this, since there's a limited amount of prey to go around even with as good a setup as the one Onella's created. For years this has resulted in a state of war between the lady vampires and their "sloppier" brethren, whose antics Onella believes are bringing the Danites down on all of their heads. The arrival of new creatures like La Llarona and the Chordewa, both of who use hunting techniques similar to the Demimonde's, has complicated matters even further, forcing the Demimonde into alliances it would never have considered a few short years before.

Group Relations: The Demimonde is a hierarchy with Illyeshazy Onella standing at the very top as the undisputed queen of Reno's vampire hookers. Beneath her are the full vampiresses who work in the Demimonde brothel, known as "Older Sisters." Beneath them are "Younger Sisters": full vampiresses who work at the Pussycat Ranch. There are also usually around a dozen girls who have been contaminated with small doses of Onella's blood, but who haven't yet fully turned, known as "Cousins." At the bottom of the ladder are a wide variety of mesmerized male servants that work as bouncers, chauffeurs, groundskeepers, and general muscle for the organization, referred to simply as "the Help."

Relations between the various members of the Demimonde are tense within a particular group, but smooth between them. The Help fight among themselves for the favor of their mistresses.

Cousins struggle against one another to be promoted to Younger Sister, while the Younger Sisters in turn scheme to become Older Sisters, who compete for Onella's favor. The queen herself stays above the fray like any good monarch.

Relations between the Demimonde and other Mythologies are poor. The One-Percenters and the Homeless are traditional enemies with whom they've fought for over a century. The three groups have recently agreed to suspend hostilities and cooperate against the other two, but so far no joint action has taken place. La Raza Misteriosa continually offers friendship and alliance to the vampire women while secretly scheming with anyone they can to eliminate them. Yama Doota has traditionally avoided all the other Mythologies, but has now publicly allied with La Raza Misteriosa in response to the Native coalition. And Danite attacks have increased in the last few months to the point where the Mormon monster hunters are boldly launching daytime raids on the Demimonde's brothels. Matters are coming to a head....

Tactics: The Demimonde is the most powerful, well-organized, and versatile of the Mythologies. Unlike the Homeless or One-Percenters, its members are technologically savvy. They use cell phones, text messaging, and the Internet to communicate with one another, and have an expert on staff to deal with Internet security issues. Members are trained not only in the arts of pleasure, but in Tactics and Teamwork as well. They fight in groups of four: a "scout" who spots their opponents using her Wolf or Bat form, a "lure" who draws the enemy out, a "striker" who attacks once they've been spotted, and a "hitter" who comes in with a trained team of Help to finish the job. Full members fight with their Fangs, Claws, Hypnotic Gaze, or animal forms, while the Help have equipment similar to that used by the Danites: shotguns that fire silver pellets, "super soaker" water guns, pepper spray mixed with wolfsbane, and the like. They're also equipped with automatic weapons (for use against more mundane opponents) and high-quality communications equipment.

Onella's organization is also quite wealthy. It has dozens of cars, a helicopter, safehouses in and around Reno, and a stable of high-powered lawyers on retainer in case things get out of hand. Their relationship with Nevada law enforcement is quite cordial, as Onella gives generously to a wide variety of police-sponsored charities. She also has a variety of useful contacts within local government she can call upon for assistance if needed.

Campaign Use: Playing a vampire can be a lot of fun. They're mysterious, sexy, and possess powers far beyond those of mortal men. When transported into the modern era they can drive sports cars, wear slinky black leather outfits, fire automatic pistols, and have passionate love affairs. It's almost enough to make you forget that they're bloodsucking monsters who must kill to stay alive. Almost.

Generally, vampires and hookers are only the heroes of their own stories. This is doubly true of vampire hookers. The women of the Demimonde are ruthless, both in their pursuit of power and the constant hunting of victims. They're also arrogant, vain, and quick to resort to violence, which is why destroying vampires has always been Job One for the Danites. Almost nothing is more monstrous than a vampire — or more dangerous. This is why more often than not the Demimonde's enemies, both human and otherwise, resort to tactics akin to terrorism in an attempt to dispose of them.

Monster hunting characters in a Sons of Daniel campaign will find that their leadership has made a top priority of hunting down and destroying vampires, for what could be more accursed in God's sight than a creature that dissolves in direct sunlight? Turncoat vampires who forswear evil and killing in are a common occurrence in many vampire-themed television shows and movies; such a character would make a logical member of a Renegades team. Finally, should the players all wish to be vampires, the Demimonde is a world-within-a-world: an organization worthy of the name, capable of combating the Danites, One-Percenters, and other Mythologies on equal terms. The PCs in a Taking Care of Business campaign could do a lot worse than being members of the Demimonde!

For members of the Demimonde, use the Vampire Package Deal on page 35, but remove the Disadvantages mentioned under "Structure And Organization" above, and add the following Skills: +1 SPD; +1 HTH; Concealment (INT Roll); AK: Truckee Meadows 11-; CK: Reno 11-; PS: Prostitute 11-; Seduction (PRE Roll); Tactics (INT Roll); Teamwork (DEX Roll); Fringe Benefit: Membership: The Demimonde (2 points) (total cost: +35 points). Remove the Disadvantages mentioned above under "Structure And Organization."

La Raza Misteriosa

"We're living in a time where things are perfect for the resurrection of monsters here on Earth. Since men are bent on wreaking destruction on the world today, they'll heed to their selfish desires and use the tremendous power that nature has given us."

—Professor Rolof, *Santo vs. the Vampire Women*

Membership: Unknown; though Los Viejos Hombres estimate that there may be as many as 100 "monstruos" in the Reno area, plus another 100 or so mortal "familia" dedicated to helping them. There are currently three species of creatures belonging to this Mythology: the wise and mysterious *Momias de Guanajuato*; the cunning and cannibalistic *Chupacabra*; and the beautiful but deadly *La Llarona*. Others may join in the near future as immigration from Latin America continues.

Background/History: Immigrants from Mexico have always been part of the mix in Nevada. During the cowboy era they worked in the mines of the Comstock, maintained the railroads, cut lumber, and herded cattle and sheep. Still, for most of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries Mexicans were a relatively small minority of the population. That changed in the 1980s and 1990s, when waves of Mexican immigrants came to the Truckee Meadows area to work in the casino and construction industries. This new wave of immigrants brought their language, their customs, their cuisine... and their nightmares.

La Raza Misteriosa — "The Mysterious Race" — accompanied their mortal cousins northward to the new Promised Land. In the case of the Las Momias de Guanajuato, they were considered family members and brought along deliberately; while the feared and predatory La Llarona snuck in disguised as normal women. The Chupacabra simply showed up in the 1990s, drawn across the desert to Reno by the same unseen magical vortex that's attracted the creatures of other Mythologies for generations. There may be other supernatural creatures from south of the boarder that haven't yet revealed themselves. But regardless of species, these newcomers have run into many of the same troubles that plague some of their mortal cousins. They must compete for resources with "native" monsters and hide from the "authorities" — though for members of La Raza Misteriosa the penalty for being caught is significantly more severe than deportation.

Structure and Organization: To help overcome their difficulties, members of this Mythology have banded together into a group that includes a large number of mortal Mexican immigrants (mostly members of Las Momias' families). Because of this, La Raza Misteriosa operates under several unwritten rules. First, members do not prey upon members of Reno's Mexican/Hispanic community. Second, La Razas must protect members of that community from out-

side supernatural predators (La Raza Misteriosa particularly despises the Homeless), and even from mundane dangers such as non-Hispanic gangs and La Migre (or Immigration). This has led to the belief by many local Mexicans/Hispanics that this Mythology is a benevolent force, though few understand its true nature.

La Raza Misteriosa is led by a council of mummies known as *Los Viejos Hombres*: the Old Men. These wizened creatures gather once a week in Fisherman's Park to smoke cigarettes, play checkers, and discuss the business of running their Mythology. Dressed in normal clothing and protected by mortal members of their familias, they're indistinguishable from any other group of old men socializing beneath the shade of the park's trees. They communicate their orders to other members of La Raza Misteriosa via cell phones and text messaging, though upon occasion they prefer physical messengers.

Not every Momia in Reno is part one of Los Viejos Hombres. Some have fallen out of favor and been excluded, while others have opted either to not belong to La Raza Misteriosa or simply not to participate in its governance. Particularly noteworthy is the absence of Dr. Remigio Leroy, the first mummy ever displayed at the Guanajuato Mummy Museum (see below). Leroy doesn't approve of any of Reno's Mythologies, which he considers both criminal and obscene. Though large and powerful in its own right, his familia remains separate from the Mysterious Race. Reportedly, Dr. Leroy relies upon the life force of carefully selected rapists, child molesters, and others he considers to be social parasites to sustain himself.

The La Llarona act as the "hit women" of La Raza Misteriosa, using their strength and seductiveness to remove its enemies within the Native Mythologies, Danite agents, and opponents of its mortal members' business and criminal interests. They're particular enemies of the Demimonde, with whom they compete for "customers" in Reno's casinos, strip clubs, and taverns. The Chupacabra work as the organization's messengers and spies. They also occasionally assist members of Las Familias in their various endeavors, criminal and otherwise. These shapeshifting carnivores jockey against the One-Percenters and Dust Coyotes for control of the deserts just outside of Reno's city limits.

The backbone of La Raza Misteriosa, however, is its mortal members. These include violent but skilled gangsters, influential businessmen, lawyers, and a wide variety of shopkeepers, all of whom are descended from one mummy or the other. These loyal henchmen (one is tempted to say cultists) act as the majority of the Mythology's muscle in their war with the other Mythologies and the Danites. This relationship yields tangible benefits for them as well. For the criminal members of the organization, getting rid of the One-Percenters eliminates a competitor, while the several of its more legitimate members would very much like to take over Illyeshazy Onella's operation... minus the vampire hookers, of course.

Group Relations: Perhaps unsurprisingly considering the mortal culture from which it springs, La Raza Misteriosa is essentially a large family. Las Momias are its patriarchs: wise, tough minded, demanding, and more than a bit overbearing. La Llarona are strong-willed daughters, constantly striving to prove themselves to their fathers. The Chupacabra are naughty children perpetually testing the boundaries of parental authority. The mortal members of the organization are “good sons” and wise uncles, constantly exasperated by the behavior of their supernatural charges.

It works, though there’s the sort of interpersonal chaffing one expects within a large family. Conflicts are invariably verbal, loud, and over quickly. Mostly, members of La Raza Misteriosa simply look out for one another to the best of their ability. This is in large part what makes them formidable. Their affection for one another is quite genuine — in contrast to the vampires and werewolves, who seem to hate their own species nearly as much as they do their enemies.

The Mysterious Race is currently allied with Yama Doota against the native Mythologies and the Danites. So far this has been a smooth relationship. Las Momias and the Rakshasa have already planned and executed several attacks on the Demimonde and One-Percenters, and are contemplating a “sweep” of the nearby desert to clean out Dust Coyote nests.



Tactics: La Raza Misteriosa behaves like a bunch of devious farmers edging out competitors for the rights to an agricultural easement. Alternately aggressive and passive, diplomatic and unyielding, Los Viejos Hombres use every tool imaginable in the pursuit of their eventual goal of dominating Reno’s secret world. They think nothing of lying or deceiving the other Mythologies when it suits them (a fact that’s no secret to anyone, including their Yama Doota allies). They’re loyal to themselves, their families, and to the Mexican/Hispanic immigrant community in that order.

Los Viejos Hombres prefer stealth, deception, and assassination over outright war. They’ve even been known “drop a dime” on their rivals to the Danites, letting the Mormon monster hunters do the heavy lifting of killing vampires, werewolves, or what have you. In a combat situation the Mysterious Race prefers to deploy large numbers of tough mortals armed with automatic weapons, relying on superior firepower to be just as effective as Danites and Demimonde tickery. These shooters are supported by Chupacabra and La Llarona who pick off stragglers or supernaturals too powerful for their mortal companions to confront.

Campaign Use: Though ruthless and devious, in some ways La Raza Misteriosa is the Mythology that players will find it most easy to sympathize with. Its members seem to genuinely care about one another, and operate under a code of honor more complex than “survival of the fittest.” They feel a sense of responsibility toward their mortal community, even protecting it from outside threats upon occasion. They treat their mortal members as equals rather than servants or food. But of course, they have no compunction about murdering outsiders.

Because they spend as much time making the other Mythology’s unives miserable as they do hunting mortal humans, destroying La Raza Misteriosa isn’t the highest priority for the Danites, but it’s still a priority. Up to this point the missionary monster hunters have had an *extremely* hard time infiltrating the Hispanic community well enough to strike against Los Momias and their familia, but they’re working hard on correcting that. In a Sons of Daniel campaign, the PCs could be recently converted Hispanic Mormons tasked with destroying the supernaturals that dwell within Reno’s Mexican/Hispanic community. In a Renegades campaign creatures of La Raza Misteriosa pose a profound dilemma: can any of the other PCs trust them enough to let them join the team? With its emphasis on family loyalty and community support, the Mysterious Race is a natural candidate for a Taking Care of Business campaign. In such a game it’s easy to cast the other Mythologies, and even the Danites, as “oppressors” and “racists” whom the monstrous PCs have a moral obligation to fight.

CHUPACABRA

The Chupacabra — literally “goat-sucker” in Spanish — are a species of legendary vampiric creatures who inhabit desolate regions of Puerto Rico, Mexico, and the United States. Their name derives from the fact that they attack and drink the blood of livestock, especially goats... though there favorite food is human children. Long thought to be a type of aliens (or, more accurately, alien pets), these creatures are actually a form of lycanthrope, distantly related to werewolves. In their normal form Chupacabra appear to be reptile-like beings about the size of a large dog, with leathery skin, large eyes, and a row of sharp spines that run down their backs. They have panther-like noses, a forked tongue, and large, hollow fangs

CHUPACABRA PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 STR
15	+5 DEX
16	+8 CON
4	+2 BODY
3	+3 PD
3	+3 ED
20	+2 SPD
15	+3 Hand-To-Hand
2	Concealment (INT Roll); Self Only (-½)
2	AK: Truckee Meadows 11-
2	CuK: Reno 11-
7	Stealth (DEX Roll +2)
3	Teamwork (DEX Roll)
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: La Raza Misteriosa
15	<i>Bite</i> : HKA 1d6 (plus STR)
12	<i>Claws</i> : HKA 1d6; Reduced Penetration (-¼)
12	<i>Spines</i> : HKA ½d6, Continuous (+1), Damage Shield (+½), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Persistent (+½), Inherent (+¼); Always On (-½), Activation Roll 11- (-1), No STR Bonus (-½)
3	<i>Tough Body</i> : Damage Resistance (3 PD/3 ED)
10	<i>Hard To Hit</i> : +2 DCV
4	<i>Fast</i> : Running +2"
4	<i>Leaping</i> : Leaping +4"
3	<i>Easily Hidden</i> : +2 to Concealment; Self Only (-½)
5	<i>Large Eyes</i> : Night Vision
19	<i>Child Form</i> : Shape Shift (Sight and Touch Groups; one form), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 186

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
25	Distinctive Features: sulphuric stench (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction)
25	Hunted: Danites 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: at least two other Mythologies at any given time 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Total Cost of Package Disadvantages: 90



capable of draining away both a victim's blood and internal organs, leaving only a bone-filled sack behind. However, a Chupacabra can also transform into a quasi-human form resembling a ragged Hispanic child with large eyes. In both guises Chupacabra are mute and leave behind a telltale sulfuric stench wherever they go.

Traveling in packs of four to six, Chupacabra like to take their child form and infiltrate playgrounds and schoolyards, where they can scout out victims for later consumption. Traditionally this has generally meant Mexican or Guatemalan children, but Los Viejos Hombres have forbidden this practice, forcing the Chupacabra to forage among Anglo and black children instead. This has proven more difficult, and the Chupacabra frequently (and unsuccessfully) petition Los Momias for the right to hunt among their own kind. Like Dust Coyotes and One-Percenters, they also prey upon hapless indigents, teenagers, and anyone else who wanders out alone into the deserts surrounding Reno. This puts them into direct competition with these two groups, both of whom kill Chupacabra on sight when they can catch them.

In combat situations Chupacabra rely on their superior speed and leaping abilities to overwhelm stronger opponents, swarming them under while attacking with their claws and fangs. They also twist their bodies instinctively to put the sharp spines along their back between themselves and their opponents.

LA LLARONA

The legend of La Llarona always goes something like this: a young woman named Maria considered herself very beautiful, and thus wanted a handsome man to marry. She found one. After they were married they had a boy, then a girl, and finally another boy. To provide for his new family her husband had to leave town. When he returned, he came to visit his children but not his wife, to whom he paid little attention. The next time he came to visit he brought another woman with him. He explained to his children that he was going to marry this new woman, but still didn't speak to his wife. Maria became so angry that she temporarily went insane. She took her children down to a river and drowned them in a fit of anger. Then, realizing what she'd done, she wept for her slain children for hours. Finally she drowned herself. The next morning some villagers found her body by the riverbank and buried it. But Maria didn't stay buried. For years after her death, the grief-stricken woman could be found crying for her children along the banks of the river... and dragging anyone foolish enough to approach her into its depths.

La Llarona (Spanish for "the Crying Woman") is a form of female undead creature, commonly believed to be the ghost of a woman weeping for the children she's drowned. In fact, there's another explanation for the creation of La Llarona; otherwise, based on their numbers, the mothers of Mexico would be killing their children at an alarming rate! La Llarona are created when young women of particular beauty drown in certain rivers, streams, or lakes once held sacred by the Aztec or Maya. These waters were used for human sacrifice by those ancient peoples, and somehow the energies from those deaths have given the waters supernatural powers. The maidens who drown in their depths emerge not only undead, but also possessed of unnatural desires. Like the black widow spider they're driven to mate, then to destroy the object of their longing. Drowning her lover in any available body of water fulfills La Llarona's needs on a powerful level that cannot be understood by mortals.

In Reno La Llarona can most often be found working as escorts, call girls, and casino walkers — prostitutes who stalk the city's gambling dens in search of customers. They're extremely successful in their chosen profession, as few men can resist the allure of their tragic beauty. The unnatural women don't kill every customer, or even most of them. A La Llarona's desire to murder springs directly from the youth and attractiveness of her victim, most of who end up drowned in hotel bathtubs. Old, overweight, and unattractive clients are in little danger from La Llarona (unless Los Viejos Hombres want them dead for some reason, of course). Though exquisitely beautiful, La Llarona have unnaturally pale features and low body temperatures similar to that of a corpse. To disguise this they wear makeup and specially designed heated clothing similar to that worn by motorcyclists (though a lot skimpier).

La Llarona work for mortal pimps who are also part of La Raza Misteriosa, usually in teams of three prostitutes per pimp. This puts them at direct odds with the Demimonde, who claim the same hunting grounds as they do. It's this conflict between La

LA LLARONA PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
15	+15 STR
10	+5 CON
10	+10 PRE
5	+10 COM
15	+5 PD
15	+5 ED
10	+1 SPD
-15	Reduce END to 0
10	+2 HTH
2	AK: Reno 11-
2	Language: English (fluent conversation; Spanish is Native))
3	Persuasion (PRE Roll)
2	PS: Prostitute 11-
3	Seduction (PRE Roll)
3	Teamwork (DEX Roll)
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: La Raza Misteriosa
15	<i>Undead Strength:</i> HA +3d6, Ranged Endurance (0 END; +½); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)
15	<i>Undead Body:</i> Damage Resistance (5 PD/5 ED)
90	<i>Undead Body:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%
12	<i>Undead Body:</i> Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) for STR
15	<i>Undead Body:</i> Does Not Bleed
10	<i>Undead Body:</i> No Hit Locations
45	<i>Undead Body:</i> Takes No STUN
50	<i>Undead Vitality:</i> Life Support: Total (including Longevity; Immortality)
6	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced END (0 END; +½) on Running
2	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced END (0 END; +½); on Leaping
1	<i>Tireless:</i> Reduced END (0 END; +½); on Swimming

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 343

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
10	Distinctive Features: low body temperature (Concealable With Effort; Noticed And Recognizable)
25	Hunted: Danites 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: at least two other Mythologies at any given time 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
15	Psychological Limitation: Must Drown The Object Of Her Desire (Common, Strong)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)
15	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (La Llarona) (Frequently, Major)
10	Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Fire (common)

Total Cost of Package Disadvantages: 115

Llorona and the vampiresses that's led to much of the animosity between the two Mythologies.

Crying Women have undead bodies that are strong and tough, capable of resisting most forms of damage save for fire, which they're vulnerable to. In combat a La Llorona chokes or rends her opponent using her powerful grip. Or if a body of water is nearby, she simply walks beneath its surface holding her victim firmly in her grasp until he drowns.

MOMIAS DE GUANAJUATO

In 1833 a terrible cholera outbreak struck the city of Guanajuato, Mexico. So ferocious was this epidemic that the bodies of its victims had to be buried immediately to control the spread of the disease; in some cases, the dying were hastily buried alive by accident. Oddly, the special qualities of the air and water in the area combined with a mysterious, never fully understood force to preserve the corpses of these unfortunates — some with horrific expressions on their faces that attested to their death after interment.

Over a hundred years later, local construction workers unearthed this unmarked burial ground, revealing the mummified remains. Everyone in the city felt terrible about misplacing their ancestors; especially those whose relatives had been mistakenly buried alive by their own families. To honor these forgotten dead, the city constructed the Guanajuato Mummy Museum at that location. It currently displays 108 corpses of various sizes, many of whom still wear portions of the clothing they were buried in. But there used to be a lot more mummies in the museum.

Beginning in the Eighties, mummies began to vanish from the facility at the rate of a few each year. The curators whispered to one another that this was the work of the mysterious *P'urhepecha* — an indigenous, pre-Columbian people who hold the area to be sacred — but in reality families from Guanajuato were beginning to immigrate to the United States. Specifically, the families of those who had been buried alive *and* who had *P'urhepecha* blood in their veins were leaving, taking the remains of their tormented ancestors with them.

Well, “remains” isn't quite the right word... because these Momias weren't really dead.

Las Momias de Guanajuato are the undead “survivors” of important men who were accidentally buried alive during that long-ago epidemic. After their bodies were recovered, their mestizo decedents revived them using ancient rituals forgotten by other townspeople. Unfortunately, these rituals involved human sacrifice, forcing them to flee once their revered ancestor had been restored to unlife. This ritual must be repeated once a year, causing the family — or “familia” — of each Momia de Guanajuato to form a sort of multigenerational death cult centered on their beloved “Viejo Hombre.” Each year they kidnap a victim and, in a horrific ceremony, murder him to infuse his life force into

their ancestor. If this ritual is not performed within 12 months of the previous ceremony, the Momia returns to its inanimate state, but is otherwise unharmed.

LA MOMIA DE GUANAJUATO PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
15	+15 STR
10	+5 CON
5	+5 INT
20	+20 PRE
12	+4 PD
18	+6 ED
10	+1 SPD
-15	Reduce END to 0
10	+2 HTH
2	CuK: Reno 11-
2	KS: Family Matters 11-
2	KS: The Mythologies 11-
2	KS: The Secret World 11-
2	Language: English (fluent conversation; Spanish is Native)
3	Persuasion (PRE Roll)
2	PS: Businessman 11-
3	Tactics (INT Roll)
2	Fringe Benefit: Membership: La Raza Misteriosa
15	<i>Mighty Fists</i> : HA +3d6, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Hand-To-Hand Attack (-½)
12	<i>Untiring Body</i> : Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½) for STR
15	<i>Mummy's Body</i> : Does Not Bleed
10	<i>Mummy's Body</i> : No Hit Locations
45	<i>Mummy's Body</i> : Takes No STUN
90	<i>Undead Body</i> : Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75%, Does Not Work Against Fire (-1)
4	<i>Undead Body</i> : +2 PD; Only Protects Against Crushing Or Piercing Attacks (-½)
3	<i>Undead Body</i> : +2 PD; Only Protects Against Piercing Attacks (-1)
24	<i>Undead Body</i> : Damage Resistance (10 PD/6 ED)
50	<i>Undead Vitality</i> : Life Support: Total (including Longevity: Immortality)
6	<i>Tireless</i> : Reduced END (0 END; +½) on Running
2	<i>Tireless</i> : Reduced END (0 END; +½); on Leaping
1	<i>Tireless</i> : Reduced END (0 END; +½); on Swimming

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 384

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
10	Distinctive Features: Momia (Concealable; Noticed and Recognizable)
25	Hunted: Danites 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: at least two other Mythologies at any given time 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
10	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (mummy) (Occasionally, Major)
20	Vulnerability: 2x BODY from Fire (Common)

Total Cost of Package Disadvantages: 85

Las Momias de Guanajuato are very wise, both in terms of their understanding of the hidden reality of *Invasive Species* and their ability to give practical advice to members of their familia. Mexican immigrant families fortunate enough to have a Viejo Hombre generally excel in their undertakings, whether in business, crime, or marriage. Perversely, the Momias are also excellent gardeners, as their time buried in the earth has taught them the secret language of plants. Several of Reno's most respected Latino businessmen have a mummy quietly dwelling in their home; and several of the city's most feared families of criminals have an incredibly elderly relative puttering around a shockingly beautiful garden.

From even a short distance away a Momia de Guanajuato appears simply to be a very elderly man with exceptionally wrinkled and tan skin. It speaks in a raspy voice and exudes a pleasant, slightly musty smell something like freshly overturned dirt. However, on closer inspection the mummy's skin turns out to be an unnatural shade of red and cold to the touch. Its eyes are a lifeless, milky white color. Yet the Momia's undead body is surprisingly strong and tough. It's tireless and able to resist incredible amounts of physical punishment (though it's vulnerable to fire). Generally, however, all Momias de Guanajuato avoid conflict, preferring to let their families and the other members of La Raza Misteriosa handle physical conflicts while they plot from behind the scenes. This may change in the near future. With the double threat of the Native Mythology alliance and the Danites appearing more and more pressing, it's likely that the Momia will take direct action to preserve what is theirs.

Yama Doota

*"He who bestows life-force and hardy vigor,
Whose ordinances even the Gods obey,
Whose shadow is immortal life — and death —
What God shall we adore with our oblation?"*

—The Rig Veda

Membership: Less than 50 members, all but eight of which are Chordewa. The remaining members are Rakshasa, or "Demon Princes" as they fancy themselves: powerful, ambitious shapeshifters with designs on Reno's casinos. Yama Doota has no mortal sympathizers, only servants and victims... neither of whom have any understanding of the true nature of the organization until it's too late.

Background/History: Immigration from the subcontinent of India to the Reno area began in the Eighties, when men from several Hindu families moved to the city to purchase and restore corner stores and small motels that had fallen into disrepair. When these men's efforts proved successful, they sent for their wives and children. This first wave blazed a trail for another one, and then another. By the end of decade almost a third of Reno's small grocery stores and motels were owned and operated by families from India. Additionally, Reno's large casinos embarked on an aggressive program of hiring labor from abroad that brought thousands of young people to the city from countries as far away as India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh.

It brought other things too.

No one in Reno's cloistered Indian community knows when the first Chordewa arrived in the Biggest Little City. When they discovered that one of the soul draining, shapeshifting prostitutes had followed them to America, brave men quickly and quietly put an end to her. But it was too late. Other Chordewa had already followed their sister to Reno and, finding it to their liking, called yet more to join them. By the dawn of the twenty-first century there were dozens of them living, working, and killing in and around the edges of Reno's Indian immigrant community. But where the diligent mortal Hindus had come to make a new life for themselves by the sweat of their brows, these supernatural intruders came to spread evil and death. And the worst was yet to come.

On the other side of the planet terrible beings caught word of an exciting new city where gambling, prostitution, and vast wealth rubbed elbows with monsters, mysteries, and ambition. The Rakshasa (literally, "the injurers"), shapeshifting man-eaters from the heart of Hindi nightmare. The self-styled "demon princes" claimed to be the children of the gods themselves — though their behavior could never be considered holy. In the last nine years eight of these monstrosities have moved to Reno, where they've set their determined sights on a bigger prize than any ever imagined by Jay Carl Dobkins, Illyeshazy Onella, or Los Viejos Hombres. They want to own the casinos.

Structure and Organization: Yama Doota is Hindi for “Messengers of Yama” — the god of death, judgment... and monsters. Its members all worship this dark and terrible deity. Along with ethnicity, language, financial goals, and self-defense, worship of Yama holds the group together. With the help of the Rakshasa, the Chordewa have constructed an altar to him in a long-forgotten part of Reno’s water drainage system. All of Yama Doota gathers at this hidden sanctuary monthly to worship, dance, and drink the blood of human sacrifices. However, their intrusion into the city’s underworld has put them in direct conflict with the Sesquac, who know of the Yama temple’s existence but not its precise location. The hairy humanoids have been attempting to capture and interrogate a Chordewa so they can learn this secret and launch an attack.

Yama Doota is the newest of the Mythologies, and its structure is far more fluid than that of the One-Percenters, Demimonde, or La Raza Misteriosa. The Chordewa and Rakshasa are extremely social with one another; almost like a group of newly independent twentysomethings... which to an outsider is exactly what they appear to be. They phone or text message one another constantly and go out to restaurants together several times a week (though never Indian ones). Each Rakshasa has three or four Chordewa “girlfriends” that are his favorites out of the group.

Unlike La Raza Misteriosa, Yama Doota has no relationship with its ethnic community — in fact, it avoids Hindis whenever possible. The members of Reno’s Hindi population who are aware of their existence would like nothing more than to see the entire Mythology wiped out entirely (though they won’t knowingly assist any of the other Mythologies). To their surprise and delight, the Danites have found many older Indian immigrants willing to help them in their crusade, either by giving advice, acting as spies, or even personally assisting in the destruction of members of Yama Doota.

Group Relations: Relations between the members of Yama Doota are quite good, with no inter-organizational rivalries beyond the “he said, she said” level of occasional gossip. Members of this Mythology can be relied upon to come to one another’s aid quickly and fight to the death if necessary. Before the outbreak of the Native-Newcomer War, they were more than content to avoid Reno’s other supernaturals and fled from Danite attacks whenever possible. Now things have changed. Yama Doota is doing its best to assist La Raza Misteriosa in their war against both the Natives and Danites. They’re now almost as likely to come to the assistance of a Chupacabra or La Llarona as they are one of their own kind.

Tactics: Yama Doota doesn’t have the martial organization of the Demimonde or La Raza Misteriosa. When a member or an ally is in trouble, all of the Chordewa and Rakshasa in the area shows up and helps to the best of their ability. Yama Doota aren’t trained in tactics or



teamwork; though their natural abilities somewhat make up for this. This general reluctance to train together or have a more structured organization is the Mythology’s greatest weakness. It also explains why its members have traditionally avoided conflict.

Yama Doota seeks to gain control of one or more of Reno’s large casinos under the guise of its corporate identity, Yama Industries Inc. It’s already purchased several smaller ones. Having control of these institutions will not only make human hunting easier, but also allow the faction’s members to enjoy the lavish, upscale lifestyle they crave. Rakshasa and Chordewa genuinely enjoy the trappings of wealth. They also like Reno’s nightlife: eating out (horribly or otherwise), going to shows, gambling, dancing at nightclubs, and the like. As an organization they aren’t interested in preserving their heritage, continuing their species, protecting their neighborhood, or anything like that. They just want to live well and not get caught.

Campaign Use: The other Mythologies jokingly refer to Yama Doota as “yuppie monsters.” If the members of Yama Doota paid any attention to what other supernaturals thought, they would probably agree with that nickname. After all, why spend your time living in a sewer, hanging around a beaten-up clubhouse, or performing sexual services for truck drivers when you can live in a nice condo and drive a BMW?

These trappings of respectability also make members of Yam Doota more difficult to target without attracting the attention of the authorities. No mortal is going to miss a Dust Coyote or a werewolf biker; but members of this Mythology have mortgages, mortal coworkers, business associates, and credit card payments. Monster hunters in a Sons of Daniel campaign will have to be careful about where and how they target these supernaturals. They may even have to make their deaths look like an accident. Though a Chordewa or Rakhasa would make an excellent contribution to the multi-species team in a Renegades campaign, their defection is unlikely. A PC monster would be traumatized by his separation from his own kind and always have a hard time seeing mortals as anything but food and victims. An all-Yama Doota group in a Taking Care of Business campaign would be fun... if the players can get past just how horrible their PCs are.

CHORDEWA

A Chordewa, or “witch” in Bengali, is a shapeshifting prostitute from western Bengal who can transform her soul into a black cat. Thus transformed, the soul (should such a wicked creature truly have one) can be dispatched out to commit acts of evil. This “cat” approaches a potential victim in a friendly fashion, eventually moving into his home, eating his food, and showing its affection by licking him on the lips. However, this “lick” is actually draining the victim’s life force, upon which the chordewa feeds. Additionally, if the cat licks someone’s shadow, that person dies within hours.

The best way to identify the cat form of a chordewa is by the sound of the cat’s meowing: it sounds just like a small child crying. Injuries inflicted on the cat appear on the chordewa as well, and killing it slays her as well. It’s likely that the first chordewa to arrive in Reno came as a hotel worker, one of the thousands brought into Nevada to clean casino rooms or toil in one of the city’s dozens of tiny Indian-owned motels. Finding that even black cats are welcome in most Nevada residences, this first Chordewa must have enjoyed herself so much that she wrote home, because Reno is now crawling with her kind — so much so that killing Chordewas has become one of the Danites’ many priorities.

There are now dozens of Chordewa operating in the Reno area. They generally work in the large casinos as maids, hostesses, and waitresses. They also enjoy turning tricks on the side if a customer seems physically pleasing enough, which has caused antagonism with vampires and La Llarona in the past (not to mention mortal prostitutes). Unlike other supernatural sex workers, a Chordewa never actually hurts her clients. She’s simply in it for money and pleasure.

CHORDEWA PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
21	+7 DEX
3	+3 INT
8	+4 EGO
5	+5 PRE
3	+6 COM
5	+5 PD
5	+5 ED
10	+1 SPD
3	Acrobatics (DEX Roll)
3	Breakfall (DEX Roll)
3	High Society (PRE Roll)
2	CuK: Reno 11-
2	PS: Maid (or other appropriate job) 11-
2	PS: Prostitute 11-
3	Seduction (PRE Roll)
1	Fringe Benefit: Membership: Yama Doota
15	Claws: HKA ½d6 (plus STR), Armor Piercing (+½)
5	Cat-Like Toughness: Damage Resistance (5PD/5ED)
6	Cat-Like Speed: Running +3”
20	Always Lands On Her Feet: Leaping 40”, Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only For Landing On Feet Unharmed When Falling (-2)
5	Cat’s Eyes: Nightvision
9	Cat’s Senses: +3 PER with all Sense Groups
8	Claws: Clinging (normal STR) (10 Active Points); Physical Manifestation (-¼)
62	Black Cat Form: Duplication (creates 309-point black cat form), Altered Duplicate (100%; +1); Feedback (-1) (note: cost may increase depending on relative cost of Chordewa’s base character)

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 209

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
25	Hunted: Danites 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: at least two other Mythologies at any given time 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
10	Psychological Limitation: Dislikes Water (Common, Moderate)
10	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Chordewa) (Occasionally, Major)

Total Cost Of Package Disadvantages: 65

Chordewa in *Invasive Species* have many of the same abilities as housecats. In game terms these include Nightvision, high Dexterity, increased Speed, and +3 PER with all Sense Groups. Their Claws, which appear to be normal fingernails worn a bit long, enable them to climb sheer surfaces and deliver deadly slashes. Additionally, a Chordewa can fall from incredible distances without injuring herself and always land on her feet (this is bought as Limited Leaping, using the optional rule on page 435 of *The HERO System 5th Edition, Revised*). She most often uses this to flee adversaries by leaping from the windows of a casino or hotel.



CHORDEWA'S BLACK CAT FORM

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
-5	STR	-15	8-	Lift 12.5kg; 0d6 [1]
18	DEX	24	13-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
10	CON	0	11-	
5	BODY	-10	10-	
13	INT	3	12-	PER Roll 15-
14	EGO	8	12-	ECV: 5
8	PRE	-2	11-	PRE Attack: 1½d6
12	COM	1	11-	
2	PD	2		Total: 2 PD (0 rPD)
2	ED	0		Total: 2 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	2		Phases: 4, 8, 12
4	REC	4		
20	END	0		
12	STUN	2		Total Characteristic Cost: 19

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 4"/8"

Cost	Powers	END
5	<i>Bite</i> : HKA 1 point	1
5	<i>Claws</i> : HKA 1 point	1
23	<i>Life Stealing</i> : Drain BODY 1d6, Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Day; +1½), Fully Invisible (both source and effects are invisible; +2), Time Delay (Drain occurs roughly 5 Minutes after the lick; +¼); Skin Contact Required (-1)	5
163	<i>Licking The Shadow</i> : RKA 4d6, NND (defense is various forms of mystic charms versus black magic, the "evil eye," and the like; +1), Does BODY (+1), Indirect (attack can use any portion of target's shadow; +½),	

Invisible to Sight Group (+½), Time Delay (roughly 2-4 hours after the target's shadow is licked; +¼), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Limited Range (length of a person's shadow; -¼), Must Target Victim's Shadow (-½) 0
 2 *Pounce*: Leaping +2" (2" forward, 1" upward) 1
 9 *Cat's Senses*: +3 PER with all Sense Groups 0
 5 *Cat's Eyes*: Nightvision 0
 5 *Cat's Nose*: Tracking with Normal Smell 0

Skills

15 *Hard To Hit*: +3 DCV
 5 +1 HTH
 3 Breakfall 13-
 3 Climbing 13-
 13 Concealment 20- (19 Active Points); Self Only (-½)
 19 *Conquer With Cuteness*: Seduction 19-
 15 Stealth 19-

Total Powers & Skill Cost: 290

Total Cost: 309

75+ Disadvantages

10 *Distinctive Features*: mews sound like a small child in pain (Easily Concealed; Causes Major Reaction)
 10 *Physical Limitation*: Limited Manipulation (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
 10 *Physical Limitation*: Tiny (.25m; +9" KB) (Frequently, Slightly Impairing)
 204 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 309

RAKSHASA PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability			
10	+10 STR			
57	+19 DEX			
16	+8 CON			
16	+8 BODY			
10	+10 PRE			
3	+6 COM			
4	+4 PD			
2	+2 ED			
10	+1 SPD			
15	+3 HTH			
2	Animal Handler (Felines) (PRE Roll)			
3	Concealment 11-			
3	High Society (PRE Roll)			
2	AK: Northern Nevada 11-			
3	Persuasion (PRE Roll)			
2	PS: Businessman 11-			
3	Seduction (PRE Roll)			
3	Stealth (DEX Roll)			
3	Tracking (INT Roll)			
2	TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles			
4	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Small Arms			
1	Fringe Benefit: Membership: Yama Doota			
6	Money: Wealthy			
20	Fangs: HKA 1d6+1 (plus STR)			
12	Claws: HKA 1d6 (plus STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)			
Martial Arts: <i>The Eye Of The Tiger</i>				
	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Avoid Harm	—	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
4	Chomp/Claw Slash	+0	+2	Strike +2 DC
3	Holding Bite	+0	-1	Grab One Limb, +10 STR
3	Knockover	+2	-1	Strike +1 DC, Target Falls
2	<i>Resilient</i> : Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED)			
44	<i>Resilient</i> : Physical Damage Reduction, 50%, Resistant; Does Not Work Against Limited Type Of Attack (pure iron weapons; -¼) plus Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%; Does Not Work Against Limited Type Of Attack (fire; -½)			
6	<i>Tiger's Legs</i> : Running +3"			
5	<i>Tiger's Legs</i> : Leaping +5"			
6	<i>Tiger's Senses</i> : +2 PER with all Sense Groups			
5	<i>Tiger's Eyes</i> : Ultraviolet Perception (Sight Group)			
5	<i>Tiger's Nose</i> : Discriminatory for Normal Smell			
29	<i>Shapechanging</i> : Multiform (change shape into 150-point human or 225-point tiger; true form is half-animal form); Extra Time (takes and Extra Phase to change shape; -¾)			

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 328

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
25	Hunted: Danites 11- (Mo Pow, NCI, Kill)
20	Hunted: at least two other Mythologies at any given time 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
20	Psychological Limitation: Considers Humanity To Be Cattle (Common, Total)
15	Psychological Limitation: Fears Fire And Sunlight (Uncommon, Total)
10	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Rakshasa) (Frequently, Minor)
10	Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Pure Iron Weapons (Uncommon)
10	Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Pure Iron Weapons (Uncommon)
20	Vulnerability: 2 x STUN from Fire attacks (Common)
20	Vulnerability: 2 x BODY from Fire attacks (Common)

Total Cost Of Package Disadvantages: 150

RAKSHASA

Description: The Rakshasa are a race of shapeshifting feline humanoids from the island of Ceylon (Sri Lanka). They claim to be the children of the god Brahma and fancy themselves demon princes, but most Hindi wise men consider this to be rubbish. What is known for certain is that Rakshasa are greedy, lecherous, blasphemous, destructive, and cruel. In their homeland they're infamous for stealing offerings left in temples, killing infants, raping pregnant women, murdering travelers as they ford rivers, and killing holy men in the midst of prayers. They enjoy eating humans, simultaneously drinking and bathing in their blood as they consume them.

The eight Rakshasa who've immigrated to Reno have a great deal of self-control. While they enjoy all the same vile habits as their old world cousins, they contain and conceal them. They usually stay in their human form during the day, conducting legitimate business from the safety of the darkened offices of Yama Enterprises. At night they emerge either to socialize with their fellow Yama Doota or to search for women to seduce, attack, and consume while in half-animal form. It was during one of these "hunts" that one of the Rakshasa first discovered a member of the Demimonde — hunting him! Understandably, the two species have hated one another ever since.

In their human form Rakshasa appear to be handsome Indian men in their mid-twenties. They often travel by limousine, employing mortal chauffeurs and even bodyguards to protect them during the day. All eight have conceal-carry permits and wear high-powered handguns. However, if forced into combat with another supernatural, they switch to either their tiger or half-animal form so they can utilize their superior strength, speed, and natural weaponry.

Rakshasa fear and avoid direct sunlight, though it doesn't harm them physically. They're vulnerable to fire and weapons made from pure iron (steel doesn't count). Recently, infamous Danite hunter Iverson Smith grievously wounded a Rakshasa by shooting him with a solid slug of iron. (It also destroyed his shotgun's barrel and nearly blew off three of his fingers... but Smith rather typically didn't care.) It's possible the Rakshasa may start wearing specially-designed Kevlar vests or other armor in the near future to counteract this new threat.

The Danites

"If thy life is endangered by him, thine enemy is in thy hands and thou art justified."

—Joseph Smith, *History of the Church*

Membership: There are currently 87 hunters active in the Danite organization. This is down from their optimum number of 120, with most of the losses having taken place in Reno over the last two years. Two hundred and twenty mechanics, secretaries, weaponsmiths, researchers, and other personnel support them in their efforts. The Danite State Presidency oversees the entire organization with the assistance of the Danite State Council.

Background/History: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, whose members are known as Mormons, was founded by the Prophet Joseph Smith after the angel Moroni led him to a buried cache containing fourteen lost books of the Bible engraved on golden tablets. These tablets, written in the previously unknown language Reformed Egyptian, contained the history of God's dealings with the ancient inhabitants of the Americas. Inspired by what he'd found, Smith published his translation of these texts as *The Book Of Mormon*, after the prophet-historian who originally engraved the tablets.

The Church was organized in 1830 but almost immediately faced persecution, forcing its members to relocate several times. Yet it continued to grow. In 1844 Joseph Smith was killed by an angry mob of "Gentiles," or non-Mormons, in Carthage, Illinois. His successor Brigham Young decided to move the entire congregation away from the reach of the Gentiles. Thousands of believers embarked on an epic quest to found Deseret — their promised land to the west. The Mormons traveled 1,300 miles from Nauvoo, Illinois across the unsettled American frontier to the Salt Lake Valley in Utah Territory. Here they established Salt Lake City, which slowly grew into one of the largest cities in the western United States.

For the remainder of the 1800s Church members from around the world gathered in the valleys of Utah, spreading outward to settle large sections of the Old West. The Church continued to grow steadily, becoming one of the fastest-growing religions in the world. Today it has more than 11 million members in 160 countries. In the United States, it's the fifth-largest religious denomination, with active representation in all 50 states.

Of course, all religions have their secrets.

Sampson Avarad founded the Danites, or Sons of Daniel, in 1838. Publicly, the Danites were established as a quasi-secret organization dedicated to protecting the faithful both from physical threats from the Gentiles and spiritual threats from apostates and dissenters, of which the early Mormon movement had many. Soon after their founding they were caught up in the so-called Mormon War, in which 10,000 Mormons were forced to leave Missouri. Later, the Danites successfully assisted the Nauvoo Legion

in organizing the defense of the faithful against one-third of the United States Army in the snowstorm-plagued Utah War. Yet some say the Danites had secrets — dark secrets. Some even claim they participated in the Mountain Meadows Massacre of 1857 in which 120 settlers from Arkansas were murdered, leaving only 17 small children alive — and that the Church forcibly disbanded the Danites for their crimes. This is true... and at the same time not true.

The end of hostilities between the United States and the Mormons in July of 1858 also largely ended the era of Mormon persecution. There was no longer a need for militia armies and secret organizations to protect the faithful from Gentiles, most of who were no longer interested in harming them. The Nauvoo Legion, the Danites, and other such organizations slowly faded from the memories of everyone but a few Church historians and old men who like to talk about such things.

Which was fine with Sampson Avarad. He hadn't created the Sons of Daniel to fight Missouri hicks and half-frozen cavalrymen in any case. From their very beginnings the Danites had a second, secret mission: destroy all monsters. Before his conversion Avarad had been a member of the Keepers of the Invisible World, a Puritan secret society charged with keeping New England free of supernaturals (see pages 128-29). Avarad had become infuriated by the increasing number of werewolf and vampire attacks that were being launched against newly formed Mormon communities under the cover of the 1838 Mormon War in Missouri. "Like salt that's lost its savor, the Children of Cain shall be trodden under the feet of righteous men!" Avarad declared. "Vengeance sleepeth not, neither does it slumber. Beware creatures! For you there shall be no escape. Like the armies of Daniel we shall overtake you at an hour you do not expect and, at a day when you do not look for us, there shall be no escape!"

Avarad kept his word... and his son after him, and that son's son, and so forth until today. All worked in secret — and as far from the prying eyes of historians, politicians, and policemen as humanly possible. Posterity has distorted much of what these brave and selfless men did. For example, the Mountain Meadows Massacre wasn't Mormon fanatics and their Paiute allies murdering a hundred innocent people. It was actually two dozen Danite hunters and their Paiute medicine men allies heroically destroying a specially-constructed wagon train of vampires bound for San Francisco. They lost half their number in the process, but were still able to rescue 17 small children the vampires had brought along as "provisions" for their trip... yet history remembers them as murderers.

Structure and Organization: The Sons of Daniel, or Danites, are the monster-killing division of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, dedicated to the destruction of Reno's Mythologies and all other manifestations of supernatural evil. They

focus their efforts on the western United States, where their mission is equivalent to that performed by the Keepers of the Secret World in New England and Opus Dei in Latin America.

To understand the structure of the Danites one must first understand the structure of the Mormon Church itself. The Church is organized into *stakes*, administrative units composed of multiple congregations. A stake is roughly comparable to a diocese in the Catholic Church or other Christian denominations. The name “stake” derives from Isaiah 54:2: “Enlarge the place of thy tent, and let them stretch forth the curtains of thine habitation: spare not, lengthen thy cords, and strengthen thy stakes.”

In most cases a stake is formed from a group of five to eight geographically contiguous congregations known as “wards” or “branches.” However, the Danite stake encompasses all of North America, with each ward comprised of however many Danites are currently assigned to a given State or province (the Danites are active in Canada and Mexico as well as the USA). It’s currently headed by Danite Stake President Bishop Sampson Avard VII, a direct descendent of the founder of the organization. Two counselor-elders, who together form the Danite Stake Presidency, assist him in his duties. These three righteous men are assisted in turn by the twelve-member Danite Stake High Council, with each member representing a stake with a large Mormon population. Together with the Stake Presidency this council helps to determine how best to distribute the organization’s resources. All Danite hunters are male.

The leader of the Reno branch is Elder Iverson Smith, one of the most famous hunters in Danite history. Smith’s operation ordinarily consists of three squads of six hunters with one or two “Mavericks” who operate by themselves. Each squad has a Unit Leader and a Tactical Commander. The Unit Leader constantly researches the media for evidence of Mythology activity, selects targets, plans missions, and then submits his plan to the branch leader for approval. If this is granted, the Tactical Commander assumes command during the mission; with the Unit Leader only assuming control should he become incapacitated. The other hunters in a squad are expected to spend their off hours training, praying, or personally investigating Mythology activity.

However, because of the increase in violence brought on by the Native-Newcomer War, the Reno branch has been reduced to Smith and a single battered squad cobbled together from the shattered remnants of the previous three. The aging warrior is looking forward to new hunters straight from the Danite Academy in Salt Lake City. They’re due to arrive in town any day now. Smith has their first few missions already planned out for them....

The Reno branch’s headquarters are located in a secret underground complex below the Church’s Reno Nevada Temple located on Beaumont Park-

way. This base houses numerous support staff, workshops, a gym, armory, an extensive library, and its own temple-below-a-temple. A series of hidden access tunnels link it to Avenida de Landa and Clubhouse Drive, while a larger passageway connects the complex’s motor pool to a hidden exit in a parking garage a block away.

Group Relations: Incredibly smooth. The Danites are *believers*. They believe in God, Jesus Christ, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, the Danite organization, and killing supernaturals with equal fervor. Any would-be hunter whose faith is less than absolute gets weeded out while he’s still in the Academy. Still, Elder Smith and the other veteran Danites can be a little hard to get along with. Sometimes it doesn’t seem like they truly believe at all... but that’s probably because their faith is so absolute.

Tactics: The Danites are a paramilitary organization. Its hunters are soldiers in a war against evil — and they’re expected to behave like soldiers. Danite hunters live together in a barracks, follow a chain of command, file detailed reports, and receive promotions based on their performance. They train together, fight together, and more often than not die together. Most hunters perish in battle against the creatures they despise.

The only exceptions to this rule are the Mavericks: senior hunters whose years in the field prove they require no supervision... and whose sacrifices prove that they’ve obtained a unique level of holiness. Mavericks make their own rules.

Hunters can requisition nearly any imaginable sort of handheld weapon from the organization’s weaponsmiths... and some that are frankly unimaginable. The weaponsmiths will build them anything they like and the Danite organization encourages inventiveness. Some hunters were in the Army or Marines before joining the Danites and prefer military-style weapons: assault rifles that fire silver bullets, incendiary grenade launchers, flamethrowers, and the like. Others were in violent street gangs before they found Jesus Christ. They wield silver or iron knuckles, iron bats, and sawed-off shotguns that fire solid slugs. Still others have exotic or frankly bizarre ideas about combating supernaturals. Their weapons include anything from flaming swords to super-soaker water guns to garlic laced pepper spray.

The Danites also possess a wide variety of vehicles in their motor pools. These include motorcycles, sports cars, SUVs, vans equipped for surveillance, and even armored personnel carriers. Hunters can requisition most of these vehicles; though taking more exotic vehicles like limousines and APCs require authorization from the base leader.

Campaign Use: Though the setting is overall morally ambiguous, Danites are the great force for good in *Invasive Species*. Their goal is, after all, to protect innocent people from being eaten, while the goal of most of the supernaturals is to

eliminate the competition so that they can graze on humanity without interference. PCs in a Sons of Daniel game can sleep easily at night knowing that, no matter how terrible their deeds, the creatures they hunt are responsible for far worse. Conversely, in a Taking Care of Business campaign the Danites are basically a force of nature. Like bad weather or sickness they constantly interfere in the Native-Newcomer War, but are otherwise simply a dangerous annoyance. To a group of Renegades the Danites are a tantalizing paradox: if they could make an alliance with the Mormon monster hunters, the Renegade PCs stand a good chance realizing their goals, be they protecting humanity, ending of the War, or simply surviving.

But of course, if the Danites were in the business of making deals with monsters, they wouldn't be Danites.

Description: Danite hunters aren't built on as many Character Points as monsters (see Character Creation), but don't let that fool you. They use skill, tactics, teamwork, and weaponry to even the odds. The vast majority of hunters have short, glorious lives that end in gruesome and horrible deaths; but there are few complaints. Hunters know their rewards are in the next life, not this one.

All Danites begin with the 3-point *Membership* Fringe Benefit which is the basic rank of all hunters who've graduated from the Academy. Unit Leader and Tactical Commander rank costs 4 Character Points, while Elder rank costs 5 points.

The Danites often use specialized equipment based on standard firearms and weapons (for which you can find information in *Dark Champions* or *The HERO System Equipment Guide*). These include: iron and silver knuckles (brass knuckle-like punching weapons; HA +2d6); incendiary ammunition; shotgun shells filled with silver pellets or slugs of pure iron; and "super-soaker" squirt guns (range 10").

DANITE HUNTER PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
16	+2 with All Combat
5	Autofire Skill (any one of them)
3	Criminology (INT Roll)
3	AK: Truckee Meadows (INT Roll)
3	CK: Reno (INT Roll)
3	KS: The Law Enforcement World (INT Roll)
3	KS: The Secret World (INT Roll)
3	Deduction (INT Roll)
3	PS: Danite Hunter (INT Roll)
3	Streetwise (PRE Roll)
8	Survival (Desert, Mountain, Underground, Urban) (INT Roll)
3	Tactics (INT Roll)
3	Teamwork (DEX Roll)
3	Tracking (INT Roll)
4	TF: Common Motorized Ground Vehicles, Two-Wheeled Motorized Ground Vehicles, Wheeled Military Vehicles
10	WF: Common Melee Weapons, Common Missile Weapons, Small Arms, Flamethrowers, General Purpose/Heavy Machine Guns, Grenade Launchers, Shoulder-Fired Weapons
4	Contacts (4 points' worth)
2	Fringe Benefit: Concealed Weapon Permit
3	Fringe Benefit: Membership: Danite Hunter
3	Fringe Benefit: Membership: Son Of Daniel

Basic Combat Arts

	Maneuver	OCV	DCV	Notes
4	Block	+2	+2	Block, Abort
4	Dodge	—	+5	Dodge all attacks, Abort
5	Kick	-2	+1	6d6 Strike
4	Punch	+0	+2	4d6 Strike
3	Throw	+0	+1	2d6 +v/5, Target Falls

Total Cost of Package Abilities: 108

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
10	Hunted: Danite Order 11- (Mo Pow, Watching)
20	Hunted: at least two Mythologies at any given time 11- (Mo Pow, Kill)
20	Psychological Limitation: Extremely Devout (Common, Total)
10	Social Limitation: Secret Identity (Danite Hunter) (Frequently, Minor)
20	Social Limitation: Subject To Orders (Very Frequently, Major)

Total Value of Package Disadvantages: 80



CHARACTER CREATION

How you create a character for *Invasive Species* depends on what type of character you're creating: monster or Danite.

Monster characters must take the appropriate monster Package Deal (see above), then get enough additional Character Points to round them up to 300 total (or, in the case of characters whose Package Deal costs more than 300 points, to round them up to 400 points). They must take at least 100 points' worth of Disadvantages, though some or all of these (and perhaps more) may come from their Package Deal. If they want guns, body armor, special vehicles, or the like, they must pay Character Points for them, but they can have mundane equipment like ordinary cell phones and flashlights for free.

Danite characters must take the Danite Hunter Package Deal (see above), then get enough additional Character Points to round them up to 200 total. They do not have to take any more Disadvantages than the ones listed with the Package Deal, but may do so to help define their character if they wish (this doesn't increase the points they're built on, of course). They get all their equipment for free.

If for some reason a player wants to have a character who's not a part of either faction, build him as a Standard Heroic character (75 Base Points + up to 75 points in Disadvantages). He can have equipment for free.

INVASIVE SPECIES PLOT SEEDS

Interdenominational Death Squad: As the Native-Newcomer War drags on, the embattled Reno Danite branch decides to call in help from around the globe. An assortment of heavily armed ministers, monks, priests, rabbis, nuns, and imams gather in the World's Biggest Little City for a final, apocalyptic battle with the forces of evil. Can the PCs survive this ecumenical onslaught?

Get Me That Book! A rare copy of Kit Carson's *Secret Diaries And Western Observations* has been bought by the Silver Legacy's owners for display in their casino museum. Not only do the leaders of every Mythology in Reno want it for themselves, they also desperately need to steal it before someone else does... or God forbid a mortal reads it! The PCs find themselves assigned to pilfer or protect the infamous tome.

The Ethnologists: Worried that the Sesquac will die out, taking their vast reserve of oral knowledge with them, Los Viejos Hombres dispatch the PCs to capture and interrogate one of the sewer-dwelling shaggy men. But down below the city's streets will they end up being the hunters — or the hunted?

Enter Reichenbach: Desperate to finish the Native-Newcomer War once and for all, Illyeshazy Onella has called for the assistance of her "father" Carl Reichenbach, one of the most powerful vampires in existence. Unfortunately, once he arrives in Reno Reichenbach founds a coven of male vampires, effectively creating a sixth Mythology. Worse yet, his strain of vampirism is highly contagious — and spreading. With the fate of all supernaturals at risk, a truce is called so the PCs can exterminate this new threat.

The Joint Action: Battered by a series of attacks launched by the Newcomers and Danites, the Natives at last agree to a combined attack on their foes. But who will lead, who will follow, and who will they strike first? It's up to the PCs to figure it out.

Come The Luchadores: As if life weren't complicated enough for the members of La Raza Misteriosa, Mexico's resident occult crimefighters have learned of their existence. A group of masked wrestlers has arrived in Reno to put an end to the Mysterious Race... and any other supernatural they can slap a headlock on! What will the PCs do?

THE SIXTH SUN



It is said in the lore of the Aztecs:

IN THE TIME BEFORE TIME, THE GODS CREATED THE WORLD, AND POPULATED IT WITH ALL MANNER OF BEINGS, INCLUDING MEN. TEZCATLIPOLCA, GOD OF MAGIC AND DARKNESS, BECAME THE FIRST SUN, AND SHONE DOWN ON THE EARTH FOUR OCELOT. BUT THE MEN AND GIANTS WHO LIVED THERE WERE MONSTROUS AND WICKED, AND THE IRE OF THE GODS FELL UPON THEM. THEY SENT A PLAGUE OF JAGUARS TO DESTROY THE MEN AND GIANTS. THE WORLD WAS OVERTURNED, AND THE FIRST SUN FELL FROM THE SKY.

AND THE GODS CREATED THE WORLD AND MEN ANEW. QUETZALCOATL, GOD OF WIND AND WISDOM, BECAME THE SECOND SUN, AND SHONE DOWN ON THE EARTH FOUR WIND. BUT THE MEN OF THAT WORLD BECAME FOOLISH AND INDULGENT, AND SO THE GODS SENT A VAST HURRICANE. THE WORLD WAS OVERTURNED, AND MEN TURNED INTO MONKEYS, AND THE SECOND SUN FELL FROM THE SKY.

AND THE GODS CREATED THE WORLD AND MEN ANEW. TLALOC, GOD OF RAIN, BECAME THE THIRD SUN, AND SHONE DOWN ON THE EARTH FOUR RAIN. BUT THE MEN OF THAT WORLD SINNED AGAINST THE GODS, WHO SENT A RAIN OF FIRE. THE WORLD WAS OVERTURNED, AND MEN TURNED INTO BIRDS, AND THE THIRD SUN FELL FROM THE SKY.

AND THE GODS CREATED THE WORLD AND MEN ANEW. CHALCHILHUELI, GODDESS OF WATER, BECAME THE FOURTH SUN, AND SHONE DOWN ON THE EARTH FOUR WATER. BUT THE MEN OF THAT WORLD IGNORED AND INSULTED THE GODS, WHO SENT A GREAT FLOOD. THE WORLD WAS OVERTURNED, AND MEN TURNED INTO FISH, AND THE FOURTH SUN FELL FROM THE SKY.

AND THE GODS CREATED THE WORLD AND MEN ANEW. THE GOD TONATILH BECAME THE FIFTH SUN, AND SHONE DOWN ON THE EARTH FOUR MOVEMENT. BUT THEN THE GODS FELL INTO SLUMBER....

During the Enlightenment hundreds of years ago, the so-called “pagan” gods worshipped by peoples around the world were, one by one, driven away by the force of Reason and the rise of Science and Rationalism. For the Aztecs and other Mesoamerican peoples this happened in 1521 when Hernán Cortés and his forces overthrew the Aztec empire. Abandoned by their gods, the natives of the Americas were easy prey for the more culturally and technologically advanced Europeans. But gods do not die, even when they turn from their worshippers (or their worshippers from them). Instead they sleep, and as they sleep they dream... and sometimes they awaken.

In the year 1957, the supreme Aztec god Tezcatlipoca awoke from his long slumber. Looking about him, he became disgusted with the state the world was in and the inferior position occupied by his people. Angered, he roused the other Aztec gods and told them the time had come for the Sixth Sun to arise. They agreed, and as long prophecied the world of the Fifth Sun was destroyed by earthquakes. Terrible tremors shook the entire world, even places with no tectonic instability, and millions upon millions of people died. The Fifth Sun fell from the sky.

It was Tezcatlipoca's plan to overturn the world once more and turn men into frogs, but the god Quetzalcoatl prevailed upon him to be merciful. “Look at the number of peoples now, so much more vast than when last we watched the earth,” he said. “Look at the wonders they create with their engines and smokes. Is there not something here worth preserving?”

Shamed from the worst of his anger, Tezcatlipoca agreed. “But there must be a new sun for the new world that will follow this one,” he said. “Who among us will become the Sixth Sun?”

For a long time there was silence, then a voice sounded through the heavens. “I will,” said Xochiquetzal, goddess of pleasure, indulgence, and vice. So the gods traveled to Teotihuacán, where they built a vast fire. They arrayed Xochiquetzal in sumptuous robes and glittering jewelry, and they sacrificed their own blood to her. And she stepped into the fire and became the Sixth Sun.

That was 51 years ago. Warmed by the light of the Sixth Sun, mankind soon discovered that the “pagan” gods — not just those of the Aztecs, but all other peoples — had returned. Just as significantly, magic had returned to the world. It took many years for humanity to stumble through the world of the arcane and come to a true understanding of what magic could do, but by the mid-Seventies it had influenced (and in some cases reshaped) every aspect of human society.

As of 2008, the world of the Sixth Sun is a place both like and unlike the real world. It has much of the same technology, though other devices have been replaced by magic. Evidence of the arcane is everywhere, from products seen in advertisements, to the storefronts of wizards for hire, to the classrooms of major universities. And in 2009 the first turn of the 52-year Long Count occurs, leaving many people to wonder what the gods will do....

SIXTH SUN SOCIETY

Human society in the world of the Sixth Sun is much the same as that in the real world... but with some important differences. All these differences relate to the fact that magic exists and is both easy to learn and to use.

TECHNOLOGY

For the most part, the technology of the Sixth Sun is the same as that of the real world. People drive cars, which have internal combustion engines. They use computers, which connect to one another via the Internet. They take all sorts of pharmaceuticals to prevent or cure all kinds of diseases. But in other respects magic has replaced, or at least augmented, technology. Shamanic spells can cure diseases and speed healing in ways that modern science cannot match. Rather than call in an exterminator to spray for

bugs, homeowners buy an anti-vermin talisman from an alchemist. People use “refresher” spells to stay awake and alert throughout the day, so coffee’s much less popular.

The MageNet

Mages often prefer to rely on magic rather than technology to a greater degree than the average citizen does (for obvious reasons), but they’re not above adapting technology to their own purposes, or stealing a good idea from the realm of Science. For example, many of them maintain their lists of spells and working notes on their current research on computers.

Perhaps the most intriguing development in this department is the *MageNet*, a communication and research tool created by mages enamored of the Internet. The MageNet isn’t technological at all; it’s an arcane construct that wizards access with the power of their minds. To “log onto” the MageNet, a mage must sit quietly, concentrate, and succeed with a Magic roll. (Cybermancers use their Cybermancy roll instead, and don’t have to sit or concentrate; they can “multitask,” accessing the MageNet with part of the brain while still perceiving the real world with the other.) His perceptions shift and he’s now “seeing” the MageNet in his mind’s eye. (He remains dimly aware of real world events, but is at ½ DCV and -3 on all PER Rolls.) To interact with it he creates an “avatar,” usually an idealized version of himself, but sometimes much more fanciful. Perceiving the “trans-



mission lines” and “data storage devices” of the MageNet as objects that make sense to him, he can then go interact with them. Generally speaking the MageNet is used mostly for communication, though some wizards are part of an ongoing effort to “upload” vast amounts of publicly-available data on magic to it that any mage can use for research. The MageNet’s still young, and no doubt will change in unexpected ways as it grows.

RELIGION

Aside from the existence of magic, the most notable difference between the world of the Sixth Sun and the real world is religion. “Pagan” religions long dead in the real world have come roaring back to popularity — a not unexpected development when the gods start handing out magical powers! Just about any organized (and more than a few disorganized) pantheons has a body of worshippers somewhere, but some have attracted large numbers of worshippers. The Aztec gods, as the beings who transformed the world, are now worshipped all over the Earth. The Greek, Norse, Egyptian, and Celtic gods are popular in the western world; in the East, the Hindu, Chinese, and Japanese gods (whose worship never completely died away) have millions of followers. Thus, in cities that used to have nothing but Protestant churches, Catholic cathedrals, Jewish synagogues, and Muslim mosques, you can now see the step-pyramids of the Mesoamerican deities, Egyptian-, Norse-, and Greek-style temples, and many other types of holy buildings.

Christianity

Despite the rise of the Old Faiths (as they’re collectively known), Christianity remains the single most followed creed on Earth, and Islam and Judaism similarly have retained most of their adherents. Some of the more extreme sects rage against magic as the work of Satan, and the Old Faith gods as demons, but few people listen to them.

For reasons no one understands, the God of the Abrahamic religions has been *totally silent* on the question of magic. Unlike the Old Faith gods He doesn’t communicate directly with His worshippers, nor has He granted any of His followers special knowledge of magic. However, it was quickly discovered after 1957 that any truly devout follower of any of these religions was virtually immune to any magical effect. (In game terms, such people have Force Field (20 PD/20 ED/20 Mental Defense/20 Power Defense/20 Sight Group Flash Defense), Fully Invisible, 0 END, Persistent. Player characters and NPCs do not have to pay Character Points for this ability, but they have to have something that indicates true devotion (typically a Psychological Limitation at the very least). Most importantly they have to act in accordance with their faith and the dictates of their theology. Step out of line at all and poof! the free Force Field stops working, possibly forever.)

This in and of itself has created a great deal of turmoil within the Abrahamic religions, particularly their established religious hierarchies. The existence of an unquestionable touchstone of devotion makes it easy to determine who’s *not*

devoted. While few religious groups have cast out leaders who lack the “Shield of True Faith” (as it’s often called), many religious figures have quietly left their posts when it became apparent they didn’t “have what it takes.” The implications and repercussions of these issues, and others, continue to affect Abrahamic congregations.

CRIME

Crime in the world of the Sixth Sun has been influenced by magic just like everything else. Wizards are only human and sometimes can’t resist the temptation to use their spells for illicit gain or to harm others. A con artist might try to convince potential marks that he has a unique, powerful enchanted item for sale, or that only he knows the spell needed to make them fabulously rich.

In the early Eighties a new organized crime group emerged from the Mystic World into the mundane. The Vampire Mafia, as it’s known, is a worldwide group of vampires and other powerful undead (plus a few living wizards) who use human patsies to commit all sorts of crimes. In many cities the Vampire Mafia has largely displaced other major organized crime entities, or at least reduced their share of the pie significantly — and unlike any of them, it’s truly worldwide in scope. Everyone in the organization ultimately answers to the ruling Shadow Council, a mysterious body no law enforcement agency has ever even gotten close to. This gives the Vampire Mafia a level of coordination and cooperation that no other criminal organization can match.

Naturally, where magic impacts crime, it also comes into play in law enforcement. Most police agencies have a separate division for magic-related crime, and/or assign magically-trained cops to other units either on a full-time or as-needed basis.

THE MILITARY AND ESPIONAGE

The world’s militaries and espionage agencies have been even quicker to take advantage of magic’s possibilities than the cops have. Mages and magic phenomena have become an important factor on the battlefield, making enemy mages prime targets. While the bulk of any fighting is still done by human soldiers armed with guns, rampaging elementals, demons, and golems wreak horrific destruction during combat, and teams of elite “mage commandos” parachute behind the lines to occupy the attention of entire divisions. The United States Army in particular is known for its reliance on mystical resources; its combat mages are widely considered the best in the world.

Magic’s potential for concealment, distraction, and subterfuge make it ideal for espionage. In many cases analog and digital cryptography have largely given way to *goetic cryptography*, which makes a message completely untranslatable unless one knows the revelation-spell. Spies on the ground often employ Sorcery to help them get the job done, and the CIA’s Thaumaturgics Section (*a.k.a.* the “Dirty Demon Tricks Squad”) has a well-deserved reputation for finding devilishly clever ways to use even the most ordinary magical assets.

CHARACTER CREATION

Characters in *Sixth Sun* campaigns are typically Low-Powered Superheroic characters, built on 175 Base Points plus up to 75 Character Points from Disadvantages. Normal Characteristic Maxima is imposed as a campaign default. Characters must pay Character Points for significant equipment (including all weapons, body armor, and other combat-effective gear, and all enchanted items of any type), but can have minor equipment (such as ordinary cell phones and flashlights) for free. (Though of course, it's much easier to lose free equipment than equipment one pays for....) Characters who want to be able to cast spells must pay Character Points for them; see below for rules and example spells.

Package Deals

Here are a few Package Deals specifically for the Sixth Sun setting. You can also use appropriate ones from Chapter Two if desired.

SIXTH SUN WIZARD PACKAGE DEAL

This is an adaptation of the Wizard Package Deal from Chapter Two specifically for the Sixth Sun setting.

WEREJAGUAR

Werejaguars (*Nahualli* in the Aztec language) are humans who can assume the shape of a jaguar. (They do not have an “in-between” jaguar-man shape.) Some Aztec priests and devout worshippers of the Aztec gods (particularly Tezcatlipoca) are granted this power by the gods. Werejaguars have many abilities similar to those of traditional European lycanthropes, they lack others, and tend not to suffer from the same weaknesses.

WEREJAGUAR PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 STR
18	+6 DEX
10	+5 CON
5	+5 PRE
2	<i>Animal Empathy</i> : Animal Handler (Felines)
29	<i>Shapechanging</i> : Multiform (change shape into 250-point jaguar; true form is human); Extra Time (takes an Extra Phase to change shape; -¾)
20	<i>Fangs</i> : HKA 1d6+1 (plus STR)
12	<i>Claws</i> : HKA 1d6 (plus STR); Reduced Penetration (-¼)
2	<i>Werejaguar Resilience</i> : Damage Resistance (2 PD/2 ED)
30	<i>Werejaguar Resilience</i> : Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%
5	<i>Werejaguar Eyes</i> : Nightvision

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 138

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

SIXTH SUN WIZARD PACKAGE DEAL

Abilities

Cost	Ability
5	+5 INT
10	+5 EGO
5	+5 PRE
5	Cramming
3	Deduction
3	KS: Arcane And Occult Lore (INT Roll)
3	KS: The Mystic World (INT Roll)
9	Power: Magic (INT Roll +3)
2	PS: Wizard 11-
6	6 Character Points' worth of abilities from the following list: Acting, Bribery, Bureaucratics, Computer Programming, Concealment, Conversation, Cramming, Gambling, High Society, Interrogation, Inventor (Spell Research), Penalty Skill Levels, Skill Levels, Sleight Of Hand, Stealth, Trading, Ventriloquism, Weapon Familiarity, any Background Skill, Well-Connected, Contacts, Favors
3	Perk: Spellcaster
50	50 Character Points' worth of spells and mystic powers

Total Cost Of Package Abilities: 104

Optional Abilities

Cost	Power
10	<i>Second Sight</i> : Detect Magic (INT Roll), Discriminatory
var	<i>More Powerful Wizard</i> : increase the <i>Spellcaster</i> Perk
22	<i>Blood Magician</i> : Add Power: Blood Magic (INT Roll +2) plus Blood Magic Aid from page 150
7	<i>Cybermancer</i> : Add Power: Cybermancy (INT Roll +2)
7	<i>Hermetic Theurgy</i> : Add Power: Hermetic Theurgy (INT Roll +2)
0	<i>Rune Mage</i> : Substitute Power: Rune Magic for Power: Magic
0	<i>Shaman</i> : Substitute Power: Shamanism for Power: Magic
7	<i>Voodooist</i> : Add Power: Voodoo (INT Roll +2)
17	<i>Corporate Mage</i> : Add KS of corporation 11-, Money (Well Off), and 10 points' worth of Contacts in the corporation or related companies (for a “retired” corporate mage, remove the Money)
11	<i>Cop Mage</i> : Add Concealment (INT Roll), Criminology (INT Roll), KS: The Law Enforcement World 11-, and Streetwise (PRE Roll)
7	<i>Military Mage</i> : Add KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 11-, PS: Soldier 11-, and Tactics (INT Roll)
13	<i>Eldritch Espionage Agent</i> : Add KS: The Espionage World 11-, KS: The Military/Mercenary/Terrorist World 8-, and 10 points' worth of Contacts in the Espionage World

Disadvantages

Value	Disadvantage
None	

Total Value Of Package Disadvantages: 0

MAGIC

As with any other Open Magic campaign, what sets the world of the Sixth Sun apart is the existence of magic. Magic can be found nearly everywhere and has affected nearly every facet of life, as discussed above. Think of it like computers and computer programming in the real world: computers are everywhere and have become a major factor in life; computers make many jobs easier, but can't totally replace humans; you can study computer programming in college; many people encounter or interact with computers every day but don't really know anything about them.

The Basics

Sixth Sun magic is a well-understood, widely-practiced phenomenon extensively studied and catalogued in such textbooks as *Corben's Handbook of Applied Thaumaturgy*, 2008 Edition and *Corben's Magical Theory and Practice*, 2008 Edition. (The *Corben's* series is regarded as the best, though it has many competitors; individual mages often prefer one or the other for various picky little reasons.) In theory anyone can learn magic, though practically speaking it appears that some people have a "talent" for it and some don't, just like some people can sing well and some cannot. Persons under age 18 (or 17 for registered college freshmen) are forbidden by law to practice magic. Most people learn magic by studying it at a university (though a few follow the ancient tradition of apprenticeship); in the United States, the leading institutions for magical study are Duke University, the University of Chicago, the University of California (Davis), Vanderbilt University, Gonzaga University, and Cagliostro University (in Virginia).

Sixth Sun spells typically manifest as colored energy in the appropriate shape or form — for example, an attack spell might look like a green beam, or a defensive spell like a purplish sphere encasing the subject. The intensity and brightness of the color indicates the spell's Rank (its raw power), though only a trained eye can accurately gauge the subtle gradations (*i.e.*, in game terms it takes a successful *Analyze Magic* Skill Roll to determine a spell's Rank based on its appearance). A spellcaster typically chooses what color he wants his spells to be when he learns them, and it doesn't change thereafter. However, a caster can change the color of a spell from his "default"; all he has to do is make the spell's Magic roll at a -1 penalty. (Imitating another mage's favored color *precisely* changes this to a -3 penalty, or more if the caster's not personally familiar with that color.)

Mundane personal defenses, such as body armor, don't work well against magic — reduce any PD, ED, or DEF they provide by half. (This does not apply to, for example, hiding behind a wall.)

BUYING SPELLS IN GAME TERMS

A Sixth Sun character needs three (possibly four) things to buy and cast a spell.

First, he must have the *Spellcaster* Perk. This Perk costs 1 Character Point per point. A character's *Spellcaster* Perk must be equal to or greater than a spell's Rank before a character can buy that spell.

Second, he must have a *Power: Magic* Skill (or some alternate Skill, for certain specialized types of magic; see below).

Third, if there are any special requirements due to a cultural variation (see below), he must meet them as well.

Fourth and last, he must pay the full Real Point cost of the spell. Casters cannot buy spells in Power Frameworks, with a spell divisor, or the like; they pay the full Real Point cost for each and every spell they learn. (They can, of course, "upgrade" a spell to a higher Rank simply by paying more points for it; they don't have to buy each Rank of a given spell separately.)

CREATING SPELLS IN GAME TERMS

All spells in the world of the Sixth Sun follow certain rules of creation and use set down by the gods. These rules are reflected in how they're bought in *HERO System* terms.

Skill Roll And Side Effects

Using magic is a skill, like carpentry or computer programming — albeit a more dramatic and physically powerful one in most cases. It's possible for a caster to get one wrong, and unlike mundane skills the consequences for making a mistake can be personally harmful.

All spells require a *Power: Magic* roll to cast — they have the *Requires A Magic Roll* Limitation. Additionally, they all have the *Side Effects* Limitation. The typical Side Effect is a Drain CON or Drain STUN that lasts for at most a few minutes: mis-cast spells tend to make the caster feel sick and weak. A bad enough botch may render the caster unconscious or leave him bedridden for days. The most powerful spells can actually inflict lasting physical harm on the caster if not properly cast (Drain BODY or Killing Damage), and in the worst cases can even kill him.

Gesturing And Incanting

Almost all Sixth Sun spells (and certainly all powerful ones) require the Limitations *Gestures* and *Incantations*. Other common Limitations include *Concentration*, *Extra Time*, and *Increased Endurance Cost*. Police forces often use a device called a *magecuff*, basically a pair of stiffened leather gloves that prevent the fingers from moving, to keep captive wizards from casting spells.

Endurance

Because it's so powerful, magic is tiring to use. No spell can cost 0 END — if it's based on a Power that inherently doesn't cost END, it must take the *Costs Endurance* Limitation. Many spells that cost END have the *Increased Endurance Cost* Limitation, and a spell can only take the *Reduced Endurance* Advantage at the +¼ level (half END) with the GM's permission.

Sixth Sun wizards may buy Endurance Reserves or the like to provide END for their spells. It's common for casters, especially weaker ones, to buy Reserves through a Focus (typically a staff, wand, amulet, talisman, or fetish of some sort); more powerful casters often have personal Endurance Reserves that cannot be taken away. If a caster has an Endurance Reserve of any kind for his magic spells, he can cast them using his personal END instead, but they cost *triple* their normal END cost.

Some Powers Are Rare

Although it's not a hard-and-fast rule, as a system design parameter Mental Powers, Movement Powers, and Body-Affecting Powers are rare in Sixth Sun magic. They're more likely to occur in some of the cultural variants (see below) than in mainstream magic.

CULTURAL VARIATIONS

The magic system described above, and most of the spells presented below, represent the "default" for the Sixth Sun world — the standard magic taught to and practiced by most spellcasters. But there are a few cultural/religious variants that have arisen over the years. In some cases these variants simply affect how spells are cast or appear; in others they represent entirely different bodies of lore that can be learned instead of (or sometimes in addition to) the standard magic.

Black Magic

Some casters, eager to attain great magical power quickly and easily, choose the "left-hand path" of *Black Magic* — spellcraft learned from demons, devils, and other dark powers. This has two benefits. First, it lets a caster learn magic without having to go through years of tedious study and memorization. Second, it allows him to learn and cast Black Magic spells of terrifying power and effect (see *Black Magic*, below).

On the other hand, it also has a significant drawback: it imperils the caster's soul. This takes one of two forms. First, the caster can simply sell his soul to whatever Powers teach him magic. This can benefit him greatly in life... but it guarantees that when he dies his soul will spend eternity in Hell (or whatever other torturous afterlife he believes in or is subject to). In game terms, the following abilities represent the effects of selling the soul. Any character who learns (pays Character Points for) even a single Black Magic spell *must* buy the two powers named *Has No Soul*; the others are optional:

Cost Power

- | | |
|----|---|
| 6 | <i>Has No Soul: Armor</i> (20 ED) (30 Active Points); Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (spells and powers that inflict injury by attacking the soul; -4) |
| 4 | <i>Has No Soul: Power Defense</i> (20 points) (20 Active Points); Only Works Against Limited Type Of Attack (spells and powers that work by attacking the soul; -4) |
| 30 | <i>The Devil's Own Luck: Luck</i> 6d6 |
| 15 | <i>The Devil Made Me Rich: Money: Filthy Rich</i> |
| 10 | <i>Devilishly Seductive: +20 COM</i> |

Additionally, the character must take two Disadvantages: Distinctive Features: has no soul (Not Concealable; Causes Extreme Reaction; Detectable Only By Unusual Senses) (15 points) and Social Limitation: Has No Soul (Very Frequently, Major) (20 points). The first one means anyone with second sight (*i.e.*, Detect Magic or similar abilities) automatically perceives that he's sold his soul and is a black magician... which will cause him lots of trouble in life, not to mention prevent him from being invited to the best parties. The second means that even people without such finely-honed senses perceive that there's something "wrong" about the character — they feel uncomfortable in his presence and have difficulty getting along with him. He suffers a minimum -2 penalty to all attempts to use Interaction Skills in a friendly or helpful way (but may receive a corresponding bonus to Interrogation).

Second, instead of selling his soul outright at the start of his career, the character can "trade" it away bit by bit. In this case, learning and casting Black Magic spells slowly but inevitably taints the character's soul to the point where it "rots away," with the same terrible afterlife effects as just selling it. On the other hand, until the soul is entirely gone, it's possible for the character to reform and "repair" it... though this requires tremendous effort and personal sacrifice. In game terms, learning and casting Black Magic spells (but not standard spells) causes a slow but steady Major Transform of the character to turn him into a person with no soul. Each Black Magic spell learned (*i.e.*, bought with Character Points) automatically causes 1 point of Major Transform; each time the character casts a Black Magic spell he automatically causes another .2 BODY of Transform (or .4 BODY, if he fails the Magic roll). The Transform works against the character's EGO rather than his BODY. When the Transform is complete, the character's soul is totally corrupted; he automatically receives both of the Disadvantages described above, and possibly others (such as the Psychological Limitation *Utterly Evil*, if he doesn't have it already).

Blood Magic

One of the most popular cultural variants, this is a special type of magic taught by the Aztec priests to the adherents of their faith. It allows the caster to enhance his spells using the power of his own blood. In game terms, here's how he buys this power (which he must pay for with Character Points):

Aid Magic 6d6, any Magic spell one at a time (but not on this spell; +¼) (75 Active Points); OAF (sacrificial flint knife; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Requires A Blood Magic Roll (-½), Self Only (-½), Side Effects (suffers 1 BODY damage per Aid 2d6 used [see text], always occurs; -½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 15 points.



As indicated by the Limitations, the character needs a separate *Power: Blood Magic Skill* to use this ability. This represents not only knowledge of how to draw on blood's power, but how to cut one's self as efficiently, safely, and painlessly as possible to draw the blood.

The maximum effect that can be obtained through this spell is Aid 6d6, requiring 3 BODY of blood sacrificed. At the GM's option a character can sacrifice $\frac{1}{2}$ BODY of blood for Aid 1d6. In this case a character with only half a point of BODY is treated as being at the next lowest whole number for all rules purposes (for example, a character with $8\frac{1}{2}$ BODY is treated as having 8 BODY).

Urban legends sometimes speak of blood magicians who go beyond using their own blood — who use the power in animal, or even human, sacrifices to increase the strength of their spells even further. While there's no documented proof of anything like that existing, theoretically at least a greater sacrifice would earn the caster greater power.

Cybermancy

Cybermancy is a new field of magical practice that's arisen in just the past 30 years or so, as computers and electronics have become a nigh-omnipresent aspect of modern life. Cybermancy is magic that affects computers and machines. In theory it's simply an extension of existing magical forms, but in practice learning to use magic on such "artificial" things requires extensive additional training. (In game terms, characters need a separate *Power: Cybermancy Skill*; they can't just use their *Magic Skill*.) See *Cybermancy*, below, for example spells.

Hermetic Theurgy

Hermetic theurgists follow a magical tradition that began with the ancient Greeks but was fully developed in medieval Europe, then carried through to the modern day by the work of scholars and dabblers in the occult who turned out to simply be a few decades early. To the average American, a hermetic theurgist most closely resembles the “classic” wizard of legend, myth, and Fantasy fiction. He often wears robes, he learns magic by studying precise formulae written down in large grimoires, and he tends to carry a staff as his “badge of office.” Of course, there are plenty of theurgists who vary from this pattern (aside from the book learning), but despite being a stereotype it often rings true.

In Hermetic philosophy, magic is a manifestation of the power of the classical Four Elements: Air, Earth, Fire, and Water. When a theurgist casts a standard spell, the raw magical energy he manipulates is composed of the “essence of the Four.” The spell doesn’t look or behave any differently than any other spellcaster’s spell, but that’s how it works. Where theurgists differ from standard spellcasters is that they can “dissever” (to use the formal theurgical term) one Element from the others, “transforming” the spell into an elemental effect rather than a “pure” magical one.

In game terms, a hermetic theurgist must buy the Skill *Power: Hermetic Theurgy* in addition to his standard *Power: Magic Skill*. If he wants to cast a spell as Air, Earth, Fire, or Water instead of just “magic power,” he must do two things: (a) spend a minimum of a Full Phase casting the spell, regardless of its standard casting time (in the case of spells that already take a Full Phase or longer, the GM should extend the casting time to an Extra Segment, Extra Phase, or the like); and (b) succeed with *both* a Magic roll and a Hermetic Theurgy roll (if either roll fails, the spell fails). Elemental spells have the same effect as standard spells, but also have an additional Elemental effect, as described below (this doesn’t alter the cost of the spell or affect the rolls to cast it). Elemental effects are most likely to occur with offensive spells, but may sometimes be appropriate for other types of spells. The GM can alter an Elemental effect, rule that an effect automatically does or does not occur, or change an effect to suit his own preferences or the way he runs his Sixth Sun campaign.

Air, Water: Offensive Air and Water spells can knock targets around. Roll Knockback for them using the standard rules. For 0” of Knockback, nothing happens. For 1-3” of Knockback, the target is Knocked Down. For 4” or more inches of Knockback, divide the inches rolled by 3 (standard rounding rules apply), and the target takes that many inches of Knockback. (For example, if the Knockback rolled is 7”, $7/3 = 2.33$, so the target takes 2” Knockback.) Additionally, either Air or Water may be used to help put out fires; the GM determines the effectiveness of this.

Earth: Offensive Earth spells have a tendency to slow targets down due to their being covered by dirt, temporarily pinned under blocks of stone, having to work their way around rubble, and so forth. In game terms this occurs on an Activation Roll 11- for spells of up to 30 Active Points, and Activation Roll 14- for spells of more Active Points. If the effect occurs, reduce the target’s Running by $\frac{1}{2}d6$ inches that Phase. (At the GM’s option, this might also apply to anyone else moving through the affected area.)

Fire: Fire spells can set flammable targets on fire. In game terms this occurs on an Activation Roll 11- for spells of up to 30 Active Points, and Activation Roll 14- for spells of more Active Points. The effect is RKA 1 point, Continuous, Reduced Endurance (0 END), Sticky (only affects flammables), Uncontrolled (spell ends when it runs out of fuel or oxygen, or someone extinguishes the flames).

Hindu Magic

The magic granted to casters by the Hindu gods is no different than standard magic, except that spells are cast by dancing rather than finger-gestures. Stopping a Hindu wizard from casting requires full-body restraints, not just magecuffs.

Rune Magic

Rune Magic is a separate body of magical lore taught to humans by the Northern European gods. See *Rune Magic*, below, for more details and sample spells. Typically a character cannot learn both standard magic and Rune Magic; he must choose one or the other.

Shamanism

Shamanism is a form of magic that involves calling on spirits and the Spirit World for power. See *Shamanism*, below, for more details and sample spells. Typically a character cannot learn both standard magic and Shamanism; he must choose one or the other.

Voodoo

Voodoo is a form of magic deriving from Haitian and Caribbean traditions by way of Africa, with some American variations, extensions, and other lore thrown into the pot for good measure. In game terms it works like standard magic, with a few key differences. First, Voodoo spells require special fetishes or charms created by the caster from a variety of (often disgusting or rare) materials. Typically a fetish is reusable until it’s broken or damaged, but a few have limited uses (Charges). In *HERO System* terms, all Voodoo spells have the *Focus* Limitation, and most the Foci are always Obvious and almost always Accessible; adjust the cost of the sample spells below accordingly (if the options don’t already do this for you).

Second, unlike standard magic — which almost entirely involves external effects — Voodoo can create “internal” effects that alter or augment the caster’s body. Usually this is done by allowing a *loa* (a Voodoo god or spirit) to “ride” (possess) the caster via an intermediary Focus. See *Voodoo*, below, for some example spells. To cast these spells

(as opposed to standard magic spells bought in the Voodoo manner, as described above), characters need a separate *Power: Voodoo Skill*; they can't just use their *Magic Skill*.

Offensive Spells

Offensive spells tend to be the most common purchased and used by adventurers, and they're certainly the type of spell most extensively studied by academics. After considerable debate and discussion over the years, scholars have devised a method of categorizing attack spells based on their nature and power — or, in academic parlance, their *Class*, *Manifestation*, and *Rank*.

SPELL CLASS

A spell's *Class* indicates the type of effect it has on the target. There are four Classes of spells:

Class Alpha: The most basic type of offensive spell, which projects magical force in some fashion to cause injury or harm. (In game terms, Class Alpha generally refers to Normal Damage spells such as Energy Blasts.)

Class Beta: Class Beta spells are more energetic and powerful than Class Alpha, though they're otherwise very similar. A Class Beta spell tends to be deadlier than the Class Alpha equivalent. (In game terms, Class Beta spells typically do Killing Damage.)

Class Gamma: Class Gamma spells are more subtle than Alpha or Beta, though not necessarily any less powerful. They typically only affect living beings, but incapacitate them without causing any lasting harm. Scholars usually organize this class into subclasses: Gamma/1 spells knock out the target, put him to sleep, or the like; Gamma/2 spells restrain him in some fashion; Gamma/3 spells incapacitate him in other ways. (In game terms, Class Gamma spells tend to do STUN Only damage or the like; they include Drains, NNDs, and Ego Attacks. This category also includes Entangles.)

Class Delta: Class Delta is a "miscellaneous" category encompassing any type of offensive spell that doesn't fit into the other three categories. This includes spells that temporarily blind one of the target's senses, spells that change his state of being, spells that affect other spells instead of human targets, and the like. For the most part Class Delta spells tend to be quite rare. (In game terms, this category includes Flashes, Transforms, many Suppresses, and so on.)

SPELL MANIFESTATION

A spell's *Manifestation* defines how it affects the world — or to put it in more practical terms, the target(s) it affects. There are six types of spell Manifestations:

Type 1: A Type 1 spell only affects a single target. Depending on the type of spell, the Manifestation may be a beam of energy, a field that surrounds the target, a tiny ball of energy the caster "throws" at the target, or the like. Although they're not as effective against groups of foes, Type 1 spells tend to be easier (and thus safer) to cast.

Type 2: Type 2 spells can be used against a single target or multiple targets depending on the circumstances. Typically the Manifestation is multiple beams, darts, or orbs of energy whose targets the caster chooses. (In game terms, Type 2 spells have the *Autofire Advantage*.)

Type 3: Perhaps the most common Manifestation after Type 1, Type 3 designates a spell that can affect multiple targets within a spherical area. In some cases everything within the target area is affected equally (Type 3/A); in others the spell has full potency at the center part of the sphere but decreases in power as it reaches the edge of the area (Type 3/B). (In game terms, Type 3 Spells have the *Area Of Effect (One Hex)*, *Area Of Effect (Radius)*, or *Explosion Advantage*.)

Type 4: The rare Type 4 Manifestation creates a wide beam of energy that begins at (but does not affect) the caster and extends straight toward a defined endpoint, affecting everything in between. (In game terms, Type 4 spells have the *Area Of Effect (Line)* Advantage.)

Type 5: Only slightly more common than Type 4 spells, Type 5 spells affect a 60° radius area in front of the caster. (In game terms, Type 5 spells have the *Area Of Effect (Cone)* Advantage.)

Type 6: This is a catch-all category for any Manifestation that doesn't fit into the other five categories.

RANK

A spell's *Rank* represents its power, ranging from Rank 1 (the weakest-known version of the spell) to whatever upper end scholars have so far recorded. Many spells don't have more than Rank 4-5 at most, though some go to Rank 10 or higher. In theory any two spells of the same Rank are roughly "equal" in power; in practice, many spellcasters tend to regard certain spells of a given Rank as "better" or more effective than others.

In game terms, Rank is one of the factors that dictates whether a character can buy a particular spell. A character's *Spellcaster Perk* must be equal to or greater than a spell's Rank before a character can buy that spell.

MAGEBLAST: ALPHA-1, RANK 1

Effect: Energy Blast 4d6
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 100"
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This is the most basic attack spell in the Sixth Sun repertoire, the one casters tend to learn first during their apprenticeship. It projects a beam or pulse of energy at the target that causes relatively mild pain (and sometimes injuries).

Game Information: *Energy Blast 4d6 (20 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain STUN 3d6; -½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 7 points.*

Options:

- 1) **More Powerful Ranks:** Change as follows:
Rank 2: *Energy Blast 5d6. 25 Active Points; total cost 8 points.*
Rank 3: *Energy Blast 6d6. 30 Active Points; total cost 10 points.*
Rank 4: *Energy Blast 7d6. 35 Active Points; total cost 12 points.*
Rank 5: *Energy Blast 8d6. 40 Active Points; total cost 13 points.*
Rank 6: *Energy Blast 9d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 15 points.*
Rank 7: *Energy Blast 10d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 17 points.*
- 2) **Mageblast Alpha-2, Rank 1:** Add Autofire (5 shots; +½). 30 Active Points; total cost 10 points.
Rank 2: *Energy Blast 5d6. 37 Active Points; total cost 12 points.*
Rank 3: *Energy Blast 6d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 15 points.*
Rank 4: *Energy Blast 7d6. 52 Active Points; total cost 17 points.*
Rank 5: *Energy Blast 8d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 20 points.*
Rank 6: *Energy Blast 9d6. 67 Active Points; total cost 22 points.*
Rank 7: *Energy Blast 10d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 25 points.*
- 3) **Mageblast Alpha-3/A, Rank 1:** Add Area Of Effect (Radius; +1). 40 Active Points; total cost 13 points.
Rank 2: *Energy Blast 5d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 17 points.*
Rank 3: *Energy Blast 6d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 20 points.*
Rank 4: *Energy Blast 7d6. 70 Active Points; total cost 23 points.*
Rank 5: *Energy Blast 8d6. 80 Active Points; total cost 27 points.*
Rank 6: *Energy Blast 9d6. 90 Active Points; total cost 30 points.*

Rank 7: *Energy Blast 10d6. 100 Active Points; total cost 33 points.*

4) **Mageblast Alpha-3/B:** Add Explosion (+½). Same costs as Option #2.

5) **Mageblast Alpha-4 or Alpha-5:** Add Area Of Effect (Line) or (Cone). Same costs as Option #3.

6) **Greater Mageblast (Beta Spells):** To create a Class Beta version of any of these spells, simply substitute the equivalent DCs in Killing Damage: 1d6+1 for Rank 1, 1½d6 for Rank 2, 2d6 for Rank 3, and so on.

7) **Power Shackles (Gamma/2):** This spell surrounds the target with a field (or sometimes bands) of colored energy that prevents him from moving. Substitute Entangle of equivalent Active Point value for Energy Blast (for odd-numbered Active Point totals, add +1d6 of BODY).

SLEEP SPELL: GAMMA/1-1, RANK 1

Effect: Energy Blast 2d6, NND (defense is Force Field)
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 100"
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This spell is similar to Mageblast, but it only knocks the target out, it doesn't cause any lasting physical injury.

Game Information: *Energy Blast 2d6, NND (defense is Force Field; +1) (20 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain STUN 3d6; -½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 7 points.*

Options:

- 1) **More Powerful Ranks:** Change as follows:
Rank 2: *Energy Blast 3d6. 30 Active Points; total cost 10 points.*
Rank 3: *Energy Blast 4d6. 40 Active Points; total cost 13 points.*
Rank 4: *Energy Blast 5d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 17 points.*
Rank 5: *Energy Blast 6d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 20 points.*
Rank 6: *Energy Blast 7d6. 70 Active Points; total cost 23 points.*
Rank 7: *Energy Blast 8d6. 80 Active Points; total cost 27 points.*
- 2) **Sleep Spell Gamma/1-2, Rank 1:** Add Autofire (5 shots; +½). 35 Active Points; total cost 12 points.
Rank 2: *Energy Blast 3d6. 52 Active Points; total cost 17 points.*
Rank 3: *Energy Blast 4d6. 70 Active Points; total cost 23 points.*
Rank 4: *Energy Blast 5d6. 87 Active Points; total cost 29 points.*
Rank 5: *Energy Blast 6d6. 105 Active Points;*

total cost 35 points.

Rank 6: *Energy Blast 7d6. 122 Active Points; total cost 41 points.*

Rank 7: *Energy Blast 8d6. 140 Active Points; total cost 47 points.*

3) Sleep Spell Gamma/1-3/A, Rank 1: Add Area Of Effect (Radius; +1). 30 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

Rank 2: *Energy Blast 3d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 15 points.*

Rank 3: *Energy Blast 4d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 20 points.*

Rank 4: *Energy Blast 5d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 25 points.*

Rank 5: *Energy Blast 6d6. 90 Active Points; total cost 30 points.*

Rank 6: *Energy Blast 7d6. 105 Active Points; total cost 35 points.*

Rank 7: *Energy Blast 8d6. 120 Active Points; total cost 40 points.*

4) Sleep Spell Gamma/1-3/B: Add Explosion (+½). 25 Active Points; total cost 8 points.

Rank 2: *Energy Blast 3d6. 37 Active Points; total cost 12 points.*

Rank 3: *Energy Blast 4d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 17 points.*

Rank 4: *Energy Blast 5d6. 62 Active Points; total cost 21 points.*

Rank 5: *Energy Blast 6d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 25 points.*

Rank 6: *Energy Blast 7d6. 87 Active Points; total cost 29 points.*

Rank 7: *Energy Blast 8d6. 100 Active Points; total cost 33 points.*

5) Sleep Spell Gamma/1-4 or Gamma/1-5: Add Area Of Effect (Line) or (Cone). Same costs as Option #3.

ENERVATION SPELL: GAMMA/1-1, RANK 1

Effect: Drain STUN 1d6
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 75"
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: Although similar to the Sleep Spell, this spell is learned less frequently by wizards due to its shorter range. However, some wizards swear by it, arguing that the basic effect of weakening and potentially stunning the target is more reliable than the all-or-nothing of the Sleep Spell.

Game Information: *Drain STUN 1d6, Ranged (+½) (15 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain STUN 3d6; -½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 5 points.*

Options:

1) More Powerful Ranks: Change as follows:

Rank 2: *Drain STUN 2d6. 30 Active Points; total cost 10 points.*

Rank 3: *Drain STUN 3d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 15 points.*

Rank 4: *Drain STUN 4d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 20 points.*

Rank 5: *Drain STUN 5d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 25 points.*

Rank 6: *Drain STUN 6d6. 90 Active Points; total cost 30 points.*

Rank 7: *Drain STUN 7d6. 105 Active Points; total cost 35 points.*

2) Enervation Spell Gamma/1-2, Rank 1: Add Autofire (5 shots; +1½). 30 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

Rank 2: *Drain STUN 2d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 20 points.*

Rank 3: *Drain STUN 3d6. 90 Active Points; total cost 30 points.*

Rank 4: *Drain STUN 4d6. 120 Active Points; total cost 40 points.*

Rank 5: *Drain STUN 5d6. 150 Active Points; total cost 50 points.*

Rank 6: *Drain STUN 6d6. 180 Active Points; total cost 60 points.*

Rank 7: *Drain STUN 7d6. 210 Active Points; total cost 70 points.*

3) Enervation Spell Gamma/1-3/A, Rank 1: Add Area Of Effect (Radius; +1). 25 Active Points; total cost 8 points.

Rank 2: *Drain STUN 2d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 17 points.*

Rank 3: *Drain STUN 3d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 25 points.*

Rank 4: *Drain STUN 4d6. 100 Active Points; total cost 33 points.*

Rank 5: *Drain STUN 5d6. 125 Active Points; total cost 42 points.*

Rank 6: *Drain STUN 6d6. 150 Active Points; total cost 50 points.*

Rank 7: *Drain STUN 7d6. 175 Active Points; total cost 58 points.*

4) Enervation Spell Gamma/1-3/B: Add Explosion (+½). 20 Active Points; total cost 7 points.

Rank 2: *Drain STUN 2d6. 40 Active Points; total cost 13 points.*

Rank 3: *Drain STUN 3d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 20 points.*

Rank 4: *Drain STUN 4d6. 80 Active Points; total cost 27 points.*

Rank 5: *Drain STUN 5d6. 100 Active Points; total cost 33 points.*

Rank 6: *Drain STUN 6d6. 120 Active Points; total cost 40 points.*

Rank 7: *Drain STUN 7d6. 140 Active Points; total cost 47 points.*

5) Enervation Spell Gamma/1-4 or Gamma/1-5:

Add Area Of Effect (Line) or (Cone). Same costs as Option #3.

6) Other Drain-Based Spells: You can create many similar spells by substituting other forms of Drain, such as:

Weakness Spell (Gamma/3): *Drain STR*

Clumsiness Spell (Gamma/3, often referred to as the "Butterfingers Spell"): *Drain DEX*

Exhaustion Spell (Gamma/3): *Drain END*

FLARE (DELTA-1, RANK 1)

Effect: Sight Group Flash 4d6
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 10"
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This spell creates a blindingly bright flare of light that can blind a target up to 65 feet away.

Game Information: *Sight Group Flash 4d6 (20 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (10"; -¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Side Effects (Drain STUN 3d6; -½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 6 points.*

Options:

1) More Powerful Ranks: Change as follows:

Rank 2: *Sight Group Flash 5d6. 25 Active Points; total cost 8 points.*

Rank 3: *Sight Group Flash 6d6. 30 Active Points; total cost 9 points.*

Rank 4: *Sight Group Flash 7d6. 35 Active Points; total cost 11 points.*

Rank 5: *Sight Group Flash 8d6. 40 Active Points; total cost 12 points.*

Rank 6: *Sight Group Flash 9d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 14 points.*

Rank 7: *Sight Group Flash 10d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 15 points.*

2) Flare Delta-2, Rank 1: Add Autofire (5 shots; +1½). 50 Active Points; total cost 15 points.

Rank 2: *Sight Group Flash 5d6. 62 Active Points; total cost 19 points.*

Rank 3: *Sight Group Flash 6d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 23 points.*

Rank 4: *Sight Group Flash 7d6. 87 Active Points; total cost 27 points.*

Rank 5: *Sight Group Flash 8d6. 100 Active Points; total cost 31 points.*

Rank 6: *Sight Group Flash 9d6. 112 Active Points; total cost 34 points.*

Rank 7: *Sight Group Flash 10d6. 125 Active Points; total cost 38 points.*

3) Flare Delta-3/A, Rank 1: Add Area Of Effect (Radius; +1). 40 Active Points; total cost 12 points.

Rank 2: *Sight Group Flash 5d6. 50 Active Points; total cost 15 points.*

Rank 3: *Sight Group Flash 6d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 18 points.*

Rank 4: *Sight Group Flash 7d6. 70 Active Points; total cost 21 points.*

Rank 5: *Sight Group Flash 8d6. 80 Active Points; total cost 25 points.*

Rank 6: *Sight Group Flash 9d6. 90 Active Points; total cost 28 points.*

Rank 7: *Sight Group Flash 10d6. 100 Active Points; total cost 31 points.*

4) Flare Delta-3/B, Rank 1: Add Explosion (+½). 30 Active Points; total cost 9 points

Rank 2: Sight Group Flash 5d6. 37 Active Points; total cost 11 points.

Rank 3: Sight Group Flash 6d6. 45 Active Points; total cost 14 points.

Rank 4: Sight Group Flash 7d6. 52 Active Points; total cost 16 points.

Rank 5: Sight Group Flash 8d6. 60 Active Points; total cost 18 points.

Rank 6: Sight Group Flash 9d6. 67 Active Points; total cost 21 points.

Rank 7: Sight Group Flash 10d6. 75 Active Points; total cost 23 points.

5) Flare Delta-4 or Delta-5: Add Area Of Effect (Line) or (Cone). Same costs as Option #3.

WIZARD'S HANDS (DELTA-1, RANK 1)

Effect: Telekinesis (2 STR), Fine Manipulation
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 30"
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: This versatile spell creates a pair of hands made of glowing arcane energy. Following the wizard's mental commands they can manipulate objects, punch or grab an opponent, and so on.

Game Information: *Telekinesis (2 STR), Fine Manipulation (14 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 5 points.*

Options:

1) More Powerful Ranks: Change as follows:

Rank 2: *Telekinesis (6 STR). 19 Active Points; total cost 8 points.*

Rank 3: *Telekinesis (10 STR). 25 Active Points; total cost 9 points.*

Rank 4: *Telekinesis (14 STR). 31 Active Points; total cost 12 points.*

Rank 5: *Telekinesis (18 STR). 37 Active Points; total cost 15 points.*

Rank 6: *Telekinesis (22 STR). 43 Active Points; total cost 17 points.*

Rank 7: *Telekinesis (26 STR). 49 Active Points; total cost 20 points.*

Defensive Spells

Defensive spells are much rarer than offensive ones, and much more simply categorized. In effect they all belong to one "Class," and since they are all personal only (*i.e.*, casters cannot cast a defensive spell "on" another person) they're all basically a restricted form of the Type 1 Manifestation.

A defensive spell's Rank depends on the amount of protection it provides. In theory a Rank 1 defensive spell offers complete protection against an appropriate Rank 1 offensive spell. In practice this isn't always the case. Fluctuations in arcane energies, physical forces, and attack vectors mean that an attack spell sometimes gets through a defensive spell it shouldn't, or that a weak defensive spell blocks a comparatively strong attack. Furthermore, just like body armor a defensive spell can block the lethal or injurious aspect of an attack while still permitting enough concussive force through to stun the target or knock him unconscious. As usual, a character's *Spellcaster* Perk must be equal to or greater than a spell's Rank before he can buy that spell.

LESSER WARDSHIELD (RANK 1)

Effect: Force Field (6 PD/6 ED)
Target: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: This defensive spell, which manifests as a colored glow of energy surrounding the caster, will), protects against mundane/physical impacts, including those created by spells like Mageblast.

Despite the "Lesser" in its name, this spell is learned and used more frequently than Greater Wardshield. A wizard can use both spells simultaneously, but their arcane energies "clash," making it very tiring to do so.

Game Information: *Force Field (6 PD/6 ED) (12 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x3 END when used at the same time as Greater Wardshield; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 5 points.*

Options:

1) More Powerful Ranks: Change as follows:

Rank 2: *Force Field (8 PD/8 ED). 16 Active Points; total cost 6 points.*

Rank 3: *Force Field (10 PD/10 ED). 20 Active Points; total cost 8 points.*

Rank 4: *Force Field (12 PD/12 ED). 24 Active Points; total cost 10 points.*

Rank 5: *Force Field (14 PD/14 ED). 28 Active Points; total cost 11 points.*

Rank 6: *Force Field (16 PD/16 ED). 32 Active Points; total cost 13 points.*

Rank 7: *Force Field (18 PD/18 ED). 36 Active Points; total cost 14 points.*

GREATER WARDSHIELD (RANK 1)

Effect: Force Field (4 Mental Defense/4 Power Defense/4 Sight Group Flash Defense)
Target: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: This defensive spell, which manifests as a colored glow of energy surrounding the caster, protects against the exotic effects of many spells, as well as certain mundane weapons like flare grenades. A wizard can use both Greater and Lesser Wardshields simultaneously, but their arcane energies “clash,” making it very tiring to do so.

It's possible to learn versions of Greater Wardshield that function more effectively against certain attacks than others (*i.e.*, in game terms, versions which have their points of defense re-arranged to favor one of the three types of defense). These are known as “Greater Wardshield Minor” spells. Each one counts as a separate spell and must be purchased separately.

Game Information: Force Field (4 Mental Defense/4 Power Defense/4 Sight Group Flash Defense) (12 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x3 END when used at the same time as Lesser Wardshield; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 5 points.

Options:**1) More Powerful Ranks:** Change as follows:

Rank 2: Force Field (5 Mental Defense/5 Power Defense/6 Sight Group Flash Defense). 16 Active Points; total cost 6 points.

Rank 3: Force Field (6 Mental Defense/6 Power Defense/7 Sight Group Flash Defense). 19 Active Points; total cost 8 points.

Rank 4: Force Field (8 Mental Defense/8 Power Defense/8 Sight Group Flash Defense). 24 Active Points; total cost 10 points.

Rank 5: Force Field (9 Mental Defense/9 Power Defense/10 Sight Group Flash Defense). 28 Active Points; total cost 11 points.

Rank 6: Force Field (10 Mental Defense/11 Power Defense/11 Sight Group Flash Defense). 32 Active Points; total cost 13 points.

Rank 7: Force Field (12 Mental Defense/12 Power Defense/12 Sight Group Flash Defense). 36 Active Points; total cost 14 points.

INTANGIBILITY (RANK 5)

Effect: Desolidification (affected by sonics)
Target: Self
Casting Time: Extra Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 8

Description: Although it has uses other than defensive, *Corben's Handbook* and other references list Intangibility with the defense spells because mages so often use it to escape from the Power Shackles spell or avoid attack spells. It's also handy for, among other things, walking through walls to avoid alarms. However, despite the general intangibility afforded by the spell, the caster remains vulnerable to sonic attacks for reasons not entirely understood by theoreticians. Security-conscious facilities set up “sonic barriers” along key walls to prevent spellcasters from walking through them.

Game Information: Desolidification (affected by sonics) (40 Active Points); Extra Time (Extra Phase; -¾), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.

Sensory Spells

Spells that augment a caster's senses (or ability to communicate) are relatively common, since they're useful and easy to learn (*i.e.*, they tend to cost few Character Points). In effect they all belong to one "Class," and since they are all personal only (*i.e.*, casters cannot cast a sensory spell "on" another person) they're all basically a restricted form of the Type 1 Manifestation.

A sensory spell's Rank is determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on ease of learning and use, whether the spell can be "upgraded" to a better form as the caster's knowledge grows, and other factors. As usual, a character's *Spellcaster* Perk must be equal to or greater than a spell's Rank before he can buy that spell.

ARCANE ANTENNA (RANK 1)

Effect: Radio Perception
Target: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: This spell allows a character to hear radio transmissions (though not to broadcast them). Like a radio, he can only hear one frequency at a time on one band (AM or FM); to change bands or frequency he must make an INT Roll (this is a Zero-Phase Action).

Game Information: *Radio Perception (Hearing Group)* (8 Active Points); *Costs Endurance (-1/2)*, *Gestures (-1/4)*, *Incantations (-1/4)*, *Requires A Magic Roll (-1/2)*. Total cost: 3 points.

Options:

1) Arcane Transceiver (Rank 4): This version of the spell allows the caster to both receive and transmit. Change to Radio Perception/Transmission (Hearing Group). 10 Active Points; total cost 4 points.

CLAIRVOYANCE (RANK 3)

Effect: Clairsentience (Sight Group)
Target: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: This spell allows the caster to see locations up to one mile away clearly. He establishes a "perception point" at the desired location, and from there can see normally. Many casters use a small crystal ball or mirror in conjunction with this spell so others can see what they're viewing, but neither are required to cast it. In either case, it takes a Full Phase Action every Phase the character wants to use it, so maintaining it prevents the caster from doing anything else.

Higher ranks of the spell provide greater range, and even the ability to move the perception point. The Mystic World takes it for granted that the military has developed versions of this spell with *much* longer ranges for use in military reconnaissance (possibly up to and including tracking enemy submarines and satellites), but if so the military's done an extraordinary job keeping them secret.

Game Information: *Clairsentience (Sight Group)*, *x8 Range (800")* (35 Active Points); *Extra Time (Full Phase throughout; -1/2)*, *Gestures (-1/4)*, *Incantations (-1/4)*, *Requires A Magic Roll (-1/2)*. Total cost: 14 points.

Options:

- 1) More Powerful Ranks:** Change as follows:
Rank 4: Increase to *x16 Range (1,600")*. 40 Active Points; total cost 16 points.
Rank 5: Increase to *x32 Range (3,200")*. 45 Active Points; total cost 18 points.
Rank 6: Increase to *x32 Range (3,200")* and add *Mobile Perception Point*. 50 Active Points; total cost 20 points.

FLY EYES (RANK 2)

Effect: Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees) for Sight Group
Target: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: Despite this spell's disgusting name and the sometimes lurid depictions of it in the media, it doesn't literally transform the caster's eyes into multifaceted insect-like eyes. It merely grants him the ability to see all around himself — an invaluable ability for soldiers, cops, adventurers, and others who tend to find themselves in sticky situations.

Game Information: *Increased Arc Of Perception (360 Degrees) for Sight Group (10 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 4 points.*

THOUGHTSPEECH (RANK 4)

Effect: Telepathy 4d6, Communication Only
Target: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: LOS
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2 (see text)

Description: This spell allows the caster to “talk” with another person mentally — a useful power in tactical situations where silence and/or precise communication are essential. To start “talking,” the caster must have Line Of Sight to the intended “target.” This spell is tiring to use for long periods of time; typically a caster uses it to convey one piece of information or hold a quick “conversation,” then shuts it off.

Game Information: *Telepathy 4d6 (20 Active Points); Communication Only (-¼), Costs Endurance (must pay END every Phase of use; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 6 points.*

WITCHSIGHT (RANK 1)

Effect: Nightvision
Target: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 0

Description: This simple, common spell lets the caster see clearly in the dark.

Game Information: *Nightvision (5 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Nonpersistent (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 2 points.*

Movement Spells

Spells that allow the caster to move in unusual ways are rare, and generally known only to skilled mages. In effect they all belong to one “Class,” and since they are all personal only (i.e., casters cannot cast a movement spell “on” another person) they're all basically a restricted form of the Type 1 Manifestation.

A movement spell's Rank is determined on a case-by-case basis, depending on ease of learning and use, whether the spell can be “upgraded” to a better form as the caster's knowledge grows, and other factors. As usual, a character's *Spellcaster* Perk must be equal to or greater than a spell's Rank before he can buy that spell.

SPIDER'S FEET (RANK 4)

Effect: Clinging (normal STR)
Target: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 2

Description: This spell allows a character to walk along walls and ceilings as if he were a spider. While that sounds simple, it's not without its dangers. It's tiring to use, and if the character happens to pass out (or get Knocked Out) while using it, he'll fall.

Game Information: *Clinging (normal STR) (10 Active Points); Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 3 points.*

WITCHSTEP (RANK 6)

Effect: Teleportation 15"
 Target: Self
 Casting Time: Full Phase
 Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
 Duration: Instant
 Range: Self
 Magic Roll Penalty: -3
 END Cost: 12

Description: This spell allows the caster to vanish and re-appear up to 100 feet away without passing through the intervening space. It's very tiring to use and requires a Full Phase Action regardless of how far the character moves.

Game Information: *Teleportation 15"* (30 Active Points); *Extra Time* (Full Phase; -½), *Gestures* (-¼), *Incantations* (-¼), *Increased Endurance Cost* (x4 END; -1½), *Requires A Magic Roll* (-½), *Side Effects* (Drain STUN 3d6; -½). Total cost: 7 points.

Black Magic

AGONY

Effect: Ego Attack 2d6, Does BODY
 Target/Area Affected: One character
 Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
 Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
 Duration: Instant
 Range: LOS
 Magic Roll Penalty: -4
 END Cost: 4

Description: This spell allows a caster to inflict twisting torment upon another person. The pain is so intense that it causes actual physical harm (i.e., BODY damage). Injuries it inflicts manifest as pustules, sores, and the like erupting upon the target's body, the target bleeding from his eyes or fingernails, or the like.

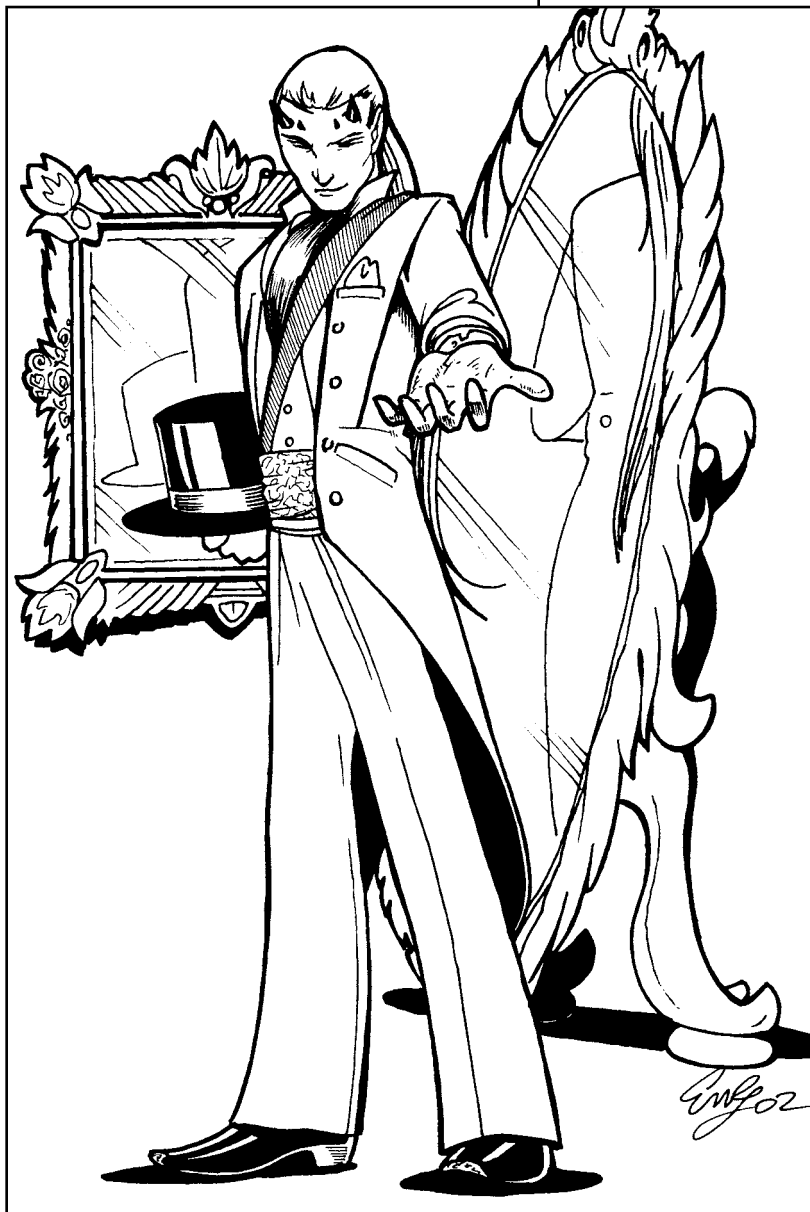
Game Information: *Ego Attack 2d6, Does BODY* (+1) (40 Active Points); *Gestures* (-¼), *Incantations* (-¼), *Requires A Magic Roll* (-½), *Spell* (-½). Total cost: 16 points.

CALL FORTH THE DEVIL

Effect: Summon one 600-point lesser demon
 Target/Area Affected: One demon
 Casting Time: 1 Hour
 Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
 Duration: Instant
 Range: No Range
 Magic Roll Penalty: -12
 END Cost: 12

Description: This ritual summons a devil from the Infernal Depths to serve the caster. But the caster must do more than call the fiend up — he must force, trick, or bribe him to service, for the spell does not compel obedience.

Game Information: *Summon one 600-point lesser demon* (120 Active Points); *OAF Expendable* (human sacrifice plus sacrificial tools and supplies, Extremely Difficult to obtain; -2), *Concentration* (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), *Extra Time* (1 Hour; -3), *Gestures* (throughout; -½), *Incantations* (throughout; -½), *Requires A Magic Roll* (-½). Total cost: 14 points.



CURSE OF PALSY

Effect: Drain DEX 4d6, Indirect
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: 1 Hour (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate) MegaScaled to cover all of Earth
Magic Roll Penalty: -0
END Cost: 17

Description: This curse, which can affect a target anywhere on Earth, afflicts the victim with a long-lasting palsy.

Game Information: *Drain DEX 4d6, Delayed Recovery Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Year; +2½), Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), MegaScale (hex is large enough to cover the Earth; +1¼), Indirect (always come from the caster, but can strike target regardless of intervening barriers; +½) (230 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (no Active Point penalty; -0), Spell (-½). Total cost: 35 points.*

Options:

1) Other Curses: Using this spell as a model, you can create all sorts of curses — just substitute some other Characteristic for DEX. For example:

Curse Of Brittle Bones: *Drain PD*

Curse Of Ennervation: *Drain STR*

Curse Of Fatigue: *Drain CON*

Curse Of Idiocy: *Drain INT*

Curse Of Ugliness: *Drain COM*

THE EVIL EYE

Effect: Drain 3d6, any two Characteristics at once
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 10"
Magic Roll Penalty: -0
END Cost: 10

Description: This special curse-like spell allows a caster to inflict grievous harm upon another person merely by looking at him. He must make eye contact with the victim, which means he has to be fairly close to him (this is why many people refuse to look directly at anyone they suspect of practicing Black Magic). He then utters a malediction of some sort, and the harm described soon starts to affect the victim until, slowly but surely, he's crippled by it. The caster can instantly dispel the effects of the Evil Eye if he so chooses; this counts as a Limitation because it's a well-known fact and often leads people to hunt down a black magician whom they believe has cursed one of their relatives or friends.

Game Information: *Drain 3d6, any two Characteristics at once (+½), Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Week; +1¾), Limited Range (10"; +¼) (105 Active Points); Caster Can Instantly Alleviate Effects (-½), Eye Contact Required (-½), Extra Time (onset time of 5 Minutes; -2), Gestures (-¼), Gradual Effect (3 Hours, 1d6/hour; -1¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (no Active Point penalty; -0), Spell (-½). Total cost: 17 points.*

HAND OF GLORY

Effect: Invisibility to Hearing Group plus Sight Group Images (create light)
Target/Area Affected: Self/4" Radius
Lighting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: None
Duration: Constant
Range: Self/No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
Charges: 1 Continuing Fuel Charge lasting for 1 Hour

Description: Black magicians use this spell to commit robberies without being heard or seen. It creates a talisman that not only renders the caster's footsteps silent, it gives off a light that only the caster himself can see.

To create a Hand Of Glory, a black magician must cut off the right hand of a murderer who's been executed. (Ideally the murderer should have been hanged upon a gibbet, but executions are few and far between in the world of the Sixth Sun and almost none of them involve hanging, so black magicians make do with what they can get.) He wraps the hand in a winding-sheet and squeezes out all the blood and fat (which he saves), then pickles the hand for a fortnight in salt, pepper,

saltpetre, and less pleasant substances. Meanwhile, he uses the fat and blood to make a candle, often forming a wick from the dead man's hair. When the hand has finished pickling, it's shaped to hold the candle. The total amount of time necessary to craft the candle and hand (as opposed to prepare them for the creation) is six hours.

When the caster is ready to use the hand, he lights the candle. While it remains lit, his movements are absolutely silent. Furthermore, only he can see the candle's light, so he can carry it into darkened rooms and buildings without waking sleeping inhabitants or alerting guards.

Game Information: *Invisibility to Hearing Group, No Fringe, Delayed Effect (may have available a number of candles equal to character's INT/2; +¼) (25 Active Points); OAF (-1), Concentration (0 DCV throughout making; -1), Extra Time (6 Hours to make; -3½), Gestures (throughout making; -½), Incantations (throughout making; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (to make; -½), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Hour (-0) (total cost: 3 points) plus Sight Group Images, +2 to PER Rolls, Invisible to Sight Group (see text; +½), Personal Immunity (character can see the light even though no one else can; +¼), Increased Size (4" radius; +½) (36 Active Points); OAF (-1), Concentration (0 DCV throughout making; -1), Extra Time (6 Hours to make; -3½), Gestures (throughout making; -½), Incantations (throughout making; -½), Linked (-¼), No Range (-½), Only To Create Light (-1), Requires A Magic Roll (to make; -½), 1 Continuing Charge lasting 1 Hour (-0) (total cost: 4 points). Total cost: 7 points.*

HEX

Effect: Major Transform 8d6 (person into person with Unluck 4d6)
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 20"
Magic Roll Penalty: -12
END Cost: 12

Description: This spell inflicts a curse of ill fortune upon a person of the caster's choosing. If it succeeds, the victim is doomed to misfortune until the caster chooses to lift the malediction (or some other spellcaster removes it).

Game Information: *Major Transform 8d6 (person into person with Unluck 4d6, heals back through another application of this spell or a like spell) (120 Active Points); Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (20"; -¼), Limited Target (sentient beings; -¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 34 points.*

Cybermancy

This category of spells allows a wizard to activate, use, and manipulate technological devices.

ACTIVATE DEVICE

Effect: Make Cybermancy Roll to turn on a device (see text)
Target: One device
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 5"
Cybermancy
Roll Penalty: See text
END Cost: 1

Description: The simplest spell of Cybermancy is one that allows a wizard to turn on a device. To activate a machine, the wizard simply has to succeed with a Cybermancy roll and spend 1 END. The roll is modified by the complexity of the device: Simple devices (most household appliances and such) are -2; Complex devices (most vehicles) are at -4; and Very Complex devices (robots, computers, automated security systems) are at -8.

Game Information: *See text.*

CONTROL TECHNOLOGY

Effect: Mind Control 12d6 (Machine class of minds)
Target: One device
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: LOS
Cybermancy
Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 6

Description: When he encounters machines that "think" (such as computers and robots) that he doesn't already control, a wizard can use this spell to force his will upon them and make them do his bidding.

Game Information: *Mind Control 12d6 (Machine class of minds) (60 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Cybermancy Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 27 points.*

DEACTIVATE

Effect: Dispel 20d6, all Electrical/Mechanical Device powers simultaneously
Target: One machine
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 50"
Cybermancy
Roll Penalty: -10
END Cost: 9

Description: Even a wizard can't always rely on technology to function properly, and sometimes it's necessary to shut the device off quickly lest it harm him. That's when this spell, which can deactivate any device, comes in handy.

Game Information: *Dispel 20d6, all Electrical/Mechanical Device powers simultaneously (+2), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (total cost: 195 points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Requires A Cybermancy Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 78 points.*

DRAIN POWER

Effect: Suppress 4d6, all Electrical/Mechanical Device powers simultaneously
Target: One device
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 50"
Cybermancy
Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 6

Description: Even in the world of the Sixth Sun, most devices require some sort of power, whether it comes from a battery, a wall socket, or fuel. This spell saps that power, making it harder (or impossible) for a device to function.

Game Information: *Suppress 4d6, all Electrical/Mechanical Device powers simultaneously (+2) (60 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (50"; -¼), Requires A Cybermancy Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 24 points.*

MACHINE SPEECH

Effect: Telepathy 12d6 (Machine class of minds)
Target: One device
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: LOS
Cybermancy
Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 6

Description: The cybermancers of the Sixth Sun are aware that computers, robots, and many similar devices can "talk" — in other words, that a wizard can communicate with them to learn what they know and perhaps persuade them to take a particular course of action. This is the spell used for such communication.

Game Information: *Telepathy 12d6 (Machine class of minds) (60 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Cybermancy Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 27 points.*

MANIPULATE MACHINE

Effect: Telekinesis (10 STR), Fine Manipulation, Only Versus Machines
Target: One machine
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 125"
Cybermancy
Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 2

Description: Wizards use this common Cybermancy spell to move machines, control the moving parts in machines, flip switches, and so forth.

Game Information: *Telekinesis (10 STR), Fine Manipulation (25 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only To Control Machines And Machine Parts (-1), Requires A Cybermancy Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 8 points.*

REPAIR

Effect: Healing BODY 4d6, Machines Only
Target: One machine
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Cybermancy
Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 4

Description: By touching a damaged machine, a wizard can repair it with this spell. The spell cannot replace missing parts or the like, it can only repair existing, damaged parts.

Game Information: *Healing BODY 4d6 (40 Active Points); Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Versus Machines (-1), Requires A Cybermancy Roll (-1 per 20 Active Points; -¼), Spell (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

Rune Magic

Rune Magic, the type of magic practiced by mages who worship the Norse gods (or just find that culture or style of spellcasting fascinating) involves the use of spoken or painted runes, sigils, glyphs, and like symbols. To create a spell effect, the spellcaster must place the rune on the appropriate object, and perhaps concentrate on it to activate the magic. In some cases, the caster may use a short incantation to activate the rune's power, but he can mutter it under his breath in a word or two, so it doesn't qualify for the *Incantations* Limitation.

In *HERO System* terms, Rune Magic spells are designed one of two ways. Most are Uncontrolled spells that cost no END; they last until someone obliterates, removes, mars, or covers up the rune. (For non-Uncontrolled spells, this may constitute a $-\frac{1}{2}$ Limitation.) This can lead to some extremely long-lasting effects, so GMs may want to restrict the use of such spells (or even require the character to make them Independent). The other type of rune-spell either creates a Constant effect that lasts as long as the user expends personal energy to power it, or uses the *Lingering Advantage* to represent how long the rune remains in effect before fading or becoming powerless. Both types of spells have the Limitations *Focus* (the materials used to carve or paint the rune) and *Requires A Rune Magic Roll*. If the rune must be carved, this takes Extra Time (even painting one may require a Full Phase); creating or activating many runes also requires Concentration.

To prevent over-use of some runes, GMs may want to require characters to use their own blood to "empower" a rune. This costs $\frac{1}{2}$ of a point of BODY for each rune cast. (A character with less than a full point of BODY is treated as being at the next lowest whole number for all rules purposes (for example, a character with $8\frac{2}{3}$ BODY is treated as having 8 BODY.) Some runes require more blood; if so this is included as a Side Effect.

Here are a few example runes. You can adapt the ones in the *Rune Magic* chapter of *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire II* if you need more, or create your own.

RUNE OF COMMAND

Effect: Mind Control 14d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Painting Time: 1 Turn (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 7

Description: By painting this rune on the forehead of another person, the caster can take control of his mind and force him to follow a command. The caster cannot alter the command unless he recasts the spell (*i.e.*, erases the rune and redraws it), but can cause the spell to cease.

Game Information: *Mind Control 14d6* (70 Active Points); OAF Expendable (rune-paints, Easy to obtain; -1), Cannot Change Commands Unless Spell Is Re-Cast ($-\frac{1}{4}$), Concentration ($\frac{1}{2}$ DCV throughout casting; $-\frac{1}{2}$), Extra Time (1 Turn; $-1\frac{1}{4}$), No Range ($-\frac{1}{2}$), Requires A Rune Magic Roll ($-\frac{1}{2}$), Spell ($-\frac{1}{2}$). Total cost: 13 points.

RUNE OF LUCK

Effect: Luck 4d6, Usable By Other
Target/Area Affected: One character
Painting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus
Duration: Uncontrolled (lasts until rune is marred, destroyed, or covered up, or for 1 Hour from the time of casting, whichever occurs first)
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 0

Description: When painted on the caster or another person, this rune makes the recipient extremely lucky. Things just seem to go his way... for up to an hour. However, if the rune is marred, destroyed, or covered up before the duration ends, the spell expires immediately.

Game Information: *Luck 4d6, Uncontrolled* (lasts until rune is marred, destroyed, or covered up, or for 1 Hour from the time of casting, whichever occurs first; $+\frac{1}{2}$), Usable By Other ($+\frac{1}{4}$) (35 Active Points); OAF Expendable (rune-paints, Easy to obtain; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase; $-\frac{1}{2}$), Requires A Rune Magic Roll ($-\frac{1}{2}$). Total cost: 12 points.

RUNE OF NIGHTSIGHT

Effect: Nightvision, Usable By Other
Target/Area Affected: One character
Painting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus
Duration: Uncontrolled (lasts until rune is marred, destroyed, or covered up, or for 1 Hour from the time of casting, whichever occurs first)
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 0

Description: When painted on the caster or another person, this rune (a favorite of many soldiers) allows the recipient to see as well at night as he can in daylight for up to an hour. However, if the rune is marred, destroyed, or covered up before the duration ends, the spell expires immediately.

Game Information: *Nightvision, Uncontrolled (lasts until rune is marred, destroyed, or covered up, or for 1 Hour from the time of casting, whichever occurs first; +½), Usable By Other (+¼) (9 Active Points); OAF Expendable (rune-paints, Easy to obtain; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Requires A Rune Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 3 points.*

RUNE OF PROTECTION FROM FIRE

Effect: Force Field (16 ED), Only To Protect Buildings From Fire
Target/Area Affected: One building
Carving Time: 20 Minutes
Casting Procedures: Focus
Duration: Uncontrolled (lasts until rune is marred, destroyed, or covered up)
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -12
END Cost: 0

Description: When carved on a building (a Base, in other words), this rune makes it very difficult to set any part of the building — even old, dried wood — on fire. The contents of the building can still burn normally, and the protection ends if anything ever defaces or covers the rune. A rune mage can only protect one building at a time with this rune.

Game Information: *Force Field (16 ED), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½), Uncontrolled (lasts until rune is marred, destroyed, or covered up; +½), Usable By Other (one building of up to 100 ktons weight; +5¼) (116 Active Points); OAF (rune-carving knife; -1), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (20 Minutes; -2½), Requires A Rune Magic Roll (-½), Only Works Against Limited Type Of Damage (fire; -½), Only Works On Buildings (Bases) (-1). Total cost: 15 points.*

RUNE OF RAISING THE DEAD

Effect: Summon one 178-point zombie, Slavishly Loyal
Target/Area Affected: One zombie
Painting Time: 5 Minutes
Casting Procedures: Focus, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -7
END Cost: 7

Description: This dark and evil rune brings the dead back to a horrible semblance of life to do the caster's bidding. The rune mage must cut the palm of his hand and use the blood to paint the rune on the forehead of a corpse (the corpse must be reasonably intact) while loudly chanting the words to activate the rune. If he casts the spell properly, the corpse becomes his zombie servant. The zombie must take a Susceptibility: 3d6 per Segment if rune is destroyed, removed, or obliterated.

Game Information: *Summon one 178-point zombie, Slavishly Loyal (+1) (72 Active Points); OAF (rune-painting brush made of human hair; -1), Concentration (0 DCV throughout; -1), Extra Time (5 Minutes; -2), Incantations (throughout; -½), Must Have Reasonably-Intact Corpse (-1), Requires A Rune Magic Roll (-½), Side Effects (caster loses 1 BODY, always occurs; -½). Total cost: 10 points.*

RUNE OF SHATTERING

Effect: RKA 2d6, Only Works Against Stationary Objects
Target/Area Affected: One object
Carving Time: 2 Turns (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: When a rune-wizard wishes to destroy some object — be it a cup, a car, or a window — he can do so by carving this rune upon the object. The shattering itself does not hurt or affect him in any way, but at the GM's option the secondary effects (such as a wall falling) might, if he doesn't find some way to avoid them.

This spell does not work at range — the caster has to touch (carve a rune upon) the object he wants to shatter. The *No Range* Limitation is a part of the *Only Works Against Stationary Targets* Limitation and thus is not listed separately.

Game Information: *RKA 2d6, Penetrating (+½) (45 Active Points); OAF (rune-carving knife; -1), Concentration (½ DCV throughout casting; -½), Extra Time (2 Turns; -1¼), Only Works Against Objects (-½), Only Works Against Stationary Targets (-1), Requires A Rune Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 8 points.*

RUNE OF STRENGTH

Effect: Aid STR 2d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Painting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: By painting this rune on himself, another person, or even an animal, the caster can prodigiously increase that being's strength for several minutes.

Game Information: Aid STR 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 5 Minutes; +½) (30 Active Points); OAF Expendable (rune-paints, Easy to obtain; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Requires A Rune Magic Roll (-½), Power Stops Working If Rune Is Marred, Destroyed, Or Covered Up (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

Shamanism

Shamanism involves spells that summon, contact, control, or otherwise make use of spirits (or allow the caster to interact with them). Primarily it focuses on nature spirits, spirit creatures, and the Spirit World in which they live, but in some cases it goes beyond that to involve human spirits. Characters cannot learn both standard magic and Shamanism; they must choose one or the other. See the Shamanism chapter of *The Fantasy Hero Grimoire II* for more spells you can adapt to the Sixth Sun setting, if desired.

BANISH DISEASE SPIRIT

Effect: Major Transform 3d6 (cure sick person)
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: 1 Hour (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: It's well-known to shamans that illnesses are caused by disease spirits who maliciously attack humans. This spell, an hour-long ritual involving the burning of special substances, the drawing of sacred patterns with mystic powders, and other procedures, drives out the disease spirit and heals the sick person. The more intense the effects of the disease, the longer it may take to cure (i.e., if necessary, the shaman may have to cast the spell two or more times to effect a full Transformation).

In game terms, this is a Major Transform, "sick person to well person," that stops the course of a disease — once the character applies the spell, the disease inflicts no further damage (loss of CON, for example) on the victim. However, the spell does not automatically heal any STUN,

BODY, CON, or other Characteristics lost to the disease prior to the spell's use. To accomplish that, the priest must add up the cost of the lost abilities he wants to restore and treat them as "powers" being granted to the target by the Transform.

Game Information: Major Transform 3d6 (sick person into well person, heals back through any normal means that would cause character to contract the same disease) (45 Active Points); OAF Expendable (special herbs, mystic powders, and the like, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Limited Target (sentient beings; -¼), No Range (-½), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½). Total cost: 5 points.

COMMAND SPIRITS

Effect: +40 PRE, Only To Make Presence Attacks Against Spirits
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: This spell enhances the shaman's prestige and appearance of power, allowing him to more easily persuade or intimidate spirits. On the other hand, if they call his bluff and realize he's not as powerful as he seems, things may go badly for him.

Game Information: +40 PRE (40 Active Points); OAF (fetish bag; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only To Make Presence Attacks (-1), Only Works Against Spirits (-1), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

DESTROY SPIRIT

Effect: RKA 3d6, Affects Desolidified, Only Versus Spirits
Target/Area Affected: One spirit
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: 280"
Magic Roll Penalty: -6
END Cost: 6

Description: Sometimes A shaman must confront evil spirits, or spirits who for some reason intend harm to themselves or another person. As a last resort, he can use his power to destroy a spirit utterly.

Game Information: RKA 3d6, Affects Desolidified (only versus spirit Desolidification; +¼) (56 Active Points); OAF Expendable (consecrated knife made of flint, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Versus Spirits (-1), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 12 points.

PERCEIVE SPIRITS

Effect: Detect Spirits
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: This common shamanic spell grants the caster the power to perceive spirits. (Some skilled shamans buy it as an ability rather than a spell.)

Game Information: *Detect Spirits (INT Roll) (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Ranged, Targeting (25 Active Points); OAF (mirror made of mica, obsidian, or the like; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points.*

RELEASING THE SPIRIT

Effect: Duplication (create astral form)
Target/Area Affected: Self One character
Casting Time: 1 Hour
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -14
END Cost: 14 to cast

Description: With this spell, perhaps the most powerful in his repertoire, a shaman can disconnect his spirit from his material form, allowing it to roam at will. His spirit can fly at tremendous speed and is immaterial, but possesses his memories, spells, and so forth. While disconnected from his spirit, the shaman cannot use his body at all, and harm caused to either spirit or body affects both. Furthermore, his spirit cannot remain outside his body for more than 24 hours, or both will die.

In game terms, this spell is built with a heavily Limited form of Duplication. You should build the Duplicate with powers appropriate to a spirit — Flight, Desolidification, and the like — in addition to most of the character's normal abilities (including spells). This version assumes a Duplicate built on 250 Character Points; you should recalculate the cost for characters built on more or fewer points.

Game Information: *Duplication (creates 250-point spirit form), Easy Recombination (Half Phase Action at half DCV), Ranged Recombination (+½), Altered Duplicate (51+%; +1) (137 Active Points); OAF (special fetish bag filled with items of personal significance; -1), Costs Endurance To Activate (-¼), Extra Time (must enter trance and meditate to allow spirit to leave its fleshy prison, 1 Hour to cast; -1½), Feedback (-1), Original Character Is Incapacitated And Helpless While Duplicate Exists (-1), Both Characters Die If They Do Not Recombine Within 24 Hours (-½), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½). Total cost: 20 points.*

SHAMANIC HEALING

Effect: Aid REC 2d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: 1 Hour (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 10

Description: With this spell, the shaman calls upon his knowledge of the body and its spirit to work a rapid healing. During an hour-long ceremony, he speaks to the spirit, coaxing it back into greater vigor so that the subject heals far more quickly than normal.

Game Information: *Aid REC 2d6, Delayed Return Rate (all points fade after 1 Month or when subject wounds are fully healed by any means; +1½) (50 Active Points); OAF Expendable (special herbs, mystic powders, and the like, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Increased Endurance Cost (x2 END; -½), Only Increases REC For Purposes Of Recovering BODY From A Specific Wound/Injury (-½), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½). Total cost: 5 points.*

SOOTHING TOUCH

Effect: Touch Group Flash 10d6
Target/Area Affected: One character
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: This spell temporarily alleviates the pain felt by the victim of an injury (though in numbing him it may also make it difficult for him to use his hands; the GM might require DEX Rolls for even simple actions). To maintain the anaesthetic effect the shaman has to stay near the subject and cast the spell on him repeatedly.

Game Information: *Touch Group Flash 10d6 (30 Active Points); OAF (fetish bag; -1), Concentration (½ DCV; -¼), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½). Total cost: 9 points.*

SPIRIT WARD

Effect: Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense), Only Versus Spirits
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 2

Description: Since not all spirits are friendly, and even seemingly friendly spirits sometimes play “pranks” that can harm humans, a wise shaman learns this spell, which protects him from spirit powers. As a Focus he must make a fetish bag, a tiny leather pouch containing items of mystic significance to him.

Game Information: *Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (50 Active Points); OAF (fetish bag; -1), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only Versus Spirits And Their Attacks (-1), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½). Total cost: 12 points.*

SUMMON CITY SPIRIT

Effect: Summon one city spirit built on up to 500 points
Target/Area Affected: One city spirit
Casting Time: 1 Turn (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -10
END Cost: 10

Description: Spirits do not dwell just within the wilds — cities are living, breathing things too and have spirits of their own. Shamans in the world of the Sixth Sun can often call these spirits forth to talk with them, and perhaps seek their aid. (See pages 100-01 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* for a suggested character sheet for a city spirit, or create your own.)

At the GM's option, contrary to the standard rules, shamans can buy this spell in a Multipower with Summon Nature Spirit.

Game Information: *Summon one city spirit built on up to 500 points (100 Active Points); OAF (spirit fetish; -1), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½), Arrives Under Own Power (-½), Summoned Being Must Inhabit Locale (-½). Total cost: 17 points.*

SUMMON NATURE SPIRIT

Effect: Summon one city spirit built on up to 500 points
Target/Area Affected: One city spirit
Casting Time: 1 Turn (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -10
END Cost: 10

Description: To a shaman, the domain of nature is filled with spirits: field spirits, forest spirits, tree spirits, stone spirits, stream spirits, wind spirits, and many, many more. A skilled and wise shaman can often call these spirits forth to talk with him, and perhaps seek their aid. (See pages 100-01 of *Monsters, Minions, And Marauders* for a suggested character sheet for nature spirits, or create your own.)

At the GM's option, contrary to the standard rules, shamans can buy this spell in a Multipower with Summon City Spirit.

Game Information: *Summon one nature spirit built on up to 500 points (100 Active Points); OAF (spirit fetish; -1), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½), Arrives Under Own Power (-½), Summoned Being Must Inhabit Locale (-½). Total cost: 17 points.*

TOTEM FORM

Effect: Multiform (assume totem animal form)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Persistent
Range: Touch
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: Also known in some cultures as Skin-changing, this spell grants the shaman the power to assume the form of the animal he has taken as his totem (see *Totem Power*, below). However, in animal form he retains his own intelligence, memories, and the like, and he does not risk personality loss for staying in that shape for long periods of time.

The cost of the spell varies based on the animal. This one uses a bear as an example.

Game Information: *Multiform (assume 200-point bear form) (40 Active Points); OAF (fetish for the appropriate totem, plus a claw, tooth, skull, or like object from that animal; -1), Costs Endurance (to change form; -½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½). Total cost: 11 points.*

TOTEM POWER

Effect: Aid two Characteristics/abilities 2d6, Self Only
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Half Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

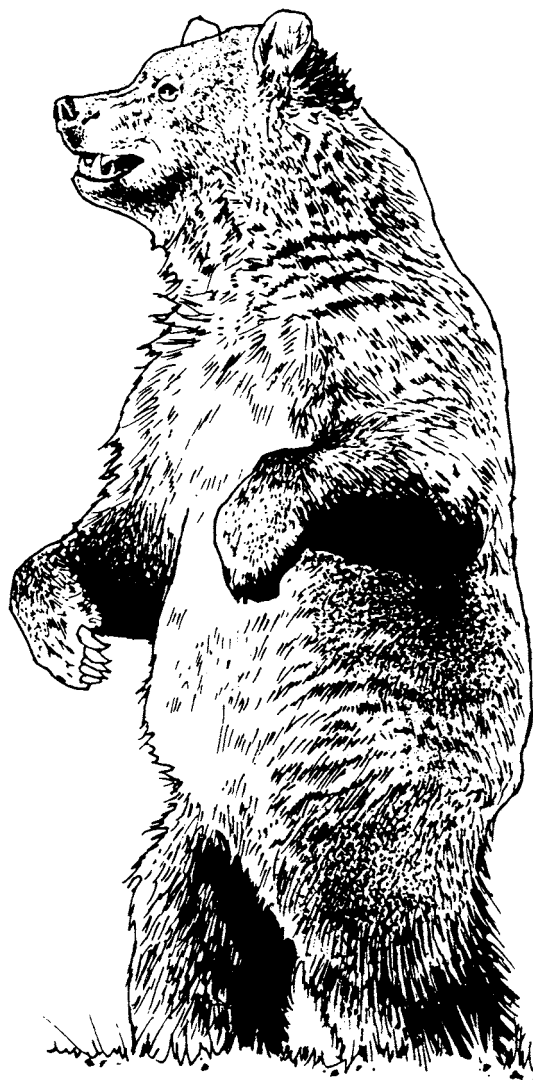
Description: Many shamans have a totem — a sort of guiding philosophy of life represented by a archetypical spirit animal or being, such as Raven, Bear, or Wolf. Some shamans have more than one totem, since adopting the guidance/worship of one doesn't necessarily prevent the shaman from adopting others (though some may be considered mutually exclusive in some shamanic traditions). If he adopts a totem, the shaman can, if he wishes, learn a spell that lets him more purely and mystically embody one (or more) of the qualities of that totem. He can only do this once per day (unless his totem's feeling particularly helpful or benevolent).

In game terms, this spell works by temporarily enhancing the attributes most closely related to the totem (see the accompanying text box for a list of suggested totems). A shaman with a totem should have other abilities, and often Disadvantages, that reflect that totem. A player shouldn't just pick totem spells because they're powerful, but because they fit his shaman character (and help to define him better). For example, a shaman with the Psychological Limitation *Love Of Combat* probably shouldn't choose Mouse, Raven, or Serpent as a totem; they're not combative or aggressive in that way. But Wolf, Bear, or Shark might fit his temperament just fine. Almost all shamans take just one totem, but with the GM's permission a character might have multiple totems (as long as they don't conflict with each other "personality-wise").

Game Information: Aid 2d6, two Characteristics/abilities at once (+½), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼) (35 Active Points); OAF (fetish or mask related to totem; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Shamanism Roll (-½), Self Only (-½), 1 Charges (-2). Total cost: 6 points.

TOTEM ANIMALS

Totem	Characteristics/Abilities
Bear	STR, CON
Cat	DEX, SPD
Crocodile	CON, PRE
Crow	INT, EGO
Dog	EGO, PRE
Eagle	INT, PRE
Hummingbird	SPD, REC
Jaguar	DEX, PRE
Lion	DEX, PRE
Mongoose	DEX, SPD
Mouse	DEX, INT
Oak	CON, BODY
Owl	INT, EGO
Raccoon	DEX, INT
Rat	DEX, REC
Raven	INT, PRE
Shark	STR, PRE
Snake	EGO, PRE
Spider	INT, EGO
Tiger	DEX, PRE
Turtle	CON, PD
Wolf	DEX, CON
Wolverine	STR, DEX



Voodoo

As discussed above, most Voodoo spells are standard spells with an OAF (fetish or charm) added. However, there is a body of Voodoo lore unique to that tradition. (See Hero Plus Adventure #17, *Strange Magics: Voodoo* for many more Voodoo spells and powers, including “Voodoo Doll,” which is too long to include here.)

LOA POSSESSION

Effect: Succor two Characteristics 4d6, Side Effects (character takes on loa's personality)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: 1 Minute
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Self
Voodoo Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: Through the use of spell ritual practices and meditative states, a houngan (a Voodoo priest) can let a loa (a god or spirit) “ride” (take possession of) him. This has the benefit (and drawback) of making him more like that loa — certain Characteristics increase or improve, based on the loa in question. But he also takes on aspects of the loa's personality. For example, if ridden by Erzuli he becomes seductive and lustful; if ridden by a death-loa he might become macabre (or, in the case of evil loa, murderous); if ridden by a loa associated with black magic he becomes wicked and cruel.

Game Information: *Succor Characteristics 4d6, any two Characteristics simultaneously (see accompanying table; +½) (30 Active Points); OAF (specially-prepared fetish or symbol of loa who will ride the houngan; -1), Concentration (½ DCV throughout casting; -½), Extra Time (1 Minute to cast; -¾), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Requires A Voodoo Roll (-½), Self Only (-½), Side Effects (character takes on loa's personality, always occurs; -½). Total cost: 5 points.*

LOAS

Loa	Sphere	Characteristics
Agau	Storms, earthquakes	PD, ED
Agwé	Fishing, sailing	CON, INT
Ayida-Wedo	Fertility	BODY, COM
Ayizan	Marketplaces, priestesses	INT, PRE
Azaka	Agriculture	STR, BODY
Badè	Wind	DEX, SPD
Baron Samedi	Death (aspect of Ghede)	PRE, SPD
Bosou	Virility, black magic	STR, EGO
Danbala (Damballa)	Wisdom, ancestral lore, the sky, serpents	EGO, PRE
Erzuli (Ezili)	Love, sex	PRE, COM
Ghede (Gédé)	Death	PRE, STUN
Gran Bwa	The forest, wildlife, herbal medicine, healing	CON, BODY
Lasiren	The ocean; love	CON, COM
Loko	Medicine, the priesthood	INT, EGO
Maman Brijit	Black magic, money	PRE, REC
Marinette	Evil deeds and works	STR, SPD
Ogou (Ogun)	Fire, war, metal, machines, tools	STR, CON
Papa Legba	Chief loa; destiny	CON, PRE
Simbi	Fresh water, rain, magicians, electricity	ED, SPD
Sogbo	Lightning	DEX, ED
Ti-Jean Petro	Revolution, black magic	STR, STUN

CHARM OF RELEASE

Effect: Telekinesis and Lockpicking
Target/Area Affected: One lock/door
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: With this spell a houngan can open locked doors, free himself from chains, and the like. He can also lock such things normally, sometimes confounding his jailers with how he got out of a still-locked door.

Game Information:

Cost Power

- 6 *Charm Of Release:* Multipower, 17-point reserve; all slots Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Instant (-½), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Voodoo Roll (-½)
- 1u 1) *Basic Locking/Unlocking:* Telekinesis (4 STR), Fine Manipulation; Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Incantations (-¼), Instant (-½), No Range (-½), Requires A Voodoo Roll (-½)
- 1u 2) *Arcane Unlock:* Lockpicking 18-; Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Instant (-½), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Voodoo Roll (-½)

Total cost: 8 points.

CREATE ZOMBI CADAVRE

Effect: Summon up to 64 zombi cadavre built on 154 Character Points each, Slavishly Loyal, Extra Tasks

Target/Area Affected: Special

Casting Time: 1 Hour

Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations

Duration: Instant

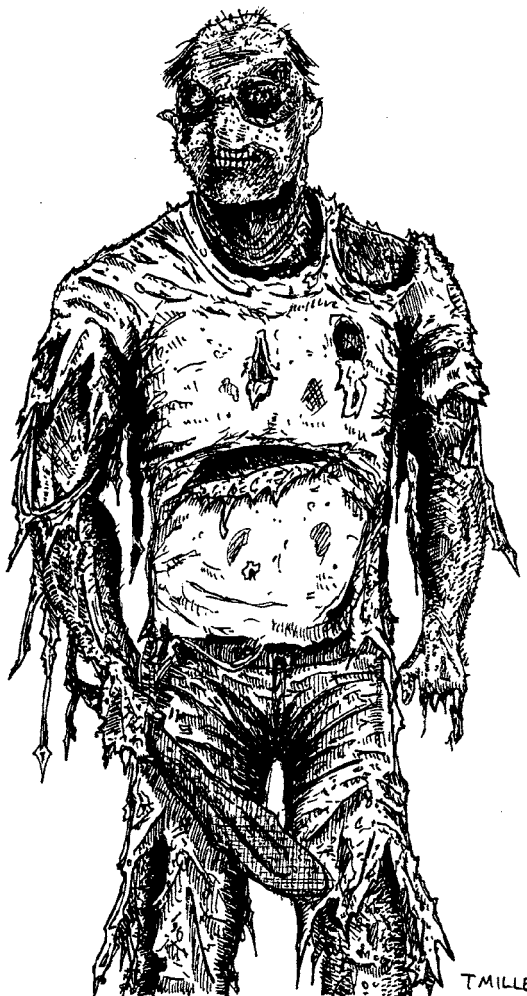
Range: No Range

Voodoo Roll Penalty: -15

END Cost: 15

Description: One of the most-feared spells of Voodoo black magic is this one, by which a bokor causes a body to rise from the grave and serve him as a mindless *zombi cadavre*. It requires a long and terrifying ritual performed in the same room or cemetery where the corpse is currently located.

First the bokor appeals to Baron Samedi, who controls the passage between the lands of life and death, to open the way that he (the bokor) may bring the *zombi cadavre* to life. Then he calls on Ghede-Nibo, caretaker of tombs, whose permission must be asked to use any dead person. Finally, when all preparations have been made and incantations uttered, the bokor calls the dead person's name. If all has gone as planned, the corpse answers the bokor's call and rise as the living dead.



The death of the bokor who created it frees a *zombi cadavre* to return to death, as does the completion of its total number of tasks. See *The HERO System Bestiary* for a character sheet for a typical zombie.

Game Information: *Summon up to 64 zombis cadavre built on 154 Character Points each, Slavishly Loyal (+1), Extra Tasks (bokor's EGO x4 tasks; +½) (152 Active Points); OAF Expendable (appropriate Voodoo charms, powders, and paraphernalia, Very Difficult to obtain; -1½), Can Only Be Cast At Night Within 36 Hours Of Death (-½), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Must Have An Appropriate Corpse (see text; -1½), Requires A Voodoo Roll (-½), Summoned Being Must Inhabit Locale (see text; -½). Total cost: 14 points.*

DEATH CURSE

Effect: RKA 8d6, NND, Does BODY

Target/Area Affected: One character

Casting Time: 1 Hour

Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations

Duration: Instant

Range: Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate) MegaScaled to cover all of Earth

Voodoo Roll Penalty: -0

END Cost: 31

Description: The most powerful bokors (Voodoo sorcerers) can pronounce a direct and lethal curse against someone, causing him to drop dead instantly. To cast the spell, the bokor goes to a graveyard at night, calls upon Ghede and Baron Samedi to send the spirits of the dead to him, and then sends those spirits to attack his target.

Game Information: *RKA 8d6, NND (defense is Life Support [Longevity]; +1), Does BODY (+1), Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), MegaScale (area covers all of Earth; +1¼), Indirect (always come from the bokor, but can strike target regardless of intervening barriers; +½), Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼) (660 Active Points); OAF Expendable (black hen or goat sacrifice plus sacrificial tools and supplies, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Can Only Be Cast At Night (-¼), Can Only Be Cast In A Graveyard (-½), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Gestures (throughout; -½), Incantations (throughout; -½), Requires A Voodoo Roll (no Active Point penalty; -0), Spell (-½). Total cost: 78 points.*

GHEDE'S COMMAND

Effect: +30 PRE, Only To Make Presence Attacks Against The Undead
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Voodoo Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: Ghede, the lord of death, can give his followers to power to command the walking dead. With his aid a houngan can scare away *zombis cadavre*, or perhaps even force them to turn on the bokor who created them.

Game Information: +30 PRE (30 Active Points); OAF (specially-prepared Ghede fetish; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Gestures (-¼), Incantations (-¼), Only To Make Presence Attacks Against The Undead (-2), Requires A Voodoo Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 5 points.

LOUGAROU

Effect: Multiform (into wolf and various other animal forms)
Target/Area Affected: Self
Casting Time: 1 Turn
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Persistent
Range: Self
Voodoo Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: The term loulgarou (or “loogarou”) can mean any of several different types of monsters or creatures in Voodoo and Caribbean folklore. One is a bokor who can transform himself into various animal shapes, the better to commit wicked acts. This is the spell which grants that power. Baron Samedi oversees it; casting it requires the bokor to call upon him.

Game Information: Multiform (into wolf, horse, black cat, bird, pig, or cow, each form built on up to 150 Character Points; see *The HERO System Bestiary* for character sheets) (45 Active Points); OAF Expendable (appropriate Voodoo supplies, Easy to replace; -1¼), Can Only Be Cast At Night (-¼), Can Only Be Cast At A Crossroads (-½), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Requires A Voodoo Roll (-½). Total cost: 7 points.

OGOÛ'S MACHINE HAND

Effect: Telekinesis (10 STR), Fine Manipulation, Only To Control Machines
Target/Area Affected: One machine
Casting Time: Full Phase (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: 25"
Voodoo Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: By calling on the power of Ogoû, the loa of machinery, a houngan can take control of machines — whether to use them, destroy them, or manipulate their smallest parts.

Game Information: Telekinesis (10 STR), Fine Manipulation (25 Active Points); OAF (Ogoû fetish made of bits of metal and plastic taken from working machines; -1), Extra Time (Full Phase; -½), Gestures (throughout use; -½), Incantations (-¼), Limited Range (25"; -¼), Only To Control Machines And Machine Parts (-1), Requires A Voodoo Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 4 points.

STORM CONJURATION

Effect: Change Environment (create or banish storms)
Target/Area Affected: 4 km Radius
Casting Time: 5 minutes
Casting Procedures: Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: No Range
Voodoo Roll Penalty: -5
END Cost: 5

Description: A houngan who possesses a *pierre tonnerre* (“thunder stone”; actually an Arawak axehead) can use it to call on one of the loa who control rain and storms — Simbi, Agau, Sogbo, or Bade — to conjure a storm, or to send away a storm that’s already occurring. The storms he makes can have powerful enough winds and rain to make it hard to see (and possibly even strong enough to harm crops or damage houses and trees), or they can simply cause gentle, life-giving rain. It takes five minutes from the time the spell is cast for these effects to fully manifest.) The storm (or area cleared) covers a four kilometer area.

Game Information: Change Environment (create or banish storm) 4" radius, -1 to Sight Group PER Rolls (for created storms), Long-Lasting (until ambient weather conditions change naturally), Varying Effect (create or banish storm; +¼), MegaArea (1" = 1 km broad and wide; +¼) (52 Active Points); OAF (one or more *pierre tonnerres*; -1), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (5 Minutes to cast; -1), Extra Time (5 Minutes onset time; -2), Gestures (two hands throughout casting; -1), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), No Range (-½), Requires A Voodoo Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 6 points.

Enchanted Items

Although they're not common, enchanted items exist in the world of the Sixth Sun. Even the least powerful of them is treasured, and on the rare occasions when they exchange hands for money princely sums are involved. The best-known such transaction was the 1992 sale of an enchanted Aztec obsidian dagger by an unnamed Mexican individual to the Binary Corporation for \$100,000,000 US dollars — a price some experts says is only a third of what it would fetch if it were sold in 2008.

The Sixth Sun term for creating magical raw materials and then forging enchanted items out of them is *Alchemy*. For the most part you can assume this is an NPC activity. If a PC wants to craft a magical item, he needs the *Alchemy* Skill (a variant of *Inventor*) and must apply the *Independent* Limitation to the item, with all that implies. Most Sixth Sun magical items come with restrictions on how often they can be used (*i.e.*, Charges); very, very few provide perpetual enchantments.

Enchantments cannot be placed on technological items, such as guns, cameras, computers, cars, or the like. Many an alchemist has labored mightily to break through this barrier (since whoever figures out how to do it will become rich beyond the dreams of avarice), but so far none have even come close to succeeding. On the other hand, many an alchemist makes a fine living supplying simple, one-use practical enchanted items to consumers. These include amulets that drive all vermin from a house for a period of time (a year or a month), security talismans, alchemical seasonings that make food as good as it can possibly be, and hangover-curing potions.

Here are a few example items from the more powerful end of the alchemical spectrum:

DIVERS MASQUE

Effect:	Shape Shift (Sight Group, any humanoid shape), Imitation
Target:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	9 DEF

Description: Placing this finely-made wooden mask on his face gives a character the power to change his outward appearance to imitate anyone he wishes. The character must have seen the person he wishes to mimic (or at least a likeness) for the change to be effective (assuming he wishes to imitate someone, rather than simply altering his own appearance). The Masque doesn't not change any of the character's other features, however — his voice, smell, and other attributes remain the same.

Game Information: *Shape Shift* (Sight Group, any humanoid shape), *Imitation*, *Reduced Endurance* (0 END; +½) (45 Active Points); *OIF* (-½) *Independent* (-2). Total cost: 13 points.

ELEMENTINE ORB

Effect:	Physical And Energy Damage Reduction, 75%, Resistant, Only Versus Elementals
Target:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
END Cost:	0
Breakability:	Unbreakable

Description: This baseball-sized orb of purplish crystal offers broad protection against the attacks of elementals. It won't completely thwart an attack, but it makes it extremely difficult for an elemental to inflict serious harm on the possessor. It must be held in the hand to function; this is represented with *Gestures* since it means the character can't hold something else (like a weapon or a flashlight) in that hand.

Game Information: *Physical And Energy Damage Reduction*, 75%, *Resistant* (120 Active Points); *OAF* (-1), *Gestures* (see text, throughout; -½), *Independent* (-2), *Nonpersistent* (-¼), *Only Versus Limited Type Of Attack* (elementals' attacks; -2). Total cost: 18 points.

OBSIDIAN MIRROR AMULET

Effect:	Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense/10 Sight Group Flash Defense)
Target:	Self
Duration:	Constant
Range:	Self
Charges:	4 Charges lasting 1 Turn each
Breakability:	Unbreakable

Description: This talisman is a flat disk of obsidian about two-thirds as large as the palm of a human hand, polished to a mirror finish and encased in a silver frame designed in the likeness of prowling jaguars. It affords the wearer broad protection against spells for a brief period of time.

Game Information: *Force Field (10 PD/10 ED/10 Mental Defense/10 Power Defense/10 Sight Group Flash Defense) (50 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 4 Continuing Charges lasting 1 Turn each (-½). Total cost: 11 points.*

RUNEWAND

Effect:	Energy Blast 9d6
Target:	One character
Duration:	Instant
Range:	225"
Charges:	9 Charges
Breakability:	9 DEF

Description: A favorite creation of Norse alchemists (despite the hideously expensive materials required), a Runewand projects a beam equivalent to a Rank 6 Mageblast. Its inherent energy can be used up to nine times in the space of a week.

Game Information: *Energy Blast 9d6 (45 Active Points); OAF (-1), Independent (-2), 9 Charges that Recover Per Week (-¾). Total cost: 9 points.*

BESTIARY

Here are a few creatures character might encounter in the world of the Sixth Sun:

CITY ELEMENTAL

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
40	STR	50	17-	Lift 6,400 kg; 8d6 [4]
17	DEX	21	12-	OCV: 6/DCV: 6
25	CON	40	14-	
20	BODY	20	13-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
15	PD	14		Total: 15 PD (10 rPD)
15	ED	17		Total: 15 ED (10 rED)
4	SPD	13		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
15	REC	8		
50	END	0		
53	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 190

Movement: Running: 6"/12"
Leaping: 4"/8"

Cost	Powers	END
27	<i>Power Grid Channeling:</i> Energy Blast 8d6; No Range (-½)	4
27	<i>Grasp Of The City:</i> Entangle 4d6, 4 DEF; Only Versus Targets Standing On The Ground (-½)	4
27	<i>Moving Through The Substance Of The City:</i> Desolidification (affected by any attack), Reduced Endurance (0 END; +½); Only To Pass Through Solid Objects (see text; -¼), Does Not Protect Against Damage (-1)	0
10	<i>Body Of The City:</i> Damage Resistance (10 PD/10 ED)	0
60	<i>Body Of The City:</i> Physical and Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 50%	0
6	<i>Heavy:</i> Knockback Resistance -3"	0
45	<i>Body Of The City:</i> Life Support: Total	0
10	<i>Elemental Body:</i> No Hit Locations	

Talent

3 Bump Of Direction

Skills

3 Climbing 12-
5 CK: the city it's native to 14-
3 Stealth 12-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 226

Total Cost: 416

75+ Disadvantages

5 Physical Limitation: Large (up to 4m; -2 DCV, +2 to PER Rolls to perceive) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
5 Physical Limitation: Reduced Leap, can only leap half as far as STR indicates (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
331 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 416

Description: City elementals are large, humanoid beings who embody the power and spirit of a city. Typically they look like they're made of the stuff that comprises a city — asphalt, cement, I-beams, lampposts, bits of park turf/grass, and the like. However, they have the power to walk through the city without being impeded (*i.e.*, Desolidification that only works when they move through things), and they tend to take on the look/substance of whatever they're passing through. For example, a city elemental passing through an office building would look more like skyscraper glass, sections of drywall painted taupe, computer screens, and that stuff they make cubicle walls out of. Furthermore, a city's reputation, nickname, history, or other attributes may affect the appearance of its elementals; Chicago elementals always have broad shoulders, for instance.

In combat a city elemental can fight in several ways. First, it's prodigiously strong. Second, it has a subconscious connection to its city's power grid, allowing it to deliver powerful shock-touches. Third, it can make the substance of the city itself "come alive" and grab a target. (The DEF of the Entangle should be no higher than 4, and possibly lower if the elemental only has low-DEF substances to work with.)



SMOG ELEMENTAL

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
0	STR	-10	9-	Lift 25 kg; 0d6 [1]
23	DEX	48	14-	OCV: 8/DCV: 8
23	CON	32	14-	
15	BODY	10	12-	
8	INT	-2	11-	PER Roll 11-
10	EGO	0	11-	ECV: 3
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
8	COM	-1	11-	
5	PD	5		Total: 5 PD (0 rPD)
5	ED	0		Total: 5 ED (0 rED)
4	SPD	7		Phases: 3, 6, 9, 12
5	REC	0		
46	END	0		
35	STUN	8		Total Characteristics Cost: 107

Movement: Running: 0"/0"
Leaping: 0"/0"
Flight: 15"/30"

Cost	Powers	END
32	<i>Choking Smog:</i> Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing]; +1); Limited Range (20"); -¼	4
40	<i>Choking Cloud:</i> Energy Blast 4d6, NND (defense is Life Support [Self-Contained Breathing]; +1), Area Of Effect (4" Radius; +1); No Range (-½)	6
26	<i>Smog Cloud:</i> Change Environment 8" radius, -3 to Sight Group PER Rolls, Reduced Endurance (½ END; +¼); Doesn't Work In High Winds/Rain (-¼)	1
27	<i>Body Of Smog:</i> Desolidification (affected by magic); Cannot Pass Through Solid Objects (-½)	4
30	<i>Drifting Cloud:</i> Flight 15"	3
75	<i>Body Of Smog:</i> Physical Damage Reduction, Resistant, 75% plus Energy Damage Reduction, Resistant, 25%	0
45	<i>Body Of Smog:</i> Life Support: Total	0
10	<i>Elemental Body:</i> No Hit Locations	
-14	<i>True Flyer:</i> Running -6", Swimming -2"	

Skills

3 CK: the city it's native to 12-
3 Stealth 14-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 277

Total Cost: 384

75+ Disadvantages

20 *Distinctive Features:* foul smell (Not Concealable; Causes Major Reaction [disgust])
5 *Physical Limitation:* Large (up to 4m; -2 DCV, +2 to PER Rolls to perceive) (Infrequently, Slightly Impairing)
284 *Experience Points*

Total Disadvantage Points: 384

Description: Smog elementals, the manifestation of one of the worst sides of city life, look like big, roiling clouds of thick smog. They can change their shape to become more humanoid or take on other simple shapes (like a pillar or a sphere), but they rarely do. They smell awful, like automobile exhaust fumes mixed with the scent of rotten eggs;



this makes it difficult for them to use their Stealth unless the persons who might detect them are upwind or “blinded” by equally strong smells.

Smog elementals fight by blinding and choking their victims. Military mages like to send them into enemy strongholds to drive out the occupants, since few people are willing to remain in an enclosed space with a smog elemental unless they have to.

CAMPAIGN AND PLOT IDEAS

Here are a few adventure and campaign ideas to get you started in the world of the Sixth Sun.

CAMPAIGNS

Goin’ ‘Round One More Time: 2009 marks the first complete Long Cycle of the Aztec calendar for the Sixth Sun world. Obviously this is a time of great potentialities, both positive and negative. The greatest fear some people have is that the gods will judge men, find them wanting, and once again re-create the world. The PCs are somehow in a position to prove humanity’s worth to the divine. They may be the subjects of prophecy, or perhaps they’ve been hired by a think tank that’s working on the problem, but whatever the cause the fate of the world may hinge on them. Or it may not... who can say what the gods will do?

Central Invocation Agency: The PCs are mystic spies employed by the CIA (or a similar agency). They’ve been assigned to one of the Sixth Sun’s hotbeds, Mexico City — a place made rich and mystically powerful, and thus attractive to spies and the people they pay attention to, because of the influence of the Aztec gods and its “neutrality” in world affairs. It’s 2008 Sixth Sun’s equivalent of 1960s Berlin... and the PCs have just been thrown into the deep end.

Off We Go Into The Wild Astral Yonder: Some mages theorize that magical power derives from an “Astral Plane.” Until recently this was all speculation... but now a group of government mage-researchers claim to have found it! They’ve persuaded Congress to fund an expedition to explore this new realm... and perhaps figure out better ways to tap its power. The PCs are the “astralnauts” chosen for the mission, and are about to set off into the literal Unknown.

ADVENTURES

Stolen Hearts: A powerful but elderly wizard hires the PCs to recover for him a talisman called the Heart’s Treasure, which he claims was recently stolen from him. He’s offering a hefty fee, no questions asked, if they’ll just get it back for him. But as they start investigating the PCs discover he may not be all that he seems, and the Heart’s Treasure more than what he says it is....

Down In Mexico: The Mexican government wants to hire the PCs to capture (or, it’s not-so-subtly implied, kill) a renegade mage-werejaguar who used to work for it. The target suddenly quit his job with no explanation, and that’s unacceptable — he knows too much. But why did he quit, and why did the Mexicans go so far afield to find someone to bring him in?

The Ebon Tome: Rumors are spreading like wildfire through the Mystic World that someone’s found the legendary Ebon Tome — the grimoire of the medieval wizard Theobald of Brittany, said to be the most powerful of his time. If the stories are true, the Tome contains mystic secrets that could threaten the world, if they fell into the wrong hands. Whether they want it for their own purposes or just to keep it out of other peoples’ hands, the PCs must have that grimoire!... assuming, of course, that it exists.

ADVENTURE BACKGROUND

The sacrifice of Tara Griswold severs the minor ley line “framework” that underpins Hudson City’s major ley lines, making it possible for Kane to move them. (If things were left alone the minor ley lines would “self-repair” over the course of several months, but Kane has no intention of stopping.) The second part of the scenario involves three rituals, one for each ley line, that he has to conduct to “loosen” them so he can move them with the amount of

mystic power he has at his command.

Once the major lines are decoupled, Kane has to actually move them so they intersect at the desired spot: his penthouse apartment in a building he owns, on Beck Avenue between N. Iredell Street and N. Jackson Street. Again, this requires three rituals, ones so powerful the PCs can “home in on him” if they don’t have enough clues to find him any other way.

Fortunately for the PCs, Kane’s plan, like nearly all magical workings, is fragile — interfering with any part of it may ruin the whole thing, or at least make it much harder for him to proceed. Unfortunately for them, if he’s not stopped permanently he’ll probably be in a good position to try again in a few years or decades. He’s got four times the lifespan of a normal person and can afford to be patient.

LEO KANE’S SPELL

Kane’s spell is a multi-part ritual that depends in part on work he (and before him his father) have done for decades.

Kane has studied the ley lines of Hudson City extensively; he knows more about them than any living person. He understands that the major lines are “supported” by the minor lines. That means the first thing he has to do is break apart the supporting “network.” The sacrifice of Tara Griswold as part of a carefully-planned ritual at the point where all four minor lines intersect accomplishes that, “loosening” the major lines.

Next he needs to establish a “handle” on the three major lines he wants to move — the Taft, 12th Avenue, and 3rd Avenue lines — so that he can mystically “grab hold” of them and shift them so that they intersect at his apartment. That involves a second ritual in which he (a) drives a gold spike into the ground near the terminus of each line, and (b) sacrifices another human being to “empower” the spike as his handle. (Removing the spike after that won’t “de-power” it, but it will make the final stage of the ritual more difficult and possibly provide a lead to tracking Kane down.)

The Grand Model

The final stage of the spell is a three-part ritual involving an object Kane calls *the Grand Model*. It’s a highly-accurate scale model of Hudson City. It takes up an entire room of his penthouse apartment and is built on top of a table that separates into sections so he can easily reach the central parts of the city.

Kane’s father started building the Grand Model decades ago, and he’s continued the work. Not only is it an accurate representation of Hudson City, it’s linked to the city by the Law of Contagion. As often as possible, Kane has

obtained bits of actual buildings to use as part of the matching building in the model. For years he’s been knocking little chips off the outer facades of buildings, tearing up tiny strips of carpet in lobbies, smashing out tiles from bathrooms, and even breaking windows to obtain small pieces of glass. If a building’s torn down, it’s removed from the model (and carefully stored); if a new one goes up, Kane tries to be there to observe the construction throughout the process and steal bits of building material. Even the roads of his model often contain tiny fragments of asphalt from the actual roads they mimic.

For the ley lines, Kane has created tiny silver and gold chains — silver for the minor lines, gold for the major. He’s taken each tiny link and walked back and forth with it across the segment of the ley line it represents. He has to do this over again periodically (every couple of years at the least) to keep the Contagion link “fresh.” While his vandalism and thefts of building material have never been connected to him, more than once someone’s noticed him walking up and down the same section of street, sometimes bending to touch the ground with his fingers (he’s touching the silver or gold link to the ground to reinforce the Contagion). Most people write this off as the strange behavior of a mentally unbalanced homeless person, but it’s stuck in some witnesses’ minds enough that the PCs may be able to learn about it through diligent investigation.

The Grand Model is Kane’s obsession. He spends hours keeping it as accurate as possible, which has almost become a goal in itself apart from preparing for his spell. If anyone damages or disturbs it he’ll be very, very angry.

Concluding The Ritual

Once Kane has established a “handle” on each ley line, he can move them. He can only move one a day. To do more risks disrupting the ley lines permanently, or causing other changes he’d prefer not to, so he’ll only do it if he has no other choice (i.e., if the PCs or some other enemy are just about to stop him).

To move the lines, Kane performs his ritual, then grasps one end of the golden chain representing that line and moves it across the Grand Model to position it where he wants it to be: running across/underneath his apartment on Beck Avenue between N. Iredell and N. Jackson Streets. If he gets all three moved, the ritual is finished and ultimate power will be his. However, it will take about a month for the ley lines to “lock into” their new position; any time before that the heroes could reverse the spell by moving the golden chains back to their original positions.

RUNNING LINES OF CONTENTION

Lines Of Contention is deliberately left “open” for the GM to adapt to his group, since it’s difficult to predict what types of PCs the players will create and what abilities and resources they can bring to bear on the mystery. At each stage of the spell Kane can perform the three steps in any order you see fit, over whatever time period fits your campaign. If you want to make this a one-game-session adventure, the events occur over a series of days. If you prefer to spin it out slowly (which is more “realistic” and dramatic) as a subplot interspersed with other adventures, the whole thing might take weeks or months of setting time.

If you want to run the adventure all the way through to its described conclusion, you have to be careful to keep Leo Kane free and able to act. Even though he’s a Ninth Ascension magus, and thus undoubtedly more mystically powerful than any single PC, he can’t stand up to an entire group. If even two or three PCs corner him, that’s the ball game — they can simply beat him unconscious with their fists if they want to, no magic required. So you have to plausibly, and fairly, tantalize the players by letting the PCs get close but avoiding a direct confrontation with Kane.

Fortunately, Kane’s no dummy. He’s been preparing to cast this spell for years, and has the experience and wisdom not only of a man who’s lived seven decades but a magus of the Ninth Ascension. Once he realizes someone’s stalking him, he’ll be even more careful than usual. He won’t walk blindly into traps, will use spirits to spy on his antagonists (if he can identify them), will try to dupe or mislead the PCs, and may even hire mundane bodyguards to protect himself. (That’s a delicate thing to do, since he’s committing four acts of murder, but with his money he can probably find the right people if he has to.) He owns and carries a gun and will use it if he must, though he dislikes firearms and isn’t a particularly good shot. He’d rather use magic — including spells like Curse/Deadly Curse, Divination, Enter The Akashic Record, and Karcism to learn about the PCs, stay one step ahead of them, and cripple their efforts to stop him.

Ideally, the PCs should always remain one step behind Kane. Investigating the corpses of his victims and the things he leaves behind gradually leads them to a final confrontation with him, though they may never have seen him or even learned his name before that. If they lay eyes on him beforehand it should be at a distance and with his awareness, so he has an excellent chance to get away even if the PCs give determined chase.

HUDSON CITY LEY LINES

In the world of *Lines Of Contention*, powerful channels of mystical energy known as *ley lines* run under the surface of the Earth. Only magi are aware of them at all, and even then it often proves difficult to find them and map them accurately. But their presence often subconsciously affects people, influencing where roads, buildings, and other important structures are built. For magi, ley lines represent a source of mystic power they can tap to make their spells stronger (or easier to cast).

MAJOR AND MINOR LEY LINES

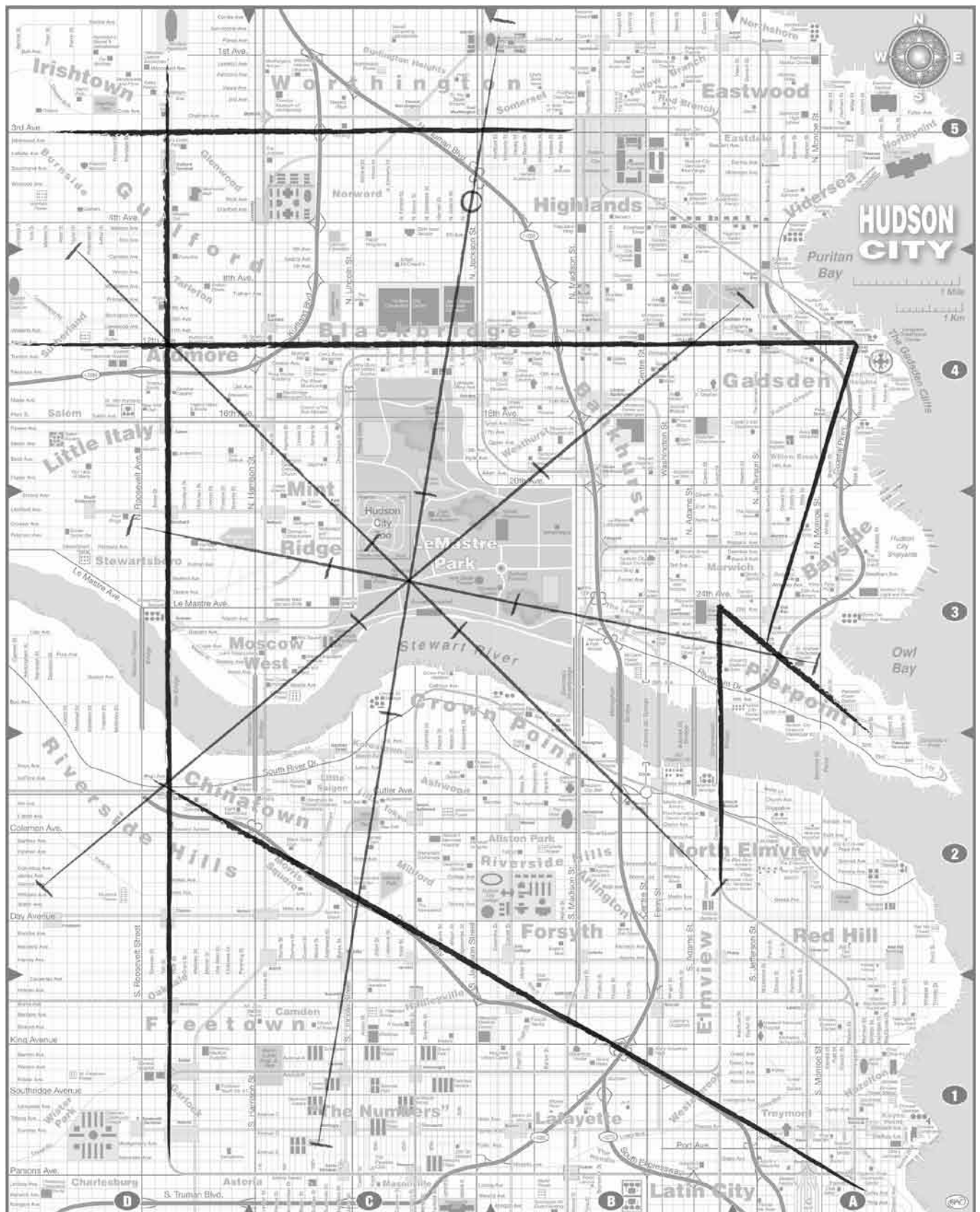
The accompanying map shows the primary ley lines in Hudson City. The major ones are:

- the *Taft Line*, which runs the length of Taft Street on the Southside and continues straight north along Snow Street almost to the Aquarium
- the *12th Avenue Line*, which bisects the Northside along 12th Avenue
- the *3rd Avenue Line*, which runs along 3rd Avenue from Irishtown to just west of Governmental Plaza
- the *Pierpoint Line*, which runs up the Pierpoint cape
- the *Elmview Line*, which runs from the northern tip of the Pierpoint line south along the Scherwinski Bridge to terminate in North Elmview
- the *Bayside Line*, which connects the eastern terminus of the 12th Avenue Line (near Longview Prison) with the Pierpoint Line
- the *Southside Line*, which runs northwest-southeast across the Southside from just west of the Taft Line (and just west of Chinatown) all the way to southeastern Latin City

Underlying, supporting, and “anchoring” these major ley lines is a web of four minor ley lines that all cross at Hangman’s Hill. Although individually none of the minor lines is as strong as a major line, they’re a crucial part of the overall “mystic framework” of Hudson City.

The map on page 181 shows the ley lines, both major and minor. The hashmarks bisecting the minor lines show their new terminus points after Leo Kane shatters the web by sacrificing Tara Griswold on Hangman’s Hill. Thus, after he’s done there’s little ley line presence within LeMastre Park.

Although the map shows the ley lines as rigid, straight lines, that’s not entirely accurate. Generally they hew to the course shown on the map. However, here and there every ley line tends to zig unexpectedly to one side for a short distance (or zag to the other), drop deeper below the surface than usual, or even suffer a minor weakness or gap. Only someone who’s studied them extensively (*i.e.*, who has KS: Hudson City Ley Lines, like Kane does) can accurately predict the exact status of a ley line at any given location.



LEY LINE EFFECTS

The ley lines have the following effects on spells cast in Hudson City (see *The Powers Of The Magus*, below, for information on the magic system in *Lines Of Contention* and how spell bonuses apply):

1. A spell cast while standing on top of a single minor ley line gets a +25% Active Point bonus, or a +1 to the Magic roll.
2. A spell cast while standing on top of a single major ley line gets a +50% Active Point bonus, or a +2 to the Magic roll.
3. A spell cast while standing on top of the intersection of two or more minor ley lines gets an Active Point bonus equal to 15% times the number of intersecting lines, or a +2 to the Magic roll. (However, this condition cannot apply during *Lines Of Contention* — Leo Kane has “broken” them at Hangman’s Hill, so no two currently intersect.)
4. A spell cast while standing on top of the intersection of a major ley line and a minor ley line gets a 75% Active Point bonus, or a +3 to the Magic roll.
5. A spell cast while standing on top of the intersection of two major ley lines gets a 100% Active Point bonus, or a +4 to the Magic roll.
6. A spell cast while standing on top of the intersection of a two major ley lines and a minor ley line gets a 150% Active Point bonus, or a +5 to the Magic roll.

Taking this into account, the two most mystically powerful loci in Hudson City are (a) the intersection of the Taft and 12th Avenue lines with a minor line in Ardmore, and (b) the intersection of the Taft and Southside lines with a minor line on the Riverside Hills/Chinatown “border.” A similar intersection almost, but not quite, occurs where the Bayside Line T-intersects the Pierpoint Line (anywhere in that area would grant a +120% bonus).

PART ONE: THE SACRIFICE OF TARA GRISWOLD

Shortly before the scenario begins, Leo Kane starts his plan with a well-timed sacrifice, drawing on the Laws of Sanguinity and Synchronicity (see *The Laws Of Thaumaturgy*, below) for the power he needs. He kidnaps a little girl named Tara Griswold who was born on July 4, 1995 — the hundredth anniversary of the Independence Day Fire his father started — and sacrifices her in a ritual performed on Hangman’s Hill in LeMastre Park. Hangman’s Hill is where the minor ley lines of Hudson City that underpin the major ley lines intersect (see *Hudson City Ley Lines*, below). Sacrificing Tara Griswold there as part of the ritual he’s created allows him to “break” the minor ley lines and thus make the major lines moveable.

The map on page 181 shows the major and minor ley lines in Hudson City. The hash marks on the minor lines show their endpoints after Kane performs his ritual. Some of them break close to Hangman’s Hill, others relatively far away — but they all break.

Player characters who are magi (which is to say, probably all of them) will feel the breaking as a sort of “wrongness” or chill up their spine when it occurs (so will other members of the Mystic World), but that’s it. They won’t know exactly what happened, or where, or what it’s all about, though they will sense that it’s unpleasant and dangerous. If a PC has made a special study of ley lines (*i.e.*, he has KS: Ley Lines or a similar Skill), he can make a roll with that Skill; if he succeeds he knows what just happened concerned Hudson City’s ley lines, but no more.

After the sacrifice, Kane throws Tara Griswold’s corpse in the lion cage at the Hudson City Zoo. The mangled remains of her little body are found by zookeepers the next day, and this is reported in the papers. The medical examiner’s report states she was dead when she was thrown in there, and based on what seem to be knife marks on her ribcage the ME believes she was stabbed to death. The police do not find the site of the killing and do not suspect any sort of “cult connection.” However, if the PCs think to go to Hangman’s Hill, they’ll discover Kane’s footprints and traces of the rare incense Kane used in the ritual.

INVESTIGATING THE INCENSE

Characters who succeed with a KS: Arcane And Occult Lore roll by 4, or who do enough asking around among members of the Mystic World who supply such things to mages, recognize the incense as a rare form of dragon’s-blood incense. While many forms of dragon’s-blood are supposedly curative or drive away negative influences, this form, which is darker in color than most, has associations of turmoil, disruption, even chaos. Its use in magical rituals could be dangerous; at the very least most magi would consider it irresponsible. No one the PCs know in



Hudson City's Mystic World sells it; if they make a KS: Mystic World roll by 8 or more they can find someone who does — an unpleasant old woman name Rigoberta who lives in a hovel in Latin City — but she hasn't sold any to anyone for several years. (In fact, Kane got his from a contact in the Orient; there's no way to trace it.)

INVESTIGATING THE LEY LINES

If the PCs realize the “wrongness” involved the city's ley lines, they'll probably want to investigate them. This is difficult, but not impossible. Any PC who has KS: Ley Lines (or even better, KS: Hudson City Ley Lines) can make a roll. The text box on page 184 describes the results.

Note that only a character with KS: Hudson City Ley Lines knows the location of the major and minor lines in Hudson City (and unless he has at least a 16- roll, his knowledge is incomplete or faulty). Photocopy the Hudson City map from *Hudson City* and draw in the rough locations of the ley lines if you have a character like that so you can give him a copy of the map; otherwise give him an unmarked Hudson City map and let the PCs figure out where the ley lines are by locating them on their own or through research.

PART TWO: THE RITUAL OF THE HANDLES

Assuming that the actions of the PCs don't require him to adjust his plans, here's what Kane intends to do to create the “handles” he needs to move the ley lines. He'll create the handles in the order listed.

THE TAFT STREET LINE

Kane intends to “take hold of” the Taft Street line at its north terminus, which will make it easier to move over to Worthington than if he put his handle at the south terminus. Unfortunately, the north terminus is in Irishtown, where strangers can easily stand out and the cops respond quickly to any disturbances, so he has to move carefully.

After dressing appropriately, he heads to Club Irish (see *Hudson City*, pages 28, 61). He uses his Mesmerism spell (see his character sheet) to get into the club without any hassles. Once he's in there he uses it again to pick up Melinda Hardwick, a drunk twentysomething party girl from a wealthy Irishtown family. He persuades her to to walk about a block west with him. In the behind-the-building parking lot of a jewelry store on Chatham Avenue he drives his golden spike (which is about five inches long and slightly thicker than a pencil) into the pavement, scuffing some dirt over it so the golden head isn't obvious. Then he sacrifices Hardwick with a quick, simple thrust of his knife. Once enough blood drains out of her, he covers up the wound with a heavy bandage. Then he “walks” her a couple blocks north, pretending to be helping a drunk woman walk,

KS: LEY LINES ROLL

Roll	Information Learned
Failed by 4+	Character is <i>totally convinced</i> the ley lines weren't involved; dissuading him from this opinion will be difficult (he gets +2 to EGO or PRE Rolls to resist Persuasion and the like)
Failed by 2-3	Character believes the “wrongness” he felt had nothing to do with ley lines at all — possibly it was a ritual involving necromancy or the summoning of demons.
Failed by 1	Character believes the “wrongness” he felt was temporary and that everything's fine now — whatever took place, it didn't work like it was supposed to.
Succeeded by 0	Character knows ley lines were involved, and were probably the subject of some ritual.
Succeeded by 1	As if by 0, plus character realizes that Hangman's Hill is a crucial nexus point for ley lines, and thus would be useful for manipulating or altering them somehow.
Succeeded by 2-3	As if by 1, plus character realizes that some of Hudson City's lesser ley lines have actually been “broken” as a result of whatever was done on Hangman's Hill.
Succeeded by 4+	As if by 2-3, plus character realizes the broken lines intersect with major lines elsewhere in the city, so whatever was done at Hangman's Hill could have repercussions elsewhere.

This table assumes the character's making a KS: Ley Lines roll. If a character has KS: Hudson City Ley Lines (or any other KS that's more specific), he gets a +2 to the roll to reflect his greater knowledge of the subject.

and dumps her body in the parking lot of the Nicolaus Aquarium.

The police are called in when Aquarium workers find the body the next morning. Although they don't find any prints, the cops quickly realize she wasn't killed there, due to the lack of blood on the ground. A search of the Irishtown-Guilford area over the course of the day will eventually find the scene of the crime, though the cops don't spot the golden spike. (If the PCs get involved with the investigation beginning at the Aquarium, let them be the ones to find the scene of the crime.)

Hardwick's clothing makes it obvious she was out on the town. It won't take long for the cops (or the PCs) to find out she went to Club Irish the night before. Her friends who were there will say she left with “a guy,” but descriptions of the guy will be vague: good-looking, well-dressed, blonde, flashed a lot of money.

If the PCs investigate the scene of the sacrifice, they can use their Third Eye ability (Detect Magic, see below) to perceive the golden spike. Removing it from the ground won't disrupt Kane's spell, but will make it slightly harder for him to use (in game terms, he'll have to concentrate longer and spend more END during the “moving the lines” ritual). But having it may make it easier to track Kane down using Finding or a similar spell, since the spike is mystically linked to the golden chain on the Grand Model. It won't function as a compass or tracker or anything else that easily resolves the mystery, but it will help the PCs realize they're on the right track if they get close to Kane's apartment. (In game terms, each spike the PCs have gives them a +1 to PER Rolls with their Third Eye power, and at the GM's option may extend the range of that power.)

THE 3RD AVENUE LINE

Establishing a “handle” on the 3rd Avenue ley line is also tricky, since he needs to put it in the eastern terminus of the line, which is in Highlands near Governmental Plaza. But fortunately he's got a superb spot for it: the Hudson City Underground, where the remains of part of the city destroyed by the Independence Day Fire were found several decades ago. Although it's not a trendy shopping and dining area, it's got a strong mystic link for his work since his father started the Fire.

Kane's plan is simple. First he's going to find a hapless female shopper and “capture” her with Mesmerism. Then he'll lead her into one of the “alleyways” in the Underground — the less-used pathways between the buildings, where few people walk and the lights aren't as bright. He'll bend down to “tie his shoe” and quickly drive the golden spike into the ground, with the woman faking a coughing fit to help muffle the sounds (he's also using a rubber mallet and covering the spike with a cloth pad). Once that's done, he'll pretend to be making out with the woman, but will sacrifice her with a short, swift knife thrust, then ease her body to the ground and flee. This makes it very likely that the spike will be discovered, but he can't help that, and as mentioned above removing it won't disrupt the spell so he's not too concerned.

Because the Underground is usually crowded, this ritual presents a real risk for Kane — and a chance for a dramatic scene, if you can arrange matters to have the PCs present. If they've figured out what Kane's doing they might be staking out the Underground; otherwise perhaps they're there for dinner or shopping and sense the mystic emanations of the spell. If you can orchestrate it, you might be able to set up a chase scene in which the PCs find the body while it's still warm and try to find and catch Kane before he leaves the Underground. Kane can use the crowds and relatively dim lighting to his advantage, and if necessary you can assume he's Mesmerized a few people here and there to interfere with any pursuers in seemingly innocent ways (like “accidentally” stepping in front of them to cause a collision and slow them down). Don't forget that he has the Akashic Dome gift (Invisibility to Detect Magic), which he'll use if he believes the PCs are mystics.

THE 12TH AVENUE LINE

Establishing the handle for the 12th Avenue ley line is the easiest of all, since the area of Gadsden near its terminus, around Longview Correctional Center, isn't as heavily populated or carefully watched. The spike will be driven into the ground near the Gadsden Sewage Plant, and the sacrificial victim is a homeless man named Gerald Wilson whom Kane “captured” using his Mesmerism spell. After the sacrifice Kane dumps the body over the Gadsden Cliffs, where it's noticed by a sightseer the next day.

The cops investigating this crime don't connect it with the murder of Melinda Hardwick (at least not right away), but the PCs are likely to

notice some similarities immediately. The cause of death is the same: a stab wound in the same place on the chest, made by the same knife (or one with the same size and shape blade); and the victim was not killed where he was found. In this case finding the scene of the killing will be harder, since the blood was able to soak into the ground rather than puddle up on asphalt, but if they spend enough time searching the area the PCs will probably find it. (The odds are the prison and the sewage plant will both attract their attention as likely killing spots.) Again, if they get close enough, they can “see” the golden spike with their Third Eye power.

PART THREE: THE RITUAL OF MOVEMENT

With all three “handles” established, Kane just has to move the ley lines to where he wants them. As discussed above, he can only move one a day safely (and in fact he’d rather only move one a week, for maximum stability and chances of success). That gives the PCs some extra time to find him before things go too far.

Kane plans to move the Taft Street line east, the 3rd Avenue line south, and the 12th Avenue line north to intersect at his apartment on Beck Avenue between N. Iredell and N. Jackson Streets. (This location is marked with a small circle on the map on page 181.) After he moves the first line, the PCs can begin using their Third Eye and other mystic senses to try to trace the new line, which will point them in the right general direction of where he is (and perhaps allow them to use the spikes, if they’ve found them, to perform a ritual to more closely pinpoint Kane’s location). Once he moves the second line, tracing it and where it intersects with the first line will show the PCs exactly where he is.

At that point, a final confrontation is likely to occur. Since Kane is in his place of power with two ley lines to tap, he gets +2d6 Luck, and you should give him a +2 bonus on any Magic rolls he has to make (while the PCs suffer -2d6 Luck and -2 on Magic rolls). He may even have summoned spirits to cause problems for the PCs. If necessary, assume he can use magic in this place to “distort space,” making it harder for the PCs to move and act while he’s unrestricted. (In game terms, think of this as a Suppress of Running and most Characteristics, and perhaps of some spells as well.) He could also have mundane bodyguards, if you think that will increase the drama of the situation. In short — arrange the situation to create a dramatic final scene, rather than just letting the PCs kick down the door and bring everything to a swift and boring end.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

LEO KANE

Val	Char	Cost	Roll	Notes
10	STR	0	11-	Lift 100 kg; 2d6 [2]
13	DEX	9	12-	OCV: 4/DCV: 4
13	CON	6	12-	
10	BODY	0	11-	
20	INT	10	13-	PER Roll 13-
20	EGO	20	13-	ECV: 7
20	PRE	10	13-	PRE Attack: 4d6
10	COM	0	11-	
4	PD	2		Total: 4 PD (0 rPD)
4	ED	1		Total: 4 ED (0 rED)
3	SPD	7		Phases: 4, 8, 12
5	REC	0		
26	END	0		
22	STUN	0		Total Characteristics Cost: 65

Movement: Running: 6”/12”

Cost	Spells	END
4	Akashic Arising	
4	Blending	
2	Clarity	
5	Curse	
5	Deadly Curse	
9	Divination	
7	Enter The Akashic Record	
4	Fascination	
2	Finding	
8	Karcism	
4	Mesmerism	
4	Reading	
3	Seeming	
4	Spirit Communion	
1	Vitality	
Powers		
25	<i>Bythos</i> : Luck 5d6	0
15	<i>Will Of Iron</i> : Mentals Defense (19 points total)	0
15	<i>Greater Occult Ward</i> : Power Defense (15 points)	0
3	<i>Protection Of The Soul</i> : Power Defense (+10 points); Only To Protect Against Attacks Versus The Soul (-2)	0
4	<i>Achosian Denial</i> : Life Support (Safe Environments: Intense Cold, Intense Heat)	0
1	<i>Limosian Denial</i> : Life Support (Diminished Eating: only needs to eat once per week)	0
1	<i>Morphean Denial</i> : Life Support (Diminished Sleeping: only needs to sleep once per week)	0
3	<i>Occult Health</i> : Life Support (Immunity to most common, simple illnesses like colds, flus, fevers, sore throats, pneumonia, and the like)	0
5	<i>Astral Eye</i> : Dimensional (Astral) for Normal Sight	0

EQUIPMENT

Weapon	OCV	RMod	Dam	STUN	Shots	STR Min	Notes
Pistol	+0	+0	1d6+1	1d6-1	8	9	
Knife	+0	+0	1d6	1d6-1	6	—	Can Be Thrown

Armor

None

Gear: Fine, well-tuned watch; pen flashlight

- 22 *The Third Eye:* Detect Magic 13- (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Analyze, Range, Sense 0
- 20 *Akashic Dome:* Invisibility to Detect Magic 2
- 27 *Astral Projection:* Duplication (creates 350-point astral form), Altered Duplicate (100%; +1); Costs Endurance (to activate; -¼), Original Character Is Incapacitated And Helpless While Duplicate Exists (-1), Extra Time (must enter trance and meditate to allow astral self to leave its fleshy prison, 1 Hour; -1½), Feedback (-1), Both Characters Die If They Do Not Recombine Within 24 Hours (-½) 0

Perks

- 5 Money: Well Off

Talents

- 3 *Morphean Denial:* Lightsleep
- 3 *Overriding The Pain:* Resistance (3 points)
- 6 *Death Trance:* Simulate Death 16-
- 10 *Confounding Of Babel:* Universal Translator 13-; Only Applies To Speech (-1)

Skills

- 3 Acting 13-
- 3 Conversation 13-
- 2 Cryptography 13-; Translation Only (-½)
- 3 Deduction 13-
- 6 CK: Hudson City 16-
- 5 PS: Meditation 15-
- 3 Stealth 12-
- 3 Trading 13-
- 3 Linguist
- 1 1) Arabic (fluent conversation; English is Native)
- 1 2) Greek (fluent conversation)
- 1 3) German (fluent conversation)
- 1 4) Latin (fluent conversation)
- 1 5) Spanish (fluent conversation)
- 3 Scholar
- 4 1) KS: Arcane And Occult Lore 15-
- 4 2) KS: Hudson City Ley Lines 15-
- 2 3) KS: Ley Lines 13-
- 2 4) KS: The Mystic World 13-
- 2 5) KS: Spirits 13-

Total Powers & Skills Cost: 287**Total Cost: 352****50+ Disadvantages**

- 20 Psychological Limitation: Obsessed With Altering Hudson City's Ley Lines And Extending His Own Lifespan (Common, Total)
- 282 Experience Points

Total Disadvantage Points: 352

Description: Kane's background is described above, and most of his powers and spells as a Ninth Ascension magus are discussed under *The Powers Of The Magus*, below. Here are the ones he's crafted himself that aren't known to anyone else (though the PCs could learn them from his workbooks after they defeat him):

Mesmerism: *The caster subtly imposes his will on another person, making the subject more likely to agree with his suggestions and desires... provided they're not too outrageous. Persuasion 18- (17 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout casting; -½), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (1 Turn; -1¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 4 points.*

Blending: *The magus has the power to blend in with a crowd, becoming inconspicuous and difficult to perceive unless you look straight at him and want to find him. He can't move fast or fight well while using it, though. Concealment 18- (17 Active Points); Concentration (½ DCV throughout; -½), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (Full Phase to cast; -¼), Only For Inconspicuousness (see page 39; -1), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 4 points.*

Appearance: Leo Kane is a handsome caucasian male who looks like he's in his mid-thirties to mid-forties... but in fact he was born in 1932, so he's nearly 70 as of 2008. Longevity spells have preserved his youthful vigor and health, and if all goes according to his plans they'll continue to do so for centuries to come. He usually wears "dressy casual" clothes, such as khakis and button-down shirts, but he can dress up or down as the occasion requires. He's cleanshaven with no glasses, and has blonde hair and blue eyes.

Wild Cards

Leo Kane and the PCs aren't the only mystics in Hudson City. There are maybe a couple dozen all told, some of whom might get involved in the events of *Lines Of Contention* if the PCs go to them for information... or you want to shake things up. They include:

AMANDA GRICE

Amanda Grice is a young (17) woman, a Second Ascension magus who's just beginning to come into her powers. She's very confused about them and in need of mentoring (a role one of the PCs can take on, perhaps). Lately she's been having disturbing dreams in which a city with several rivers running through it experiences strange, violent floods and earthquakes that shift the rivers in their beds. This is her subconscious psychic "reading" of what Kane's doing. It makes no sense to her, but it might provide the PCs with a clue or two... and perhaps Grice can somehow help guide them to him.

JEREMIAH NEDERMAN

An Eighth Ascension magus now nearing the end of his extended lifespan, Jeremiah Nederman has begun suffering the early stages of dementia... sort of. Magi rarely fully lose control of their mental faculties the way a person suffering from Alzheimer's Disease does, but they can go insane to varying degrees. In Nederman's case, that's manifested as an obsession with Gnostic doctrine and mysticism and a belief that he is some sort of avatar or incarnation of Ialdabaoth, the imperfect/evil demiurge who created the material world. As such he thinks the world is (or will be) his to rule, and he's very attuned to its local "condition." When Kane begins his spell Nederman will sense it. It may take him a while to figure out what's going on, but eventually he'll respond somehow. The odds are he's too hampered by his delusions to pose any significant problems, but he might show up *just* when the PCs don't want him to... or just when they do.

JIM SCHOEN

The owner of the Owl's Roost Bookstore is a layman expert on occult matters, particularly as pertains to Hudson City. (You can find his character sheet on page 101; just adapt it to this setting.) He has for sale in his rare book stock the workbooks of some magi who partially mapped out some of the Hudson City ley lines. They're not cheap, but the PCs might find them helpful. Schoen would be glad to offer other advice and help provided doing so doesn't put him at risk. He doesn't like Leo Kane, whom he considers snooty and arrogant, and is likely to become even more helpful if he learns Kane's up to something.



RANDOLPH WINSTON

The reclusive Randolph Winston, who lives in Pierpoint, is a Sixth Ascension magus... and no friend of Leo Kane's. He and Kane have been rivals/enemies for years and often spy on one another. Through his spirit servants Winston's learned of Kane's activities and deduced, in rough outline form, what Kane is doing. He plans to try to swoop in and "steal" the ritual from Kane at the last minute, thus usurping the power to alter the ley lines as he wants. If he learns of the PCs' involvement, he'll help or hinder them in whatever way he can that comports with his goal. He won't contact the PCs directly unless he absolutely has to; he prefers to aid them from a distance without exposing himself.

Besides being a powerful magus (and you should increase his Ascension if necessary, but no higher than Eighth), Winston is a wealthy man with something of a reputation as a ladies' man and socialite. His home is a converted old warehouse with plenty of space for his library, workrooms, and the like — and the latest in electronic security. Outwardly charming and affable, inwardly he's powerhungry, bitter, and prone to feelings of jealousy and envy. He has a dislike of other people bordering on the sociopathic, though he hides it well; most of his long-term relationships with other people, particularly women, tend toward using and abusing them in subtle ways.

SKILLS FOR MAGI

Besides the *Magic* Skill required to cast spells, the following Skills are common among magi:

KS: Arcane And Occult Lore represents a magus's general knowledge of true matters mystical. Non-magi who are interested in such things can't buy it; at best they can buy *KS: Layman's Arcane And Occult Lore*, representing the "surface level," non-usable mystic knowledge they can learn.

KS: The Mystic World represents a magus's knowledge of other magi, mystic places and events, and the like. Compared to *Hudson City Shadows* and *The Sixth Sun*, *KS: The Mystic World* is rare in *Lines Of Contention*, and rarely bought at more than an 11- roll — there just aren't that many magi in the world, and they tend to be very private, secretive individuals.

PS: Meditation is an aid to casting Thaumaturgy spells, many of which require a period of quiet contemplation and "focusing" so the magus can bring his powers to bear. At the GM's option, a character can reduce the casting time of a Thaumaturgy spell by 1 Minute for each point by which he succeeds with a *PS: Meditation* roll (but cannot reduce a spell's casting time by more than half this way).

Although it's not a mystic skill, many magi know **Forgery (Documents)**, a talent they develop to help them hide their preternaturally long lifespans.

CHARACTER CREATION

Characters for *Lines Of Contention* are relatively weak compared to those in the other settings featured in this book: they're built on 50 Base Points plus up to 50 Character Points from Disadvantages. Normal Characteristic Maxima is imposed as a campaign default, and it takes effect at 15, not at 20, making Characteristics significantly more expensive. Unless the GM prefers otherwise, all characters must start the game as at least First Ascension magi, and must pay for all the attendant Gifts. If the GM wants to start characters at a significantly higher level of power, he should either increase the points characters are built on, or should give them Ascension Gifts for free.

THE POWERS OF THE MAGUS

In the world of *Lines Of Contention*, some people have occult powers that defy rational explanation. A person with such powers is known as a *magus* (plural "magi"), sometimes shortened to "mage" by members of the Mystic World who are less respectful of tradition. The powers of the magus fall into three categories:

- *Gifts*, mystic powers the magus can call on at any time
- *Bythos* ("profundity"), also known as "unconscious magic" or "passive magic," the (generally uncontrollable) effect the magus's power has on the world around him, to his benefit
- *Thaumaturgy*, also known as "conscious magic" or "active magic," what a layman would refer to as "spellcasting." Thaumaturgy typically involves rituals and other forms of preparation; it cannot be used in combat or other crisis conditions. Despite this, it can achieve some amazing things.

Although magi are exceedingly rare, over the centuries they have preserved and passed along enough of their lore that all three types of magical powers are ranked into nine classifications called *Ascensions* (on the theory that the more powerful one becomes, the closer to godhood one gets). The *Ascensions* and the powers assigned to them are discussed in more detail below.

THE GOALS OF THE MAGUS

Generally speaking, a magus uses magic to achieve two primary goals.

First, he wishes to transcend the restrictions of the physical — to diminish the demands of the body and become more akin to a spirit in many ways. Most of the Gifts bear on this goal, and mages for whom this consideration is paramount may never study Thaumaturgy to any great extent. As part of this process of transcendence, many (though by no means all) mages live an ascetic lifestyle; they eat little (if they have to eat at all), abstain from sex, and even mortify their flesh.

Second, he wishes to work his will upon the world, altering reality to bring himself greater power, comfort, or whatever else it is he desires. This is the purpose of most Thaumaturgy spells, though it may be an indirect purpose. Mages inclined toward this goal often try to achieve power in other ways as well (social, financial, political...).

MAGIC IN GAME TERMS

In *HERO System* terms, each of the three types of magic is purchased in a specific way.

Gifts

A character purchases Gifts by paying their full Character Point cost, listed below. Generally they shouldn't be changed, but the GM can permit this if desired. A character cannot purchase any Gifts from the Second or higher *Ascensions* until he has purchased *all* the Gifts from the preceding *Ascensions*. For example, a character cannot buy any Fifth *Ascension* Gifts until he's bought all the Gifts from the First, Second, Third, and Fourth *Ascensions*. However, he can buy the Gifts for any *Ascension* (and his *Bythos*) in any order he prefers.

Bythos

A character's *Bythos* is bought as dice of Luck, representing the unconscious beneficial effects a magus's power has on the world around him. As a being of power, a magus doesn't always have to assert his will to work magic; the world tends to adapt itself to benefit him in small, simple ways. Some examples of this that magi have reported include: while a magus may never be rich, he rarely runs out of money completely, and usually just happens to have as much as he needs (or more) when crucial expenses arise; a magus usually gets a green light at every stoplight and avoids traffic jams; a magus often has exact change when making a purchase; a magus rarely suffers accidental cuts, scrapes, or falls; the minor inconveniences of life (such as lightbulbs burning out, a car running out of gas, having to stand in long lines) usually don't affect the magus.

A magus can buy Luck 1d6 at the First *Ascension*; another die (2d6 total) at the Fourth *Ascension*; another die (3d6 total) at the Sixth *Ascension*; another die (4d6 total) at the Eighth *Ascension*; and a final die (5d6 total) should he attain the Ninth *Ascension*. These dice of Luck are treated as Gifts in the sense that a character *must* purchase them before he can buy any Gifts for higher *Ascensions*.

Generally speaking *Bythos* is totally subconscious. A magus doesn't know he's "using" it; events and patterns in the world simply re-align themselves in unobservable ways to benefit him. What this means in game terms is that a character usually doesn't ask to make a Luck roll, or even suggest to the GM that it would be appropriate to roll Luck at a particular time — he must let the GM decide, totally on his own, when to roll his Luck. (The typical effects of *Bythos*, described above, really

don't have much affect on the game most of the time and thus don't require rolls; they're more for roleplaying and convenience.) Asking for a Luck roll is called *pushing your luck*, and it can have dire consequences. If a character tries to consciously call on his Luck by asking for or suggesting a roll, he can roll his Luck dice as normal — but any 1 rolled counts as *two levels of Unluck!* Thus, pushing your Luck can lead to great things... or terrible tragedies... or possibly both at once.

Example: *Yevgeni Dityatev is a magus of the Sixth Ascension, and his Bythos is Luck 3d6. He's in desperate need of cash and decides to "push his luck" to try to make a Las Vegas slot machine pay off for him. He makes his Luck roll and rolls 6, 3, and 1. So he's achieved one level of Luck — a payoff of a few hundred dollars, far less than he needs — and one level of Unluck... but the Unluck counts double, as two levels. The GM decides two levels of Unluck means casino security thinks Yevgeni's been cheating somehow and escorts him off the premises without being at all gentle about it.*

Thaumaturgy

Like Gifts and Bythos, the spells and rituals of Thaumaturgy are grouped according to Ascension, based on long experience of when a magus can safely master a spell's power. But unlike Gifts and Bythos, there's no restriction on when a character can buy a Thaumaturgy spell — a First Ascension magus can have a Ninth Ascension spell, if he's willing to shell out the Character Points. (Typically this would represent a character who's stumbled onto secret lore he's not yet ready for, snuck a look at his master's notebook of rituals, or the like.)

However, knowing a spell doesn't mean a magus can safely cast it! The perils of trying to wield too much power before one's time are great indeed. For every point of difference between the character's current Ascension and the Ascension of the spell he's trying to cast, he suffers a cumulative -2 penalty to his Magic roll. For example, a Fourth Ascension magus trying to cast an Eighth Ascension spell suffers a $((8-4) \times 2 =)$ -8 penalty! (See below regarding the nature of the Side Effects for spells.)

To a large extent Thaumaturgy spells qualify as "realistic" magic, which is discussed on page 54. In other words, a magus's spell doesn't have any flashy visible effects or the like; it just lets him achieve what he wants. A rational observer would insist that his spell didn't do anything... but the magus knows otherwise.

Gifts By Ascension

Here are the standard Gifts learned/developed by magi, ranked by Ascension.

THE FIRST ASCENSION: AWAKENING

A magus of the First Ascension has just Awakened to the existence and potentials of magic. Sometimes this happens early in life, sometimes later; some magi have to stumble through the fields of occult lore on their own, while others have masters and guides to help them.

The Third Eye

The first Gift a magus learns to use is his "third eye" — his ability to perceive mystical forces. In the world of *Lines Of Contention*, this primarily allows him to perceive other magi, ley lines, the functioning of ongoing spells, manifest spirits, and the like.

Detect Magic (INT Roll) (no Sense Group), Discriminatory, Range. Total cost: 15 points.

Bythos 1

A magus of the First Ascension begins to evince the unconscious "luck" possessed by his kind.

Luck 1d6. Total cost: 5 points.

THE SECOND ASCENSION: REBIRTH

Having been Awakened to the manifestations and possibilities of magic, the magus soon deepens his understanding of the occult and becomes Reborn into the Mystic World.

Morphean Denial

A magus of the Second Ascension begins learning how to deny the needs of his body. The first thing he discovers is how to do without sleep — he only needs to sleep one-seventh as much as a mundane person. Many magi sleep more than this simply because they enjoy it, or to keep from revealing their mystical powers, but if necessary they can remain awake for nearly a week. And when he awakens he does so immediately, without any period of confusion or sleepiness.

Morphean Denial: *Life Support (Diminished Sleeping: only needs to sleep once per week).* Total cost: 1 point.

Morphean Denial: *Lightsleep. Total cost: 3 points.*

THE THIRD ASCENSION: GROWTH

Having now become a part of the Mystic World, the magus starts to Grow into his true power.

Expanding The Third Eye

A magus of the Third Ascension becomes ever more aware of the interplay of occult forces around him.

Expanded Third Eye: *Add Analyze to Detect Magic. Total cost: +5 points.*

Limosian Denial

Having learned to do without sleep, the magus soon learns that his body needs neither food nor drink anymore. He may eat for enjoy-

ment, or to seem to be an ordinary person, but if he must he can go nearly a week without eating.

Limosian Denial: *Life Support (Diminished Eating: only needs to eat once per week). Total cost: 1 point.*

Strengthening The Mind

The mental disciplines necessary to comprehend and use the ever-greater magical powers he commands strengthen the magus's mind, making it harder to affect him with certain spells.

Strengthened Mind: *Mentals Defense (5 points + (EGO/5)). Total cost: 5 points.*

THE FOURTH ASCENSION: FREEDOM

By the Fourth Ascension, the magus has learned a level of self-control beyond what he needed to attain his earlier powers — a self-control so firm it means Freedom from most demands of the flesh.

Bythos 2

A magus of the Fourth Ascension has even greater unconscious "luck."

Increase to Luck 2d6. Total cost: +5 points.

Death Trance

A Fourth Ascension magus can enter a trance so profound that even a trained person can't tell it apart from death.

Death Trance: *Simulate Death. Total cost: 3 points.*

Occult Health

A magus's power now shields him from the germs and viri that cause many ordinary illnesses, preserving his health even in times when all around him fall sick. However, he's still susceptible to serious conditions (typhus, Ebola, AIDS, strokes, malaria, heart attacks...).

Occult Health: *Life Support (Immunity to most common, simple illnesses like colds, flus, fevers, sore throats, pneumonia, and the like). Total cost: 3 points.*

THE FIFTH ASCENSION: POWER

By the Fifth Ascension, a magus has come into true Power. In addition to his Gifts and Bythos he can usually cast several Thaumaturgy spells.

Expanding The Third Eye

By the Fifth Ascension, a magus need not concentrate to use his Third Eye; he's always aware of the occult energies around him.

Expanded Third Eye: *Add Sense to Detect Magic. Total cost: +2 points.*

Occult Ward

Because he's now dealing with perilous magical powers at times, a magus of the Fifth Ascension develops some simple defenses against the backlash or misuse of those powers.

Occult Ward: *Power Defense (5 points). Total cost: 5 points.*

Overriding The Pain

A magus of the Fifth Ascension has sufficient control over his body and mind that he can ignore pain much better than ordinary people can.

Overriding The Pain: *Resistance (3 points). Total cost: 3 points.*

THE SIXTH ASCENSION: WISDOM

A magus of the Sixth Ascension has begun to develop Wisdom: a true and profound understanding of the nature and power of magic, not just the surface understanding he once had. This gives him both greater awareness and greater control.

Bythos 3

A magus of the Sixth Ascension has even greater unconscious "luck."

Increase to Luck 3d6. Total cost: +5 points.

Confounding Of Babel

At the Sixth Ascension, a magus's knowledge and understanding of humanity allows him to understand all human speech. Unfortunately, this does not extend to the written word.

Confounding Of Babel: *Universal Translator (INT Roll) (20 Active Points); Only Applies To Speech (-1). Total cost: 10 points.*

Profound Death Trance

A magus of the Sixth Ascension can enter and wake from a Death Trance with even greater ease than he could previously.

Profound Death Trance: *+3 to EGO Roll for Simulate Death. Total cost: 3 points.*

THE SEVENTH ASCENSION: TRANSFORMATION

By the Seventh Ascension, a magus's understanding and control of eldritch energies is so thorough, so intense, that it begins to Transform him, making him something more than merely human... or perhaps something less.

Achosian Denial

As the final stage of denial of the body's needs, the magus learns how to ignore the discomforts of extremes of temperature. He still burns if he touches fire, but he can walk through the Arctic winter in ordinary clothes and not feel the cold.

Achosian Denial: *Life Support (Safe Environments: Intense Cold, Intense Heat). Total cost: 4 points.*

Protection Of The Soul

The magus's beginning Transformation strengthens his soul, making it far less vulnerable to attack by curses or malign spirits.

Protection Of The Soul: *Power Defense (+10 points) (10 Active Points); Only To Protect Against Attacks Versus The Soul (-2). Total cost: 3 points.*

THE EIGHTH ASCENSION: ARISING

By the Eighth Ascension of his occult “career,” the magus is become as much a being of spirit, knowledge, and wisdom as he is a human being of flesh and bone. At this point he may start to have some difficulty relating to other people or paying attention to mundane matters like paying his bills, which may cause him trouble... though his Bythos usually protects him.

Akashic Dome

A magus of the Eighth Ascension may, if he wishes, make himself seem to be a totally ordinary person — other magi cannot perceive his magical nature and powers.

Akashic Dome: *Invisibility to Detect Magic.*
Total cost: 20 points.

Astral Eye

At the Eighth Ascension the magus begins to become “attuned” to the Astral Plane where spirits reside and it’s said magic originates. He cannot yet visit it, but he can see it, which allows him to perceive magi using Astral Projection (see below), see where he’s about to project into when he uses Astral Projection, and detect the presence of spirits not made manifest through magic.

Astral Eye: *Dimensional (Astral) for Normal Sight.* Total cost: 5 points.

Bythos 4

A magus of the Eighth Ascension has even greater unconscious “luck.”

Increase to Luck 4d6. Total cost: +5 points.

Will Of Iron

The mental discipline of an Eighth Ascension magus is so strong that affecting him with mind-altering spells is difficult, if not impossible.

Will Of Iron: *Mental Defense (+10 points).*
Total cost: 10 points.

THE NINTH ASCENSION: HENOSIS

The Ninth and final Ascension represents the pinnacle of occult power a human being can attain — a power so great some magi call it Henosis (“Union with God”). It’s said that a magus of the Ninth Ascension (sometimes referred to as an *adept*) can touch, or has touched, the Divine and partaken of its Essence.

Astral Projection

The greatest Gift a magus can learn is the power to project his spirit into the Astral World, where it can interact directly with spirits (and, some say, God). This isn’t always safe, but it allows the magus to “travel” around the world and spy on others while being largely undetectable.

During the time when he frees his astral form, a magus remains in a trance so deep he’s effectively comatose. Since his astral self and physical self are both aspects of the same being, any damage inflicted on one body affects the other as well. In short, killing either the physical or astral form kills the other form, too. Additionally, the two forms can remain separate no longer than 24 hours, or they both die.

The astral form possesses all the character’s mystical powers, all his Intellect and Interaction Skills, and all of his memories (similarly, the character retains all the astral form’s memories after the two rejoin). It possesses no physical abilities beyond those of a normal person. All Focus-based abilities are lost, since the Focus doesn’t come with the character’s astral form. In any case, the astral form can only affect other astral forms and creatures, for it is intangible (it must buy Desolidification, Reduced Endurance (0 END), Persistent, Inherent, Always On, and cannot affect the physical world directly) and invisible (Invisibility, Reduced Endurance (0 END), Persistent, Inherent, Always On) and can fly (Flight, MegaScaled to allow it to get anywhere in the world in no more than an hour).

Astral Projection: *Duplication (creates 350-point astral form), Altered Duplicate (100%; +1) (140 Active Points); Costs Endurance (to activate; -¼), Original Character Is Incapacitated And Helpless While Duplicate Exists (-1), Extra Time (must enter trance and meditate to allow astral self to leave its fleshy prison, 1 Hour; -1½), Feedback (-1), Both Characters Die If They Do Not Recombine Within 24 Hours (-½). Total cost: 27 points.*

Bythos 5

A magus of the Ninth Ascension has the most unconscious “luck” a human can possess.

Increase to Luck 5d6. Total cost: +5 points.

Greater Occult Ward

A magus who’s achieved Henosis finds himself well-shielded against the magics of lesser magi; it’s very difficult to affect him with spells.

Greater Occult Ward: *Power Defense (+10 points).* Total cost: 10 points.

Thaumaturgy Spells

Thaumaturgy, or “spellcasting” if you prefer, is a process by which a magus enters a mental state that allows him to access mystic energies to create desired effects. These effects aren’t the flashy wizardry of fairy tales, roleplaying games, and Disney movies, but rather a much more subtle manipulation of reality. Usually there’s no sign the magus did anything, and an everyday person could easily come up with an everyday explanation for what happened — but the magus knows the truth.

To help him achieve the right mental state to use Thaumaturgy, magi tend to use various “aids.” The most common of these is meditation, which helps to center the mind and focus the spirit on the task at hand. Ritual acts and paraphernalia also help in some instances, though the higher a magus’s Ascension the less likely he is to need such obvious crutches.

THE LAWS OF THAUMATURGY

The central premise of Thaumaturgy, and thus in a sense of magic as well, is the Law of Unity: *everything is connected to everything else*. Some magi prefer to phrase it more simply as *everything is everything*, but that’s more philosophical than most people care for. But what it all means is this: since everything is connected to everything else, it’s possible to change any one thing into another thing, or more broadly to alter reality to suit one’s needs or perspective.

Technically, a powerful enough wizard should be able to do *anything* he wants based on the Law of Unity. Practically, that’s not possible. The amount of mystical power required to do something truly spectacular — like instantaneously transforming lead into gold — defies description. Instead, magi focus on two things.

First, they limit themselves to what they know they can reasonably reliably accomplish. This means relatively minor effects that don’t violate an ordinary person’s paradigm of how Reality works. Obviously magic violates that paradigm, but doing so in minor ways makes it easier to use.

Second, they employ the other, lesser, Laws of Thaumaturgy to make casting a spell easier.

The Law Of Cause And Effect

“The same actions done under the same conditions create the same results.”

One of the guiding principle of many rituals is that the actions the magus takes during the ritual represent the effect he wants to create/achieve. Ideally the ritual actions should be identical to the desired effect, but realistically that’s rarely possible; instead the magus must employ symbol and analogy to “represent” what he wants.

The Law Of Contagion

“Once together, always together.”

Two objects that were once together or in significant contact — a person and his hair or blood, two halves of a cookie, a car and one of its old tires — are still “in contact” for mystic purposes, and you can affect one by affecting the other.

The Law Of Knowledge

“Knowledge leads to power.”

The better a magus knows something, or the more he knows about it, the greater his chances of affecting it with Thaumaturgy. This is why many magi spend days or months researching the subject of a spell before they cast that spell. It’s also why magi often like to have a picture of the target of a spell, since just knowing what the target looks like imparts useful Knowledge.

The Law Of Sanguinity

“Blood is power.”

Blood has inherent arcane power that a mystic can “tap” while casting a spell. For each 1 BODY of human blood he sacrifices (either his own or someone else’s), he gets a +25% Active Point bonus to the spell (see below). For each 1 BODY of animal blood he sacrifices, he gets a +5% Active Point bonus.

The Law Of Similarity

“Matching attributes, matching effect.”

The universal connection between all things is stronger between any two things that are in any significant way similar: both are blue; both are made of stone; both come from New York; both were used by the same person during an ill-fated incident in 1972; and so on.

The Law Of Synchronicity

“Linked in time, linked for true.”

Two actions or objects with some sort of temporal relationship have a stronger universal connection than two that do not. This includes two actions performed simultaneously or at the same time on different days/years (the reason for the precise timing of so many rituals), two people born on the same day (or in the same year, month, or season), two objects made at the same time (such as two statuettes manufactured in the same batch at a factory), and the like. More than one magus has tried to tap the enormous magical energy inherent in city- or nation-wide celebrations or events (rush hour, a street festival, attending a baseball game, playing an MMO, celebrating Christmas...), but so far that’s proven too powerful and inchoate to “grasp.”

THAUMATURGY SPELLS IN GAME TERMS

In *HERO System* terms, Thaumaturgy spells are usually built as low Active Point effects with lots of Limitations. All spells must have Requires A Magic Roll, since Thaumaturgy is difficult to use and magi frequently fail at their endeavors. Concentration, Extra Time, and Increased Endurance Cost are all quite common. Focus is an important part of many rituals, and spells that rely heavily on the Law of Contagion. Side Effects appear frequently; the most common is Unluck (1d6 for Minor, 2d6 for Major, 3d6 for Extreme) that lasts for 1d6+1 days.

In fact, the Active Point costs in a “base” Thaumaturgy spell tend to be so low that the spell isn’t likely to accomplish anything on its own.

THAUMATURGY CONNECTION BONUSES

Strength Of Connection	Bonus	Example
Very Strong	75%	Cause/Effect: Ritual actions are identical to desired effect Contagion: Blood from a human target; ritual object is a portion of target object (e.g., two halves of a single object) Knowledge: Magus has an INT-Based KS of the target specifically Similarity: Ritual object and target object were made from the exact same substance (e.g., two statuettes carved from the same block of marble); caster and target live together Synchronicity: Ritual is performed simultaneously with the target action; caster and target have the same birthday (date and year)
Strong	50%	Cause/Effect: Ritual actions are significantly similar to desired effect Contagion: Saliva, semen, a tooth, or a piece of bone from a human target; ritual object is a crucial part of target object (e.g., part of the engine of a car, to affect the car) Knowledge: Magus has an INT-Based KS of the target generally, or an 11-KS of the target specifically Similarity: Ritual object and target object were made from the same substance (e.g., two statuettes carved from marble); caster and target live in the same building Synchronicity: Ritual is performed in the same hour as the target action; caster and target have the same birthday (same day, different years)
Average	30%	Cause/Effect: Ritual actions are vaguely similar to desired effect; ritual actions have a strong symbolic/representational connection to desired effect Contagion: Skin, hair, or nails from a human target; ritual object is an important part of target object (e.g., a tire from a car, to affect the car) Knowledge: Magus has an 11-KS of the target generally, or an 8-KS of the target specifically Similarity: Ritual object and target object are the exact same color; caster and target live on the same block Synchronicity: Ritual is performed on the same day as the target action; caster and target were born under the same sign of the zodiac
Weak	20%	Cause/Effect: Ritual actions have a minor symbolic/representational connection to desired effect Contagion: An article of clothing frequently worn by a human target; ritual object is a minor part of target object (e.g., a piece of the bumper from a car, to affect the car) Knowledge: Magus has an 8-KS of the target specifically, or any KS of the target specifically obtained through Cramming Similarity: Ritual object and target object are the same color (but different shades) Synchronicity: Caster and target were born in the same season
Very Weak	10%	Cause/Effect: Ritual actions have a weak symbolic/representational connection to desired effect Contagion: An article of clothing rarely worn by a human target; ritual object is a very minor part of target object (e.g., a piece of the chrome decor on a car, to affect the car) Knowledge: Magus has photographs of or similar information about the target Similarity: Caster and target both live in the same city Synchronicity: Caster and target were born in the same year (but days more than three months apart)

However, a magus can boost a spell by following the Laws of Thaumaturgy and establishing strong connections between his spell and the target. The accompanying Thaumaturgy Connection Bonuses table indicate the “boost” received from establishing a connection, expressed in terms of a percent increase in the spell’s Active Points. (The GM can alter this to “round off” to whole dice, change it to add an Advantage or remove a Limitation, or allow a connection to provide a Magic roll bonus instead. Similarly, he may also find it easier and more fun to ignore existing Advantages when calculating the effect of boosts.) The GM determines the strength of each connection, adds up the resulting increases to the spell’s Active Points,

adds that to 100%, and then multiplies the Active Points by the increase to determine the final Active Points in the spell (which affects the Magic roll and the END cost).

Example: *Yevgeni Dityatev wants to cast a Deadly Curse (a type of harmful spell) on one of his enemies. He plans to make the man walk in front of a moving car. Unfortunately the base Deadly Curse spell only has an RKA ½d6 effect (10 Active Points), which isn’t enough harm for Yevgeni’s tastes. He needs to establish some connections.*

First, through covert means he obtains some of the target’s hair and blood. Each has a



Very Strong connection of Contagion to the target, granting a +75% Active Point bonus. Second, he studies his target extensively, buying a KS 8- for him, giving him an Average connection and another 30% bonus. Third, he plans and prepares for a ritual that he will perform at the exact time when he expects his target to be walking out of his office building, and the ritual will mimic the target's path. The GM decides this is worth a Very Strong Synchronicity connection (+75%) and a Strong Cause and Effect connection (+30%). So, adding up all the bonuses, Yevgeni has +210% worth of bonuses. That means he multiplies the 10 Active Points by (210 + 100 =) 310%. That gives him 31 Active Points in the spell, or RKA 2d6. At the right time, Yevgeni performs his ritual... and suddenly his target stumbles and falls right in front of a bus, sustaining serious injuries.

EXAMPLE SPELLS

Here are some example spells from the *Lines Of Contention* setting, with their Ascensions listed in the summary block. But they're not the only possible ones; the central plot device is a spell not depicted here, for instance. While there are sufficient commonalities between magi to give rise to the Ascension system, ultimately magic, particularly Thaumaturgy, is a very individualistic activity. Each magus tends to create his own body of spells as much as, and sometimes moreso than, use those devised by other magi. (To simulate this in game terms, a magus PC might want to keep some unspent Character/Experience Points handy in case he needs to craft a new spell.)

AKASHIC ARISING

Effect:	Aid INT and EGO 1d6
Ascension:	Third
Target:	Self
Casting Time:	Ten Minutes (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Gestures (see text)
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-3
END Cost:	3

Description: A magus can temporarily heighten his conscious and expand the power of his mind by embracing the Akasha — the aetherial “gestalt” connection that binds all things, particularly all living things. To do this he must meditate for 10 minutes in a quiet area, thus allowing him to “open” his mind and “focus” the power of the Akasha. Many magi use aids like incense and soft music to soothe them and enhance their meditation, but this isn't required. Reaching the proper frame of mind and directly “accessing” the Akasha gives the character greater intellect, wisdom, insight, and willpower for as much as several hours.

At the Sixth Ascension a magus may increase this spell to Aid 2d6 (55 Active Points; total cost 9 points).

Game Information: *Aid INT and EGO 1d6, two Characteristics simultaneously (+½), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per 2 Hours; +1¼) (27 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (10 Minutes; - 2), Gestures (throughout casting, see text; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Self Only (-½). Total cost: 4 points.*

CLARITY

Effect: Aid INT and EGO 1d6, Only To Overcome Insanity/Dementia
Ascension: Fourth
Target: One character
Casting Time: Five Minutes (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: None
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -3
END Cost: 3

Description: The practice of magic does not always lead to the firmest state of mental health among its devotees, who after all must often deal with things Man Was Not Meant To Know. At times a magus needs information from a person suffering from insanity or dementia, which means he needs them to be able to think properly. This spell grants that ability, cutting through the fog of mental illness to grant clarity. Casting it involves sitting with the subject in a quiet place and projecting the stillness of the magus's soul into him. If done correctly, this gives the subject a few minutes where he's likely to think more clearly (in game terms, it enhances his EGO and INT for purposes of making EGO Rolls to overcome Psychological Limitations, making INT Rolls to remember things, and so forth).

At the Seventh Ascension a magus may increase this spell to Aid 2d6 (35 Active Points; total cost 5 points).

Game Information: *Aid INT and EGO 1d6, two Characteristics simultaneously (+½), Delayed Return Rate (points fade at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼) (17 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (5 Minutes; - 2), Others Only (-½), Only To Overcome Insanity/Dementia (see text; -1), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 2 points.*

CURSE

Effect: Drain Characteristic 1d6
Ascension: Third
Target: One character
Casting Time: 1 Hour (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Gestures, Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate) MegaScaled to cover all of Earth
Magic Roll Penalty: -4
END Cost: 4

Description: Magi refer to any spell deliberately designed to hurt living beings, particularly humans, as a "curse." This is the main example of such a spell. It allows a magus to reach out and affect a victim anywhere in the world (though the GM should impose penalties on the Magic roll the further away the target is: beyond 100 miles, -1; beyond 500, -2; beyond 1,000, -3; beyond 5,000, -4; and so on). To cast it he must concentrate on the mental image of his victim for an hour, directing at him all manner of hateful thoughts as well as a precise visualization of the effect he wants the Curse to have: injury or illness for a Drain BODY; clumsiness for a Drain DEX; fatigue and weariness for a Drain CON or END; and so forth. While concentrating he focuses his thoughts and power with mystic gestures and incantations.

At its base level a Curse causes only temporary pain or diminishment of ability (though even that can be troublesome at the wrong time). For truly significant effect the magus relies on Contagion in particular, but also Knowledge, Similarity, and other Laws, to boost the power of the spell. (At the GM's option, enhancing the effect of the spell may mean extending the Delayed Return Rate effect rather than increasing the number of Drain dice, or it may mean both.)

At the Fifth Ascension a magus may remove the Gestures and Incantations (increases total cost to 6). At the Seventh Ascension a magus may increase this spell to Drain 2d6 (75 Active Points; total cost 12 points).

Game Information: *Drain Characteristic 1d6, any one Characteristic at a time (+¼), Delayed Return Rate (points return at the rate of 5 per Minute; +¼), Area Of Effect (One Hex Accurate; +½), MegaScale (hex is large enough to cover the Earth; +1¼), Indirect (always come from the caster, but can strike target regardless of intervening barriers; +½) (37 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour; - 3), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (see text; -½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 5 points.*

OPTIONS:

1) Deadly Curse: Substitute RKA ½d6 for a lethal Sixth Ascension version of this spell. 32 Active Points; total cost 5 points.

DIVINATION

Effect:	Precognition, Vague And Unclear
Ascension:	Fourth
Target:	Self
Casting Time:	1 Minute
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-4
END Cost:	4

Description: With the aid of a “prop” he favors — typically Tarot cards, but possibly bones to be cast, a crystal ball or mirror to gaze into, horoscopes to calculate, sacred smoke to “read,” or the like — a magus may attempt to glimpse the future. What he does perceive tends to be vague and subject to multiple interpretations, but provided he discerns the correct interpretation he can learn much.

At the Ninth Ascension a magus may remove the *Vague And Unclear* (-½) Limitation, subject to the GM’s approval (total cost 9 points).

Game Information: *Clairsentience* (Sight Group), *Precognition* (40 Active Points); *OAF* (see text; -1), *Gestures* (spreading the cards, throwing the bones, or the like; -¼), *Instant* (-½), *Precognition Only* (-1), *Requires A Magic Roll* (-½), *Vague And Unclear* (-½). *Total cost: 8 points.*

ENTER THE AKASHIC RECORD

Effect:	Learn one fact (see text)
Ascension:	Eighth
Target:	Self
Casting Time:	1 Hour
Casting Procedures:	None
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-4
END Cost:	4

Description: A magus with a serious understanding of the Worlds Beyond and the Universal Connection can extend his mind into the Akashic Record — the magi’s term for the sum total of human knowledge as recorded in the “astral gestalt” of human existence. Typically referred to and envisioned as a sort of “library” (or, in more modern terms, a “database”), it “contains” the answer to virtually any question a magus could ask.

To “access” the Akashic Record, a magus must meditate for 1 Hour in a quiet area, thus allowing him to “open” his mind. Many magi use aids like incense and soft music to soothe them and enhance their meditation, but this isn’t required. If his Magic roll then succeeds, the magus may request one fact from the GM. Typically this has to be a fact the character could learn through diligent research and “detective work,” and it can’t be something only a single person knows (like someone’s “true name”). However, it doesn’t necessarily have to be something definitely known by the public or historians; a magus could ask to

know, and learn, the true fate of the *Marie Celeste* or whether yetis exist (and if so, their nature). The GM has the final say on what questions are permitted and how much the character learns.

Game Information: *KS: Nearly Everything* 50- (41 Active Points); *Concentration* (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), *Costs Endurance* (-½), *Extra Time* (1 Hour; -3), *Requires A Magic Roll* (-½). *Total cost: 7 points.*

FASCINATION

Effect:	Mind Control 4d6
Ascension:	Fifth
Target:	One character
Casting Time:	1 Minute (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures:	Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
Magic Roll Penalty:	-2
END Cost:	2

Description: A magus of sufficient power can impress his will upon another person, forcing the subject to do his bidding. However, even the most powerful magi recognize that dominance is easier to establish and maintain if the commands given are simple and agreeable ones. Using Fascination to convince a subject to commit suicide is very difficult; convincing him to go to work by a different route, to deliver a mysterious message, to attend a specific event, or to consider someone his friend are much easier to achieve... and equally as effective, in the right circumstances.

To cast this spell, the magus must have close access to the subject (who usually either trusts the magus strongly, or is restrained). He speaks an incantation that renders the subject’s mind especially susceptible to his control, then focuses his will. Establishing control takes a minute, after which the magus can issue his order.

It’s not unknown for magi to make this spell more likely to succeed by softening the target up first with torture — ranging from psychological manipulation, to sleep deprivation, to the brutal infliction of pain. The GM can adjudicate the effects of that on the target’s EGO as he sees fit.

At the Sixth Ascension, a magus may increase this spell to 5d6 (25 Active Points; total cost 5 points). At the Seventh Ascension, he may add Telepathic (+¼) (31 Active Points; total cost 6 points). At the Ninth Ascension, he may increase this spell to 6d6 (37 Active Points; total cost 7 points).

Game Information: *Mind Control* 4d6 (20 Active Points); *Concentration* (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), *Extra Time* (1 Minute; -1½), *Eye Contact Required* (-½), *Incantations* (-¼), *Requires A Magic Roll* (-½), *Spell* (-½). *Total cost: 4 points.*

FINDING

Effect:	Concealment 16-, Only To Find Objects (see text)
Ascension:	Second
Target:	Self
Casting Time:	1 Minute
Casting Procedures:	Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-1
END Cost:	1

Description: One of a magus's most useful abilities is the power to find lost, hidden, or secret objects — be they his missing car keys or the combination to a safe. To use this spell, the magus must be in the location where he thinks the object is. He concentrates for a minute, speaking the incantation as he does so to focus his mind. When he finishes it, the power of the spell guides him to the object... assuming both his Magic and Concealment rolls succeed.

When using the Laws to enhance this spell, consider every +50% as a +1 to the roll (standard rounding rules apply).

Every Ascension the magus may increase the Concealment roll by +1, with a corresponding increase in cost.

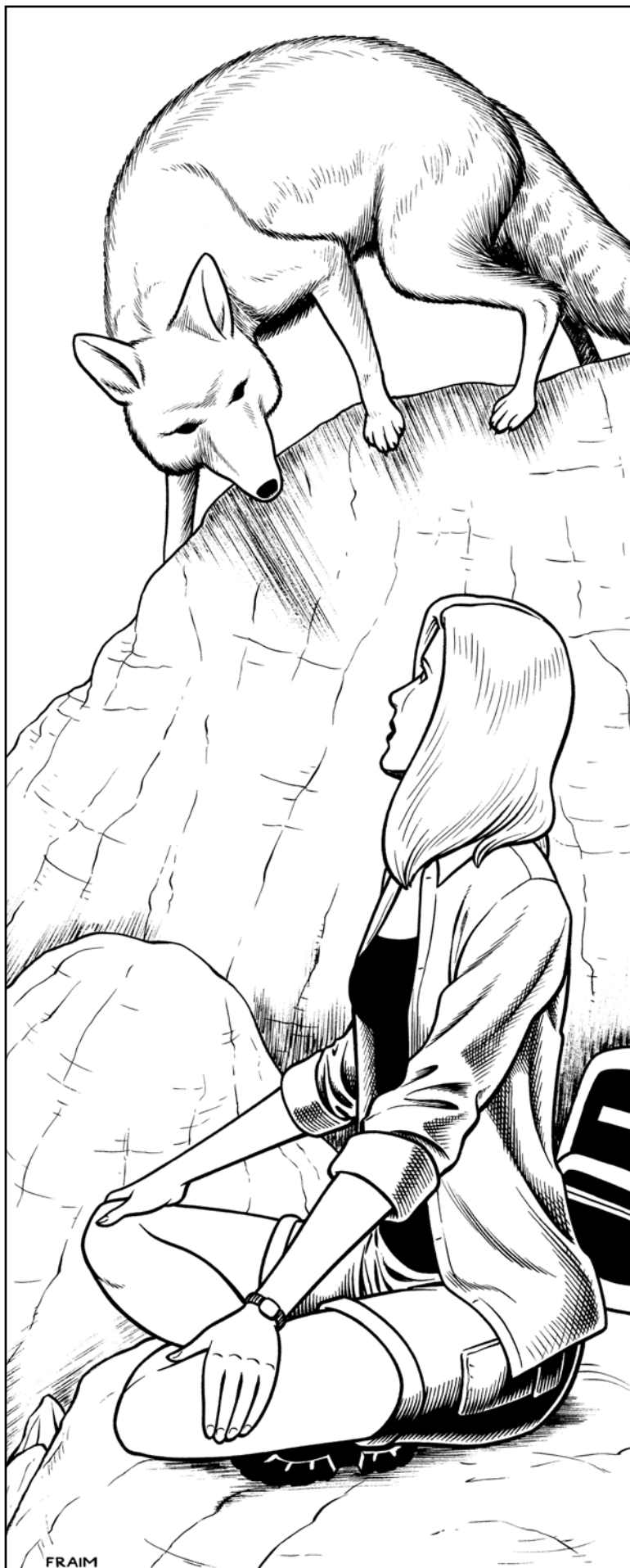
Game Information: *Concealment 16- (13 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Costs Endurance (-½), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Incantations (-¼), Instant (-½), Only To Find Objects (see text; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 2 points.*

KARCISM

Effect:	Summon one spirit built on up to 300 points
Ascension:	Fifth
Target:	Special
Casting Time:	1 Hour
Casting Procedures:	Focus, Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Instant
Range:	No Range
Magic Roll Penalty:	-6
END Cost:	6

Description: Karcism is a term from hermetic theurgy that refers to the practice of summoning demons. Magi who possess knowledge of true magic use it to refer to what can actually be done: the summoning of a spirit from the Astral World. Although magi don't truly understand what these spirits are — some claim they're departed or waiting-to-be born human souls, some demons, some an entirely distinct sort of astral being — what can be done with them is well-documented. Basically they make excellent spies, and sometimes can answer questions. They have little ability to affect the mundane world, but they can perceive events without being perceived in return.

For a spirit, use the Ghost character sheet on page 120 of *The HERO System Bestiary*, but remove all of its abilities that allow it to affect



the physical world. For the most part it's just an intangible, totally invisible entity (though they can be perceived vaguely with Detect Magic, and precisely with the Astral Eye or the Spirit Communion spell). Besides observing and reporting back, really all they can do is create feelings of disquiet and perhaps fear in people (*i.e.*, make Presence Attacks).

To summon a spirit, a magus prepares a summoning space by purifying it with special incenses and candles. Then he performs an hour-long ritual involving mystic hand-gestures, incanting, and meditation. If the ritual succeeds, the spirit appears (and he can perceive it at that time and whenever it communicates with him). It is not bound to him, but typically a conjured spirit is amenable and willing to listen to what a caster wants. Possibly it may require "payment" in the form of a drop of blood or something else it desires — who can predict the inscrutable ways of the spirit world?

Game Information: *Summon one spirit built on up to 300 points (see text) (60 Active Points); OAF Expendable (summoning supplies, Difficult to obtain; -1¼), Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Hour; -3), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 8 points.*

READING

Effect: Telepathy 4d6
Ascension: Fourth
Target: One character
Casting Time: 1 Minute (Attack Action)
Casting Procedures: Incantations
Duration: Instant
Range: No Range
Magic Roll Penalty: -2
END Cost: 2

Description: A magus of the Fourth Ascension or higher can discern the thoughts in the minds of another. However, as all practiced magi know, it's far easier to learn "obvious" thoughts — information on the surface of the subject's mind or that's central to his vision of himself — than it is to learn long-buried memories or secrets.

To cast this spell, the magus must have close access to the subject (who usually either trusts the magus strongly, or is restrained). He speaks an incantation that renders the subject's mind especially "open," then focuses his will. Establishing mental contact a minute, after which the magus can ask questions of the subject.

It's not unknown for magi to make this spell more likely to succeed by softening the target up first with torture — ranging from psychological manipulation, to sleep deprivation, to the brutal infliction of pain. The GM can adjudicate the effects of that on the target's EGO as he sees fit.

At the Sixth Ascension, a magus may increase this spell to 5d6 (25 Active Points; total cost 5 points). At the Eighth Ascension, he may increase this spell to 6d6 (30 Active Points; total cost 6 points).

Game Information: *Telepathy 4d6 (20 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Eye Contact Required (-½), Incantations (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Spell (-½). Total cost: 4 points.*

SEEMING

Effect: Disguise 16- (see text)
Ascension: Third
Target: Self
Casting Time: 1 Minute
Casting Procedures: Incantations
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: Some magi have the power to alter their appearance slightly... but sometimes slightly is more than enough to accomplish whatever they have in mind. He doesn't literally "change shape" so much as he changes the way people perceive him. He can change details like skin or hair color, add scars or tattoos, and the like — basically anything a skilled makeup artist could do without prostheses, appliances, and other such paraphernalia.

To use this spell, the magus must concentrate in a quiet location for a minute. Many magi draw simple pictures of themselves as they wish to be perceived as an aid to concentration. Once the spell is complete, he takes on a different seeming... assuming both his Magic and Disguise rolls succeed.

When using the Laws to enhance this spell, consider every +50% as a +1 to the roll (standard rounding rules apply).

Every Ascension the magus may increase the Disguise roll by +1, with a corresponding increase in cost.

Game Information: *Disguise 16- (13 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Minute; -1½), Incantations (-¼), Nonpersistent (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 3 points.*

SPIRIT COMMUNION

Effect: Detect Spirits 16-
Ascension: Third
Target: Self
Casting Time: 1 Turn
Casting Procedures: None
Duration: Constant
Range: Self
Magic Roll Penalty: -1
END Cost: 1

Description: This relatively simple spell allows a magus to perceive and communicate with spirits. It's not required for the Karcism spell, but is very handy when one needs to speak with ghosts or similar manifestations.

Game Information: *Detect Spirits 16- (no Sense Group) (15 Active Points); Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Extra Time (1 Turn to cast; -¾), Nonpersistent (-¼), Requires A Magic Roll (-½). Total cost: 4 points.*

VITALITY

Effect:	Life Support (Longevity: double human lifespan)
Ascension:	Fourth
Target:	Self
Casting Time:	1 Hour
Casting Procedures:	Gestures, Incantations
Duration:	Persistent
Range:	Self
Magic Roll Penalty:	-1
END Cost:	0

Description: One of the main goals of nearly every magus — and the utter obsession of many — is the extension of life. Those who can work magic are rarely content with a normal human span of years; their plans are long and subtle, and they must remain alive and vital to seem them through to fruition.

A magus uses this spell to double his lifespan to 200 years, thus giving him at 100 the vitality of an ordinary man of 50. Casting it involves an hour-long ritual that must be performed *every year* at the *exact same place and time*. Failure to meet these requirements instantly reverses the effects of the spell to that date, which may be fatal. Even if the magus survives, he has to cast the spell all over again and is stuck with his current, natural, state of age and health as of that time (and then begins aging at half the normal rate from that point).

Magi who use this spell (which is to say, nearly every magus) become paranoid about casting it again as required, often spending months or weeks planning to make sure nothing interferes with the procedure. Some magi favor wild, abandoned places (like mountaintops), which they don't think will ever change; others put their trust in a place they own and can control.

At the Eighth Ascension, a magus may increase this spell to quadruple human lifespan (2 Active Points; total cost 1 point). As yet no magus has found a way to extend life further, though many have spent more than a single lifetime trying. If that's even possible, the magus who learns how to do it and is foolish enough to let the Mystic World know would soon find himself the most hunted, flattered, and sought-after member of the occult fraternity.

Game Information: *Life Support (Longevity: double human lifespan) (1 Active Point); Concentration (0 DCV throughout casting; -1), Costs Endurance (to cast; -¼), Extra Time (1 Hour to cast; -1½), Gestures (throughout casting; -½), Incantations (throughout casting; -½), Requires A Magic Roll (-½), Requires Maintenance (see text; -0). Total cost: 1 point.*

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