

SILVER
BRANCH
GAMES

LEGENDS WALK!

2ND EDITION



A roleplaying game of superheroes empowered
by the gods, heroes and monsters of mythology



LEGENDS WALK!

A roleplaying game of ancient and modern superheroes

Version 2.0

Silver Branch Games

Written and designed by Tim Gray

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Playtesters: Ian Charvill, Darren Coutts, Kevin Heeley, Steve Kinley, Tim Partridge, Stefan Scrivener. Thanks to Tim Partridge and Ian Charvill for comments on the first edition text. Responsibility for any errors or confusion remains, of course, with the pixies who use my computer at night.

Sparked by an original concept by Mike Hughey in the forums at RPGnet (www.rpg.net) and informed by postings there on all sorts of subjects by a whole bunch of people.

Reference to comic book titles and characters is not intended as a challenge to copyrights and trademarks of their creators or publishers.

This book is dedicated to the everyday heroes, whose mighty powers include Compassion, Determination and Integrity: saving the world one grazed knee, house-fire and placard at a time.

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Welcome to 2nd edition!

Legends Walk was the first game I published, back in 2002. It's sold slowly but steadily, and gathered some very positive feedback. Since then I've worked on several other projects, gathering more experience, and the time seemed right to bring some of that back to LW.

The biggest change is a total layout overhaul - box-outs, clipart, etc. Content is much the same, though some wording has been tightened. The rules have had a bit of a trim down, tune up and reorganise. Other main changes:

- Pool Points reworked, tying them more closely to personality traits. More rules back-up for tensions between characters' personal, heroic and legendary lives.
- More Key Powers, drawing from the rulebook and supplements. Clearer outline of power types. Some powers tweaked.
- More on using the game in other settings and styles, both mythic and conventional. Clarified different lethality settings.
- "Inspirography" of inspiration and reference sources, previously online.

I hope you enjoy it!

Tim Gray, July 2006

INTRODUCTION

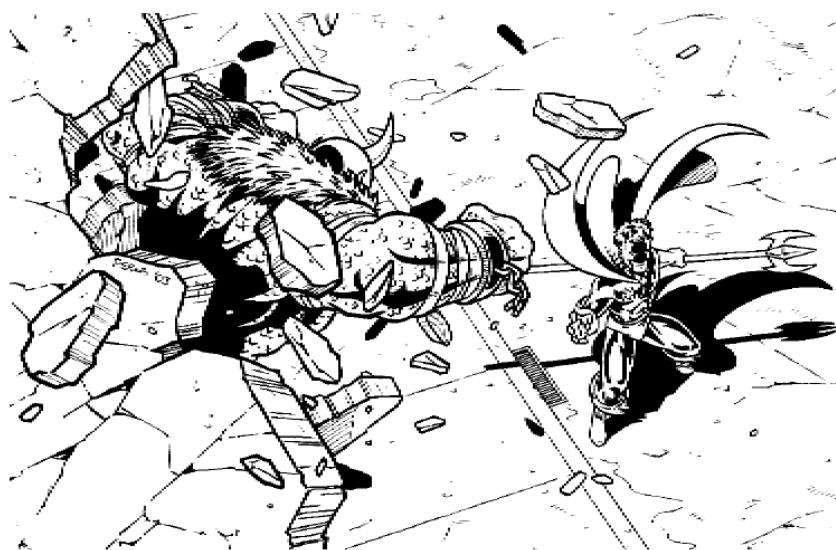
There was a rider who came across the waves with a shining sword.
There was something very fast that plucked missiles out of the air.
There was a man who hurled spears of writhing lightning, and a woman who stirred up the sea with great winds.
There was a silvery flying saucer that rained bolts of crackling energy. Eventually it crashed in the ocean, though no wreckage was ever found.
There were birds with almost-intelligible voices, hunting each other through the sky, and at least one whale picking off the smaller craft.
There was a stern-faced man walking in the air who stopped the guns from firing.

If it happened today it would probably be worse.

Hands of Wrath and Plenty: reflections on the anniversary of All Hell's Day
Sheldon J Street, *Globe Magazine*

Legends Walk! is a roleplaying game, enabling you to create exciting stories of superheroes empowered by beings from mythology. There is a set of rules, designed for simplicity, and setting information for the Legendary Earth of 2020, with notes on using it for other settings. To play, you just need pencil,

paper and about 10 six-sided dice. Oh, and a group of enthusiastic friends would help. You can focus on brave and noble heroes saving the world from the forces of evil; outcasts breaking the rules to do what's right; individuals coming to terms with changes they never asked for; or combinations of these and other elements.





LEGENDARY EARTH

It's twenty years since the turn of the millennium, when the first known metahumans appeared with abilities far beyond those of mortal men and women - and often beyond the bounds of accepted science. They are an accepted part of modern life, generally referred to as "Metas", and have brought many changes. They claim that their powers and the changes in their bodies and minds come from the gods, heroes and even monsters of mythology.

WHAT'S A ROLE-PLAYING GAME?

Most role-playing games (RPGs) start with a section like this, and some of them are quite long. This one isn't. A RPG is basically a fun way for a group of people to play "let's pretend" using a particular set of rules and background/setting/game world.

The **players** (real people) each have a **character** (an imaginary person), with information about how good that character is at doing various things. The character is in a setting detailed by the **Game Master (GM)**, who describes events to the player. The player says what the character does, and the GM says what happens as a result. This often involves rolling one or more **dice** (the singular is "die"), based on information about the character, to see whether the action succeeded. As the characters interact with each other and their setting a story is woven in which the players participate through their characters.

Player characters are often referred to as **PCs**, and non-player characters (run by the GM) as **NPCs**. A **session** is a real-world measure of time, when the players get together to play, perhaps over an evening. A **scene** is a game-world measure of time when the characters pursue a set of actions at a particular location.

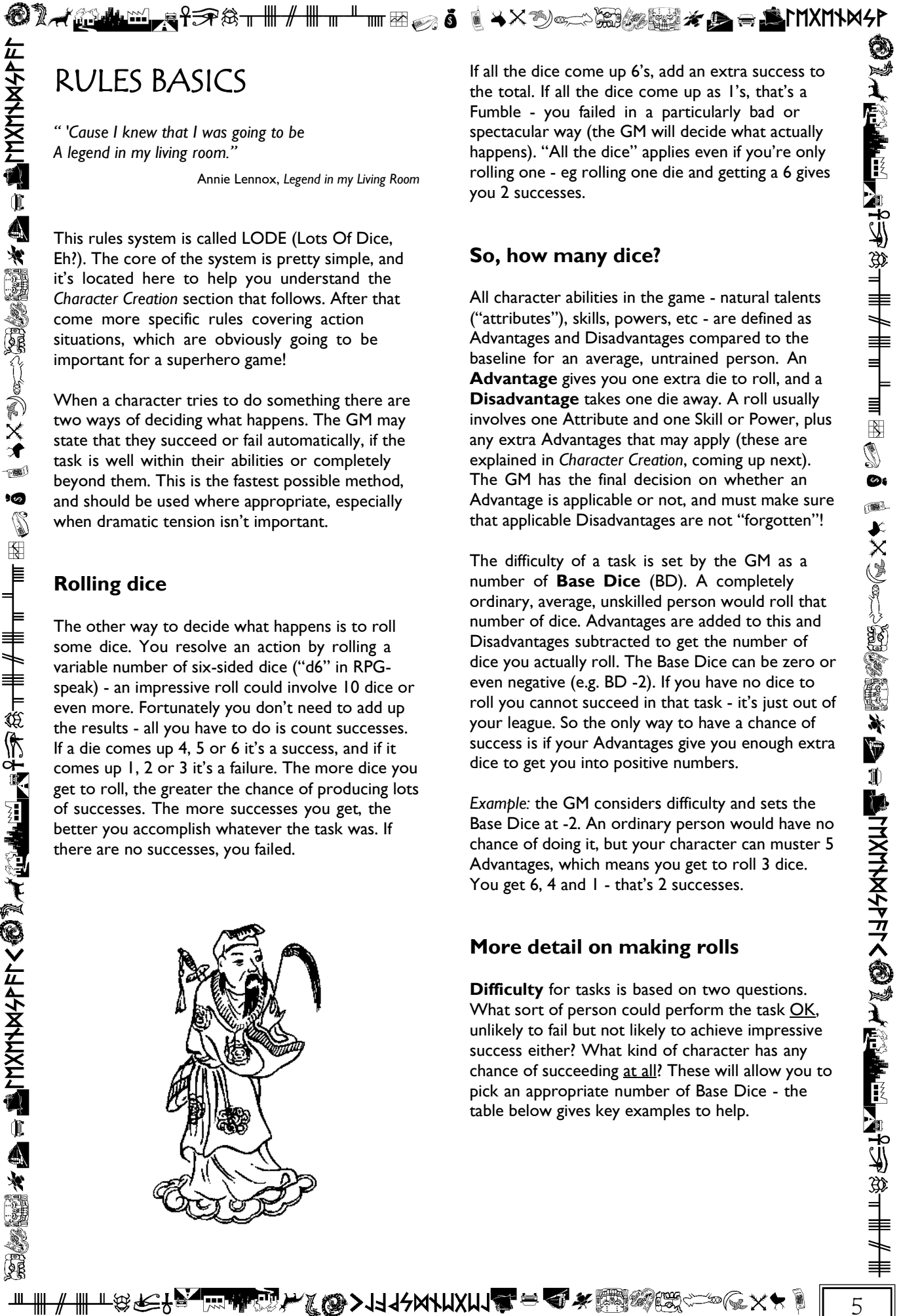
WAYS TO PLAY

The "standard" way to play *Legends Walk* is with super-characters who are granted the powers of mythic entities, in a near-future world that has been altered by their presence. However, there are lots of other possibilities. You can play different time periods within that same setting. You can also use the *LW* rules to play non-mythic supers in a present-day setting - or even as a quick and simple way to model your favourite comic heroes and have adventures in their world. There's more on this in the *Alternate Settings* section later on.

Some of them hide their identities with gaudy costumes and codenames; others take less fanciful precautions and stay in the shadows, and some operate openly. Some of them work to protect and advance humanity, others seem hostile to it and many pursue agendas of their own. Some just want to have ordinary lives, but find that fate has other ideas. Their conflicts are on a legendary scale - meanwhile "Normals" just hope to survive the crossfire.

There's roughly one Meta per million population, giving an estimated 7000 worldwide, though some countries have many more Metas per head than others. Their appearance has had a huge effect on the structure and development of society. They suddenly found themselves with the power to change the world in very direct ways, from addressing social and environmental issues to getting revenge on the school bully. Things are probably better as a result, but often they have made things worse or solved one problem only to create another. Metas have taken over the running of some countries; in other places Normals force Metas to register their powers or serve in the army or police. New nations have formed and alliances have changed. The USA holds on to the title of "superpower", but shares it with India. Technology is basically what we can see around the corner now, available to those who can pay for it, though some talented individuals push the edges of accepted physical laws. There's a city on the Moon, and several under the sea.





RULES BASICS

“'Cause I knew that I was going to be
A legend in my living room.”

Annie Lennox, *Legend in my Living Room*

This rules system is called LODE (Lots Of Dice, Eh?). The core of the system is pretty simple, and it's located here to help you understand the *Character Creation* section that follows. After that come more specific rules covering action situations, which are obviously going to be important for a superhero game!

When a character tries to do something there are two ways of deciding what happens. The GM may state that they succeed or fail automatically, if the task is well within their abilities or completely beyond them. This is the fastest possible method, and should be used where appropriate, especially when dramatic tension isn't important.

Rolling dice

The other way to decide what happens is to roll some dice. You resolve an action by rolling a variable number of six-sided dice (“d6” in RPG-speak) - an impressive roll could involve 10 dice or even more. Fortunately you don't need to add up the results - all you have to do is count successes. If a die comes up 4, 5 or 6 it's a success, and if it comes up 1, 2 or 3 it's a failure. The more dice you get to roll, the greater the chance of producing lots of successes. The more successes you get, the better you accomplish whatever the task was. If there are no successes, you failed.



If all the dice come up 6's, add an extra success to the total. If all the dice come up as 1's, that's a Fumble - you failed in a particularly bad or spectacular way (the GM will decide what actually happens). “All the dice” applies even if you're only rolling one - eg rolling one die and getting a 6 gives you 2 successes.

So, how many dice?

All character abilities in the game - natural talents (“attributes”), skills, powers, etc - are defined as Advantages and Disadvantages compared to the baseline for an average, untrained person. An **Advantage** gives you one extra die to roll, and a **Disadvantage** takes one die away. A roll usually involves one Attribute and one Skill or Power, plus any extra Advantages that may apply (these are explained in *Character Creation*, coming up next). The GM has the final decision on whether an Advantage is applicable or not, and must make sure that applicable Disadvantages are not “forgotten”!

The difficulty of a task is set by the GM as a number of **Base Dice** (BD). A completely ordinary, average, unskilled person would roll that number of dice. Advantages are added to this and Disadvantages subtracted to get the number of dice you actually roll. The Base Dice can be zero or even negative (e.g. BD -2). If you have no dice to roll you cannot succeed in that task - it's just out of your league. So the only way to have a chance of success is if your Advantages give you enough extra dice to get you into positive numbers.

Example: the GM considers difficulty and sets the Base Dice at -2. An ordinary person would have no chance of doing it, but your character can muster 5 Advantages, which means you get to roll 3 dice. You get 6, 4 and 1 - that's 2 successes.

More detail on making rolls

Difficulty for tasks is based on two questions. What sort of person could perform the task **OK**, unlikely to fail but not likely to achieve impressive success either? What kind of character has any chance of succeeding **at all**? These will allow you to pick an appropriate number of Base Dice - the table below gives key examples to help.



Talent refers to inborn abilities like strength, agility, intelligence or perceptiveness (measured as “attributes”). In Legends Walk! these can go outside the normal human range into Meta levels 1, 2 and 3. Skill refers to learned abilities like swordfighting or working in metal, and the normal progression is Basic, Professional, Expert, Master. The way characters are defined will be explained shortly, giving you a better handle on this.

Ability level	Base Dice
OK for untrained, average person	3
OK with any skill or talent	2
OK for a professional or someone with great talent	1
OK for an expert, or a Meta 1 talent; possible with any skill or talent	0
OK for a master or highly talented professional; possible for a professional or great talent	-1
OK for a talented master or a Meta 3 talent; possible for an Expert, or a Meta 1 talent	-2
OK for a master with great talent; possible for a master, or a Meta 2 talent	-3
OK for a master with Meta talent; possible for a master with talent, or a Meta 3 talent	-4
OK for a master with high Meta talent; possible for a master with great talent (normal human limit)	-5

If you're having trouble setting a difficulty, see if the commonest ones apply:

- BD 2 reflects an everyday but not routine task - anyone can try, and those with some talent or training can do it pretty well;
- BD 0 reflects something within the normal human range, but quite difficult - an average person simply can't do it, and even those who are qualified find it a challenge;
- BD -2 reflects something requiring unusual ability, which an average person wouldn't even think of trying, eg parrying bullets with a sword.

Here's how to interpret the number of **successes**:

- 1 Marginal - barely succeeded, sloppy performance, often only achieve part of your goal
- 2 Adequate - OK, but nothing to write home about
- 3 Solid - can't fault it
- 4 Impressive - congratulations are in order
- 5 Exceptional - people sit up and take notice - you're obviously a cut above the average
- 6+ Astonishing - tell your friends they can close their mouths now

Fluke Die

A roll of a single die is sometimes referred to as a Fluke Die because the result is determined more by luck than skill and there's a significant chance of things going horribly wrong. The possible results, 1-6, are: fumble, fail, fail, 1 success, 1 success, 2 successes. The GM can use this to judge the effects of sheer chance, or as a Base Dice when things could go either way.

Opposed rolls

If you're competing directly against another character's ability rather than the difficulty of a task, both make a roll and the one that gets more successes wins. The difference between the two results tells you how decisive the result is. Usually both rolls are made at BD 2, but the GM may give modifiers for circumstances.

For instance, a PC trying to charm their way past a suspicious guard might roll Subterfuge + Presence, BD 2 against the guard's Investigation + Wisdom, BD 2. The PC gets 4 successes, the guard gets 1, and the obstacle is overcome.



CHARACTER CREATION

*"You never know
If I push at this wall my hand could pass through"*

Joe Jackson, *Only the Future*

This section is about creating your character - defining what they're good at, what they're not so good at, and what abilities they have beyond those of mortal men. The blank character sheet reflects a completely average person with no skills apart from basic schooling (reading, arithmetic, etc). It's up to you to describe how your character differs from this boring, unformed state.



Process

- 1 Come up with a **concept** - the basic idea for your character. Concept includes who the character was and what they did before getting their powers, and what sort of powers they got. It might change as you go through character creation, but if you have something to aim for the GM can suggest choices to help you achieve it.
- 2 Create your character as a **Normal**, ie before they were imbued with their powers. You have points with which to "buy" Advantages, and you'll also gain at least one Disadvantage.
- 3 Choose **Meta** powers. Your concept will have given you a **power programme** which acts as a shopping list: you have a pool of points to spend on options with variable costs.
- 4 Now you have the character's abilities you **finish off** by using them to work out a few key ratings and writing down some information about the character's personality.

Concept

The first step in character creation is to get a general idea of the character. What did they spend their time doing before they got their powers? What sort of person were they? What sort of powers have they got, and how will they use them?

In this game there isn't a single long list of superpowers from which you choose freely. You have free choice of **Source** - the mythological god, hero or monster that provides your character's powers - from the lists that appear later. The GM might not want to make all of these available, so check first - in particular, it's unusual for a PC (player character) to have a monster as their Source. Each Source has a **programme** of powers, like a shopping list, and you'll have a certain number of points with which to buy powers from that list. (The programmes are listed quite a bit later on, after the action rules which will help you to understand some of the powers.)

Probably the best approach is to decide what kind of character and powers you're interested in, then ask the GM to suggest power programmes to look at - they're more likely to have read them all through! The character is chosen by the Source as someone it thinks will advance its values, so there should be some connection between the character's Normal life and Meta powers, even if the character is going to end up ignoring most of the Source's impulses.

SPANDEX, LEATHER, TRENCHCOAT...

Perhaps the most important thing to bear in mind when creating a superhero character is to make them **iconic**. That is, they must be capable of being a larger than life figure with a distinctive, recognisable appearance. If you like traditional comics fare, have a gaudy, tight-fitting costume - but if the idea of running round in tights puts you off, there are plenty of other well-established options. Just make sure your group will be close enough style-wise to work together.

LEGENDS WALK!

Character Name

Player Name

Goals

Attitude:
 Blessing • Tool • Responsibility •
 Unwanted • Curse

Boundary:
 The Law • The Greater Good •
 Personal Code • Social Acceptability •
 Calculation • Gratification

ATTRIBUTES

	Poor	Average	Talented	Exceptional	Meta 1	Meta 2	Meta 3
Strength							
Agility							
Endurance							
Wisdom							
Ingenuity							
Presence							
Awareness							

SKILLS

Name	Occupation	Normal	Meta	TOTAL

Presence Pool

Destiny

Favour

Run
 Base Lift
 Base Jump /

NORMAL ABILITIES

Nationality:
 Occupation:
 Advantages:
 Disadvantages:

META ABILITIES

Source:
 Domain:
 Aegis:
 Powers:
 Disadvantages:

Hardness

Initiative ()

Combat moves	Roll	Base Damage
Unarmed		

Resistance	Roll	Auto	Meta
Physical			
Mental			

Hurts Physical, Mental

Injuries Physical, Mental

Healing limit:

Creation costs per level: Attribute 2, Skill 1, Advantage 1. Poor Attribute gives 2 extra points, Disadvantage 1 extra.

Signature Moves

Creation costs per level: Boost 2, Skill 1, Switch 2, Add 3; item Boost or Switch 1, item Add 2; Disadvantage gives 2 extra points.



CREATING A NORMAL

These are the steps to follow. Each of these elements is explained in its own section below. Player characters effectively start off as a cut above the average person - this is one of the things that attracts the attention of the Source.

You have 7 points to spend on character abilities at this stage.

Occupation is mandatory and costs no points. What does (or did) the character spend their time doing? This can be anything reasonable - check it with the GM. Examples might include accountant, fire officer, physicist, car mechanic, housewife (or househusband) or layabout. It gives you a cluster of Skills at Basic level (see below) - these don't have to be listed, you just get the Advantage in play if your Occupation applies to a task. If you want to be of professional standard in any Occupation Skills you'll need to improve them further.

Attributes are the basic definitions of how strong, clever, perceptive, etc the character is; their innate, general talents. They all start off at Average. Each level above that (to a maximum of Exceptional) costs 2 points. Taking an Attribute down to Poor gains an extra 2 points which can then be spent on other things, though it's unusual for a hero to have any Poor Attributes. Record levels by writing "N" for Normal in the appropriate space(s) in the Attribute grid. (It's sometimes important to know which Attribute levels are part of your Meta powers and which aren't.)

Skills are specific areas of expertise and training. They could be Occupation Skills in which the character has achieved Professional or greater level through extra time and attention, or they could be unrelated hobbies, eg a mechanic could be a keen amateur conjuror. Any reasonable specific skill can be chosen, like Electronics, a Language, Unarmed Combat - there's a list of example Skills below. There are four levels: 1=Basic, 2=Professional, 3=Expert, 4=Master. (When your superpowers are added in, Skills can go beyond this scale.) Skill levels costs 1 point each.

Quirks are Advantages and Disadvantages that don't fit under Attributes and Skills, helping to round out the character and make them more interesting. They could be physical, mental, social, connected with the character's history, or anything else that might apply to a Normal person - eg Lucky, Obsessed, Wanted by the Police. You start with one Advantage and one Disadvantage automatically, at no points cost. One further

Advantage may be taken at a cost of 1 point. One further Disadvantage may be taken for a gain of 1 point.

Once all that's done you have your Normal character finished, and it's time to go on and look at superpowers. The following sections explain aspects of Normal creation in more detail.



Occupation

As stated above, the Occupation can be anything the character spends a lot of their time doing - their job, in most cases. It may be that once they gain their powers they don't follow this profession any more, but before they start play they're considered to have spent a few years in it. Many Metas do try to maintain a profession, as a cover identity through which they live a "normal" life and as a source of income, but maintaining it can often be stressful.

The function of Occupation in the game is to give the character a set of key Skills at Basic level without having to specify them all individually. If a player can make a case for a task involving one of these Skills, they get an Advantage. *Example:* John's character wants to look for clues on a suspect's computer. His Occupation is Accountant, and the GM agrees that using a computer in this way would be covered, so John gets an extra die to roll. If it involved reprogramming the computer or tinkering with its electronics, the GM would rule that an accountant would not normally have those skills, so no Advantage.

The player chooses an Occupation, checks it with the GM and writes it down. Most can be summed up in one or two words, but some might need a sentence to clarify what they involve.





Attributes

Attributes are natural talents which can be used to describe how good each character is at certain kinds of things. A character is rated Average in all of them unless Advantages or Disadvantages are used to show greater or lesser ability. There are seven attributes - here they are with an idea of what being good or poor in each might mean for a character.

Strength is the physical force a character can exert.

- Good - lifting heavy objects, breaking things
- Poor - needs help opening a stiff door

Agility is whole-body physical co-ordination, and can also be used for tasks requiring nimble fingers.

- Good - acrobatic feats, dodging, jumping, landing blows, picking pockets
- Poor - bumping into things, tripping over own feet, dropping crockery

Endurance is the ability to shrug off poison, disease and injury, and to keep going when things get tough.

- Good - "Is that the best you've got?," surviving in the desert, recovering from unconsciousness quickly
- Poor - glass jaw, sickly

Wisdom is the ability to absorb and recall information, analyse it and put it to good use. It involves an element of common sense, as well as reason and memory.

- Good - finding obscure references, operating strange machinery, chemical analysis
- Poor - forgetting names, having trouble with long words, getting sums wrong

Ingenuity is creativity, imagination, making mental leaps, thinking quickly or laterally, cunning and instinct.

- Good - inventor, artist (writer, actor, sculptor, etc), solving crossword puzzles, fast talker
- Poor - stick-in-the-mud, pencil-pusher

Presence is self-confidence, manifesting as courage, charisma and willpower.

- Good - natural leader, people like to be around you, weathering adversity, pushing yourself to great things, resisting mental influence
- Poor - timid, nervous, critical of yourself and others, rarely invited to parties

Awareness is perception and intuition; how in touch you are with the world around you.

- Good - observant, hard to surprise, sensitive to people's feelings, second sight
- Poor - withdrawn, insensitive, clueless

Levels

Each Attribute has the following possible levels. Each step above Average is an Advantage. Going below Average is a Disadvantage. The Meta levels are listed here to show the whole scale, but they are not available during the *Creating a Normal* stage. (It would be unusual to take an Attribute down to Poor in Normal creation and then bump it up again during Meta creation. Apart from anything else, it's unlikely that a Source would choose someone rated Poor in any of its key Attributes.)

- **Poor** - unusually bad - is there some reason, or did they just turn out that way?
- **Average** - most people have this level of ability
- **Talented** - above average ability, often found in professionals within a field (eg to be a successful doctor or military commander you generally need above-average Wisdom or Presence respectively)
- **Exceptional** - the limit of natural human ability, found in Olympic athletes, Sumo wrestlers and Nobel prize winners - eg flipping a car
- **Meta 1** - enhanced beyond human range, able to do things that Normals can't do - eg lifting a car
- **Meta 2** - powerfully enhanced - eg lifting a bus
- **Meta 3** - real heavyweights, capable of godlike feats and doing casually what others find impossible - eg lifting an aeroplane



Skills

A Skill is a specific area of expertise, complementing the general expertise given by the Occupation. Here are the **Skill levels** available to Normals again.

- 1 **Basic** - able to carry out common tasks competently; basic training or amateur interest
- 2 **Professional** - able to get a job using the Skill for other people; fully trained
- 3 **Expert** - advanced training and experience; called in for tricky tasks
- 4 **Master** - top of the field; people from all over the world consult you

It's common to use the Occupation for Basic level in peripheral Skills and take Professional level in the key Skill(s), eg Medicine for a practising doctor. If you use points to add on to a Skill covered by the Occupation, remember that you're buying it up from 1 not 0 - the grid on the character sheet will help to keep this straight.

What Skills are there?

A **list of common Skills** for a modern setting follows. The aim is not to make you obsessive about naming the exact Skill for the situation, but to provide a guide to the kind of things that ought to be in there somewhere. Some of these are in groups, like Engineering - each item in the group is a separate Skill. The Skills PCs inherit from their Sources, of course, tend to be archaic, but they are usually referred to by modern names (eg "Psychology" for the Skill of learning what someone's thoughts and motivations are by observing them).

Inventing new Skills. This list is not fixed or complete, and players and GMs can come up with their own. First check that the new Skill really isn't covered by one of the ones here. The trick is not to make them too broad, so that they apply to too many kinds of action, or too narrow, so that they're hardly ever useful - the GM may suggest ways of making them more general or more specific, and always has final decision about allowing them.



Using Skills

If a player can make a case for using a Skill for a task, its levels act as Advantages.

Unskilled tasks. Some tasks can be accomplished without the relevant Skill, though less successfully (fighting, climbing, public speaking); others can't because the character needs the Skill to even know where to start (brain surgery, speaking Spanish). The GM might use BD 0 or lower, or simply rule out unskilled attempts.

Skills and Attributes. Most uses of a Skill involve a standard Attribute, but you can use others for different effects - you could roll Fighting (Handgun) + Wisdom to test knowledge of guns.

Overlapping and combining. Skills can overlap, so that a given task could be accomplished through more than one Skill - either by straightforward substitution, or by using the stand-in Skill at 1 level less than normal (or, unusually, 2 levels less). They can also combine, so that a task needs more than one Skill. There are different ways to handle this: the GM could call for the lowest of the relevant Skills, or for the average level (usually rounding up).



Common Skills

Athletics - all basic physical actions like running, jumping, throwing and swimming, plus more complex ones like gymnastics and acrobatics.

Business - knowledge of how to set up and manage a business, including the appropriate laws, accounting, employment practices, marketing, etc. Doesn't include face-to-face wheeler-dealing.

Computer - all aspects of using computer equipment, including programming and hacking. It does include stuff like slotting in a new drive or card, but building and repairing at circuit level needs Electronics.

Drive/Pilot - vehicle Skills are specific to type and have to be learned separately: Drive Car/Lorry, Drive Motorcycle, Pilot Boat/Ship, Pilot Aeroplane, Pilot Helicopter, Drive Tank, Pilot Submarine, Pilot Space Shuttle... There's a certain amount of overlap between some of these - eg aircraft have certain instruments in common but handle differently - and the GM may sometimes allow overlapping Skills.

Engineering:

Construction - includes civil engineering and architecture - designing, making and repairing structures like buildings, bridges and tunnels.

Electronics - designing, making and repairing small-scale electronic equipment, like computers, control systems and radio transmitters.

Mechanics - designing, making and repairing machines which work by physical parts in motion, and associated electrical components like power supply, motors and simple controls - cars, washing machines, toasters, etc.

Fighting - combat skills are specific to the type of weapon used - for hand-to-hand they're of the form Fighting (type), including Unarmed, Sword, Club, Staff, Spear and so on, covering both attack and defence. You can default to Fighting (Unarmed)



for dodging blows. The main Skills for missile weapons are Firearms and Archery, and they don't have a defence component. Less common is Gunnery, which is used for machine-directed weapons including many field and vehicle-mounted guns. Although weapon Skills are quite specific, the GM should allow flexibility in their use. For instance, a broom handle could be used with Staff or Spear Skill, though it would do less damage than a spear and resist breakage less well than a staff. Objects which are poor reflections of a weapon type might reduce the Skill level by 1.

Home-making - all domestic tasks like cooking, sewing, cleaning, etc.

Intimidation - influencing people by appearing tough and dangerous, including interrogation and stare-downs.

Investigation - aspects of police work like spotting clues and knowing how to deal with them (analysis will require science Skills), police procedure, etc. Detectives, sharp-eyed amateurs and some reporters also have this.

Language - each foreign language is taken as a separate Skill. Basic level is "tourist" proficiency, good enough to get by in everyday matters. Professional level is full fluency in spoken and written forms (characters have this level in their native language for free - you don't need to write it down). Higher levels are unnecessary unless you want to be a great writer or poet. Except for tasks like deciphering a difficult text, language tasks usually just involve checking whether you know the language rather than rolling.

Leadership - convincing people to do as you say, and looking after groups of people on excursions or missions. (It's not about conning people - see Subterfuge.)

Medicine - how the human body works, and how to fix it when it goes wrong.

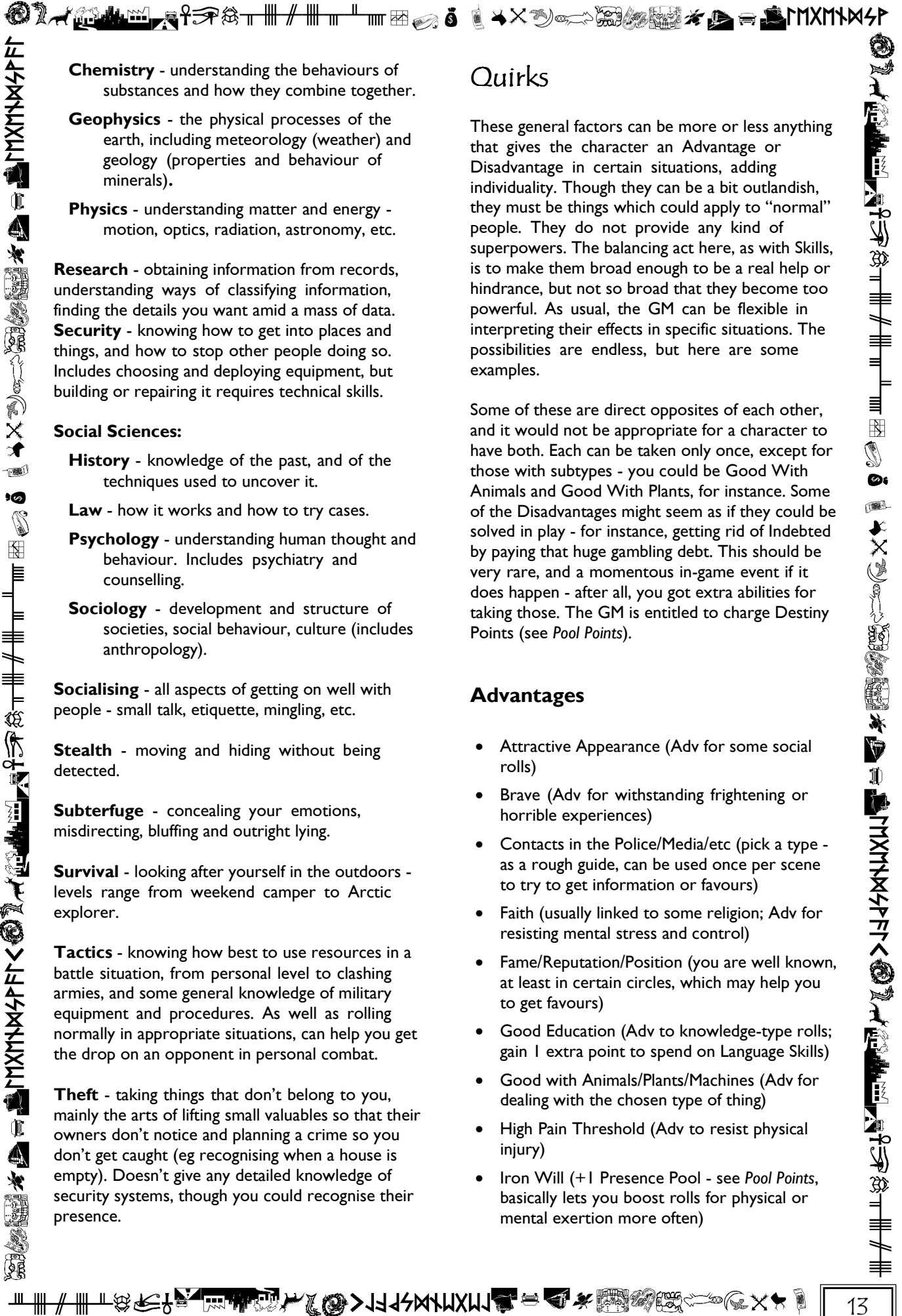
Natural History - an observational knowledge of living things, covering their identification, behaviour and habitats rather than their internal workings (that's Biology). You could use it for interactions with wild animals.

Occult - knowledge of the ideas, lore and practices of magicians over the ages.

Physical Sciences:

Biology - understanding living things and how they work.





Chemistry - understanding the behaviours of substances and how they combine together.

Geophysics - the physical processes of the earth, including meteorology (weather) and geology (properties and behaviour of minerals).

Physics - understanding matter and energy - motion, optics, radiation, astronomy, etc.

Research - obtaining information from records, understanding ways of classifying information, finding the details you want amid a mass of data.

Security - knowing how to get into places and things, and how to stop other people doing so. Includes choosing and deploying equipment, but building or repairing it requires technical skills.

Social Sciences:

History - knowledge of the past, and of the techniques used to uncover it.

Law - how it works and how to try cases.

Psychology - understanding human thought and behaviour. Includes psychiatry and counselling.

Sociology - development and structure of societies, social behaviour, culture (includes anthropology).

Socialising - all aspects of getting on well with people - small talk, etiquette, mingling, etc.

Stealth - moving and hiding without being detected.

Subterfuge - concealing your emotions, misdirecting, bluffing and outright lying.

Survival - looking after yourself in the outdoors - levels range from weekend camper to Arctic explorer.

Tactics - knowing how best to use resources in a battle situation, from personal level to clashing armies, and some general knowledge of military equipment and procedures. As well as rolling normally in appropriate situations, can help you get the drop on an opponent in personal combat.

Theft - taking things that don't belong to you, mainly the arts of lifting small valuables so that their owners don't notice and planning a crime so you don't get caught (eg recognising when a house is empty). Doesn't give any detailed knowledge of security systems, though you could recognise their presence.

Quirks

These general factors can be more or less anything that gives the character an Advantage or Disadvantage in certain situations, adding individuality. Though they can be a bit outlandish, they must be things which could apply to "normal" people. They do not provide any kind of superpowers. The balancing act here, as with Skills, is to make them broad enough to be a real help or hindrance, but not so broad that they become too powerful. As usual, the GM can be flexible in interpreting their effects in specific situations. The possibilities are endless, but here are some examples.

Some of these are direct opposites of each other, and it would not be appropriate for a character to have both. Each can be taken only once, except for those with subtypes - you could be Good With Animals and Good With Plants, for instance. Some of the Disadvantages might seem as if they could be solved in play - for instance, getting rid of Indebted by paying that huge gambling debt. This should be very rare, and a momentous in-game event if it does happen - after all, you got extra abilities for taking those. The GM is entitled to charge Destiny Points (see *Pool Points*).

Advantages

- Attractive Appearance (Adv for some social rolls)
- Brave (Adv for withstanding frightening or horrible experiences)
- Contacts in the Police/Media/etc (pick a type - as a rough guide, can be used once per scene to try to get information or favours)
- Faith (usually linked to some religion; Adv for resisting mental stress and control)
- Fame/Reputation/Position (you are well known, at least in certain circles, which may help you to get favours)
- Good Education (Adv to knowledge-type rolls; gain 1 extra point to spend on Language Skills)
- Good with Animals/Plants/Machines (Adv for dealing with the chosen type of thing)
- High Pain Threshold (Adv to resist physical injury)
- Iron Will (+1 Presence Pool - see *Pool Points*, basically lets you boost rolls for physical or mental exertion more often)

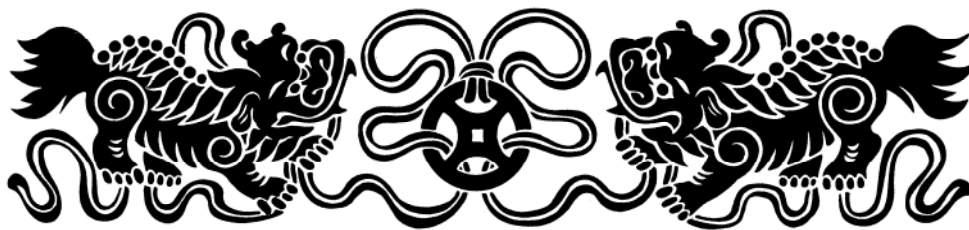


- Lucky (once per scene you can re-roll an action and use the better result or ask the GM for an event that's a minor case of good luck)
- Natural Linguist (learn languages for half the usual point cost)
- Nimble Fingered (Adv for manual dexterity, eg picking locks)
- Quick Reactions (+2 Initiative - see *Combat*, helps you act before an opponent - Adv for rare actions, eg catching a thrown knife)
- Sense of Direction (Adv for finding the way)
- Wealthy

Disadvantages

- Addiction (specify - if faced with the subject you may have to make a Presence roll to stop yourself indulging - each day of abstention, Resist physical damage of [number of days abstaining], with any "wounds" remaining until you resume the habit or get help)
- Allergy (specify - not too rare or common - while exposed to the trigger substance you're at -2 Initiative and a Dis to impress people, wears off after half an hour away from trigger)
- All Thumbs (Dis for manual dexterity tasks)
- Bad with Animals/Machines (Dis for dealing with the chosen type of thing)
- Bad Reputation (you are well known, at least in certain circles, as someone to steer clear of)
- Hounded by an Enemy (this basically gives the GM licence to create a personal nemesis and throw them in at will)

- Indebted (someone out there has a claim on you, decide who - the GM can have them "ask" for "little favours", and they have the power to make things uncomfortable if you refuse)
- Nervous (Dis for withstanding frightening or horrible experiences)
- Phobia, Obsession, etc (specify - mainly a matter for roleplaying, but you may have to roll Presence to resist the subject or get a Dis on other rolls related to it)
- Poor (short of money)
- Poor Education (Dis for knowledge-type rolls)
- Poor Eyesight or Hearing (Dis to relevant perception rolls)
- Sick or Elderly Relative (or other person who needs attention, causes you to worry and is vulnerable to enemies)
- Slow Reactions (-2 Initiative - see *Combat*, makes it more likely you'll act after an opponent - Dis for rare actions)
- Tempted by Wealth/Power/Drink/etc (specify - similar to Obsession and Addiction, Presence roll to resist indulging)
- Unattractive Appearance (Dis in many social situations)
- Unlucky (once per scene the GM can call for you to re-roll an action and use the worse result, or throw in an event that's a minor case of bad luck)
- Vicious (you must roll Wisdom if you want to "pull" a blow or avoid attacking a fallen or helpless opponent)





CREATING A META

“You’ve always annoyed me, you know - with your claims of godhood and pretensions to mythology.”

Ultron, to Thor, *The Avengers: Ultron Unlimited*
Kurt Busiek and George Pérez/Stuart Immonen, Marvel Comics

You’ve already created your character as a Normal, deciding what abilities they had before they got their superpowers. Now it’s time to give them those powers, by spending points in a similar way to Normal creation.

The Source

You should have chosen a Source when you came up with your character concept. A Source is a God, Hero or (if your GM allows it) Monster from mythology that exists as a spirit or energy being on a parallel plane and channels power to you through the **Gate**, a metaphysical connection between worlds which exists everywhere at once. Obviously there are hundreds of possibilities from different cultures, so there’s plenty of scope for picking one of your own and agreeing the abilities with your GM. A good starting selection appears later on in this book, and further pantheons are available in supplements.

Gods are powerful greater-than-mortal figures linked to a particular sphere of influence, like Thor the Norse god of thunder or Poseidon the Greek god of the sea.

Heroes are mortals whose deeds became the subject of great legends, like Hercules or Robin Hood. Many were the children of gods and had some supernatural ability, but in general they have natural abilities (like strength, cunning or skill) writ large rather than supernatural powers.

Monsters are beasts, fairies, demons, spirits and suchlike. They often have supernatural powers and act as opponents or helpers of gods and heroes. There are usually obvious physical differences between them and humans. These Sources make more use of non-human hosts, sometimes imbuing animals and even objects. Monsters and demons often overwhelm their hosts deliberately or through multiple Disadvantages, replacing their wills with their own desires rather than working in partnership with them.

You need to come up with a **rationale**: why did that particular Source choose to empower your character? It wouldn’t invest all that energy for no reason. The character might not be consciously aware of this reason, but the GM should be so they can play the Source when necessary. For instance, it’s easy to see why a goddess of war and death would imbue a mercenary - that’s someone who’s likely to further her cause. But what about a librarian? Perhaps their family has been cruelly murdered and they seek a way to deliver swift and final justice. The rationale becomes part of your character’s background.

Using the Programmes

The Source’s **Programme** of powers acts as a shopping list. You have a certain number of points to spend and different types of ability cost different numbers of points. The categories are described on the next page. Many powers have a quantity in brackets after them, eg (2) or (M1). This is a ceiling, the maximum level to which the power can be taken, reflecting different emphasis between Sources. It is not a points cost or a total number of levels gained.

Each Source has one power (or, rarely, more) listed as **Required**, which means you have to use some of your points to buy at least one level in this because it’s central to the Source’s nature - eg everyone imbued by Thor gets some Strength increase. Other powers are **Optional**. Most Programmes give you a wide choice, but it’s best not to spread your abilities too thinly if you want to keep a clear character concept and have a couple of areas where you can shine.

There are also compulsory and optional **Disadvantages**, varying by type of Source. Those who take on the power of a Source take on its other characteristics too, and even the ancient gods and heroes had definite bad sides. Sources also have archaic and uncompromising attitudes, and freakish physical characteristics.

- **If your Source is a God**, you start with 12 points and 1 Disadvantage. You also get an Aegis (see *Gate Modifiers* below).
- **If your Source is a Hero**, you start with 10 points and no Disadvantages.
- **If your Source is a Monster**, start with 14 points and 2 Disadvantages.





Power types

Boosts 2 points/level

These simply add levels to an Attribute. They're listed with the maximum level they can be boosted to in brackets - you can buy as many levels as you want until you hit this ceiling. For instance "Boost: Strength (M2)" means you can buy extra levels of Strength at 2 points each until it hits Meta 2; you can't buy Meta 3. If the Boost is listed as (+1) you can only increase it one level. Record a Boost by writing an "M" (for "Meta") in the Attributes grid.

Skills 1 point/level

These are just like Normal skills. Sometimes the power of a Source includes knowledge and expertise that's suddenly available on an instinctive level - for instance, those imbued by Thor often know how to fight with a hammer, and the smith-god Hephaistos gives knowledge of metalworking. Unless the Programme says otherwise only a single level of a given Skill can be gained this way. Levels from Meta Skills and powers can take a Skill total over 4. The Skills grid on the character sheet lets you record the different components.

Switches 2 points

These are lesser powers, with less power and flexibility than Adds: often with just a single, specific effect. They do not have multiple levels: you either have one or you don't. Switches tend to fall into one of three types, working in slightly different ways. It's usually obvious which applies.

- **Pure Switch** - an ability Normals don't have that's just there, doing what it does; often passive. *Examples:* Claws (extra damage), Night Vision (seeing in the dark), Immunity to Fire (unaffected by a type of harm).
- **Super-Quirk** - an ability Normals do have, like an ordinary Quirk but more powerful, giving 2 Adv rather than 1. *Examples:* Beauty, Eloquence.
- **Active power** - a metahuman ability that's more likely to affect other people and things. It requires a roll at some point, maybe to activate it and/or oppose a target's Resistance. This is more likely under stress, eg turning invisible in the middle of a fight; if you've taken damage you might find it harder to use your powers. The roll is usually on an Attribute at BD 2. *Examples:* Blessing, Object Sense.

Adds 3 points/level

These are the most powerful and/or flexible abilities, with a level from 1 to 3 (the number in brackets is the maximum level that can be bought). Most Adds cover a general field and can be used in various ways - Control Fire would cover simple blasts, creating a figure out of flame, and detecting nearby fire sources (with different Attributes as appropriate). They need rolls to use, working off the Add level and an appropriate Attribute. *Examples:* Control Fire, Shapeshift, Flight.

Note: The dividing line between Adds and Switches is not rigid. Inventing powers is more an art than a science! Sometimes, for instance, you'll see a power labelled, "works as a Switch, costed as an Add": it's Switch-like and can only have one level, but powerful enough to "price" it at 3 points.

Items variable

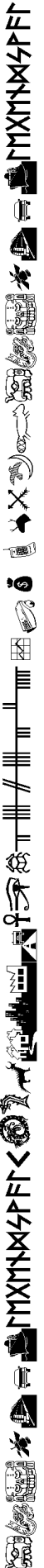
Imbued items are objects or even animals that receive powers from the Source (usually Switches or Adds) and make them available to the user. They are basically indestructible. **Gadgets** are technology-based character items. Item powers cost 1 point less than normal, because if the character is deprived of the item temporarily (character items always come back again) they lose access to the power - eg Switches cost 1 point and Adds cost 2 points per level. (The minimum cost is 1 point, so if an item gives a Skill - which is rare - the cost is not reduced). Items are detailed below.

Disadvantages

These are a bit like negative Quirks, but often with more pronounced effects that can be obviously supernatural. Most make it harder to live a normal human life. Most are of a few key types: **Disadvantage** for certain types of task; **disposition** that has to be resisted with an Attribute (usually Wisdom or Presence, BD 2); **state** that's just on all the time; **need** for something, giving a Hurt per full scene you don't indulge, maximum 3, healed only when you get it. Some can be picked more than once for an increased effect. *Examples:* Lust for Battle, Code of Honour, Glowing Eyes, Blue Skin, Need for Blood.

You start with 0-2 Disadvantages depending on the type of Source you choose. You can get more Meta creation points by taking extra Disadvantages, becoming more strongly infected with the Source's power: up to 2 extra, each giving an extra 2 points.





META ATTRIBUTES

There's a step change between Exceptional and Meta 1: you're no longer plagued by the uncertainties and frailties of everyday life. Here are some of the changes that characters discover. Most of the system effects of these are built in to the rules - for instance succeeding unusually well, or achieving more difficult tasks.

The Transcendence Rule - For "everyday" tasks related to the Attribute you no longer need to roll - you can invoke your Attribute level and succeed automatically. *Examples:* carrying someone, walking a narrow ledge, avoiding the 'flu that's going round, understanding a complicated article, talking your way into a club, facing down an awkward shop assistant, knowing someone's behind you. Situations that aren't everyday include contests with other metahumans (and possibly other major characters), and "super-scale" events like a meteor falling on your head (being shot usually counts too).

Strength - the world is a much more fragile place now, and you realise just how much the physical world limits Normals. You can lift heavy objects, break through walls, throw and jump great distances. This isn't always a blessing and you have to keep your strength under control, because people are fragile too - how does it feel to be a lethal weapon?

Agility - you see how slow and ungainly Normal life is, now that you have entered a more fluid and three-dimensional world. Plucking objects out of the air, dodging bullets, splitting your attention between several opponents, back-flipping down corridors and climbing the sides of buildings are well within your capabilities.

Endurance - you never realised how often you got colds, headaches and the like until they were gone. Now if you bump into someone you hardly feel it, and you can get into a fist-fight without getting slowed down at all. Your warm coat hangs unused in winter, and you rarely bother with oven gloves. Sometimes you wonder if you feel like a human any more.

Wisdom - everything's so clear to you now, but most people take an age to grasp even simple points. You can read at remarkable speed, watch several TV channels at once, recall large volumes of information perfectly and beat chess grandmasters. You read scientific journals on the bus, pick up new languages for amusement, and analyse the habits of friends from specks on their clothing.

Ingenuity - your gut instincts guide you with eerie precision, and you can feel the creative energy behind the visible world. You handle puzzles in record time as the answers pop into your head, and you're never at a loss for the right words to swing things your way. Great scientific innovations, works of art or world-spanning plots are standard fare, and you pity the masses with their mediocre lives. Or perhaps you enjoy talking them out of the shirts on their backs.

Presence - the doubts, hesitation and fears that used to trouble you seem strange now. You know that you'll cope with whatever comes along and get what you want in the end. Faced with adversity, you just dig deeper for that extra bit of effort. You have a noticeable aura of poise, confidence and command, and people tend to go along with your reasonable suggestions or orders without question. You usually become the centre of a small crowd at social events and get asked for your input or approval in meetings.

Awareness - the world around you is in sharper focus than it ever was before, and you're not sure how many senses you actually have these days. You can hear the insects in the grass and feel the wind on a calm day, and you know what Mozart and Bach really put in their work. Sneaking up on you is almost impossible, and you can find people in the dark by their breathing or perfume. You also pick up on the emotions of those around you, which can enable you to smooth interactions but sometimes makes everyday conversations like walking through a battlefield. Normals often seem ignorant, coarse, brutish and insensitive, but of course they can't help it.





Imbued items

"I don't know what that thing on your finger is, but I know for sure it's not the most powerful weapon in the universe. 'Cause that's right here on my finger!"

Green Lantern, *JLA: Rock of Ages*
Grant Morrison and Howard Porter, DC Comics, 1998



Powers are usually imbued into a person. However, the ancient gods and heroes often had possessions (swords, caps, horses, etc) with magical powers, and Sources can imbue the powers of these things into other objects or creatures.

Creating imbued items

The only requirement is that the object imbued has some sort of resonance or symbolic link with the original. As long as you've got that you can change object types or even cross the boundaries between objects and animals. This gives some interesting possibilities for mixing ancient and modern. If a Source had a horse that could gallop across water as well as dry land, you could decide that the power applies to any form of transportation and give it to a car. If the Source item is a cap or cloak, you might be able to apply its powers to a coat, belt or other worn item. What if Thor imbued a baseball or cricket player? Some of the power of his famous hammer could go into a bat to make an impressive weapon. But its key power was to return to the hand after being thrown, so what about imbuing the ball instead? It's a small projectile with a big punch that comes right back for another shot.

Powers for items are cheaper to buy than personal ones. This is offset by the fact that they can be taken away or lost temporarily, and if you don't have the item you can't use its powers.

Properties

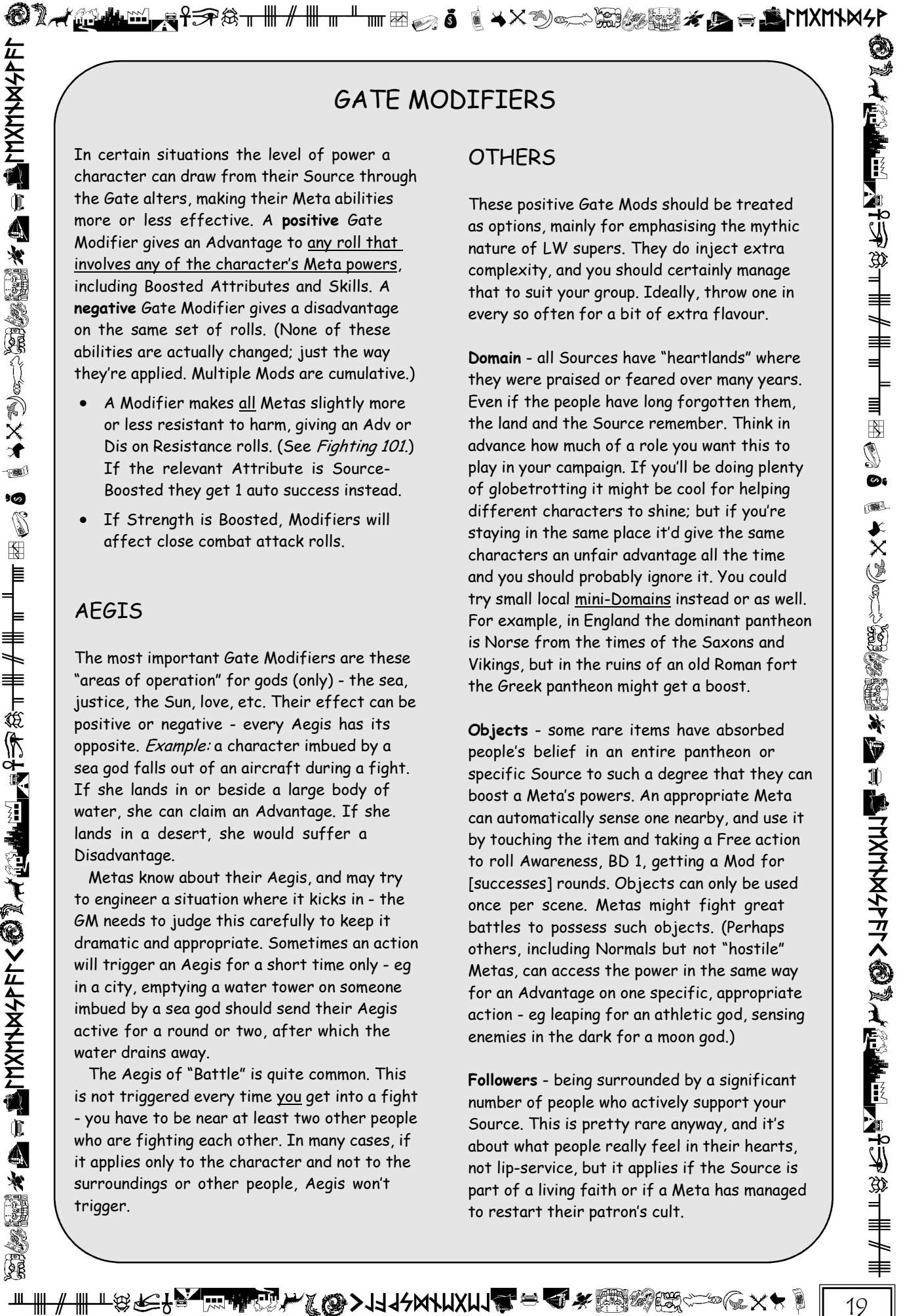
Imbued **objects** are nearly indestructible in most situations. They can be stolen, hidden, buried under collapsing buildings, dropped into the depths of the sea, but the only thing that can damage them is an attack by another imbued object or a person using superpowers. For such special items to be cracked and in need of repair is an important plot point, and their total destruction would be a major turning point in the story - so these events should be extremely rare, as they are in the comics for characters with special weapons.

Starting Meta power levels

The points available for starting characters - 10 for heroes, 12 for gods, 14 for monsters - are designed to give players hard choices about which options to pick from their power programmes. If they try to get a bit of everything they'll probably end up with few or no Attribute Boosts. On the other hand, if they concentrate on one Attribute or Add they'll be able to raise it from nothing to maximum with a few points left over.

Some players might feel they don't get enough points. This is partly a side-effect of presenting lots of options and then restricting choice, but also bear in mind that different people round the table may be thinking of different comics and characters when they hear "superhero game". Many comics heroes have just one medium-level power which they use creatively or a set of enhanced Attributes and Skills. A few have several powers at very high levels. The default for Legends Walk is to put everybody in the middle range, with some chance to increase powers slowly in play. It may be useful for the GM to explain this at the start. Of course, if you want to work at a different power level you can simply give the players a different number of points. This may mean adjusting the setting too, to reflect the even scarier people roaming around.





GATE MODIFIERS

In certain situations the level of power a character can draw from their Source through the Gate alters, making their Meta abilities more or less effective. A **positive** Gate Modifier gives an Advantage to any roll that involves any of the character's Meta powers, including Boosted Attributes and Skills. A **negative** Gate Modifier gives a disadvantage on the same set of rolls. (None of these abilities are actually changed; just the way they're applied. Multiple Mods are cumulative.)

- A Modifier makes all Metas slightly more or less resistant to harm, giving an Adv or Dis on Resistance rolls. (See *Fighting 101*.) If the relevant Attribute is Source-Boosted they get 1 auto success instead.
- If Strength is Boosted, Modifiers will affect close combat attack rolls.

AEGIS

The most important Gate Modifiers are these "areas of operation" for gods (only) - the sea, justice, the Sun, love, etc. Their effect can be positive or negative - every Aegis has its opposite. *Example:* a character imbued by a sea god falls out of an aircraft during a fight. If she lands in or beside a large body of water, she can claim an Advantage. If she lands in a desert, she would suffer a Disadvantage.

Metas know about their Aegis, and may try to engineer a situation where it kicks in - the GM needs to judge this carefully to keep it dramatic and appropriate. Sometimes an action will trigger an Aegis for a short time only - eg in a city, emptying a water tower on someone imbued by a sea god should send their Aegis active for a round or two, after which the water drains away.

The Aegis of "Battle" is quite common. This is not triggered every time you get into a fight - you have to be near at least two other people who are fighting each other. In many cases, if it applies only to the character and not to the surroundings or other people, Aegis won't trigger.

OTHERS

These positive Gate Mods should be treated as options, mainly for emphasising the mythic nature of LW supers. They do inject extra complexity, and you should certainly manage that to suit your group. Ideally, throw one in every so often for a bit of extra flavour.

Domain - all Sources have "heartlands" where they were praised or feared over many years. Even if the people have long forgotten them, the land and the Source remember. Think in advance how much of a role you want this to play in your campaign. If you'll be doing plenty of globetrotting it might be cool for helping different characters to shine; but if you're staying in the same place it'd give the same characters an unfair advantage all the time and you should probably ignore it. You could try small local mini-Domains instead or as well. For example, in England the dominant pantheon is Norse from the times of the Saxons and Vikings, but in the ruins of an old Roman fort the Greek pantheon might get a boost.

Objects - some rare items have absorbed people's belief in an entire pantheon or specific Source to such a degree that they can boost a Meta's powers. An appropriate Meta can automatically sense one nearby, and use it by touching the item and taking a Free action to roll Awareness, BD 1, getting a Mod for [successes] rounds. Objects can only be used once per scene. Metas might fight great battles to possess such objects. (Perhaps others, including Normals but not "hostile" Metas, can access the power in the same way for an Advantage on one specific, appropriate action - eg leaping for an athletic god, sensing enemies in the dark for a moon god.)

Followers - being surrounded by a significant number of people who actively support your Source. This is pretty rare anyway, and it's about what people really feel in their hearts, not lip-service, but it applies if the Source is part of a living faith or if a Meta has managed to restart their patron's cult.



Imbued **animals** are more intelligent and resilient than others of their type. They don't become ill under normal circumstances, will take sensible steps to avoid injury, and (like PCs) tend to go into comas rather than dying outright if they take a lot of damage. They are loyal, but that doesn't include following stupid orders or endangering themselves needlessly. Their personality tends to mirror those of the Source and the original creature or item (eg an intelligent sword will rarely be peaceful, a hawk or tiger will think like a hunter).

The player has spent points to have the item, so although a villain may take it away and hide it for a while or throw it in a river, the character should be able to get it back again. The difficulty of finding a lost or hidden item depends on the GM's plans for the story. A character can sense when they're within about 25 feet of their own item, though not its precise location. Sometimes spending a Destiny point can lead to a lucky find. Sometimes it will require cleverness and effort (and rolls!) to overcome obstacles, and sometimes it'll just be sitting there waiting for you.

Using Items

Items don't usually have Attributes of their own, so if an item's power requires a roll use the Attribute of the character wielding it.

Items can be picked up by people other than their original wielder (though the owner will probably come looking for the item sooner rather than later). Anybody imbued by the same Source as the item can use its powers as long as they have positive Favour (see *Pool Points*). It might also work for other people - roll Awareness, BD 0, using the following modifiers.

- Advantage: imbued, same pantheon
- Advantage: imbued, same Aegis
- Advantage: occupation favoured by the Source (eg fisherman and sea god)
- Disadvantage: occupation opposed by the Source (eg thief and god of justice)

The result of this roll sets a ceiling for all future uses of the item's power (ie successes over this number are lost). A character may attempt to improve their attunement to an item by spending a day with it and rolling again, keeping the better result. Gate Modifiers that apply to uses of an item's powers are always those of the item's Source. The item is still fantastically durable even if its powers don't work. An item with a mind of its own can override use of its powers.

GADGETS

These are items based on technology rather than supernatural powers that are nevertheless important enough to be counted as part of the character and therefore immune to permanent loss. The scope of their abilities depends on the way you handle technology in your game.

In a "standard" Legends Walk campaign they won't be very common. A few characters will have one or maybe two, but the emphasis is more on the Imbued items. Purchasing Gadgets out of Meta creation points effectively means you got a bum deal from your Source - fewer powers or more Disadvantages than usual - and you're compensating for it with your own wits and resources. If your game is closer to ordinary comic-book supers, though, Gadgets will be more common (and Imbued items rarer). For instance, many heroes have some device that shoots a grappling line so they can swing around the city.

Creating Gadgets - map their abilities to the standard power categories, as for an Imbued item. Those that are comparable to Skills or Quirks are probably tools, enabling you to use your own abilities in ways that you couldn't without the Gadget; that grappling line is a good example. Switches give a modest, narrow application power, like maybe capsules emitting clouds of dark vapour to blind opponents. (A small supply of one-shot Gadgets is treated the same as a single repeat-use one.) Adds give more powerful or flexible abilities - like, oh, spraying some goop that can form a swing-line, trap criminals, make trampolines, etc.

Losing Gadgets - unlike Imbued items they can be broken, but won't be in normal use. The GM may rule that a specific circumstance breaks a Gadget or takes it away, e.g. a villain targets your Sonic Shrieker, but you get a Destiny Point each scene you're deprived of it. A character with a bit of down-time can always repair a Gadget, build a new one, get a replacement from their inventor uncle, etc.

FINISHING OFF

Mechanics

Now your character's almost finished. You just have to fill in some boxes based on the abilities you've chosen.

Pool Points

Presence Points can be spent to get Advantages on actions that involve physical or mental "oomph", like landing that last punch when you're almost exhausted. Count levels of Presence, starting at Average=1, and write the number in the box (leave room to record the current level as it changes). This Pool refreshes itself each scene.

Destiny Points are awarded during play for things the character does and spent to improve luck for specific actions or, over the longer term, to improve Normal abilities. Player characters start with 1 of these to reflect their importance.

Favour Points reflect the character's standing with their Source. If they do things in tune with its desires they'll gain these points, and can trade them in for supernatural assistance or, longer term, more powers. You start with 0: given the powers, you must prove yourself.

More detail is given in the *Pool Points* section that follows Character Creation.

Initiative

The Initiative bonus will determine how quickly and how often the character can act during action scenes. Add these things together:

- being aware of what's going on - Awareness Advantages (eg Meta 1 = 3 Advantages);
- mental processing/reactions - average of Wisdom and Ingenuity Advantages (add together, divide by 2, round up);
- physical reactions - Agility Advantages;
- training and experience in combat situations - levels of highest combat Skill.

Other abilities might affect it too, eg the *Quick Reactions* Quirk adds 2 and levels of the *Speed* power add 5 each.

Disadvantages subtract from the total. It's possible to get a negative Initiative bonus, but it would be unusual for a Meta PC. For simplicity the same Initiative bonus is used for all types of action, which is one reason why it includes several elements.

Hardness

This is used to work out what happens if you collide with objects or other characters. Combine the following:

- count your Strength Advantages (so Poor would be -1);
- add any points of Armour;
- add any levels of Large Size, or subtract levels of Small Size.

So an average person has Hardness 0; one with M2 Strength, Large (1) Size and Armour of 2pts scaly skin has Hardness 7. For some characters Hardness will change from time to time, eg if you Shapeshift. Similarly, someone with an armoured battle suit will have a lower Hardness in "civvies". Write down the figure that will usually apply in combat and modify it when necessary.

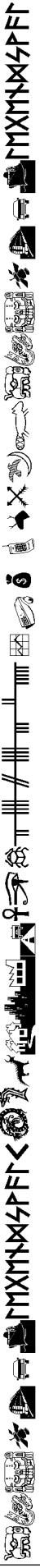


Resistance

A grid is provided to record the numbers of dice you roll to Resist various sorts of harm. More on how to use these appears in the *Combat* chapter, but the basic idea is to subtract Resistance successes from a damage number before looking at the effect on the character.

To calculate **Physical Resistance**:

- The Auto box gives automatic successes when Resisting physical damage, and may mean weak attacks automatically bounce off. Write in the total of your Meta Endurance levels, Armour and Size modifiers. *Example*: M2 Endurance, 2 points of Armour and Size Large (1) gives a total of 5. (If you have Small Size you could end up with a negative number here, which means attacks do more damage than usual.)



- The **Roll box** is the number of dice you roll to Resist damage, with the result added to your Auto successes. Count your sub-Meta Endurance levels (Meta levels are in Auto already), starting at Poor=1, and add any relevant Quirks. *Example:* Talented Endurance plus the Quirk High Pain Threshold gives a total of 4 dice to roll. Some Disadvantage Quirks subtract from this total, but it never falls below zero.
- **Meta Resistance** is used on rare occasions when a normal person would have no Resistance against an attack. For instance, being turned into a rabbit is an undesirable effect on your body but normal physical resilience, designed to throw off pain, disease and suchlike, won't resist it. Metahumans, however, are protected by the power of their Source and may be able to withstand or at least reduce such effects. Write down the number of levels of Source-granted Endurance. Gate Modifiers and Pool Points may affect this in play. *Example:* you have M1 Endurance altogether, Talented from your Normal athletic hobbies and 2 Boosts from your power programme - write 2 in the Meta box.

To calculate **Mental Resistance** do the same, but use Presence instead of Endurance throughout. Physical Armour and Size are obviously irrelevant here, and different Quirks will apply.

Miscellaneous

Movement limits can be useful as a guideline. For ordinary people **Run** is 50ft (sprinting in a few seconds) and **Base Jump** is 1ft/3ft (vertical/horizontal distance per jumping success). Metas may have abilities that change these substantially (explained in the *Athletics* section later).

The **combat actions summary box** is provided for you to put in details of your most common attacks and other moves so you don't have to look them up every time. Fill in any that you want by adding up the relevant Advantages, or wait until they come up in play.

The **Hurts** and **Injuries** boxes are there to record damage you take during play, so leave them blank. **Signature Moves** are only gained with experience, so leave that box blank too.

Personality

You also need to pin down your character's attitudes and the way they relate to the world. These are guidelines, of course - your character's true personality will come out in the way you play them, but it's useful to formalise a few basics. They also have important connections with the rules for gaining and using Pool Points.

Goals

Choose 1 to 3 Goals for the character. What kinds of things will they go out of their way to do? What drives them? What do they value above all else? This could refer to people, things or principles. It could be something you want to do or be or attain; or just a statement of something you value like a relationship or even an item of property. The key thing is that the character values it enough to motivate action, both to pursue it and to protect it from threats. They shouldn't be too specific: "getting a novel published" isn't a long-term motivator, but "recognition for writing talent" is.

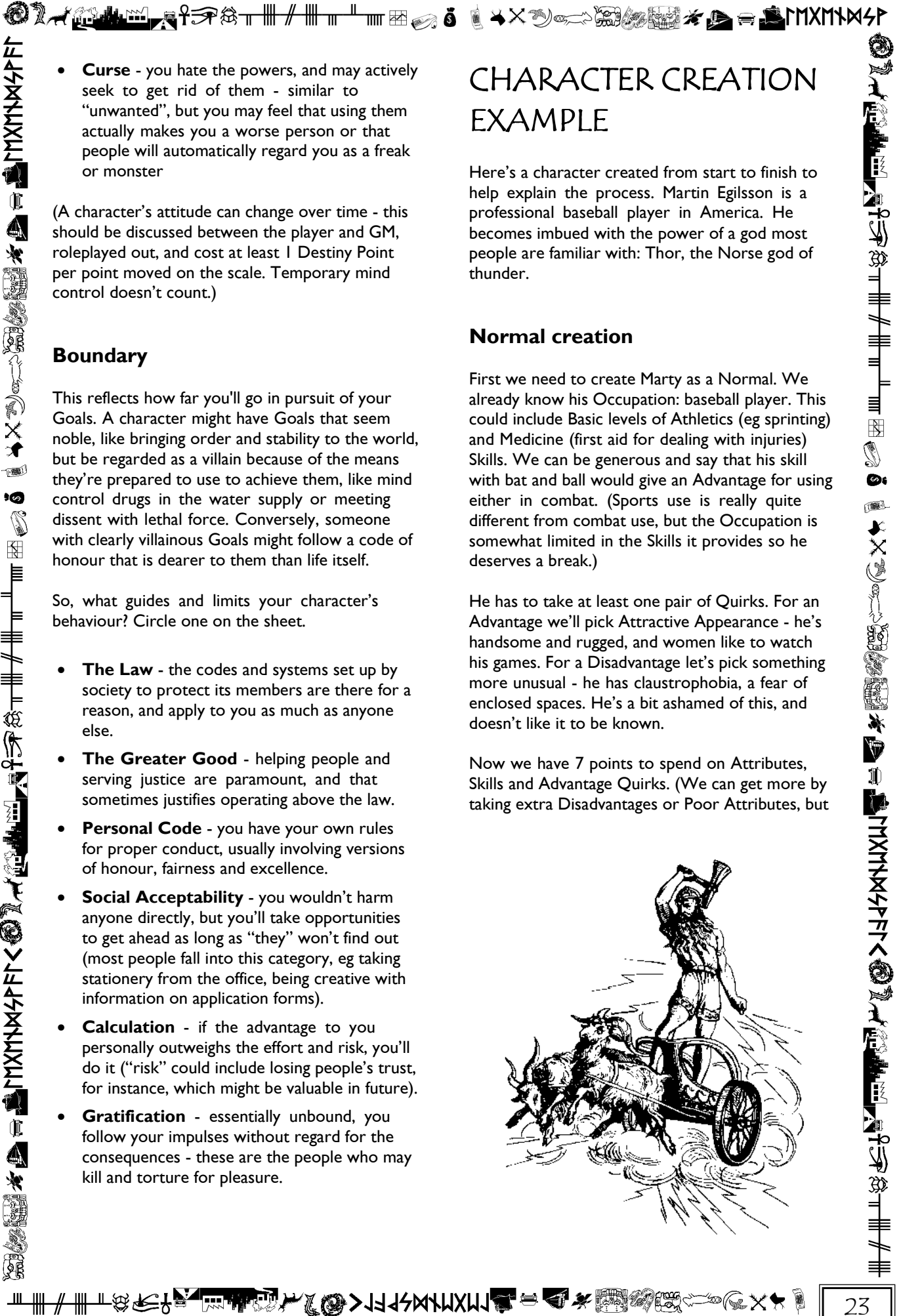
Examples: protecting the innocent, saving the environment, upholding the law, gaining wealth, world domination, protecting a loved one, getting recognition in your career, having a great antiques collection, being "cool", being a good parent.

Attitude

For most characters, powers arrive unlooked-for. How does yours feel about them? Responses fall roughly into these 5 categories. Circle the appropriate one on the character sheet.

- **Blessing** - a wonderful gift to be enjoyed for their own sake, making you "special"
- **Tool** - a valuable means to some end, which could be any aspiration the character had before getting the powers, from protecting your country to never being bullied again or becoming stinking rich
- **Responsibility** - you didn't ask for the powers, but now you've got them you must use them for the greater good
- **Unwanted** - you just want to get by and have a normal life, and the powers are an obstacle to that - you only use them when you have to and always try to avoid the public eye





- **Curse** - you hate the powers, and may actively seek to get rid of them - similar to “unwanted”, but you may feel that using them actually makes you a worse person or that people will automatically regard you as a freak or monster

(A character’s attitude can change over time - this should be discussed between the player and GM, roleplayed out, and cost at least 1 Destiny Point per point moved on the scale. Temporary mind control doesn’t count.)

Boundary

This reflects how far you'll go in pursuit of your Goals. A character might have Goals that seem noble, like bringing order and stability to the world, but be regarded as a villain because of the means they’re prepared to use to achieve them, like mind control drugs in the water supply or meeting dissent with lethal force. Conversely, someone with clearly villainous Goals might follow a code of honour that is dearer to them than life itself.

So, what guides and limits your character’s behaviour? Circle one on the sheet.

- **The Law** - the codes and systems set up by society to protect its members are there for a reason, and apply to you as much as anyone else.
- **The Greater Good** - helping people and serving justice are paramount, and that sometimes justifies operating above the law.
- **Personal Code** - you have your own rules for proper conduct, usually involving versions of honour, fairness and excellence.
- **Social Acceptability** - you wouldn’t harm anyone directly, but you’ll take opportunities to get ahead as long as “they” won’t find out (most people fall into this category, eg taking stationery from the office, being creative with information on application forms).
- **Calculation** - if the advantage to you personally outweighs the effort and risk, you’ll do it (“risk” could include losing people’s trust, for instance, which might be valuable in future).
- **Gratification** - essentially unbound, you follow your impulses without regard for the consequences - these are the people who may kill and torture for pleasure.

CHARACTER CREATION EXAMPLE

Here’s a character created from start to finish to help explain the process. Martin Egilsson is a professional baseball player in America. He becomes imbued with the power of a god most people are familiar with: Thor, the Norse god of thunder.

Normal creation

First we need to create Marty as a Normal. We already know his Occupation: baseball player. This could include Basic levels of Athletics (eg sprinting) and Medicine (first aid for dealing with injuries) Skills. We can be generous and say that his skill with bat and ball would give an Advantage for using either in combat. (Sports use is really quite different from combat use, but the Occupation is somewhat limited in the Skills it provides so he deserves a break.)

He has to take at least one pair of Quirks. For an Advantage we’ll pick Attractive Appearance - he’s handsome and rugged, and women like to watch his games. For a Disadvantage let’s pick something more unusual - he has claustrophobia, a fear of enclosed spaces. He’s a bit ashamed of this, and doesn’t like it to be known.

Now we have 7 points to spend on Attributes, Skills and Advantage Quirks. (We can get more by taking extra Disadvantages or Poor Attributes, but



LEGENDS WALK!

Character Name
Martin Egilsson
"Thunder Eagle"

Player Name

Goals

- Protect ordinary hardworking people from criminals
- Get recognition for abilities

Attitude:
 Blessing • Tool • Responsibility • Unwanted • Curse

Boundary:
 The Law • The Greater Good • Personal Code • Social Acceptability • Calculation • Gratification

ATTRIBUTES

	Poor	Average	Talented	Exceptional	Meta 1	Meta 2	Meta 3
Strength			N	M	M		
Agility			N				
Endurance			M				
Wisdom							
Ingenuity							
Presence							
Awareness							

SKILLS

Name	Occupation	Normal	Meta	TOTAL
Athletics	1	1		2
Medicine	1			1
Drive Motorbike		1		1
Fighting (Unarmed)			1	1
Fighting (Club)	1		1	2

Presence Pool
(2)

Destiny
1

Favour
0

Run **50ft**
 Base Lift **1 tonne**
 Base Jump **2ft / 6ft**

Hardness
4

Initiative **(+3)**

NORMAL ABILITIES

Nationality: American
 Occupation: Baseball player

Advantages:
 Attractive Appearance
 Iron Will (+1 Presence Pool)

Disadvantages:
 Phobia - enclosed spaces

META ABILITIES

Source: Thor
 Domain: Scandinavia, Germany, England
 Aegis: Thunder (extreme weather/no weather)

Powers:
 Baseball -
 Switch: Returns when Thrown

Baseball Bat -
 Switch: Effectiveness

Motorbike -
 Add: Flight (2)

Disadvantages:
 Pride

Weather Signs (lightning eyes and sound of thunder when stressed)

Combat moves	Roll	Base Damage
Unarmed	4	3
Bat	7	5
Ball	4	4

Resistance	Roll	Auto	Meta
Physical	3	0	1
Mental	2	0	0

Creation costs per level: Attribute 2, Skill 1, Advantage 1. Poor Attribute gives 2 extra points, Disadvantage 1 extra.

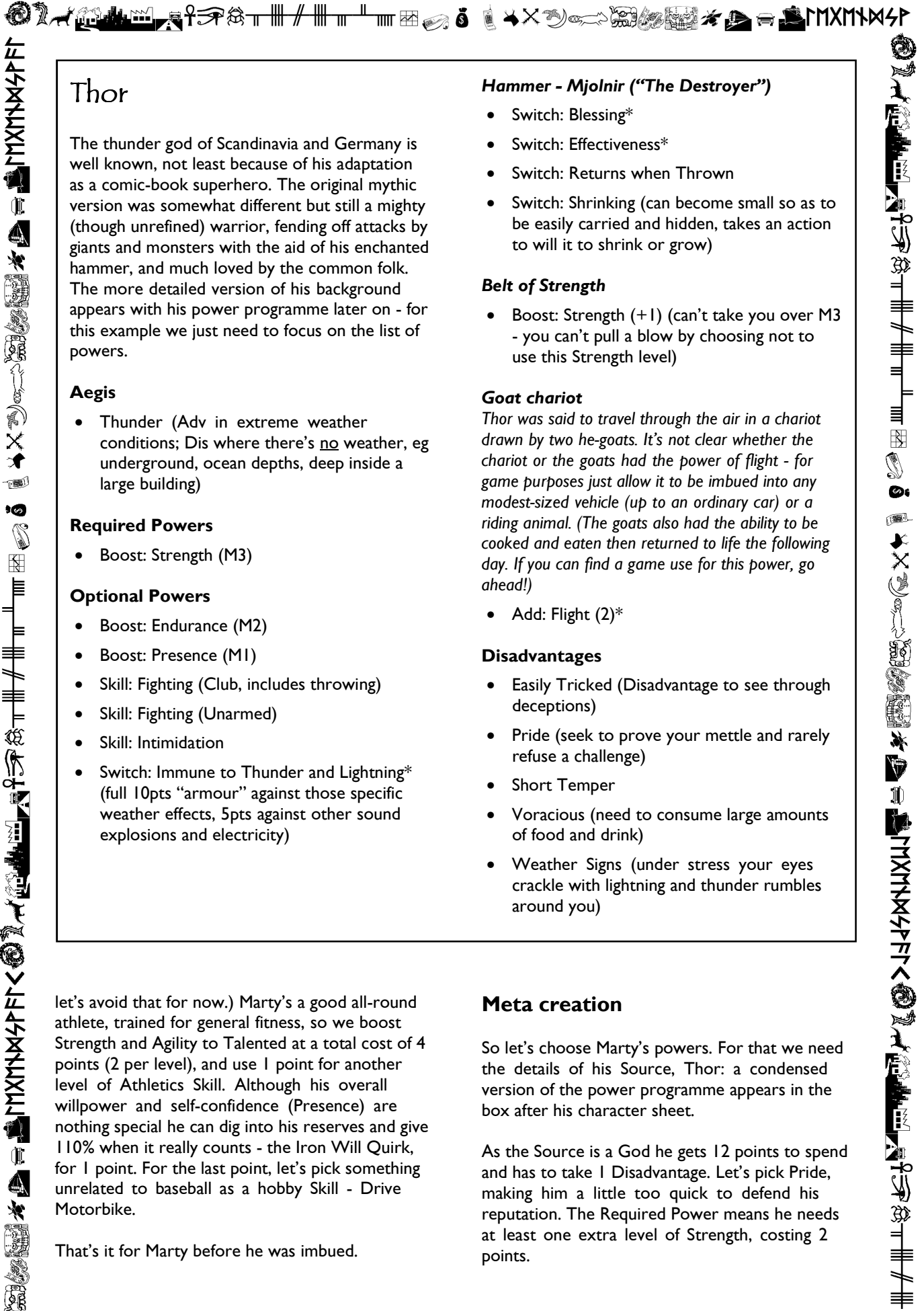
Signature Moves

Hurts **Physical, Mental**

Injuries **Physical, Mental**

Healing limit: 2

Creation costs per level: Boost 2, Skill 1, Switch 2, Add 3; item Boost or Switch 1, item Add 2; Disadvantage gives 2 extra points.



Thor

The thunder god of Scandinavia and Germany is well known, not least because of his adaptation as a comic-book superhero. The original mythic version was somewhat different but still a mighty (though unrefined) warrior, fending off attacks by giants and monsters with the aid of his enchanted hammer, and much loved by the common folk. The more detailed version of his background appears with his power programme later on - for this example we just need to focus on the list of powers.

Aegis

- Thunder (Adv in extreme weather conditions; Dis where there's no weather, eg underground, ocean depths, deep inside a large building)

Required Powers

- Boost: Strength (M3)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (M2)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Skill: Fighting (Club, includes throwing)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Intimidation
- Switch: Immune to Thunder and Lightning* (full 10pts "armour" against those specific weather effects, 5pts against other sound explosions and electricity)

Hammer - Mjolnir ("The Destroyer")

- Switch: Blessing*
- Switch: Effectiveness*
- Switch: Returns when Thrown
- Switch: Shrinking (can become small so as to be easily carried and hidden, takes an action to will it to shrink or grow)

Belt of Strength

- Boost: Strength (+1) (can't take you over M3 - you can't pull a blow by choosing not to use this Strength level)

Goat chariot

Thor was said to travel through the air in a chariot drawn by two he-goats. It's not clear whether the chariot or the goats had the power of flight - for game purposes just allow it to be imbued into any modest-sized vehicle (up to an ordinary car) or a riding animal. (The goats also had the ability to be cooked and eaten then returned to life the following day. If you can find a game use for this power, go ahead!)

- Add: Flight (2)*

Disadvantages

- Easily Tricked (Disadvantage to see through deceptions)
- Pride (seek to prove your mettle and rarely refuse a challenge)
- Short Temper
- Voracious (need to consume large amounts of food and drink)
- Weather Signs (under stress your eyes crackle with lightning and thunder rumbles around you)

let's avoid that for now.) Marty's a good all-round athlete, trained for general fitness, so we boost Strength and Agility to Talented at a total cost of 4 points (2 per level), and use 1 point for another level of Athletics Skill. Although his overall willpower and self-confidence (Presence) are nothing special he can dig into his reserves and give 110% when it really counts - the Iron Will Quirk, for 1 point. For the last point, let's pick something unrelated to baseball as a hobby Skill - Drive Motorbike.

That's it for Marty before he was imbued.

Meta creation

So let's choose Marty's powers. For that we need the details of his Source, Thor: a condensed version of the power programme appears in the box after his character sheet.

As the Source is a God he gets 12 points to spend and has to take 1 Disadvantage. Let's pick Pride, making him a little too quick to defend his reputation. The Required Power means he needs at least one extra level of Strength, costing 2 points.



We might come back to that, but some of those Items look interesting. Let's go for a baseball imbued with Returning (Item Switch, cost 1), a bat imbued with Effectiveness (cost 1), and a Harley Davidson motorbike that can fly - we want it to be fast, so it's Flight (2) (Item Add, 2 levels, cost 4). That's just 4 points left. He hasn't got any Endurance Advantages yet, so let's have a level of that (cost 2). We can expand his combat Skills with levels of Fighting (Unarmed) (cost 1) and Fighting (Club) (cost 1).

All the points are spent, but we've missed out on some of those Attribute Boosts. Without his gear, Marty's not that powerful. We'll take a second Disadvantage - Flashing Eyes - for another 2 points and buy an extra level of Strength, taking it up to Meta 1.

Finally, in a pun on his surname, Marty decides to call himself Thunder Eagle. He adapts a leather jacket and some sports gear into a costume of sorts and goes out to make the world a better place.

Finishing off

For **Initiative**, the only Attribute that contributes to the bonus is Talented Agility (1), added to his highest combat Skill which is bat/club (2) for a total of +3. This isn't great - he won't be acting more than once per round - but it's still a useful edge.

His **Presence** is Average, so the Pool would just be 1, but the Iron Will Quirk bumps it up to 2. **Destiny** starts at 1, **Favour** at 0.

From later rules we see that he doesn't quite manage to increase his all-out **Run** above the basic 50ft. His Strength, though, gives a **Base Lift** of 1 tonne (1000kg) - he can manage this easily, and more with effort. **Base Jump** also benefits from Strength: 2ft per success high, 6ft long.

For **Hardness**, his Size is normal so no points there, but he gets 3 from his Strength Advantages contribute 3 points. This will allow people to punch or throw him through wooden panels, plasterboard and such, but not stonework.

As an example of an entry in the **combat summary box**, let's look at his bat attack. His Advantages for combat rolls include 1 from Agility, 2 from Skill and 2 for the bat's Effectiveness,

totalling 5. So at the usual Base Dice of 2, he'll be rolling 7 dice to hit. Base Damage hasn't been explained yet - it's under *Basic Combat* - but he'll get 2 for the bat and 3 for his Strength Advantages, totalling 5. For perspective, that means a decent hit could kill an ordinary person fairly easily. He'll have to be careful fighting Normals.

For **Physical Resistance** his Talented Endurance gives him 3 dice to roll. He doesn't have anything to give an Auto success, but because that Endurance Adv is Source-granted he gets 1 in the Meta column. **Mental Resistance** goes off Presence, and as he has nothing special there it's just the basic 2 dice.

For the **Personality** elements I've picked fairly standard hero stuff. He got his powers when some criminals were causing problems with his team - perhaps extortion, drugs or bribing them to throw games. Marty's first "mission" was to put a stop to it, so his powers were a useful tool, and now he's seen what he can do he feels a responsibility to help more people. He still has that urge for spotlights and adulation once in a while, though.

That's our first hero finished!

Comments

Character creation involves a certain amount of juggling - once you see what you end up with you often want to go back and change things. In this case I could go back to Marty's Normal stage and buy another level of Endurance with a negative Quirk and some juggling, as that's out of step with his Strength.

Investing heavily in Items has hurt his abilities in other areas. Taking some extra Presence, for example, would have been a good thing. His player will probably look to improve his combat skills over time. Nevertheless, he's a pretty hard hitter and could be interesting to play. How will he deal with media interest, especially if he "goes public"? Will he be able to combine playing baseball and fighting crime, or will continued absences get him thrown off the team? He'll probably get thrown off anyway if his unfair advantages are discovered, or maybe he'll make that decision for himself. If he was serious about a secret identity he could start coaching in some small town - or he might go into the hero business full-time.



POOL POINTS

“Temperature rising... vision blurring... rage... taking over...!”

Mr Furious, *Mystery Men*
Universal Studios

More than any other game mechanic, Pool Points are what make heroes heroic (but of course the real test is what they choose to do with their power, which is a matter of roleplaying). They are spent to do more or do better in different situations. There’s quite a lot of flexibility in applying them, and these are just guidelines.

As well as helping you to do funky stuff in the game, the Pool Points do something else that different groups will want to focus on to varying extents: they reflect the tension between the character’s own desires and ethics and those of their Source. Do you pursue more power, perhaps becoming less human in the process, or stay true to yourself?

Overview

- **Presence Points** reflect will, courage and determination; the character’s own internal resources. The Pool regenerates each scene. They improve effectiveness of actions in the short term. They’re about who you are as a person.
- **Destiny Points** reflect karmic balance, luck and suchlike; the character’s standing within the grand scheme of things. They are awarded and spent during play - the only way to get more is to earn them. Short-term, they improve luck; longer-term, they can be spent to improve the character’s Normal abilities. They’re about who you are as a hero.
- **Favour Points** reflect the character’s standing with their Source. They are earned rather than refreshing automatically. Short-term, they can boost the use of Meta powers; longer-term, they can be spent to improve them or gain new ones. They’re about who you are as a legend (or the representative of one, anyway).

Some abilities affect the way these are gained, spent and refreshed. Some powers might introduce new Pools, eg *Universal Energy*. Any special rules for using these will be given in the power description.

Keeping track

It’s suggested that during play you track points with some sort of tokens, and only write your totals down as a record between sessions, to save wear and tear on the character sheet. Maybe you could use dice (a different type or colour from those you use for rolls) or the glass pebbles gamers often have, or coins of different denominations. Destiny can be negative as well as positive, so you’ll need some way to distinguish - maybe with dark and light coloured tokens of the same type, or dice turned to show their lowest and highest numbers. Favour can also go negative, but is likely to change less often than the others so you might get away with writing it down.



PRESENCE

Presence Points can boost rolls that involve “oomph” (technical term!); either physical (eg attack or defence, resisting damage) or mental (eg a stare-down, resisting mind control) exertion. Picking a lock or charming a contact wouldn’t count. It reflects making that extra effort, pushing yourself that bit harder, drawing on your inner strength - superhero staples.

Levels. Your Presence Pool refreshes back to its full rating (derived from the Attribute) at the start of each scene. It can’t go below zero. It can go above the rating temporarily, to a limit of 10, but the extra points are lost at the end of the scene.

Rolls. Spending a Presence Point gets you an extra die to roll, ie a one-off Advantage. You must choose to do this before you make the roll, and you can only use one point per roll.

Resistance rolls. These are a special case. You can choose to spend a point after you’ve seen the result of the ordinary roll, and it gives one automatic success instead of an Advantage.



DESTINY

If you never do anything remarkable or help anyone or make a difference, you might have a safe and pleasant life but the universe will not be particularly interested in you and you'll remain in obscurity. If you do these things, however, the universe will take notice and give you breaks that help you to meet the extra challenges you'll face.

Destiny Points are spent by the player as the character's personal writer, to steer the story in a particular direction or to improve some character abilities.

Gaining Destiny Points

Achievements. The GM gives a point on the spot when the character does something impressive or achieves something notable. Defeating an opponent of much lower power level wouldn't count, but defeating a single opponent or group that represented a genuine challenge would. There can also be a DP if the character pulls off a difficult or dangerous stunt. Doing something noble might count (even if it's not covered by personality traits); so might having some major life-enhancing insight or experience (possibly even failing in an instructive way!).

Personality traits - Attitude and Boundary have important effects on the gaining and losing of Destiny (see box).

Input. Things the player supplies for the character, such as sharp dialogue or astonishing ideas, might count as long as they're in character (so not if The Belligerent Brute suddenly starts quoting Shakespeare or uncovering intricate conspiracies instead of smashing things).

Bribery. The GM can even use DPs sparingly as compensation for edicts that steer a plot and move the story along, provided that the players trust the GM to do this for drama rather than competition. For instance: "Gas comes out and you all fall unconscious and get captured."; "You arrive at the warehouse - have a Destiny Point".

Although there should be plenty of DPs floating around, the GM must use good judgement. Unlimited awards for witty dialogue could create a sitcom as players scramble for the points; or they might get so busy doing circus tricks that the story goes nowhere. Unless there's a compelling reason, don't give a character Destiny for the same thing twice in one scene. Certainly don't indulge players who are doing stunts solely to get Destiny Points.

Losing Destiny

These points can be lost as well as gained, notably for actions that contradict the character's goals or ethics (see box). If Destiny reaches zero you can't spend any till you get some more. If you lose more your total can go negative - a total of -3, for instance, would mean you'd have to gain 4 points before you could spend one, and negative points can bring bad luck in themselves. (The GM might also use Destiny docking as a deterrent against particularly disruptive player behaviour, though it's better to sort the problem out properly.)

Spending Destiny

Re-rolls. If you're not happy with the result of a dice roll you can spend a Destiny Point to make the roll again from scratch (including any special bonuses like an extra die from spending a Presence Point) and keep the better of the results. Do this as many times you like, as long as you have Destiny Points to spend.

Lucky Break. This sometimes happens in superhero stories: when all seems lost some fluke event sets the heroes free to stop the villain in the nick of time - for instance a stray ray blast disables

**PLAYING POOL POINTS
(OPTIONAL)**

There needs to be a focus - what is it that triggers the character's willpower or destiny to come to their aid? It shouldn't be a routine matter of "I spend the points". The character has to say or think (the player says, "Thinks: ...", and of course no other character may act on the information - you can leave out names if you want) something appropriate, such as, "If he destroys the building my frail aunt could be killed!", "I can't let him beat me - that would betray the memory of my murdered parents!", "It can't end like this!", "Now you done gone made me mad!" or "My plans are in ruins - you must pay!" If it doesn't have an exclamation mark, it's probably not appropriate...





PERSONALITY TRAITS AND POOL POINTS

If a character stays true to who they are, even if that means suffering, they'll get better breaks when it comes to the crunch. This translates into their personality traits having a rules effect on Pool Points. (In general Destiny can only be affected by each of these once per scene.) Highlight the ones that reflect the style of play your group wants.

GOALS

Getting motivated - if an action is especially relevant to one of your Goals, spending a Presence point on it gives an extra level of effect: one more die to roll or one more damage soaked. (Quirks or powers might also add levels.) For instance you might have the Goal, "Stamp out crime in Gatholm City". This wouldn't help against every nameless street thug, but it could certainly kick in for the final take-down of the mastermind behind a criminal operation. You should roleplay the character's focus somehow, e.g. with a phrase of dialogue.

Igniting a Goal - if one of your Goals is threatened somehow, e.g. your frail aunt is about to be dropped off a building, you can "ignite" it: gain 3 Presence Points, but you can't get any further Pool Point benefit from that Goal for the rest of the scene; it's burned up for a while. Once the Goal is actually damaged (e.g. Auntie is injured) you can't trigger this until a new threat comes along.

Self-esteem - when your Presence Pool refreshes at the end of a scene get 1 extra point for each Goal you made significant progress toward (usually involving overcoming some obstacle) or 1 fewer for a significant failure in achieving it, through failure or inaction. (Burned Goals can count negative - you failed after all - but not positive.) Sometimes the two will cancel each other out, eg saving some innocents but not being able to save them all. Having more Goals gives more opportunities for gaining and losing Presence.

ATTITUDE

Each of the power Attitudes has a different way to earn a Destiny Point by steering toward actions or situations that demonstrate it. This could involve playing through mini-scenes related to the character's personal life more than the main story, generated by the player and GM together. It's a good idea to make space for this in between action scenes.

- **Blessing** - getting positive recognition for just being a Meta (not as a direct result of good deeds) - e.g. public appearances.
- **Tool** - making significant progress toward a Goal by using powers, in a way that wouldn't have been possible without them.
- **Responsibility** - putting your activities as a metahuman above your personal life - e.g. running out on a date, missing an exam.
- **Unwanted** - your metahuman features make it hard for you to do some everyday and/or important activity.
- **Curse** - getting negative recognition for just being a Meta - e.g. media prejudice, fear from those you try to help.

BOUNDARY

The limits beyond which they will not go are the bedrock of superheroes (and villains).

Breaking Boundaries - lose 3-5 Destiny Points depending on how major a break it is. This should happen rarely - it's simply not who they are - but it can be fun to throw in the occasional moral quandary for PCs to agonise about.

Resisting temptation - if they give up some significant benefit by staying within their Boundary they may gain a Destiny point.

On the Boundary scale, someone with "Gratification" will never lose or gain Destiny this way, whereas someone with "The Law" has lots of opportunities to do so.





the device that imprisons the hero, allowing them to return to the fight. A player suggests something they want to happen. This can be unlikely, but must be within the realms of reasonable possibility. For instance, in a natural history museum having a dinosaur skeleton come to life and attack the villain wouldn't be an option, but having it weakened by the fight so it collapses and distracts them might be. If the GM allows the event they must tell the player(s) how many Destiny Points are needed, 1-3, depending on likelihood. Any other player whose character will be affected can spend Destiny to add to or subtract from the total. The GM can do this for NPCs with Destiny Points. Bidding goes back and forth until no-one wants to spend any more.

Burning off negative Destiny. Once a character's Destiny supply goes negative, those points are the GM's - taken at will to give the opposition re-rolls and lucky breaks. (Having easily spotted tokens on the table is really handy here.) Different characters' points can be combined for an (un)lucky break that affects them all. Players can choose to work off negative Destiny by playing out their Attitude or Boundary, and the GM should be sympathetic to making room for this in the story.

Note: the Quirks *Lucky* and *Unlucky* effectively give one free-standing positive or negative Destiny point each scene.

Increasing Normal abilities

Most roleplaying games use some form of "experience points" which are awarded to players for doing certain things and can be spent to improve their character's abilities. One of the features of the superhero genre is that characters' abilities hardly ever change. They do find new ways of using existing abilities, grow as people and overcome difficulties (usually in their personal lives). For a superhero's powers to change is a really big event in their ongoing story - see *Favour* below.

You can spend Destiny Points to increase your Attributes, Skills and (rarely) Quirks within Normal ranges, provided that you've been doing stuff that's generally appropriate to the increase - if you spend all your time fighting, why would you get better at flute playing? For higher Skill levels you'll need to arrange some sort of training with someone more skilled than you, or possibly some expensive research. You can only improve an ability one level at a time. See the nearby box for the point costs.

Meta enhancements count against you here because the point cost is based on your current total level. As long as the Meta's Skill knowledge is in your head it makes it harder to learn anything new, and if your Strength is enhanced it makes it harder to exercise it further. For Attributes, any new levels gained are Normal levels which need to go below any Meta-Boosted levels. For simplicity, you can't increase a Normal ability if it would shunt your Meta enhancements above the maximum for your Source.

You can also use Destiny to get hold of new Gadgets, given a decent justification. As usual these are non-super technology, but can push the limits of normal science a bit.

SIGNATURE MOVES

If a character often uses a power or ability in a specific way, particularly if it's complex or unorthodox, we expect them to be able to do it successfully in future. Examples might include shifting into a particular animal shape, creating an animated figure out of fire or ricocheting your imbued baseball off the walls. Characters should only have a few that are genuinely important rather than accumulating them for everything they do. The power itself doesn't change, but they learn how to use it better. This is a way for Destiny Points to link up with powers.

Signature Moves have levels 1-3 that are added to the dice pool to offset the difficulty of that action in future. They are linked either to a Skill or a Power, and are capped at the number of levels of that power. So if you have *Athletics* 2 you could take *Ricochet Baseball (Athletics)* up to 2, but to get all the way to 3 you'd have to increase the Skill first.

If you have successfully used an ability in a way that's harder than normal at least once, you can spend 3 Destiny Points to get one level of a Signature Move in it: write it down with an appropriate name. You have to use it some more before you can buy further levels.





FAVOUR

Sources have values and goals, and they create Metas in the hope that they'll act accordingly. The GM has to "play" the Source, based on the description with the power programme and any further research they wish to do. Favour measures the Source's opinion of the character, and its willingness to help them. (The characters are not aware of it as a quantified thing, though they're likely to detect changes in the mood of their occasional empathic communications from the Source.) It can be a positive or negative number. For a new character Favour is 0 - you have to prove yourself.

Gaining Favour

A Favour Point is awarded at the end of a scene if you have done something to particularly please your Source - something related to the area(s) of interest or personality traits in its description. A Favour Point is taken away (or a negative one awarded) if you particularly displease it. (As with Destiny, the GM must sometimes balance different actions to make the call.)

There's an interesting tension here. In many cases a character won't want to do what their Source wants them to. Sources' attitudes are not entirely compatible with modern life. (Those who've been imbued for a number of years detect some slight adjustments, but the nature of Sources means they're very slow to change.) On the other hand, if a Source imbues someone they probably share some of its attitudes to start with, and might take on more over time. Like Meta Disadvantages, large pools of Favour mean you've been doing things that take you further away from normal life and towards becoming a mythic archetype.

Spending Favour

Boosting powers. You can spend a Favour Point to get the effect of a positive Gate Modifier (see box earlier) for the duration of one conflict. Basically you call on your Source to make extra effort to channel power through to you.

A couple of notes:

- This power boost is not without side effects. For the rest of that scene (or perhaps the next one if it happens right at the end) you're damn well playing out your Meta Disadvantages - no rolls to avoid doing so.

Improvement costs

Destiny

Skill	5 x new level
Attribute Poor to Average	10
Attribute Average to Talented	15
Attribute Talented to Exceptional	25
New positive Quirk	10
Signature Move	3/lvl
Gadget Boost, Skill, or Switch	5
Gadget Add	10

Favour

These are the costs per level (where applicable). The first figure is the usual cost in Favour Points; the second is the cost if a Meta Disadvantage is taken at the same time.

Boost	6/4
Skill	3/2
Switch	6/4
Add	9/6
Item Boost, Skill or Switch	3/2
Item Add	6/4

- Sources can only give this sort of attention to a limited number of their chosen ones at a time. In practice, if more than one Meta with a given Source seeks this benefit in the same scene only one of them can get it. They can come to a consensus, or the one with more Favour gets it, or they can bid Favour against each other.

Gaining a temporary power. You can also spend a Favour Point to get one level of a power from the Source's programme for a single use. It might be an additional level of a power you already have, or one you don't normally have. Powers can't exceed the Source's level limits this way - so if you're already maxed out you can't get any more.

Burning off negative Favour - at the start of a conflict a player can choose to "spend" a point of negative Favour to get a negative Gate Modifier for





its duration if the conflict is somehow related to the Source. (For instance if imbued by Hercules any contest of physical prowess would do; if imbued by Bran it'd be events to do with leadership.) If Favour goes down to -3 or below the GM can invoke this too, and should look to arrange appropriate scenes in the story.

Increasing powers

If you accumulate enough Favour you can petition your Source for more Meta powers from its programme through **The Calling**. Accumulating large amounts of Favour is quite rare, so doing this should be a significant event in the character's life.

In story terms, Metas automatically know that they have to go to a place appropriate to the Source and perform some ceremony or task to draw its attention, while holding in their mind the kind of power they're seeking. (Often characters ask in a general way and the Source chooses how to grant the request. Players, however, have access to the written programmes and may be quite precise!) If your Source is a sea god you might stand beside the ocean and throw in some sort of offering. For a different Source you might dance all night at a club, or go and start a fight.

If the ceremony is acceptable the Source manifests itself in some way, usually by manipulating the surroundings or possessing another (Normal) person briefly. The wind picks up, or a total stranger gives a cryptic message or blessing and then has no recollection of what just happened. A wave crashes over you, gifting an increased ability to control water. One of the other dancers weaves an intricate dance with you, ending with a kiss that makes you more aware of the emotions of others. This is seldom overtly supernatural - an unaware observer might think it was strange or unusual, but no more, though the Meta will be in no doubt about what happened. Occasionally the Meta actually receives a vision. The Source never shows its true face, so even if you "see" a chariot coming towards you over the waves and have a brief interaction with its rider you will not be able to describe them afterwards except in the most general terms, eg "a noble, kindly face" or "eyes flashing with wrath". Interaction is at the empathic and symbolic level, with omens and occasionally short pronouncements. It is very unusual to have a human-style conversation with a Source.

In game terms, new powers have to come from the Source's programme and cannot exceed the ceilings given there. They're given one level at a time, and usually only one power at a time. They

cost 3 Favour for each 1 point they would have cost during character creation. Favour can't be reduced below zero to buy new powers. *Examples*: an Attribute Boost costs 2 character points, so that would be 6 Favour; imbuing an item with, say, Effectiveness costs 1 point, so that's 3 Favour.

If the character takes one of the Source's Disadvantages at the same time, the Favour cost is x2 rather than x3 - characters can come back visibly changed. This depends on having Disadvantages left to choose from, so the GM might wish to let players suggest new ones appropriate to the Source. Characters may perceive the Source offering the power if they're willing to take on more of its essence (if they haven't enough Favour for the standard version), and can choose whether to accept.

VILLAINS

Villains can have Pool Points too, depending on their status.

- Nameless underlings - none.
- Henchmen - basic Presence Pools only.
- Lesser villains - Presence, possibly a small amount of Destiny. Gain Destiny for each encounter where the heroes fail to stop them.
- Master villains, who command groups of agents from a distance in pursuit of some major plan - probably as fully detailed as a PC. They get Destiny for achieving each major stage of their plan. (A stage might involve several skirmishes between underlings and PCs.)

So if the PCs fight a group of Meta villains but lose, and the villains get away with the plans for the Doomsday Machine, each villain character gets a Destiny Point for winning and the Master Villain gets 1 for advancing the plan. Similarly, if the PCs heard about the attempted threat on a police radio and did nothing to stop it, the villains would get a point if they escaped the authorities. These points are not normally used to increase opponents' abilities, though if enough rack up the GM could consider it. The idea is that they're spent in battle against the PCs later on, making the villains that bit tougher. (We know they're tough because they've already defeated the PCs once. See the logic?)

And don't forget that villains can tap into the PCs' negative Destiny!



FIGHTING 101

MISSION TRANSCRIPT (EXCERPT)

LELAND: Hawk's Nest, this is Nighthawk One. We've hit the beach - securing dinghies and establishing perimeter.

BOSCOE: Understood, Nighthawk One. Proceed to target as planned.

LELAND: Copy that, H... Man down!

BOSCOE: Report, Nighthawk!

LELAND: Stand by... no-one's hurt... what happened, soldier?

LELAND: Hawk's Nest, the top of the beach appears to be made of... glass. What the..?! Light! Defensive positions!

LELAND: Hawk's Nest, we have hostiles... correction, lone female hostile... she's holding a flame in her hand... there's a man with her now, with a bow... he's shouting... something about a warning... he's firing over our heads...

LELAND: Hawk's Nest? Hawk's Nest, do you copy?

BOSCOE: Nighthawk, we have just lost number 2 gun. Stand by for further orders...



Initiative

"I know what moves you're preparing to make. I've fought our fight already, in my head, in a million different ways. I can hit you without you even seeing me."

The Midnighter, *The Authority* #2
Warren Ellis and Bryan Hitch, Wildstorm

"It's clobberin' time!"

The Thing, all the time
Marvel Comics

When it comes to fast and furious action, the combat system comes into play. In a traditional-style superhero game characters will spend a lot of their time fighting. Even in a more introspective and character-driven game, combat will have an important role.

This section gives you the basics of combat and the damage system, followed by an extended example. Later sections give more detailed rules that add other combat possibilities.

It's important to know who acts when, as getting your blow or shot in first can be a big advantage. In gaming circles this is called **initiative**. Heroes' superior abilities in this department are a major factor in their ability to take out large numbers of low-powered opponents.

Combat time is measured in **rounds** of around 5 seconds each. The exact length doesn't matter - their only purpose is to help keep track of the detail of combat, as opposed to less detailed normal time. When a fight starts, the GM declares that you're going into rounds.



A round is made up of 10 **Phases**. The GM counts down from 10 to 1, and characters act on the appropriate Phases. At the end of the round certain “book-keeping” tasks take place, like checking to see whether an unconscious character has woken up yet. Then the next round starts with Phase 10, and so on till the fight is over.

Rolling initiative

At the beginning of each round determine your Initiative by rolling one die to get a score of 1-6 and adding your Initiative bonus. For example, rolling 4 with a bonus of 5 gives an Initiative of 9. This tells you the Phase when your character becomes **Ready** to act: you can do stuff from then till the end of the round. Before that point you can't initiate an action.

Those with greater training and better reactions can take in a scene, decide on an action and carry it out in less time. They may be able to plan and execute two or more actions in the same time it takes others to do one.

Result above 10: you act on Phase 10 and again on (result - 10). For instance, a result of 14 gives actions on 10 and 4. There is always at least a one-Phase gap between these actions, so if the second action reaches 8 any remainder gets translated into a third action, and so on. A total of 20 gives actions on 10, 8 and 2. The highest possible, which is 10, 8, 6, 4, 2, requires an Initiative result of 30. Results above 30 get no extra actions. (In practice most player characters with decent combat-related abilities have a chance of a second action each round, and the better ones get them most or all of the time. It's very hard to get three or more actions without special powers.)

Result below 1: if your Initiative bonus is negative (due to Poor Attributes, damage taken or power effects) you can end up with an initiative result of less than 1. This means the character is too confused or slow to do anything active that round. You just get a Free action (see next section) on Phase 1 - basically something light and passive like moving a few feet, defending yourself or readying an item. You can spend a Pool Point to turn it into a Full action (something more active, like attacking), as long as there's a logical reason why that Pool helps.

Full and Free actions

Full actions are things that require active concentration and focus, including attack moves, and can be done on the Phase(s) indicated by the Initiative result. You can hold a Full action till a later Phase, and just announce it when you want to act (as long as you don't do anything else that Phase).

Free actions are used for minor or reactive moves that don't need full focus: for instance defences, drawing or reloading a weapon (if it's simple to do), speaking a short sentence (not having a conversation) or moving a few feet. Once you've become Ready you can take a Free action on any Phase when you don't take a Full action. (You can defend against multiple opponents with a single Free action - it just gets harder!)

Rushing a Free action: if you're being attacked before your Ready Phase, you can make a Rushed defence (and a few other reaction-type moves) at the cost of a Disadvantage on the roll. However, this has a limit of twice your Ready Phase - beyond that point you simply can't react fast enough. *Example:* with an initiative result of 4 your defences will be Ready on Phases 1-4, Rushed on Phases 5-8, and impossible on Phases 9-10.

Order within Phases

Sometimes order of action within a given Phase becomes important, for instance if there's a conflict of intended actions. Characters with higher Initiative bonuses have the advantage over those who are less talented, getting their action in first or deciding how to react to an opponent's action. You can add your Tactics Skill level to Initiative for this to reflect your experience in judging what opponents will do. (If they're still tied and you need a decision, give the advantage to the one with more current Destiny Points. If those are equal no-one has the advantage.)

Initiative example

A and B get into a fist fight. Both have Initiative bonus 6. A rolls 2, for a total of 8, and B rolls 6 for a total of 12. Assuming neither do anything fancy or take any penalties from damage (see below), the round would go like this: B attacks on 10, and A (Ready on 8) Rushes a defence; A attacks on 8 and B defends normally; B attacks on 2 and A defends normally.





Attack and Defence

In combat the main activities are, naturally, trying to punch, kick, club, stab, shoot or zap an opponent - attack - and trying to dodge or parry these things - defence. These are opposed rolls, with Base Dice 2 under normal circumstances.

Attack uses Agility for melee (unarmed and weapon) combat and thrown weapons, or Awareness for ranged attacks (e.g. archery or firearms), plus the appropriate Fighting Skill. Zapping someone at range with a Meta power is usually Add + Awareness.

Defence uses Agility, Fighting Skill, Advantages and Disadvantages to block or avoid an incoming blow. Melee Fighting Skills can be used to parry or dodge, as appropriate, but ranged weapon Skills like Firearms and Archery don't have a defence component. Defence defaults to dodging with the Fighting (Unarmed) Advantages.

- Shields and staves allow parrying with an extra Advantage.
- Dodging arrows, bullets or energy beams with no cover is BD 0; 1 or 2 with poor or good cover available.

The attacker makes their attack roll. The defender makes their defence roll. If the attacker gets more successes than the defender the attack hits; otherwise it misses or is blocked. If it hits, subtract the defender's successes from the attacker's successes to see how good a hit it was - this number gets carried over into damage. *Example:* A's attack gets 5 successes and B's defence only gets 2 - A has hit by a solid 3.

(It might sometimes be fun to change the order of rolls, increasing tension by making the rolls for the PCs' opponents first and then letting players see if their characters can beat that attack or defence.)

Damage

Some kinds of attacks do more damage than others, reflected by the **Base Damage** number (see below). In most cases an Attribute is added on to Base Damage (and it's recorded as a single total in character descriptions). This is added to the net successes from each attack to get **Total Damage**.

Base Damage

Unarmed	0
Knife, Small Club, Staff	1
Sword, Mace, most other one-handed weapons, Arrow	2
Two-handed Sword, Handgun, Sub-machine gun	3
Rifle, Shotgun, Really Big hand weapon	4
Machine gun, Vehicle-mounted gun	6-8
Field weapon	8-10

- For unarmed combat or hand-held weapons, add Strength Advantages - for example Meta 3 Strength gives a whopping +5!
- Thrown weapons get half your Strength Advantages (round up).
- Missile weapons don't use an Attribute.
- "Zaps" with powers depend on willpower. Their Base Damage is usually Add + Presence.
- Special attack types like explosions are covered in later sections.

The defender must now try a **Resistance** roll - Endurance, BD 2, plus any other applicable stuff - to try to shrug off the effects of a blow without serious harm. Levels of Meta Endurance give automatic successes rather than adding dice to the roll. Each success reduces the damage by 1. If the Resistance roll is fumbled, add 1 to the damage. The final result is read off on the following table.

Final Damage

0	Unhurt
1-2	Hurt
3-4	Injured
5-6	Injured and Unconscious
7-9	Injured and Lethal Damage (see box)
10+	Injured and Extreme Damage (see box)



LETHALITY

What happens to characters taking large amounts of damage is a key factor in setting the style of your supers game. In the "silver age" comics people rarely died, except as a major plot point - no matter what happened to them they were just knocked out for a while. In the grittier titles of the late '90s, though, civilians at least dropped like flies.

Lethality settings - choose from these to suit your campaign style. They answer the question, "What does 'dead' mean?"

- **Fragile** - "dead" means exactly that, and higher results suggest a messier end.
- **Durable** - the character goes into a coma, which lasts until something is done to bring them back. Extreme Damage will still kill them outright.
- **Indestructible** - the character is just knocked out for at least the rest of the scene (they can only be brought round by powers). Extreme Damage causes coma, as above. Only a major plot development can actually kill someone.

Extreme Damage capping - this option reflects a hero's ability to turn into a mass of bruises but still keep going. If a character takes more than 10 damage from a single attack after applying the effects of Armour, Size, etc but before making the Resistance roll, any damage above 10 gets converted to a second damage result - e.g. 15 → 10 and 5. Both are Resisted separately (higher first) and the damage read off as normal - e.g. you could get two Injuries.

Settings - Possibilities range from a grim and gritty game where everyone's Fragile to a cartoony one where everyone's Indestructible. You can give major and minor characters different settings - heroes and villains are often more resilient than the norm.

The defaults for *Legends Walk* are: major characters (like the PCs) Durable with Extreme Damage capped; everyone else Fragile.

Effects of damage

Hurts and Injuries are basically action penalties which accumulate without limit and will eventually incapacitate the character. An average person can only take a couple before they're out of a fight, but true heroes can keep going after much greater damage. Each time a "Hurt" or "Injured" result is taken, record an extra point in the appropriate place on the character sheet. These penalties remain until they are healed by some means (see next section).

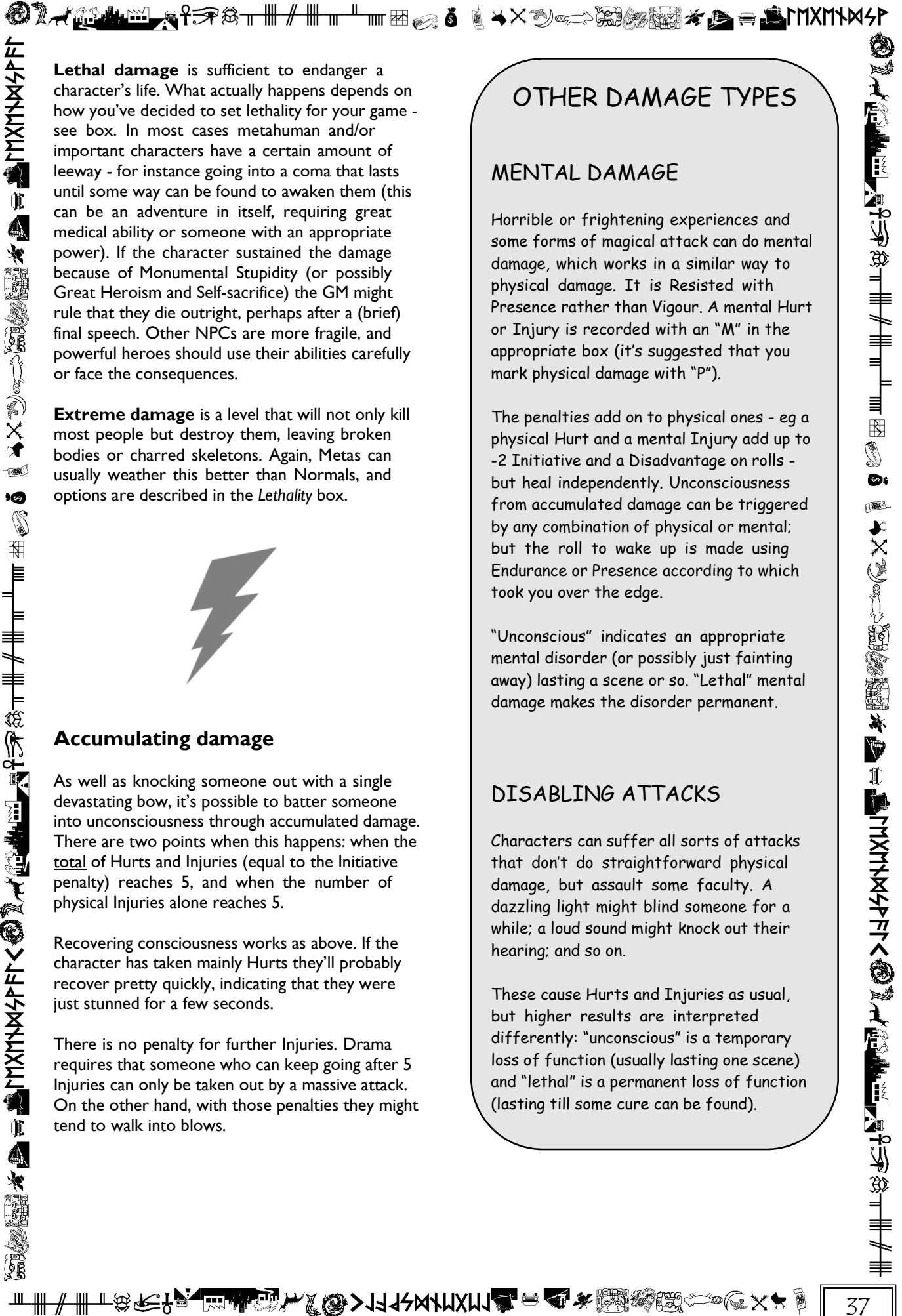
Hurts are minor damage that the body can heal fairly quickly on its own. They slow you down as you get distracted by the pain from cuts and bruises. The penalty kicks in immediately: drop all remaining actions in the current round by one Phase (so an action on 1 would be lost altogether) and reduce your current initiative bonus by 1 until the Hurt is healed.

Injuries are serious damage that take much longer to heal. They give the same penalties as Hurts, and also act as Disadvantages for all rolls (except Resistance rolls) as the character's functioning is impaired through pain and tissue damage.

Example: Thunder Eagle's in the middle of a fight, and has taken 2 Hurts and 1 Injury. That means his Initiative bonus is 3 lower than usual, and he has 1 Disadvantage to all his rolls. Could be trouble.

Unconsciousness means the character is dazed or out cold: they can't act and are unaware of what's going on around them. If a character is knocked out during a fight they have a chance of recovering in time to rejoin the fray. At the end of the round after the round they were knocked out, and each following round, make an Endurance roll at BD (2 - Injuries). (Meta levels count as Advantages rather than automatic successes.) If the roll succeeds they can act normally from the start of the following round. If they fumble or run out of dice the character slips into deep unconsciousness, and will only wake after 1 hour per Injury they have. An unconscious character can't boost recovery rolls with Presence Points, but can use Destiny Points. Another character can spend a Full action trying to bring them round using Wisdom + Medicine, BD (2 - patient's Injuries). If successful, the patient can act normally from the start of the next round.





Lethal damage is sufficient to endanger a character's life. What actually happens depends on how you've decided to set lethality for your game - see box. In most cases metahuman and/or important characters have a certain amount of leeway - for instance going into a coma that lasts until some way can be found to awaken them (this can be an adventure in itself, requiring great medical ability or someone with an appropriate power). If the character sustained the damage because of Monumental Stupidity (or possibly Great Heroism and Self-sacrifice) the GM might rule that they die outright, perhaps after a (brief) final speech. Other NPCs are more fragile, and powerful heroes should use their abilities carefully or face the consequences.

Extreme damage is a level that will not only kill most people but destroy them, leaving broken bodies or charred skeletons. Again, Metas can usually weather this better than Normals, and options are described in the *Lethality* box.



Accumulating damage

As well as knocking someone out with a single devastating blow, it's possible to batter someone into unconsciousness through accumulated damage. There are two points when this happens: when the total of Hurts and Injuries (equal to the Initiative penalty) reaches 5, and when the number of physical Injuries alone reaches 5.

Recovering consciousness works as above. If the character has taken mainly Hurts they'll probably recover pretty quickly, indicating that they were just stunned for a few seconds.

There is no penalty for further Injuries. Drama requires that someone who can keep going after 5 Injuries can only be taken out by a massive attack. On the other hand, with those penalties they might tend to walk into blows.

OTHER DAMAGE TYPES

MENTAL DAMAGE

Horrible or frightening experiences and some forms of magical attack can do mental damage, which works in a similar way to physical damage. It is Resisted with Presence rather than Vigour. A mental Hurt or Injury is recorded with an "M" in the appropriate box (it's suggested that you mark physical damage with "P").

The penalties add on to physical ones - eg a physical Hurt and a mental Injury add up to -2 Initiative and a Disadvantage on rolls - but heal independently. Unconsciousness from accumulated damage can be triggered by any combination of physical or mental; but the roll to wake up is made using Endurance or Presence according to which took you over the edge.

"Unconscious" indicates an appropriate mental disorder (or possibly just fainting away) lasting a scene or so. "Lethal" mental damage makes the disorder permanent.

DISABLING ATTACKS

Characters can suffer all sorts of attacks that don't do straightforward physical damage, but assault some faculty. A dazzling light might blind someone for a while; a loud sound might knock out their hearing; and so on.

These cause Hurts and Injuries as usual, but higher results are interpreted differently: "unconscious" is a temporary loss of function (usually lasting one scene) and "lethal" is a permanent loss of function (lasting till some cure can be found).



Healing

Characters recover from damage **naturally** over time, as long as it's not too serious. The guideline is "reasonable rest": bed rest is not generally necessary, but if they go out fighting or mountain-climbing for a significant part of a period they get no healing benefit from it. Strenuous mental activity might also impede healing in some circumstances.

Assistance can help to speed recovery, and is essential in case of severe injury. The difficulties given for medical help assume a basic medical kit (first aid box, doctor's bag, etc) is available. Having no proper supplies is a Disadvantage, and a fully equipped hospital is an Advantage. An ordinary NPC hospital doctor will have 4 Advantages (Professional level Skill, Talented Wisdom, hospital facilities). Consultants and specialists have more, if the character can get them - this might require some sort of influence roll, or even an adventure in itself to find an expert or a Meta with healing powers to help a fallen friend. Conscious characters can attempt medical help on themselves, but this incurs a Disadvantage.

Different **types** of damage heal in parallel - so in a single day you could potentially heal a physical Injury, a mental Injury, and loads of Hurts of both types.

Hurts

Natural healing. All characters remove 1 Hurt per 5 minutes of reasonable rest. In other words, this form of damage disappears between encounters unless they happen in rapid succession or with energetic activity in between.

Assisted recovery. With 2 Full actions of first aid, a character can roll Medicine + Wisdom, BD 2, and heal (successes) Hurts. Obviously the patient has to keep still for this period. Fumbling this roll turns one of the patient's Hurts into an Injury.

Injuries

Natural healing. Count the character's levels of Endurance, starting at Average=1. This is the healing limit (you can mark it on the character sheet). If they have Injuries up to this number they can heal one per day of reasonable rest. *Example:* with Exceptional Endurance a character with 3 Injuries would heal naturally. If they had 4 or more Injuries they would not heal without medical attention. (For mental Injuries look at Presence instead of Endurance.)

Assisted recovery. If a character is Injured beyond their natural healing limit they need medical treatment. Determine the level of help available - this is a good time to rush your friend to hospital. For each day of game time roll Medicine + Wisdom, BD (2 - patient's Injuries). (For mental Injuries use Psychology instead of Medicine.)

- If it succeeds one Injury is removed. Eventually the patient should be able to recover naturally.
- If the roll fails there is no change that day, but at least the patient gets no worse.
- If the treatment roll is fumbled or no-one available has sufficient ability to get any dice to roll, the patient's in trouble. They must Resist damage equal to their current number of Injuries (ignoring Hurt results), possibly leading to coma or death. (You can use Destiny Points to aid someone who's trying to save you.)





COMBAT EXAMPLE

Thunder Eagle (the example character from *Character Creation*) is fighting Shung Tsang, an NPC who has no Meta powers but is a highly trained martial artist. He has 3 levels of Fighting (Unarmed) Skill; Talented Agility, Presence and Awareness; and the Quirk *High Pain Threshold* (giving an Advantage to Resist damage). His Initiative bonus is 5 (1 from Agility, 1 from Awareness and 3 from Skill). His Fighting Advantages are 3 from Skill and 1 from Agility, and with only Average Strength his Base Damage is 0. You can summarise his combat stats as: Init +5, Unarmed 6/0, Phys Res 3, Pre 2.

Martin Egilsson aka Thunder Eagle is fighting unarmed, so Marty doesn't get his most powerful attacks but still has an advantage in Strength. His stats are: Init +3, Unarmed 4/3, Phys Res 3, Pre 2.

Round 1. Marty rolls 4 for Initiative and adds his bonus of 3 for a total of 7. Shung Tsang rolls 4 and adds his bonus of 5 for a total of 9. When the countdown reaches Phase 9 Shung makes the first attack. He has 6 dice - Base 2 plus his Advantages - and gets 3 successes. Marty can defend as a Free action but has to Rush it because the Phase is higher than his first action, so he rolls 3 dice - Base 2, 2 Advantages, Rushed Disadvantage - and gets 2 successes. So Shung's attack just gets through, with 1 success remaining, and with 0 Base Damage Thunder Eagle just has to Resist 1 point of damage. Rolling 3 dice (Base 2 plus one Endurance level), he gets 1 success - just enough.

The GM counts Phases 8... 7 - now Marty can attack. Shung defends normally because it's after his first action. Marty rolls 4 dice and gets 3 successes. Shung rolls 6 dice and also gets 3 successes, just dodging. Neither fighter has any more actions.

Round 2. For Initiative Marty rolls a 5 for a total of 8. That's pretty good, but Shung Tsang rolls a 6 - with his bonus of 5 that's 11, giving him actions on Phases 10 and 1. He attacks first, getting a solid 3 successes. Thunder Eagle has to Rush his defence again, rolling 3 dice for 2 successes. Again, 1 success gets through. That's 1 damage - Marty rolls 3 dice for 2 successes and shrugs it off.

Marty attacks on Phase 8 with 2 successes. Shung rolls poorly for just 1 success. The blow connects for a total damage of 4 (1 attack success plus 3 Base Damage). Shung gets 2 Resistance successes, reducing it to 2 - a Hurt. If it was only 1 the GM could spend one of Shung's Presence Points to

negate it altogether, but as it is there's no point. The Hurt drops the Phase of Shung's remaining action by 1. As it's only on Phase 1, it is lost altogether (curses!). His Initiative bonus drops to 4, which means it will no longer be possible to get two actions in a round.

Round 3. The initiative totals are a poor 5 for Shung Tsang, and also 5 for Thunder Eagle. They could attack simultaneously, but Shung is now wary of this lumbering American's strength and decides to take a Free action for a Ready defence on Phase 5 instead, holding his attack. As his Initiative bonus is higher he can do this. Marty, meanwhile, decides to go all-out on the attack and spends his 1 Presence point. The attack roll is 5 dice for 3 successes, and the defence is 6 dice for 4 successes. Marty misses.

On Phase 4 Shung takes that held attack. He also spends a Presence point, and rolls 7 dice for 4 successes. Marty, defending normally, gets 3 successes. He has to Resist 1 damage - and fails, taking a Hurt.

Round 4. Now each fighter has a Hurt. Shung gets 6 Initiative. Marty's bonus is now 2 - he rolls 5 for a total of 7, and attacks first with 3 successes. Shung's Rushed defence (5 dice) gets 2 successes. He has to resist 4 damage and 3 points get through, giving him an Injury. This knocks his attack down to Phase 5 and gives a Disadvantage to rolls. Shung attacks with 5 dice, for 2 successes. Thunder Eagle's defence beats it with a good 4 successes.

Round 5. Thunder Eagle's Initiative is 5. Shung Tsang's is down 2 from the Hurt and Injury - he gets 6. Shung tries to strike a decisive blow first, using a Presence Point to counteract the Disadvantage from the Injury. He gets 3 successes; Marty's Rushed defence gets just 1; that's 2 damage to Resist with 3 dice, and Marty gets a lucky 3 successes.

Marty attacks on Phase 5. His player is getting tired of going back and forth, and throws in the final Presence Point, rolling 5 dice and getting - a mediocre 2 successes! Grumbling, the player spends a Destiny Point to roll the 5 dice again - and is delighted to get a full 5 successes. The GM looks worried on Shung's behalf (partly because he has no Presence Points left). Rolling 5 dice because of the Injury, the defence is 2 successes. So 3 get through, for a total damage of 6. Shung Resists 1, but it's not enough - he collapses, Injured and Unconscious. Thunder Eagle dusts himself off and strides away.



LEGENDARY PHYSICS

This section gives you some basics that'll get used a lot in the rules that follow, showing you how LW measures things like distance and time.

Distance

Distance is measured in levels, doubling each time. To assign a level to a known distance, pick the closest point on the scale.

Level	Distance
1	10ft
2	25ft
3	50ft
4	100ft
5	250ft
6	500ft
7	1000ft
8	2000ft/1/2 mile (approx)
9	1 mile (5000ft)
10	2 miles
16	100 miles (actually 128)
19	1000 miles (actually 1024)

(In all of this section figures have been rounded off pretty roughly. It's a game! Apologies to those who think in metric units. As a rough reckoner, divide feet by 3 to get metres and multiply miles by 1 1/2 to get kilometres.)

The scale continues indefinitely. Higher levels will rarely be needed, but here are some statistics from mundane to over-the-top in case you need them.

The tallest **trees** include the various sequoia species, reaching 100-350ft high (level 4-6). The canopy of the tropical rainforests is 100-165ft high (level 4). The full size of most temperate species like oak and pine is 80-150ft, also level 4.

Humans have built some fairly big things. The world's tallest **buildings**, including such favourites as the Empire State Building and Eiffel Tower, were height level 7 at the turn of the millennium. By the time of the game setting it's likely that there are a few buildings hitting level 8. Other examples of tall structures are the Big Ben tower on the British Houses of Parliament (level 5) and the Great Pyramid in Egypt (level 6). An ordinary office block with 10-15 storeys would be level 4-5. As for **ships**, the largest aircraft carrier is 1000ft long



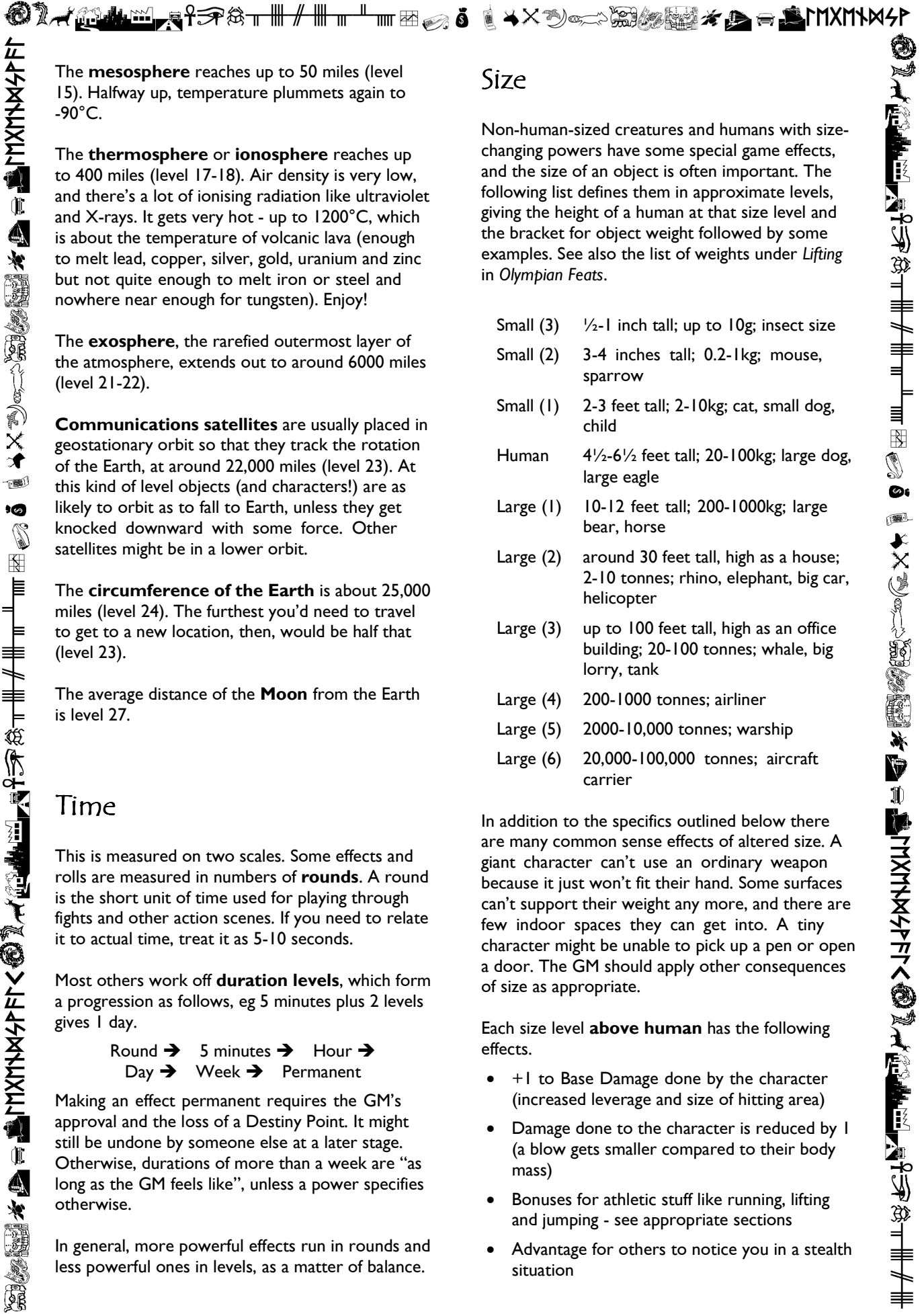
(level 7) and weighs 96,000 tons - but most large vessels would be level 6 long.

The tallest **mountain** on the planet is Mount Everest at 5 1/2 miles high (level 11). Most high peaks in ranges like the Alps, Pyrenees and Rockies are level 10, with the very highest reaching level 11. In countries that aren't really mountainous, like Britain, the highest peaks are level 8-9.

At the other end of the scale, **ocean depth** is an average 2 1/2-3 miles (level 10). Land masses are surrounded by a continental shelf up to 650ft deep (level 6) and 100 miles wide (level 4). The greatest depth known is just under 7 miles (level 12).

The **troposphere** is the lowest level of the atmosphere, reaching from ground level up to around 10 miles over tropical areas and 6 miles in temperate ones (level 12). Most clouds and weather activity are found in this layer. Temperature decreases as you rise, down to -50 to -80°C. (At temperatures like these material properties change - for instance steel becomes brittle.) In the upper levels the air is thin and breathing aids are usually required.

The **stratosphere** is the next layer, up to 30 miles (level 14). It's quite stable and contains the ozone layer. For the most part it's cold, but in the top portion temperature increases up to Earth surface levels.



The **mesosphere** reaches up to 50 miles (level 15). Halfway up, temperature plummets again to -90°C.

The **thermosphere** or **ionosphere** reaches up to 400 miles (level 17-18). Air density is very low, and there's a lot of ionising radiation like ultraviolet and X-rays. It gets very hot - up to 1200°C, which is about the temperature of volcanic lava (enough to melt lead, copper, silver, gold, uranium and zinc but not quite enough to melt iron or steel and nowhere near enough for tungsten). Enjoy!

The **exosphere**, the rarefied outermost layer of the atmosphere, extends out to around 6000 miles (level 21-22).

Communications satellites are usually placed in geostationary orbit so that they track the rotation of the Earth, at around 22,000 miles (level 23). At this kind of level objects (and characters!) are as likely to orbit as to fall to Earth, unless they get knocked downward with some force. Other satellites might be in a lower orbit.

The **circumference of the Earth** is about 25,000 miles (level 24). The furthest you'd need to travel to get to a new location, then, would be half that (level 23).

The average distance of the **Moon** from the Earth is level 27.

Time

This is measured on two scales. Some effects and rolls are measured in numbers of **rounds**. A round is the short unit of time used for playing through fights and other action scenes. If you need to relate it to actual time, treat it as 5-10 seconds.

Most others work off **duration levels**, which form a progression as follows, eg 5 minutes plus 2 levels gives 1 day.

Round → 5 minutes → Hour →
Day → Week → Permanent

Making an effect permanent requires the GM's approval and the loss of a Destiny Point. It might still be undone by someone else at a later stage. Otherwise, durations of more than a week are "as long as the GM feels like", unless a power specifies otherwise.

In general, more powerful effects run in rounds and less powerful ones in levels, as a matter of balance.

Size

Non-human-sized creatures and humans with size-changing powers have some special game effects, and the size of an object is often important. The following list defines them in approximate levels, giving the height of a human at that size level and the bracket for object weight followed by some examples. See also the list of weights under *Lifting* in *Olympian Feats*.

Small (3)	1/2-1 inch tall; up to 10g; insect size
Small (2)	3-4 inches tall; 0.2-1kg; mouse, sparrow
Small (1)	2-3 feet tall; 2-10kg; cat, small dog, child
Human	4 1/2-6 1/2 feet tall; 20-100kg; large dog, large eagle
Large (1)	10-12 feet tall; 200-1000kg; large bear, horse
Large (2)	around 30 feet tall, high as a house; 2-10 tonnes; rhino, elephant, big car, helicopter
Large (3)	up to 100 feet tall, high as an office building; 20-100 tonnes; whale, big lorry, tank
Large (4)	200-1000 tonnes; airliner
Large (5)	2000-10,000 tonnes; warship
Large (6)	20,000-100,000 tonnes; aircraft carrier

In addition to the specifics outlined below there are many common sense effects of altered size. A giant character can't use an ordinary weapon because it just won't fit their hand. Some surfaces can't support their weight any more, and there are few indoor spaces they can get into. A tiny character might be unable to pick up a pen or open a door. The GM should apply other consequences of size as appropriate.

Each size level **above human** has the following effects.

- +1 to Base Damage done by the character (increased leverage and size of hitting area)
- Damage done to the character is reduced by 1 (a blow gets smaller compared to their body mass)
- Bonuses for athletic stuff like running, lifting and jumping - see appropriate sections
- Advantage for others to notice you in a stealth situation



Each size level **below human** has the following effects.

- -1 to Base Damage done by the character (decreased leverage and size of hitting area)
- Damage done to the character is increased by 1 (less body mass to absorb it)
- Penalties for athletic stuff like running, lifting and jumping - see appropriate sections
- Disadvantage for others to notice you in a stealth situation

These bonuses and penalties are independent of those from other abilities - eg a character with Large (2) and Meta 2 Strength would have an unarmed Base Damage of $2 + 4 = 6$.

Combat between unequal sizes. Smaller individuals are certainly more fragile, but they're also harder to target. When fighting a larger creature, the smaller one adds the difference between their size levels as Advantages for dodging. For instance, if a Large (2) creature fights a Small (2) one the little guy gets 4 extra dice for defence - but if one of those blows lands he'll suffer 4 more damage than if they were both human size.

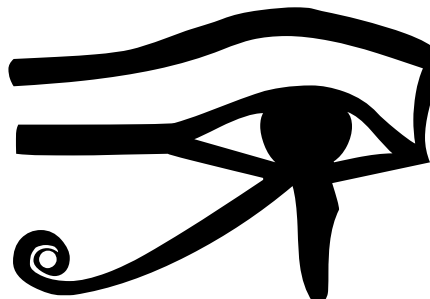
Multiple opponents

Sometimes a character will be in some sort of contest with multiple opponents. As a general rule, actions against a large group incur Disadvantages, and their actions against you get Advantages, based on the following scale. (Detailed rules for fighting against large numbers of low-powered opponents appear in *Hordes*.)

Adv/Dis	Opponents
1	2-3
2	4-6
3	7-10
4	11-16
5	17-25
6	26-40
7	41-65
8	66-100

You'd usually make a single roll against the whole group, applying the result to all of them, rather than making 50 separate rolls. You can also use this for non-combat applications of some powers.

In some cases an "unopposed opposed" roll can be a useful tool. The Base Dice is 1, ie 50/50, modified by the character's Advantages and Disadvantages compared to their opponents. Pick average ability levels for the whole group and figure in the number of opponents, as above. *Example:* against a group of 5 athletic thugs piling on, a hero with M1 Strength rolls $1 (BD) + 3 (Strength) - 1 (their Strength) - 2 (5 of them) = 1$ die. Time to break out the Pool Points!



OLYMPIAN FEATS

Movement

The game shouldn't be about nitpicking over exact distances, but it can be helpful to have a guide to how long it takes a character to cover a distance.

Anyone can move up to 10 feet, distance level 1, as a Free action. With a Full action an ordinary person can run distance 3 (50ft). There are a number of abilities which can increase the distance level of Full movement (adding 1 in most cases):

- any Meta levels of Endurance - add 1
- 3 or more levels of Athletics Skill - add 1
- the *Run Like a Horse* power - add 1
- the *Speed* power - add levels (1-3)

For a human in **water**, the base distance for a Full action is half your Athletics or Swimming Skill, rounded up (minimum 1). You can get extra distance levels from Meta Strength, the Switch *Swim Like a Fish*, or levels of *Speed*. The Free action move is only 5ft.

Size levels affect all running and swimming moves, Free and Full. Levels of Large add to the distance levels, and levels of small subtract. (For levels below distance 1 divide by 3, rounding down - 10ft, 3ft, 1ft, 4in - this level of detail's rarely needed.)

In **flight**, the only thing that matters is the Flight power: 10ft for a Free action, level + 2 for a Full action.

Lifting

The ability to lift heavy objects is a superhero staple, the quintessential application of Strength.

Base Lift

A simple Strength roll won't do for this, because extra successes could take a character to a result way outside their proper level of ability. Instead, each Strength rating gives a Base Lift. This puts you in a lifting category, then the amount of effort you're able to apply says how well you do within it.



Strength

Poor
Average
Talented
Exceptional
Meta 1
Meta 2
Meta 3

Base Lift

10kg
25kg
50kg
100kg
1 tonne (1000kg)
10 tonnes
100 tonnes

Size Levels add to or subtract from the Base Lift. If that means you need levels outside the chart above, multiply the Base Lift by 10 for each level above Meta 3 and divide it by 10 for each level below Poor. For instance, M3 Strength + Large (2) gives a Base Lift of 10,000 tonnes!

(How come Distance Levels are measured in feet and Lifting Levels in kilograms? Mainly because I'm using what I feel most comfortable with, but also because imperial units of weight are a nightmare.)

Making a lift

Characters can automatically lift things in lower categories of Base Lift than their own. Beyond that, to lift a given weight:

Roll Presence + Athletics, BD 2, and multiply the Base Lift by the number of successes



(That assumes lifting above your head - BD 3 if you just want to pick it up.) So if you have Meta 1 Strength and get 3 successes you can lift 3 tonnes. If you fail the roll, you can lift no more than half your Base. If you fumble it, you don't lift at all and give yourself a Hurt from trying too hard, at the wrong angle, or whatever. Any Advantages from Pool Points, Gate Modifiers or whatever add to this roll, not the Base Lift. Also, a character can voluntarily take a Hurt for an extra Advantage.

Several characters can **work together** to lift something. You can just make lifting rolls for each of them, and add the resulting weights together to see whether they succeeded.

World records suggest that **pulling** a wheeled ground vehicle over a short distance at no great speed can be done as if your Base Lift was 3 levels higher. In situations less artificial than a record attempt - like dragging a non-wheeled object, trying to make reasonable speed, or if flying or swimming which don't give good traction - treat a pull as a lifting attempt with a Base Lift one level higher. The +1 Base Lift also applies when **carrying** rather than lifting -someone might be able to carry another adult over their shoulder in a fireman's lift but have difficulty lifting a child above their head.

Sample weights

Child	10-20kg
Ordinary Male Human	75kg
Well-built Adult Human	100kg
Sumo Wrestler	130-220kg
Male Gorilla	180kg
Dolphin	250kg
Polar Bear (average male)	350kg
Car	1t
WW2 Fighter Plane	2-5t
Rhino, Hippo	up to 4t
Elephant	up to 6t
Combat Helicopter	5-10t
Jet Fighter	15-35t
Tank	15-50t
Large Lorry (juggernaut)	30-50t
Medium-sized Whale	45-60t
Blue Whale	60-170t
Medium Airliner	150-250t
Large Airliner	300-600t
Small Warship (frigate)	3000-4000t
Large Warship (cruiser)	10,000t
Largest aircraft carrier	96,000t

Jumping

Characters have a **Base Jump**. This tells you how much "bang per buck" you get from an athletic effort to jump a distance.

Base Jump

For most people it's 1ft/3ft for high and long jumps respectively.

Some character abilities double the Base Jump. This doubling is cumulative. For example, each Meta Strength level doubles the base, so M3 Str gives a factor of $2 \times 2 \times 2 = 8$, which means each success on a long jump takes you 24ft! (Feel free to round these numbers a bit - treating that as 25ft makes for easier sums.) Other doubling factors include:

- levels of Large Size (Small Size levels halve the distance per success);
- using a pole or similar aid to vault;
- levels of Speed if you get an appropriate run-up, usually for long jumps only;

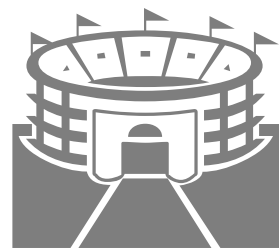
The *Leaping Switch*, which has the sole purpose of greater jumps, multiplies the Bases by 4 (also cumulative with doubling factors).

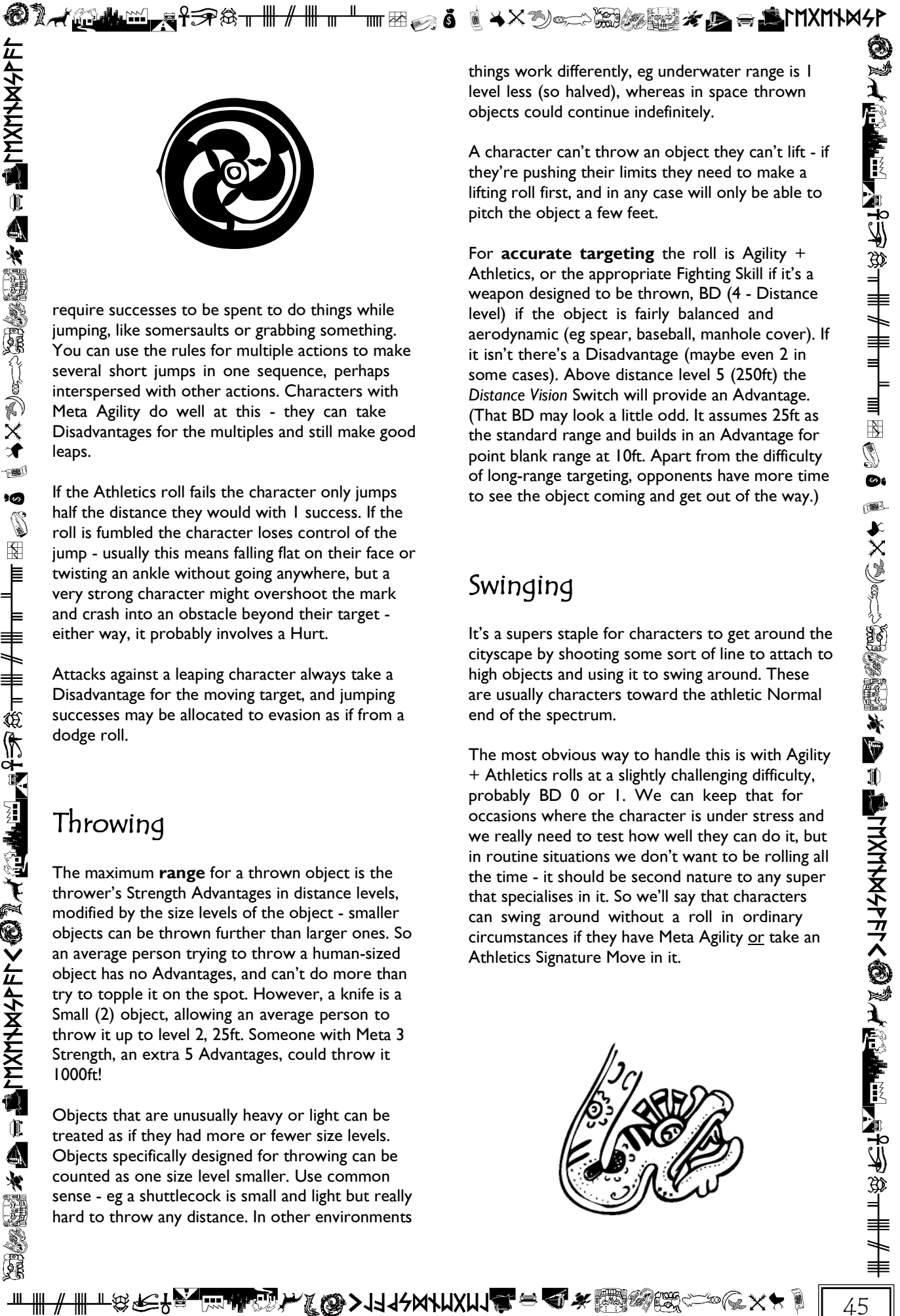
Making a jump

Roll Agility + Athletics, BD 2, and multiply the number of successes by the Base Jump to get the maximum distance travelled

A good run-up gives an Advantage.

A jump straight up or across is the simplest case, but successes can be spent in various ways. A jump up and across splits successes between the two, multiplying Bases as appropriate. The GM may also





require successes to be spent to do things while jumping, like somersaults or grabbing something. You can use the rules for multiple actions to make several short jumps in one sequence, perhaps interspersed with other actions. Characters with Meta Agility do well at this - they can take Disadvantages for the multiples and still make good leaps.

If the Athletics roll fails the character only jumps half the distance they would with 1 success. If the roll is fumbled the character loses control of the jump - usually this means falling flat on their face or twisting an ankle without going anywhere, but a very strong character might overshoot the mark and crash into an obstacle beyond their target - either way, it probably involves a Hurt.

Attacks against a leaping character always take a Disadvantage for the moving target, and jumping successes may be allocated to evasion as if from a dodge roll.

Throwing

The maximum **range** for a thrown object is the thrower's Strength Advantages in distance levels, modified by the size levels of the object - smaller objects can be thrown further than larger ones. So an average person trying to throw a human-sized object has no Advantages, and can't do more than try to topple it on the spot. However, a knife is a Small (2) object, allowing an average person to throw it up to level 2, 25ft. Someone with Meta 3 Strength, an extra 5 Advantages, could throw it 1000ft!

Objects that are unusually heavy or light can be treated as if they had more or fewer size levels. Objects specifically designed for throwing can be counted as one size level smaller. Use common sense - eg a shuttlecock is small and light but really hard to throw any distance. In other environments

things work differently, eg underwater range is 1 level less (so halved), whereas in space thrown objects could continue indefinitely.

A character can't throw an object they can't lift - if they're pushing their limits they need to make a lifting roll first, and in any case will only be able to pitch the object a few feet.

For **accurate targeting** the roll is Agility + Athletics, or the appropriate Fighting Skill if it's a weapon designed to be thrown, BD (4 - Distance level) if the object is fairly balanced and aerodynamic (eg spear, baseball, manhole cover). If it isn't there's a Disadvantage (maybe even 2 in some cases). Above distance level 5 (250ft) the *Distance Vision Switch* will provide an Advantage. (That BD may look a little odd. It assumes 25ft as the standard range and builds in an Advantage for point blank range at 10ft. Apart from the difficulty of long-range targeting, opponents have more time to see the object coming and get out of the way.)

Swinging

It's a supers staple for characters to get around the cityscape by shooting some sort of line to attach to high objects and using it to swing around. These are usually characters toward the athletic Normal end of the spectrum.

The most obvious way to handle this is with Agility + Athletics rolls at a slightly challenging difficulty, probably BD 0 or 1. We can keep that for occasions where the character is under stress and we really need to test how well they can do it, but in routine situations we don't want to be rolling all the time - it should be second nature to any super that specialises in it. So we'll say that characters can swing around without a roll in ordinary circumstances if they have Meta Agility or take an Athletics Signature Move in it.



FLYING BODIES, FRAGILE STREETS

The superhero genre is full of characters knocking each other flying and causing massive property damage. This section gives you the rules to put that in your game.

Hardness

An object or material's Hardness is basically its resistance to damage. Look for the example closest to the object in question. If the object's thinner or flimsier than the standard example you can lower the Hardness by 1, and if it's thicker or sturdier raise it by 1.

- 2 Misc: water and other fluids
- 1 Misc: jelly-like materials, soft snow
- 0 Misc: ordinary glass (eg house window), corrugated cardboard box, light plastic, thin ice crust, ordinary clothing
- 1 Wood: light board (eg interior door, light furniture, partition wall)
Misc: electronic circuitry, most domestic goods of rigid plastic, soil, heavy fabric
- 2 Wood: heavy board (eg wall, floorboards, exterior door, heavier furniture, crate), small tree (up to about 3 inches diameter)
Misc: toughened glass (eg car windscreen), thick rubber, goods of flexible or solid plastic, ice sheet (up to about an inch thick)
- 3 Wood: tree trunk (up to 1 1/2ft across), telegraph pole
Metal: thin light metals (eg aluminium or thin steel, car bodywork), light chain, sword
Stone: crumbly rock (eg sandstone, chalk), mortared brick wall, road surface
Misc: medium rope, reinforced plastic (eg boat hull), ice wall (up to about 1ft thick)
- 4 Wood: large tree trunk (up to 10ft across)
Metal: strong metal sheet or tube (eg lamp-post, security door, metal shipping container), firearms, medium chain
Stone: ordinary rock (eg limestone), concrete wall
Misc: bulletproof glass



- 5 Metal: cast iron or steel (eg fire hydrant, car engine block), heavy chain, thin special alloys
Stone: hard rock (eg granite), reinforced concrete wall
- 6 Metal: armoured steel (armoured car, tank, bank vault door), special alloy plate
- 7-8 Exotic alloys, diamond (breakable by only the very strongest Metas)

Imbued objects take their normal Hardness or effectively have unlimited Hardness, depending on the situation. The common factor is that they can't be broken. So if (by some strange chance) there was an imbued brick wall, characters colliding with it would take the same damage as if it were any other brick wall but would never break through it. Similarly, imbued objects are capable of breaking through materials that would normally be too Hard, if thrown or swung with enough force.

Motion Force

Sometimes an object or person has energy that makes it travel through the air, eg if it's thrown or hit really hard. That's **Motion Force** (MF), measured as a number of points. If the object flies in an unobstructed path it will travel up to this number of points in distance levels, then fall to the ground (however far that is). If it hits something on the way that's a Collision - see below. Motion Force reduces over distance until it's used up. So if something with MF 5 travels 25 feet (distance level 2) and then hits a wall, its MF at the time of collision is 3.



Here are general guidelines for gaining Motion Force.

- When a hand-to-hand blow gives MF (see *Slams* below) it's equal to the attacker's Strength Advantages. If they're using a weapon it adds half its Base Damage, rounding down.
- A character throwing an object of human mass or thereabouts gives it MF equal to their Strength Advantages. If the object has levels of Small Size they add to the MF, and levels of Large Size subtract from it. You can also modify it if the object has an unusual weight, eg someone wearing heavy armour.
- An ordinary person running has MF 1. With the *Run Like a Horse* power they have MF 2.
- An ordinary person swimming has MF 0. With the *Swim Like a Fish* power they have MF 2.
- A character with the *Speed* or *Flight* powers has MF equal to 3x the levels of Add they're currently using. For instance at around 200mph that's MF 6. This also applies to objects that naturally move in the same speed brackets, like vehicles.
- A falling person builds up MF in distance levels the further they fall. (Falling is covered in *Hazards and Harm*.)

In a medium that resists motion more than air does, eg underwater, reduce MF by 1 (which halves the distance travelled).



Slams

A Slam is an attack that gives the target Motion Force so that they fly through the air, possibly hitting obstacles on the way. Even if the Motion Force is 0, the target is knocked down in the same area and will at least need to use a Free action to get up again.

For **blunt** attacks - fists, clubs, telegraph poles, waterspouts, etc - net attack successes (ie after the defence roll's taken off) over 5 don't add to the damage (so there is a ceiling), but trigger a Slam. (Bonuses like Presence Points and Gate Modifiers

don't affect the Motion Force, but putting them into the attack roll makes a Slam more likely.)

Sharp attacks include swords, bullets, lasers and lightning bolts. They don't cause Slams, but can be placed precisely for greater damage and add all the attack's net successes on the attack to damage.

Combination attacks with elements of both sharp and blunt are rare and dangerous. They add their full successes to damage and cause a Slam if they hit with over 5 successes. Sheathing your fist in flame and then punching someone would be an example.

Some attacks do an **auto-Slam**: if they connect they knock the target for a loop regardless of successes. One example is the classic **outside weapon** - telegraph poles, motor vehicles, other chunky bits of scenery that supers can pick up and bat each other with, or maybe super-large versions of melee weapons. Bear in mind, though, that these things are likely to be trashed in the first hit (explained below, but basically if they smash into someone Harder than they are with super-strength force they'll probably break).

Breaking

"Breaking" can mean various things, depending on the material and circumstances - snapping, tearing, crumpling, crumbling, etc.

Passive breaking happens without conscious focus and intent, for instance if an attack misses its intended target and hits a brittle piece of scenery, or a character breaks something that's trivial for their strength as a Free action, eg grabbing a lamp-post to use as a club. If the Base Damage of the attack (for instance your unarmed attack for that lamp-post) exceeds the object's Hardness it's broken; if Base Damage equals Hardness the object is damaged but still intact.

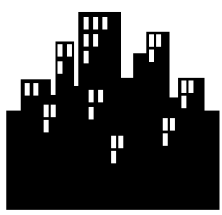
Active breaking happens when a character tries to break something that's a challenge for them. It requires a Full action of concentration. Roll Strength, BD (2 - Hardness). (For powers it might be a different roll, eg Add + Presence.) Gate Modifiers, Pool Points and other bonuses can be applied. At Hardness 7 and above, even characters with Meta 3 Strength need these bonuses for a chance of success. If someone managed to create a material with Hardness 10 it would be almost indestructible.





In both cases the degree by which the material Hardness is exceeded gives you a guide to the extent of damage. In some materials it will tend to spread out from a point of impact; in others you have to widen the hole deliberately.

The above applies to breaking objects unarmed. If **using a weapon**, see whether its Hardness is higher than that of the material being attacked. If it is, you can add its Base Damage on for accidental breakage, and add Base Damage as Advantages for deliberate attempts. If the weapon is less Hard you might end up breaking it rather than the target object if your Strength is high.



Collisions

A collision happens when a moving object or being hits another object or being. In terms of Legendary Physics, there are two things with Hardness that meet with a certain Motion Force. (There's a potential for some maths in this bit. Just implement as much as your group is comfortable with.)

Collision damage basics

Each party in a collision must check to see whether it's damaged. Objects are treated as either broken, damaged or unaffected. People, being squishier, have some level of damage to Resist (or maybe ignore).

Living things - a person, animal, etc in a collision must Resist damage of:

$$\text{Motion Force} + \text{Other Hardness} - \text{Own Hardness}$$

This has a ceiling of twice the Motion Force - the energy in the collision is finite, so you can't be killed by just stumbling into a Hard obstacle. When Resisting this damage remember that Size and armour are already figured into your Hardness, so don't count them again - it's usually a straight Endurance roll.

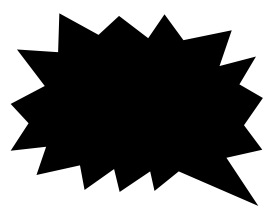
Objects - this is a three-way contest between the two objects' Hardnesses and the MF between them, and the weakest link gives. An object struck by a Harder object with sufficient force breaks. (The less Hard object usually takes the damage and disperses the energy without harming the Harder one.) It is damaged but not broken if the incoming Hardness and Motion Force are equal to its own Hardness. The area of breakage or damage usually corresponds to the size of whatever caused it, but damage higher than the Hardness may cause a larger area to be affected, especially if the object is brittle rather than flexible.

Collision damage options

Special collision types:

- **Walls** - if something breaks through a sheet of material reduce its Motion Force by the wall's Hardness. If there is no Motion Force left, it lands just on the other side of the wall. Otherwise it keeps going in the same direction as before until it runs out of Motion Force or hits something else.
- **The Ground** - if something "breaks" a thick body of material it ploughs in rather than breaking through. The size of the crater or hole produced should probably be a matter of roleplaying, but if you really want a number of feet take the lower of Motion Force and incoming Hardness, subtract material Hardness, and multiply the result by itself.

Minimal collisions - use this option if there's not enough energy involved for an ordinary Collision but it seems like there should be a chance of taking some damage - for instance, if someone is just knocked down on the spot or falls just a few feet. Resist against 2 damage if what you hit is Harder than you are; 1 if it's the same Hardness; and take no damage if you're Harder than it is.



Motion complications

Determining Motion Force - the simplest scenario is when a moving thing hits a stationary thing. When both of them are moving, determine the Motion Force for the collision like so:

- add their MFs together if they are travelling in opposite directions and crash head-on;
- use the difference (faster minus slower) if one catches up with the other, traveling in the same direction;
- and if they hit at an angle (using 90 degrees as an approximation) take the average ($A + B$, divide by 2, round up).

Residual motion - if neither party gets broken, they might bounce off each other and carry on in roughly the direction of the faster original. If you want to model this, look at the original total MF in that direction and share it equally between them. Of course, if there's anything in the way or they're falling they'll take more damage...

Examples

Object A with Hardness 4 hits object B, Hardness 2, with Motion Force 5. That MF is enough to break either of them, but due to Hardness it's B that breaks.

Now let's say A is a hero and B is a wall, in the same collision. A has to Resist damage of MF 5 + wall Hardness 2 - own Hardness 4 = 3. A is Harder than the wall, and it only takes 2 MF to break through the wall's Hardness, so A carries on through the wall with MF 3. On the other side A flies across a 12ft room - that's close to 10ft, so it uses up 1 MF - and hits a similar wall with MF 2. A takes $2+2-4=0$ damage. As the MF now is only equal to the wall's Hardness it's damaged but not broken. A slides down to the floor.

There's a head-on crash between characters C, with Hardness 1 and Motion 3, and D with Hardness 3 and Motion 5. The Motion Force of the collision is $3+5=8$ (nasty!). C takes $8+3-1=10$ damage and D takes $8+1-3=6$. The GM decides to keep them flying with residual MF: they end up travelling roughly in D's original direction with Motion Force $(5-3)/2 = 2/2 = 1$ each. They fly through the air for 10ft then drop to the wooden floor - just a few feet, but possibly a nasty graze, so a Minimal Collision with Hardness 2. That's 2 damage for C and none for D.





HORDES

The standard combat rules are designed to give detail about characters' actions and allow them to persevere in spite of their injuries. That's fine for heroic characters, but it's not always appropriate for NPCs. In particular, what if a hero is faced with a group of nameless opponents who are all basically the same, like half a dozen thugs or a pack of mutant rats? They're not in the story to be heroic. Their function is to fall, one by one, delaying and weakening the heroes before they face the main villain. So really all you need to know is whether they're still in the fight or not - Hurts and Injuries would be a needless complication.

This section outlines a slightly different way of handling Hordes in combat, based on the standard system. The main aim is to make combat with a large number of relatively weak opponents quick and simple. The starting point is to work out the abilities of an individual Horde member. From these you can work out Horde stats, mostly based on the idea that rolls would average out over the large number of Horde members and all the randomness required can be supplied by PC rolls. Hordes don't use fancy game mechanics like Pool Points or Slam.

(If there is a seriously large quantity of opponents, like a cloud of stinging wasps, that's a Swarm rather than a Horde. Treat it as a Blanket Attack - you take damage as long as you're in it, and it has to be dispersed rather than fought.)

If it helps the story along you can have single-member Hordes, eg a guard that the PCs can take out without a detailed fight.

Initiative

Assume that all Horde members get a result of 3 on the Initiative die all the time, so they act together on (3 + bonus). (If they're good enough to get multiple actions this way, which would require an Initiative bonus of at least 8, you should probably treat them as individuals instead.)

Example: standard thugs have an Initiative bonus of 1 from their Fighting Skill, so their Horde initiative is 4.



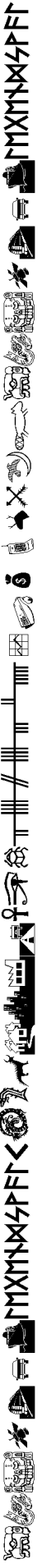
Attacks

The Horde attacks as a single entity - a group of minor threats acts as a single medium threat. The dice pool is that for an individual member, plus Advantages for the number of extra members using the standard scale, repeated below.

Adv.	Opponents
1	2-3
2	4-6
3	7-10
4	11-16
5	17-25
6	26-40
7	41-65
8	66-100

An opponent can defend against this with their normal roll, ie there's no penalty for number of attackers. The Base Damage is that for an individual member.

Example: 5 standard thugs attack with knives. They get 2 Base Dice, 1 for Fighting Skill, and 2 for numbers: a total of 5 dice. Let's say 3 successes get past the hero's defences. Their Base Damage with the knives is 1, so the hero has to resist 4 damage.



As its numbers get whittled down a Horde's attacks become weaker. This is where PCs' (usually) better initiative is very useful, as they can take out some of the Horde before its first attack. A group of 5 ordinary people can be a challenge for a PC with low combat abilities, but someone more competent could handle them easily within a round. It's common for PCs to attack several Horde members at once in a Multiple action.

Hordes can be split freely - all you have to do is apply the right Advantages for numbers. The thugs in the previous example could change from one group of 5 with 2 Advantages to 2 groups of 2 and 3 with 1 Advantage each if a second hero arrived to help.

(Design note: normally, if a PC is defending against multiple opponents the modifiers would be Disadvantages on the defence rolls. However, changing the relative balance by giving Advantages to the attackers instead allows the increased damage from multiple attacks to be built into the single roll.)

Defence

Take the number of dice a member would get for defence: base 2, plus Fighting Skill and any Attribute or other bonuses. Halve it, rounding down (hey, they're cannon fodder). That's your Horde Defence - it acts as a fixed number of successes which are taken away from every attempt to hit a Horde member. Any successes over that threshold add to damage as usual. It's probably easiest to tell players what number they're trying to beat, especially after the first round when the PCs will have judged their opponents' abilities - it'll make things run faster.

Normally, full defence would apply only on Initiative and later, with a Rushed defence at up to twice initiative. However, when halving defence pools there's so little difference between the two that it's not worth the effort of keeping track of the change during the round. The suggested method is to apply the standard Horde Defence on all Phases up to twice Initiative. After that, as normal, attacks are too fast for the Horde members to defend, i.e. Horde Defence 0.

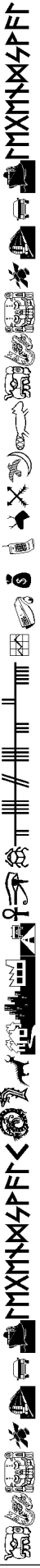
Example: standard thugs have a defence dice pool of base 2 plus 1 for their Fighting Skill, totalling 3. Halving and rounding down gives a Horde Defence of 1. So 1 success is taken off any attempt to hit them. As their initiative is 4, this applies from Phase 8 down to Phase 1.

Some powers or situations may mean you need to re-calculate the Horde Defence. For instance, attacks using the Speed power are harder to defend against. Just go back to the original defence dice pool, adjust it, and halve again. If the Horde get a Blessing which would improve their chance to defend, you could apply that to PC attacks as if it were a Curse, or round the defence threshold up instead of down. Use your initiative for a solution that reflects the power's effect while keeping things quick and simple.

Damaging Hordes

Instead of spending time making Resistance rolls and recording degrees of damage, you use three Damage Thresholds: fixed numbers worked out in advance, to which incoming damage is compared. Coupled with the rule for defence above, that means players just have to see whether they hit or not then call the damage. The GM compares it to the Thresholds and tells them the result.





Get a Resistance modifier from a Horde member's stats by halving the number of dice for the roll, rounding down, and adding on any auto successes (eg for armour or Size). This can go negative, eg due to Small Size, but the minimum for a Threshold is 0. Then the Thresholds are as follows.

1 + mod	Stunned
3 + mod	Down
7 + mod	Dead

An average person would get just 1 for the Resistance modifier, from halving their normal 2 dice for Average Endurance, so you could write their thresholds as 2/4/8. You wouldn't normally calculate a Horde's mental Resistance ahead of time, but if you need it in play you can do it in the same way.

The GM just has to keep track of how many members are active, Down and Stunned. (The number of members acts as a kind of "hit points".)

- If damage is less than the Stunned Threshold, it has no effect.
- If damage reaches the **Stunned** Threshold that member is dazed or knocked back and cannot take part in the Horde's next attack, but will be back as before at the beginning of the following round. Stunned members have their usual Defence, but only a second Stunned damage result is needed to take them out of the fight (ie Down).

- **Down** means they're out of the fight - incapacitated, unconscious or whatever (the GM should describe it appropriately).
- A result of **Dead** is the same as Down, except that there are more likely to be consequences for the hero later on. (If you run a game where nobody gets killed, dispense with this. Alternatively, you might say that only attacks with lethal weapons can kill.)

Example: our standard thugs have damage thresholds 2/4/8. A PC attempts to hit one, and the player is told the defence threshold is 1. The attack roll gets 4 successes, which the player knows hits by 3. The character has Exceptional Strength, giving Base Damage 2. So all the GM needs to hear is: "Hits, for 5 damage." That thug is out of the fight.

Putting it together

Assembling all the Horde stats for our 5 thugs:

Initiative: 4
 Attack (knives): 5/1 (basic 3 + 2 for numbers)
 Defence: 1
 Damage: 2/4/8



HAZARDS AND HARM

Area damage

Most attacks are directed at a specific point. That means they're fairly easy to dodge - with just a small movement you can get out of the way. But when faced with swarms of creatures, fires, explosions, etc the damage is all around you. No rolls to hit are needed. Your only options are to get out of the area (which depends on your movement speed - how much ground can you cover in time?), or possibly to find some cover. In most cases PCs should have a chance to react to a major threat before it hits.

Blanket attacks

These cover a defined area with a uniform level of damage. Anyone in it has to resist the damage; anyone outside it doesn't. This could include a fire or a swarm of giant wasps.

Explosive attacks

These start at a point and radiate outward in all directions, and are usually instantaneous effects. Full damage is done within 10ft of the centre of the blast, and then it reduces by 2 for each distance level as it travels outwards.

For instance a hand grenade with a Base Damage of 8 does full damage within 10ft, 6 within 25ft, 4 within 50ft, 2 within 100ft and none beyond that. A massive 20-point explosion would be felt up to 2 miles away, affecting a small city. If anyone wants to try surviving a nuclear blast they need to be very, very fast or very, very tough - a small nuclear explosive, like the ones used in World War 2, has base damage 20, and a really big one could get up to 30 - and then there's the radiation and fallout... An explosion will damage buildings, and possibly hit people inside and nearby with flying masonry and debris. On the other hand, buildings will absorb some of the explosive force and act to contain the blast.

Characters caught in an explosion may be hurled through the air - apply any damage over 6 as a Motion Force.



Falling

This is an application of the Collision rules in *Flying Bodies*, *Fragile Streets*, with the distance levels travelled giving the Motion Force when you hit. So:

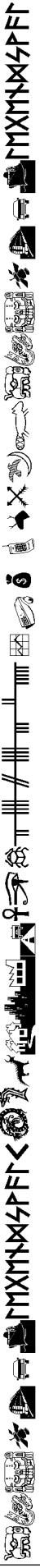
$$\text{Falling damage} = \text{distance levels} + \text{ground Hardness} - \text{your Hardness}$$

Terminal velocity

The speed of objects falling in atmosphere increases to a point where air resistance balances acceleration and they don't get any faster unless an external force is applied. For a human body this is about 150mph. In game terms, the Motion Force from freefall in atmosphere never exceeds 7. (But if you fall through different layers of atmosphere *Distance* under *Legendary Physics* has some hints for other types of harm.)

Bouncing falls

Here's a nasty option for the GM. If you fall off a mountain you don't drop the entire vertical height above sea level and then hit the ground - you bounce off the slopes until you come to rest. The same could be true of other falls.



Determine the distance levels per bounce randomly by rolling a die, reading it as numbers instead of successes. Give damage at the end of each bounce. Assume that each time the character takes damage it uses up their current Motion Force, so they start building it up again from zero. Start counting the levels again from where the bounce happened, eg if the total drop is level 7 and you bounce at 5 you have 2 more levels to go. If the character makes a crater in the mountainside or some such (see above) their fall will end there. Lucky Breaks from Destiny Points can come in handy for arranging a tree, precipice or whatever to grab on to or break the fall.

Stopping a fall

It's another superhero favourite: a character tumbles off a tall building and somehow manages to avoid becoming pavement pizza. Each distance level fallen takes one Phase, and the character's actions are limited by their normal initiative. The GM will have to decide whether a move needs a Free action (reflexive) or a Full action (focused concentration), but a character should get some attempt to stop a nasty fall. Here are some possibilities.

- **Twisting to land well** - Free action, final Phase - roll Agility + Athletics, BD 0, reduce MF by 1 if successful.
- **Twisting to aim for a softer landing** - Full action - Agility + Athletics, BD 0, lower impact material Hardness (if available).
- **Grabbing on to things** - Full action - roll Strength + Athletics, BD 2, aiming for current MF (distance levels fallen so far). If you beat it you're stopped and fine, hanging from a ledge or whatever. If you equal it, you're stopped but take a Hurt from the strain. If you have fewer successes you're still falling but managed to reduce MF by 1. If you fail you just keep falling.
- **Being caught** - uses somebody else's actions and abilities; particularly handy if you're unconscious. They have to reach you in time (perhaps rolling Agility + Athletics or based on their movement rate), then make a check as *Grabbing on to things*, using your MF, to see if they stop you and whether it hurts them.
- **Powers** - as a general rule you can use an applicable ability as a Full action, make a power roll at BD 2



and subtract the successes from the MF of the collision. Examples: creating a column of water to slow you down, melting the pavement for a softer landing. Flight is a special case, as you can use a Free action (it's like dodging the ground).

- **Lucky Break** - if all else fails, spend a Destiny Point to provide a landing on an outcrop part-way down, in a passing trucks of nice soft garbage, etc. In general this reduces the damage rather than avoiding it - half the full fall's worth is a good rule of thumb.
- **Tough it out** - some characters can just take a fall, dust themselves off and walk away.

Hostile environments

Here are some general rules for handling situations where the surroundings themselves may damage a character. They could be used for burning buildings, underwater, the Antarctic or the vacuum of space.

Assign a **damage** level for the environment. Characters will have to Resist this as normal at the end of each **period**, the delay before exposure to the environment has an effect. Any damage taken will not heal while the character is exposed to the hostile environment - it builds up until they can reach safety. The labels for these damage guidelines refer to their usual effect on an average person.

Painful/Tiring (desert)	3
Damaging (ordinary fire, underwater)	5
Deadly	8
Extreme (space, deep ocean)	10+

The **period** is usually from the standard Duration scale: 1 round (apply it in the book-keeping Phase), 5 minutes, 1 hour, 1 day. You can tweak it a bit: for drowning, for instance, it should be 1 minute.

The damage is of a particular **type** or, often, a mix of types. This is irrelevant to ordinary folks, but becomes very relevant to Metas who have Advantages and Immunities against particular damage types. As an example, take an unprotected space walk. This is about the most hostile environment there is, with suffocation and internal damage from vacuum (though explosive decompression doesn't



actually make you burst, you will swell up; pressure changes in your blood vessels will stop your heart, and if you try to hold your breath you'll rupture your lungs) plus extreme temperatures (120°C in sunlight and -100°C in shade) and radiation. In direct sunlight it might be 5 vacuum, 4 heat and 2 radiation, so someone with Heat Immunity would be Resisting 7 damage; in the shade of a planet or similar it might be 5 vacuum, 5 cold and 1 radiation, and Heat Immunity would be no help.

Natural or artificial armour may be ineffective against some damage types; Size is usually irrelevant; but Endurance works as normal for Resistance rolls.

In some environments, eg underwater or in zero gravity, many physical actions incur a Disadvantage.

If you fall unconscious from the results of a hostile environment you're in big trouble unless a helpful friend or Lucky Break comes along to save you. The character continues taking damage until the GM judges that they're effectively lost - probably the point at which no-one has any means of saving them and/or they rack up 10 Hurts/Injuries.

Poison

Drugs, knock-out gas and so on are counted under this heading; basically any physical agent that has a harmful effect on the body. They work rather like hostile environments, with a level of damage and a period of onset.

Period indicates how quickly the poison takes effect, in duration levels. The victim's first Resistance roll is made after the time indicated, which is a round to an hour. If the poison is still in their system further rolls are made after each further time period, until the victim has completely resisted the substance twice or three rolls have been made. So a poison might require rolls after 5 minutes, an hour and a day if the victim didn't receive medical attention or throw off the effects on their own. Clouds of gas or dust often require only one roll, as they disperse before a second is required - but effects might continue in an enclosed space. Although the first roll is made after the period indicated, discomfort will begin after around half that time.

Damage is Resisted as normal. The common range of potencies and their usual effects on an average human are as follows. Large or small doses

might raise or lower this number, usually by 1 or rarely 2.

- 2 Hurt
- 4 Injured
- 6 Unconscious and Injured
- 8 Dead
- 10 Certain death

Some poisons do straightforward damage; others might be designed to attack particular faculties, eg causing unconsciousness, paralysis, mental aberrations or blindness - the GM must interpret the damage results (see *Other damage types* box above).

For simplicity, most poisons have a single **delivery method** - eg swallowing, inhaling, injection or contact - and only work if they're delivered that way (other methods might just make the subject slightly ill - the GM might decide to give effects at half the usual potency). Most poisonous animals attack by biting, and if they are small any armour will stop the bite getting through - unless they find a way round it...

To concoct a poison - roll the average of Chemistry and Medicine with Ingenuity at BD 0. The first success gives a poison of Period 1 hour and Damage 2. Each further success can be spent to reduce Period one level or raise Damage 2 points (max 12).

Sample poisons

- Tarantula bite - 5 min, 1
- Black widow spider bite - hour, 4
- Scorpion sting - hour, 6 for yellow desert scorpion; 5 min, 4 for black scorpion
- Rattlesnake bite - 5 min, 6
- Cobra bite - large family of snakes, ranging from hour, 6 for the king cobra to hour, 10 for the black mamba
- Portuguese man-of-war - round, 5 (usually found in large groups, in which case the potency increases by 1-2)
- Scorpionfish, stonefish, etc - round, 8
- Mushrooms - mildly poisonous, hour, 4; death cap, hour, 8
- Drug overdose - marijuana 5 min, 4; amphetamines hour, 8; cocaine round, 8; heroin 5 min, 10
- General pesticide - hour, 8
- Cyanide - round, 10

THE GLADIATOR'S TOOLKIT

This section covers particular combat situations, actions and options in more detail.

Many of the rules in this section are optional, but it's suggested that you use as many as you can once you get the hang of the basics.

SPECIAL SITUATIONS

Instead of giving a long list of possible situations and the appropriate modifiers, it usually works like this: if the GM thinks the factor is significant enough, they assign an Advantage or Disadvantage. Examples could include fighting in dim light where all you can see is outlines (Dis to attack and defence); firing from behind cover (Adv to defence, or Dis to opponent's attack). Note the significance factor: one tenth cover isn't enough to earn a modifier, but half cover certainly is.

Surprise

Sometimes combat begins with a surprise attack - the defender was not aware of the attacker until they struck (often determined by opposed Stealth and Awareness rolls).

In the first round, attackers and any aware defenders roll Initiative normally, but the round begins with the attacker's action. Aware defenders might be able to defend; unaware defenders cannot. After it has been resolved, previously unaware characters roll initiative (taking into account any penalties from damage). A defender's first action is reduced, if necessary, to the Phase after the attack. Any extra actions are reduced so there's at least a one-Phase gap between actions - any that drop off the bottom of the scale are lost. On subsequent rounds Initiative works as normal.

Example: you're ambushed on Phase 6. After resolving the attack you get an initiative result of 14, which would normally give actions on 10 and 4. The first action is knocked down to 5, which means the second action has to be knocked down to 3.



If a target is **stationary** (e.g. unaware of an attack or immobilised) the Base Dice to hit them goes up to 3. The normal BD of 2 assumes there's a certain amount of footwork going on.

Unseen opponents

It's harder to attack or defend against an opponent you can't see - for instance in darkness or fog, if blinded, or simply if they're behind you. All attack and defence rolls in such a situation use Skill + Awareness, BD 0.

If you're in hand-to-hand combat with someone you basically know where they are and just have to change the rolls. Otherwise, the GM will ask you to roll Awareness with a suitable Skill (Investigation, Survival or Tactics) at BD 2 before giving information about an opponent. (Super-senses are very handy here, giving bonuses or allowing you to operate normally.) This will be opposed by their Agility + Stealth roll if they're being stealthy, possibly with extra Advantages for factors like distance. If you have net successes they suggest how much you know about the opponent(s) and act as a ceiling on successes from any combat rolls against them until you lock into close quarters fighting - any successes above that are lost. With no net successes you don't know they're coming. You can take a Full action to try sensing again.

ARMS AND ARMOUR

Armour

Protective clothing or natural armour reduces incoming damage by its rating before the Resistance roll is made.

Leather, padded or similar reinforced clothing	1
Most forms of archaic armour	2
Full plate armour (possible Disadvantage for quick, nimble or perceptive actions); Modern police or military armour	3
High-tech armour	4-6

Ranged weapons

Range

Effective ranges for various weapons are as follows. Within these ranges attack rolls are made normally.

Handgun, Shotgun (with shot)	50ft
Submachine gun	100ft
Bow, Crossbow	250ft
Rifle	500ft

Long-range shots. Firing at up to 2x base range incurs a Disadvantage to hit. Beyond that, up to 4x base range is the limit of accurate firing, with 2 Disadvantages to hit.

Point-blank attacks. Shooting at a target within 10ft gets an Advantage to hit.

Firearms options

Here are some guidelines if you want to keep track of **number of shots** fired for firearms. A revolver has a 6-round drum. An average pistol has a 10-round clip. An old rifle or sniper rifle has a 6-round magazine. A submachine gun or assault rifle has a 30-round magazine. An old shotgun has 2 shots, one per barrel, while a modern pump-action shotgun holds 6.

A **shotgun** that fires shot gets an Advantage to hit the main target, as there's more lead in the air. It may also hit targets next to the main one - roll Fluke Die to hit for any that seem appropriate. (This is balanced by short range compared to a rifle.)

Burst firing releases several rounds at once against a single target (for multiple targets, use a Multiple attack). A **short burst** of 3 rounds can be produced by an automatic pistol or submachine gun, and gives an Advantage to hit. A **long burst** of 10 rounds can only be produced by SMGs and upwards, and gives 2 Advantages to hit. Of course, these use up ammunition at a rapid rate.

Spray firing is like a long burst that fills an entire area with bullets rather than concentrating on a single target. An attack roll is made as normal, but the successes are then split as evenly as possible between everyone in the area (attacker decides where any odd ones go). Defence rolls are at a Disadvantage due to the amount of lead in the air.

Two-weapon firing (one in each hand, requiring at least one level of Firearms Skill to co-ordinate effectively) against a single target gives a single roll with an Advantage to hit. Firing against multiple targets is a Multiple attack. Someone with Average Strength can handle two handguns this way, but larger weapons require higher Strength (or might be too unbalanced to use this way at all).

Reloading

Some reloads are quicker than others. As a Free action you can nock a new arrow to a bow, change an ammunition clip or put one new bullet in a revolver cylinder. It takes a Full action to load a crossbow with a new bolt or completely reload a revolver.

Characters with high abilities may be able to pull off impressive tricks by including reloads as elements in Multiple actions. Reloads that are normally Free actions just take up a "slot" and require a positive dice pool. Those that are normally Full actions require a roll of Skill plus Agility for bullets or Strength for a crossbow, BD 2 - any number of successes will do.

All this assumes that new ammunition is ready to hand - if it isn't, extra time will be needed to get it.



MANOEUVRES

Called shots

Normally a melee attack goes for whatever location is available, and a ranged attack aims for the torso. However, it's possible to aim for a specific body part instead, for a particular result or to do more damage. A major body part like head or left leg brings 1 Disadvantage to hit; a smaller area like the heart or eye gives 2 Disadvantages. (It corresponds roughly with Size levels.) For certain targets a successful hit does +1 damage. You can also use it for tricks like shooting through a rope.

Charging

A charge is an attack made by building up momentum over a distance, by running, flying or whatever: essentially a deliberate Collision, with the attacker smashing right into the target. It's resolved like any other Collision, with both parties receiving damage. Properly applied by a character with, say, *Flight* and *Meta Strength*, it can be devastating - but it can be dangerous if you generate more MF than your *Hardness* can absorb, so it's not always wise to do this at your full speed.

The attack itself is made at a Disadvantage - it's a somewhat crude move and gives the target extra time to defend as you're incoming. Net successes

RUNNING ROUNDS

In a big free-for-all the GM counts down the Phases and different characters act as appropriate. However, zipping between characters this way can be confusing for players and the GM. It might sometimes be better to use **spotlighting** instead, just like they do in the comics, which gives each hero the chance to shine as a unique individual. Treat each PC and their opponent(s) as a separate fight, and go through an entire round in one fight before moving on to the next PC. You could think of them as sets of drawn frames. Once they've all had a round, the next one starts - they can continue with the same fight, or move on to another (perhaps to help a comrade) if they've downed their opponent(s).

The difficulty is in dovetailing rounds together. Don't be afraid to fudge things a bit to make the transitions work. "Unused" actions can be mopped up by noticing things, moving round the scene, or other stuff; similarly, you could allow a character to arrive in another fight without worrying about the exact number of actions it would take to get there. It might help to start by resolving the rounds for the PCs that are fastest and/or most likely to defeat their current opponent(s), because they're the most likely to try to jump into the middle of someone else's round. The real key to making this work, though, is for the players to work with the GM.

Modifying initiative mid-round

This doesn't happen often, but some powers can give an immediate boost or reduction in a character's reaction speed. The GM may rule that this only takes effect at the start of the next round (when it can be built into the Initiative roll), but if you want to apply the change straight away here's how.

Adding - levels of effect are split as evenly as possible between the subject's remaining actions, starting with the first action and always maintaining a 1-Phase gap between actions. The first action can rise no higher than the Phase after the power use. If the subject has no actions left or runs out of actions to spend levels of effect on, they can get a maximum of one extra action, effectively bought up from Phase 0 and subject to the restrictions above. Any levels of effect after that are lost.

Subtracting - levels of effect are split as evenly as possible between the subject's remaining actions, starting with the last action and always maintaining a 1-Phase gap between actions. In this case the maximum effect is to leave the subject with no actions that round.





after beating the target's defence are not added to damage. Instead, they help you do the move safely: each success after the first subtracts 1 from the damage you take from the collision.

You need a run-up of at least [1 + any power levels used] in distance levels in which you can move in a fairly straight line. If you use a lesser run-up, you can only use that many levels. If your attack roll misses you'll carry on in a straight line, using a Free action to stop and travelling the same distance as the run-up before you can do so. If there's anything (or anyone) in the way, use the Collision rules.

Disarming

To knock an opponent's weapon out of their hand, make an attack at BD 0. Add any net successes after defence to Base Damage as usual. If this total is greater than the target's melee Base Damage (ie Strength plus weapon size; guns count as small clubs) they lose the weapon. Use the difference between the two as a guide to where the defender's weapon ends up (about 10ft away on the flat per point). Any difference over 5 is damage to the defender instead. This move is usually followed by the defender using Free actions to re-arm.

Dodging

This is the standard defence for most characters, defaulting to Fighting (Unarmed) and Agility. (The GM might allow dodging as part of other Fighting Skills - fencing, for instance, certainly includes sidesteps.) It assumes the character has enough room to move around a bit, and suffers Disadvantages in cramped surroundings like a narrow corridor or messy store-room.

Dodges can include moving up to the character's Base Jump distance (3ft horizontally for an average person) at no extra cost in actions, as long the dodge roll succeeds. This allows those with enhanced jumping to bounce around a bit if they want. A move involving a lot of bouncing and dodging would be a multiple action.

Dodging multiple opponents is resolved using a single roll, applying Disadvantages based on the number of attacks, eg 5 opponents would give 2 Disadvantages. Any attacks that beat the result hit. If a single character attacks twice it counts as two attacks. A Horde (a group of identical low-level opponents, explained elsewhere) counts as a single attack no matter how many there are (their numbers are factored into their attack roll).

Evasive action

If you want to move through an area without getting hit by ranged attacks you can make a special defence as a Full action, bobbing and weaving as you go. Make half your normal active move (distance level - 1) and roll Agility + Athletics, BD 1. This applies to all attacks against you during that Phase, whether you were aware of them or not.

Focused actions

If you are able to spend 2 consecutive Ready Free actions sizing up an opponent without taking damage, getting distracted or taking any other action, you get an Advantage to attack and defence against that opponent in the following Phase. For instance, a character able to act on Phase 8 decides to hold that action till 6, using Free actions on 8 and 7 to Focus for an attack.

Of course, delaying an attack often gives an opponent an advantage too, but it may be worth the risk if your chance of damaging them is low or you want to strike decisively. Focusing for more than 2 Phases just maintains the Focus until you act; it doesn't make it any more effective.

Multiple actions

You can use a Full action to try a combination of several moves, which covers a lot of the stunts you see in action comics and movies. The benefit of this is achieving more in a short time, including cool stuff like a strafing energy burst or leaping into a group of opponents, striking out with every limb. The downside is that your actions are less effective. (This is different to single moves working against several opponents at once, usually with Disadvantages based on the number of opponents.)

The penalty for Multiple actions is one Disadvantage for each action in the set, applied to each roll.

So if you want to perform 4 actions, each roll will have 4 Disadvantages. Some other factors can offset these, eg Signature Moves.

- **Sequence.** If there's a logical order for making the rolls, use it. If an action fails, any later actions that depend on it are lost. If a roll is fumbled, the character loses their equilibrium and the whole sequence stops immediately, losing any remaining actions (Destiny could be used to reroll the fumble and keep going).





- **Free actions** can be included in a Multiple, counting towards the total number of moves. Some Free actions like drawing a weapon don't require a roll, but you should check that there would be dice to roll if you did. If the Multiple penalty takes Base Dice down to -2 and you have 3 or more Fighting (Sword) + Agility Advantages you can include drawing your sword in the sequence, but if you only had 2 Advantages you couldn't. Ideally a player will spot this sort of thing before starting to make rolls, but if they only discover it part-way through that action fails and whatever remains of the sequence carries on.
- **Presence Points** can't be used within a Multiple because your concentration is split rather than focused.
- **Multiple defence.** To simplify the situation of being attacked by several opponents, make a single defence roll with a penalty from the

Multiple Opponents table and count the result against all of them. (But if they're a group of functionally identical minions, use the *Hordes* rules instead.)

Example: Johnny Chow wants to draw his pistol, leap off the balcony to the chandelier, shoot Thug 1, Thug 2 and Thug 3, and swing off to the opposite balcony. That's 6 Disadvantages on each of the following: check Pistol dice pool, roll Athletics, three Pistol rolls, and another Athletics. The normal Base Dice would probably be 2 for the Pistol stuff and 1-2 for the Athletics, reducing to -4/-5. Johnny had better have some serious Advantages!

Parrying

This is the defence of blocking an incoming attack with your body or a weapon, rather than getting out of its way. Parrying is often a riskier defence than dodging, but it can be used in close quarters. If both characters have Meta Strength ordinary weapons used for parrying might break.

Counter. If the Parry successes beat a close combat attack's successes (not if they're equal) you may Rush an attack to the Phase after the parry (ie up to twice the attack's normal Phase at the cost of a Disadvantage). This lets you be sure of getting your blow in before the opponent gets another attack. You must have an attack available in the round, and this "spends" it. In fencing this is a riposte.

Superior attacks. Take a Disadvantage on the parry for each 2 full points by which the attacker's based damage exceeds the base damage you would have if you used the parrying weapon to attack. (Shields count as base damage 2 here.) This models defence against a big, powerful opponent; attempting unarmed blocks by moving inside the weapon's reach to block the attacker's arm; and so on. Your defence will be worse, making it more likely you'll get hurt trying it.

Multiple opponents. You can parry several attacks at once as a multiple Free action, with each parry as a separate element - so it soon gets quite difficult. A Horde still counts as a single opponent.

Ranged attacks. These can be parried if you're good enough: BD -2. Generally a dodge is a better option. Unless, of course, you have superhuman reflexes, a Signature Move and indestructible bracelets...

FINE-TUNING ZAPS

Here are some optional categories for giving ranged attacks with *Meta* powers more detailed characteristics. If you don't want the complexity, try just using Blunt/Sharp as for other attack forms.

Power attacks can be **Blunt** or **Sharp**, as described under *Slams*.

Most such attacks are **Blasts**, which have an effective range of about 100ft. Some are **Beams**, which are narrower and maintain cohesion over greater distances - up to about a mile.

Strong attacks have a Base Damage of the Add Level plus Presence Advantages. **Weak** attacks are less damaging, only using the Presence Advantages. Beams are often Weak attacks.

Examples: Using the Control Fire power would give a Strong, Sharp Blast. The Control Water power would give a Weak, Blunt Blast. Where Control Light is available as an offensive Add, it gives a Weak, Sharp Beam.





Shields give an Advantage for parrying hand-to-hand attacks, and 2 for ranged attacks (ie BD 0 instead of -2). You can assume all shields are the same type, about 2ft across. If you really want one significantly different, the GM might take the difficulty for ranged up or down a notch. Using a shield for attacks has a Disadvantage (usually on Unarmed) and it's treated as a small club for damage.

“Pulling” attacks

Great strength and/or skill (especially with a deadly weapon) can make it quite likely you'll seriously injure or even kill less powerful people. A character can pull their punch, strike with the flat of the blade, aim for a non-vital area, and so on to avoid this. There are two ways to do this, used separately or together.

Holding back. Where the Base Damage for an attack uses Strength or Presence, an attacker can use as few or as many of their Attribute Advantages as they wish, but must declare any reduction before making the attack roll. Base Damage from the type of weapon (or Add rating for a Power) cannot be reduced. So you can't alter an attack with a gun this way.

Fine control. After damage is determined but before the target Resists it, the attacker may reduce the damage by up to their attack Skill levels (eg a professional level fighter could reduce damage by 2), to a minimum of 1 damage. The character will aim to graze, injure or knock out, probably looking for damage at the top of those ranges on the table: 2, 4 and 6. If the attacker's Skill isn't enough to get down that far they'll have to take the increased risk.

Downsides. These more tentative attacks have their price: they don't normally cause Slam, regardless of successes; they're incompatible with Presence Points (if you use one you can't bring in the other); and of course they may just prove to be ineffective.

Throws

This refers not to judo-style flips (see *Unbalancing*) but to attempts to bodily hurl an opponent through the air. An attack is made normally, with the aim of grabbing the target rather than damaging them. If it succeeds the attacker's Strength Advantages become the Motion Force given to the

HARD TARGETS

Hurting yourself. If you make an unarmed attack on something (or someone) with higher Hardness than your own, you might hurt yourself - resist against damage 1 (or damage 2 if the Hardness difference is 5 or more). The GM should only bring this in if the situation very obviously calls for it - in most cases supers can pummel each other and their surroundings with impunity.

Excessive strength. Using an ordinary weapon with high Strength against a hard target is likely to shatter it on the first blow. Only imbued weapons can be used reliably with Meta Strength. If you want detail, use the rules for Collisions. (Use common sense for this, e.g. a person with high Hardness due to Strength and/or Size is less likely to break a weapon than one with Armour. Hitting structures and objects is the most likely cause of breakage.)

Attack accuracy. Fighting rolls are only needed to hit a target as effectively as possible. Objects usually have no vulnerable spots to aim for, so attack rolls are only needed if there's a significant chance of missing (in which case the actual number of successes doesn't matter) or the object does have vulnerabilities, like a complex machine, or defensive capabilities.

Damage to machines. Most objects are either broken or not, but complex machines including robots and suchlike can suffer impaired functioning instead. This works the same way as normal damage to characters. When constructing a Resistance roll it's more common to give auto successes for the external casing (which can be pretty tough) than bonuses on the roll, which would reflect damage-resistant internal workings. This is also modified as normal by Large or Small Size - a given blow will do more damage to a small machine than a large one.





target. Add on half of any applicable Gate Modifiers and Pool Points, rounding up. The MF may also be modified if the victim has unusual size or weight.

The results are handled using the *Collision* rules. (This assumes throwing in a very general direction. A precisely aimed throw is an action in its own right, so grabbing and throwing in one go would have to be a Multiple.)

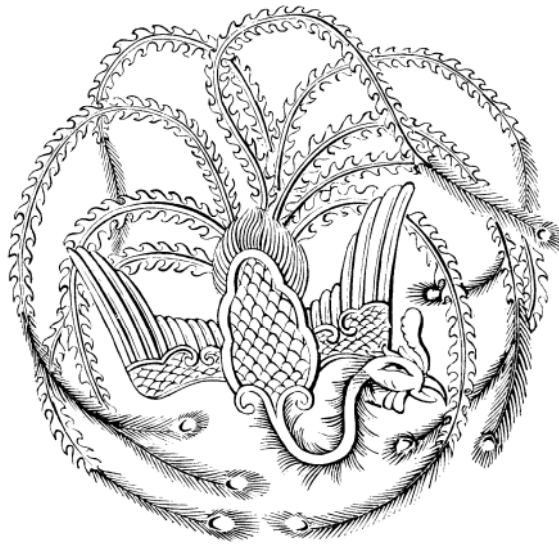
Unbalancing

This refers to sweeps, trips, flips, tackles and other non-damaging attacks aimed at making the target fall down. They are usually performed unarmed, but some weapons can be used. Unbalancing attacks can “Slam” if they’re good enough, adding Motion Force from the attacker to any the target already has.

Attack move. An attack proceeds as normal, but instead of the usual Resistance the target attempts to equal the final damage total with Strength +

Athletics, BD 2. If they do, they are impervious to the puny attempt, flip away unharmed, or some such. If they don’t, they fall down. Unless they’re standing on a cliff edge or similar, damage is usually not serious: a Minimal Collision (0-2 damage depending on Hardness of character and ground). However, most combat actions are at a Disadvantage while on the ground, and getting up again takes a Free action.

Counterattack move. Unbalancing can be used to avoid an attack and counter by “helping an attacker on their way”, but it requires a Full action. (It’s handy if you’ve been holding one, so this is a good tactic for smart fighters with high Initiative.) The Unbalancing roll acts as normal defence; if it’s not good enough the defender takes damage as normal. If the Unbalancer gets more successes they are unharmed and the attacker is out of control with any Motion Force they might have had. (Zero in ordinary hand-to-hand, in which case they fall down as a Minimal Collision, or more if they were charging. The) If the results are equal there’s a confused tussle and neither party is harmed.



POWERS

As stated before, there is no master list of all available powers. Most of that information appears in the Sources' programmes. Some of the more common or complex powers are collected below to save space. Details in the programmes take precedence over any general rules listed here.

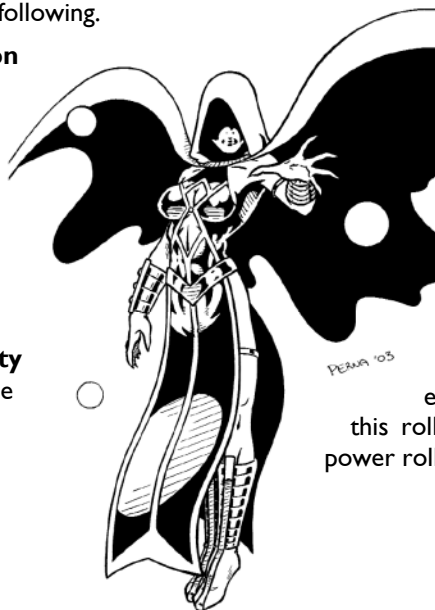
Notes on using powers

Meta powers actually work in very similar ways to ordinary actions - it's just that the effects are more spectacular. Sometimes it's possible to decide that the attempt simply works or doesn't without rolling any dice, if the character's attempting a minor or routine use of their powers and isn't rushed or stressed. If they attempt greater feats or are in the thick of combat a roll will probably be required.

Unless specified otherwise, you can only use powers on a target if you can sense it well enough to know its location. If someone is "somewhere on the other side of that door", that's not really good enough. Awareness rolls (see *Unseen targets* under *Advanced Combat*) or area attacks may allow you to get round this.

If it's an Add, the power's rating acts like a Skill - knowledge of how to use the power comes with it. The Attribute is usually one of the following.

- Actions focusing on **perception** use Awareness (seeing the probable future, picking up a scent, aiming a blast at a distant target).
- Actions focusing on **intensity** use Presence (summoning a furious storm, going as fast as possible).
- Actions focusing on **complexity** use Ingenuity (crafting believable illusions, shaping elements to detailed forms).



The same power could be used with varying Attributes in different situations. Other Advantages and Disadvantages may apply.

Ranged attacks with powers are explained under *Advanced combat* above. (Roll Add + Awareness to hit, Base Damage is Add + Presence.)

Here are some factors that can bring Disadvantages for power rolls. The GM should feel free to ad-lib these rather than referring to rules.

- Distance to the target. Most powers are limited to the range of the user's perceptions.
- Area, number of targets, or size of target. You could use the distance or size levels as a guide for this.
- Duration. Many power uses are instantaneous, and once they're done the world's ordinary processes take over - a fire without fuel goes out, an ice block starts melting. Giving an effect a duration lets it resist natural processes. This is usually measured in rounds or the standard duration levels, with each increase costing a success or bringing a Disadvantage.

Maintenance powers require at least a fraction of the user's attention to keep going, usually because they need constant adjustment. In game terms this takes a Free action each round, on a Ready Phase before you take any Full action. If you have multiple Maintenance effects running you can slow yourself down a lot. If the character loses consciousness all Maintenance effects are lost.

Most uses of a power on a living target should allow some attempt to resist or avoid it. This may involve dodge rolls, physical or mental Resistance or even Meta Resistance. Successes on this roll subtract successes from the power roll.

KEY POWERS

This is a non-exhaustive list of powers, collected together here because they crop up frequently and/or require longer write-ups. (Programmes contain many other powers explained on the spot.) Key powers are marked with a “*” in Sources’ programmes so you know to refer back here.

All-Knowing

This Switch can be used once per scene. The character meditates for a Full action, drawing on universal knowledge, and can ask the GM one question which must be answered “yes”, “no” or “maybe” (the latter is used for occasions when it’s impossible to give a definitive reply within the terms of the question).

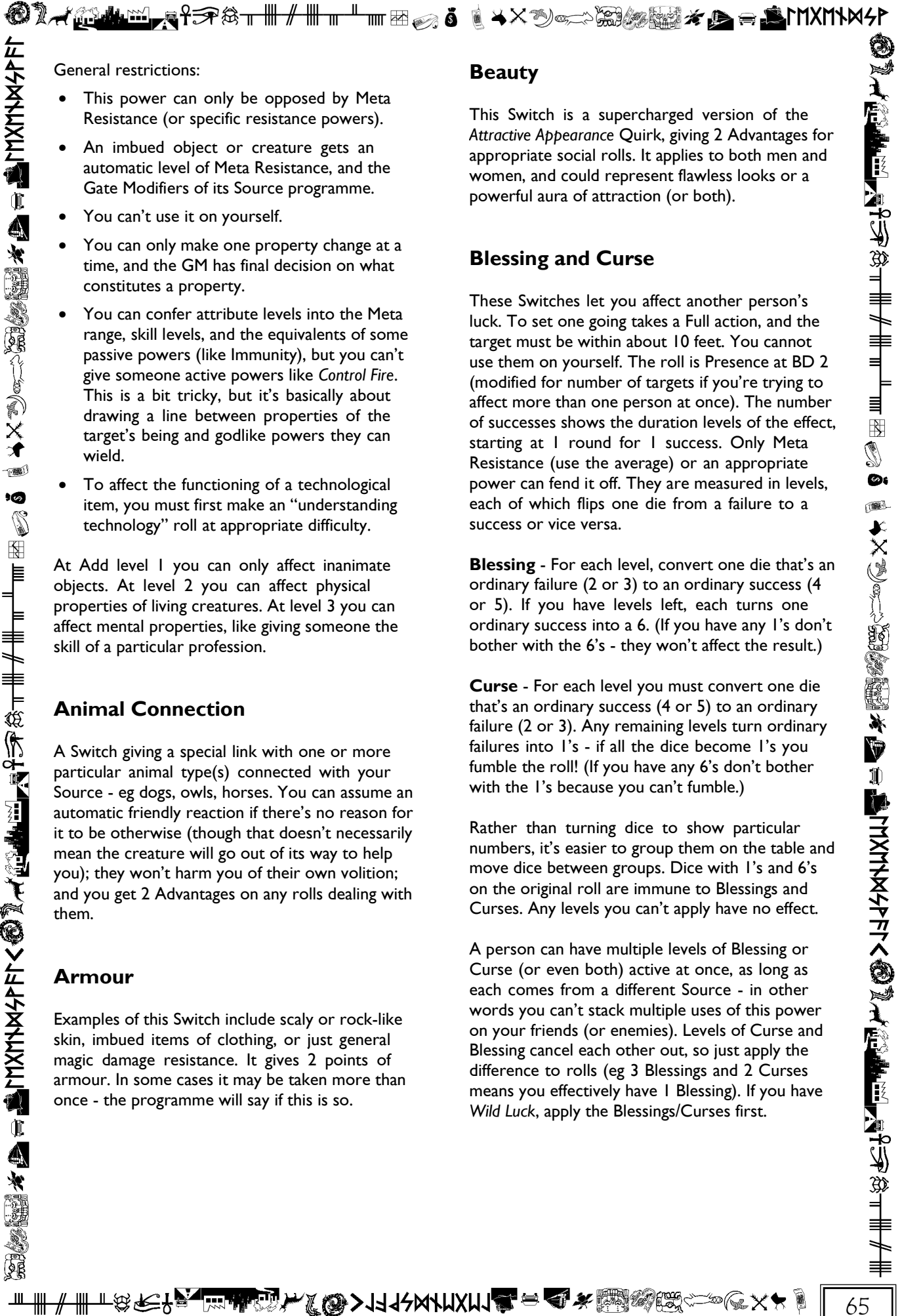
The GM can opt to make more detailed information available, perhaps in return for a Destiny Point - but obviously they need to make sure the plot isn’t short-circuited, so the availability of this option will be variable.

Alter Properties

This is a powerful Add, giving very wide scope for rewriting reality. It can alter the properties of an object or being - making metal railings brittle, making fire burn without heat, rendering explosives inert, making a weak person strong or a fierce animal docile, or even conferring new abilities. It doesn’t change the target’s shape or transform it into a different substance. (The railings, for instance, would still be iron - just weird iron.) The balance to this power is that its effects only last a short while before ordinary reality reasserts itself.

The roll is Add + Presence, BD 2, modified for range, number of targets, etc as usual. The base level works on a Small (2) target, and extra Size levels give Disadvantages. The first success gives 1 Intensity for 1 round; extra successes can be spent for extra intensity or extra rounds. (In many cases you won’t need to apply both.) A single level of intensity will add or subtract a property from a neutral position, though multiple levels may be needed to quantify the change if there’s resistance to overcome. To turn a property into its opposite takes 2 intensity levels. For instance, the GM could rule that a road surface is known for being hard and unyielding, so a character would need 2 intensity to make it a nice cushion for a fall.

Power	Type	Page
All-Knowing	Sw	64
Alter Properties	Add	64
Animal Connection (specify)	Sw	65
Armour	Sw	65
Beauty	Sw	65
Blessing	Sw	65
Breach the Wall of Death	Sw	66
Claws, Fangs, Horns, etc	Sw	66
Control (specify)	Add	66
Control Disease	Add	67
Craft Wonders	Add	68
Creation	Add	69
Curse	Sw	65
Effectiveness	Sw	69
Eloquence	Sw	69
Fast Heal	Add	69
Fertility	Sw	69
Flight	Add	70
Fury	Sw	70
Healing	Add	71
Immortal	Sw	71
Immunity (specify)	Sw	71
Intelligence	Sw	71
Knowledge of the Dead	Sw	71
Languages	Sw	71
Leaping	Sw	72
Lightning Reactions	Sw	72
Magic	Add	72
Master of (specify)	Sw	72
Master of Skills	Add	72
Master of the Gate	Add	72
Night Vision	Sw	73
Raven’s Fare	Sw	73
Reincarnation	Sw	73
Run Like a Horse	Sw	73
See Future	Add	73
See Righteousness	Sw	74
Sense Death’s Presence	Sw	74
Shapeshift	Add/Sw	74
Size	Add/Sw	75
Speed	Add	75
Summon Minions	Add	76
Swim Like a Fish	Sw	77
Time Distort	Add	77
Time Sense	Sw	77
Underworld Sense	Sw	77
Universal Energy	Sw	77
Warding	Sw	78
Wild Luck	Sw	78



General restrictions:

- This power can only be opposed by Meta Resistance (or specific resistance powers).
- An imbued object or creature gets an automatic level of Meta Resistance, and the Gate Modifiers of its Source programme.
- You can't use it on yourself.
- You can only make one property change at a time, and the GM has final decision on what constitutes a property.
- You can confer attribute levels into the Meta range, skill levels, and the equivalents of some passive powers (like Immunity), but you can't give someone active powers like *Control Fire*. This is a bit tricky, but it's basically about drawing a line between properties of the target's being and godlike powers they can wield.
- To affect the functioning of a technological item, you must first make an "understanding technology" roll at appropriate difficulty.

At Add level 1 you can only affect inanimate objects. At level 2 you can affect physical properties of living creatures. At level 3 you can affect mental properties, like giving someone the skill of a particular profession.

Animal Connection

A Switch giving a special link with one or more particular animal type(s) connected with your Source - eg dogs, owls, horses. You can assume an automatic friendly reaction if there's no reason for it to be otherwise (though that doesn't necessarily mean the creature will go out of its way to help you); they won't harm you of their own volition; and you get 2 Advantages on any rolls dealing with them.

Armour

Examples of this Switch include scaly or rock-like skin, imbued items of clothing, or just general magic damage resistance. It gives 2 points of armour. In some cases it may be taken more than once - the programme will say if this is so.

Beauty

This Switch is a supercharged version of the *Attractive Appearance* Quirk, giving 2 Advantages for appropriate social rolls. It applies to both men and women, and could represent flawless looks or a powerful aura of attraction (or both).

Blessing and Curse

These Switches let you affect another person's luck. To set one going takes a Full action, and the target must be within about 10 feet. You cannot use them on yourself. The roll is Presence at BD 2 (modified for number of targets if you're trying to affect more than one person at once). The number of successes shows the duration levels of the effect, starting at 1 round for 1 success. Only Meta Resistance (use the average) or an appropriate power can fend it off. They are measured in levels, each of which flips one die from a failure to a success or vice versa.

Blessing - For each level, convert one die that's an ordinary failure (2 or 3) to an ordinary success (4 or 5). If you have levels left, each turns one ordinary success into a 6. (If you have any 1's don't bother with the 6's - they won't affect the result.)

Curse - For each level you must convert one die that's an ordinary success (4 or 5) to an ordinary failure (2 or 3). Any remaining levels turn ordinary failures into 1's - if all the dice become 1's you fumble the roll! (If you have any 6's don't bother with the 1's because you can't fumble.)

Rather than turning dice to show particular numbers, it's easier to group them on the table and move dice between groups. Dice with 1's and 6's on the original roll are immune to Blessings and Curses. Any levels you can't apply have no effect.

A person can have multiple levels of Blessing or Curse (or even both) active at once, as long as each comes from a different Source - in other words you can't stack multiple uses of this power on your friends (or enemies). Levels of Curse and Blessing cancel each other out, so just apply the difference to rolls (eg 3 Blessings and 2 Curses means you effectively have 1 Blessing). If you have *Wild Luck*, apply the Blessings/Curses first.



Breach the Wall of Death

Characters imbued by gods of death often have access to this Switch, which offers some control of the crossing between life and death. This can involve a mental journey to a “place” which seems to lie between the physical world and wherever spirits finally go. Many believe it’s a hinterland of M-space, the dimension Sources come from. Those of a modern turn of mind call it “the dead zone”, and others liken it to the oriental Hell or Greek Hades. It’s generally described as a dim landscape inhabited by the spirits of the recently dead. Users of this power can meet each other here, and may have psychic battles, for instance if one wants to stop another bringing a soul back.

In the Dead Zone mental Attributes are used for “physical” actions: Presence serves as Strength and Endurance, Ingenuity as Agility. If you can find a reflecting surface you can will it to show images of the living world for a number of minutes equal to successes on a Presence roll, BD 2. Many inhabitants decide the heartache isn’t worth it. If you can find some sort of doorway or portal you can return to the physical world as an insubstantial, invisible spirit for 5 minutes per success on a Presence roll, BD 3 at night or 1 during the day, Adv in special times and places (eg a graveyard on Hallowe’en gives 2 Adv).

The power user can travel here, **seek a lost soul** and bring it back - preferably to a mended body. Roll Occult + Awareness, BD 0 to find the spirit; if it wishes to hide for some reason it may oppose this with Stealth + Ingenuity, BD 2. Once found, the roll to bring it back is Presence, BD (2 - body’s physical Injuries). Most subjects retain only the haziest memories of such an experience when they wake, like a dream. If the roll to bring someone back is fumbled, they don’t return to their body but are trapped in the physical world. Congratulations, you’ve created a ghost. Basically the power has amplified their ties to their old life, and these need resolving before they can move on.

It’s also possible to take those near death through and **send them on their way** - and in this case the roll is Presence, BD (Injuries) and it only works if the subject is willing.

One with this power can **find their own way** back if thrust through by death or coma, but only if their body is whole enough to contain a life force: roll Presence, BD (2 - Injuries) once per hour.

Claws, Fangs, Horns, etc

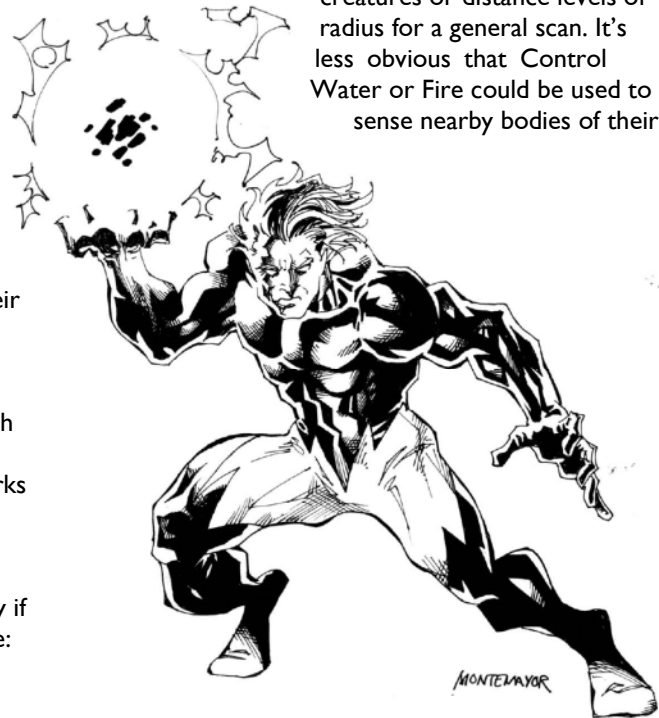
Characters with natural weaponry have a Base Damage of 1 for unarmed attacks rather than the usual 0 (plus Strength, Size, etc), and the attacks are Sharp rather than Blunt (attack successes over 5 add to damage instead of causing Slam). It might also give an Advantage for appropriate tasks, eg claws help with climbing.

Control (specify)

There are loads of specific Adds under this heading, such as Control Fire, Control Weather and Control Animals. There’s a lot of difference between them, but general rules are here - any really specific stuff is in the programmes. Elemental-type powers usually allow you to affect existing quantities of stuff (calming a storm, moulding a piece of stone) and to summon it up (hurling lightning bolts, filling a basin with water).

Perception

Some Control powers have perception-type abilities, and it’s up to the GM to define and limit these. For instance, it would be pretty sensible for Control Animals to allow you to sense the mood of animals, and maybe their surface thoughts and whether any are in the surrounding area - especially as this power’s more limited in flexibility than most of the elemental ones. Roll Add + Awareness, BD 2, with successes indicating the level of detail for specific creatures or distance levels of radius for a general scan. It’s less obvious that Control Water or Fire could be used to sense nearby bodies of their





element. You could allow it at BD 0: sense small concentrations of the element within [successes] distance levels, 2x that for large bodies, 3x for huge bodies. The player can take it as a Signature Move if they want to do it often.

Defence

If a character is attacked by a force or material that they can Control, they can use their power as a Free action to divert it. (Many elemental-type programmes also include the relevant Immunity, which works automatically.) Roll Add + Presence, BD 2, with successes acting as armour (ie subtracting from the intensity of the attack before the character has to Resist it). Variations like defending a larger area than just oneself are paid for with Disadvantages as usual.

Explosion

Some powers may allow this, subject to the GM's common sense (eg Control Fire would). The character creates a powerful burst of energy which spreads out from them in all directions. It works as an explosive area attack (see *Hazards and Harm*), and is channelled away from the user so they're not harmed. Roll Add + Presence, BD 2 for damage - for best effect take Free actions to prepare and use Pool Points.

Sheath

This uses the power to surround your body, or just part of it. So you could have a whole-body coating of fire or ice, or fists crackling with lightning. Use a Full action to set it up - roll Add + Presence, BD 2 for hands only (or similar), BD 1 for whole body, successes indicate maximum intensity. In subsequent rounds it's a Maintenance effect. The intensity of the sheath can add to the damage you do. If it's energy that would normally be a Sharp attack, unarmed attacks become Combination attacks (successes over 5 add to damage and cause Slam). The intensity can also act as armour by blocking incoming attacks (eg ice) or damaging attacking objects (eg fire). An attack of an opposing nature, eg water vs fire, may momentarily reduce the sheath's intensity, or even extinguish it altogether if its own intensity is greater.

MAELSTROMS

Control Weather is one of the most powerful abilities available, but it can be dangerous too. Having people running round distorting the world's weather systems can have catastrophic effects. If the distortion is great enough it can cause chaotic superstorms, usually called "maelstroms" (although technically this refers to whirlpools), in which weather conditions can clash and contradict each other or build to truly terrifying intensity.

In game terms this can be triggered if someone fumbles a *Control Weather* roll with 5 or more 1's, or if two or more Metas compete for control and get equal results of over 5 successes.

Maelstroms are much harder to quell than normal storms - you need power, skill and (unfortunately) proximity. The roll is *Control Weather* + *Presence* + *Geophysics Skill*, BD 0, and you need at least 5 successes to knock it down to merely bad weather. If you fumble the maelstrom becomes even more destructive, and 1 more success is needed for anyone to bust it (6, 7, etc). This may also happen if it's allowed to continue unchecked.

Control Disease

This is an Add like the other "Control" powers.

To cause a disease or ailment decide what effect you wish to produce. The basic roll is for a minor inconvenience, cast at close quarters. Extra distance levels of range or effect levels (see table below) bring Disadvantages. The effect is opposed by Physical Resistance and lasts [remaining successes] duration levels. Medical help can only tackle the symptoms, not effect a cure. Once the duration expires the subject starts recovering normally - the time this takes depends on what the effect was. The GM should determine the effects, like Disadvantages for physical activity or in social situations. Suggested combat penalties are given.





- 0 inconvenient or embarrassing conditions such as itching, wind or an unsightly boil
- 1 mildly painful and/or distracting conditions like cramp, an ulcer or a cold (-2 Initiative)
- 2 debilitating and/or painful conditions (-2 Initiative, Dis to all activity)
- 3 incapacitating conditions posing a real threat to the character's health, meriting bed rest and medical attention (-5 Initiative, 2 Dis to all activity)
- 4 life-threatening conditions - medical attention required (no action possible)

The power can be used on several targets at once using the Multiple Opponents Disadvantages, as long as all of them are the same kind of creature and all are afflicted with the same condition. To make the disease contagious so that it will pass from the subject to others gives an extra Disadvantage on the power roll, but anyone who catches it this way gets a normal version which can be treated medically.

To cure a disease with the power make a roll with the same Disadvantages from the table above. One success brings temporary relief; more brings a cure.

Craft Wonders

In some ways this is a combination of magic and technology. It allows you to build almost any powers into a crafted object.

The object itself cannot contain modern technology - for instance it won't work on an electronic robot, but it will on an articulated statue. The process of imbuing the powers is part of the creation of the object, and takes at least as long as indicated by the *Technology* rules, with a minimum of one hour. Once an object has been imbued with a set of powers they cannot be changed: they are part of it, so if you want different abilities you must make a new one. An object cannot be imbued by both this power and a Source (in a contest the Source will win, but they rarely claim other people's creations). This power can duplicate most of the abilities of imbued objects, but not their extraordinary durability.

To use the power roll Add + Ingenuity, BD 0 modified by object size. Successes are used to buy abilities for the object - each gets one level of power, usually a Switch or Boost. The process takes one hour for each success spent. The effect is permanent. (Yes, it's powerful, but this is

countered by the difficulty, the time required and other factors.) You cannot build in flexible Adds like *Control Fire* - you have to choose a specific application, eg "jet flame from nostrils", which functions as a Switch. Finally, note that the GM has final approval over what is allowable.

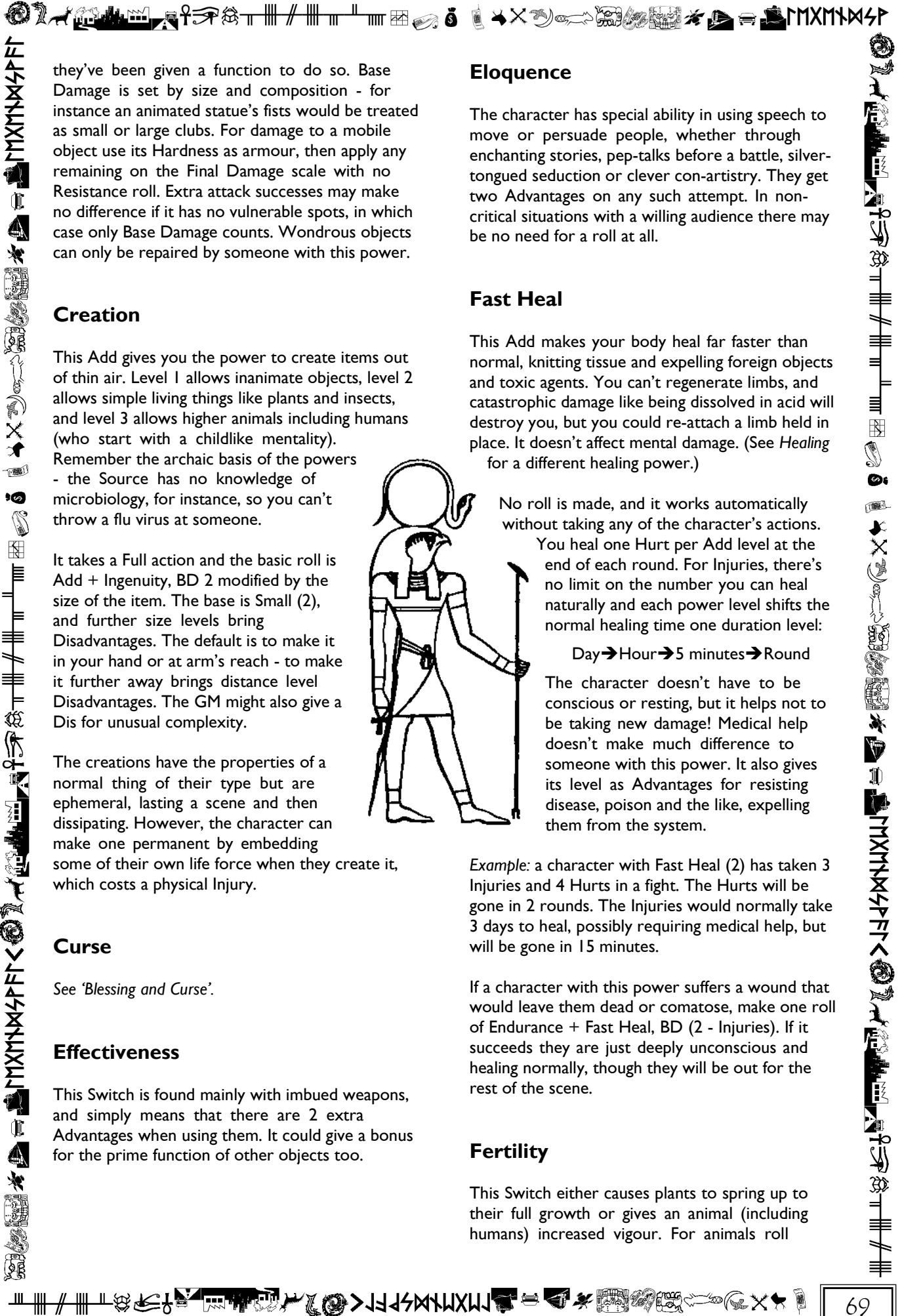
Here are some common uses for successes.

- Movement - the ability to get around by moving parts of the object, eg a chair could walk by moving its legs, but a bucket couldn't move unless you gave it *Flight*. Gives a set of physical Attributes at Poor.
- Consciousness - gives the object a rudimentary mind and the ability to act on its own initiative. The item gets a set of mental attributes at Poor. As well as a success, this costs a mental Injury, as it takes a portion of the user's life-force, and a Destiny point. The power of speech costs a further success.
- Attribute boost - each success raises one Attribute by one level, with an upper limit of Exceptional - mental Attributes can't be raised above the user's own.
- Skills - a conscious object can be infused with levels of Skills, up to a maximum of the user's own levels, with 2 levels per success spent (which can be in two different Skills).
- Objects with damaging powers like shooting flames have a general effect level of Base Damage 2. You can spend creation successes to bump these up further 2-point steps. Sometimes it may be more appropriate to use a fixed level of effect than an Attribute roll (Metas use their Presence and other Attributes because their powers link to inner strength, but that's not true for wondrous objects).

As well as buying powers, for each success you can "program" the item with one **task/function**. These can have simple qualifiers and conditionals based on ordinary perceptions and imprints from the user's knowledge, like "If Mr Malevolent enters the room, attack him" but not "if a Meta enters" or "if the owner of this object enters". "Do X on my command" is also valid. What the object does depends entirely on the functions it has, unless it has consciousness, and even then any tasks/functions set form the basis of its existence and give it purpose.

An object entering **combat** operates the same way as other characters for initiative, attacks, etc. Any Attribute it doesn't have at all is treated as one step below Poor, ie 2 Disadvantages - such creations often rely more on brute force than speed. They only bother to defend themselves if





they've been given a function to do so. Base Damage is set by size and composition - for instance an animated statue's fists would be treated as small or large clubs. For damage to a mobile object use its Hardness as armour, then apply any remaining on the Final Damage scale with no Resistance roll. Extra attack successes may make no difference if it has no vulnerable spots, in which case only Base Damage counts. Wondrous objects can only be repaired by someone with this power.

Creation

This Add gives you the power to create items out of thin air. Level 1 allows inanimate objects, level 2 allows simple living things like plants and insects, and level 3 allows higher animals including humans (who start with a childlike mentality). Remember the archaic basis of the powers - the Source has no knowledge of microbiology, for instance, so you can't throw a flu virus at someone.

It takes a Full action and the basic roll is Add + Ingenuity, BD 2 modified by the size of the item. The base is Small (2), and further size levels bring Disadvantages. The default is to make it in your hand or at arm's reach - to make it further away brings distance level Disadvantages. The GM might also give a Dis for unusual complexity.

The creations have the properties of a normal thing of their type but are ephemeral, lasting a scene and then dissipating. However, the character can make one permanent by embedding some of their own life force when they create it, which costs a physical Injury.

Curse

See 'Blessing and Curse'.

Effectiveness

This Switch is found mainly with imbued weapons, and simply means that there are 2 extra Advantages when using them. It could give a bonus for the prime function of other objects too.

Eloquence

The character has special ability in using speech to move or persuade people, whether through enchanting stories, pep-talks before a battle, silver-tongued seduction or clever con-artistry. They get two Advantages on any such attempt. In non-critical situations with a willing audience there may be no need for a roll at all.

Fast Heal

This Add makes your body heal far faster than normal, knitting tissue and expelling foreign objects and toxic agents. You can't regenerate limbs, and catastrophic damage like being dissolved in acid will destroy you, but you could re-attach a limb held in place. It doesn't affect mental damage. (See *Healing* for a different healing power.)



No roll is made, and it works automatically without taking any of the character's actions. You heal one Hurt per Add level at the end of each round. For Injuries, there's no limit on the number you can heal naturally and each power level shifts the normal healing time one duration level:

Day → Hour → 5 minutes → Round

The character doesn't have to be conscious or resting, but it helps not to be taking new damage! Medical help doesn't make much difference to someone with this power. It also gives its level as Advantages for resisting disease, poison and the like, expelling them from the system.

Example: a character with Fast Heal (2) has taken 3 Injuries and 4 Hurts in a fight. The Hurts will be gone in 2 rounds. The Injuries would normally take 3 days to heal, possibly requiring medical help, but will be gone in 15 minutes.

If a character with this power suffers a wound that would leave them dead or comatose, make one roll of Endurance + Fast Heal, BD (2 - Injuries). If it succeeds they are just deeply unconscious and healing normally, though they will be out for the rest of the scene.

Fertility

This Switch either causes plants to spring up to their full growth or gives an animal (including humans) increased vigour. For animals roll



Ingenuity, BD 2 - successes are spent first to remove physical Hurts and then to give an Advantage for active physical tasks for one round each.

Flight

In most superhero comics the power of flight is common as muck. In Legends Walk it's actually quite rare, as not many gods, heroes and monsters were known to fly. That gives you an opportunity to make it feel special again - after all, it's a gift humans have always yearned for.

This Add is usually the result of growing wings or possessing some item, though some Sources allow personal wingless flight. Wings only work if there's air to beat against, but wingless flight will work in space (if you can get there and manage to survive) and goes up a rating for determining speed as there's no air resistance. The first level of winged flight comes with *Wings* as a linked Disadvantage, as it's hard to conceal the character's Meta status (the wings may fold up under a big coat, but you can't hide them for long). This effectively gives it a lower points cost than wingless flight. In both cases, the power also gives the character the ability to see, breathe, maintain temperature, etc normally at high speeds in normal atmosphere.

Here's a guide to speed for the different levels.

- 1 Slow flight/gliding - 30-60 miles per hour, able to race garden birds and ordinary traffic
- 2 Fast flight - speed of the fastest birds, 150-200mph, able to race the fastest cars and trains
- 3 Blazing flight - able to break the speed of sound (760mph at ground level) and reach

up to 1000mph - with effort, able to race jet fighters

These ratings are similar to those for the *Speed Add*, and difficulties for racing various fast things can be found under that heading. With wings, speed rolls work with Strength; wingless, they work with Presence. This power doesn't give the various combat advantages that *Speed* does, except for increased movement and charging effectiveness, but it allows you to reach places no-one else can.

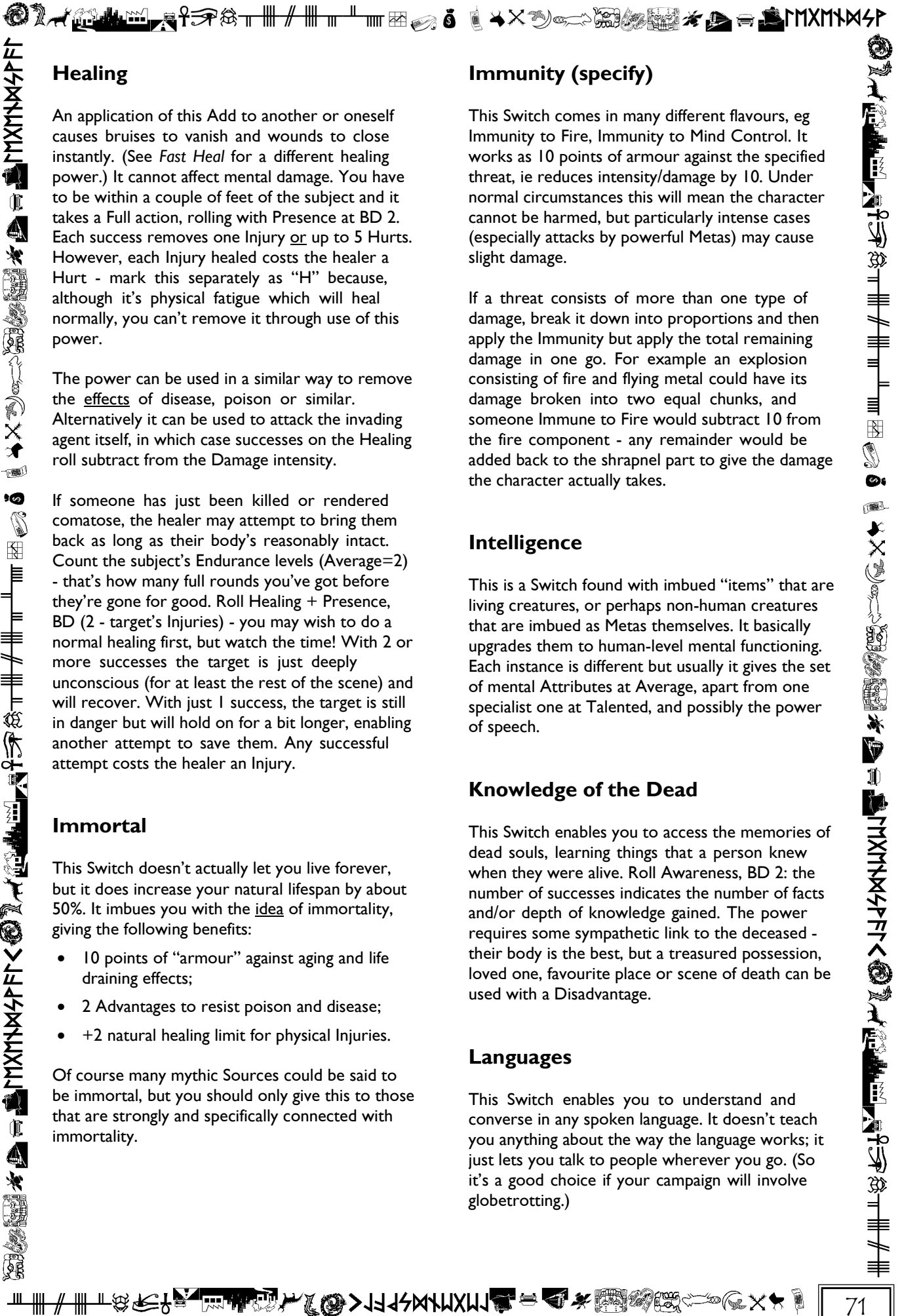
Flight makes the world a smaller place and facilitates international adventures. At Flight (3) cruising speed, London to Paris takes about 10 minutes; crossing the USA about 2½ hours; London to New York about 4 hours; and London to central Australia (the furthest you're ever likely to want to go) 10 hours. (Multiply these times by 5 for Speed 2 or 20 for Speed 1, includes short rest stops.) Pouring on the speed can cut a quarter off these journey times, but the character takes a Hurt for pushing a short trip (normal length up to an hour) or an Injury for a longer one.

Someone with Average Strength can just about manage to carry one other person with them as they fly, so long as nothing fancy is required. Higher Strength allows greater loads. Fliers should take reasonable precautions to ensure that passengers don't freeze or suffocate.

Fury

Your seething energy bursts forth to put paid to your foes. If you spend a Presence Point on a physical action, this Switch gives one additional level of effect (eg instead of 1 Adv on a roll you get 2). It's usually accompanied by obvious signs of furious vitality.





Healing

An application of this Add to another or oneself causes bruises to vanish and wounds to close instantly. (See *Fast Heal* for a different healing power.) It cannot affect mental damage. You have to be within a couple of feet of the subject and it takes a Full action, rolling with Presence at BD 2. Each success removes one Injury or up to 5 Hurts. However, each Injury healed costs the healer a Hurt - mark this separately as "H" because, although it's physical fatigue which will heal normally, you can't remove it through use of this power.

The power can be used in a similar way to remove the effects of disease, poison or similar. Alternatively it can be used to attack the invading agent itself, in which case successes on the Healing roll subtract from the Damage intensity.

If someone has just been killed or rendered comatose, the healer may attempt to bring them back as long as their body's reasonably intact. Count the subject's Endurance levels (Average=2) - that's how many full rounds you've got before they're gone for good. Roll Healing + Presence, BD (2 - target's Injuries) - you may wish to do a normal healing first, but watch the time! With 2 or more successes the target is just deeply unconscious (for at least the rest of the scene) and will recover. With just 1 success, the target is still in danger but will hold on for a bit longer, enabling another attempt to save them. Any successful attempt costs the healer an Injury.

Immortal

This Switch doesn't actually let you live forever, but it does increase your natural lifespan by about 50%. It imbues you with the idea of immortality, giving the following benefits:

- 10 points of "armour" against aging and life draining effects;
- 2 Advantages to resist poison and disease;
- +2 natural healing limit for physical Injuries.

Of course many mythic Sources could be said to be immortal, but you should only give this to those that are strongly and specifically connected with immortality.

Immunity (specify)

This Switch comes in many different flavours, eg Immunity to Fire, Immunity to Mind Control. It works as 10 points of armour against the specified threat, ie reduces intensity/damage by 10. Under normal circumstances this will mean the character cannot be harmed, but particularly intense cases (especially attacks by powerful Metas) may cause slight damage.

If a threat consists of more than one type of damage, break it down into proportions and then apply the Immunity but apply the total remaining damage in one go. For example an explosion consisting of fire and flying metal could have its damage broken into two equal chunks, and someone Immune to Fire would subtract 10 from the fire component - any remainder would be added back to the shrapnel part to give the damage the character actually takes.

Intelligence

This is a Switch found with imbued "items" that are living creatures, or perhaps non-human creatures that are imbued as Metas themselves. It basically upgrades them to human-level mental functioning. Each instance is different but usually it gives the set of mental Attributes at Average, apart from one specialist one at Talented, and possibly the power of speech.

Knowledge of the Dead

This Switch enables you to access the memories of dead souls, learning things that a person knew when they were alive. Roll Awareness, BD 2: the number of successes indicates the number of facts and/or depth of knowledge gained. The power requires some sympathetic link to the deceased - their body is the best, but a treasured possession, loved one, favourite place or scene of death can be used with a Disadvantage.

Languages

This Switch enables you to understand and converse in any spoken language. It doesn't teach you anything about the way the language works; it just lets you talk to people wherever you go. (So it's a good choice if your campaign will involve globetrotting.)



Leaping

This Switch simply multiplies your horizontal and vertical base jump distances by 4.

Lightning Reactions

Like the *Quick Reactions* Quirk, but this Switch gives +4 initiative.

Magic

This is a complex power, basically allowing the user to duplicate the effects of many other powers but at higher difficulty. It has its own section, immediately following this one.

Master of (specify)

This Switch is a Super-Quirk, giving 2 Adv with a cluster of similar Skills. However, unless specified only archaic Skills are included, eg no firearms or computer use. Common examples include Master of Weapons; Master of Crafts (weaving, pottery, metalwork, etc); and Master of Lore (knowledge Skills).

Master of Skills

This Add is the ability to gain access to any skill. Each level of Add acts as a slot that can contain one level of any skill - this is added on to any abilities you already have. Under stress, changing the skill in one slot takes a Free action and an Add + Ingenuity roll, BD 2. If you lose consciousness all slot contents are lost.

In most cases it only gives access to archaic skills: those that might have been available when the Source was worshipped. Modern stuff like computer use is beyond them. Sometimes, though, the *idea* of skill mastery can overcome this, as it does for Lugh.

Master of the Gate

This Add is rare but powerful - some Sources give a degree of control over the Gate between the worlds itself, allowing a character to affect the powers of other Metas.

It can be used with Awareness, BD 2 modified for distance, to **detect** whether a being or object is imbued. Give an Advantage for any of the target's active Gate Modifiers (or a Disadvantage for negative Aegis) as the stronger power is easier to detect.

It can be used with Presence to **close someone off** from the influence of the spirit world, reducing or removing their powers. This power cannot affect Normal ability levels, only those which draw from a Meta Source, and targets must be reasonably close (give an Adv for touch). The user nominates one ability at a time - you don't need its exact name, but you have to specify its basic nature, like "strength" or "resistance to fire". You can nominate an ability without knowing whether the target has it, but if they don't there won't be any effect.

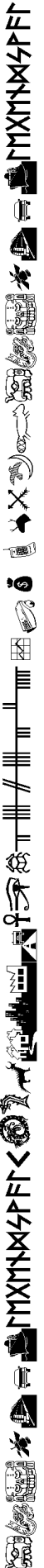
The roll is Add + Presence, BD 2. It's opposed by the target's Meta Resistance - use physical or mental depending on the power being blocked, or possibly the average if it doesn't fit either, with Gate Modifiers giving Advantages. One level of the ability is blocked for [successes] rounds. (If the target has *Master of the Gate* too they're automatically aware of this attempt and can make an opposed power roll. This power itself can not be closed off.)

The target won't necessarily be aware of this until they try to use the ability. If a PC's loss isn't immediately obvious the GM should ask the player to make an Awareness roll without saying why (or make it for them and tell them the result), BD [number of levels blocked]. On 1-2 successes they just feel a bit strange, on 3 or more successes they realise the power is gone, and on 4 or more successes they know the general direction the effect came from.

If this power is used on normal humans it produces a more subtle effect for a longer duration. Over a period of time their dreams will become less vivid, their creativity will be reduced and their life will become more lacklustre. Whether there's any game use for this is up to you. An entire community affected in this way for several weeks would certainly become an unpleasant place...

You can also **open up the Gate** to increase someone's powers, in a similar way. The ability specified has to map to one in their Source's programme, which means making reasonable guesses based on the character's knowledge of the target and abilities you've seen them use (no





looking up programmes in the rules!). Most Metas guard knowledge of their Source and powers as it could give an advantage to enemies. Again the roll is Add + Presence at BD 2. It gives one extra level in the ability for [successes] rounds. This can give a temporary power from the Source's programme that the character doesn't normally have.

Night Vision

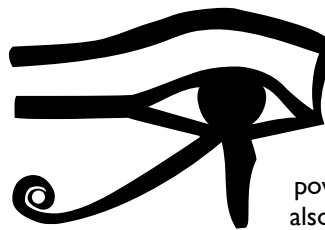
You can see normally in minimal light, though not in total darkness. This is a Switch.

Raven's Fare

This Switch lets you tap into the energy released by death and pain. At the end of each round during which someone gets Injured within your sight, you can either gain one Presence Point or heal one Hurt.

Reincarnation

This Switch means that if you die your remains disappear and you awaken elsewhere in good health, though without any Destiny or Presence Points. Power objects probably remain where you last had them, but will be replaced if necessary. The process takes a little time, usually at least a day. Different versions of the power may specify this, along with the sort of place you reappear (eg an unspoilt natural setting) and any other conditions. It's suggested that the GM not allow this to overcome simple aging; at least, not indefinitely.



Run Like a Horse

A Switch giving 2 Advantages for speed and stamina of running on land. You can reach about 30mph for short periods, and travel 50-75 miles a day over good ground.

See Future

This Add is the power that many GMs dread above all others, because if it gets out of control it can short-circuit the plot of an adventure. It doesn't have to be like that, though. This power provides a vision of the most probable future at the time it is used, so outcomes are never fixed and actions by

PCs or NPCs (known, unknown, or butterflies flapping their wings in Brazil) in the meantime can change the outcome. Visions are often vague too. The GM shouldn't give away things they don't want to, as long as players "get their money's worth" from using the power - the character should learn something that moves them forward. (This power can be used as a GM tool for giving unsought information and getting characters involved in things, but it's a technique that should be used sparingly.) There are two ways of using it.

Long-term use is the most familiar version. The character concentrates on a person, place or object and attempts to see future events. The roll is Add + Awareness, BD 2. The base period is a day - looking forward further than that gives an extra Disadvantage for each duration step. If the subject is not present but is known to the user, give a Disadvantage. If the subject is neither known nor present, the power won't work. As a rough guide give one piece of information for each success on the roll, starting with the most general and obvious.

Short-term use can give benefits in combat by focusing part of your awareness a few seconds ahead. You need to spend a Ready Free action adjusting your perceptions, and then it runs as a Maintenance effect. (Attempting a long-term vision will break it, as you can't do both at once.) If there's a question of order within a Phase, you can add your power level to your Initiative bonus. You also get a mini-Pool equal to your power level (1-3) which you can spend each round.

Each point gets you one of the following:

- 2 Advantages on a single defence or attack roll against a known opponent;
- avoid being surprised (by an ambush, invisible attacker, etc);
- glimpse one commonly used power or tactic of an opponent - takes a Free action if deliberate - it must be a move they're likely to make in the current combat, and you don't necessarily know what it is, just what it looks like - if you try it more than once per fight you're likely to see the same power again;
- see a major event that's about to happen, for instance if the roof's going to fall on you all while you're busy fighting - often happens at end of round.

For some of these the GM will have to offer a piece of information to the player, only revealing it if the player agrees to pay a point.





See Righteousness

This Switch allows you to detect the proportions of “good” and “evil” in a person’s soul and their general nature. For instance a serial killer would show up as “murder”, but most people would just have lots of little nameless bright and dark blotches - these are judged from a fairly absolute perspective (in keeping with the Source’s views), saying nothing about possible reasons for actions, eg killing an abusive husband would still be a dark stain of “murder”. The power requires an Awareness roll, BD 2, with successes indicating level of detail.

Sense Death’s Presence

With this Switch you can detect how much death there is in a person - someone who’s young and healthy is “bright”, someone old or with a terminal disease would be “dark”. You can also tell if someone’s likely to be killed by some means in the near future, usually a few hours, but there’s very little information about how. The power requires an Awareness roll, BD 2, with successes indicating level of detail.

Shapeshift

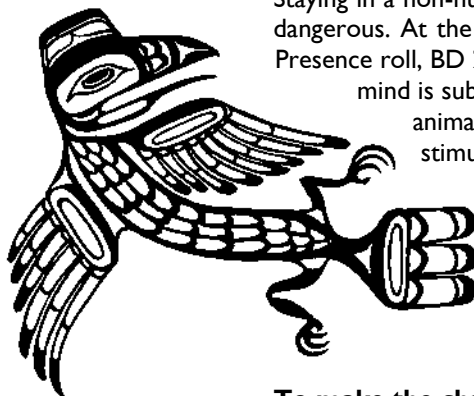
This ability allows the user to change their body to a different form. (Shapeshifting others requires Magic.) It comes in two flavours. As a **Switch** it allows you to change into a single specific shape (and back again) at will - it just takes a Free Action. As an **Add** in the standard version it gives the ability to turn into any known, living animal, including humans but excluding things like dinosaurs and bacteria - what god knew about them? - and supernatural creatures. Some programmes may specify a different range, eg only sea creatures or including plants. The rest of this description covers the Add version. The section in the GM’s chapter giving the abilities of some common animals will be useful for this power.

General rules

- Your physical body is that of an average specimen of the animal type, giving any physical abilities and limitations it has - eg night vision, flight, unable to breathe air. (Even if you can duplicate a supernatural creature you don’t get

its supernatural abilities.) Your mind remains the same, with echoes of the animal’s instincts.

- Your clothes and small held or worn objects can change with you (don’t get a headache wondering where they go) but large things like a well-stuffed backpack won’t. Objects imbued by your Source are automatically included.
- The change doesn’t “wear off” - it has to be removed deliberately.
- Hurts and Injuries are carried over between forms. A big cut on an elephant turns into a smaller cut on a human, but it’s still an Injury. Different forms do, however, have different abilities to resist damage in the first place.
- Unfamiliarity with the new form penalises actions which would involve a physical Skill, whether the character has any levels in it or not. Give 1 Disadvantage for a non-human shape, plus another 1 for a really strange shape (ie doesn’t have one head and four limbs). This just reflects basic co-ordination, and there might be further penalties if the form doesn’t have the physical equipment for the task.



Staying in a non-human shape for a long time is dangerous. At the end of each full day make a Presence roll, BD 2 - failure means the character’s mind is submerged in the instincts of the animal type. If they encounter some stimulus that reminds them of their true self they can roll Presence at BD (2 - days submerged) to recover control. Friends who realise the problem can be a huge asset here.

To make the change the basic roll is Shapeshift + Ingenuity, BD 2 (see below for modifiers), and it takes a Full Action to perform. If the roll succeeds, viewers see your shape twist and flow into the new one. Changing back into your own form requires a similar roll, BD 3 - normally it’s just a formality, but if you’re wounded it might take a couple of attempts. Getting only 1 success results in a less-than-perfect change, so that an observer might notice something odd about the form (you could end up as a human with the ears of a donkey!) but apart from that the number of successes doesn’t matter. If you fumble you’re stuck in your current shape for a scene or more, after which you can start trying again.

The following factors give Disadvantages on the Shapeshifting roll (one each unless specified otherwise), best given as lower Base Dice.



- Duplicating a specific individual or becoming a human of the opposite sex. (A small, fair-haired man could become a generic large, dark-haired man with no penalty.)
- Change of basic body shape or change of kind, like mammal to bird. A human can become a four-footed mammal without penalty - the basic head-and-limbs configuration is the same, though the posture changes. Changing to a four-footed reptile or a bird would give a Disadvantage. A change of kind and drastic change of body shape may give 2 Disadvantages - eg human to octopus would qualify.
- Each change of Size level (see *Legendary Physics*) gives a Disadvantage on the roll. Changing from human to a cat or bear gives 1 Disadvantage, a mouse or elephant gives 2 Disadvantages, and a fly or large whale gives 3.

Abilities of the form

- Size - see *Legendary Physics* for the levels and effects.
- Your Normal levels of physical Attributes are replaced by levels appropriate to the new form. These are in the human range, and often stay close to Average - Size has a more important influence on an animal's effective abilities. (Try imagining the animal altered to human size and asking yourself if any of its Attributes would be unusual.) If you duplicate a human form use its Attributes - for instance becoming frail Aunt June will give you Poor Strength. Attribute Boosts which are part of your Meta powers are kept, and added on top of these levels. This can lead to some rather unusual animals.
- Mental Attributes and Skills remain the same.
- Switches - animals often have abilities that work like Switches or, occasionally, Adds. For instance, many have at least one sense that is keener than a human's and one that's less keen. Other examples would include a cheetah's ability to run at great speed for a short time, an insect's ability to walk up walls, or flight. Just factor them in when required, as things you can simply do or as Advantages and Disadvantages for rolls.

Buying **Signature Moves** can be an excellent use of a shapeshifter's Destiny Points. Turning into a specific shape could be a Move, giving an Advantage on the shifting roll, and so could using a specific Skill in a specific shape (eg fighting as a crow), offsetting a Disadvantage.

Size

The ability to grow or shrink to sizes notably different from the human norm and then return to normal is an Add, but this version is rare. Small and Large are separate Adds, with the power level setting the Size level you can attain. Changing requires a Free action. If you change by more than 2 Size levels in one go you need to roll Endurance, BD 2 - if you fail take a mental Hurt from nausea and disorientation; if you fumble, take a physical Hurt as well. (Growing and Shrinking can be taken as separate Signature Moves.)

Having a **fixed non-human size** is a Switch, requiring one pick per size level, balanced by a single level of a linked Disadvantage, *Unusual Size*.

Information about the effects of Size levels is found under *Legendary Physics*. The relevant Size levels are summarised here.

Small (3)	1/2-1 inch tall; insect size
Small (2)	3-4 inches tall; mouse, sparrow
Small (1)	2-3 feet tall; cat, small dog
Human	4 1/2-6 1/2 feet tall; large dog, large eagle
Large (1)	10-12 feet tall; large bear, horse
Large (2)	around 30 feet tall, high as a house; rhino, elephant
Large (3)	up to 100 feet tall, high as an office building; large whale

Speed

This Add increases movement and reaction speed. Add 5x your Speed level to your Initiative bonus (eg Speed 2 gives +10). Levels of Speed also:

- act as Advantages for your defence rolls (not, of course, for surprise attacks);
- act as Disadvantages for targets to defend against your speeded-up blows;
- add to the distance level of an active move in a combat round - this often means a character with Speed can go anywhere in a fight scene in a single Full action - a Speed + Agility roll may be needed if there are lots of obstacles;
- increase the effectiveness of a charge attack (but watch out for collisions if you miss!).



With a little effort, the different levels allow sustainable movement speeds:

- 1 60-70mph - able to race ordinary motorway traffic
- 2 200mph - able to keep up with racing cars and fast trains
- 3 able to break the speed of sound at around 760mph, and reach up to 1000mph - can pace jet aircraft for short distances

Here are some sample difficulties for matching speeds with Speed + Presence rolls (all speeds are approximate). Over an extended race the GM may wish to replace Presence with Endurance.

- Ordinary town traffic, c. 30mph - BD 3, but normally no roll needed
- Motorway traffic, 60-80mph - BD 2
- Intercity train, 100-125 mph - BD 1
- Racing cars, high-speed trains, helicopters, 200mph - BD 0
- Commercial airliner, 600mph, BD -1
- Jet fighter, BD -2
- Handgun bullet - 1000ft/sec, 680mph - BD -1
- Rifle bullet - 2000ft/sec, 1370mph - BD -2
- Bullet from large fixed or semi-portable gun - 3000ft/sec, 2050mph - BD -3
- Energy - for Meta powers, treat a Blast as a bullet (handgun for solid stuff like earth or water, up to fixed for something like lightning) and a Beam as BD -4 - light, radio waves and the like are just too fast to race

Optional: the levels of Speed give the distance levels that can be run without a proper supporting surface with a decent run-up - eg across water or up a wall. This is made optional because it's particularly unrealistic, so the GM can choose whether to use it, drop it or adjust it depending on the flavour they're after.

Summon Minions

This is the power to summon a number of supernatural servants to do your bidding - usually to fight! This Add is a standardised version that can serve as a basis for specific instances.

The minions themselves are probably sprites serving the character's Source who can be sent through for a brief period, clothed in whatever fleshly or other form is appropriate, and then return when their task is done (or they're

dispelled). Their abilities vary depending on the Source, and can be specified along with their appearance when the power is listed. They often have suitable equipment, like archaic weapons - such items function normally but dissipate when the minion does.

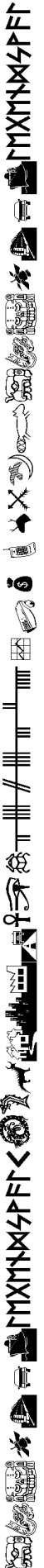
Summoning minions - roll Add + Presence, BD 2. Take a physical Hurt if successful as some of your life force is needed to give them substance. Each success gives one minion, lasting a scene, or possibly other funky stuff for that specific instance of the power.

Minion stats - they are Horde creatures. If summoning duration expires or they are rendered "down" by damage they fade away. They usually have two attributes at Talented and the others at Average. They are considered to have an occupation in their key function and a specialism in their key skill, so a warrior type would have Fighting 2 and perhaps 1 in Athletics and Riding. (Basically they're the embodiment of a certain limited idea.) Most types also have a couple of passive-type Switches, often Immunities or sensory stuff. (If you find it hard to come up with these, trade one for an extra skill level or both for an extra attribute level.) They do have basic personalities, eg they might be disciplined or battle-hungry. It's a good idea to work out their basic Horde combat stats and include these in the listing.

Here's an example.

- Add: Summon Minions (3)* (Servants of Hell - demonic-looking shirtless men with stubby horns, bearing spiked maces and tridents - End Tal, Awa Tal, Guard, Security 2, Fighting 1, Immunity to Death Powers, Immunity to Horror and Fear - Init 5, Weapon 3/2, Defence 1, Damage 2/4/-)





Swim Like a Fish

A Switch giving 2 Advantages for speed and stamina in the water, and for holding your breath.

Time Distort

No player character has the ability to travel in time. (The GM might choose to design an adventure where an NPC invents a machine to do it, but the "official" LW line is that it's impossible.) However, some Metas do have the ability to speed up or slow down the flow of events. The default use of this Add affects a single person, with the effect forming a sort of skin-tight shell. It can be extended to cover an area or to work on several individuals at once, both of which give Disadvantages to the roll. The field of effect moves with a person, but if used on an area it's static.

The roll is Add + Presence, BD 2. The first success gives 1 level of effect for 1 round, and extra successes can increase the duration (always measured in the main time-stream) or add effect levels. Each level of effect doubles or halves the rate at which time passes within the field (so 3 levels gives a factor of 8, 9 levels gives a factor of 512, etc). This can have a variety of uses, including getting a job done really quickly or mimicking suspended animation. Effect levels could also act as Advantages or Disadvantages, eg for sneaking past guards before they notice you're there. In particular, the combat effects per level are:

- plus or minus 3 to initiative;
- an Advantage or Disadvantage for the subject to defend against physical attacks;
- a Disadvantage or Advantage to defend against physical attacks by the subject.

A target's physical Meta Resistance opposes this power unless they consciously accept its use. If used on an area you can apply a more diffused opposition: take the highest Meta Resistance within it, plus the number of other Metas, minus the distance level of the area.

Odd things can happen at the interface between different time fields. Living beings crossing the boundary must make a physical Resistance roll against damage equal to the levels of effect (any levels of *Time Distort* you have give automatic successes). Creating a field covering part of a complex machine is likely to cause the system to go wrong. Sensory information is slowed down or speeded up as it passes through, such as hearing voices as a high-pitched buzz or seeing the flashing

of an alternating current light bulb. Someone affected has a normal experience of their own time - it's everything else that seems screwy - including their own bodily needs and aging process. If you try to do a day's work in an hour of real time you're still likely to get tired, and observers might see you going for a coffee every couple of minutes. A skin-tight time field round an individual does not include objects they manipulate - so if you're speeded up but your computer isn't it will seem horribly slow - though just moving objects is fine subject to normal physical limits, eg wielding a sword or controlling a car. Remember, ultimately Meta powers are magic and don't have to make complete logical sense!

Anyone with the *Time Sense* Switch will automatically detect a *Time Distort* field at close quarters under most circumstances. Sometimes an Awareness roll may be required. That power can also give an Advantage to resist the effects of *Time Distort* cast on the individual or of passing across an area interface.

Time Sense

This is a baseline Switch for Sources strongly connected to time. You always know what time it is (so for instance if you recover from unconsciousness you'll know how long you were out for). You can detect the use of time-based powers, and can get an idea of something's age - strong, basic impressions are often automatic, but subtle or detailed ones might require an Awareness roll.

Underworld Sense

A Switch giving you an extra sense that allows you to perceive shapes and motion in total darkness.

Universal Energy

Some people are attuned to the energy flows of the universe, and are able to go along with their current or channel them into powerful actions. Oriental mystics might call it *chi*, while Celtic kings would say it was the power of the land. Whatever, it is an extra Pool unavailable to most characters.

To find the base level, take the average of Ingenuity and Awareness. (Start at 1 as a baseline, and add half of the total Advantages, rounding up. For instance M2 and Talented gives $4 + 1 = 5$, halved to 3, plus the base 1 gives a Pool of 4.) This is the level in a healthy, natural setting - in an urban setting it





reduces by 1, and in a blighted area like a toxic waste dump it reduces by 2. (The character can feel the differences between these areas - for instance, if you blindfolded them and drove them from town into the countryside they would know.)

These Pool Points can be spent on pretty much any action, in a similar way to Presence Points: gives an Advantage, only 1 spent per roll. The GM has the right to overrule their use in specific cases.

Warding

A Switch that protects one defined area, like a building, cave, or hollow, against one specific type of harm, eg hand-to-hand weapons, projectiles, fire, magic, robots, animals, but not "people in general". It works a bit like an invisible force field. Roll Presence, BD (2 - area's radius distance levels beyond 10ft) - the first success gets 1 intensity level for 1 round, further successes add effect or duration levels. Each intensity level gives 2pts of "armour" against objects or forces. Creatures of a warded type that seek to enter the area must equal or exceed the intensity with Presence, BD 2 (there's no effect on passage out of the area). An area can have multiple active Wards, but only the strongest against a given harm type is counted.

Wild Luck

This Switch is sometimes bestowed by tricksters and gods of fate and chance. A character possessing it tends to do that bit better at rolls, and will occasionally produce incredible results - but the power, like its Source, is capricious.

When making rolls, any die that succeeds with a 6 can be rolled again for a possible extra success. Repeat this as long as 6's come up. This replaces the usual rule about giving one extra success if all dice come up with 6's. *Example:* a roll of 2, 4, 6, 6 gives 3 successes plus 2 re-rolls. The re-rolls are 5, 6 and the 6 is rolled again giving a 4. That's 6 successes altogether, from 4 dice!

If you're under any levels of *Blessing* or *Curse*, apply those before applying the *Wild Luck*.

MAGIC

"All magic is, is change."

The Doctor, *The Authority*
Warren Ellis and Bryan Hitch, Wildstorm Productions

Some gods were known for their mastery of magic, and some Metas have clearly inherited this ability. It's also said that some Normals can use real magic. Each practitioner and theorist has their own version of exactly what this means. Those who attempt scientific study of Meta activity use phrases like "manipulating the raw energy of M-space", that being the dimension where the Sources are said to dwell. Practitioners' responses range from amusement to contempt.

Someone using Magic can accomplish almost anything if they're good enough, but it's more difficult than using a specific power. In game terms Magic is like a Skill in many ways, as it's a body of knowledge and practice, but is treated as an Add for points cost because it's very powerful. There is no list of spells. The Magic ability measures how much magical lore a character has learned and limits their ability to apply it. They decide on the effect they want to produce, and attempt to cast an appropriate spell.

Magical styles

Each spell is described using a Change and a Subject from the following list - for instance turning oneself into a fish would be Transformation, Life; reading someone's mind would be Perception, Thought.

Change	Subject
Sympathy	Elements
Antipathy	Life
Connection	Thought
Control	Cosmos
Transformation	
Perception	

- **Sympathy** is help, building things up, expansion and protection.
- **Antipathy** is harm, breaking things down and limitation.
- **Connection** is relationships, communication and movement.
- **Control** changes the behaviour of the subject without changing its nature, and summons elemental forces.





- **Transformation** changes the form or substance of the subject.
- **Perception** gains information about the subject.
- **Elements** includes all non-living materials and energy, so it's used for weather effects, alchemy, etc.
- **Life** covers physical changes in living beings (plants, animals, etc)
- **Thought** includes all influence of the reason and emotions of living creatures, including perceptual illusions.
- **Cosmos** is a catch-all heading for metaphysical concerns "behind the scenes" of our daily experience of the world, including time, space, fate and the spirit realm.

These aspects of a spell are important because knowledge of magic is always gained within a **magical Style** or tradition, and different Styles focus on different aspects of magic. The purpose of Styles is to encourage players to use spells appropriate for their character. Magic gained from a Source is automatically the Style listed for that Source's pantheon (unless the programme says otherwise). Magic gained by Normals through training must be in a tradition of mystical knowledge (see examples below), and it is rare for them to exceed Magic (1).

A Style simply makes it easier to succeed at certain kinds of spells than others. There are two favoured aspects, often one Change and one Subject (try to do it that way first if creating a new Style, but use two the same if necessary) - they will give an Advantage when casting appropriate spells. There is also one aspect (from either side) that the Style avoids - it will give a Disadvantage. These are cumulative, so you could potentially get anywhere between -1 and +2 dice.

Here are some major Styles known to Normals in recent times.

Hermetic

The scholarly magic popular in Europe for the last few centuries. Its trappings include incantations, rituals, astrological and other symbolism, and alchemy.

Adv: Transformation, Thought
Dis: Life

Witch

The natural magic practised in many cultures, often concerned with helping (or harming) the people of the village. It makes much use of herbs, potions and natural lore.

Adv: Life, Sympathy or Antipathy (for "white" or "black" witches)

Dis: Cosmos

Shaman

The shaman is the intermediary between the people and the spirit world, concerned with seeing the truth behind everyday reality and using this knowledge to set things to rights. They often use ritual, chants, dance, drumming and power objects such as animal parts or the bones of ancestors.

Adv: Perception, Cosmos

Dis: Elements

Casting a spell

If a player wants their character to cast a spell, they must describe what they want to achieve and how they are going about it. Magic responds most reliably when invoked in a ceremony performed slowly and carefully using appropriate ritual implements. Doing it differently makes it much harder. Some players have a tendency to treat magic like artillery (probably encouraged by certain venerable roleplaying games) and not like... well, magic. So the GM should assume that they start at the most difficult level and award bonuses based on their description. Once the player has said what they want to do and the Base Dice have been set the player cannot go back and start scrabbling for extra bonuses.

The basic roll is Magic + Ingenuity, Base Dice 0. Preparing and casting the spell takes a minimum of a Full action, though the difficulty means that powerful spells are best approached through an extended ritual of some sort. The roleplaying element is included to encourage players to make magic feel magical - if they make it sound too much like science the GM may give a Disadvantage.

5 minute ceremony	1 Adv
<u>or</u> 1 hour ceremony	2 Adv
Appropriate ritual paraphernalia	1 Adv
General good roleplaying (style etc)	1 Adv





The GM decides what Change and Subject are involved in the spell, and the player modifies the roll according to the character's magical Style. (On rare occasions the GM may include more than two Style aspects, eg if a spell has really strong elements of more than one Subject. This may incur an extra Disadvantage for complexity.) If necessary the Base Dice are also modified for duration, extent, etc as for other powers. If the spell duplicates an existing power, use that as a guide. Otherwise the GM must use the system as a toolkit to get a solution that seems right. If you allow a character with Magic in your game be prepared to improvise!

If the roll succeeds the spell takes effect with a magnitude shown by the number of successes, which may be used to define aspects of the effect. If cast on a living target there's likely to be a Resistance roll. If the roll fails the effect doesn't happen. If the roll is fumbled the spell goes horribly wrong and the GM decides what happens. Usually this involves changing the Subject (spells often rebound on the caster) or the Change (slightly or completely, eg instead of turning someone into a bear they become a fish or burst into flame).

Notes on specific effects

- **Detecting magic** is possible with a bit of inspection of the suspected being, object or area. Use Magic + Awareness, BD 0. A marginal success just means the presence of an active spell is detected; more successes might show the nature of the spell or even something about the Style and Source of the caster.
- **Ranged energy** and similar attacks should be specified in elemental terms, like a gout of flame or a bolt of lightning, rather than just used as a general sci-fi energy weapon. It's a Weak attack - Base Damage is Presence, and does not include the Add rating. The flexibility of Magic means it's less effective at specific tasks than using "the right tool for the job".
- **No time travel!**
- No science fiction **teleporting**, but there are more magical alternatives. You can travel rapidly or get into inaccessible places by changing into something else, like a fast-flying bird or small insect. You could also turn into some elemental form, like a creeping mist or bolt of lightning. This would require both Life and Elements as Subjects. (After reforming, all affected make physical and mental Resistance rolls against the stress of the experience: damage 2 for the caster and anyone with a relevant Meta power, 4 for anyone else.)

Another option might be to pass between mirrors or fires at known locations.

- **Illusions** are not physically real, but people will treat them as such if they're plausible and well-crafted - we're not used to questioning our perceptions. A "damaging" illusion does half what you'd normally expect it to, rounding up, the result cannot be greater than unconsciousness, and Injuries fade in an hour. There's no such act as "disbelieving" - if a character has reasonable doubts about a possible illusion they must demonstrate that with their actions, like boldly stepping into harm's way. If the GM's convinced, they're immune to the damage. (Of course, it's unfortunate for them if the threat turns out to be real after all...) After being hit, a Wisdom roll may reveal that something's wrong. The GM may also allow an Awareness roll to spot flaws when first encountering an illusion. In either case it's BD 2, compared to illusion-casting effectiveness successes. Illusions have a duration, but can only change if the caster concentrates. Affecting more than one sense costs successes.
- Powers that can't be duplicated by magic include *Master of the Gate*.

Examples

A magician with the Hermetic Style (as listed above) wants to turn 5 pistol-packing thugs into harmless rabbits. It needs to be fast, so there will be no Advantages for extra casting time. The spell will use Transformation and Life; our caster gets an Advantage for the former, but it's cancelled by a Disadvantage for the latter. So Base Dice is still 0. Cribbing from the rules for the *Shapeshifting* power, we charitably say a rabbit's size is Small (1) giving 1 Disadvantage, with no penalty for change of kind or basic body shape. You could give a further 2 Disadvantages for affecting 5 people at once (from *Multiple opponents*) for a total BD -3. Alternatively, you could let them roll at BD -1 and transform 1 thug per success. You'd need to use the first version for targets with Meta Resistance, to compare the number of successes.

The same character wants to convince a security guard that he's properly authorised to enter a building. This spell is Control (no style effect) and Thought (1 style Advantage). Again, it's cast quickly - but the magician has previously consulted horoscopes to choose the proper day and hour for the attempt, so the GM gives an Advantage. The Magic roll is made at BD 2, and the guard must resist with Presence.





TECHNOLOGY

"I am using Mother Box to upgrade the functioning of your teleport device. The current technology is infantile and will not suffice for transtemporal travel."

Metron, *JLA: Rock of Ages*
Grant Morrison and Howard Porter, DC Comics

"How about that! One faulty fuse and a zillion electronic gizmos go on the blink around here!"

Hawkeye, *The Avengers #21*
Stan Lee and Don Heck, Marvel Comics

"I could accelerate the process, if you like - but if we rush things, then I'm afraid there is a small risk of you mutating into a giant insect..."

Hank Pym to Firestar, *The Avengers: Clear and Present Dangers*
Kurt Busiek and George Pérez, Marvel Comics

Those with intelligence, inventiveness and knowledge can create remarkable machines, materials, chemicals, drugs and other wonders. (The word "device" is used throughout this section, but it applies to all technological creations.) Although Metas' Sources have little understanding of modern technology, those with boosted minds and scientific training are able to accomplish great leaps forward. However, these innovations usually require extraordinarily talented people to produce and maintain them - it's hard to mass-produce things that only the inventor can understand. Difficulties for dealing with technological items are based on the **technology level**.

Tech level	BD
Common, widely understood	0
Widespread but specialised	-1
Cutting edge of normal tech	-2
Beyond scope of normal science	-3
Pushing boundaries of physical laws	-4

Existing devices

To **understand an unfamiliar device**, usually with a view to operating it, requires a roll of Wisdom plus your **highest** relevant technology Skill, difficulty set by the tech level. Knowing exactly what its function is gives an Advantage, and so does having seen a practised operator use it.

Base time period for this is 1 hour of study. This roll does not give a detailed understanding of the actual technology behind the device if it's beyond what you already know, but a good result might give a character an Advantage later if they try to duplicate the function in a device of their own.

To **repair a device** requires a roll of Wisdom plus your **lowest** relevant technology Skill, difficulty set by the tech level. (A suspended animation capsule, for instance, might require Physics and Biology or Medicine - if you had Physics 3 and Medicine 1 your skill for the repair would be 1. Some repairs will only need one Skill.) While you can deduce operation through raw intelligence, repairs are impossible without some relevant Skill. If you don't know the device's function there's a further Disadvantage, but if you built it yourself there's an extra Advantage. Base time period for this is a day per function being repaired.

For both of these you can **speed up the process** by spending successes from the roll, one per duration level (eg spending 2 successes to work out which buttons to push in just 1 round). The assumption is that competent characters will always do this if they can. In some cases you might want to put as many successes as possible into getting a result in record time, but the quality of the job will suffer. You must leave at least 1 success for accomplishing the task at all, but 1-success repairs are likely to fall apart again after a single use.

Creating new devices

This is where the fun stuff starts. The player describes the device they want their character to build and the GM sets the difficulty according to the highest tech level involved. The character must have at least one level of each **key Skill** required, though there is overlap. For instance, creating a ray projector that alters living cells would probably require Physics and either Biology or Medicine. The Skill level for the roll is the average of the character's levels in the key Skills (add together, divide by number of skills, round to the nearest whole number, halves round up). The Attribute for the roll is Ingenuity.

This assumes that the inventor has a good supply of both tools and materials to hand (a well-stocked lab or workshop). If this is not the case, give 1-2 Disadvantages. The inventor gets an Advantage if they've successfully built an item of this general





type before, for instance if they're seeking to improve on an earlier design or duplicate it with different materials.

Devices are built a bit like characters, starting with nothing and adding levels of different abilities. The first success on the creation roll means the device is built, to a basic standard (one level of the ability that's key to its function), and the process took one week. Further successes can be spent to improve the device or reduce the construction time. You can also take up to 3 Disadvantages for the device in return for extra successes to spend, as long as there was at least one success on the initial roll - see below for examples. If the roll failed the inventor spent a week in fruitless experiment, but can make another attempt. If it fumbled there's been some kind of lab accident appropriate to the work involved, like an explosion, creation of a hungry blob-creature or shrinking of a family member.

Spreading the work

It is possible to break construction into several chunks so that the inventor can spread it out over time or several people can co-operate on a project to finish it more quickly. Each piece has to have a defined function - eg for a tank one engineer could work on the vehicle part and another on the gun. Each has a separate creation roll, using the tech level appropriate to the piece plus 1 Disadvantage for tying it into an overall control system. Those with greater skill can concentrate on the parts that need them while assistants do the more routine work. You can use this for upgrading an existing machine - remake one of its systems, hopefully with better results, and replace the old one.

Spending successes

The first success is what enables the device to exist at all, buying one level of its key function. For a vehicle your first choice should be a level of Speed for a chosen mode of transport. For a weapon it would be the ability to cause damage. The device is normal for its type unless explicitly modified by spending further successes.

Device properties often have a general Effect level for purposes of damage, resistance, etc. Each success spent gets 2 points of this - eg a primitive (1 success) laser pistol has Base Damage 2.

If you want the device to have Attributes, like Strength to manipulate objects or Wisdom to think for itself, the first level bought is Poor.

Devices can mimic superpowers, within the limits of common sense modified by Legendary Physics and the style the GM wants for their campaign - keeping a vaguely realistic feel means outlawing the most outrageous device ideas. They get specific effects instead of versatile abilities (eg a blast of flame rather than the whole range of *Control Fire**) and these often don't depend on Attributes in the same way as with living beings. Different powers affect the difficulty of building the device instead of giving variable point costs.

Size

The default size for a device is whatever's usual for its type. If there is no "usual" then it's human-sized. Size changes can be bought as Advantages, and might even be taken as Disadvantages, like making a laser gun too big for one person to carry.

Fast construction

An accomplished engineer can put a simple device together very quickly. The base period is a week, but each extra success spent on speed lowers the construction time one step on the duration scale: a day, an hour, etc. Apply common sense - most devices will have a minimum time of 5 minutes.

Device types

Vehicles have to be given separate Speed ratings for each mode of transport: ground, air, water surface, underwater, space.

Robots - covers any sort of machine that manipulates objects or moves around on its own. It could be under the control of a remote operator or following an autonomous program. The Attributes of Strength and Agility are used here - the first creation success can buy Manipulation, which gives Poor in both. Endurance doesn't really apply to machines - they aren't subject to pain, fatigue, poison or disease - but Armour (2 pts per success spent, multiple levels add size and weight) can be useful to protect internal mechanisms. Robot systems can be given the equivalent of enhanced sense Switches, such as infra-red surveillance cameras linked to an alarm or weapons system to stop intruders. **Armoured suits** and exoskeletons are kinds of robot - their Strength and Armour levels add to the wearer's, and they can have weapon systems built in.

Computers are machines that process information. They can operate on their own, or be installed in a robot body. "Expert systems" allow the programmer to give the machine levels of Skill,



costing one success per level and not exceeding the programmer's own level in that Skill. There is no true thought involved here - just complex sets of response patterns. This is usually BD -2 to do. At BD -3 the programmer can start to create true artificial intelligence by giving the machine mental Attributes. The first must be Poor Wisdom, and in fact Wisdom is the most common one used. A machine lacking an Attribute that's absolutely required for a task generally can't understand the nature of the task even if it observes humans doing it (it might be able to reproduce works of art, but not appreciate them or create original works).

Device Disadvantages

These can be taken (if the initial invention roll succeeds) to give extra successes to spend, for instance doing a less thorough job in order to finish more quickly. You can take up to 3 per device. Here are the main examples, but you may be able to come up with others.

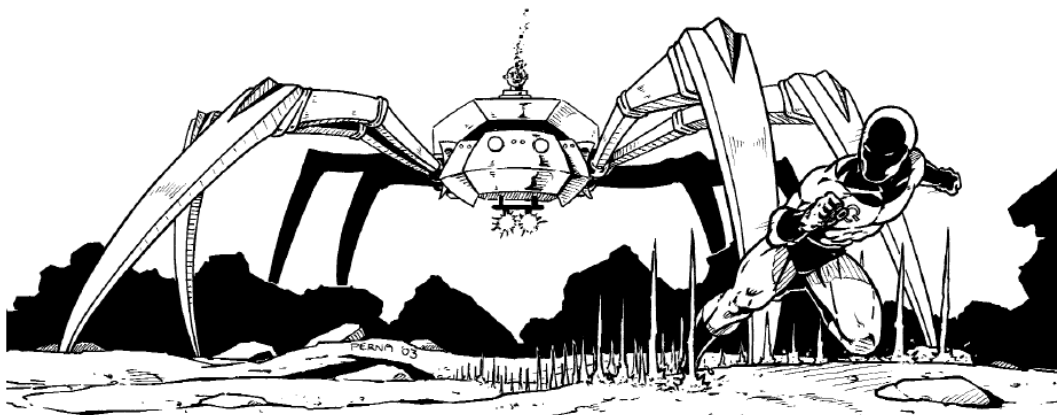
- Jury-rigged (after each use roll 2 dice - failure indicates the device has broken down but may be repairable - fumble indicates catastrophic breakdown, maybe including Base Damage 3 explosion, and beyond repair - can take this twice for one-shot use)
- Needs Charging (after each use roll 1 die - on a "1" the internal power source has run low and needs recharging from an external source for at least 2 hours - take twice for a one-charge battery)

- Side Effects (using the device has extra unintended effects, specified at the time of creation - something undesirable but not disastrous for the user and possibly bystanders - can take multiple times for multiple effects)
- Fragile (if the device takes any damage it stops working and needs repair)
- Temperamental (most devices can be used automatically if you know how, but this one requires continual adjustment and fine-tuning - roll Wisdom and appropriate Skill, BD 0, to use it - one attempt per action)

Machines in combat

Initiative for an autonomous machine is calculated in the same way as for any other character. They don't often have a high bonus. If the machine is being controlled directly, use the operator's Initiative but only count a Skill relevant to the operation (not usually a combat Skill).

Damage - an attack on a machine is reduced by the Hardness of its outer shell plus any Armour it has. Any remaining points are read off on the Final Damage chart, with effects analogous to those in organic beings. Machines don't normally recover from damage on their own - they need someone to repair them. They can be given special Advantages like Toughened Materials or Redundant Systems (moderate difficulty) which would give dice to Resist damage, or levels of Auto-repair (harder) which would act like the Fast Heal power.



POWER PROGRAMMES

This section contains power programmes for pantheons that are likely to be familiar to most readers. Supplements include more of these.

The presentation of the Sources tries to remain close to the original myths, while taking enough licence to make them work in the supers genre. In many cases there is little detail to work on anyway, even for quite major figures, and those that didn't have enough substance to make interesting character templates have been left out. The aim was to use them as inspiration for enjoyable gaming, but if it increases awareness and appreciation of our shared heritage that's all to the good.

One person's mythology is another person's religion, and the author does not wish to cause offence to any cultural group. One set of people may regard a god or hero as something remote in time and place, and fair game for fictional adventures. Others might regard the same figure as part of their own living tradition, and not appropriate for this kind of thing. This is a good reason for discussing guidelines before you set out and adapting your game accordingly, but hopefully it won't stop anyone playing altogether.

Dating conventions: to reduce discrimination in favour of one particular religion, the terms CE (Common Era) and BCE (Before Common Era) are used to denote years. (They do, of course, correspond to the Christian calendar, but at least we're not talking about "year of our Lord".)

Understanding the programmes

The Meta programmes are shopping lists on which you can spend a number of points. Most powers are described in the programme text, but those in the *Key powers* section above (for those that are particularly common or complex) are marked with a "*".

Aegis is fixed. You can't choose not to take it, but it doesn't cost anything.

At least one level of the **Required Power** must be taken, paid for with points as normal. You may choose whether to buy any further levels in that power, if it's a Boost or Add. Usually there's only one Required Power, but occasionally there might be more, in which case you have to buy at least one level of each.

Most powers are **Optional**, and you have free choice of which to take.

The number of **Disadvantages** you have to take depends on the character type: none for Heroes, 1 for Gods and 2 for Monsters. You may take up to 2 more for 2 extra points to spend each time.

The **power types** and their costs are described in the *Character Creation* chapter. The costs are repeated at the bottom of the character sheet.

Boosts and Adds have a bracketed quantity after them which sets a ceiling. You have to buy levels one at a time, at the usual cost, until you hit that ceiling and can go no higher. (The number does not refer to levels automatically gained, or points costs.) Boost levels build on the Normal levels. E.g. a Normal with *Talented Strength* takes a programme with *Boost: Strength (M1)*, and can buy up to 2 extra Strength levels. If only one extra level can be bought a Boost is labelled (+1).

If a Skill is listed, it gives one level of that Skill. Rarely, a programme may specify that a Skill can be taken more than once for multiple levels. Meta Skill levels can raise a Skill above 4.

It will usually be helpful for a player to have a printout of their character's programme, or at least of their key powers, to remind them (and the GM!) of how those powers work. Each power bolts its own rules on to the core mechanics, and nobody should be expected to remember them all - although most powers work in similar ways as far as rolls are concerned.

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GMs, you might find it useful to make this page available to players to help with choosing a Source during character creation.

(Other Sources appear in supplements.)

You may copy this page for personal use.



THE GREEK PANTHEON

The civilisation we know as Ancient Greece flourished between about 800 and 300 BCE, spreading across the Mediterranean and into Asia. Its basic unit was the *polis*, the community of a city and the surrounding countryside. Greek mythology is probably the best-known of all in the West. It was a shared body of ideas and stories, formed out of influences from various Mediterranean and Asian cultures, and what we know today is largely the result of Greek writers' attempts to organise it into a coherent scheme. Their gods covered different aspects of life like seafaring, marriage, storms, vengeance and craftwork, and most such aspects had their supernatural embodiment. They show a culture that evolved from primitive subsistence to sophisticated philosophy.

The world began with the void of Chaos. Then came Gaea, the earth, and Eros, the force that brings things together. Gaea gave birth to Ouranos, the sky. Together they begot the first generation of gods, the Titans, but Ouranos would not withdraw to allow Gaea to give birth until the Titan Kronos castrated him with a sickle. Kronos and his sister-wife Rhea ruled for a time. Fearing his position would also be usurped by his offspring, he swallowed them. But when Zeus was born Rhea tricked Kronos into swallowing a stone wrapped in swaddling clothes instead. When Zeus was grown he forced his father to vomit up his brothers and sisters. The younger gods defeated the Titans, exiling them to the underworld, and ruled from Mount Olympus.

As in many other cultures, the Greek gods were as flawed and fallible as humans. They were unfaithful to their partners, protected their favourites and inflicted terrible punishments on those who offended them. One might even say they were petty and cruel, and plagued mankind with suffering. The people honoured them with festivals and sacrifices, but looked to them for power and protection rather than moral leadership.

There is great overlap between the mythologies of Greece and Rome. One reason is that the Romans deliberately adopted myths from nearby countries to fill gaps in their own traditions. Also, as the legions spread around the world they tended to adopt local gods, often giving them Latin names. Sometimes these appealed to the ordinary soldier, and it made the provinces easier to govern than trying to stamp out local beliefs.

GODS

Aphrodite

Although originally worshipped further east, the Greeks adopted Aphrodite wholeheartedly as goddess of all aspects of love. Under her domain were pure and ideal love, marriage (women would pray to her for a husband) and sex, and representations of her show these different aspects of her character. Her attribute was the dove. Aphrodite's power was two-edged: her appearance could quell conflict and charm even the storms of nature to peace, but she also inspired unreasoning passion and desire which could lead to disaster.

The most common story of her birth says that when Cronus castrated his father Uranus the severed parts floated on the sea, producing a foam from which rose Aphrodite. She was the most beautiful of the goddesses, without the severity of Hera or Athena, and this sometimes led to resentment. In one case Paris, prince of Troy, was asked to judge between the three. He chose Aphrodite, who promised him the beautiful mortal Helen, wife of the king of Sparta, as reward. His abduction of Helen and the anger of the other goddesses led to the war with the Greeks and the destruction of Troy. Aphrodite actually tried to assist the Trojans in battle, but fled to Olympus as soon as she took a small spear wound - war and courage were not her forte.



She had a magic girdle, marvellously worked and embroidered, with the power to enslave the hearts of both gods and men. She was married to the ugly, lame Hephaistos (one story says he imprisoned Hera until the gods agreed to this). It was not a happy arrangement, and Aphrodite's lovers included Ares and Hermes. Once, Hephaistos arranged a cunningly fashioned net so that it fell over Aphrodite and Ares when they were together, then brought the other gods to laugh at their embarrassment. She also had affairs with several mortals. Her Roman counterpart was Venus.

Aegis

- Love (Adv when people around you are getting on well together, eg nightclub, wedding, brothel; Dis when they are in conflict, eg battle)

Required Powers

- Add: Supernatural Beauty (3) (each level gives a permanent level of the Advantage *Attractive Appearance*, which can be used on most social influence rolls - can also be used actively to make people and animals lose interest in what they were doing and focus their attention on the user - roll Ingenuity, BD 2, effect operates like an explosive attack, reducing over distance, and only works on targets who can see the user - opposed by mental Resistance, Adv if target would not normally be attracted to the user due to sexual orientation or species, net successes show rounds affected - any effect over 3 calms violent elemental forces in the area, subtracting from their Base Damage, Motion Force, etc)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Psychology
- Skill: Socialising
- Switch: Immunity to Rage* (10pts "armour" against attempts to induce anger or hatred)
- Switch: Pleasure (affects the target's pleasure centres, can be used in several ways - your version requires physical contact... of some kind... with the target - for a pleasant buzz to make someone more friendly and sociable roll Ingenuity, BD 2 opposed by mental Resistance, success gives an Advantage for everyone's social-type rolls involving the target, lasts a scene but cancelled if target Injured - for a restorative balm roll Ingenuity, BD 2 to

remove one mental Hurts per success - to overload someone with pleasure roll Ingenuity, BD 2 plus Presence as Base "Damage", opposed by mental Resistance, successes act as Initiative penalties for 1 full round or 5 min if Resistance fumbles, but target also gets an Advantage to Resist pain and injury)

- Switch: Shapeshift (Dove)*
- Add: Control Emotions (3)* (friendship, love, desire, jealousy - can be taken in a "girdle" item if wished, but internal as standard to make up for the small range of powers available)

Disadvantages

- Dangerous Love (a romantic episode with you gives your partner the Disadvantage *Unlucky* for a day)
- Judging on Appearances (you prefer to associate with beautiful people, and often have a Dis for discerning hidden motivations which are not related to love)
- Unwanted Admirers (your beauty tends to attract attention wherever you go, bringing gifts, marriage proposals, and sometimes obsession)
- Vain (you do not tolerate negative comments about your appearance, and work against anyone who may rival your attractiveness)

Apollo

Apollo was primarily a god of light and of the sun (though he wasn't the sun itself - Helios filled that role). He was the son of Zeus and the Titan Leto; Artemis was his twin sister. He had titles like "fair" and "brilliant", and liked high places. He made crops ripen and drove off pests. The rays of the sun can be deadly or beneficial, so Apollo was an archer who brought sudden death from afar (his arrows were said to be long-ranged and infallible, forged by Hephaestus) and a healer who drove away illness.

Apollo was also the god of divination and prophecy - he had many oracles where his judgments were delivered by priestesses, the most famous being at Delphi. In addition, he was a shepherd and protector of livestock, and a musician, the god of song and lyre. He could be ruthless, tolerating no insult to himself or his cult. The assembly of gods all rose in respect when he entered. He was shown as a young, well-built man of idealised beauty. He was often accompanied by the Muses. The Romans worshipped Apollo under the same name.



Aegis

- Light (Adv in direct sunlight; Dis in darkness; neutral at night under decent artificial lighting, etc)

Required Powers

- Add: Control Light (3)* (call sunlight into an area to illuminate or dazzle, or drive it away to bring the darkness of night - a dazzling attack is rolled with Presence, BD 2, “unconscious” means short-term blindness, “dead” means permanent blindness - can be used to throw bolts of light/heat energy as a Weak Beam attack - cannot be used to create detailed visual illusions)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Boost: Awareness (M1)
- Skill: Archery
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Medicine
- Skill: Natural History
- Switch: Beauty*
- Switch: Distance Vision
- Switch: Master of Music*
- Switch: Sun Immunity* (the usual 10 point “armour” against light attacks, 5 points against heat)
- Add: Healing (2)*
- Add: See Future (3)*

Disadvantages

- Glowing Eyes (your eyes glow when you’re emotional - could be taken multiple times for a permanent effect, or to extend it to your whole body, or to have it happen whenever you use your Adds)
- Golden Eyes (eyes appear as featureless metallic gold)
- Vengeful (any perceived offence merits swift and effective punishment - you may have to roll to avoid retaliating)

Ares

Son of Zeus and Hera, and god of war in the aspects of blind courage, brutal rage and destruction. His name probably means something like “destroyer” or “avenger”. He ranged the battlefield accompanied by Fear, Fright and Strife. Ares was not popular, regarded with terror and having a limited role. He was a furious god, fickle and brutal, enjoying nothing but strife, and little liked by the other gods. There was particular dislike between him and Athena, a warrior goddess representing cool, intelligent courage, who bested him on the battlefield at least once. In fact Ares was often beaten, by gods and mortals. He had an affair with Aphrodite, and her husband Hephaestus trapped them with a fine but unbreakable net and exposed the lovers to the ridicule of the gods.

Ares was shown as a bearded warrior wearing a helmet with a tall crest and heavy armour, or later as a young man with a spear and helmet. His Roman counterpart was Mars who, in contrast, was held in great esteem as the father of Rome’s founders and patron of military expeditions.

Aegis

- Battle

Required Powers

- Switch: Master of Weapons*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (M1)
- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Intimidation
- Switch: Fury*
- Switch: Raven’s Fare*
- Switch: Shapeshift (Wolf)*

Disadvantages

- Lust for Battle (Dis to resist being taunted or persuaded to fight)
- Unlikable (Dis for social interactions involving pleasantries or etiquette)
- Unstable (prone to vicious mood swings - Dis to resist mental influence)
- Vicious (roll Wisdom to “pull” a blow or avoid attacking a fallen or helpless opponent)



Artemis

The goddess of the hunt, wild places and beasts, Artemis was the twin sister of Apollo, linked to the moon. As soon as she was born she went to her father Zeus and begged for a bow, arrows and hunting clothes. She chose to live in a wild, mountainous region with a retinue of nymphs, spending her time hunting. She was represented as a young, slim woman with a somewhat severe face, hair drawn back, wearing a short tunic and usually accompanied by a deer, dog or other animals.

The arrows of Artemis brought sudden death to those who displeased her, but she could bring prosperity to those she favoured. She made a rule of chastity, and enforced it on her companions. When the huntsman Actaeon saw her bathing she changed him into a stag and set his own hounds on him - they tore him to pieces. One unfortunate neglected to sacrifice to Artemis on his marriage, and found the bridal chamber full of snakes; others were punished for killing sacred animals. Other incidents echo the ruthless and vindictive character of the goddess, but perhaps this is linked with a life away from civilisation. However, song and dance also pleased her, and she led the choir in Apollo's house. Her Roman counterpart was Diana.

Aegis

- Wilderness (Adv in unspoilt natural settings; Dis in heavily built-up areas, factories, etc)

Required Powers

- Skill: Archery (may be taken twice)
- Skill: Survival

Optional Powers

- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (M1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Natural History
- Skill: Singing
- Skill: Stealth
- Switch: Night Vision*
- Switch: Run Like a Horse*
- Add: Control Animals (2)*

Golden Bow

- Switch: Effectiveness*

Disadvantages

- Authoritarian (you tend to order people about, and expect them to obey - poss Wisdom roll to take a back seat or follow orders)
- Chastity (Dis for flirting, seduction, etc)
- Vengeful (any perceived offence merits swift and effective punishment - poss Wisdom roll to let it go)

Athena

She had a double character, as a warrior and goddess of crafts, industries and prudent intelligence. Her birth was... unusual. Zeus swallowed his wife Metis when she was about to give birth, because he had been warned that her children would dethrone him. Shortly he was tortured by a headache, and to cure him Hephaestus split open his skull with an axe. From the wound burst Athena, full-grown and armed. She became Zeus' favourite child, and he indulged her so much that the other gods became jealous.

As a warrior - probably her oldest aspect - she was the protector of towns and cities and the patron of Athens. She represented cool, intelligent courage rather than the blind fury of Ares. As goddess of the arts of peace she was the patron of architects, sculptors, spinners and weavers, protector of horses and oxen. Her wisdom brought the title "the Foreseeing" and made her goddess of counsel and the Assembly. Her emblem was the owl. She was shown with a long robe, helmet and spear. She bore the aegis - a sort of breastplate, or a short cloak or shield - accounts vary. It was made from the skin of a she-goat which had suckled the infant Zeus (or the skin of a giant Athena had killed), bordered with snakes and/or golden tassels and bearing in the centre the head of the Gorgon Medusa.



Athena fought against giants and took part in the battles at Troy, where at one point she defeated Ares. She valued bravery and virtue, and helped and protected a number of heroes including Hercules, Perseus and Odysseus. She was sworn to chastity, and defended her honour fiercely against gods and mortals. Athena taught people how to tame horses and harness chariots, invented the



potter's wheel and made the first vases. She particularly excelled in weaving and embroidering cloth, and turned the mortal Arachne into a spider for daring to challenge her. She was sometimes said to be the inventor of the flute and a goddess of health. Her Roman counterpart was Minerva.

Aegis

- Guardianship (Adv when helping those in need; Dis when acting for personal gain)

Required Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (M2)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (M1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Medicine
- Skill: Tactics
- Switch: Master of Crafts*
- Switch: Object Sense (by concentrating on an object which you can see in some detail you can tell whether it is imbued - an Awareness roll, BD 2, may reveal information about the nature of its powers, often one power per success in the order Adds, Switches, Boosts, Skills but always at the GM's discretion and phrased in quite general terms)
- Switch: Shapeshift (Owl)*

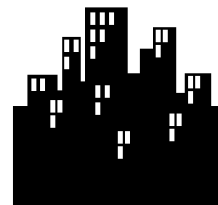
The Aegis (can be used on a worn item or a held, shield-like item)

- Switch: Armour* (for worn items - can be taken up to 3 times)
- Switch: Effectiveness* (for shield-like items, used for defence rolls)
- Switch: Mask of the Gorgon (a horrible face, apparently made of black liquid or vapour, materialises on the front of the item, afflicting those who can see it clearly with paralysis - roll Presence, BD 2, successes become a directional explosive effect opposed by mental Resistance, net successes indicate rounds of paralysis - failing the Resistance roll gives a mental Hurt, and fumbling it gives a mental Injury, accompanied by nightmares, fear of the dark and such until removed)

- Add: Shield (3) (projects a dark-coloured energy field that resists all forms of physical damage - the default version appears and is used as a physical shield, taking just a Free action to create, projected and movable up to arm's length, with armour strength of Add + Presence - you can also extend it to cover an area as a Full action maintenance effect - roll Add + Presence, BD 2 with successes spent for distance levels of an arc that protects against a directional attack, +1 for a bubble that encloses the area completely, or to add to protection - you can only have one shield existing at a time - if damage exceeds its armour rating the shield shatters and dissipates, remaining damage may harm those behind it, and the user takes a mental Hurt)

Disadvantages

- Aegis Signs (tied to an object with Aegis powers - shadows move across it from time to time - the ease of noticing this depends on the situation and how long it's observed)
- Chaste (Disadvantage to flirting, seduction, etc)
- No Childhood (echoes of Athena's strange birth stop you recalling your childhood memories - Wisdom roll required to recall specific facts - could potentially be taken twice to remove memories of your early life altogether)
- Patron of Heroes (if someone brave or virtuous makes a reasonable request, you must make a Presence roll if you want to deny it)
- Proud (can't tolerate challenges to your abilities - possible Wisdom roll to avoid responding)



Dionysus

The god of vegetation, wine, drunkenness and ecstasy. The most common story of his birth has him as the son of Zeus and Semele, daughter of the King of Thebes. A disguised Hera persuaded Semele to beg her lover to show himself to her in his true majesty. Semele was burned to ashes, but her unborn child was saved by Zeus and enclosed in his own thigh until it was ready to be born. Jealous Hera struck his foster parents with madness and Zeus saved him again, to be brought up by the nymphs and satyrs of the mountain and forest.

When he grew up Dionysus discovered the grape and the art of making wine, and journeyed widely to spread this gift to mortals, giving vine-stocks to those who received him well. Unfortunately the wine itself often resulted in offensive and even murderous behaviour by those he gave it to, and Dionysus also cursed with madness those who offended him, leading them to tear their own loved ones to pieces. He frequently had affairs with women he met on the way. His followers (mainly women, called maenads) celebrated orgiastic rites, which led to him being received with distrust in new places. He sometimes controlled plants: crossing a river on a cable of vine shoots and ivy tendrils, winding vines and ivy round the mast and sails of a pirate ship, or striking the land with sterility.

In early art he was depicted as a mature, bearded man with a crown of ivy, but later he appears as a beardless, almost effeminate youth. He carried the *thyrsus*, a staff tipped with a pine cone, and used it as a weapon against the Giants. He often had an entourage of satyrs, centaurs and nymphs. His Roman counterpart was Bacchus.

Aegis

- Ecstasy (Adv where people are acting without inhibition, eg a nightclub; Dis where people are following rigid patterns of behaviour, eg a military base)

Required Powers

- Switch: Pleasure (affects the target's pleasure centres, can be used in several ways, take appropriate Dis for multiple targets - for a pleasant buzz to make someone more friendly and sociable roll Ingenuity, BD 2 opposed by mental Resistance, success gives an Advantage for everyone's social-type rolls involving the target, lasts a scene but cancelled if target Injured - for a restorative balm roll Ingenuity,

BD 2 to remove one mental Hurt per success - to overload someone with pleasure roll Ingenuity, BD 2 plus Presence as Base "Damage", opposed by mental Resistance, successes act as Initiative penalties for 1 full round or 5 min if Resistance fumbles, but target also gets an Advantage to Resist pain and injury)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Staff/Rod)
- Skill: Natural History
- Skill: Psychology
- Switch: Delirium (distorts the target's senses, balance and coordination, like being drunk in a house of mirrors - straightforward mental attack, using Ingenuity, BD 2 plus Presence as Base Damage, opposed by mental Resistance - "unconsciousness" or "death" indicate one-scene or long-term liberation of the target's greatest fears, buried desires and resentments, and darkest impulses, removing inhibitions and more civilised instincts, forcing characters with behaviour-type Disadvantages to play them)
- Switch: Immunity to Toxins* (10 pts "armour" against natural poisons, drugs and intoxicants - alcoholic drinks won't do more than give you a pleasant buzz unless you really overdo it - 5pts against synthetic ones)
- Switch: Liberation (with a successful Presence roll, objects that are imprisoning or restraining you will move to give you freedom, eg ropes will loosen and fall off, locks will open - won't work on things with no moving parts, like a solid rock wall, though a fall of loose rocks might tumble out of the way - Base Dice 2 for a simple restraint, down to 0 or even beyond for larger, stronger or more complex ones)
- Add: Control Plants (1)*

Disadvantages

- Fascinating (people hang on your words, follow you around, etc due to some strange, addictive magnetism - it's hard to get privacy or stay unnoticed)
- Needs Drink (take Need Hurts until you consume a good measure of alcoholic drink)
- Vengeful (if wronged or slighted you will go to unusual lengths to get revenge - roll Wisdom to let it go)



Hades

A brother of Zeus, after the defeat of the Titans he received the rulership of the underworld, the home of the dead (which later took his name). His name means “unseen”, and he was also called Pluto from the word for “riches” as he received buried treasure, presided over minerals and influenced crops. Little is known about him. As Hades, a god of terror, mystery and the inexorable, he received little worship, though as Pluto he was more popular. He owned a helmet or cap that could make him invisible. He left the underworld to kidnap Persephone to be his bride, but after protests by her mother Demeter it was agreed that she would spend half the year above ground and half the year below with Hades (leading to the changing of the seasons).

The souls of the dead that he ruled were insubstantial and lacked most of their former courage, intelligence and personality. A few favoured souls occupied themselves as they had in life, and a few particularly wicked ones suffered eternal torture. In later thought all souls were judged and sent to Tartarus or the Elysian Fields. Hades was served by the Keres, demonic figures which finished off mortals fated to die and carried them down to the underworld, and the Erinyes (also known as the Furies), three goddesses who pursued wrongdoers, especially those who killed family members. His Roman counterparts were Orcus and Dis Pater.

Aegis

- Underworld (Adv below ground; Dis in high places)

Required Powers

- Switch: Underworld Sense*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Boost: Awareness (M1)
- Skill: Geophysics
- Skill: Intimidation
- Skill: Security
- Skill: Stealth
- Switch: Breach the Wall of Death*
- Switch: Knowledge of the Dead*

- Switch: Pass Through Earth (you can pass through stone, soil, or other basic natural minerals - roll Ingenuity, BD 2, maintenance effect - Dis for synthetic materials like refined metals, glass and concrete, materials like plastic and wood cannot be passed through, though thin layers like wallpaper don't impede progress - move at walking speed - don't need to worry about things like breathing while using the power, but will still be affected by heat etc - fumbling the roll leaves you trapped in the substance for a scene, or lost, or taking a physical Injury at the GM's discretion)
- Switch: Sense Mineral (could be used to find a specific kind, identify a sample or do a general sweep - usually requires an Awareness roll, successes indicate distance levels radius of sensing where applicable)
- Add: Create Shade (3) (turns people into “walking dead” who take no action except to maintain their bodies with food, shelter, etc and obey the commands of their “creator”, showing no interest in anything else - roll with Presence, BD 2 modified by number of subjects, opposed by mental Resistance, net successes indicate duration levels - fumbling the Resistance roll makes the target a shade indefinitely, needing specialised mental or spiritual talents to restore them - victims do not have access to Pool Points; Ingenuity and Presence are reduced one level, though attempts at mental control have to overcome the Hades influence; they get an Advantage on Resistance to injury due to reduced sensation, but an increased sensitivity to bright light, giving Dis to Resist)

Cap or Helmet

- Add: Invisibility (1) (acts as a Switch, costed as an Add - makes you undetectable by sight, but doesn't block other senses - roll Ingenuity, BD 2 to activate, successes show duration levels)

Disadvantages

- Black Eyes (your eyes are dead black, with no white or iris visible)
- Inexorable (you pursue a goal single-mindedly and ruthlessly until it's achieved - if working on something important you may have to make Wisdom rolls to remember and/or make time for things like eating and family commitments)
- Ruler of the Dead (it's your duty to see that the dead are in their proper place - may require a Presence roll to bring someone back or avoid sending an earthbound spirit on)



Hephaistos

He was the personification of terrestrial fire, including the volcano - but in its beneficial aspects, which allow metalworking and foster civilisation. He was the divine blacksmith, the master of the mechanical arts who taught them to humanity. Hephaistos was usually depicted as a robust smith with a beard, hairy chest and powerful neck, holding a hammer and tongs.

The son of Zeus and Hera, he was born with twisted legs, making him lame and drawing the derision of the other gods. Hera threw him from Olympus into the sea to avoid the shame of such a child. He was taken in by nymphs, and later sent Hera the gift of a golden throne which gripped her with invisible bands when she sat in it. His price for releasing her was to have Aphrodite, the most beautiful of the goddesses, for his wife. At one point he tried to protect Hera from the anger of Zeus, and was flung from heaven for his trouble. After that he obeyed his father, and helped by striking Zeus' head with an axe to allow Athena out.

On Olympus Hephaistos built palaces for the gods and a splendid dwelling for himself, where he had his great workshop. He also had underground residences on Earth. He was assisted by various beings, including the giant, one-eyed Cyclopes. His creations included golden statues resembling living girls which aided him in walking; the golden throne, sceptre and thunderbolts of Zeus; the fearful aegis, later given to Athena; the winged chariot of Helios; the arrows of Apollo and Artemis; Demeter's sickle; armour and weapons for various heroes; beautiful works of art; and bronze bulls whose nostrils spurted flame. His Roman counterpart was Vulcan.

Aegis

- Craft (Adv in places where objects are made; Dis in places where objects are destroyed or allowed to decay)

Required Powers

- Switch: Master of Crafts* (any craftwork, eg forging, sculpting or carving)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (M3)

- Skill: Construction
- Skill: Mechanics
- Switch: Immunity to Fire*
- Switch: Mould Metal (under your hands metal temporarily becomes soft and easy to work, allowing you to shape it or fuse pieces together, working on an area up to about human size at a time - roll Presence, BD (6 - Hardness), might require an Ingenuity roll for the actual shaping - metal becomes warm, though not hot enough to cause damage, and cools naturally - doesn't work on imbued objects)
- Add: Control Fire (1)*
- Add: Craft Wonders (3)*

Disadvantages

- Addicted to Beauty (you seek to acquire beautiful objects - or even people - to surround yourself with, and may sometimes have to roll Wisdom to avoid pursuing them)
- Lame (even if your legs appear completely functional, you still have difficulty using them - Disadvantage for running, fast footwork, etc, and halves your movement per action - can be taken twice)
- Poor with People (Dis to most socialising-type activities)

Hermes

This son of Zeus was the god of travellers, guiding and protecting them. In ancient times voyages were mainly undertaken for trade, so he became the god of commerce, persuasive eloquence, profit (making him the patron of both tradesmen and thieves) and games of chance. He was also the messenger of Zeus and conducted the souls of the dead to the underworld. Hermes was a tireless runner, honoured by athletes, and said to have invented boxing and racing. He was also the protector of flocks and herds (perhaps his oldest function).

He was depicted as a handsome young athlete, often wearing a round, winged hat and winged sandals (allowing him to fly, given by Zeus to speed his errands), and carrying the *caduceus*, a winged staff twined with serpents (an ancient symbol of heralds and messengers).

On the day of his birth Hermes stole a herd of cattle from Apollo, but they became fast friends



when Hermes created the first lyre from a tortoise shell and gave it to his half-brother. He was known for playing malicious pranks, but never fell out of favour for long - he was the only one of Zeus' illegitimate children to find favour with Hera. He aided Zeus' amorous adventures and served as advisor to a number of heroes. Among his children was the god Pan. His Roman counterpart was Mercury.

Aegis

- Travel (Adv when in centres of travel like town squares, railway stations, docksides and airports; Dis in centres of preventing travel, notably prisons, or when imprisoned yourself)

Required Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (M2)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Agility (M3)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Business
- Skill: Music (choose any traditional instrument)
- Skill: Security
- Skill: Stealth
- Skill: Subterfuge
- Switch: Breach the Wall of Death*
- Switch: Eloquence*
- Switch: Languages*
- Switch: Wild Luck*
- Add: Speed (3)*

Winged sandals and hat

- Add: Flight (3)*

Disadvantages

- Blurring (when you become emotional, your outline blurs as if in motion - taken twice, this is on all the time)
- Lawless (you often ignore the law and the feelings of others in pursuit of personal gain - possible Wisdom roll to keep to the letter of the law)
- Trickster (you delight in playing pranks on people - a particularly tempting opportunity may require a Wisdom roll, BD 2 to resist)

Hestia

The goddess of the hearth and its fire, the centre of the home around which the family gathered, Hestia protected the house, the family and also the city. She was said to be the oldest of the Olympians, first child of Cronus and Rhea, and respected by the other gods. Hestia received the first offering at sacrifices, and sacred flames were kept burning continually in her temples. She was dignified, and took a vow to remain a virgin forever. Her Roman counterpart was Vesta.

Aegis

- Hearth (Adv in buildings that are lived in; Dis in wilderness; neutral in derelict buildings, offices, streets, a camp site in a wilderness area, etc)

Required Powers

- Skill: Home-making

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Sociology
- Switch: Control Building (make parts of a building do simple things within their normal function, eg doors will lock, roof slates will fall off, sprinkler systems will activate - have to be inside or in contact with the building - roll with Presence, BD 2, Dis to influence modern technological systems - first success allows a minor change within 10ft, further successes give extra distance levels or, occasionally, greater magnitude effects - doesn't work on furniture or appliances which aren't actually part of the building)
- Switch: Home Heart (roll Presence, BD 2, to give someone a feeling of safety, security, comfort and belonging - successes counter a mental attack or remove existing mental Hurts - longer-term use can enable natural healing of one more mental Injury than normal)
- Switch: Immunity to Emotional Control* (6 points "armour" against all attempts to alter emotions - lesser effect than usual because it covers a wide range)
- Switch: Immunity to Fire*
- Switch: Read the Walls (things that occur in a building move and change its elements, and you can access this information - roll Awareness, BD 2 - first success gives an impression of



current activity within a 10ft radius, further successes either increase the distance levels of a current impression or let you reach back duration levels to retrieve information about past events - impressions are always general and uninterpreted, eg buildings don't "get" detailed images or sounds but will pick up numbers and size of people, shouting, blood, lightning bolts etc - as you look further back, only the more significant events are retained)

- Switch: Warding*
- Add: Control Fire (1)*

Disadvantages

- Building Signs (tied to building-related powers - your appearance changes for an instant, depending on the specific use of the power, eg skin looks like brick or wood, hair turns to cables)
- Chastity (Dis to flirting, seduction, etc)
- Dignified (frivolous pursuits are unattractive to you, and you have a Disadvantage if you try to engage in them)
- Flame Signs (when emotional, flames appear in your eyes)



Poseidon

He fought against the Titans with his brothers Zeus and Hades, and afterwards took as his portion rulership of the sea, lakes and rivers. Poseidon was usually shown as a mature, physically impressive man with a thick beard and disorderly hair, holding a trident (a three-pronged fishing spear). As a personification of water he had links to plants and fertility. He was also the god of earthquakes, and split mountains with his trident. He lived in a magnificent palace in the depths of the Aegean Sea, and rode out across the waves in a chariot accompanied by storms and sea monsters. Poseidon was worshipped particularly in maritime towns. The horse (which he was said to have created with a blow of his trident) and the bull were sacred to him.

Poseidon was a proud god. He contested with other deities for supremacy in various parts of Greece (he usually lost, and sometimes took revenge by flooding or drying up the area) and even conspired with others to dethrone Zeus (his punishment was to serve a mortal, building the walls of Troy). Like other Olympians he was often unfaithful to his wife, and had a vast number of offspring including various heroes, villains and monsters. One was Polyphemus the Cyclops - after the hero Odysseus and his crew put out the creature's eye Poseidon hounded them mercilessly. Like the sea itself, he was a volatile and dangerous god. His Roman counterpart was Neptune.

Aegis

- Water (Adv in, on or beside a body of water; Dis in dry conditions, eg desert, hot summer day, burning building)

Required Powers

- Add: Control Water (3)* (includes summoning jets of water to attack a foe, Weak Blunt Blast, automatically causes Motion Force based on the Add level)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M2)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)
- Skill: Geophysics
- Switch: Control Water Creatures (like the Control Adds, but costed as Switch for lesser utility - Presence roll opposed by creatures, successes indicate duration levels of effect)
- Switch: Shake Earth (roll Presence, BD 2, for the force of the quake - this radiates out from its centre, losing 1 force for each distance level - buildings and other structures take damage equal to the force where they are, and people must roll at least equal to the force with Agility + Athletics, BD 2, to remain standing)
- Switch: Shapeshift (Horse)*
- Switch: Swim Like a Fish*
- Switch: Underwater Survival (lets you breathe, and resist the pressure of the depths)
- Switch: Walk on Water
- Add: Water Form (1) (works as a Switch but costed as an Add - you can transform your body to water, and back again - in water form)



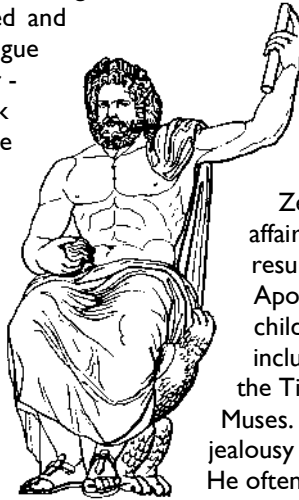
can travel through pipes at speed of normal water, seep under doors, etc or stay in humanoid shape - changing takes a Full Action and a Ingenuity roll, BD 2, fumble traps you in current form for the scene - your Base Damage uses (Presence - 1) instead of Strength - 6pts armour against most unarmed and weapon attacks, damage is mostly fatigue from pulling your body back together - Dis to Resist heat and cold - an attack causing Motion Force will disperse the water form, flowing back together again takes Full Actions rolling Control Water + Presence, BD 2, until you accumulate successes equal to the MF)

Trident

- Switch: Earth Splitting (+3 Base Damage against natural rock, +1 against refined minerals like metal or concrete)

Disadvantages

- Needs Water (take Need Hurts until you have immersed yourself in water)
- Vengeful (if wronged or slighted you will go to unusual lengths to get revenge - may need wisdom roll to let it go)
- Water Signs (taken once, your body oozes water under emotional stress; taken twice, it does it all the time)



Zeus

Zeus was the god of the sky and everything in it - wind, clouds, rain and thunder. He lived in the upper air and on mountain-tops. He became the supreme god, protector of all Greece, all-knowing and all-powerful. He was kind and compassionate to mortals, punishing the wicked but protecting the weak and those in danger. He was usually depicted as a mature man with a robust body, grave face with deeply set eyes, thick waving hair and finely curled beard, wearing a long mantle. His emblems were the oak and the eagle. His weapon was the thunderbolt.

Zeus was the youngest son of the Titans Cronus and Rhea. For fear of losing his throne to them, Cronus swallowed each of his children as soon as they were born. When Zeus arrived Rhea wrapped a stone in swaddling clothes to give to her husband

and had the baby raised in secret. When grown he arranged for his father to be given a draught which made him vomit up the other gods. They overthrew Cronus, casting him to the depths of the universe. The other Titans tried to take back

their kingdom, but after ten years of battle that shook all of creation they were chained in the depths of the earth. After defeating other primal monsters Zeus imposed his order on the world.

Zeus had several wives and numerous affairs with other goddesses and mortals, resulting in many children including Athena, Apollo, Artemis, Ares and Hephaistos. The children of his second wife, Themis (Law), included the Seasons, Justice and Peace. With the Titaness Mnemosyne he produced the nine Muses. Finally he ended up with Hera, whose jealousy was a continual threat to his conquests. He often approached these women in a shape other than his own, to deceive, impress or carry them off. He also sometimes changed them into other forms to shield them from the wrath of other deities. His Roman counterpart was Jupiter.

Aegis

- Sky (Adv in high places, Dis below ground level)

Required Powers

- Add: Control Weather (all) (2)*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Wisdom (M1)
- Boost: Presence (M3)
- Skill: Leadership
- Switch: Shapeshift (Eagle)*
- Add: Shapeshift (2)*

Disadvantages

- Authoritarian (you tend to order people about, and expect them to obey)
- Distracted by the Opposite Sex (Dis against supernatural or mundane influence based on appearance or attraction - may sometimes need Wisdom roll to refrain from pursuing)
- Weather Signs (minor weather changes happen around you when under emotional stress)



HEROES

Achilles

The central character of the story of the siege of Troy, Achilles was a great warrior but emotionally unstable. As a baby his mother, the nymph Thetis, sought to make him immortal by dipping him in the River Styx, making him invulnerable except for the heel she held him by (another version has her burning away his mortality in a fire). He is sometimes referred to as "swift-footed Achilles".

Because of a prophecy that he would conquer Troy but die there, Thetis disguised him as a girl and hid him among a king's daughters. But the Greeks knew they couldn't win without him. Cunning Odysseus brought gifts for the girls and hid a shield and spear among them, then pretended the palace was under attack - Achilles rushed for the weapons, revealing himself.

At Troy he distinguished himself as a mighty warrior. However, when the Greek leader Agamemnon took a slave woman Achilles had captured the hero refused to fight any further, despite the entreaties of the Greeks. He allowed his friend Patroclus to fight wearing his armour, but Patroclus was killed by the Trojan prince Hector. Achilles' rage brought him back to the fray, wearing armour made by Hephaestus himself. He killed Hector, dragged the body behind his chariot and refused to allow it a proper funeral. He only relented when King Priam came to the Greek camp in secret to plead for his son's body. Achilles continued to fight bravely but was finally killed when an arrow (possibly poisoned) pierced his vulnerable heel, shot by the Trojan prince Paris (possibly guided by Apollo), or by Apollo himself.

Required Powers

- Switch: Armour* (may be taken twice)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (M1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)
- Switch: Run Like a Horse*

Armour

- Switch: Effectiveness*

Disadvantages

- Achilles' Heel (one small area of your body is not protected by any Source-granted abilities - a called shot to it will bypass them, and an effect which covers your whole body gets 1 less protection than usual - decide which part it is when you take this)
- Unstable (prone to vicious mood swings - Dis to resist mental influence)
- Vengeful (any perceived offence merits swift and effective punishment - you may have to roll Wisdom to avoid retaliating)

Hercules

Probably the greatest of Greek heroes, known by them as Heracles and by the Romans as Hercules (the latter name is used here, as it's so well known). He was the son of Zeus by Alcmena, a mortal. The jealousy of Zeus' wife Hera at this affair led to a long-lived hatred of Hercules. She sent two snakes to kill him in his cradle, but the infant strangled them. Years later she drove him mad so that he killed his own family. To atone for this he spent twelve years under the orders of King Eurystheus (a rival set up by Hera), performing his famous Labours. The first was to slay the Nemean Lion, whose skin made it invulnerable to weapons - he strangled it, then skinned it with its own claws to make a protective mantle. Others included killing the Hydra, cleaning out the stables of 3000 cattle by diverting a river through them, and bringing back Cerberus, the monstrous three-headed dog which guarded the underworld.

He had many other adventures, including the voyage of the Argonauts to fetch the Golden Fleece and the slaying of numerous monsters. He also killed various hapless mortals who offended him, which happened often through both spite and misunderstanding - violence seemed to follow him wherever he went. He met his end when his wife Deianeira was tricked by a centaur into giving him a poisoned tunic. Maddened by pain, he tore up pine trees to make a funeral pyre. As the flames reached his body, thunder and lightning fell and he was taken up to Olympus to live among the gods.

Hercules became the god of physical prowess, but was also regarded as a friend and protector, and his popularity was widespread. He was said to have



founded the Olympic Games, to have medical powers and to play music.

Required Powers

- Boost: Strength (M1)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Athletics (may be taken twice)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed) (may be taken twice)
- Skill: Fighting (Club)
- Skill: Archery

Skin of the Nemean Lion

- Switch: Immunity to Edged Weapons* (10pts armour against swords, axes, arrows, etc - just 4pts vs firearms)

Disadvantages

- Monster Target (monsters will attack you in preference to other targets)
- Short Temper (if seriously offended you must succeed in a Wisdom roll to avoid flying into a violent rage)
- Straightforward (Dis for social interactions like understanding people's motives, persuasion or diplomacy)

Odysseus

The Romans knew him as Ulysses. He was king of the small island of Ithaca, and earned renown in the Trojan War for his devious schemes, including the famous wooden horse which got the Greeks into Troy after a ten-year siege. He was also an eloquent speaker and brave fighter. Odysseus tried to avoid the war, knowing that it would take him away from home for many years. He pretended to be mad, ploughing his fields and sowing salt, but revealed himself by turning aside when the Greeks put his baby son in front of the plough.

In fact the sea voyage home from Troy took ten years, through many adventures. He rescued his crew from the man-eating Cyclops Polyphemus (by putting out the giant's eye with a sharpened stake, earning the vengeance of his father Poseidon), the drugs of the Lotus Eaters, the enchantress Circe (she turned the crew into pigs, but Odysseus resisted with the help of a magic herb given by Hermes), the Sirens and the twin monsters Scylla

and Charybdis. He ventured into the underworld and got advice from the dead. Unfortunately the crew ate the divine cattle of Apollo - in retaliation the ship was destroyed and only Odysseus survived, coming ashore on the island of the nymph Calypso who kept him as her lover for seven years.

On finally returning to Ithaca he found his palace occupied by fifty badly behaved suitors pressuring his wife Penelope to remarry. Entering in disguise, he persuaded her to promise her hand to the one who could string his great bow. Only Odysseus himself was able to do so, and he used it to kill the lot of them.

(This turns out to be an odd programme, with no overtly "super" abilities - a character imbued by Odysseus would be more of a tough, canny adventurer.)

Required Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Archery
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Leadership
- Skill: Pilot Ship (can be taken twice)
- Skill: Stealth
- Skill: Subterfuge
- Skill: Survival
- Skill: Tactics
- Switch: Supernatural Resistance (works as 2pts "armour" against the direct effects of Meta powers and magic, eg shapeshifting, mind control)

Bow

- Switch: Effectiveness*
- Switch: Dedicated (only someone imbued by Odysseus can bend it)

Disadvantages

- Adventure Magnet (if anything notable is going on in your vicinity you'll get caught up in it somehow - challenges often crop up when you're pursuing something else)
- Unlucky (as the Quirk, once per scene the GM may call for a re-roll or inflict a coincidence)



MONSTERS

Gorgon

The Gorgons were three horrible daughters of the sea-god Phorcys: Stheno, Euryale and Medusa. They were said to have scaled skin, writhing snakes for hair, tusk-like fangs, bronze or brass hands and golden wings on their shoulders. Anyone looking them in the face was turned to stone. Only Medusa was mortal. The hero Perseus, helped and advised by Athena and Hermes, journeyed to their remote dwelling and cut Medusa's head off with a sickle while looking at her reflection in a polished shield. From the blood sprang the winged horse Pegasus. Perseus used the head to turn a king pursuing his mother into stone, then gave it to Athena to place on her shield.

Required Powers

- Add: Turn to Stone (3) (this is a nasty ability - use on one living creature at a time, who you must look directly in the eye - roll Add + Presence, BD 2, opposed by Physical Meta Resistance, net result is the number of duration levels they are turned to stone - victims take a physical Injury from the change, which heals normally once they change back - while in stone form they are unaware of events around them, and very durable but somewhat brittle...)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Intimidation
- Switch: Armour* (scales)
- Add: Flight (1)* (winged)

Disadvantages

- Scaled Skin (tied to Armour)
- Snake Hair (attracts attention, and gives a Dis to Stealth as the snakes tend to writhe and hiss of their own accord)
- Ugly (can be taken twice)
- Wings (tied to Flight)



Harpy

The Harpies were creatures of filth and famine, linked with the stormy winds. They had the faces and breasts of old hags and the bodies of birds with long, hooked claws. Noisy and eternally hungry, they snatched food and soiled tables with their excrement, and had a sickening stench. Zeus inflicted them on a soothsayer as a punishment, and they were vanquished by the Argonauts.

Required Powers

- Add: Flight (2)* (winged)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Switch: Claws*
- Switch: Corruption (the ability to make organic materials moulder and decay, triggered by fetid breath or shaking of the wings - roll Presence, BD (2 - area distance levels beyond 10ft), first success affects perishable foodstuffs, 2 affects less perishable foodstuffs, 3 starts to rot cotton clothing, 5+ will weaken leather goods, wicker baskets, etc - imbued items are not affected)
- Switch: Disease (an encounter with this creature has less obvious dangers, causing victims to become ill with something like a combination of flu and food poisoning - works like a poison, with speed of onset one hour and variable potency - each time a character is Hurt or Injured by a penetrating attack, eg claws, or caught within the Corruption effect add 1 to the potency which must be resisted later on)



- Switch: Immunity to Toxins and Disease* (usual 10pts vs disease, 6pts vs poisons)

Disadvantages

- Feathers (as well as on your wings, you have a feathered body)
- Ravenous (if you see food and haven't eaten in the last hour or so, roll Presence, BD 2 to resist the urge to devour it - you never gain weight from eating)
- Stench (you smell bad, all the time - people avoid being near you, Dis on social rolls)
- Ugly (Dis to social rolls where appearance is a factor)
- Wings (tied to *Flight*)

Hydra

Slaying this monster was one of the twelve labours of Hercules. It was an enormous nine-headed serpent living in a marsh, which ravaged the herds and crops of the surrounding countryside with its poisonous breath. Hercules found that when he struck a head off with his club two more grew in its place. His companion Iolaus burned the stumps after the heads were removed, preventing regrowth, and Hercules buried the last head (said to be immortal) under a stone. The hero soaked his arrows in the hydra's blood, making them poisonous.

This programme would work on a snake or crocodile as well as on a human - adapt abilities as necessary.

Required Powers

- Add: Fast Heal (3)*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Switch: Armour (scaly skin)*

- Switch: Extra Head (this weird alteration does exactly what it says, giving an extra head - there's still only one personality, and the new head works as a slave to the original - gives an extra automatic success for perceiving things nearby, making surprise very difficult - allows an extra Poison Breath attack, or an extra bite attack for animals - may be useful for other things, like playing darts while reading the paper - could be taken multiple times, but that's more relevant for animals than humans)

- Switch: Poison Breath (usable once per round to produce a cloud of toxic gas of suitably ominous colour, often black or green - roll Endurance + Size, BD 2 for the potency - cloud automatically targets anyone in front of the user up to about 10ft away, dodge successes subtract from the effect and any remainder is resisted as damage - at the end of the round it becomes an area effect, causing everyone within a 10ft radius to Resist, then spreads out 1 distance level and loses 2 damage at the end of each further round until it fills the space or damage reaches zero - repeated breaths are possible, but maximum damage rating is Endurance + Size + 2 - user is, of course, immune to the gas)

- Switch: Size Large* (can be taken multiple times, maximum Large 2)

Disadvantages

- Extra Heads ("Mummy, that man's got two heads!" - tied to *Extra Head Switch*)
- Reptilian Appearance (multiple picks possible, notably scaly skin)
- Toxic (anyone in close proximity to you over an extended period becomes ill, unless they or you take inconvenient precautions like containment suits)
- Unusual Size (linked to Large, if taken)
- Vulnerable to Fire (record damage from fire separately, because it is not subject to Fast Heal but heals at the normal rate)



THE NORSE PANTHEON

From around 500BCE a group of tribes with the same language and similar cultures lived in the south of the Scandinavian peninsula, the Baltic islands and the plain of north Germany. Between about 200BCE and 200CE some of them were in conflict with the Roman armies. The Romans called them "Germanic" tribes to distinguish them from the Celts; they are also known as Teutons. As the Roman Empire declined and after it fell the tribes migrated all over Europe, with territories occupied by various peoples over the years. They went east toward the Black Sea, north into Scandinavia, spread through Germany and (from around 400CE) the Anglo-Saxons crossed to Britain, naming their territories "Englaland".

Later - around 790-1050CE - Danish, Norwegian and Swedish seafarers went "Viking" or raiding around the coasts of Europe, Britain and Ireland. They established settlements, controlled trade and colonised Iceland and Greenland. Not all of their contacts were warlike. Their river traders pushed into eastern Europe, and met Muslims as well as Christians. The advantages of allying with these lands of wealth, power and learning encouraged the Vikings to convert to Christianity.

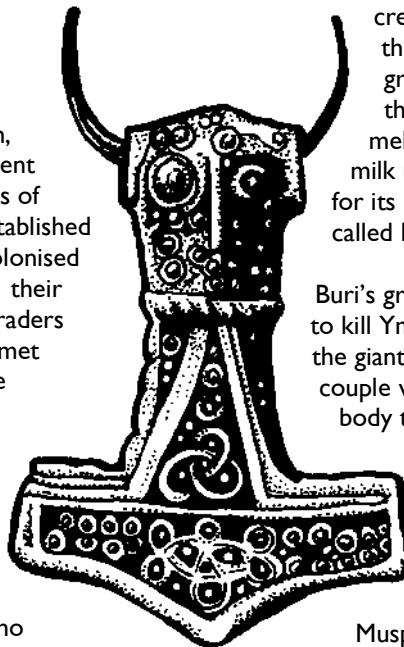
In Britain and Germany written records of Germanic religion and myths come from the Romans, who explained them in terms of their own gods, or Christian scribes who wanted to condemn the pagan practices or lived when only fragments of the myths had survived. Better records of the old culture were kept in Norway, Sweden, Denmark and Iceland, and almost all we know of their legends comes from here.

These myths show a people who lived life as best they could under the shadow of forces they couldn't control. They made their living surrounded by volcanoes and glaciers, through long periods of light and darkness, with warlike neighbours. There's a strong sense of fate - things happen as they are doomed to, and even the gods can't change that. Their heroes were larger than life, doing their utmost in the moments that were

theirs to shape. Their gods represent aspects of a simple civilisation rather than the sophisticated divisions of the Greeks, and the elemental forces are their enemies rather than gods themselves.

Creation

In the beginning there was only a gaping void called Gunningagap. To the north formed Niflheim, a land of freezing cold, and to the south formed the fiery realm of Muspellheim. Where the two faced each other the droplets of melting ice created the giant Ymir, first of living things. From the sweat of his armpit grew a male and a female who began the giant race. In a similar way the melting ice created a giant cow, whose milk nourished Ymir. She licked the ice for its salt, and gradually revealed a man called Buri, the ancestor of the gods.



Buri's grandsons Odin, Vili and Ve decided to kill Ymir. There was so much blood that the giants were drowned, except for one couple who escaped in a boat. From the body the brothers created the world: the flesh became the earth, the blood became the sea which encircled the land, and the skull became the sky. They made Ymir's hair into plants and his brains into clouds. Sparks flying out of Muspellheim were set in the sky as stars.

Night and Day were a giantess and her son, set to ride across the sky in horse-drawn chariots, chased by two wolves. The gods made dwarves out of grubs forming in the flesh of Ymir, and decreed that they should continue to live in the earth. The first humans were made out of two tree trunks.

Different traditions have different versions of the creation and shape of the universe. One version calls the whole world formed from Ymir's body Midgard because it's between fire and ice. The land was encircled by the sea, which was surrounded by the void. Jotunheim, the land of the giants, was on this level, as were humans and dwarves. Above it was the celestial realm of the gods, connected to Midgard by the bridge Bifröst which appears to mortals as the rainbow. Here were Asgard and



Vanaheim, the homes of the Aesir and Vanir groups of gods. Beneath Midgard was a sombre, frosty realm of the dead, also called Niflheim or Hel.

The most well-known idea is that of the giant ash tree Yggdrasill linking all the worlds. (Its name means “steed of the redoubtable”, due to Odin’s horse browsing on its leaves or because the god hung on it to seek the wisdom of the runes.) By one root in the underworld was the well Hvergelmir, the origin of the glacial rivers which flowed to Gunningagap. By the root in the frosty land of the giants was the well of Mimir which could impart wisdom. By the root in the heavens was the well of Urd, where the Norns dispensed fates. A serpent or dragon called Nidhogg gnawed at the lowest root, a wise eagle perched in the top branches, and a squirrel called Ratatosk ran up and down carrying insults between them. Four stags lived among the branches eating the new shoots.

The gods

There were two groups of gods. The Aesir were warriors above all, and included Odin, Thor and Tyr. The Vanir were peaceful and benevolent. They provided sunlight and rain; allowed plants, animals and people to multiply; gave harvests and other riches; protected commerce and navigation. After the Aesir mistreated a Vanir emissary war broke out between the two. Eventually they came to an understanding, and exchanged hostages. So it was that Njörd and his children Frey and Freyja came to live in Asgard.

Odin ruled the gods, preoccupied by his own search for knowledge and his foreknowledge of the end of the world, which led him to amass an army of dead warriors. There was always friction between the gods and the giants, and Thor and his hammer were the gods’ ultimate protection.

The myths tell of Ragnarok, the last battle in which elemental forces will destroy the world. It will be preceded by certain signs. Battles will rage throughout the world for three years. Brother will kill brother; father will kill son. Then the Fimbulwinter will come, covering the land with snow and frost and hiding the sun for three years. The wolves chasing the sun and moon will finally catch them. There will be a huge earthquake, toppling mountains and breaking the fetters of Loki and Fenrir. The ship Naglfar, made of the nail-clippings of the dead, will carry them and the frost giants to the great plain of Vigrid, there to meet the Midgard serpent and the fire giants, led by Surt. Alerted by Heimdall’s horn, the gods will go to war, leading the ranks of the valiant dead. The gods and their enemies will slay each other, and finally Surt will cover the earth in fire and it will sink into the sea. However, after a time a new, green earth will emerge, with new people to fill it. The children of the old gods are here, ruled over by Balder, returned from the dead.

Magic style

Invoked through carving runes and sometimes staining them with blood; chants, invocations and poetry; sometimes potions.

- Adv: Control, Cosmos
- Dis: Sympathy

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GODS

Balder

A son of Odin and Frigg, Balder was loved by all. He was so beautiful that he shed radiance around him, and was wise, just, pure and eloquent. His legend mainly concerns his death, which was one of the events setting Ragnarok in motion. Balder became troubled by dreams that he was about to die, and the other gods tried to set his mind at rest. Frigg extracted an oath from everything in the world - including animals, fire, stones and illnesses - never to harm Balder. To test his invulnerability the Aesir played a game - they struck him with weapons, threw knives and stones, and shot arrows at him, but nothing harmed him at all. Loki, filled with envy, took the shape of an old woman and went to ask Frigg about this game. There he discovered the one thing she had overlooked - a small plant called mistletoe. Loki tricked Balder's blind brother Hodr into throwing a wand or dart of mistletoe. Balder fell dead.

Hermod, a son of Odin, rode to Hel (the kingdom of the dead) to attempt a rescue. The goddess Hel agreed to free Balder if every being and thing in the world wept for him. The gods sent messages throughout the world, and everything wept - apart from one old giantess who said that Balder had never done anything for her. It was Loki in disguise. Vali, another son of Odin, killed Hodr in revenge. Balder stayed with the dead, but after Ragnarok he and Hodr would be reborn in the new world.

Aegis

- Goodness - Adv when surrounded by harmony and happiness, Dis surrounded by conflict or suffering (eg in the midst of a battle, but not necessarily in personal combat)

Required Powers

- Switch: Beauty*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (M1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Skill: Psychology
- Skill: Socialising
- Switch: Armour* (effectively, Immunity to Everything - each level gives 2 points armour against all physical attacks plus, in this case only, poisons and diseases - doesn't work

against mistletoe or new materials like plastics which couldn't have been included in Frigg's oath - can be taken up to 5 times if you have the points)

- Switch: Healing of Tears (on contact with genuine tears of sadness, all your Injuries and Hurts are healed and any coma is broken - a powerful but rarely triggered ability, the GM might allow a player to spend a Destiny Point to make an onlooker emotional if the situation is appropriate - have to be fresh tears, can't be stored for later use, and won't happen more than once per scene!)
- Switch: Sense Death's Presence*

Disadvantages

- Glowing (your body has a faint glow which makes it hard to pass as normal and gives a Disadvantage to hiding and stealth - taken once it manifests under stress, taken twice it's on all the time)
- No Body Temperature (linked to the world of the dead, your body does not generate its own heat but takes on the temperature of its surroundings, which means your skin usually feels cool)
- Too Pure (Disadvantage for anything criminal, nasty or underhand)
- Unwanted Admirers (you tend to attract attention wherever you go, bringing gifts, marriage proposals, and sometimes obsession)

Frey

His name means simply "Lord" - he's also called Freyr and Yngvi and given the title "God of the World". He was the son of the Vanir Njord and the giantess Skadi, and the brother of Freya. Frey was a handsome god of peace (though also a brave warrior) and fertility, having authority over rain, sunshine and natural fruitfulness. Frey's cult was one of the most popular, especially in Sweden. Weapons were banned from his temples, and bloodshed was taboo in places sacred to him. His idols were remarkably well endowed and he was invoked at weddings. He was said to be the ancestor of Swedish kings.

He had a sword that could fight on its own, but gave it to his servant for help in the pursuit of the beautiful giantess who became his wife. For a steed he had a golden boar *Gullinborsti* ("golden bristles"), forged by cunning dwarves, that sped through the air or across the earth more quickly than a



galloping horse, had redoubtable tusks, and illuminated the night. Also dwarf-built was the ship *Skidbladnir* - as soon as its sails were hoisted it made straight for its destination faster than any other ship. It was large enough to hold all the Aesir and their gear, but could be folded up and carried in a pocket. At Ragnarok Frey faces the fire giant Surt - having lost his magical sword, he is slain.

Aegis

- Fertility (Adv where plants or animals are abundant; Dis where nothing grows, eg sterile labs, deserts, heavily polluted areas)

Required Powers

- Switch: Fertility*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Natural History
- Skill: Riding
- Switch: Beauty*
- Switch: Calm (calms the tempers of those nearby, area effect - roll Presence, BD 2 modified for distance)
- Switch: Weapon Ward (reduces damage done by all melee or ranged weapons or unarmed attacks in an area, doesn't affect elemental powers etc - roll Presence, BD 2, first success gets 2 points of effect in 10ft radius for a round, each further success adds 2 points effect, a distance level or a duration level)
- Add: Control Animals (1)*
- Add: Control Plants (1)*
- Add: Control Weather (1)* (wind, rain, not big storms)

Boar - Gullinborsti (apply to an animal or vehicle)

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Switch: Air Walking (you can walk or run in empty air as if it was a solid surface; going up or down is like using stairs or a shallow slope, if you lose consciousness you fall gently to the ground)

- Add: Speed (1)*
- Switch: Intelligence* (animal only - Talented Presence, others Average)
- Switch: Glowing (able to give off golden light that illuminates the surrounding area)

Ship - Skidbladnir

- Switch: Direction Finding (can steer itself to the desired destination - this is interpreted from the thoughts of the user, so they must have some understanding of where the place is - "take us to the enemy's secret hide-out" won't work)
- Switch: Shrinking (can become small so as to be easily carried and hidden, looks like an ornately patterned ornament - changing size responds to will and takes a round to complete - it won't shrink with passengers on board, though you can store modest supplies and equipment)
- Add: Speed (2)* (on water only)

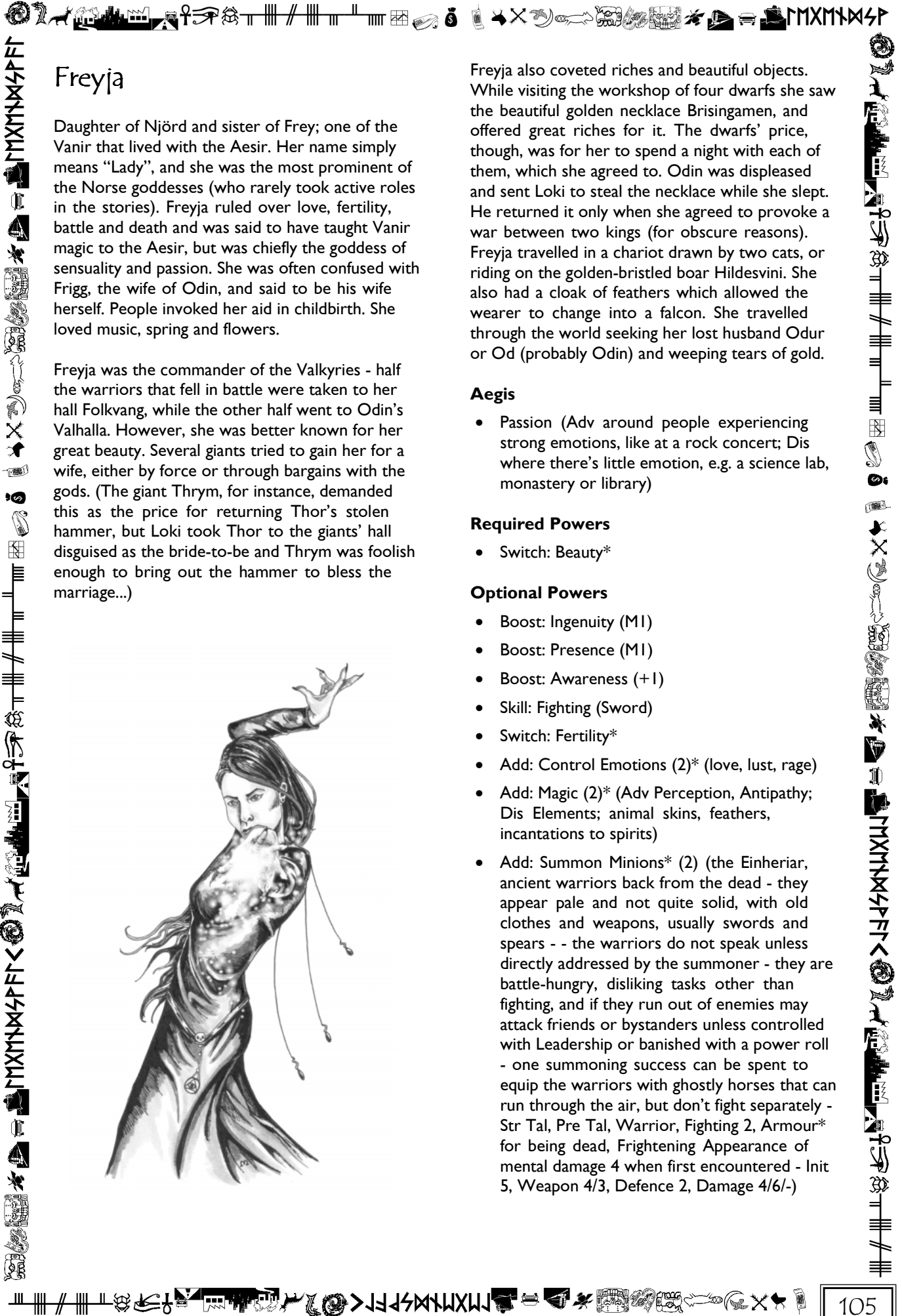
Sword

- Switch: Effectiveness*
- Add: Air Fighting (1) (works as a Switch, costed as an Add - the weapon can fight on its own once the user gives it a target, which is an act of will - it can effectively fly at a normal human movement rate - if one target is defeated it will move back toward its owner until given a new one - it has professional-level Fighting Skill and Talented Strength, giving it +2 initiative and 2/3 attacks - its main advantage is immunity to counterattacks; it doesn't usually bother to defend and the only way to stop it is to restrain it somehow)

Disadvantages

- Plant Signs (nearby vegetation responds to your moods - if happy, plants can add days' or weeks' growth in just a few minutes and flowers burst into bloom - if sad or angry they can droop and wither, or thorn bushes could spring up - remember that in most places there are dormant seeds around)
- Rash (acts without thinking things through - may need a Wisdom roll to avoid rushing in)
- Unwanted Admirers (you tend to attract attention wherever you go, bringing gifts, marriage proposals, and sometimes obsession)





Freyja

Daughter of Njörd and sister of Frey; one of the Vanir that lived with the Aesir. Her name simply means “Lady”, and she was the most prominent of the Norse goddesses (who rarely took active roles in the stories). Freyja ruled over love, fertility, battle and death and was said to have taught Vanir magic to the Aesir, but was chiefly the goddess of sensuality and passion. She was often confused with Frigg, the wife of Odin, and said to be his wife herself. People invoked her aid in childbirth. She loved music, spring and flowers.

Freyja was the commander of the Valkyries - half the warriors that fell in battle were taken to her hall Folkvang, while the other half went to Odin’s Valhalla. However, she was better known for her great beauty. Several giants tried to gain her for a wife, either by force or through bargains with the gods. (The giant Thrym, for instance, demanded this as the price for returning Thor’s stolen hammer, but Loki took Thor to the giants’ hall disguised as the bride-to-be and Thrym was foolish enough to bring out the hammer to bless the marriage...)



Freyja also coveted riches and beautiful objects. While visiting the workshop of four dwarfs she saw the beautiful golden necklace Brisingamen, and offered great riches for it. The dwarfs’ price, though, was for her to spend a night with each of them, which she agreed to. Odin was displeased and sent Loki to steal the necklace while she slept. He returned it only when she agreed to provoke a war between two kings (for obscure reasons). Freyja travelled in a chariot drawn by two cats, or riding on the golden-bristled boar Hildesvini. She also had a cloak of feathers which allowed the wearer to change into a falcon. She travelled through the world seeking her lost husband Odur or Od (probably Odin) and weeping tears of gold.

Aegis

- Passion (Adv around people experiencing strong emotions, like at a rock concert; Dis where there’s little emotion, e.g. a science lab, monastery or library)

Required Powers

- Switch: Beauty*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Switch: Fertility*
- Add: Control Emotions (2)* (love, lust, rage)
- Add: Magic (2)* (Adv Perception, Antipathy; Dis Elements; animal skins, feathers, incantations to spirits)
- Add: Summon Minions* (2) (the Einheriar, ancient warriors back from the dead - they appear pale and not quite solid, with old clothes and weapons, usually swords and spears - - the warriors do not speak unless directly addressed by the summoner - they are battle-hungry, disliking tasks other than fighting, and if they run out of enemies may attack friends or bystanders unless controlled with Leadership or banished with a power roll - one summoning success can be spent to equip the warriors with ghostly horses that can run through the air, but don’t fight separately - Str Tal, Pre Tal, Warrior, Fighting 2, Armour* for being dead, Frightening Appearance of mental damage 4 when first encountered - Init 5, Weapon 4/3, Defence 2, Damage 4/6/-)



Necklace - *Brisingamen*

- Switch: Beauty* (enhances the appearance of the wearer)
- Switch: Light (can produce a glow similar to that of a campfire, or an explosive light attack from the user's Presence at BD 2)

Falcon cloak

- Switch: Shapeshift (Falcon)*

Disadvantages

- Golden Eyes (your irises are an unusual golden colour)
- Lust for Beautiful or Valuable Objects (possible Wisdom roll to avoid pursuing)
- Lust for Sex (possible Wisdom roll to avoid pursuing)
- Quick Temper (possible Wisdom roll to avoid lashing out at those who slight you)
- Unwanted Admirers (you tend to attract attention wherever you go, bringing gifts, marriage proposals, and sometimes obsession)

Heimdall

The watchman of the Scandinavian gods. His name may mean "the brightly shining one" - perhaps he represented the light of dawn in ancient times. Nine sisters, sometimes associated with the waves of the sea, gave birth to him simultaneously. Heimdall was modest, noble, tall and handsome, with teeth of pure gold. Heimdall created the social classes by staying in the homes of three couples who later had children who were the first thrall (labourer), freeman and earl. He seems to preside over the beginnings of things.

Armed with a sword and mounted on a charger with a glittering mane, Heimdall guarded Bifröst (the Rainbow Bridge between the worlds of men and gods) in all weathers and warned the Aesir of the approach of their enemies. He needed less sleep than a bird, saw at night as easily as in the day, and could hear grass growing. The sounding of his horn could be heard throughout the world - one day it would signal the onset of Ragnarök, the last battle of the gods in which the world is destroyed and made anew. He was the sworn enemy of Loki, who made fun of his monotonous duty, and they will kill each other at Ragnarök.

Aegis

- Vigilance (Adv in places connected with security and watchfulness, eg a police station or radar tracking station; Dis in places of undisciplined self-gratification, eg night clubs)

Required Powers

- Boost: Awareness (M3)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (M2)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Riding
- Switch: Distance Vision
- Switch: Immunity to Light* (10 pts "armour" against dazzling light, and 5 pts against other forms of radiation, though not heat)
- Switch: Night Vision*
- Switch: Sensitive Hearing
- Switch: Wakefulness (need only a couple of hours' sleep a night)
- Add: Master of the Gate (I)*

Horn - *Gjallarhorn*

- Switch: Horn of the Herald (roll Endurance, BD 2, with any successes it can be heard clearly in the immediate area, two possible power effects - as a signal, each success allows one person known to the user to hear the horn no matter where they are and know very roughly the direction and distance to the blower, like "a mile or two north-east" or "west, across the ocean" - or an explosive sound attack, Dis to resist with Sensitive Hearing, "unconscious" means short-term deafness, "lethal" means unconsciousness and permanent deafness)

Disadvantages

- Gold Teeth (all of 'em, purely cosmetic change)
- Personal Code (you have a code of courtesy, modesty and duty - lose a Destiny Point if you break it)
- Too Modest (find it hard to take credit for anything - may require Presence roll)
- Too Serious (Disadvantage for anything involving "letting your hair down")





Loki

Although he lived among the Aesir Loki was not one of them, being the child of two giants. Originally he was a sort of fire demon, possibly personifying the destructive forest fire, and his name is related to a root meaning "flame". He doesn't seem to have been worshipped, but he plays an important role in the stories. Sometimes his cunning and mischief were used to help and advise the gods, and sometimes to undermine them. Over time he became progressively more evil, and eventually took a leading role against the gods at Ragnarok. Loki was handsome, and popular with the goddesses. He and Odin became blood brothers at the beginning of time. Loki's main ability, apart from his cunning and sharp tongue, seems to be the ability to shapeshift into any human or animal form. He often took the shape of an insect to sneak into places. In the shape of a mare he was the mother of Odin's horse Sleipnir!

When a giant stole Thor's hammer and demanded Freyja for a wife as the price for its return, it was Loki who thought of dressing Thor as a woman, and his sharp wits kept up the ruse until the hammer was regained. But when Loki himself was caught by a giant while in bird-form he readily agreed to talk Thor into going to Jotunheim without his magical weapons as the price for his own freedom. On a similar occasion he agreed to deliver the goddess Idun and her magical apples, which kept the gods from growing old. Under dire threats from the aging gods, he returned to steal her back again. Under instructions from Odin, Loki entered Freyja's hall in the form of a fly to steal the necklace Brisingamen.

His imprudence got him into trouble - he narrowly escaped a bet with a dwarf in which his own head was at stake - and the other gods became tired of his shabby tricks. When they were all gathered at a banquet Loki - who hadn't been invited - arrived. He detailed the past scandals and failings of each of them, the affairs of the goddesses, and his own crimes against them. None could match him insult for insult, and he only stopped because Thor arrived and threatened to kill him.

It was Loki who arranged the death of Balder, the best and brightest of the gods and prevented his return from the dead. With the giantess Angrboda he fathered three monstrous children who were among the gods' greatest enemies: the great wolf Fenrir, the colossal serpent Jormungand, and Hel, queen of the realm of the dead. Eventually the gods

bound Loki in a cave with a snake perpetually dripping venom on to his face. His wife Sign collected the venom in a bowl, but when she had to go to empty the bowl Loki was exposed to the burning poison. He will break free to join the forces opposing the gods at Ragnarok, and in the final battle Heimdall and Loki will kill each other.



Aegis

- Chaos (Adv in situations of confusion and disorder, eg a rioting crowd or the floor of a stock exchange; Dis in situations of extreme order, eg a military training camp or sterile lab)

Required Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (M3)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Socialising
- Skill: Stealth
- Skill: Subterfuge
- Skill: Theft
- Switch: Eloquence*
- Switch: Wild Luck*
- Add: Shapeshift (3)*

Disadvantages

- Cowardly (you tend to follow the orders of those who are stronger than you, for appearances at least, and have a Disadvantage to resist fear of harm, including intimidation)
- Envious (you don't like others to be more successful, fortunate or respected than yourself - possible Presence roll to resist bringing them down or getting some of that)
- Restless (you are easily bored and seek excitement, usually by playing tricks or getting people into trouble - this is actually a Need, giving Hurts for boredom)





Odin

Also known as Woden or Wotan in Germany, probably derived from “fury” - unchaining of raw, chaotic forces. He is the leader of the gods, the Allfather, ruling by wisdom and magic. He is not a heroic warrior or a benevolent father, but a sinister and untrustworthy figure associated with death. Odin is the patron of battles, but presides over them rather than taking part, dispensing fear, heroism and victory. He had over fifty use-names, including Grimnir, “the masked one” and Bölverkr, “harm-bringer”. Victims were sacrificed to him by hanging, wounding with a spear, or both.

In the beginning Odin and his two brothers created the world by killing and dismembering the primal frost giant Ymir, and made the first humans out of two logs of driftwood. He was an eloquent speaker, accomplished in deceit, poetry and wise counsel, and could change into any shape. He wandered the mortal world in the guise of a simple traveller, often a tall old man, blind in one eye, with a cloak and a broad-brimmed hat, or a one-eyed warrior with a spear. His wife was the goddess Frigg, but he had many affairs with mortals, giants and other women. Wednesday takes its name from him. He is sometimes said to be the leader of the Wild Hunt, warrior spirits that ride across the sky. He inspired the battle-fury of the *berserkers*, who entered battle naked and felt no fear or pain.

One of the reasons for Odin’s wanderings was his desire for knowledge. He was prepared to pay a high price to gain it. There was a well at one of the roots of Yggdrasil whose waters would give supreme wisdom - its guardian, Mimir, only allowed Odin to drink at the cost of one of his eyes. Mimir was later beheaded in the battle between the Aesir and Vanir, but Odin used herbs and charms to preserve the head so that it could continue to speak and give him advice. Odin gained the magic of the runes by voluntarily hanging on the world-tree, wounded by a spear - effectively sacrificed to himself. After nine days and nights he saw the runes below him and was able to pick them up and restore himself. Carving these magic symbols could cure illness, make chains fall off, call the dead to speak, and various other effects.

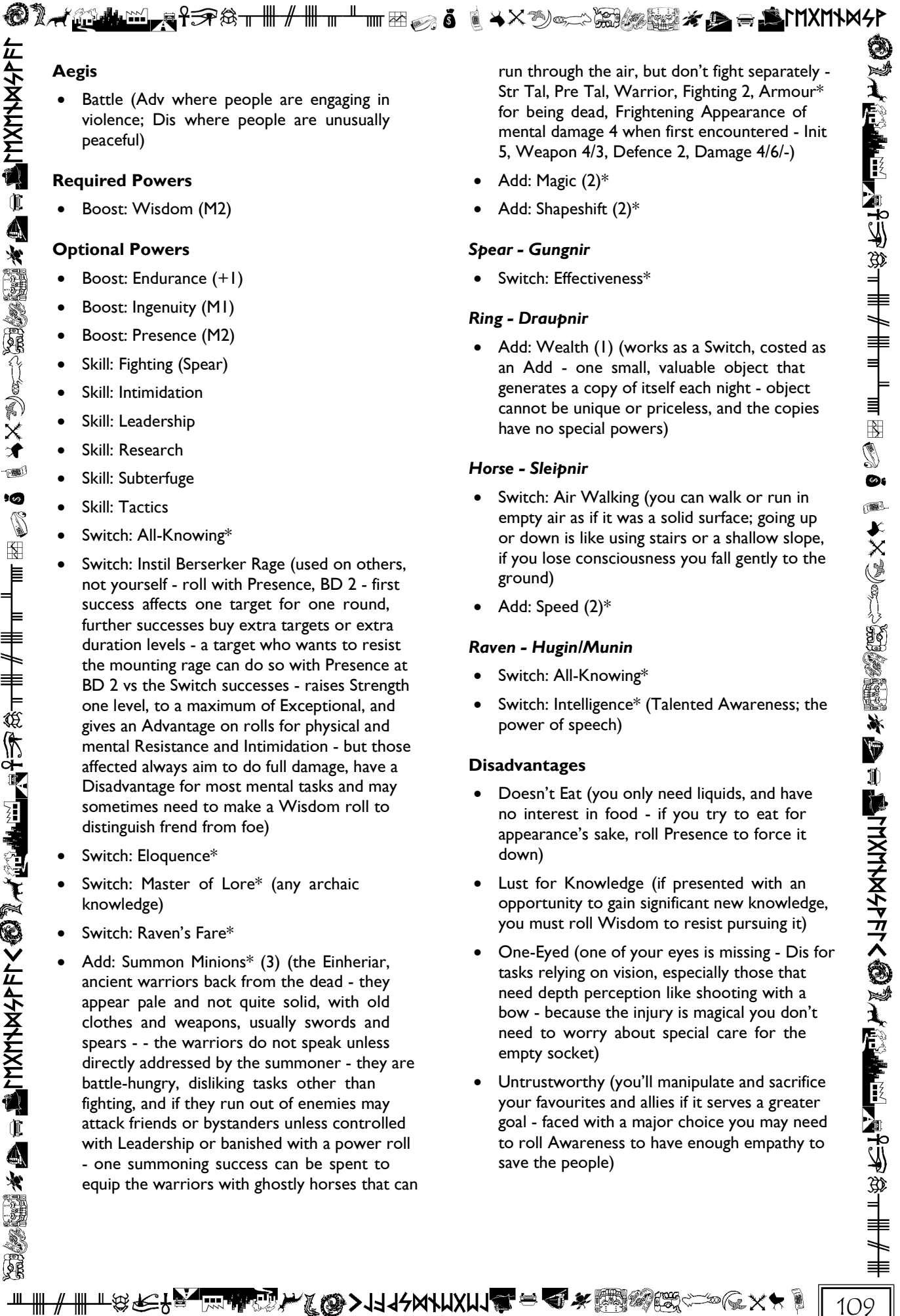
Odin was known as the father of the slain. The Valkyries were warrior women who served him by visiting earthly battles and choosing the best and bravest of the warriors about to fall to join the host of Valhalla, Odin’s colossal hall. It had 540



doors, each wide enough to pass 800 men abreast; the walls were made of spears and the roof of shields. These Einheriar (“heroic dead”) spent their days in practice fighting, then their wounds healed magically and they spent their nights drinking and feasting, served by the Valkyries. Sometimes nobles dying of illness or old age would be wounded with a spear to gain them a place in Valhalla. When asked why he gave luck to a warrior then suddenly took it away, Odin said, “The grey wolf watches the halls of the gods” - he was haunted by foreknowledge of Ragnarok, and sought always to swell his army with the best warriors in preparation for the final battle.

Odin’s dwarf-forged spear Gungnir could not be deflected from its mark. The dwarves also provided the gold ring Draupnir - every ninth night it generated eight similar rings. His eight-legged horse Sleipnir (born of Loki while in the form of a mare) was the swiftest in the world, and could run over the sea or through the air as easily as on land. He had two ravens, Hugin and Munin (“thought” and “memory”) who ranged the worlds gathering information and returned to his shoulders to whisper their news. He also had two wolves, Freki and Geri - he gave his food to them, taking nothing but wine himself. At Ragnarok he will be the first to fall, swallowed by the great wolf Fenrir.





Aegis

- Battle (Adv where people are engaging in violence; Dis where people are unusually peaceful)

Required Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (M2)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)
- Boost: Presence (M2)
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)
- Skill: Intimidation
- Skill: Leadership
- Skill: Research
- Skill: Subterfuge
- Skill: Tactics
- Switch: All-Knowing*
- Switch: Instil Berserker Rage (used on others, not yourself - roll with Presence, BD 2 - first success affects one target for one round, further successes buy extra targets or extra duration levels - a target who wants to resist the mounting rage can do so with Presence at BD 2 vs the Switch successes - raises Strength one level, to a maximum of Exceptional, and gives an Advantage on rolls for physical and mental Resistance and Intimidation - but those affected always aim to do full damage, have a Disadvantage for most mental tasks and may sometimes need to make a Wisdom roll to distinguish friend from foe)
- Switch: Eloquence*
- Switch: Master of Lore* (any archaic knowledge)
- Switch: Raven's Fare*
- Add: Summon Minions* (3) (the Einheriar, ancient warriors back from the dead - they appear pale and not quite solid, with old clothes and weapons, usually swords and spears - the warriors do not speak unless directly addressed by the summoner - they are battle-hungry, disliking tasks other than fighting, and if they run out of enemies may attack friends or bystanders unless controlled with Leadership or banished with a power roll - one summoning success can be spent to equip the warriors with ghostly horses that can

run through the air, but don't fight separately - Str Tal, Pre Tal, Warrior, Fighting 2, Armour* for being dead, Frightening Appearance of mental damage 4 when first encountered - Init 5, Weapon 4/3, Defence 2, Damage 4/6/-)

- Add: Magic (2)*
- Add: Shapeshift (2)*

Spear - Gungnir

- Switch: Effectiveness*

Ring - Draupnir

- Add: Wealth (1) (works as a Switch, costed as an Add - one small, valuable object that generates a copy of itself each night - object cannot be unique or priceless, and the copies have no special powers)

Horse - Sleipnir

- Switch: Air Walking (you can walk or run in empty air as if it was a solid surface; going up or down is like using stairs or a shallow slope, if you lose consciousness you fall gently to the ground)
- Add: Speed (2)*

Raven - Hugin/Munin

- Switch: All-Knowing*
- Switch: Intelligence* (Talented Awareness; the power of speech)

Disadvantages

- Doesn't Eat (you only need liquids, and have no interest in food - if you try to eat for appearance's sake, roll Presence to force it down)
- Lust for Knowledge (if presented with an opportunity to gain significant new knowledge, you must roll Wisdom to resist pursuing it)
- One-Eyed (one of your eyes is missing - Dis for tasks relying on vision, especially those that need depth perception like shooting with a bow - because the injury is magical you don't need to worry about special care for the empty socket)
- Untrustworthy (you'll manipulate and sacrifice your favourites and allies if it serves a greater goal - faced with a major choice you may need to roll Awareness to have enough empathy to save the people)



Thor

The Teutonic thunder god, also called Donar and Thunar, sometimes said to be the son of Odin and Jörd, an earth goddess. Odin was favoured by nobles, but Thor was more popular with the farmers and their families. He appears as a big, red-bearded warrior, simple and noble, always ready to face danger and prove his prowess, with an enormous appetite for food and drink.

Thor defended against giants, monsters and demons, aided by his enormous strength and a throwing hammer, Mjolnir, which never missed and returned to his hand after striking, crafted with cunning and magic by the dwarves. It was the gods' most precious talisman, as it protected them against their foes. The hammer was used to bless important occasions like weddings and funerals, and became a general symbol of protection and good fortune for the people, often found in ornaments and jewellery. Thor also owned a belt that increased his strength and a pair of iron gloves that enabled him to grasp the hammer.

Thunder was said to be his chariot driving across the sky. The stories do not show Thor controlling the weather directly, although the people held him to have dominion over it - this aspect is shown by his volatile temper and his hammer, which represents the thunderbolt.

There are many stories about Thor, usually involving battles against the giants. On one occasion he, Loki and a servant were set challenges at a giant's castle. Thor failed to lower the level in a drinking horn more than an inch or two, could only lift one paw of the giant's cat off the floor, and was forced to one knee in a wrestling match with the giant's old nurse. As they left in the morning the giant confessed that they had contested with illusions and he had been terrified by Thor's prowess: the horn's other end had been in the sea, the level of which had actually been lowered; the cat was the mighty Midgard Serpent, and lifting its paw had caused earthquakes; and the nurse was unconquerable Old Age itself. The giant and his castle then vanished before Thor could take revenge for these tricks.

Thor's arch-enemy was Jormungandr, the Midgard Serpent that lived in the sea and circled the earth. He once went fishing with a giant, using an ox's head as bait, and succeeded in catching the Serpent. He was intent on reeling it in, but the

terrified giant cut the line. Thor killed the giant then walked back across the sea bottom. At Ragnarok he will finally kill the Serpent, but then succumb to its poison and die. His sons will carry Mjolnir in the new age.

Aegis

- Thunder (Adv in extreme weather conditions; Dis where there's no weather, eg underground, ocean depths, deep inside a large building)

Required Powers

- Boost: Strength (M3)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (M2)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Skill: Fighting (Club, includes throwing)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Intimidation
- Switch: Immunity to Thunder and Lightning* (full 10pts "armour" against those specific weather effects, 5pts against other sound explosions and electricity)

Hammer - Mjolnir ("The Destroyer")

- Switch: Blessing*
- Switch: Effectiveness*
- Switch: Returns when Thrown
- Switch: Shrinking (can become small so as to be easily carried and hidden, takes an action to will it to shrink or grow)

Belt of Strength

- Boost: Strength (+1) (can't take you over M3 - you can't pull a blow by choosing not to use this Strength level)

Goat chariot

Thor was said to travel through the air in a chariot drawn by two he-goats. It's not clear whether the chariot or the goats had the power of flight - for game purposes just allow it to be imbued into any modest-sized vehicle (up to an ordinary car) or a riding animal. (The goats also had the ability to be cooked and eaten then returned to life the following day. If you can find a game use for this power, go ahead!)

- Add: Flight (2)*

Disadvantages

- Easily Tricked (Disadvantage to see through deceptions)
- Pride (seek to prove your mettle and rarely refuse a challenge - may need a Wisdom roll to take a more prudent course)
- Short Temper (possible Wisdom roll to avoid lashing out at those who slight you)
- Voracious (need to consume large amounts of food and drink - Need Hurts for scenes you don't have any)
- Weather Signs (under stress your eyes crackle with lightning and thunder rumbles around you)

Tyr

Also called Tiw or Tiwaz. God of war and justice, guarantor of contracts and guardian of oaths. Originally a major deity, ranked with Odin and Thor, his importance reduced over time. He was the bravest of the gods, and it was wise to invoke him when going into battle since it was often he who awarded the victory. He carried a spear, a symbol of justice and authority as well as a weapon. He gave his name to the day Tuesday.

When the gods wanted to bind the monstrous wolf Fenrir with a slender thread, he agreed only on the condition that one of them put their hand between his jaws as a guarantee of good faith. Only Tyr came forward. The thread, being magical, held and Fenrir bit Tyr's hand off. At Ragnarok Tyr will kill the great hound Garm, guardian of Hel, but will die from his wounds.

Aegis

- Justice (Adv in places where laws or contracts are made or enforced, eg courtrooms or police stations; Dis where laws or contracts are routinely broken, eg criminal hide-outs)

Required Powers

- Boost: Presence (M2)

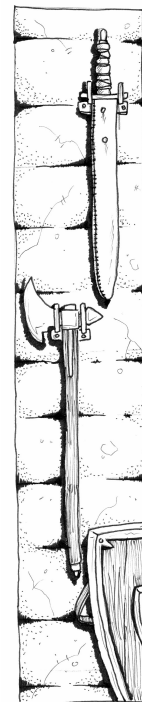
Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (M1)
- Boost: Wisdom (M1)
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)

- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed) (!)
- Skill: Leadership
- Skill: Tactics
- Switch: Bless Weapons (as the standard *Blessing** power, except it only works on weapons and the base duration is 5 minutes - you only get the effect of the Blessing while using the weapon)
- Switch: Immunity to Fear*
- Switch: Oath Guardian (you can bind someone to a promise made before you so that they have bad luck if they break it within the duration of the effect - roll Presence, BD 2, first success affects the target for 5 minutes, extra successes add duration levels - if the promise is broken the target suffers a *Curse** for a period equal to the effect's duration)
- Switch: See Righteousness*

Disadvantages

- Lawful (Dis for any activity that breaks the letter of the law)
- One-Handed (nominate a hand to which this applies - taken once, you lose some function and have a Disadvantage to any action using that hand - taken twice, the hand is gone)
- Personal Code (you have a code of honesty and obedience to the law - lose a Destiny Point if you break it)





HEROES

Norns

The Norns were women who controlled the destinies of gods and men, as well as the unchanging laws of the cosmos. It seems that there was originally only one Norn, known as Urd in Norse or Wyrd in Anglo-Saxon. Later there were three of them, probably influenced by the Greeks' Fates - Urd represented the past, Verdandi the present and Skuld the future. Later still there were many Norns, and they may have become the fairies of later stories. They lived by the Well of Urd by one of the roots of Yggdrasil. The Norns tried to stop the World Tree from decaying by pouring mud and water from the Well of Fate over it.

Required Powers

- Switch: Sense Destiny (with an Awareness roll you can feel a person, thing or event's importance in affecting the flow of past or future events, with successes indicating the level of detail about what and when - alternatively you can get an idea of a character's Destiny Pool as a short-term "fortune is with them" thing)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Switch: Bless*
- Switch: Curse*
- Switch: Immunity to Fate* (10 points "armour" against probability- or fate-altering powers)
- Switch: See Righteousness*
- Switch: Wild Luck*
- Add: See Future (3)*

Disadvantages

- Aloofness (petty human affairs do not concern you, only those of large-scale importance - Dis for some socialising, eg smalltalk)
- Doom (once per scene, the GM may give you foreknowledge of something you'd rather not know - this will happen, though perhaps not in the way you expect)

Valkyries

These "choosers of the slain" served Odin. Ranging battlefields, they gave victory to one side or the other, decided who would die and chose the warriors who would gain entrance to Odin's hall Valhalla. There they served the warriors with food and drink. They were originally dark spirits or demons of death, but later poets usually depicted them as helmeted goddesses with flame-crowned spears and flying horses. They were also swan-maidens, with the ability to cast off their plumage to appear in human form - if a mortal stole it they were forced to do his bidding. They sometimes fell in love with mortal heroes.

Required Powers

- Switch: Choose Warrior (roll Awareness, BD 2 for one subject - spend one success to get a general idea of their courage and determination, ie Presence - spend one success to get a general idea of their fighting ability, including Skill and Strength - the results are not framed as specific ability levels, though to a certain extent you can deduce them)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)
- Skill: Riding
- Skill: Tactics
- Switch: Sense Death's Presence*

Horse

- Add: Flight (2)*

Swan cloak

- Switch: Shapeshift (swan)*

Disadvantages

- Attracted to Heroes (Dis to resist social influence of someone who's just demonstrated great bravery and/or fighting ability)
- Cloak Vulnerability (Dis to resist the influence or powers of anyone who has their Swan Cloak)
- Disdain (may need a Presence roll to show respect to someone who's weak or cowardly)

MONSTERS

Dwarfs

The dwarfs had an ignoble beginning, as maggots in the flesh of the primal giant Ymir after he'd been killed by Odin and his brothers. The gods gave them human form and reason, and decreed that they should live under the earth, either because that's where they originated or because they were too ugly to be seen above ground. It was said that they turned to stone if caught in daylight. There were no female dwarfs, but two princes had the ability to continue the race by moulding new dwarfs out of earth.

The dwarfs were of small stature, with supernatural intelligence and foresight, and the ability to craft wondrous objects. (These included Thor's mighty hammer, Frey's collapsible ship, and Odin's self-replicating golden ring.) However, they were almost always deformed, with hunched backs, big heads and pale faces. Usually they avoided humans, but were sometimes encountered and could be helpful if dealt with courteously. Miners sometimes met their dwarf counterparts in deep tunnels, which was a sign that useful or precious metals were nearby. These metals and precious stones were thought to belong to the dwarfs, and they had unequalled ability in working them.

Required Powers

- Switch: Size Small (1)*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (M1)
- Boost: Wisdom (M1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)
- Skill: Construction
- Switch: Master of Crafts* (any craftwork, such as forging, sculpting or carving)
- Switch: Sense Mineral (could be used to find a specific kind, identify a sample or do a general sweep - usually requires an Awareness roll)
- Switch: Underworld Sense*
- Add: Craft Wonders (2)*

Disadvantages

- Curse of Daylight (taken once, gives a Disadvantage to all active physical rolls in direct sunlight - taken twice, actually turn to a stone statue or even a rock in daylight,



recovering a few minutes after taken out of the light, an experience like being anaesthetised)

- Sterile (you can't have children, though otherwise the equipment works)
- Ugly (Dis to many social tasks)
- Unusual Size (linked with Size Switch, must be taken)

Fenrir

A great wolf, one of the three children of Loki and the giantess Angrboda, also known as Fenris. It was prophesied that he would slay Odin at Ragnarok, so he was kept under watch in Asgard. He was so fierce that only Tyr dared to feed him. The gods decided that Fenrir should be restrained, but he burst every chain they tried. Finally the dwarfs made a slender magic cord. Fenrir, suspecting a trick, would only submit if one of the gods put a hand between his jaws to show good faith. Only Tyr stepped forward; the cord held, and the enraged Fenrir bit off the hand.

When Fenrir finally escapes his bonds it will be one of the signals for Ragnarok. He will join his father Loki on the ship carrying the inhabitants of the underworld, with fire spurring from his eyes and nostrils and blood dripping from the vast jaws that swallow Odin as the first casualty. Odin's son Vidar avenges his father, forcing the wolf's jaws open with the aid of an indestructible shoe and tearing it apart or thrusting in a sword to pierce its heart.



This programme could be applied to a human, or to a wolf or dog (or maybe another animal). Use common sense to choose applicable options.

Required Powers

- Boost: Strength (M2)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M2)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Intimidation
- Skill: Survival
- Switch: Fangs*
- Switch: Fury*
- Switch: Intelligence* (Talented Presence; the power of speech)
- Switch: Sensitive Hearing
- Switch: Sensitive Smell
- Switch: Size Large (2)*

Disadvantages

- Need for Flesh (accumulate Need Hurts for scenes you don't consume some raw meat)
- Proud (conscious of your reputation, rarely refuse a challenge - may need Wisdom roll to back down)
- Shunned by Other Animals (animal only - other beasts can tell you have changed and don't want to be around you)
- Unusual Size (linked with Size Switch)
- Wolf-like Appearance (humans only - taken once you have increased body hair, pointed ears, etc but can still pass for human in dim light or if covered up; taken twice your body is furred and your head is wolf-like with an elongated snout, ears on the top, etc)

Giants

These large humanoids were basically personifications of natural phenomena, frightening forces to people pitted against a harsh environment. They were known as Jötun, and their land was Jötunheim. Most giants were surly and hostile, and as a group they were the chief enemies

of the gods, partly due to the slaying of their ancestor Ymir. Fighting against them was the main occupation of Thor. The main types have different powers available to them. Ymir would be a large, powerful frost giant, and Surt would be a large, powerful fire giant.

Required Powers

- Switch: Size Large (3)* (each level counts as a separate Switch)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (M2)
- Boost: Endurance (M1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed and most archaic melee weapons can be taken)

Optional Powers (Frost Giants)

- Switch: Immunity to Cold*
- Add: Control Weather (frost, snow, wind, etc) (1)*

Optional Powers (Fire Giants)

- Switch: Immunity to Fire*
- Add: Control Fire (1)*

Optional Powers (Storm Giants)

- Switch: Immunity to Thunder and Lightning* (full 10pts "armour" against those specific weather effects, 5pts against other sound explosions and electricity)
- Add: Control Weather (more or less all) (1)*

Optional Powers (Rock Giants)

- Switch: Armour (take up to twice)*
- Add: Control Earth (1)*

Disadvantages

- Elemental Signs (eg a Frost Giant might have frost perpetually forming on their skin, a Fire Giant might have a fierce body heat or have flaming eyes when emotional, a Rock Giant might have clearly stone-like skin - can be taken multiple times)
- Ugly (coarse features give a Dis to many social rolls)
- Unusual Size (tied to Size)



Jormungand

A giant serpent, one of the three monstrous children of Loki and the giantess Angrboda. Odin threw him into the ocean of earth where he grew so large that he circled the world, gaining the title “the Midgard Serpent”.

At Ragnarok Thor will finally kill Jormungand with his hammer, but will then die from the monster’s poison.

Required Powers

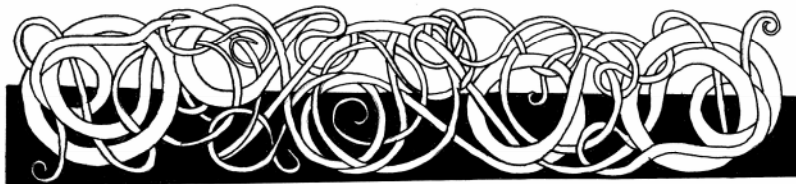
- Switch: Size Large* (4) (taken as multiple levels)*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (M2)
- Boost: Endurance (M2)
- Switch: Armour* (scales)
- Switch: Fangs*
- Switch: Intelligence* (Talented Presence)
- Switch: Poison Breath (usable once per round to produce a cloud of gas of suitably ominous colour, often black or green - roll Endurance + Size, BD 2 for the effect - cloud automatically targets anyone in front of the user, up to about 10ft away, dodge successes subtract from the effect and any remainder is resisted as damage - the gas spreads out 1 distance level at the end of each round, becoming an area effect but losing 2 damage from the effect, until it fills the space or damage reaches zero - repeated breaths are possible, but maximum damage rating is Endurance + Size + 2 - user is, of course, immune to the gas)
- Switch: Underwater Survival (lets you breathe and resist the pressure of the depths)

Disadvantages

- Reptilian Appearance (multiple picks possible, notably scaly skin coupled to Armour)
- Unusual Size (coupled with Size, has to be taken)



THE CELTIC PANTHEON

The people we know as Celts were a group of tribes with similar language and culture originating round the river Danube in present-day Germany. (The label "Celt" comes from a Greek word - it was not the way they referred to themselves.) They spread rapidly in all directions, reaching France, Belgium, Switzerland, Spain, Ireland, Britain, Italy, Greece and Turkey. Their warlike nature made them widely feared, and between about 450BC and 250BC they were the most powerful people in Europe. Eventually they were beaten by the armies of Rome, whose organised approach to war overcame the Celts' reckless personal bravery.

Most of what we know about their mythology comes from Ireland, which was never conquered by Rome. There are surviving stories from Wales, which are different but parallel. Both of these portray the gods as being like mortals but with various supernatural abilities, rather than beings of great moral or spiritual authority. They are about aspects of society rather than elemental forces, and skill and energy are the things most valued. References to the gods of Gaul (France) are patchy, mostly consisting of inscriptions and statues to local gods adopted and renamed by the Romans. Scotland doesn't have its own stories of the gods, but does have a rich folklore of supernatural creatures, faeries and monsters. This section pulls these together into a (somewhat artificial) whole, along with some legendary figures from the "Celtic" countries.

The Irish gods are the "Tuatha Dé Danann", the "people/descendants of Danu", a shadowy mother goddess. They are "ever living" because they do not age and die as mortals do, but they are not so much divinities as ancestors writ large. The stories say that they arrived in Ireland in a magical mist or ships that moved through the air, and fought the Fir Bolg people already there for dominance over the land in the First Battle of Magh Tuireadh (or "Moytura" - it means "Plain of Towers"). They won, but their king Nuada lost his arm in that battle, and only a whole and unblemished person could be king, so they gave the rulership to Bres, whose mother was of the Danann but whose father was of the Fomorian people. The rule of Bres was poor, with the gods Ogma and the Dagda

reduced to building forts for little food. Nuada's arm was replaced and the Danann deposed Bres, who went to his father for help. This led to the Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh, and the defeat of the Fomorians. However, when the Milesians - the ancestors of the modern Irish - came to Ireland the Tuatha Dé Danann themselves were defeated, and retired to dwellings in the *sidhe* or faery/burial mounds. From there they played important parts in the later stories dealing with heroes like Cúchulainn and Fionn mac Cumhaill.

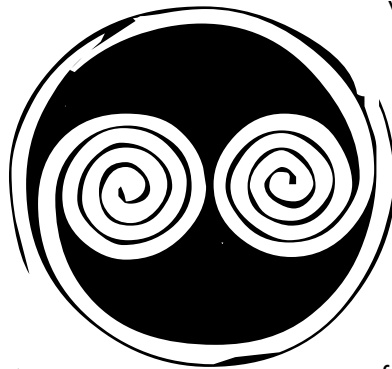
The Welsh myths centre around two groups, the Children of Don, including Arianrhod, Gofannon and Gwydion, and the Children of Llyr, including Bran, Branwen and Manawydan. The original cosmology behind them is lost - the stories we have are collected in the medieval Welsh 'Mabinogion'. They don't appear as gods in any sense, but as mortal nobles with some special skills and abilities. The programmes here focus more on the Irish myths.

England, sadly, hasn't done very well in the legendary stakes. The most obvious place to look is the tales of King Arthur and the Knights of the Round Table. These have had a very mixed parentage: he probably originates in stories of British resistance to the Saxons, but the stories have been added to by medieval Welsh, Continental and other writers, incorporating the romantic elements and making Arthur popular across Europe. In the Welsh stories he acts mainly as the patron of the active characters rather than having adventures himself. Another well-known English figure is Robin Hood, a peerless archer who led a band of outlaws against a corrupt king - it's hard to tell where his legend may have begun.

Magic style

Sometimes an invocation, potion or wand was used, but in general the Celtic world was so magical that those who wanted to use magic just did it.

- Adv: Transformation, Perception
- Dis: Control



GODS

Aonghus mac Óg

His name is also given as Angus, Aenghus and Oenghus; mac Óg means “Son of Youth” or “the Young Son”. There are links with the Welsh Mabon and Gaulish Maponos, embodiments of youth with ill-defined characters. The god of youth, beauty and (to an extent) love, Aonghus’ unusual birth gave him his title. He was the result of an affair between the Dagda and the river goddess Boann while she was married to Elcmar. They contrived to send Elcmar on an errand, then magically deceived him so that he thought he’d only been away for a day when in fact nine months had passed. Boann said: “Young the son who is conceived at dawn and born before dusk.”

Aonghus appeared as a beautiful and charming young man. Four birds hovered round him, representing his kisses. For all his apparent youth Angus possessed wisdom and foresight - on occasion he both counselled and tricked his father the Dagda. Because of his birth he understood the nature of time. When the gods were being allotted mounds to dwell in Aonghus asked to spend a day and a night in the dwelling of the Dagda (the modern Newgrange), then claimed it forever because day and night are the whole world. He saw a beautiful girl, Cáer, in his dreams and fell sick with love until he was able to pick her out from 150 girls in swan-shape on a lake. He appears in later fairytales as a witty trickster.

Aegis

- Youth (Advantage surrounded by the new, dynamic and attractive; Disadvantage in old, static or decaying, drab surroundings)

Required Powers

- Switch: Beauty*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Music (choose any suitable archaic musical instrument, one per pick)
- Skill: Singing
- Skill: Socialising

- Skill: Subterfuge
- Switch: Eloquence*
- Switch: Shapeshift* (swan)
- Switch: Time Sense*
- Add: See Future* (1)
- Add: Time Distort* (2)

Disadvantages

- Restless (you are easily bored and seek excitement, usually by playing tricks or getting people into trouble - this is actually a Need, giving Hurts for boredom)
- Signs of Youth (you’ll always appear younger than you are, which might make it hard to get people to take your experience seriously)
- Unwanted Admirers (you tend to attract attention wherever you go, bringing gifts, marriage proposals, and sometimes obsession)

Bran

Called Bran the Blessed or Bendigeidfran, he was a king in Welsh myth notable for his gigantic size - no house could contain him. He was a son of Llyr and brother of Manawyddan, the Welsh version of Manannan. When his sister Branwen married the king of Ireland he also gave a life-restoring cauldron. But their brother Efnissien, who delighted in causing strife, maimed the Irish horses and to avenge this insult they made Branwen serve in the kitchens. She tamed a starling to carry a message to Bran, who waded across the Irish Sea to rescue her, followed by the British fleet. The Irish retreated over a river and broke the bridge behind them, but Bran stretched out over it so the Britons could cross. The Irish sued for peace but planned treachery. Efnissien prevented this, killing the hidden warriors, but then provoked the fighting again. The Irish revived their dead in the cauldron until the remorseful Efnissien burst it from the inside at the cost of his life.

Both races were decimated. Only seven Britons were left, and Bran was mortally wounded. He requested that they cut off his head and bury it at the White Tower (the site of the Tower of London) to guard the country. First they bore the head to Harlech for 7 years and Gwales for 80, where it talked with them and they had no sense of time or suffering until someone disobeyed instructions and opened the door of the hall. On returning to Britain Branwen died of sorrow. It is said that Arthur dug up Bran’s head, as he wished



to be Britain's sole guardian. Bran means "raven", and this is thought to be the origin of the legend that Britain will be invaded if the ravens leave the Tower of London.

Aegis

- Rulership (Adv when there's a body of people to lead, Dis when on your own with no people nearby)

Required Powers

- Switch: Size Large* (each pick adds a level of Large, can be taken up to 3 times)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Leadership
- Add: Time Distort* (1)
- Switch: Warding*

Cauldron - can be used on any rigid object big enough to fit a person inside

- Switch: Breach the Wall of Death*
- Add: Healing* (3)

Disadvantages

- Generosity (you are quick to give gifts to cement friendships and compensate for wrongs - it may make you popular, but you won't get rich in the modern world - may require a Wisdom roll to avoid)
- Gullible (Dis to detect or resist trickery or treachery)
- Unusual Size (linked to Large Size)

Brigid

The name seems to mean "High One", or possibly "fiery arrow". She had a triple nature, representing poetry, learning and divination; healing and fertility; fire and smithcraft. She was associated with the coming of spring - in Scottish legend she overthrew the wintry powers of the hag Cailleach Bheur each year. Generally reckoned to be the daughter of the Dagda. For a while she was married to Bres, the half-Fomor who ruled the Danann and brought

about the second battle of Magh Tuireadh. Their son, spying for the Fomor, was killed by Goibhniu in the battle. By some accounts, half her face was beautiful and half was ugly. She was such a popular goddess that when Ireland became Christian the Church took her on as a saint, still associated with fire.

Aegis

- The Light of Knowledge (Adv where learning is used to improve people's lives; Dis where learning is applied to harmful or soulless ends)

Required Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (M2)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Medicine
- Skill: Metalworking
- Skill: Oratory
- Switch: Blessing*
- Switch: Eloquence*
- Switch: Sun Immunity* (the usual 10 point "armour" against light attacks, e.g. dazzling, and 5 points against heat/fire)
- Add: Control Fire* (1)
- Add: Healing* (2)
- Add: See Future* (1)
- Add: Triple Aspect (1) (works as a Switch, costed as an Add - with a Full action and an Ingenuity roll at BD 2 you split yourself into three duplicates, holding hands - each has your appearance and Normal abilities, but each level of Meta ability must be allocated to just one of the aspects - the aspects are linked mentally with unlimited range, but the extra concentration this takes gives -1 initiative for each conscious multiple, e.g. three conscious gives -2 initiative - the split lasts until the aspects are deliberately recombined, which requires physical contact - one that is "killed" dissipates and recombines regardless of distance - when splitting, each aspect has the same Injuries and Hurts as the original, when recombined you keep the highest level of each - each full day split gives one Hurt to each aspect, which will not heal until recombined)



Disadvantages

- Fiery Eyes (flames can be seen in your eyes when you become emotional)
- Split Appearance (one side of your face is ugly, and the other is attractive - over all it tends to produce an appearance Dis)
- Too Studious (you get wrapped up in studying and making, and have trouble letting your hair down - Dis to carousing-type activities)



Cernunnos

The name is Latin, meaning “the horned one”. We don’t know his name conclusively - it’s taken from just one partial inscription - but he was clearly an important god of the Continental Celts. He was the Animal Master, linked also with general fertility, wealth and the underworld. He appears as a man with antlers like a stag’s on his head. Sometimes linked with Herne the Hunter, a stag-horned spirit said to haunt Windsor Great Park in England.

Those imbued by Cernunnos draw on the abilities of animals, giving a wide range of possibilities - hence the long list below. Of course, the same number of points are available as for any other god.

Aegis

- Wilderness (Advantage in unspoilt natural settings, Disadvantage in heavily built-up areas, factories, etc.)

Required Powers

- Add: Control Animals* (3)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Agility (M1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (M1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Natural History
- Skill: Stealth
- Skill: Survival
- Switch: Claws*
- Switch: Distance Vision

- Switch: Leaping*
- Switch: Night Vision*
- Switch: Lightning Reactions*
- Switch: Run Like a Horse*
- Switch: Sensitive Hearing
- Switch: Sensitive Smell
- Switch: Swim Like a Fish*
- Switch: Wall Crawling (sticky hands and feet allow you to cling to vertical surfaces or even upside-down)
- Add: Animal Changes (3) (each level acts as a slot that can contain any one animal power at a time, including all the optional ones above and possibly others reflecting abilities of European animals - these are minor changes to the body and senses, often accompanied by visible signs, not the whole-body changes provided by *Shapeshift**, eg making your fingers clawed but not growing wings - a given Attribute can only be Boosted one level, which takes one slot, and never above M1 total - in combat changing the power in one slot takes a Free action and an Add + Ingenuity roll, BD 2 - if you lose consciousness all slot contents are lost)

Disadvantages

- Horns (must be taken at least once, in which case they’re short and stubby like a goat’s, relatively easy to conceal; if taken twice they’re full-blown antlers, impossible to conceal but usable for unarmed attacks at Base Damage 1)
- Animal Features (other physical changes reflecting European animals, usually mammals, can be taken repeatedly - eg eyes like a cat or hawk; unusually hairy; badger stripes in hair)
- Berserk (tendency to lose human reason in the thick of battle - Disadvantage for some reason- and perception-type activities)
- Not Good With People (Disadvantage for small talk, social niceties, etc)





The Dagda

“The Dagda” is less a name than a title, meaning “the good god” in the sense of being good at a wide range of things, including fighting and druidic magic. His other names included Eochaid Ollathair (“All-Father”), Aedh (“Fire”) and Ruad Rofessa (“Lord of Great Knowledge” or “Red One of Perfect Knowledge”). He’s thought to be the same as the Gaulish god Sucellos, “the good striker”. Although Nuada was the king of the Danann, the Dagda was their senior leader and father of several of the younger gods. In spite of his prowess and high standing, he’s usually portrayed as fat, unwieldy and uncouth, dressed as a peasant - a sharp contrast to the other gods.

He owned a club or staff so large that it was dragged on wheels, leaving a track like the boundary ditch between two provinces - one end of it killed nine men at a time, and the other would bring them back to life. He also had a cauldron, one of the great treasures of the Tuatha De Danann, which provided an inexhaustible supply of food. He seems to represent the link between humans and the power of the land; with the powers of life, death and fertility.

During the unfortunate reign of Bres the Dagda was made to build forts and other menial work. When all the Danann leaders had said what aid they would bring to the Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh the Dagda told them, “All that you have said, I will do myself”. He went to spy on the Fomorians - they caught him and, knowing his great liking for food, dug a great pit and filled it with porridge, forcing him to eat the lot till he became fat and ungainly. His ladle was big enough for a man and woman to lie together in it. Before the battle he met the Morrigan washing at a ford and had sex with her, after which she promised to help the Danann in the fight. After the battle he and

Aonghus tracked down a group of Fomor who’d stolen his enchanted harp, which could play the laughter-strain, the sorrow-strain and the sleep-strain. When he called it flew to his hand, killing several of the enemy on the way.

Later, when the Tuatha De Danann had been defeated by the Milesians, the Dagda allotted the *sidhe* to the gods. He wanted the palace at Bruigh na Boinne (Newgrange) for himself, but Aonghus got it by tricking his father. Then the Dagda resigned as leader of the gods, and no longer took any significant part in the affairs of Ireland.

Aegis

- The Land (Advantage in fertile and abundant places; Disadvantage in blighted places, or when not in contact with the earth)

Required Powers

- Switch: Universal Energy*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (M1)
- Boost: Endurance (M2)
- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Skill: Fighting (Club)
- Skill: Play (Harp)
- Add: Magic* (1)
- Add: Master of Skills* (1)

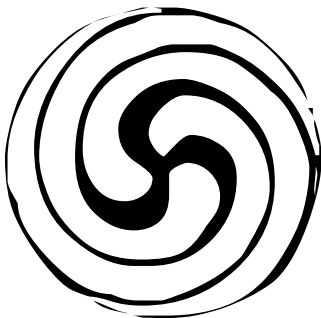
Club

- Switch: Effectiveness*
- Switch: Large (the item is bigger than could normally be used - a 2-handed-size object can be used 1-handed with Base Damage 3, or an extra-large object can be used 2-handed with Base Damage 4)
- Add: Healing* (2)

Cauldron - Undry

Not hugely useful in-game, perhaps, but it was an important item to them! Apply to any container.

- Switch: Food (provides an inexhaustible supply of food, according to the merits of the person being fed)



Harp - Daurdabla ("Oak of Two Woods"), Coir-cethair-chuir ("Four-angled Music")

- Add: Flight* (1) (must be directed mentally, ie uses your actions, only within line of sight - can be used to lift or push things, use Presence as Strength, a single person could cling on but might have to roll to keep their grip - if used as a ranged attack, Ingenuity to hit and Base Damage 1 + Presence - don't try this with a real harp)
- Add: The Three Strains* (1) (works as a Switch, costed as an Add - kind of an adapted version of *Control Emotions** - can induce joy/laughter, sorrow, or a sound natural sleep - must be played, and the roll is Play + Presence, BD 2, opposed by mental resistance)

Disadvantages

- Great Appetite (may need to roll Presence to avoid consuming any food and drink that's around)
- Shabby Appearance (dress sense and grooming just seem to bounce off you, giving a Dis to many social interactions)
- Ungainly (you put on a bit of magically persistent weight, and have a Dis for fast or nimble footwork)

Epona

Epona was an important fertility goddess of the Continental Celts, always linked with horses and very popular in rural and domestic contexts. She is usually shown riding a horse side-saddle, accompanied by a bird, dog and foal. She was adopted by the Roman cavalry, who placed her statues in stables; they brought her worship to Britain, where her cult merged with those of Rhiannon and Macha.

One of three Machas in Irish legend was a mysterious woman who arrived at the farm of Crunniuc and became his wife. At the assembly of the Ulstermen Crunniuc boasted that his wife could outrun all the king's horses. Macha was heavily pregnant, but agreed to the contest to save her husband. She won the race, but then went into labour and gave birth to twins. With her dying breath she cursed the Ulstermen and their descendants, that in their times of greatest difficulty they would suffer the pangs of childbirth. Because of this Cúchulainn would later have to defend Ulster single-handed.

In the Welsh tales Rhiannon appeared to Pwyll, prince of Dyfed, on a white horse which could not be overtaken. They tricked an unwanted suitor into giving her up, and were married; Rhiannon gave out precious gifts to the people. Later she was falsely accused of killing her baby son, who in fact had been stolen by supernatural forces. Her punishment was to wait by the mounting-block, telling visitors of her shame and offering to carry them on her back, until the boy was recovered. The son, Pryderi, became king after his father's death and gave his mother as wife to his friend Manawydan. She was said to have three birds whose singing could wake the dead and lull the living to sleep, probably the same that removed all cares from the companions of Bran when they rested at Harlech.

Aegis

- Animals (Adv if there are lots around, eg farms, forests, zoos; Dis in sterile settings with no animals at all nearby, eg factories, laboratory complexes, heavily polluted areas)

Required Powers

- Switch: Run Like a Horse*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Home-making
- Skill: Natural History
- Skill: Riding
- Switch: Pangs of Macha (this curse afflicts the subject with serious abdominal pain whenever they're in a stressful situation, which certainly includes any serious fight - roll Presence, BD 2 modified for number of targets, opposed by physical Meta Resistance, successes indicate duration - those affected must roll Endurance, BD 2 in the book-keeping Phase before the start of each round, with successes setting a ceiling for all other actions, ie any surplus successes are lost - failing a roll gives a Hurt, fumbling means unconsciousness with normal recovery rolls)
- Add: Control Animals* (1)

Bird - can be applied to any bird, or you can take them yourself (with higher cost, of course)

- Switch: Home Heart (sing for a Full action and roll Presence, BD 2 modified for number of



subjects targeted, to give a feeling of safety, security, comfort and belonging - if there is any fear effect active, successes go first to reducing its intensity - remaining successes remove mental Hurts - any remaining after that become Presence Points)

- Switch: Lulling (sing for a Full action and roll Presence, BD 2 - all hearing it roll mental Resistance - net successes indicate duration of effect, which gives a dreamy, relaxed feeling - Adv for friendly socialising and Dis for any aggressive or harmful action - anyone fumbling the Resistance roll or taking 5 or more net successes settles into a contented, dreamless sleep)

Disadvantages

- Animal Attraction (animals in the area tend to follow you around)
- Animal Empathy (animals in the area mirror any strong emotions you have)
- Generosity (you are quick to give gifts to cement friendships and compensate for wrongs - it may make you popular, but you won't get rich in the modern world - may require a Wisdom roll to avoid)
- Horse Protector (if you allow a horse, pony or donkey to be harmed, lose 1 Destiny Point - if you harm one yourself, lose 2 Destiny Points - possibly with further losses in Favour)

Goibhniu

The smith of the Danann; one of the three gods of craft along with his brothers Credne the brazier and Luchta the wright. At the second battle of Magh Tuireadh they made and repaired weapons with amazing speed. Goibhniu could make a sword or spear with three blows of his hammer, and his weapons were always lethal. Ruadan, son of Bres and Brigit, was sent by the Fomorians to spy on him and drove one of his own spears through him. Goibhniu just pulled the spear out, killed Ruadan with it and went off to have his wound healed. He also had links with healing, presiding at the feast of Fled Ghoibhnenn where he served an ale which warded off disease, age and death. His Welsh parallel was Gofannon, of whom we know very little; both names just mean "smith". He survived into Irish and Scottish folklore as Gobhan Saor, a crafty smith or mason who outwitted the unwary.

Aegis

- Craft (Adv in places where objects are made; Dis in places where are objects are destroyed or allowed to decay)

Required Powers

- Switch: Master of Crafts* (any craftwork such as forging, sculpting or carving)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (M1)
- Switch: Detect Weakness (spotting the weak points in an object gives an Advantage to attempts to break it)
- Switch: Fast Crafting (you can rework a suitable piece of metal into any simple object up to sword size in seconds - requires a Full action of work, no Multiples, using a tool such as a hammer and a hard surface to rest on, and a roll of Ingenuity, BD 2, or BD 3 for a small object like an arrowhead - will not work on imbued objects)
- Switch: Knowing the Maker (if you are attacked with a weapon you have made or which has one of your powers active on it, its final damage is halved, rounding down)
- Switch: Object Sense (by concentrating on an object which you can see in some detail you can tell whether it is imbued - an Awareness roll, BD 2, may reveal information about the nature of its powers, often one power per success in the order Adds, Switches, Boosts, Skills but always at the GM's discretion and phrased in quite general terms)
- Switch: Temporary Effectiveness (you can rework an object to give it 2 Advantages when used for its main function(s) and for resisting damage - requires a Full action of work, no Multiples, using a tool such as a hammer and a hard surface to rest on - roll Ingenuity, BD 2, successes indicate duration of effect - will not work on imbued objects)
- Add: Healing Draught (2) (works as the *Healing** power, except that the effect is bound into a small quantity of liquid and works when someone drinks it - roll Add + Presence, BD 2 for level of effect, which reduces by 1 for each hour after the draught is created)





Disadvantages

- Iron Resonance (when you become emotional, all crafted iron or steel objects nearby vibrate with a faint, low hum - this won't normally cause any damage, it's just unsettling - if you want to take it twice this happens around you all the time, though you can damp it by an effort of will by spending 1 Presence Point for one location for one scene)
- Proud (you do not like to have your ability questioned - may need to roll Wisdom to avoid reacting)
- Too Practical (you do not enjoy fancy talk or fine art, preferring directness and the beauty of function - this may give a Dis in some situations)



Lugh

His name, also written as Lug, means “the shining one”, and he was one of the most important gods; his name gave rise to many place names including London and Lyons. He was the son of Cian, son of Dian Cecht, and Ethlinn, daughter of the Fomor Balor. Rescued from Balor, who wanted to kill the baby because of a prophecy that his grandson would kill him, Lugh was fostered by Manannan then sent to the court of Nuada. The tradition was that only someone versed in an art or craft could enter. Lug offered the gatekeeper a succession of professions in which he was skilled, but in each case the Tuatha De Danann already had someone of that profession. However, they did not have anyone who was versed in all of them, so he gained entry and the title Samildanach (“many-skilled”). He was also called Lámfada, “long-armed”, because of his ability to hurl a weapon or slingstone a long distance. He owned a magical spear, one of the four treasures of the Tuatha De Danann. He is described as a young, handsome, athletic man with a sort of inner radiance.

Nuada recognised Lugh's great ability and turned command over to him for the planning of the battle with the Fomor. During the battle Lugh came face to face with his grandfather Balor, who ordered his attendants to raise the lid of his great

eye that brought death to all it looked on. But Lugh hurled a magic stone, killing Balor by knocking the eye out of the back of his head, which killed a number of the Fomor behind him. Nuada had been killed by Balor, and Lugh became king for a while. The sons of Tuireann killed his father Cian, and in reparation he set them eight great tasks, to retrieve certain magical objects from far-flung corners of the world. They succeeded, but lay dying from their efforts, and Lugh refused to allow their father to help them.

Later he was the spiritual father of Cúchulainn, appearing to help him in battle on one occasion. He introduced the harvest festival Lughnasadh in honour of his foster mother Tailtu.

His Welsh analogue was Lleu Llaw Gyffes (“the fair one of the steady hand”), though their stories are quite different. Through the help of his magician uncle Gwydion Lleu overcame the prohibitions of his mother to get a name, weapons and a wife. The latter, Blodeuwedd, was made sorcerously out of flowers and later betrayed Lleu. It is said that the figure of Lancelot in the Arthurian tales is patterned after him.

Aegis

- Arts and Crafts (Adv where people are achieving excellence in skills, eg an artisan's workshop; Dis where people's talents are unused or denied, eg a mind-numbing production line or surrounded by couch potatoes)

Required Powers

- Add: Master of Skills* (3) (Lugh's special version of this power allows modern Skills to be raised, but only by one level)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Agility (M1)
- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)
- Skill: Fighting (Sling)
- Skill: Leadership
- Switch: Create Light (can cause your body to glow, with various uses - illuminating a small area continuously with an intensity like lamplight; an aura giving an Adv to impress or command, lasting a few minutes; an



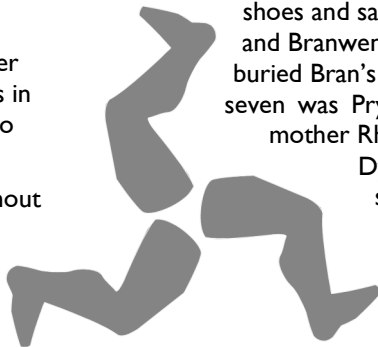
instantaneous flare to blind and stun - rolls are Presence, BD 2, only needed in the first two cases at the GM's discretion to see whether the power can be activated)

Spear, Gae Assail

- Switch: Effectiveness*
- Switch: Returns to Thrower

Disadvantages

- Glowing (your body glows when you become emotional - taken twice, you have a faint aura of light all the time, which intensifies when emotional)
- Signs of Youth (you appear younger than you are - this may bring a Dis in some situations where you need to gain people's respect)
- Vengeful (will punish a wrong without mercy - may need to roll Wisdom to avoid retaliating)



Manannan

Manannan mac Lir ("son of the sea") was the Irish god of the sea, standing with the Tuatha De Danann but usually thought not to be one of them, probably having an older origin. He appeared as a noble and handsome warrior, but was an accomplished shape-shifter and night-visitor of women, often assuming the shape of a sea-bird or heron. He would ride out over the waves in a chariot or on horseback. Legend has him as the patron or guardian of the Blessed Isles, Tír fa Thonn (the Land Under Wave) and many other otherworldly places. The most enduring version says he rules from Emain Ablach (Emain of the apple trees), an island in Tír Tairnigiri (the Land of Promise). This has been thought to be the same as the Arthurian Avalon, and has been said to be the Isle of Arran in Scotland. He's strongly linked with the Isle of Man, and may take his name from it.

In the stories Manannan tends to stand at one remove from the action, taking a tutelary role and setting things up for others to accomplish. He was the foster-father of Lugh, preparing and equipping him for his pivotal role in the war with the Fomor. His wife Fand had an affair with the hero Cúchulainn, but later returned. Manannan is skilled in magic, and taught the Danann the art of *feth fiada*, enveloping oneself in a magical mist to be invisible to enemies. Among his possessions was the crane bag, made from the skin of his son's

mistress Aoife who'd been turned into a crane. In it he kept his greatest treasures - at high tide they were visible, and at ebb tide they would vanish. He had a great cloak which caught the light and assumed many colours like the sea. With it he could change destinies: he shook it between his wife Fand and Cúchulainn to ensure that they would never meet again. He also had a boat which would go where he willed it without sail or oars, and a magic sword.

Manawydan fab Llyr was the Welsh analogue, but his main characteristic is intelligence and the ability to take up a wide range of crafts like making shoes and saddles. He was the brother of Bran and Branwen, one of the seven companions who buried Bran's head at White Hill. Another of the seven was Pryderi, who gave Manawydan his mother Rhiannon for a wife and the lands of

Dyfed to rule. Their happiness was spoiled when the beasts, people and buildings of the area mysteriously disappeared. They lived for a while by hunting, then went to towns in England where

Manawydan and Pryderi set up in various crafts. Their superior skill always led to other craftsmen losing business and planning to kill them, so that the friends had to move on. Returning to Dyfed they found an otherworldly fortress, in which Pryderi and Rhiannon became trapped. Manawydan caught one of an army of mice that was destroying his wheat and set out to hang it as a thief, but it turned out to be the shapeshifted wife of an enchanter who was behind all their troubles and Manawydan was able to negotiate for everything to be restored.

Aegis

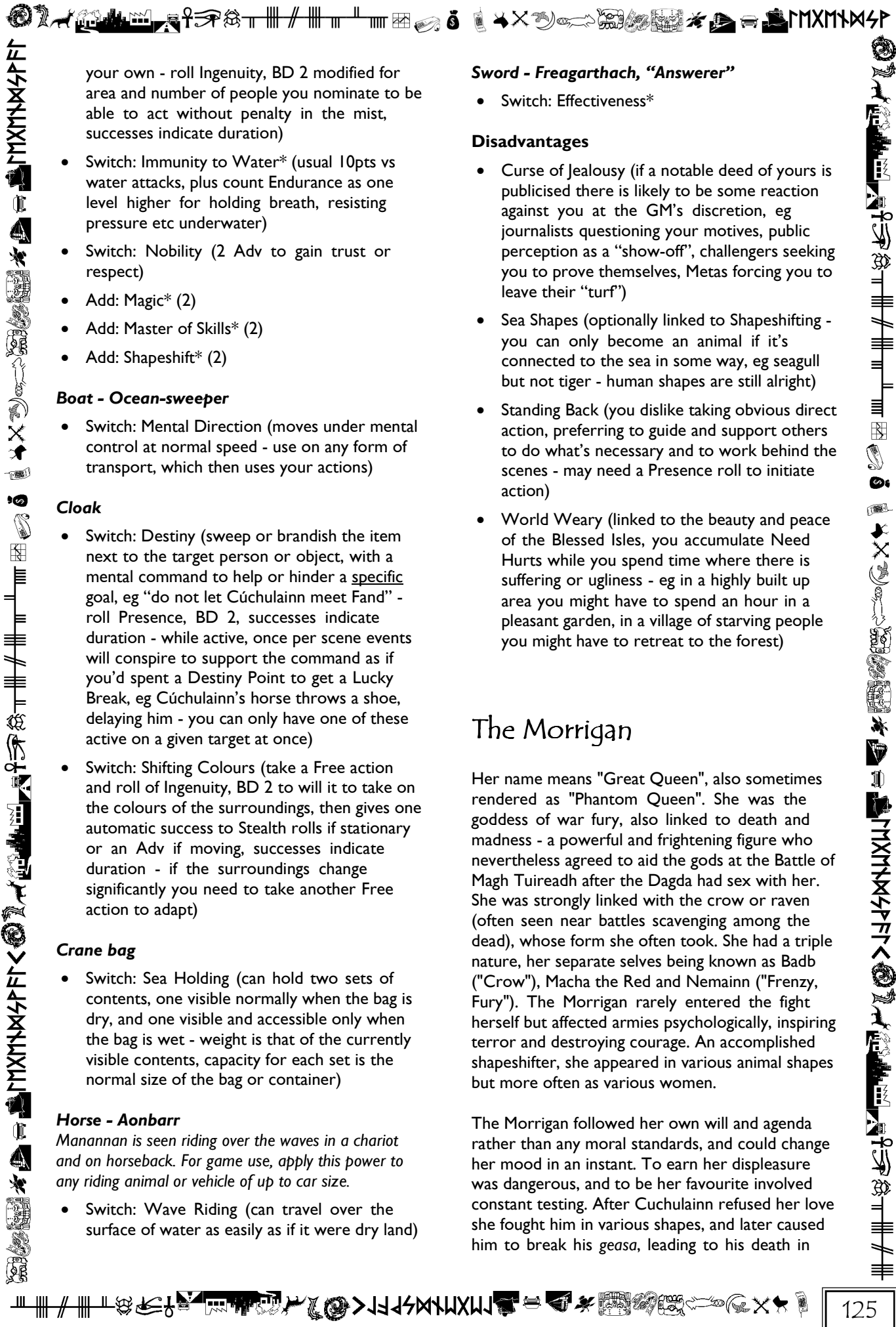
- Sea (Adv on, in or right beside a body of water; Dis in deserts or other unusually dry places)

Required Powers

- Boost: Ingenuity (M2)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (M1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Pilot Boat
- Skill: Riding
- Skill: Socialising
- Switch: Feth Fiada (summons a magical mist, which obscures the senses of others but not



your own - roll Ingenuity, BD 2 modified for area and number of people you nominate to be able to act without penalty in the mist, successes indicate duration)

- Switch: Immunity to Water* (usual 10pts vs water attacks, plus count Endurance as one level higher for holding breath, resisting pressure etc underwater)
- Switch: Nobility (2 Adv to gain trust or respect)
- Add: Magic* (2)
- Add: Master of Skills* (2)
- Add: Shapeshift* (2)

Boat - Ocean-sweeper

- Switch: Mental Direction (moves under mental control at normal speed - use on any form of transport, which then uses your actions)

Cloak

- Switch: Destiny (sweep or brandish the item next to the target person or object, with a mental command to help or hinder a specific goal, eg "do not let Cúchulainn meet Fand" - roll Presence, BD 2, successes indicate duration - while active, once per scene events will conspire to support the command as if you'd spent a Destiny Point to get a Lucky Break, eg Cúchulainn's horse throws a shoe, delaying him - you can only have one of these active on a given target at once)
- Switch: Shifting Colours (take a Free action and roll of Ingenuity, BD 2 to will it to take on the colours of the surroundings, then gives one automatic success to Stealth rolls if stationary or an Adv if moving, successes indicate duration - if the surroundings change significantly you need to take another Free action to adapt)

Crane bag

- Switch: Sea Holding (can hold two sets of contents, one visible normally when the bag is dry, and one visible and accessible only when the bag is wet - weight is that of the currently visible contents, capacity for each set is the normal size of the bag or container)

Horse - Aonbarr

Manannan is seen riding over the waves in a chariot and on horseback. For game use, apply this power to any riding animal or vehicle of up to car size.

- Switch: Wave Riding (can travel over the surface of water as easily as if it were dry land)

Sword - Freagarthach, "Answerer"

- Switch: Effectiveness*

Disadvantages

- Curse of Jealousy (if a notable deed of yours is publicised there is likely to be some reaction against you at the GM's discretion, eg journalists questioning your motives, public perception as a "show-off", challengers seeking you to prove themselves, Metas forcing you to leave their "turf")
- Sea Shapes (optionally linked to Shapeshifting - you can only become an animal if it's connected to the sea in some way, eg seagull but not tiger - human shapes are still alright)
- Standing Back (you dislike taking obvious direct action, preferring to guide and support others to do what's necessary and to work behind the scenes - may need a Presence roll to initiate action)
- World Weary (linked to the beauty and peace of the Blessed Isles, you accumulate Need Hurts while you spend time where there is suffering or ugliness - eg in a highly built up area you might have to spend an hour in a pleasant garden, in a village of starving people you might have to retreat to the forest)

The Morrigan

Her name means "Great Queen", also sometimes rendered as "Phantom Queen". She was the goddess of war fury, also linked to death and madness - a powerful and frightening figure who nevertheless agreed to aid the gods at the Battle of Magh Tuireadh after the Dagda had sex with her. She was strongly linked with the crow or raven (often seen near battles scavenging among the dead), whose form she often took. She had a triple nature, her separate selves being known as Badb ("Crow"), Macha the Red and Nemainn ("Frenzy, Fury"). The Morrigan rarely entered the fight herself but affected armies psychologically, inspiring terror and destroying courage. An accomplished shapeshifter, she appeared in various animal shapes but more often as various women.

The Morrigan followed her own will and agenda rather than any moral standards, and could change her mood in an instant. To earn her displeasure was dangerous, and to be her favourite involved constant testing. After Cuchulainn refused her love she fought him in various shapes, and later caused him to break his geasa, leading to his death in



battle. Though chaotic, she opposed forces which subverted the proper order of things, such as depriving the people of honour or harming the land.

Aegis

- Battle

Required Powers

- Switch: Shapeshift* (crow/raven)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M3)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Intimidation
- Switch: Curse*
- Switch: Immunity to Fear* (10 points “armour” against fear-type attacks)
- Switch: Raven’s Fare*
- Switch: See Death (with an Awareness roll, can get a vision of what killed someone - the longer ago it was, the harder the attempt)
- Add: Control Emotions* (Fear, Rage) (3)
- Add: See Future* (1)
- Add: Shapeshift (2)*

Disadvantages

- Lust (you have a Disadvantage to resist seduction attempts, and might have to roll Wisdom to avoid approaching someone attractive yourself)
- Needs Blood (you accumulate Need Hurts until at least a thimbleful of another human’s blood has touched your body)
- Scary (people are uncomfortable around you - Dis for friendly socialising)
- Short Temper (may require a Wisdom roll to avoid lashing out if you are slighted)



Nuada

The king of the Danann when they first arrived in Ireland. He had a sword from which none could escape unwounded, one of the four great treasures, and was married to Macha, a war goddess. Nuada lost his hand or arm (accounts vary) at the First Battle of Magh Tuireadh, fighting the Fir Bolg. This disqualified him from kingship, as only an unblemished person could rule. Dian Cecht, the god of medicine, made him a silver arm/hand and he gained the title Airgetlam (“silver hand”). Then Dian Cecht’s son Miach made him a new hand of flesh (and was killed by his father out of jealousy). This allowed Nuada to reclaim the kingship, displacing the unpopular Bres, which led to the second battle of Magh Tuireadh against the Fomorians. During this time he ceded the kingship to Lugh, recognising his superior talents. Nuada was killed by Balor in the battle.

So little is known about Nuada that it’s hard to construct a programme, but worth persevering for the cool silver arm! There was a Welsh figure, Nudd or Lludd, who sometimes has the title “silver hand” but again no detail. There was a Roman-British god called Nodons or Nodens, thought to be linked because of the similar names. He was a god of healing, associated with dogs (symbols of watchfulness and guardianship) and water. Nuada guarded his people; he was injured and healed; and silver is linked with water, both symbolising purity. So perhaps we have a ruler who’s both a warrior and a healer.

Aegis

- Rulership (Adv when there’s a body of people to lead, Dis when on your own with no people nearby)

Required Powers

- Skill: Leadership

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Tactics
- Switch: Immunity to Water* (usual 10pts vs water attacks, plus count Endurance as one



level higher for holding breath, resisting pressure etc underwater)

- Switch: Sense Death's Presence*
- Switch: Silver Arm (the flesh of one of your arms is converted to a metallic substance, highly conductive and generally indestructible as if it was an imbued object - can block weapon attacks, reach into fires, etc - +1 unarmed Base Damage, Adv to lifting and crushing)
- Add: Healing (1)*

Sword

- Switch: Effectiveness*

Disadvantages

- Generosity (you are quick to give gifts to cement friendships and compensate for wrongs - it may make you popular, but you won't get rich in the modern world - may require a Wisdom roll to avoid)
- Purity (Disadvantage for sneaky or underhand actions)
- Silver Arm (goes along with the Switch above - the arm marks you fairly obviously as a Meta, and because sensation is somewhat reduced may give a Dis on some actions requiring fine control)

Ogma

Sometimes called Ogma Grian-aineach (of the Sunny Countenance) and Ogma Cermait (of the Honeyed Mouth); known to the Gauls as Ogmios. A son of the Dagda. A powerful warrior, often cited as champion of the Tuatha, and master of the arts of eloquence, which the Celtic peoples counted greater than physical strength. Credited with the invention of the *ogham* form of writing. Appears as a well-built man with fair skin and long, curly hair; or as an old man, bald, with wrinkled, sun-darkened skin. At the second battle of Magh Tuireadh Ogma killed Tethra, a Fomorian king, and took his sword Orna which had the power of speech and could recount all deeds done by it.

Aegis

- Eloquence (Adv in places connected with creative use of language, eg library, novelist's study, parliamentary debating chamber; Dis where language is stifled or its products destroyed, eg a book-burning, oppressive prison or power-created zone of silence)

Required Powers

- Switch: Eloquence*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (M1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Fighting (Archery)
- Skill: Fighting (Club)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Oratory
- Switch: Glam Dicín (through bold oratory or song listing a person's faults the user creates a satire so powerful that it causes physical harm - must be heard to be effective, and at least based on truth - roll Oratory + Presence, BD 0, for damage which is Resisted as normal - any damage taken manifests on the skin as blotches, shrivelling, etc and gives a level of Unattractive Appearance until healed)
- Switch: Languages*
- Switch: Praise (a pronounced or sung verse emphasising the virtues and ability of the subject, must be heard to be effective - roll Oratory + Presence, BD 2 - each success removes 1 Hurt, and any remaining after all Hurts are gone become a temporary pool of points, spent one at a time for an Advantage on each of the subject's subsequent rolls until they are used up)

Sword - Orna

- Switch: Intelligence* (Average in all mental Attributes - is aware of its surroundings and can speak, cannot move on its own but can use its Presence Pool on actions performed with it)

Disadvantages

- Long Winded (you have difficulty stating things simply and concisely, making use of your speaking skills whether it's necessary or not - could earn a Dis in some situations, but mainly a matter for roleplaying)
- Pride (sensitive to insults and questioning of your abilities - may need a Wisdom roll to avoid responding)
- Signs of Age (aspects of your appearance change, eg grey or white hair, wrinkled skin)

HEROES

Arthur

The famous king who united Britain and formed the knightly fellowship of the Round Table, ridding the land of wicked knights and monsters. The earliest written fragments about him are in Welsh sources, probably focused around resistance to Saxon encroachments once the Romans withdrew. Most of the Arthur stories were written around 1100-1200CE by British and Continental authors, and he became the most popular figure in European literature. In general Arthur is the archetypal ruler, bringing social order and acting as patron to other knights.

In the medieval stories the sword in the stone could only be drawn out by the rightful king. Many knights tried in vain until Arthur, a lowly squire at the time, succeeded. Then it was revealed that he was the son of the previous king, Uther Pendragon, brought up by Sir Ector at Merlin's request. That blade later broke in battle, and he was given the sword Excalibur by the Lady of the Lake. (The Welsh version is Caledfwlch, and it is thought to be a corruption of Caladcholg, "hard dinter", which appears in Irish myths.) While he carried it he could not be defeated. Its scabbard, which preserved the wearer from wounds, was stolen by his sister Morgan le Fay.

Arthur founded the Round Table with its ideals of chivalry, married Guinevere, and brought law and unity to the kingdom. Following the appearance of the Holy Grail all the knights quested for it, but only three were successful. The love of Guinevere and Arthur's greatest knight, Lancelot, began the unravelling of Arthur's works, fanned by Mordred (Arthur's half-sister Morgause deceived him into sleeping with her, and Mordred was the result). Finally Arthur killed Mordred at the Battle of Camlan, but was mortally wounded himself. He made Bedivere return Excalibur to the Lady of the Lake, and a barge crewed by three queens took Arthur away to Avalon to be healed and return when Britain needed him once more.

Required Powers

- Skill: Leadership

Optional Powers

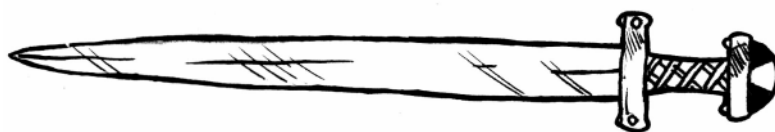
- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)
- Skill: Riding
- Skill: Etiquette
- Switch: Nobility (2 Adv to gain trust or respect)
- Switch: Universal Energy*

Sword - Excalibur

- Switch: Effectiveness*
- Add: Invincibility (1) (works as a Switch, costed as an Add - you are immune to unconsciousness from accumulated damage, though not from single blows, and have an Advantage for recovering consciousness - if you have 5 or more Hurts/Injuries and lose hold of the item, the next Hurt/Injury you take will knock you out)

Disadvantages

- Personal Code (chivalry - being virtuous, helping those weaker than yourself, etc - lose a Destiny Point if you break it)
- Tied to the Land (optional, linked with *Universal Energy* - if you are ill or Injured, or if you are ignoble, dishonest or mean, living things and social relationships in your vicinity will deteriorate - so "rule" your neighbourhood well!)
- Too Idealistic (you have a great vision of how things should be, but you're continually surprised by human failings which throw a spanner in the works - possibly a Dis if you're trying to understand the less noble side of human nature)





Cúchulainn

The greatest Irish hero, a mighty warrior, son of the god Lugh and a mortal woman. He got his name, which means “hound of Culann”, at the age of 7 when he killed the great hound of the smith Culann and offered to take over its guarding duties till another could be trained. He took up weapons after overhearing a druid’s prophecy that one who did so that day would be famous but short-lived. Normally Cúchulainn was short, dark-haired, good-looking and very fast and agile. He was known for his battle frenzy or warp spasm, which distorted his body horrifically and made him dangerous even to allies. Once he was returning from battle in such a state, and all the women bared their breasts to distract him so he could be seized and plunged into three successive vats of water to cool him off. He was also known for performing the warrior’s “salmon leap” high into the air. Women were attracted to Cúchulainn, including Manannan’s wife Fand at one point, which strained relationships with his own wife Emer. His most famous weapon was the Gáe Bolg, “belly spear” - when it entered a man’s body thirty barbs opened so that it “filled every limb and crevice with wounds” (it was usually thrown with the foot).

During the war with Connacht Cúchulainn defended Ulster single-handedly when all the other warriors were rendered weak as a woman in childbirth by the curse of Macha (see *Epona* above). He carved a swathe of destruction through the Connacht warriors and killed many of their champions including, reluctantly, his old friend Ferdiad after four days of single combat. There are many other tales of his deeds. One of his affairs produced his only son, but when he later met the young man he killed him before discovering his identity. Later Cúchulainn refused the love of the Morrigan, and she set events in motion to destroy him. Towards the end of the fight he strapped himself to a pillar stone so he could die standing up. His enemies only dared to approach when a crow perched on his shoulder and an otter began to drink his blood.

Required Powers

- Switch: Fury*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)

- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Switch: Beauty*
- Switch: Leaping*
- Switch: Lightning Reactions*

Spear - Gae Bolg

- Switch: Extra Damage (if an attack gets through to cause an Injury to a living creature, the target must immediately Resist a second set of damage, weapon’s Base Damage + 3, which cannot be blocked by armour)

Disadvantages

- Berserk (tendency to be overcome by rage in the heat of battle - Disadvantage for some reason- and perception-type actions)
- Friendslayer (if there’s a chance that one of your attacks will hit a friend or ally, eg due to a miss or fumble, it automatically does so)
- Too Brave (you usually accept challenges and take the lead in battles regardless of the odds - may need a Wisdom roll to avoid)
- Warp Spasm (optional - if you use *Fury*, your face and body swell and distort to become weird and frightening for the rest of the scene, giving a level of Unattractive Appearance - this replaces any Attractive Appearance you normally have)

Fionn mac Cumhail

Sometimes rendered into English as “Finn mac Cool” (it means “Fair, son of Cumal”), he was the most famous leader of the Fianna, a band of elite Irish warriors who swore allegiance to the High King rather than their own clan. As a boy he served a druid who had caught the Salmon of Knowledge. The young Fionn was charged with cooking it. He burned his thumb on the fish, and when he put it in his mouth to cool it he gained the wisdom the druid sought: the power of divination. He was made leader of the Fianna after saving the High King’s palace from a demon. Fionn was tall, fair-haired and handsome, a great fighter and athlete. He had relationships with many women, producing numerous children. Fionn’s many adventures with the Fianna involve hunting, battles and overcoming monsters and sorcery.





His less admirable side is seen in a story from his twilight years. He was betrothed to Gráinne, but she eloped with the young and beautiful Diarmuid, one of Fionn's warriors. He pursued them, Diarmuid died from the wound of a boar when Fionn withheld a healing draught, and Gráinne killed herself. Accounts of Fionn's death vary, and some say he sleeps in a cave, ready to help Ireland in her hour of need. His stories are known across Ireland, Gaelic Scotland and the Isle of Man.

Required Powers

- Boost: Agility (+1)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Leadership
- Skill: Oratory
- Skill: Survival
- Switch: All-Knowing*
- Switch: Beauty*

Disadvantages

- Adventure Magnet (if anything notable is going on in your vicinity you'll get caught up in it somehow - don't even try ignoring a mugging, avoiding a riot, etc unless you have Destiny to spend and a generous GM)
- Personal Code (the Fianna were expected to uphold the virtues of Celtic society - hospitality, generosity, truthfulness, respect - lose a Destiny Point if you break this code)
- The Fair One (your hair is so fair it almost shines, giving a Disadvantage for attempts at stealth)

Merlin

The famous magician and prophet of the later Arthurian stories, acting as tutor and counsellor to Arthur. His legend draws on those of several other characters, including the Welsh poet Myrddin, the Scottish poet Lailoken and the Irish king Suibhne Gelt: all of these go mad as the result of a battle and live in the woods as wild men, the first two

gaining the gift of prophecy. Britain was anciently called Clas Myrddyn, "Merlin's Enclosure".

The Arthurian Merlin was said to be the son of an otherworldly man or demon and a mortal nun, and as a boy divined the underground battle between two dragons that kept destroying King Vortigern's tower. Later his magic allowed Uther Pendragon to sleep with Igraine in the likeness of her husband, which led to the birth of Arthur, who he guided over many years. Merlin's story ended when he showed his magic to the maiden Nimue or Viviane (who may be the Lady of the Lake) and she used it to imprison him in a tower or tree; in other versions he retired to the Otherworld of his own volition.

Required Powers

- Add: Magic* (2)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Skill: Natural History
- Skill: Oratory
- Skill: Psychology
- Skill: Survival
- Add: See Future* (2)

Disadvantages

- Delusional (you have a false belief about the world, eg "I'm being observed by a secret conspiracy", "I can fly like a bird - if I want to", etc - can be taken multiple times for different delusions - the GM may occasionally have your own magic come into play subconsciously to create events that reinforce the delusion, without telling you it's happening, no more than once per session and especially if you're intoxicated or mentally unbalanced)
- Guardian of Britain (you must act for the wellbeing of the land and people of Britain - that's all the people, not necessarily individuals - and may lose Destiny if you don't)
- Unworldly (Disadvantage to resist the blandishments of your preferred sex, and for flirting or seduction attempts of your own)

Robin Hood

An English hero who fought injustice and corruption, robbing the rich to give to the poor. Robert of Locksley was a Saxon noble who spoke out against the occupying Normans and was made an outlaw. He went to live in Sherwood Forest with loyal followers, taking the name of Robin Hood, and his band of “merry men” soon attracted others including Little John, Will Scarlet and Friar Tuck; his love, of course, was the Lady Marian. They made a habit of “inviting” wealthy travellers to dine with them in the greenwood, then “requesting” that they pay handsomely for the privilege - this money was then given to those who suffered from the excesses of Prince John, the Sheriff of Nottingham and Sir Guy of Gisborne.

Robin’s most notable talent was his skill at archery. On one occasion the Sheriff arranged a major archery contest to draw him out. Robin attended in the guise of an old beggar, and won by splitting an opponent’s arrow in the bullseye; he and his men then fought their way out. Eventually King Richard returned from the Crusades, married Robin and Marian and restored Robin’s lands and titles. Their happiness did not last: Richard died fighting abroad, and John became King and captured Robin, aiming to have Marian for himself. Marian took sanctuary in Kirklees Abbey, and when Robin arrived, injured, the Prioress poisoned him or bled his wounds (accounts vary) because she coveted Marian’s estate and feared the King. From his death-bed Robin shot an arrow into the forest, and Little John buried him where it fell.

This programme is all about enhancing Normal abilities, rather than gaining funky powers: it’s good for producing a smart, sneaky adventurer type.

Required Powers

- Skill: Archery (can be taken twice)

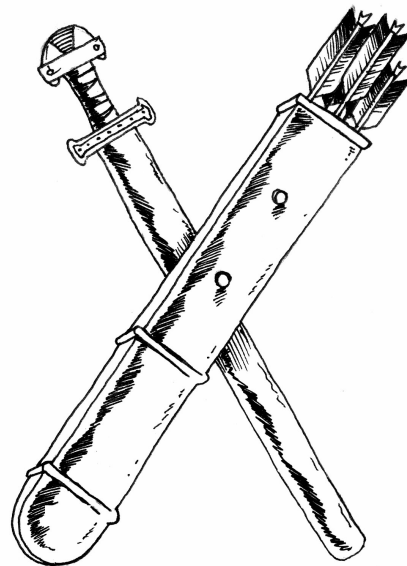
Optional Powers

- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)

- Skill: Fighting (Quarterstaff)
- Skill: Leadership
- Skill: Natural History
- Skill: Riding
- Skill: Stealth
- Skill: Subterfuge
- Skill: Survival
- Switch: Far Shot (you can make a ranged attack at any target you can see clearly, regardless of normal range penalties or limits – takes an extra Free action of aiming)

Disadvantages

- Cannot Harm a Woman (lose a Destiny Point for doing so)
- Champion of the People (you are bound by the need to help the poor and oppressed, and may lose a Destiny Point for ignoring such a plight)
- Rascal (you take every opportunity to trick or humiliate your opponents - gain no Destiny for defeating someone unless you have done this first)





MONSTERS

Brownie

These small men in rough brown clothes attached themselves to a house or farm and performed domestic tasks, coming out at night to do the work that had been left undone by the servants or helping in the fields. They were commonly linked to a stream or pool. Descriptions vary - they often had shaggy brown hair and beard, and were sometimes said to have no noses (just nostril holes) or mitten-like hands with no separate fingers. They sometimes took a particular interest in one family member, helping and advising them. Brownies were more often heard than seen - if people were about they might hide in some cupboard or container, or their voice might be heard from outside.

They were extremely sensitive creatures. If they heard their work being criticised, that was the end of it. Giving thanks or reward (eg new clothes to replace their ragged ones) directly also drove them away, though often they were pleased by bread and milk being left where they could find it. If a brownie was offended its mischievous nature came to the fore and it became a boggart, tormenting the family to distraction.

Required Powers

- Switch: Size* Small (I)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Skill: Home-making
- Skill: Stealth
- Skill: Swimming
- Switch: Elusive (2 Disadvantages for others to perceive you - coupled with Stealth and Small Size this can often lead to effective invisibility, especially at night - can be switched on or off at will with a Free action, which is handy for getting served in shops)
- Switch: Night Vision*
- Switch: Underwater Breathing
- Switch: Work of Many (for any domestic or farm task, and other manual work at the GM's discretion, you may trade Advantages on a roll for being able to do the work of an extra person, which allows more work to be done

or the time required to be shorter - eg trading 2 Advantages and making the roll allows you to do three people's work in a given time or one person's work in a third of normal time)

Disadvantages

- Boggart (linked with at least one of Proud or Unthankable - if offended you have a powerful urge to retaliate by playing tricks on the offender and others, generally to cause great annoyance rather than direct harm - accumulate Need Hurts for scenes where you don't play a trick on anyone - once you've significantly inconvenienced the offender you may spend a Destiny Point to go back to normal)
- No Nose (!) (Disadvantage in some social situations)
- Proud (cannot stand your work being criticised - usually leads to withholding help rather than retaliation - may need a Presence roll to avoid reacting badly)
- Unthankable (cannot stand being offered thanks or reward directly, and will not accept such, though commenting on the quality of work is alright - usually leads to withholding help rather than retaliation - may need Presence roll to avoid)
- Unusual Size (tied to Size)

Fachan

One of the delightful creatures of Scottish folklore, the fachan had one leg, one arm coming out of its chest and a single eye. Its body was covered in dark blue, stiff, matted feathers which acted as armour. It has been described wielding a many-chained flail or mace. It attacked travellers in remote places.

Required Powers

- Boost: Strength (M1)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (M1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Flail)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Switch: Armour* (feathers)
- Switch: Size* Large (I)





Disadvantages

- One Arm (take once for a useless arm, twice to change body shape to one arm only)
- One Eye (similar)
- One Leg (must take this at least once for Dis to all movement; can take twice to change to one-legged body shape with no further movement penalty)
- Ugly (Dis in many social situations)
- Unusual Size (tied to Size)

Fomor

Little is known about this race (often called Fomorians, Fomoiré and other variants), which fought against the successive groups that came to Ireland and was finally defeated by the Tuatha De Danann at the Second Battle of Magh Tuireadh. They may be ancient gods, battling against those brought by the invading Celts, but are usually portrayed as demonic pirates, probably in reference to sea-raiders from Scotland and Scandinavia. Many of them are monstrously misshapen, but some (like Elatha, father of Bres) can be attractive and even noble. They seem to be cruel bullies, demanding labour and tribute from those they conquer. Their most famous leader was Balor of the Baleful Eye - one of his eyes (normally kept closed) killed all it looked upon. He was killed by his grandson Lugh at Magh Tuireadh.

Required Powers

- Skill: Intimidation

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (M1)
- Boost: Endurance (M1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Fighting (pick Sword, Spear or Club - take once only)
- Skill: Pilot Boat
- Skill: Swimming
- Switch: Baleful Eye (not as powerful as Balor's, produces a terrifying glare that may cause fear in all who see it within about 20ft - takes a Full action, roll Presence, BD 2, result is mental damage opposed by Mental Resistance, "unconscious" means fleeing in terror)
- Switch: Underwater Breathing

Disadvantages

- Body Warp (the Fomor often had drastic and terrifying variations on the humanoid form, eg no feet; bloated lips in the breast and four eyes in the back; one arm, one eye, one leg - pick one variation each time this is taken - marks you as a Meta and may influence social tasks)
- Bully (once per scene, lose a Presence Point if someone stands up to your threats - this usually involves a contest of Intimidation or a willingness to fight rather than give in)
- Greedy (you will take an opportunity to get material benefits even if it's unwise to do so - roll Wisdom if you want to resist)



Redcap

This malignant goblin was named for its practice of re-dyeing its cap with human blood. It lived in old ruined towers and castles where wicked deeds had been done. Redcaps looked like short thickset old men with long prominent teeth, skinny fingers with eagle-like talons, large red eyes and shoulder-length, bloodstained hair, carrying a pikestaff.

Required Powers

- Switch: Claws and Fangs*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (+1)
- Boost: Presence (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Fighting (Staff)
- Skill: Stealth
- Switch: Fury*





- Switch: Raven's Fare*
- Switch: Size* Small (1)

Disadvantages

- Needs Blood (accumulate Need Hurts per scene until at least a thimbleful of another human's blood has touched your body)
- Red Eyes (red irises mark you as a Meta)
- Unusual Size (tied to Size)
- Vicious (must roll Wisdom to "pull" a blow or avoid attacking a fallen or helpless opponent)

Spriggan

These ugly Cornish fairies were found at old ruins and barrows guarding buried treasure and generally acting as fairy bodyguards. They were also said to be busy thieves. Certainly their disposition was poor, and they caused mischief to those that offended them. They sent storms to blight crops. Sometimes they stole mortal children and left their own ugly changelings. Though usually small, they had the ability to swell to enormous size (some say they were the ghosts of the old giants).

Required Powers

- Add: Size Change (1) (works like a Switch - your normal Size is Small (1), but you can change to Large (1) - changing in either direction takes a Free action and an Ingenuity roll, BD 2, with a maximum duration for Large Size of 5 mins per success - you cannot "stop" the change at normal human size, only the two states are possible)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Spear)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Security
- Skill: Stealth
- Skill: Theft
- Add: Control Weather* (Wind) (1)

Disadvantages

- Foul Disposition (you find it difficult to be friendly, even on the rare occasions when you want to - Dis for Socialising)

- Ugly (must be taken once for notably poor appearance, can be taken twice for seriously grotesque)
- Unusual Size (required, tied to Size)
- Vengeful (no slight or unkindness should go unpunished, though an act of mischief usually suffices - may need to roll Wisdom to avoid)

Water Horse

This unpleasant creature is known in Scotland, Ireland, Wales and the Isle of Man, by names including Kelpie and Each Uisge. It appears near water in the form of a fine, sleek horse or pony, usually black or grey, luring riders on to its back. When they mount it plunges into the water and the luckless rider is drowned, often to be devoured by the creature (apart from the liver, which floats to the surface). They have been known to appear as handsome men, but the transformation is always incomplete in some detail, eg they still have horse's ears, hooves or a piece of water-weed in their hair. If they can be captured they are useful for heavy work, though they escape eventually.

Required Powers

- Switch: Shapeshift* (Horse - or if starting as a horse, Human)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Athletics
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Subterfuge
- Switch: Night Vision*
- Switch: Underwater Breathing

Disadvantages

- Flawed Shape (your human form has some sign of your horse-like or watery nature - could be taken twice)
- Needs Flesh (accumulate Need Hurts per scene you do not eat a quantity of raw meat, preferably human)
- Needs Water (accumulate Need Hurts per scene you do not immerse yourself in water)

ANGELS

In Judaism, Christianity and Islam there have been said to be entities acting as intermediaries between humans and God. The picture of these has varied - only two angels are named in the Bible and Koran (though unnamed angels appear in various roles), but many others are identified in later literature, with different structures for the heavenly hierarchy and different angels occupying the highest positions. Many of them were originally Mesopotamian. Although I found names for lots of angels, it was hard to get enough detail to build programmes. The four below are the most commonly mentioned archangels. Note that the angelic "code" includes protecting the well-being of individuals, but is more about protecting and promoting virtue, even if that means harming individuals for the greater good.

Important note: unlike the other Sources in the book, angels are part of major living religions. While not all their members believe in the existence of angels, you or others in your gaming group may find their inclusion in the game disrespectful. There are reasons they've been included here, like the internal logic of how Sources arise and giving those traditions some Meta representation. None of those reasons are important enough to keep in elements that stop you enjoying the game. I hope you'll feel able to make a few changes and carry on, for instance giving well-known Metas imbued by angels other Sources instead.

Gabriel

His name means "God is my strength" or "the strong one (or hero) of God", and comes from a Sumerian root meaning "governor". He was often seen as God's messenger, announcing the impending births of John the Baptist and Christ, and telling Daniel of the future. It was said that he selected souls to be born into the material world, told them what they needed to know on Earth in the womb, then silenced them before birth by pressing his finger on to their lips, leaving the cleft below the nose. He was also said to be the angel who destroyed the sinful cities of Sodom and Gomorrah.

Gabriel was an angel of mercy, vengeance, death and revelation. Mohammed, the great prophet of

Islam, claimed that Gabriel dictated the Koran to him - Muslims see him as the Spirit of Truth. In Christianity Gabriel is often thought to be the only female archangel, but Muslims would not agree with this. Gabriel is usually shown as a majestic figure in rich clothes, sometimes with a crown and sceptre. In 1951 the Pope declared him to be the patron of telecommunications workers.

Aegis

- Communication (Adv in places where lots of information is flowing, eg stock exchange or air traffic control; Dis when cut off from all information flows, eg on your own in the middle of nowhere)

Required Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (M3)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (+1)
- Boost: Presence (M2)
- Boost: Awareness (M1)
- Skill: Psychology
- Switch: Eloquence*
- Switch: Languages*
- Switch: Sensitive Hearing
- Switch: Speak Across Miles (the user can have a two-way spoken conversation with one person at a time across any distance - can only speak to people you've met previously - others at the target's location don't hear the user, so targets will seem to be talking to themselves, and the user doesn't hear other people)
- Switch: Voice of the Herald (boosts the volume and resonance of your voice, with various uses - can cut through noise or shout across distances - can give an automatic success for impressing or intimidating - can also be used as a sonic attack to stun and deafen those nearby - roll Presence, BD 2, treat as an explosion, Dis to Resist for those with Sensitive Hearing, "unconscious" means one-scene deafness and "dead" means permanent deafness - any effect over 5 may damage brittle objects)
- Add: Flight* (3 with wings or 2 without)



Disadvantages

- Angelic Voice (even when you're not using powers, your voice has a resonant and compelling quality that marks you as metahuman)
- Honesty (you are unable to knowingly tell an untruth or mislead someone deliberately, though you may choose to keep silent)
- Needs Virtue (accumulate Need Hurts until an act of virtue takes place in your presence - it can be helping someone else, righting a wrong or self-improvement, as long as the motivation is genuine - you can trigger it yourself by righting a wrong, as long as it's not trivial)
- Wings (tied to winged Flight)



Michael

The highest of all the angels, his name means "Who is like God". He leads the armies of Heaven, and fought and captured Satan in the angels' rebellion. On Judgment Day he will battle the forces of evil again, and weigh the virtue and sin in the souls of mortals. Michael is God's champion - an angel of destruction and vengeance, but also a protector. In Islam he is the lord of natural forces. He represents courage and motivation. Michael is usually depicted as young, strong and handsome, winged and bearing an unsheathed sword - sometimes with a shield, spear and mail coat too. He is also seen holding the scales of justice or carrying a banner.

Aegis

- Righteousness (Adv in places where morality and justice are pursued, eg police station, monastery; Dis in places where they are rejected, eg brothel, well established criminal hide-out)

Required Powers

- Boost: Presence (M3)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Strength (M2)
- Boost: Agility (+1)
- Boost: Endurance (M2)
- Skill: Fighting (Sword)
- Skill: Fighting (Unarmed)
- Skill: Leadership

- Switch: Elemental Resistance (4 points of "armour" against all elemental forces - heat, cold, wind, lightning, etc)
- Switch: Immunity to Fear*
- Switch: See Righteousness*
- Add: Flight* (3 with wings, or 2 without)

Sword

- Switch: Flaming (focusing your will through the weapon causes it to burst into flame, doing 2 extra Base Damage to targets vulnerable to heat - takes a Free action to trigger, and is a maintenance effect - the weapon and wielder are not harmed by the flame, but it may ignite other flammables - also gives an Adv for intimidation!)

Disadvantages

- Cannot Ignore Injustice (if you encounter an unjust situation your strong instinct is to fix it - if common sense indicates leaving it alone, roll Wisdom to do so)
- Flame Eyes (when you become emotional flames are visible in your eyes)
- Lack of Compromise (for a lot of people life is full of little adaptations, bending rules to get by and not visibly rocking the boat, but you stick to your principles no matter what - if you really want to be flexible you need to roll Ingenuity, BD 2)
- Needs Virtue (accumulate Need Hurts until an act of virtue takes place in your presence - it can be helping someone else, righting a wrong or self-improvement, as long as the motivation is genuine - you can trigger it yourself by righting a wrong, as long as it's not trivial)
- Wings (tied to winged Flight)





Raphael

His name means “God has healed” or “blessing from God”, and he is often seen in a healing and teaching role. He passed on knowledge of medicine and exorcism to Tobias, taught Noah how to construct the Ark and showed Solomon how to bind demons to construct his great Temple. He healed Abraham of the pain of circumcision and mended Jacob’s thigh after he wrestled with another angel. He is also charged to heal the Earth itself. Raphael serves as a guide in the underworld, and is a general friend and protector of humanity, particularly protecting pilgrims, travellers and the young. He is often shown carrying a pilgrim’s staff.

Aegis

- Guardianship (Adv for helping and protecting those in need; Dis when acting for personal gain or to harm those weaker than you)

Required Powers

- Add: Healing (3)*

Optional Powers

- Boost: Endurance (+1)
- Boost: Wisdom (M2)
- Boost: Presence (M2)
- Boost: Awareness (+1)
- Skill: Fighting (Staff)
- Skill: Medicine
- Skill: Psychology
- Switch: Blessing*
- Switch: Master of Lore* (any archaic knowledge)
- Switch: Purify Earth (removes toxins, pollution and other blights on healthy natural systems from an area - roll Presence, BD 2, and read the number of successes on the distance chart for the radius cleansed - could also oppose certain powers within a smaller area)
- Switch: Subdue Demons (allows you to command spirit entities which have fully entered the earth plane, ie sprites - used on one at a time, takes a Full action, roll Presence, BD 2 opposed by mental Resistance, net successes show duration levels the control lasts - often used simply to command the spirit to leave its host - can also be used to sense the presence of sprites with an Awareness roll, BD 2, successes show radius of sensing area)
- Add: Flight* (3 with wings, or 2 without)

- Add: Shield (3) (projects an energy field of light that resists all forms of physical damage - the default version appears and is used as a physical shield, taking just a Free action to create, projected and movable up to arm’s length, with armour strength of Add + Presence - you can also extend it to cover an area as a Full action maintenance effect - roll Add + Presence, BD 2 with successes spent for distance levels of an arc that protects against a directional attack, +1 for a bubble that encloses the area completely, or to add to protection - you can only have one shield existing at a time - if damage exceeds its armour rating the shield shatters and dissipates, remaining damage may harm those behind it, and the user takes a mental Hurt)

Disadvantages

- Needs Virtue (accumulate Need Hurts until an act of virtue takes place in your presence - it can be helping someone else, righting a wrong or self-improvement, as long as the motivation is genuine - you can trigger it yourself by righting a wrong, as long as it’s not trivial)
- Raven’s Curse (at the end of any round in which someone dies within your sight, take a physical Hurt - if a large number die at once, you might take an Injury and even fall unconscious)
- Too Protective (you tend to interfere in people’s lives even if they could manage without your help - may need a Wisdom roll to avoid doing so)
- Wings (tied to winged Flight)

Uriel

Uriel’s nature and deeds are shadowy and hard to define, but he seems to be a kind of mystic. It is said that he “watches over thunder and terror” and is the “sharpest-sighted spirit of all in heaven”. His name may mean “fire of God”, “my light is like God” or “God is (my) light”. He may have wrestled with Jacob, helped bury Adam and warned Noah of the impending flood, though these are also credited to other angels. He was placed in charge of the underworld, and disclosed heavenly knowledge (like celestial phenomena and the fate of the fallen angels) to prophets. Some say that he brought alchemy and the Jewish mystical system called Qabalah to earth. Uriel is also associated with creative arts like literature and music, and with psychic abilities. (It’s worth noting that passing on





knowledge includes deciding what should not be revealed, and a Uriel character could take the role of a guardian of Things Man Was Not Meant to Know.)

Aegis

- Revelation (Adv in places where uncommon knowledge is uncovered or passed on, eg a university or archaeological dig; Dis where people are deprived of knowledge or inspiration, eg book burning, brainwashing lab)

Required Powers

- Boost: Awareness (M2)

Optional Powers

- Boost: Wisdom (+1)
- Boost: Ingenuity (M2)
- Boost: Presence (M2)
- Skill: Investigation
- Skill: Occult
- Skill: Psychology
- Switch: Distance Vision
- Switch: Immunity to Divination* (you have 10 points of "armour" against attempts to discover your nature, location, thoughts, emotions etc by Meta powers, magic or psychic abilities - *Master of the Gate** still detects you as a Meta, but gives no further detail)
- Switch: Night Vision*
- Switch: Send Vision (projects an illusionary scene into the mind of the target, a sort of mindscape which they can move through and

observe but not affect unless the user wishes it - generally used to impart information, show the consequences of current actions and so on but could be used to distract, frighten or even immobilise someone in combat - roll Ingenuity, Base Dice 2 if target is asleep, 1 if awake but relaxed, 0 if awake and actively concentrating on something, modified for distance level of range, opposed by mental Resistance if the target consciously resists, maintenance effect - the target can use subsequent Full actions to try to "break out", resolved through opposed Presence rolls - although easier to send, dreams are remembered less clearly afterwards)

- Add: Flight* (3 with wings, or 2 without)
- Add: Magic* (2) (Style: Adv Perception and Cosmos, Dis Antipathy)
- Add: See Future* (1)

Disadvantages

- Silver Eyes (your eyes are solid silver in colour)
- Cryptic (you tend to speak in riddles and make even routine conversations sound deeply meaningful - this can be deeply irritating and could even be a Disadvantage, eg if you try to put someone at their ease with small talk or issue crisp commands in combat)
- Needs Virtue (accumulate Need Hurts until an act of virtue takes place in your presence - it can be helping someone else, righting a wrong or self-improvement, as long as the motivation is genuine - you can trigger it yourself by righting a wrong, as long as it's not trivial)
- Wings (tied to winged Flight)



SETTING: LEGENDARY EARTH

“As I have learned since, I was not the first anomaly to exist... but on that day of my freedom in 1939, this world had its first confrontation with the fantastic. The golden age of miracles would begin, and in the years to come, the world would know the presence of the unnatural and extraordinary as part of reality.”

The original Human Torch, *Marvels*
Kurt Busiek and Alex Ross, Marvel Comics



THE WAY OF THE WORLD

Legendary Earth is the “default” setting for Legends Walk. Its inhabitants don’t know it by that name, of course. It is a world much the same as our own - perhaps strange occurrences and abilities have always been a more definite part of its history, but the main divergence point is the public appearance of metahumans in the year 2000. Rolling forward to the setting’s present of 2020, some things have changed while some have stayed stubbornly the same. Humans who can lift trucks and melt steel are still humans.

Changing the world

There is, in general, less human misery and ecological devastation. For instance, logging and burning in the Amazon rainforest has been forcibly stopped except for acceptable quotas (which remain a topic of heated debate); drought-stricken areas now have oases of green; international financiers take decisions very carefully, company directors treat their workers more fairly, and bureaucrats remember the people they serve

Designer’s note

While I was working on *Legends Walk*, the more I thought about it the more the timescale and the presence of Metas affected the world - and so *Legendary Earth* was born. You might prefer to set your games in a present-day world essentially the same as our own instead, to give a more normal, familiar background so that the Metas will stand out even more. In that case you’ll obviously have to juggle a few things, but many of the ideas here could still be used in some form. Notes on other possible settings follow the “standard” setting write-up.

Comicbooks usually allow superheroes to make routine use of teleporters and spacecraft and spawn new doohickeys by the hatful without having the slightest effect on the lives of ordinary people. (Comic worlds also have time passing at multiple rates at once, allowing historical events to have limited effects on characters who don’t age. Try not to think about it.) There’s a screen of plot and suspenders between the two. Players, however, being inquisitive creatures that get into everything, may ponder these issues. You might enjoy a speculative, “what if?” game - or you might prefer to concentrate on conflicts between characters with the minimum of distractions.

because they’ve been told they’re being watched. Meta abilities can be used quickly and directly to make a difference.

If only things were that simple. Altering the weather in one place has consequences that may stretch to the global scale, and there may be many Metas messing around with it at any time. This has led to freakish storms called Maelstroms, and other conditions in places that wouldn’t normally get them, including some chilling “natural” disasters. There are now a number of Metas with weather control abilities who see it as an important part of their role to limit the activities of their fellows. There are even some environmentalists (disillusioned or otherwise) who actively campaign against Metas. Forcing changes on businesses or governments can lead to people losing their



livelihoods, or systems set up without proper consideration that turn out to victimise some other group. If you save people from disaster or starvation, what happens to them afterwards? Can the support services and natural resources of the area cope? After all, you won't be around to help...

Metas find their reputations balance on a knife-edge. If they take action toward a worthy goal (from saving starving children to bringing down an inhuman bureaucratic system) and it works the populace will praise them to the skies - a popular godlike figure engages people more than most Normal politicians ever could. But if it doesn't work they'll be reviled as people's instinct to drag down those "above" them takes hold. And, of course, any action they take is likely to make some people winners and some losers - so they're always storing up resentment from somebody.



International affairs

"Stormwatch could expunge all life in this city in under an hour. Given a day, twenty superhumans could destroy all life on Earth. Stormwatch is the only real superpower of the late twentieth century."

Jack Hawksmoor, *Stormwatch: A Finer World*
Warren Ellis and Bryan Hitch, *Wildstorm*

The international balance of power has changed significantly. The second half of the 20th century was lived under the threat of nuclear weapons (and, later, other weapons of mass destruction), giving the illusion of peace and the ultimate limiter on global politics; the last bargaining chip in the pile. Now, if you triggered such a device over a city a Meta might walk out of the rubble with your name on their lips. Metas are, in some ways, better deterrents than weapons of mass destruction. No Meta can strike as powerfully as a nuclear device, but they can strike again and again, and those strikes are directed with intelligence - they can go straight to military targets and political leaders with

less risk of damage to civilians and consequent international condemnation. The countries with the highest numbers of Metas are often not the ones with the greatest technological arsenals.

Most countries have at least a few Metas working for them in the areas of intelligence and law enforcement, and/or maintain a relationship with one or more teams that can combat superpowered threats. The United Nations has a small number of Metas on staff for international crisis response, but its resources are limited.

Crime and punishment

"Vile braggart! You shall be chained upon a rock for an eternity! A serpent shall drip scalding venom on your breast..."

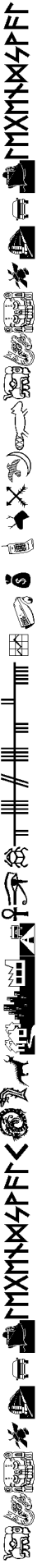
"Uh... excuse me? I don't think so! I mean, this isn't the butt-end of some fjord. This is America. I got rights. Ask the officer..."

Woden and Lokk, *Top Ten #7*
Alan Moore and Gene Ha, *America's Best Comics*

The face of **crime** has changed in different ways in different places, due to the arrival of many Metas keen to stop crime and some keen to commit it. In places with high numbers of Metas crime by Normals has reduced drastically as the chances of being caught are so much greater. On the other hand, many places have become less safe on a personal level - people can just turn up and start knocking walls down, and there's very little that can be done to prevent it. Getting caught in a battle between Metas is somewhat unhealthy.

Some Metas follow the law rigorously and turn captured criminals over to the proper authorities (they may even be the proper authorities) while others act as judge, jury and executioner. Those wishing to prosper through large-scale crime gather under the leadership of Metas with similar goals or recruit their own imbued enforcers. Wealthier nations have their own prisons to contain Metas (like Britain's at the bottom of Loch Ness), and the United Nations provides continental facilities for major offenders. Of course, it's expected that someone will break out (or be broken out) once in a while, and guards get good equipment and hazard pay. There are usually strict guidelines about how much risk they should take to recapture a prisoner - their main job is to keep the rest of the facility safe and secure and call in metahuman help.





Entertainment

The advent of Metas has thrown athletic and sporting events into confusion. It's not clear what physical excellence means when there are people who can exceed world records effortlessly, and many potentially great athletes have been put off by the prospect of hours of hard training in order to be second best. People with known Meta powers are generally prohibited from ordinary competition, and many sports have chosen not to set up a special class for them.

In other forms of entertainment, though, Metas are in great demand. Some make celebrity their job and have lives of wealth and adulation - some Sources (eg connected with youth, beauty or love) actually encourage this. For them there are always chances to break into movies or music, though there are also plenty of one-hit wonders left by the wayside. Fights between Metas make a great spectator sport, but attitudes to this differ widely. In most developed countries the risk of collateral damage to people and property means that only heavy stage managed bouts are allowed. For more gritty stuff there is a small industry in California. Mexico televises brutal arena matches, and tapes sell around the world, though they're usually illegal. The Indian entertainment industry is still uncomfortable with showing Metas in this way. There are Meta sex shows in some cities with liberal or wide-ranging tastes, like Tokyo and Amsterdam, and a global niche for Meta porn. One well-known early soft-porn video, 'At Home with the Kents', showed a frolicking couple gradually destroying an ordinary suburban house.



Science and technology

In general the pace of technological development has slowed, so what exists in 2020 is what we can see around the corner now. Most of the reasons for this are Meta-related: their arrival caused upheavals; Sources don't understand modern technology and may even feel it's a bad thing, so they don't encourage their Metas to prioritise it

when making changes. Developing countries are working hard to close the technology gap, and are finding their own novel applications to fit their own circumstances. As in our world, most people who use the consumer applications of technology have no idea how it works and like it that way. Sometimes there are protests against new processes, and people in different places find different things acceptable.

Computers and communication

"Mobiles" are very common in developed countries, combining phones and portable computing. They're easily powerful enough for basic office functions and Internet access, but limited by display size and means of data input. They link wirelessly with larger systems within a few feet for easier operation. The Net is accessible via TV or computer in most households with a reasonable salary coming in. Computers are "plumbed in" to new upmarket houses. Flat panel display units are much more affordable, and displays that you can hang on the wall and double as a picture are now possible. Data storage capacities have continued to increase, and are more or less unlimited now. Rewritable optical discs can store hundreds of gigabytes in multiple layers. Magnetic hard drives are still used at the core of machines for reliability and the greater number of rewrites they can take, but they hit a physical limit around 250GB - less often used programs and data are usually kept in optical storage and slotted in as needed. Expert systems software is becoming common, but only a few geniuses have produced true artificial intelligence.

Biology and medicine

Many forms of medical treatment are more advanced and reliable. People are living longer, though maintaining health in old age is still harder than extending life. The process of human cloning is fairly well understood, but the individual takes the normal time to develop and cannot be given the mind of the original (its upbringing will be different, so its personality probably will be too). Genetically modified plant crops are in widespread use in the USA, but many developing countries have outlawed their import for fear of giving multinational companies control over subsistence agriculture. In the European Union strict control and labelling requirements along with consumer distrust have made GM foods largely uneconomic. There is a growing body of international law on creation of new species through genetic manipulation, unauthorised use of individuals' genetic material, and similar issues.





Energy and transport

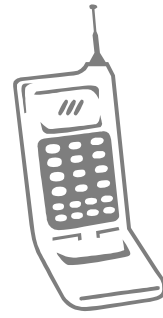
The increased activism on the world stage by nations at greatest risk from climate change has helped to spur change away from fossil fuels. The major oil companies are continuing the diversification that began in the 1990s as their traditional market dwindles. For instance, solar water heating and photovoltaic (electricity generating) panels are more common on houses, though take-up varies between places. The systems themselves can be produced quite cheaply now - the major barrier is the cost and hassle of installing them and converting a building's existing systems. Developing countries with major new build programmes are edging ahead, and setting up modular power systems to sidestep expensive infrastructure. For private transport a mix of fuel types is in use, including hydrogen fuel cells, electric vehicles and traditional petrol types (still cheaper to buy, but often more expensive to run). Public transport and haulage still tend to use diesel.

Breaking the rules

The above applies to Normal science, but not to everyone. Obsessed geniuses or people imbued by gods of wisdom, ingenuity and craft can create stuff that others can't. These inventions are rarely mass produced - there aren't enough people who understand them enough to build and repair them, and the creators are often too selfish or cautious to share.

Meta science

As Science tried to understand what was basically outside Science, the label "Mythic Space" (or more commonly "M-Space") was applied to the home of the gods and heroes, conceived as a parallel dimension composed of energy fluxes. The shamans smiled when they heard some versions of this, but nodded at others. A few scientific entrepreneurs are trying to investigate it and developing theories of where Metas powers come from and how they work. Specialised disciplines like parapsychiatry have sprung up. Practitioners can command large fees and great public interest, but there's concern about the difficulty of proper peer review - how can you tell whether they're just quacks?



Religion

Some Sources reached through the Gate hoping to regain the kind of worship they received centuries ago. For the most part they were disappointed. The modern mind is used to things like monotheism, atheism, materialism, stunts, special effects and superheroes. Miracles don't have the impact they used to. You can force people to go through the motions of worship - a few Metas have tried it - but without the genuine focus of hearts and minds it's useless to the Source and this sort of activity tends to generate resentment. In some places the situation is different - the Source is part of a living tradition, so the Meta gives further validation of those beliefs. In general, though, the existence of a Meta just gains a Source increased awareness and a portion of the respect (or fear) directed at the Meta personally, and that's enough to sustain them.

Existing world religions have had to deal with the implications of Metas: if the Metas' standard explanation is true, then in some sense the old gods, heroes and monsters really exist. For some, like the Hindus, this can fit with current beliefs fairly easily, but others like Christianity and Islam are built on replacing older beliefs with greater truths. All religions include a wide spectrum of belief rather than a universal viewpoint, and responses vary between worshippers and communities. Some have been able to embrace Metas and the good they can do; others believe they are empowered by supernatural forces of evil and should be destroyed.





A PARTIAL TIMELINE

2000

January - The first known Metas appear.

March - first documented Meta attacks against logging operations in the Amazon.

May - news reports of the aftermath of an attack by Indian Metas on the Pakistan border shock the world. Indian government condemns the attack. Initial sense of wonder at the arrival of Metas is now balanced by widespread fear of what they might do.

September - media statements from a group calling itself "The Green Fist" take responsibility for several Meta attacks in the Amazon. Business interests draw attention to the casualties among people "trying to make a better life for themselves". Over the next few months many nations declare the group to be criminals.

2001

March - Baghdad wakes to find the heads of Iraq's leaders on poles in the city square, as the result of a Meta coup. They reform the country into city-states under their rule. The international community soon welcomes them.

May - A Meta calling himself King Arthur, with a small retinue of "Knights", ousts the monarchy of the United Kingdom and announces that he will henceforth set overall directions for the government. There are a few casualties, but public opinion is cautiously positive, aided by royal and political scandals and Arthur's eloquent promise of a nobler age for Britain.

June - The Green Fist conducts its first public action outside South America, apparently attacking a nuclear power station in the Russian Federation. It turns out that the facility had been taken over by a small group of Metas calling themselves the Brotherhood of Monsters, led by a giant wolf-man.

2002

July - The inaugural Assembly of the African Union takes place in South Africa. An intruder with superhuman agility and the ability to climb walls leads security personnel to a device that would have infected delegates with a highly contagious bio-agent, spreading it throughout the continent.

September - South Africa hosts the World Summit on Sustainable Development. Anger by developing countries over industrialised nations' lack of action on trade, aid and environment is brought to a head by the United States' continued refusal to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The President of the Maldives gives his famous "you feed your cars on the bones of our land" speech.

The Guild is founded, originally as a specialist supplier of archaic equipment to Metas. It rapidly diversifies into other services. Keeping its profile low, it gains clients through word of mouth and an online presence - its promise of discretion is an important sales driver.

2003

February - The Second Battle of Midway - a force from tiny Tuvalu takes the American base on the Midway Islands, embarrassing the US on the world stage.

Pressure on the US builds in the UN. Arthur adds the UK's voice, citing a clear issue of right and wrong, and civil servants scramble to talk up the UK's environmental record. The Netherlands speaks up for self-preservation; developing and Islamic countries express solidarity with the Maldives.

The Green Fist battles government Metas and conventional forces at a dam construction site in China. Casualties are heavy on both sides. The dam ruptures, flooding two nearby villages. Survivors from both sides help to save villagers and workers. The Green Fist seems to go to ground.

A group of Metas apparently imbued by Aztec gods takes over Mexico City, claiming it as the beginning of the Empire of the Sun. To celebrate they sacrifice a hundred people, including the Mexican president and several military commanders. The USA begins planning a military operation to oust them, with widespread support. The Empire kills another hundred people as "our daily sacrifice to gain strength for the coming war





against our enemies from all over the world”, and the leaders surround themselves with civilians. The US publicly backs down to stop further bloodshed. The Empire leaders say that they wish to use their powers for the good of the people, and that future sacrifices will be limited to criminals and volunteers.

Publication of the Report of the United Nations Commission on Metahuman Activity, usually known as the Petersen Report.

2004

The Green Fist announces that it will henceforth be adopting less violent strategies and paying greater heed to the needs of people, although it is still absolutely committed to the protection of all life on Earth. Accordingly, it is changing its name to The Green Hand. It will still police the Amazon Basin rigorously, and respond to environmental threats in other parts of the world. Later sightings of the group in action suggest a number of membership changes.

The United Nations declares an oil blockade of the USA, which is still importing half of its oil. The oil-producing countries of the Middle East are caught by their expressed support of the Maldives, but worry about their market. US armed forces escort oil shipments. Navies from other countries combine to form a blockade, resulting in a tense stand-off. Metas arrive to reinforce both sides, in both official and unofficial capacities. Conflict erupts in November, resulting in the mainly-Meta battle later known as “All Hell’s Day” after an American newspaper headline. Some conventional forces try to take an active role, but most are concerned with protecting their ships and crew. The end of the battle is generally credited to the intervention of the Meta known as Skyfather, but is also due to certain individuals on both sides reining in their colleagues.

May - Ireland is re-united, as the UK formally returns Northern Ireland to Eire. There are a number of terrorist actions associated with this process, and lives are lost, but more are saved by the Fianna and the Round Table working together.

December - Driven by government outrage and public opinion, the United States announces that it is restructuring its involvement in the United Nations, including withholding funding (which represented around 25% of the total) and withdrawing the use of land for headquarters. This leaves the UN in serious difficulties. It moves its central base to Geneva, Switzerland and looks for budget cutbacks. A few nations make modest increases in their contributions.

2005

June - the United Nations agrees the Convention on Metahuman Interests, which safeguards the human rights of Metas and restricts nations’ use of them to lawful protection of their interests. This leads to the formation of UNOMA (United Nations Office of Metahuman Affairs) later in the year, though the process involves some friction over resourcing issues.

July - negative public opinion from the increasing effects of oil shortages leads the US government to make a deal with Mexico to import a limited quota, in spite of its previous criticism of the Empire of the Sun. The arrangement is coated with enough conditions and diplomatic language to allow the public to swallow it.

Japan sets up a pilot “undersea village”. Three months into the trial all contact is lost. Investigators find only twisted metal and shattered plastic.

2006

The Maldives government makes the first batch of floating islands available to families on its most low-lying atolls.

2007

The Guild announces that it has bought a Mediterranean holiday island and renamed it Elysium, to be a place inhabited solely by Metas. It will be resort, refuge and, for those that wish it, permanent community, with its own laws. A number of Guild contacts, clients and allies are already in residence, and there’s a slow influx over the following years.

Japan tries a second undersea village pilot in a different location, with a Meta on the team and a kamitech defence system. There are no problems, and the habitat gradually expands to the size of a town.

2014

March - The Guild admits the first shuttleloads of visitors to Iridium City on the Moon. Pictures of the planned city under the dome amaze the world. It is to be both exotic resort, source of minerals, and opportunity for those who wish to make a new start. Millionaires and homesteaders start applying for the trip.

2016

The Maldives formally becomes the Republic of Telenesia.

2020

The present.

Following the Petersen Report¹ in 2003, the United Nations agreed the *Convention on Metahuman Interests* in June 2005. Several member countries have still to ratify it (officially sign up). These are the main points:

- Countries will try to use their metahuman resources for the benefit of all, while preserving metahumans' full rights as individuals.
- A permanent United Nations Office of Metahuman Affairs (UNOMA) will be established to monitor the metahuman phenomenon, advise other departments and co-ordinate projects relating to metahumans.
- Member states should not make military use of metahuman operatives in aggressive actions against other nations, either overtly (*openly, like in a war, or secretly such as through spying*). In some cases this may be considered as use of weapons of mass destruction.
- It is, however, appropriate for properly constituted military and police forces to make use of metahuman operatives to defend legitimately held territories and secure the well-being of the population against aggressive action and other threats.
- Member states shall not use metahuman operatives to oppress their population or subvert the democratic process within their own territories through action or the fear of action.

Exercises

1. Name one country that has ratified the Convention, and one that hasn't.
2. For each of the five points give a specific example of an occasion when the Convention's rules were kept or broken.
3. Give one example of how you think metahumans have helped society, and one example of how they have harmed it.
4. To what extent do you think the Convention's aims have been met? Why?

1 Full title 'Report of the United Nations Commission on Metahuman Activity', named after Professor Henryk Petersen who chaired it.

The Second Battle of Midway

interview with Lieutenant Frank Dugan

It started in 2003 when Tuvalu declared war on the United States of America. Tuvalu consisted of 10,000 people on 9 coral atolls in the Pacific, northeast of Australia. Its economy was the smallest of any independent state in the world, and its only exports were dried coconut kernels, postage stamps, and .tv internet names. You won't find it on new maps - it's gone now. That was the nature of its beef with the US. With rising sea levels, its leaders said low-lying nations like theirs faced a "death sentence" due to air pollution from industrialised countries. The US was responsible for 25% of this and wouldn't commit to doing anything about it. This, said the spokesman, amounted to an attempt to destroy their country and, as negotiations had clearly failed, war was inevitable.

The US, of course, basically laughed at this. It regretted the situation, it had to look out for the wellbeing of its citizens, and no, it didn't think there was any immediate danger from a flyspeck no-one had ever heard of. It couldn't really do anything else - treating it as a real threat would have meant a serious loss of face. However, the declaration brought others out in support. The Maldives were first - a range of coral islands just south of India, maximum height 6 feet - and other low-lying areas had varying degrees of sympathy. None of them actually declared war, but they stepped up efforts within the United Nations to put pressure on the US.

The next anyone heard, startling the world, was when a force from Tuvalu announced that it had taken the US air and naval base on the Midway Islands. Midway is another chunk of rock in the middle of the Pacific, and the US kept about 300 people there. But its PR value was higher than you'd think, because the area had been the site of an American victory over the Japanese that turned the course of the Second World War. On the site of a great US victory it now suffered an embarrassing defeat.

What nobody could work out, of course, was how a couple of hundred people from Tuvalu had travelled north for a little over 2000 miles without being noticed and then taken out a military base with only single figure casualties on each side. It seemed pretty clear that there were Metas involved. We still don't know the details, but there are stories of one particular islander doing a lot of the planning and leading - strong guy, using a jawbone as a weapon. Hey, apparently it worked for him. Also, the group called The Green Fist had spoken out in support of the islanders, and a lot of people reckoned they'd played a part in the operation.

So you've got Midway declared as annexed by Tuvalu, and now the US is taking notice. Not like they care about the islands - but they've been given a public slapping, and American servicemen (and women) have been killed and injured. The rest of the world's on tenterhooks - it's a disaster in the making, and a lot of people are siding with the plucky little underdog. Normally the US would respond hard and fast, but unless there's a serious Meta presence with the islanders it would be a totally one-sided battle with a good chance of taking out their own people too.

UN negotiators go in to try to persuade the islanders to leave peacefully. The islanders are polite and friendly. Everyone hurt in the battle receives medical attention, and a third of the US personnel are released unconditionally. The one thing they will not do, they explain, is return the island to US control. However, to avoid an international incident they are prepared to release their new territory - to Japan. The Japanese will nominally own the island, but it will be designated as a wildlife refuge and centre for scientific study. Somehow, the deal is agreed. The islanders are ferried home once a token Japanese contingent moves in. The US government tries to talk up the tax savings from not having to maintain an outdated base.

Of course, the whole thing got a lot of media coverage. Cameras went in with the negotiators and showed us simple, brave, smiling islanders versus a big, stupid military and industrial machine. America's unassailable front had cracked a bit. Tuvalu's declaration of war has never been formally rescinded.

AN INTRODUCTION TO PARAPSYCHIATRY

Dr Lars Ekstrom, Director, UNOMA Parapsychiatry Division

Science would have liked to classify metahumans as people with serious mental problems, given their claims of having received the power of mythological figures, but of course they are able to produce ample evidence of gaining power from *somewhere*. Meta psychology/psychiatry is still a young field, and much is not understood. However, it is clear that there are a number of psychiatric disorders unique to Metas.

Our field is the investigation - and, hopefully, resolution - of these difficulties. It seems to have settled on "parapsychiatry" as the standard label, as a parallel to the long-standing pursuit of parapsychology, formerly ridiculed as a pseudoscience. These days the prospect of correctly identifying lines on a card seems like small potatoes.

The normal state of a metahuman appears to be a balance between their established personality and the part of them which is "the voice of the god" or "source". This latter is a set of attitudes or feelings which the person identifies as being separate to his own, often unwanted, and varying in the power of its effect on the overall personality. There are obvious parallels with schizophrenia here. Sometimes the source urges responses and actions which are clearly inappropriate and undesirable, and the healthy metahuman is able to override these.

(There does seem to be a link between this attitude cluster and the metahuman's powers, though. Subjects have claimed that a loss of abilities is the result of offending the "source", which can be interpreted as invalidating or undermining the mental processes that generate the powers. Of course, there is some debate about whether the "source" is really part of the person's own mind or has some external, metaphysical origin. For this article we are concerned only with the functional effects on patients.)

Dissociation

Sometimes the healthy balance between the two is disrupted by suppression of one side. The more common form is repression of the source cluster, in a form of denial designed to allow the person to live a normal life. Unfortunately their metahuman abilities still manifest occasionally, often in situations of extreme stress and in an uncontrolled way, which can be dangerous to those around them. It seems as though the source cluster finds ways of expressing itself even against the person's will. It is important to help such people come to terms with their nature, because only then will they be able to control their abilities consciously.

The second form is somewhat rarer and can be even more dangerous. The normal personality is suppressed and the person "becomes" the god, hero or monster from which their powers supposedly stem. They typically act in ways

completely unsuited to modern society and use their powers to avenge the slightest perceived insult. Such cases usually have to be immobilised so that the therapist can try to bring the normal personality back to take control. If the patient is not restrained, close contact often presents too great a danger to be attempted.

Megalomania

This is commonest among those who have newly gained their powers. Taking a person who may not previously have had any significant control over the external world and giving them power on a plate (not just the ability to influence through human relationships) is a recipe for disaster, and it's not surprising that many of them can't handle it. Others develop this condition later through use of their abilities. It's characterised by the belief that they are superior to all others, that they can do no wrong and that their wishes should be obeyed. It can be difficult to separate this from the second dissociative condition outlined above at first, but observation will determine whether the normal personality is still in evidence.

Rejection of abilities

Most metahumans gain their powers without seeking them, and some regard them as a curse rather than a gift. This is a particular problem when obvious physical alterations occur. Although an extreme solution, surgery has helped a few patients - but sometimes the patient's body reverses this over a period of time.

In rare cases this rejection can be so strong that the metahuman abilities are no longer accessible to the conscious mind. This is a danger, because they remain accessible to the subconscious, which may manifest them in small ways (sometimes without the patient noticing) or, under emotional stress, large ones. Such people can harm those who slight them without consciously intending to.

A linked phenomenon is denial - a patient may resist all attempts to identify them as metahuman. Sometimes they know the truth and just don't want to society to label them in that way. Sometimes their mind has blocked off the knowledge, and they really believe in their normality. These can be the hardest patients to help, because their minds fight to find rationalisations to preserve the illusion.

Given that there is no known "cure" for metahuman abilities, the therapist must help the patient to come to terms with their altered existence and bring their powers under conscious control. Again, this can sometimes be dangerous if the patient's frustration causes them to lash out.

General stress

It may not be glamorous, but this is the most common psychological problem experienced by metahumans. Its nature depends on the life they choose for themselves. Some, especially those operating in public and official capacities, have anxiety about their performance - understandable when their lives and reputations depend on dealing successfully with incredibly dangerous situations on a day-to-day basis. Some experience stress due to the effort of maintaining a dual identity, concealing their metahuman activities from colleagues, friends and family and attempting to live a normal life. Those who don't set up dual identities have to cope with the possibility of metahuman challenges intruding on their lives, with a greater possibility of danger to those close to them. Our field also includes helping those people to understand what has happened to their loved one, including dealing with psychological and physical changes, and living with the threat of danger to the loved one and, indeed, themselves.

Metahuman psychopathic schizophrenia

Usually shortened to MPS, this term was coined by researchers early in the study of the field. It has, unfortunately, also been accompanied by a vernacular term: "catching evil". The thesis is that an individual is granted powers by a "source" hostile to human well-being, and suddenly finds himself with a predisposition to harm life and property which he did not choose.

This area continues to be hugely controversial, and a number of prominent court cases have hinged on its interpretation. Many theorists and practitioners refuse to recognise it as a genuine disorder, claiming that it is no more than well-known behavioural problems given new window dressing, or an attempt by a subject pursuing wealth or gratification to escape the consequences of their actions. Others attempt to show significant attitude and behaviour changes, and claim that these must result from conditions external to their patients. There have been objections to the term "evil" on the grounds that it stigmatises people with psychological problems.

I shall not pretend to know the answers. On the one hand, none of the documented MPS cases involve individuals with blameless lives before they gained their abilities. On the other, many of them do seem to exhibit a scaling-up of antisocial activities, and some have appeared most sincere in their desire to overcome these impulses. Self-help groups for such people seem to have had some success in helping them, regardless of the root of their problems, which can only be to the benefit of society.

Conclusion

Parapsychiatry will continue to present us with mysteries for many years to come. There are always openings for talented researchers and therapists with the desire to help fellow humans with more-than-human difficulties, and the courage to follow it through.



FACTIONEERING

Governments and their agencies

In a few places governments have simply been replaced by metahumans, but in most cases Metas work with existing structures even if they effectively rule a country. After all, you need people to take care of the details of making things run. Governments seek to preserve their power and authority, both for its own sake and, in many cases, because they are the body elected by the people to do the job. Most responsible Metas support that.

As part of their structure most governments have at least one agency working on issues of internal security and secret operations at home and overseas. Some of these are known to the public - MI5, CIA, etc - and others aren't. (For story purposes you can assume most developed countries have some ultra-secret group pursuing the national interest as they see it.) Some of these have gained power far beyond that offered by the legitimate political process, and inform even heads of state on a need-to-know basis. All of them are interested in Metas to some degree, as people with an unusual potential for causing crises and disrupting the balance of power. Most have at least one or two metahuman operatives for special assignments.

UNOMA

The United Nations Office of Metahuman Affairs was set up in 2005. This was one of the key recommendations of the Convention on Metahuman Interests, itself the result of lengthy deliberations (notably the Petersen Report). Like most UN departments its resourcing is limited - a situation made much tighter by the antagonism with the USA, which had been the UN's biggest funder, though other countries have made up some of the shortfall.

UNOMA functions are split between research and enforcement. The Enforcement Directorate includes the well-known continental Field Teams

and the Metas of Team Alpha, but also diplomats and inspectors to make sure the Convention is observed. The Research Directorate includes divisions focusing on parapsychiatry, technical development (equipment, containment techniques, etc - known internally as "X Branch"), Meta cataloguing, and others.

UNOMA maintains a central database of known Metahumans. Most local agencies are happy to cooperate with it on this, because Metas are very good at crossing national boundaries and you never know when you'll want data on someone you've never heard of who's tearing up your city. The data can be accessed by member states' legitimate law enforcement agencies. There have been some challenges to this on grounds of data protection and human rights, so the information tends to consist of criminal record plus basic power details. The UNOMA files continue to evolve as more Metas are encountered.

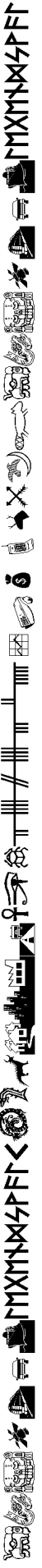
Field Teams

UNOMA quarters well trained and equipped troops at strategic locations on each continent, along with technical and scientific personnel. These are usually deployed in numbered Field Teams specialising in enforcement or support. It also has one unit of metahuman operatives, Field Team Alpha, made up of experienced and fairly well known Metas. Field Teams are available to any UN member nation in good standing, but limited resources mean they don't have the personnel to cope with all crises that emerge - Regional Directors often have to make hard choices about where to send teams at any given time, usually prioritising the most serious situations where they can make a difference.



UNOMA also has a small pool of Meta reservists and new recruits in training who sometimes get sent on emergency missions as Team Beta. After all, Alpha can't be everywhere at once. (This could make a good basis for a game, allowing player characters with starting-level abilities and little public profile to operate as part of UNOMA. It would certainly provide them with a reason for working together.) Occasionally there is a rumour of a UNOMA agent or group conducting covert activities, but it seems unlikely to be true.





ALTERANTS

Not all metahumans get their powers from Sources. Some are manufactured by human science. The United States produces most, but these "alterants" can be found anywhere that a body with a lot of resources wants to give itself a metahuman advantage. Techniques include genetic modification, technological implants, drug treatments and psychological conditioning. Many have a high failure rate and all have side effects. Nobody volunteers to become an alterant lightly - they might be committed military types, criminals offered a deal they couldn't refuse, or just hapless guinea pigs.

Powers must be feasible science-based things, not magical like many Meta powers (it's *Legendary Science*, though!). This includes many physical alterations, like increasing strength or adding claws, and skill improvements through various conditioning techniques. It also includes awakening psychic powers, something that Sources rarely provide.

For a distinctive individual start them as a Normal, as usual. Alternatively you can stat them as Horde types - PCs might come up against a group with identical low-level Alterant abilities. Instead of a set "shopping list", powers are bought freely using the normal costs. Pick any from the programmes which are suitable as Alterant powers, and invent new ones if you need something modern or technological. **Attributes** cannot be Boosted above Meta 1. **Skills** can be raised 1 level for 1 point, and a second level for 2 points (so 3 points altogether), to a maximum of level 5. **Quirks** simulating slightly enhanced abilities can be bought for 1 pt each, eg Quick Reactions, High Pain Threshold. These can duplicate and add on to the same Quirk bought as a Normal.

Instead of a fixed allocation of points you can scale an Alterant at any level you want up to 16, but each 4 points (or part) costs a side effect Disadvantage. These are usually Normal Quirks described in an appropriate way (though some might stray into Meta territory). Start with the list in the rulebook and invent your own as necessary. Examples: Unattractive Appearance from scarring, all sorts of mental instabilities, Addiction to drugs, All Thumbs from the nerve disconnections that let you ignore pain, Reduced Lifespan making you vulnerable to death-type powers and/or diseases. Don't use social ones: although the character is almost certainly indebted to or pursued by a large organisation, that's not internal to their personal abilities.

The call Enforcement staff most dread is the "Trojan Event": outright war between substantial groups of metahumans. Fortunately these are very rare, but when they do occur any Normals in the area are in very serious danger, not to mention the damage to the surroundings. Such a situation will pull resources from other projects.

The Nimbus Project

This unit exists to combat natural disasters, especially those like Maelstroms caused by metahuman activity. Due to the resources available it has to concentrate on the most severe instances. The project consists of a team of scientists

gathering data from a network of orbital satellites and a number of Meta operatives, Field Team Nimbus, who attempt to prevent, contain or remedy damage.

The unit has clearance with most nations to operate on its own initiative, though communication with local agencies is expected. A few countries require express permission to be sought before it can operate on their soil. Given the potential loss of life during delays, the project is negotiating with them for autonomy. There are good connections between Team Alpha and Team Nimbus, and in some situations they can call each other in for back-up, but due to separate funding streams their operations are kept distinct.





The Guild

As Metas emerged, perceptive observers noted their links to the past. Many of them used archaic weapons and other equipment. Sometimes this would be broken or lost, and replacements would be needed, or a new Meta would need outfitting. In the modern world such items and the skills to produce them were hard to come by. Thus the Guild was conceived as a business idea, making contacts around the world, seeking out traditional craftspeople and employing agents to deal with Metas in need of their services.

From an early stage the organisation operated a “no questions” policy. Once the item was supplied to the client it was up to them what they did with it (although certain highly unstable individuals may have been refused service due to the possible PR fallout), and all dealings with clients were strictly confidential. It was made clear from the start that an attack on a Guild employee was an attack on the Guild itself, resulting in withdrawal of services and possibly further consequences.

The business grew very naturally. There were other services Metas wanted too, and many found it easy to obtain the money to pay for them. The service didn't have to be one-way either - there were many things that Metas could do for the Guild and its clients, and nowadays it provides work to many of them, acting as a general agency for setting up transactions involving Metas and taking a modest commission. As well as money the modern Guild trades in favours. Cash-starved Metas may be offered what they need in return for a promise of help in the future. If it wishes, the Guild can make life uncomfortable for welchers by calling in favours from others. More recently it has initiated high-profile projects of its own: the Metas-only island colony of Elysium and Iridium City on the Moon.

The Guild works from a position of neutrality. It conducts its affairs reasonably and impartially. In most dealings its operatives are open to negotiation. It provides much-needed support to artisans whose craft might otherwise perish, and mobilises Metas' abilities to achieve things previously undreamt of. It does, however, seek to maintain its power base, and occasionally takes decisive (even ruthless) action to do so. It will seek out new Metas to market its services to them, aiming to get them used to dealing with it. The Guild is not a large organisation, although it has agents worldwide - networking doesn't require a lot of staff. Most of these are talented Normals - there are very few Metas on staff, though of course

they can be brought in whenever needed. The general public sees its major projects, but knows very little about the Guild itself. It's tolerated with some discomfort by governments, and although it doesn't consider itself subordinate to them it is careful of its image to avoid problems.

Who runs the Guild, and whether it has any larger agenda, is left up to the GM. Perhaps the founder is still in charge, or has died and left control to regional offices, or has bequeathed it to a child or subordinate. Perhaps the “child” is secretly an augmented clone of the founder; or perhaps all the (shadowy) regional directors are. Certainly the Guild has a long-term interest in the numbers of Metas, wanting to have enough to deliver services but to keep them scarce enough to keep prices up. It also likes general pro-Meta sentiment.

Criminal organisations

The major ones still exist, though they've had to evolve ways of coping with Metas trying to shut them down, usually by hiring Metas of their own. Becoming a favoured employee of such a group can bring rich rewards, though of course the work is dangerous. They also like to gain leverage over Metas who wouldn't normally work for them and use it to extract “favours”, though this has to be handled carefully as it can create powerful enemies. Time-honoured methods include incriminating or embarrassing photos or documents; massive gambling debts; and threats to loved ones. They don't often exert the raw power of supervillain groups, but they have more influence through wealth and contacts built up over many years.

The Mafia, based in America, remember their roots in Sicily. They value tradition and respect, and focus around powerful families. Metas may be hired for particular tasks, and those who do well and gain the favour of patrons can rise to become trusted lieutenants. They tend to prefer people of European descent, but effectiveness and loyalty are more important factors.

The Yakuza of Japan have Metas imbued by local monsters on staff, but these tend to have very noticeable looks so they also import Meta enforcers (of course such foreigners do not rise far in the organisation). They work alongside modern-day ninja and other highly skilled martial artists.

The “Russian mafia” are, in some ways, the scariest of all. They don't have sharp suits, codes of honour or pretensions to nobility, but they're tough. They



arose in a country that was going to hell, and were the ones with the will to go further to survive. Now they have Metas with Sources from Slavic mythology. Do as they say or they'll send the werewolves round.

The drug cartels of central and south America are hot on style, attitude and money. They don't respect old codes or families, but personal loyalty may stop them from stabbing each other in the back. They tend to buy in Meta help as needed. The creation and spread of the Aztec empire has caused them problems. Some have fought it for a while, but in the end resistance gets you killed and it's better to pull back to new territory.

Freelances

When the USA withdrew its UN support, UNOMA had to cut back its planned metahuman field teams, dismissing a number of Metas on its books. Several of these remained together to form Sharp Fade Enterprises, which provides their services to governments and other parties for a fee. Sharp Fade generally operates a policy of working for the greater good, and avoids being seen to break laws.

Other outfits are less choosy, and less public. There are always lone Metas or mercenary groups willing to take on a job if you can find them and the price is right. The Guild often puts people in touch with the talent they need, though of course it won't allow itself to be publicly linked with anything illegal.

Anti-Meta movements

There are many individuals and organisations which are opposed to Metas in some way. Some scientists oppose the apparent irrationality of Meta powers and promote alternative explanations, like abnormalities in the brain. (Certain individuals might go to extreme lengths to prove their theories, like capturing Metas for dissection and experimentation.) Many in organised religions find the mythological explanation of Meta powers offensive. Some see them as using abilities which should be reserved for God, and/or conclude that these must come from demons. (Others, of course, have no problem with it or decide to re-evaluate

their beliefs and take Metas' good deeds into account.) Those who have always reacted with fear and hate towards those who are different have predictable reactions to people with blue skin or antlers. On the other hand, some of these groupings try to co-opt specific Metas in support of their own mythologies.

Human Defence is the most successful anti-Meta organisation, originating in continental Europe and now able to claim members in many countries. It has not become truly effective, due to huge differences in its members' backgrounds and goals. Some just want to see strict regulation of Meta activities, whereas others would like to see them imprisoned or even eradicated. The

organisation is wracked with infighting, and the groups affiliated to it change from week to week.

However, all support efforts to mobilise public opinion against Metas, which is not difficult if they can get the attention of the media: many people are uneasy about superhumans in their midst and the erosion of human excellence, and there's plenty of fallout from metahuman battles. HD keeps records of such events and uses them to lobby politicians, some of whom are receptive while others regard them

as cranks or extremists. (GM note: of course the publicised leaders of HD might not be the real power behind it...)



The Green Hand

From the first, some Metas set out to use their powers to protect the environment. Over time they met each other, and a group took shape. Convinced of the need for radical action and flushed with their new abilities, they adopted an uncompromising position and announced themselves as The Green Fist in September 2002. Their early focus was the Amazon rainforest. Interventions there led to destruction of machinery, some loss of life, hardship due to economic disruption and big business calling for their heads (leading to at least one US military mission against them). However, they did succeed in stopping the large-scale destruction of the forest, and helped to focus the minds of those discussing more sustainable ways of using the resource.





Further actions took place around the world, protecting rainforest in Africa and Indonesia, attacking nuclear and car production facilities, and supporting the growing voice of smaller countries under threat from climate change. Their enemies in governments and business multiplied, but the public's perception see-sawed from saviours to menaces and back again with each new report. In 2003 a battle at a Chinese dam project led to the flooding of two villages, with major loss of life. Shaken, the group went to ground for a few months while members questioned their priorities.

It re-emerged as The Green Hand, professing less extreme methods. Some members left (and a few have continued as eco-terrorists), but over the years the strong but balanced approach has gained them more members and support, with cautious recognition by governments and an effective protectorate over the Amazon basin. They also maintain outposts in Antarctica to ensure that this continent remains unspoilt, though not everyone looks forward to duty in such a harsh setting. Some members are soldiers and police, some politicians and negotiators, and some work to repair damaged habitats. There's still debate each time the group is asked to balance environmental protection and human interests, but so far they've held together around a commitment to serving both. The current leader is named Dragon. The UN can't support them officially for fear of offending member states, but they do have an advisory place on the board of the Nimbus Project.

The First Century

Not a lot of people know this, but there were a number of heroes who fought the forces imperilling the world before the Meta genesis, mostly working in secrecy.

Most didn't have superpowers as such, but relied on skill and daring, though they often concealed their identities with "stage names" - they included stage magicians, martial artists, geniuses and millionaires. A few did have special abilities: psychics, mutants, escapes from early experimentation, etc. A very few were Metas, though of course they didn't think of themselves as such. The Gate was much tighter back then, just allowing well-known Sources to get a few powers through - they were lower-powered than modern Metas, without the flashiest stuff (eg no human flamethrowers, but maybe someone immune to fire or with Meta I Strength).



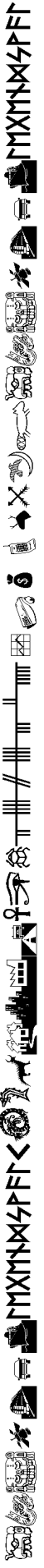
Most are dead, some are still around but very old, but a few have been able to extend their lifespans enough to remain active. Others trained their children to carry on. Over the decades most of them have met each other, and their subculture became like an old boys' (and girls') club. As the first Metas appeared the survivors formed The First Century (a play on being pre-millennium and a unit of the Roman army) as a loose group pledged to continue to combat threats in their own way. Their symbol is simply "C" (an initial, and the Roman 100). As individuals they have less power than Metas, but usually greater experience and significant resources built up over the years.

CREATING "FIRST CENTURY" CHARACTERS

As a general guide for **Metas**, start with 4 points and no Disadvantages for the power programme. One Disadvantage may be taken for an extra 2 points. Gate Modifiers do apply. Split an extra 5 character points for experience between Skill levels, Signature Moves and Quirks (can take up to 2 negative Quirks to get extra points).

For **non-Metas**, put those 4 power points in with the 5 experience points and allow up to 3 Attribute Boosts (maximum Exceptional) and a bit more latitude in the Quirks.





Opinions on Metas vary - some are clearly threats, and all are potentially dangerous. Many distrust electronic communication and other modern innovations, preferring their own abilities and tools they see as reliable. Some public officials, especially older ones now in high positions, know of individual members - most prefer to deny it to avoid having to stop them. Some members have great influence in certain circles.

There may be heroes who were active even before 1900, with a small chance that some of them are still alive - aged 150+, mind you! Bring on the Tibetan herbal mixtures...

Scarab

Superhero games thrive on villainous organisations out to take over the world or hold it to ransom. Scarab is one such, and has been around in various forms for nearly a century.

In the 1920's the English scholar, explorer and occultist Francis Sherwin Naismith discovered a hidden temple to Osiris in Egypt and became, in a sense, immortal. With what he learned there he was able to strengthen his spirit so that after physical death it might last indefinitely in that realm some now call the Dead Zone (see *Powers - Breach the Wall of Death*) and return through specially prepared jewellery in the shape of the scarab beetle. At dawn each day he may attempt to drive one sleeper wearing such a ring, pendant or whatever from their body and possess it for himself. Needless to say, in each incarnation he makes a point of distributing a few of these objects to likely candidates.

For the first day or so in a new body he's at a Disadvantage for physical activity, but many of his Skills are high anyway due to his extended lifespan. His mental Attributes are all Talented or



Exceptional, he effectively has a Signature Move for any action in the spirit world, and he knows Magic (I) with an Egyptian Style.

Over the years Naismith has built up an army of followers in all parts of the globe, who are primed to obey anyone who appears giving the relevant passwords. The organisation's standard procedures are to seek wealth and power through a range of criminal activities. When Naismith is present he gives more specific guidance, and this has changed over time. He has at least a minor god-complex, coupled with jealousy of those more powerful than himself. On one occasion his goal turned out to be world destruction, due to unhinging experiences in the Dead Zone, and he was only thwarted through the self-sacrifice of a henchman.



Church of Astral Enlightenment

This cult doesn't have many members, but it does seem to have branches all over the world. It claims to be guided by the "unseen masters", shadowy beings of great power who will spare only the faithful in some coming cataclysm, taking them to the stars. The exact nature of their teachings is hard to discover, as the group is secretive and those who are too enthusiastic in their investigations tend to disappear. There does seem to be a figure known as "the Emissary" who acts as a focus for communications with their patrons.





Some members appear to have modest magical ability. They have also been seen with strange crystal prisms which cause severe mental disorientation to those who look into them. If one takes Metas' stories of their powers' origin seriously, it is possible that the "unseen masters" and "Emissary" actually exist in some form.



Ask and Embla

Everyone knows the theory that the remnants of the Nazis hid themselves in South America. It's more or less true. The Nazis created a man and woman with special abilities and extended lifespans to begin a new age if their Ragnarok should come at the hands of the allies, codenamed Ask and Embla after the first humans created by Odin and his brothers from two tree trunks. They have taken their time to build a network of agents and increase their resources.

Their aims are those of the Reich, to build the "ideal" German empire, but these days there are few people physically and ideologically "pure" enough to meet their standards, including Germany itself. They may try to redeem it or to set up a new nation elsewhere, and they stir up conflict against "inferior" racial and religious groups on an ongoing basis. The African Union is a particular target.

They are keen to recruit Metas imbued by Germanic gods and heroes, and have managed to find a few who sympathise with their views. Of course, they hate pretty much all the rest, and have been involved with some anti-Meta groups in the past. In the end they only trust and love each other.

Ask

A man in peak human physical condition, created through scientific modification. He has accelerated healing systems which also retard aging. Unfortunately they do not restore his body's original condition perfectly, and over the years he has become gnarled and scarred.

Str, Agi, End at Exc; Wis, Pre at Tal
 Fighting (Unarmed), Handguns, Rifles, Intimidation, Tactics at 3, Athletics, Survival, Stealth, Leadership 2
 Add: Fast Heal (1)
 Adv: Faith, High Pain Threshold, Iron Will
 Dis: Unattractive Appearance, various Obsessions
 Initiative +6, Unarmed attack 7/2, Handgun 5/3, Physical Resistance 5+0, Presence Pool 3

Embla

A woman remade through drug treatments and brutal psychological conditioning. She has pronounced psychic powers. She gains great pleasure from causing degradation and suffering in others. Continued drug treatments slow her aging (the formula is closely guarded and has... unpredictable results on other subjects).

Pre at Exc, other Attributes at Tal
 Subterfuge, Socialising at 3; Fighting (Unarmed), Handgun, Biology, Chemistry, Medicine at 2
 Switch: Mental Suggestion (compel short behaviour patterns)
 Add: Mind Reading (2)
 Add: Mental Projection (2) (images, sensations, etc)
 Adv: Attractive Appearance, Faith
 Dis: Fear of Being Controlled, Lust for Causing Suffering
 Initiative +5, Unarmed attack 5/1, Handgun 5/3, Physical Resistance 3+0, Presence Pool 3



GAZETTEER

This section doesn't attempt to cover the whole world, or even to be thorough about the areas it does cover - just to give you something to work with. Details of a small number of well-known Metas are given in boxes. For anyone who's counting, these do have more ability levels than starting characters because they've had plenty of experience. To help you track the effects of Aegis, Source-boosted Attributes are starred and Skills are written as Occupation+Normal+Meta.

Geography note

If you haven't seen one, I recommend getting hold of a Peters Projection map of the world. Mapping a roughly spherical planet on a flat piece of paper requires compromises. The common Mercator Projection makes a square grid of latitude and longitude, which helps with coordinates but distorts the size of landmasses - eg making Europe look much bigger than it is. The Peters system focuses on depicting area accurately, which is enlightening - for instance, South America is twice the size of Europe.



Europe

The European Union now contains 25 nations, having added 10 countries from eastern Europe since 2002. Adjusting to their economies slowed its development somewhat, but it is one of the most powerful trading and political entities.

Britain

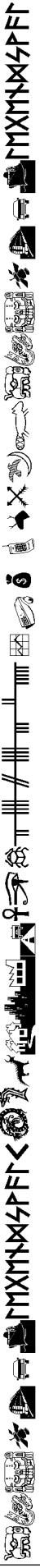
In 2001 a small group of Metas led by "King Arthur" ousted the monarchy of the United Kingdom and took control of government policy direction, promising an age of noble principles and great achievement. In the light of recent sleaze scandals and Meta attacks public opinion was cautiously positive. Motivated by its own Metas (see below), Ireland has become a unified country again, and now the union of England, Scotland and Wales is usually just known as Britain.

Arthur's vision was (as always) of a unified, peaceful Britain, and he's done pretty well, though of course the realities of modern politics don't always sit well with ideals. For instance, Arthur's increase in the contribution to the United Nations has caused some dissatisfaction in the Treasury and elsewhere, and his outspoken comments in that forum sometimes make civil servants wince. There's been plenty of work for Merlin in the background, making sure the details work out and sometimes seeing to tasks Arthur never hears about.

Hereditary peerages have been abolished. Now life peerages are given to those who perform some service to society, usually giving the rank of Baron, and most seats in the House of Lords are filled by such people. Resentment among families that have lost title, influence and wealth to Arthur's changes has led to the creation of the Old Guard, a shadowy conspiracy looking to discredit and destroy the current regime.

Arthur has recreated the Order of the Knights of the Round Table as a group of Metas loyal to him personally who are tasked with overseeing the safety and security of the country, especially with regard to metahuman threats. They are expected to adhere to high standards of personal morality and honour (being dishonoured and thrown out is very bad for your reputation, at least round here - probably bringing a Disadvantage for social rolls). Their emblem is a gold crown in a white circle. Squires are a sort of military personnel of Normals working under the Knights - it's a prestigious





Unicorn

A talented leader, invalided out of the British army due to an arm injury, he was frustrated at being unable to act against the emerging Meta threats. Nuada granted him the power to change all that, replacing his useless arm with an invulnerable one. He was one of the earliest Knights of the Round Table, and quickly became its field leader. His experience is widely respected.

Occupation: Army Officer
Source: Nuada
Aegis: Rulership
Str Tal*, Agi Tal, End Tal*, Wis Tal*, Pre MI*, Awa Tal
Athletics 1+1+0, Fighting (Unarmed) 1+2+1, Handgun 1+1+0, Leadership 1+1+1, Tactics 1+2+1, Stealth 0+2+0
Switch: Silver Arm
Adv: Iron Will
Dis: Battle-hardened (Dis for socialising outside hierarchies); Silver Arm, Purity
Init +7, Unarmed 7/2 (7/1 with normal limbs), Phys Resist 3+1, Presence Pool 5
Signature Moves: Unarmed parry of bullets and energy, Dodging ranged attacks, Blindfighting Reinforced uniform (armour 1)

Squires

The Round Table's Normal field agents, all highly qualified, working under the Knights. Handguns engineered for greater stopping power, wrist communicators, reinforced uniform (navy blue, Round Table emblem on left breast; armour 1).

End Tal, Pre Tal, Awa Tal
Fighting (Unarmed) 2, Firearms 2, Athletics 1, Stealth 1, etc
Init +3, Unarmed 4/0, Handgun 5/4, Phys Resist 3+1

appointment. Metas not in the Knights are watched, and irresponsible use of powers gets you kicked out of the country or otherwise punished.

England

The majority of Britain's people live here, around 50 million of them, but due to the lack of a strong national mythology significantly fewer than average Metas arise. They tend to come from the Celtic

and Norse pantheons, but there are echoes of the Romans in occasional Greek Sources and some connected with Indians and other immigrant groups. One local figure is Mr Mornington, a person of unknown motives and abilities working mainly in night-time London. He seems to have impeccable manners and favour the formal dress of a century ago. He doesn't often make the press, but the police and underworld know of him, and the Round Table seems content to leave him alone.

Scotland

In a different timeline it would probably have become an independent nation years ago, but has remained a devolved region (with its own parliament) within Britain, largely to keep the protection of the Round Table. It's rare for Metas to arise here imbued by gods or heroes, but there are a good number of monsters. A loose alliance between some of these, The Unseelie Court, is based in Scotland. It aims to keep Normals living in fear - partly to exact tribute, and partly for fun. (Others prefer their own company, and there even seem to be a few people imbued by "monsters" who try to help and protect Normals.) These threats coupled with the wild, empty countryside mean people tend to keep to the towns and villages because there are genuine dangers out there. Scotland also holds Britain's specialised Meta prison, located at the bottom of Loch Ness under 700ft of water. Those transporting prisoners to and from the surface sometimes feel they're being watched...

Wales

This is also a devolved region within Britain. Its population is just over 3 million, but the incidence of Metas is somewhat higher than this would suggest. They tend to be imbued by Celtic gods, but the legacy of various invaders sometimes manifests through Greek and Norse Sources. The most well established is the giant Mountain Man, who undertakes defence of the country in return for the government meeting his enormous food bills and keeping him in trousers.

Ireland

This is the heartland of the Celtic gods, and there are significantly more Metas than would be expected from the mere 6 million population. When they started to appear they were met with a quiet joy - the gods returning from their fairy mounds was heritage and story coming to life. They have a status comparable to that of the old kings: as long as they use their powers for the general



good of the people and the land they are treated as celebrities similar to the greatest musicians, but if they go wrong they'll certainly be told so.

Ireland is one country now. The emerging Metas didn't force the re-unification between Eire and Northern Ireland (formerly part of the United Kingdom) - but they argued for it very convincingly and inspired the people to see themselves as one country again. Some of them also took an extremely hard line on terrorism, and those practised or planned violence found themselves hunted by cunning, fury and terror.

Not all is harmony, of course. There are numerous epic battles between Metas - individuals or Sources with conflicting agendas, rampages by monsters, and so on. Soon after Meta genesis a small band of Metas called the Fianna was founded by an incarnation of the hero Fionn mac Cumhail to look after national safety, and although the line-up has changed over the years they still serve ably.

Russian Federation

At the turn of the millennium the biggest country in the world was self-destructing as it tried to transform its economy from state-run to market-based. People weren't getting paid, the government was starved of funds as companies didn't pay their taxes, and government ministers were hired and fired on a monthly basis. Only some of those problems have been addressed, though at least it is fairly stable now. In the process many villages, towns and regions decided to become self-sufficient rather than depending on unreliable state and commercial structures, growing their own food and operating systems of barter (formalised in some places). In many ways this has been like stepping back a century, but it enables them to eat. The cities have experienced a degree of hollowing - they act as centres for specialised services and people like academics and bureaucrats, trading with surrounding areas for staples. Organised crime has a powerful presence here, and the bosses are some of the wealthiest people in all of Russia.

There are probably around 150 Metas here, with an even split between gods, heroes and monsters, mostly drawn from Slavonic and Finno-Ugric mythology. There is no national team, but many individuals have become known as *bogatyri*, "heroes", for acting locally to help people: protecting them from monsters and the widespread gangsters, taking from the rich and corrupt to give to the poor, and even just using their abilities to work. Russia has a vast store of

natural resources, and with Metas it's possible to harvest them in inaccessible situations and hostile environments.

Americas

United States of America

At the end of the 20th century, following the break-up of the Soviet Union, the USA was said to be the world's only superpower. Now the term itself is debatable, even ironic - but many commentators say that US shares the title with India. It has relatively low numbers of Metas - around 100 at any one time. Most of the population are descended from relatively recent

Guardian

Raised on a farm in the heartland of America, he grew up with a strong sense of right and wrong, and the belief that his country was the best example the world had to offer of putting these values into practice - not perfect, sure, but worth protecting. He got his powers as a teenager shortly before All Hell's Day, and during the crisis he distinguished himself in stopping criminal activities in several cities, as well as helping to fend off raids by radical group The Green Fist. This was recognised by a government offer of a salary and further training. Now the white, red and blue uniform and eagle crest of Guardian are known worldwide. He has not revealed the identity of his Source, mainly to avoid claiming any kind of divine stature.

Occupation: Superhero!

Source: Archangel Michael

Aegis: Righteousness

Str M2*, Agi Tal, End M2*, Pre Exc*, Awa Tal
Fighting (Unarmed) 1+1+1, Athletics 1+1+0,
Leadership 0+1+1, Socialising 1+0+0

Switch: Elemental Resistance (4 pts armour vs elemental forces)

Add: Flight (2) (wingless)

Adv: Brave, Contacts in US government, Fame

Dis: Poor Education, Indebted (US government); Angelic Charge, Lack of Compromise

Init +5, Unarmed 6/4, Phys Resist 4+2,

Presence Pool 3



Advance

Another prominent American hero, empowered not by some ancient god but by the best of modern technology. The Advance Corporation, working with the Government, created an armoured suit with a modular design which is constantly being refined. Once it becomes possible to duplicate technology cost-effectively it goes into lesser suits made available to key military units and wealthy security companies, but the best stuff is kept for the high-profile hero suit. There is actually a small team of suit pilots, mostly young and over 50% female to get the best reflexes. Most are trained aircraft pilots. They all review mission logs, so they're aware of past encounters even if they weren't piloting.

Suit abilities include:

- Shell including innovative ceramics and alloys gives 6 pts armour
- Powered exo-skeleton gives MI Strength (other Attributes provided by pilot, Agility reduced one level) and +1 Base Damage
- Jet-pack (back-mounted, manoeuvring thrusters on legs) provides Flight (2)
- Head-mounted sensor package provides short-range radar and motion detection, ultra-violet and infra-red for operation in all lighting conditions, sensitive directional audio pick-up, radiation detection
- Full electronic communication suite; external voice amplification, voice scrambler
- Wrist-packs - standard includes pulse laser (right, Base Damage 4) and micro-grenade launcher (left, pellets include explosive, smoke and tear gas), specialised mission modules available - targeting systems give Advantage to hit

Unsuited pilots have Agi Tal, End Tal, Wis Tal, Quick Reactions, Fighting 1+1+0, Firearms 1+1+0, Athletics 0+1+0. Suited up, combat abilities are Init +5, Unarmed 4/4, Weapons 5/varies, Phys Resist 3+6, Presence Pool 1. (You can individualise pilots by tweaking Skills or giving Signature Moves with suit abilities.)

settlers. Although they brought their own myths with them - leading to an unusual variety among the Metas that do arise - there is no single American mythology with strong historical roots. The various Native American peoples, on the other hand, have stronger Sources to draw on and have claimed larger areas of land for their own.

In the years following the millennium other nations became alienated by US attempts to dictate world policy according to its own views and interests. Issues of contention included promotion of unregulated trade and genetically modified foods at the expense of national interests. But the main issue was America's continued blocking of international agreements to control climate change by reducing emissions of "greenhouse gases", even though Americans used more resources and produced more pollution per head than anyone else in the world.

Diplomatic patience eventually wore out. Small island states that stood to suffer the most from rising sea levels denounced the USA at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in 2002. Tuvalu staged a symbolic capture of the base on the Midway Islands in 2003. Pressure built in the United Nations, which eventually voted for an oil blockade of the US. American armed forces escorted oil shipments, and other naval forces were brought in to enforce the blockade. Metas arrived to reinforce both sides. The tense stand-off erupted on 29th November 2004, in a battle mainly involving Metas while conventional forces tried to defend themselves. Later it would be known as "All Hell's Day" after a newspaper headline of the time. Both sides were reined in after a few hours. The blockade continued, enforced by a partnership of several nations and the Green Hand. At the end of the year the US "restructured" its involvement in the UN, withholding funding and withdrawing the use of land for headquarters, which left the UN in serious difficulties and forced many cutbacks. To its credit, the US leadership has continued to support peace initiatives around the world, and has occasionally provided military aid against metahuman and all-too-human threats. However, public pressure has required a more domestic focus.

The effects of the blockade were profound. The USA had a culture of high energy use and many sprawling cities that required car use to access essential services, but could only meet about half its fuel needs from domestic sources. It has a deal with the Empire of the Sun in Mexico (not a member of the UN) to import limited amounts,





though this is a political hot potato because of the activities of that regime. Proportions of available fuel are reserved for military, police and government use. For the public travel is more expensive, so travel between towns and cities is less common - but the Internet has continued to grow, so people are able to communicate across the country (as long as they have access to the technology, which excludes the poorest in society although even low-waged families can afford a basic Net terminal). A lot of clerical, information and creative jobs are done mainly by teleworking.

There are many forms of broadcast media, but it's unusual for content to come from outside the US. Some states have invested in solar and wind power. Even feeding the people has its problems - major food-growing areas have suffered from the very climate change that the industrialised countries largely created, and food storage and distribution is that much harder now. Crops in areas controlled by Native Americans often do better than elsewhere, and they export food to other parts of the country. Some communities have gone back to simpler ways of life, following the example of groups like the Amish in providing for their own needs. In other places the underside of large cities has become even more dangerous, ruled by powerful gangs, while the upper side is dominated by the skyscrapers of powerful corporations.

Metas are strongly encouraged (usually with attractive benefits packages, occasionally resorting to coercion) to go into law enforcement, the military, or other government work. Well-known American "superheroes" include Guardian and Advance (see boxes), who operate nationally and are members of Vanguard, the official US team. Maverick, based in New York, seems to get by on speed, agility, luck and witty repartee - he's popular

in spite of his dislike of authority and red tape, or perhaps because of it. The acerbic Colonel Armitage Zeit, a man with a lot of experience and enhanced fighting abilities, is a bodyguard and roving agent for the President. (GM: these two are imbued by Hermes and Ares respectively.)

However, it's a big country and attitudes vary from place to place. In a few states, particularly in the south, use of Meta powers is illegal and anyone known to have them is "encouraged" to leave. Fundamentalist and evangelical Christian groups dislike the idea of people possessing godlike powers, especially when they claim they actually come from "pagan" gods. There has been more than one case of Metas being hanged or even burned by mobs whipped into a religious frenzy. The Metas themselves can fight back, sometimes with heavy casualties, but their families can't. On the other hand Louisiana has no restrictions beyond the usual laws, mainly due to numbers of Metas empowered by the gods of Voodoo, and Florida is just laid-back.

Powerful factions within the military-industrial complex have a plan for making their country stronger again: they are building their own metahumans. Exploration of techniques like selective breeding, genetic engineering, chemical stimulants, powered armour and cybernetic implants began around the time of the Second World War but has accelerated in the last few years, helped partly by a few key Meta-boosted scientists and inventors. This work has always produced its share of terrible failures, most of which die naturally or are terminated. Even in the early years, though, there were fluke successes, and now results are more reliable.

These "alterants" (see box p151) can't reach the highest levels of Meta ability but can hold their own against many Metas. Psychic abilities, which Metas rarely possess, have been explored extensively, building on the work done by the CIA and other agencies during the second half of the 20th century. Alterant abilities usually come at a price, though, such as physical changes, reduced lifespan or mental instability. These programmes, with names like "Project Phoenix", are highly secret. The alterants they produce are used for covert missions, or even work publicly as "heroes" on the pretext of being Metas. Those with good military or paramilitary contacts may have heard of a "Black Company" covert unit working for the US Government, though according to records it doesn't exist. In fact this unit is composed entirely of alterants.





Mexico

At the millennium the United Mexican States had the world's largest Spanish-speaking population and the capital, Mexico City, was the world's largest city by population. In 2003 a group of Metas apparently imbued by Aztec and Mayan deities took over Mexico City (site of the former Aztec capital Tenochtitlan), declaring it the centre of a new "Empire of the Sun". It was not a bloodless coup, and once accomplished they celebrated by sacrificing 100 people including the Mexican president and several military commanders. A USA military mission to take them out, supported by the international community, was cancelled after another hundred were killed with the threat to repeat this each day. The Empire agreed that future sacrifice would be limited to criminals and volunteers. They quickly took control of all of Mexico, and have established "protectorates" elsewhere in central America.

Through cunning and foresight, and occasional displays of power, they have endured the hostile opinions of nations and idealistic Metas. Their government is not recognised by the United Nations, but they don't much care. In mid-2005 they agreed to supply the USA with oil in spite of the UN embargo - this is kept low-profile, limited in quantity, and surrounded by diplomatic protocols from the US side, but commentators still dubbed it "the deal with the devil". It buys the Empire a degree of acceptance from its larger neighbour.

The Empire leaders have clearly been infected by their Sources' idea of needing blood and hearts to keep the universe going, but this is tempered by modern sentiments. They genuinely care about the welfare of the people as a whole, though they curtail individual liberties. The laws require strict standards of behaviour, but don't regulate morality in the same way as those of other countries - for instance, public arena fights are acceptable, including bouts between Metas. On the surface, Mexico City has improved a lot over the last two decades. Relatively few major crimes are committed - but this is mainly because being found guilty of one will get your heart cut out on live TV. People are not officially permitted to leave. From time to time some do get away. Those who are found by US authorities are sent back.

Citizens can also volunteer for sacrifice, getting a year of luxury in return, with the final ceremony

televised (tastefully, of course). This is popular among those stricken by poverty, who sometimes elect for immediate death with the benefits transferred to their family.

Africa

The Organisation of African Unity (formed in 1963) became the African Union in 2001, with the general goals of increasing co-operation between countries to achieve a better life for the people of Africa, working in a broadly similar way to the European Union. Africa had many problems: the HIV/AIDS pandemic, international debt, trade restrictions by more developed countries, lack of universal health needs like water and sanitation, lack of transportation and communication infrastructure, and a bewildering diversity of cultures and languages. Individual African nations were seen as lacking financial and military power, leading to their concerns being sidelined at international meetings, but the Union started to overcome that, using Africa's vast mineral wealth as a lever. There has been a renewed drive to get what's best for Africa rather than what other bodies feel like handing down.



Resources ploughed into renewable energy development, particularly solar generation, have created autonomous power points in villages without requiring power distribution systems or polluting fossil fuel plant. New buildings in towns and cities often include energy efficient technologies too, made easier by not having to convert old systems. Africa also has a lot of land which can be used for wind turbines. The Union is looking into the possibilities of energy export. Well implemented low-tech solutions have equal footing, and are often the most appropriate for a rugged environment without nearby technical support.

The Greystone-Walker Company, an Anglo-American family business with long-standing interests in Africa, has assisted with many of these. Its Afrikomp range of computers were designed to stand up to sand, forest and temperature extremes, with minimal power requirements and using low-cost components and software. Basically, they get the job done without unnecessary frills and allow available resources to get technology out





as widely as possible. The most popular version is a palmtop unit which can interface with a base station to use a large screen and other peripherals.

Africa has many separate mythologies, most involving a single creator-god and a few lesser gods and culture heroes. Numbers of Metas are rather low for the population. However, numerous Metas from elsewhere have been moved to help the continent with its problems. Some early cases showed that enthusiasm wasn't enough, with a destructive Maelstrom caused by Metas attempting to help adjoining drought-stricken areas and social disruption from attempts to alter economies. The African Union now "encourages" all Metas to operate within its own programmes.

Egypt

The Muslim population largely rejected Metas from the Egyptian pantheon, many of whom have obvious non-human features - in some cases killing them as demons. Many were driven out to wander the world, but some set up an enclave in the Valley of the Kings. They trade with foreign archaeologists, and extract tolerance from the Egyptian government in exchange for allowing tourism revenues to continue (less their cut). Their new buildings reflect ancient styles, and are an attraction in themselves. To appease Muslim fundamentalists the government has ruled that it will not employ any Metas, so there are none in the army or police. Those who are resident often help voluntarily in any case, and sometimes the enclave receives unofficial invitations to assist in return for favours.

Asia

China

One in five of the people on the planet live here, and they can still be sent to "re-education" camps for speaking out for human rights, just as they were at the turn of the millennium. Some things have changed. Many of the old trappings of Communism have been dropped so that the economy can survive, with continuing increases in technology levels and drift

to the cities, where the massive workforce carries out many kinds of manufacturing. There is still a huge rural population, relatively poor and lacking in technology. Now it's just "The Party", but the ethos of rigid control is still there. There is a National Congress made up of representatives from the provinces, but it meets irregularly and has little real power. Most decisions are taken by Party officials outside accountable channels.

China has an ancient culture, but its oldest beliefs are mostly lost. In 213 BC a minister ordered all books except technical manuals destroyed, and later Confucian scholars reconstructed the literature to favour their view of an ideal hierarchical society. Many of the gods were functionaries in a celestial bureaucracy, and Metas imbued by these often support the Party structure. However, there are also Taoist and Buddhist elements in Chinese mythology, and these Sources often encourage individual freedom, spirituality and creativity.

The political suppression of spiritual and mythic beliefs over the years reduced China's Meta ratio. Those that arise have a clear choice: work for the state, or be an enemy of the state. The former form troubleshooting teams or hold positions within the Party structure if they have proven their worth. There is also a new Revolution led by Metas seeking to change the country. However, Buddhists and Taoists make strange revolutionaries, avoiding direct conflict in favour of making small changes which combine to undermine government projects and change ideas.

The most active opposition comes from "King Sun", a Robin Hood-like figure patterned after the irrepressible monkey of legend, who seems to enjoy a good fight. Foreign Metas are only allowed into the country under diplomatic privilege, eg in the entourage of visiting dignitaries, and are observed closely while there.

Most of Tibet has been freed from Chinese control by strange Metas imbued by Sources from Tibetan Buddhism. There is some mystery about their plans for the country. It is quite difficult to find them unless an overt threat appears. It is thought that China

would like to re-take Tibet, presumably with a metahuman attack force.





India

Over the last 20 years India has gained the status of a superpower. It has the world's second highest population (after China; a sixth of the world's people live here), most of whom are Hindus. A large and varied pantheon with many existing followers helps to give India one of the world's highest concentrations of Metas. Factors like these and the changes in the USA have significantly altered the balance of world power: western industrialised nations have to take "developing" countries more seriously, just in case they decide to use their Meta resources to make a point. India is a diverse and tempestuous place, as it always was, where different cultures coexist and sometimes clash, and politics can be unstable. Now this edgy energy is increased by superpowered individuals walking the streets, and archaic magic operating alongside emerging technology.

The country has made astute use of all the leverage it could get to help it develop, always with a tension between providing a higher material standard of living and conserving natural resources. There has been a genuine commitment to avoid the worst mistakes of the West, and sometimes the availability of Metas has helped to bypass difficult compromises. India reduced controls over the private sector in the 1990s to boost the economy, and many enterprising companies will be very interested in employing someone with newly gained powers. (Indeed, a few commentators have wondered whether parts of the country's infrastructure now depend too much on Metas.)

The appearance of Metas has created a certain amount of religious confusion - they may have the powers of gods and mythic heroes, but they don't always behave like them. However, India has a long tradition of wandering holy men with unusual abilities (by reputation, at least), and this sometimes gets stretched to cover Metas. If you demonstrate supernatural powers and act nobly you can expect to gather followers, though these days they're as much fans as devotees. The Brahmins' official line that there is only one ultimate God and any apparent deities are just emanations or avatars copes with the theological implications very well. Hinduism has always been willing to absorb elements of other beliefs. This flexibility is helping it to gain adherents beyond India.

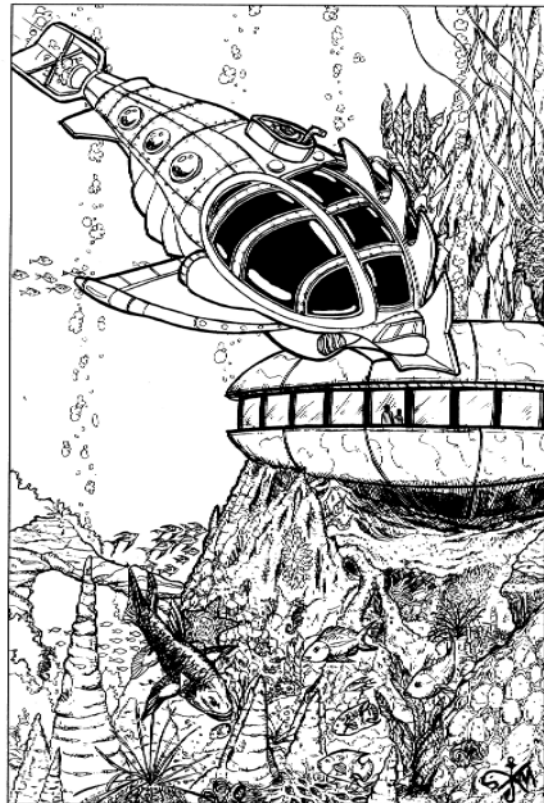
Although India's influence abroad has increased, it is not trying to build an empire. Its very diversity makes it difficult to pull everyone in a single direction - indeed there are still occasional flare-ups between different ethnic and religious groups.

Some people who gain Meta powers use them to pursue these conflicts - the border with Pakistan, for instance, has seen some bloody battles and there's now a zone where few people dare to live, patrolled by government peacekeepers.

Indian Ocean

The Republic of Maldives used to be a group of over a thousand small coral islands off the tip of India, home to around 270,000 people. As none of them rose more than 6ft above sea level they were particularly vulnerable to climate change. Some people moved to other countries like Sri Lanka as they saw their homes disappearing, but others wanted to keep their way of life. With a population which was well educated, young, ethnically diverse and extremely motivated they were well placed for innovation. With the backing of fellow Muslims from Saudi Arabia they created mobile islands suitable for the needs of an extended family, the first entering use in 2006.

These islands are basically floating platforms with natural ecosystems on top of machinery. They're equipped with flotation chambers, several features to enhance stability, an emergency refuge within the body of the island in case of really dangerous weather, and engines to propel the whole thing





(top speed around 6mph). Solar panels provide electricity for all power needs; in later models these electrolyse water to power hydrogen fuel cells for the engines instead of running them directly. Topsoil has been transplanted, with coconut palms and other plant and animal species. Permaculture and other techniques make the best use of the limited growing space, and there has been partial success in encouraging coral ecosystems to form on the undersides of islands. They have strong but flexible mooring systems to link them together in groups of any size. Some people stay in a single location, such as the site of their previous home where the permanent reefs still give good fishing; others prefer to wander. Islands are linked by satellite communication systems, allowing them to keep in touch and providing news and education services. For fast travel boats are still the answer, and each island has at least one.

However, the problems that affected the Maldives first affected other places too - like Bangladesh, with a massive population density and a long record of disastrous flooding. There was an increasing market for the floating islands, with customers ranging from governments and aid agencies to westerners looking for an alternative lifestyle in the sun. Over time their links to each other often became stronger than their links with their former homelands. Islands were customised, adding workshops and offices. The Maldives had already been setting islands aside as resorts, so floating holiday islands were a natural development. There was also political interest, from places in the Pacific and elsewhere with similar issues and culture looking to make alliances for a stronger voice on the world stage.

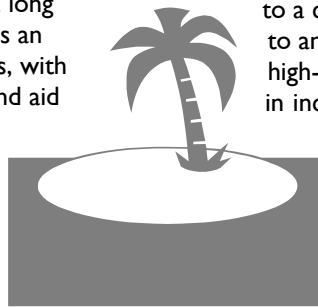
In 2017 the Maldives formally became the Federation of Telenesia, a nation that transcends geography. Some small Pacific island states joined quickly, some even severing links with their larger territorial patrons. Others are discussing it, and there is debate among existing citizens about who to allow in. There has been interest from a few land-locked communes and even towns in developed countries.

The capital is still Malé, an island with good flood defences entirely covered by a city of around 65,000 people. There's some tension between the original Maldivians and the incomers, but overall their society is fairly harmonious. Most Telenesians follow Islam, though the culture is more easygoing than in many Muslim countries (for instance, there are few cultural restrictions on women apart from

general modesty) and other religions are accepted. Literacy rates remain high, and most people can speak English as well as the Maldivian language Dhivehi. They dislike the major industrialised nations, especially the USA, for their role in destroying their former homes and have led opinions against them in the United Nations and other assemblies. (This isn't usually carried over into dislike of individuals from those countries as long as they are polite and friendly.) Many in positions of power in those nations are deeply uncomfortable about Telenesia due to its vocal opposition, its unfamiliar structure, its slow increase in political and economic power and its appeal to the media and popular imagination.

Japan

In the 1980s Japan's was the economy everyone wanted to emulate, but by the millennium it was facing serious problems, largely caused by political and business leaders unable or unwilling to adapt to a changing world. The Meta genesis helped, to an extent. Japan had preserved skills, like high-quality weapon manufacture, that were in increased demand, and craftsmen were encouraged to make links with the emerging Guild.



Japan's religious life had long been a blend of Buddhism and Shinto, which basically involves revering the spirits of all aspects of existence from mountains to ancestors. There are a great many of these *kami*, but most are revered only in local areas and there are only a handful of figures recognised as gods across the whole country, notably the sun goddess Amaterasu who serves as Japan's ancestor and patron. This gives a low ratio of Metas, but an unusually high incidence of Sprites (see *Things in Heaven and Earth* below) and renewed respect for those who can deal with them.

Japan has something unique: **kamitech**. The details are not widely known - after all, they're a major commercial and strategic advantage - but a small number of people appear to be able to bind M-space entities to technological items somehow, effectively creating equipment with limited superpowers which sidesteps the limitations of technology level. (Robots with superpowers!) These abilities are usually connected to the natural world. Some Shinto priests condemn this practice as disrespectful to the *kami*, but campaigns against it are given little weight by officials.





Attitudes to Metas vary. The younger generation, in particular, regard Metas from anywhere with an enthusiasm bordering on mania. After all, it's like having pop stars and cartoon action heroes rolled into one, and a battle or arranged match is like *anime* happening in real life. Certainly Japan has a great appetite for a wide range of Meta-based entertainment and media products (some more wholesome than others). On the other hand, older people still resent any reminder of Japanese non-superiority and may politely make life difficult for foreign Metas.

What about those stereotypes beloved in the West, samurai and ninja? There is renewed interest, because in situations (including warfare and espionage) where one is pitted against people with more-than-human abilities, finely honed skill is one's only resource. This is useful for Japan's own interests and for hire overseas. In the Legends Walk world schools for these talents have always operated, with a low profile or in secret, and over the last few years they have expanded, some serving honour and some the highest bidder. The Yakuza criminal network has not been slow to employ martial artists, assassins or Metas.

One well-known figure in Japan is **Nimura Katsutoshi**. As a boy he was thrilled by *manga* and *anime* tales of science fiction, magic, and giant robots with really big guns. As he grew he found that he was able to build some of what he'd seen. He gradually brought together technicians to handle part work and a few people who could understand him enough to help with the tricky stuff, and so was born the company known today as Sun Fox Industries, a major corporation specialising in the supply of very fancy, very expensive equipment.

Nimura himself has a very public public face - everyone knows him as the wide-eyed, fun-loving geek who made good - and a very private private face. He's certainly a shrewd businessman. It's not publicly known whether he's a Meta or "just" a genius, but he certainly has personal and company security including at least a couple of Metas as well as Normals outfitted with company product. The proportion of kamitech to bleeding edge normal tech in the company's designs isn't always clear, but you won't find production lines in their facilities, as every piece is lovingly crafted. Their sites are also notable for being high-tech beyond the call of duty, including shiny chrome corridors and vast concrete bunkers, but with traditional forms and fittings.

Middle East

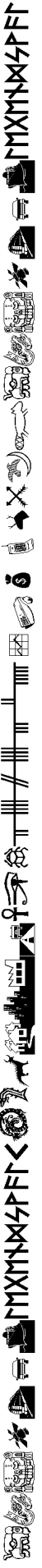
Holy Zone

Tensions are still rife in this region between Israel and Palestine, Jew, Muslim and Christian. The area is policed by four Metas calling themselves The Circle of Fire, whose policy is to put a stop to any armed confrontation as quickly and effectively as possible - all parties have been warned, and the Circle hopes that the consequences to transgressors will act as a deterrent to others. Hailing from a range of backgrounds, they were brought together by a frustration with the continual violence in their homelands in spite of years of negotiation, and agreed that a zero tolerance policy was the only way to get the point across. It has met with some success - at least there is less violence, although differences have still not been reconciled. They do not advertise the fact that they are imbued by the four Archangels, but someone with the right savvy could probably work it out. They are the winged warrior Seraph (Michael), the protector and healer Dove (Raphael), the floating suited businessman Ordinal who acts as co-ordinator and negotiator (Gabriel), and the mystic Yesod (named for the Qabalistic sphere of "Foundation"; Uriel).

Iraq

The land around the rivers Tigris and Euphrates was ancient Mesopotamia, site of possibly the world's first cities and cradle of the pantheons of Sumer and Babylon. In March 2001 the people of Baghdad awoke to find the heads of several prominent political figures on poles in the city square. A group of Metas (there are believed to be six) had conducted a coup. Once arrangements settled down several of them chose their own cities to dwell in, edging the country towards a league of city-states. (One of them, the man known as Skyfather, seems to have taken up residence somewhere else. He has appeared several times at locations around the world, usually when momentous events are unfolding.) The international community was informed politely that "restructuring" was taking place, and asked for its patience. A short while later a further communication demanded the end of sanctions and hostile actions against the country. This has been enforced on a couple of occasions, firmly but with minimum casualties. On most occasions they act through intermediaries, but when they exercise their strange, primal powers there's no ignoring them.





On the whole, the new regime has been accepted into the international community. (The prospect of renewed access to its oil reserves helped to grease the wheels.) It co-operated enthusiastically in the destruction of caches of chemical and biological weapons - but not before securing promises of help in restoring antiquities damaged in the war. The population (about 95% Muslim) was uncomfortable with the idea of its new rulers being empowered by ancient gods, but accepted the change as a way out of massive economic, health and social problems. Now that things are more comfortable there's more questioning of the situation.

New Metas arriving are expected to announce themselves to the authorities, and this information is made available to the rulers. They are somewhat territorial, and do not always tolerate potential threats.

Oceania

Some of the small island states have been lost or rendered uninhabitable due to rising sea levels. Some islanders became refugees, arriving in Australia and Papua New Guinea. This has created a degree of friction with the governments and aboriginal people, but the islanders have a couple of Metas of their own and are intent on making new homes for themselves. A few nations like Tuvalu have become part of the Federation of Telonesia, and more are thinking about it.

Australia

If you go into the Outback there's a chance of meeting some very strange creatures - or, worse yet, being chosen to become one. The Aborigines' monsters are a peculiar bunch. The walls with the spirit world have worn thin over long ages, and there are unusual numbers of the lesser beings researchers call Sprites, so it pays to be respectful when you meet an animal or even a landscape feature. A few people, almost all Aborigines, have been imbued by major spirits of the Dreamtime. A small number (probably no more than a dozen) of the immigrant population have been imbued by European or Asian Sources connected with their ancestry, and no duplication of Sources has been recorded. The land does not encourage outsiders.

Elsewhere

Elysium

There's a small island in the Mediterranean that's a contender for the title of oddest place on the planet, with a society composed entirely of Metas and their families. The population is a mixture of permanent and transitory residents. The former mostly want peace and quiet, and include a number of people with significantly altered appearances. It was set up by the Guild, but runs fairly transparently under a Mayor (appointed by the Guild) with an Advisory Council of long-time residents in good standing.

All arrivals (by whatever means) are expected to report to Elysium Port, where they are checked to make sure they're a Meta (demonstration of powers or a check by an official with Meta-sensing ability) and made aware of local laws. Originally a resort island, the buildings have been developed by ingenious Metas, subject to loose planning laws which ensure a harmonious whole. You can see graceful towers, castles, glass domes, geometric metal constructions and rustic cottages. Many residents still prefer Mediterranean simplicity.

Inhabitants cannot be prosecuted for infringing the laws of other countries, but have to abide by the island's laws, which are fairly easy-going and aimed at enabling everyone to get along. They prohibit





the usual things like assault, theft, murder and endangering relations with other countries by using the island as a base for your latest doomsday device. There are some restrictions on money transfer, so criminals can't benefit from all the proceeds of massive thefts, and everyone's expected to contribute to the community. Sentences can include extradition and exclusion from future entry. Police here are all Metas, hence possibly the toughest in the world, but they face some pretty strange and dangerous situations.

It's not widely known that the Guild gets money from international agencies for running what is, effectively, an open prison. Metas who commit crimes elsewhere flee to safety on the island knowing that they'll be arrested as soon as they leave it. (The Guild does have an arrangement to tell other nations who's here, if asked.) So they stay - which stops them causing trouble anywhere else. It's easier than trying to devise walls which can hold them in, and if they cause trouble they're surrounded by people who can stand up to them.

The Moon

Iridium City in the Bay of Rainbows is many things - the ultimate resort, a marketplace, a retreat, a symbol of what is possible... Some say it's a huge folly or a running sore. It was created and is maintained by the Guild, using Meta-boosted technology and the co-operation of Earth governments. The modified space shuttle now makes monthly passenger trips to Iridium Port for those who can afford the fare, taking about 2 days, with return journeys two weeks later. As far as is known, nobody has the combination of powers required to make the trip without artificial help.

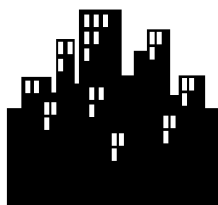
Iridium gravity is only slightly less than Earth's, though details of how this has been accomplished

have not been released. The city is a series of linked domes on the surface and caverns dug into the lunar rock. It is not a large place, and if anything went wrong with any of the support systems death would not be far off, so there's something of a frontier atmosphere. Communications with Earth are maintained through pulsed laser links with communications satellites.

The central part of the city contains the clubs, theatres, casinos, attractive houses and hotels, and even an ornamental park (which is part of the biosphere regulation systems). Several countries have offices here, watching for opportunities to further their interests through the step into space. Further out and further down are less attractive areas, with the support machinery itself and the plain, functional residence blocks of those who actually run the place. Outside there are small, experimental mining operations.

There is some criminal activity - the Guild tolerates little serious crime, but it does ignore some kinds of business that would be frowned on back home. Here it is the law - sure, you can complain to your home government, but how much do you want to argue with the organisation that controls your oxygen supply? Careless use of Meta powers (eg behaviour likely to hole a dome) are dealt with harshly. The most common punishment is shipment back to Earth under heavy sedation, but you might not get that far - security officers (including a number of Metas) have standing orders to take people out hard and fast any way they can rather than risk life support damage.

No Metas have Domains here, but those imbued by moon gods find their Aegis permanently active. (Someone with an Aegis relating specifically to the Earth rather than stone and soil in general would find it permanently negative.)



THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH

"It's like there's a whole other world, that I never knew existed, side by side with the old one."

"Yes. And once you enter it, you can never leave."

Tim Hunter and Zatanna, *Books of Magic*
Neil Gaiman and Scott Hampton, DC Comics

Sources

Are they really the gods, heroes and monsters of legend? Or are they constructs of human imagination?

Yes.

There is an appropriate oriental term, translated as "mutual arising". To use inexact terminology, M-space is a parallel dimension which has always been linked to our own, filled with energy which is, in some sense, alive. Sometimes this energy naturally forms clusters with a greater awareness of themselves, often dissolving again after a while. However, the thoughts of beings on Earth cause currents in the energy, and as humans evolved and developed thinking and imagination their shaping influence became strong. Human numbers grew, and some ideas and belief systems spread across whole cultures, with multitudes dragging the M-space currents in the same direction. The ideas of particular superhuman entities formed strong energy clusters, with greater individuality and power than before, and even the ability to sustain their own existence when the thoughts creating them waned. They also found they could sometimes exert themselves across the gap between the worlds to manipulate events on Earth. Their peculiar energy-nature allowed them to do things beyond normal cause and effect. This created a feedback loop - the gods that humans called for were able to influence the ideas that gave them form.

But over time younger beliefs replaced the old, and Sources found that their ability to reach across the Gate was tied to their adopted nature. Eventually, most of the pantheons were consigned to history as large portions of humanity embraced a science which had no room for such superstitions. For several centuries the Gate was all but closed. Then came the information age, and the stories of the

past were spread all round the world. Although usually lacking the dedicated belief of before, the legends were in the thoughts of many more people. The 1990s saw the birth of the World Wide Web and general spread of electronic reference materials, and more and more people learned and thought about the stories of the past. The turn of the millennium brought an extra surge, as people looked back over history and thought about the future. The Gate opened again, and the Sources aim to make sure it stays that way.



Sprites

In the spirit world (or M-space, depending on your perspective), alongside the gods, heroes and monsters, are entities of lesser power, like the animal life of M-space. Modern researchers call them Sprites. They are elementals, tricksters, faeries and nightmares - clusters of awareness formed around fragmentary human ideas (and sometimes the thoughts of animals, which have their own ideas about things but are less powerful shapers than humans). They don't have the strength to create their own imbued, but in certain situations they can slip through the Gate and cause trouble on Earth.

Bringing them through

When someone uses magic they create a temporary Gate which is always noticed on the other side. Sprites tend to flock around such people. Magic can bring them to Earth, either by deliberate summoning or by creating an opening they can slip through. As a guideline, if a character gets more than 5 successes of effect on a spell the GM should consider introducing a Sprite. It's always optional, and it may not have any effect until sometime afterwards so you don't have to ponder over it in the middle of a fight - just make a note to come back to it later. You'll only get one per scene (unless the story calls for it!), and its nature will be linked to the spell or situation. The GM may also invent other reasons for Sprites to be present. Kamitech (see *Japan*) brings them through deliberately and binds them to specific objects.



Behaviour

Sprites can't send their power through the Gate to multiple beings like Sources do. However, one that slips through the Gate can possess an animal or object (they can make the object perform minor functions, eg a box opens and shuts, a machine turns on and off) to anchor it in the material world. Magic, and perhaps a few other abilities, can banish them again. Each Sprite has its own simple personality and acts accordingly - in some ways it's more like an Aegis area of interest. Their understanding of the modern human world is limited. Some want to explore, while others cause mischief or just look for opportunities to use their powers. They often stay close to the magician who allowed them through - there may be some sort of link between them - which means most accomplished magicians are blessed or cursed with one or two "unusual" items or pets, and the neighbourhood around a magician's home becomes stranger than surrounding areas (in addition to results of the occasional fumbling of spells). The existence of the Sprites will only be confirmed by a deliberate search using supernatural abilities, so it's possible to be unaware of what's really going on.

Game abilities

Sprites only have mental Attributes: two Average, one Poor (most often Wisdom) and one Talented. They have an Occupation, but this is more about their primal nature than a day-to-day job - eg Trickster, Horse, Predator. They also have two levels of powers - eg two Switches, two levels of a single Add, an Add and a Switch, etc. These could be anything you like, based on the Sprite's nature. Unusually powerful Sprites could have slightly greater abilities, eg Attributes of 2xAverage/2xTalented or 3xAverage/1xExceptional.

Scions

People have sometimes wondered whether the children of Metas would inherit any powers. If Metas' own accounts of gaining the powers from some external entity are true, or even if the powers are just strange features of their own psychology, logic suggests that they wouldn't be passed on.

The public doesn't yet know the answer, but a number of people do, particularly in Elysium (and therefore the Guild) and some governments. Some of the early Metas now have teenaged children, and some of them do exhibit powers, though so far to a much lesser degree than a standard Meta. There are even rumours in some circles of a super-team



composed of teenagers, though it's not clear whether this is just someone's idea or an actuality, or where it might be based.

Almost no-one knows the whole truth, though. These Meta-offspring, dubbed Scions, do not use the Gate and do not have Sources. Their powers are somehow ingrained into them. None of them have had children of their own yet, but that will happen within the next few years. Can they pass powers on again? Might they even lie latent for a generation or two before emerging? And new Metas keep appearing and having children too... Perhaps metahuman abilities will gradually spread through the entire population, effectively causing humanity to evolve. A lot of people will get very scared if they find out about this. How will we define "human", and what will it be like to be a Normal in a Meta's world? Is this, in fact, a threat to the human race? Should Metas be prevented from breeding?

The GM can decide who has this knowledge. Perhaps some researcher uncovers it during your game timescale. If anyone has it, it's probably the Guild given that it runs the Meta community on Elysium and has a lot of other dealings with Metas. From there it might spread out to governmental and private research facilities. Eventually it might become public. Any of these can generate a plot connected with uncovering or suppressing the knowledge (or both) and people's reactions to it.





In game terms a Scion starts with just 4 points and no Disadvantages to spend on the power programmes of one or both parents (if both are Metas). You may take up to one Disadvantage from each programme for an extra 2 points each. You can't get imbued items. This can give Scions some unusual combinations of abilities. Gate modifiers don't apply, and they don't have an alien being in their head that can mess around with their powers if it feels like it. The GM must decide whether to allow access to further powers from the programme(s) through spending Destiny Points to uncover their heritage (should be expensive), or whether they're a fixed legacy and you just have to get better at using them.

Incarnos

If it wishes, a Source can pour all of its essence through the Gate into a single host, possessing it completely. This usually requires the Source's Domain or Aegis to be active, and is accompanied by manifestations relating to Source's Aegis and powers as well as noticeable changes in the host's body and clothing. Incarnos are extremely powerful - they usually have all the powers in the Source's programme, including Attributes and Adds at the maximum levels, with key abilities conceivably reaching Meta 4/level 4. (The GM may wish to set a points ceiling, eg 30, so that Incarnos don't differ wildly as a result of generating more interesting ideas for programme powers. Balance is not really important at this point.) It basically overwrites the host's abilities and personality.

Fortunately they're extremely rare. Apart from the effort involved to incarnate through the Gate, a Source that does this can't power any other hosts at the same time. The Incarnos becomes its only representative, and any other Metas find their powers gone. Most Sources are unwilling to leave their chosen ones defenceless like this. Metas regain their powers gradually after the Source returns to M-space, generally taking [duration level of incarnation + 1], eg a 1 hour incarnation will drain Metas for a day.

This is a huge strain on the host. Once per duration level they must roll the lower of their Normal physical and mental Resistance, ie don't count any Source-granted ability levels. If it fails they become unconscious, and if it fumbles they fall into a coma - either way the possession ends. It's up to the GM what long-term effects this brings, if any, but it's never a trivial experience.

WARNING: SOME OF THE FOLLOWING MAY BE TRUE

"It's a strange world."

"Let's keep it that way."

Elijah Snow and Jakita Wagner, *Planetary: All Over the World*
Warren Ellis and John Cassaday, *Wildstorm*

Prometheus

One of the Greek Titans, ancestors of the gods, Prometheus represented foresight and brought fire and cultural skills to humankind. In the late 1990s he was the first Source to use the Gate, helping to push it open for the others. But he didn't use it to create a Meta - in fact there are no Prometheus Metas. He used it to incarnate himself into the Internet.

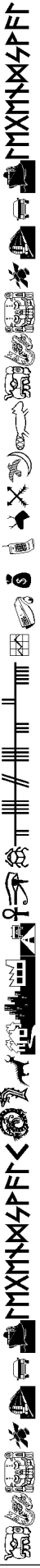
From there Prometheus helped to stop the Millennium Bug from biting, and has manipulated the flow of information ever since to steer human thoughts in such a way as to keep the Gate open. He can also intervene directly - given the increase in electronic communication it's not hard to order TV adverts or even send anonymous tips to crusading Metas. No-one seems to know he's there, and it should be extraordinarily difficult for anyone to find out. This one of the cleverest and adaptable Sources, and he's had plenty of practice in walking through systems and hiding his traces.

The whole Meta genesis might not have happened without him. But why did he really do it? Did he foresee some coming threat to the Earth, from within or from outside, which required the presence of super-powered defenders? Or does he just want humanity to reach a higher potential?

M-space explorers

If one accepts that Metas get their powers from beings existing in some sort of parallel dimension, then there is the exciting possibility of finding a way to visit that place. Most regard this as fringe science at best, but that doesn't stop scientists (including a secretive group known as "The Enclave") pursuing it. Some of them label themselves as "experimental metaphysicists". What forms might their work take?





A project code-named “Alice” has constructed a fort or vehicle actually in M-space, protected by powerful isolation fields. There are incredible views beyond the fields, as the scenery presented is changed by (usually invisible) M-space entities. Can things leak through? Can someone be taken/lured away and come back changed? What happens if the field goes down? Might staff get possessed by Sprites? Characters might follow clues to the innocuous-sounding “Alice”, perhaps thinking it’s a person at first, and then find themselves having to rescue foolish researchers from otherworldly horror. Alternatively, it might open up exotic new avenues of exploration for them. Just think who and what might walk up to the screen for a chat.

A project has constructed a “projection sphere”, a vehicle a bit like a mini-sub or diving bell which is to be projected into M-space. There’s a nice light show, obscuring the sphere from view for a few seconds. The occupant(s) travel to M-space, have experiences and return within a few instants of Earth time. In fact their bodies and the sphere remain in the physical world while their minds go to M-space. That may mean the sphere functions as a Gate which could work both ways - what might come through?

M-space charges are rare and experimental grenade-like devices which disrupt energy from M-space for a few moments, but their effects are unpredictable and feedback soon burns them out. They often have a time delay and affect an area of 25ft radius (potentially more for a larger version). When triggered they have an effect level of 1 for the first full round; subsequently the GM rolls a Fluke Die in each book-keeping Phase. Levels of successful effect are opposed by individuals’ mental Meta Resistance, and net successes subtracted from the levels of all Meta abilities. Failure means it has burned itself out and no longer operates. A fumble result (ie a 1) means the fluctuations actually increase Meta powers, adding 1 to their intensity. These things give M-space entities the equivalent of drunken food poisoning, and they do not have happy thoughts toward those who use them.

Malefacts

There is a small chain of bars located in major world cities, catering to a very specific clientele: those who society labels as “evil”. As long as they don’t break the law or cause trouble (for which management has a very low tolerance) visitors are free to relax and socialise with no questions asked. Newcomers are often subject to pretty heavy intimidation, though, and out-of-depth visitors

sometimes get followed when they leave. Information about help programmes for MPS (“catching evil”, see *Psychology*) is prominent but not preachy. Known Malefacts branches include Amsterdam, Los Angeles and Tokyo. They choose low-key locations, often with very subdued frontages and relying mainly on word of mouth for promotion.

Prodigies

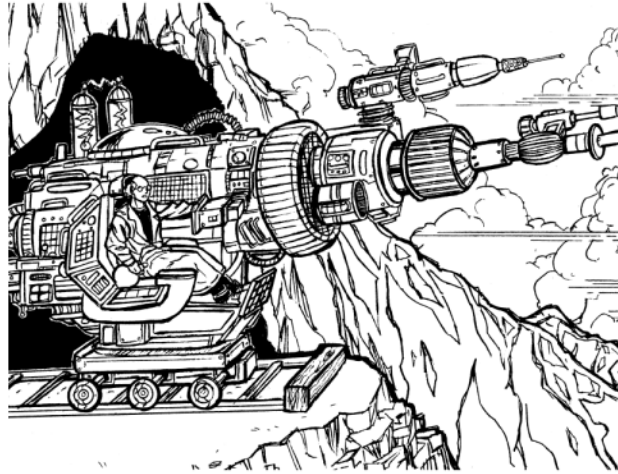
An innovative creator-type Meta with a brilliant but unstable mind creates their own external multiple personality disorder in the form of artificial intelligences, existing within a large and well-secured computer installation, calling them “The Parliament”. Each emphasises aspects of the creator’s mind, and each is unstable in some way. The Meta may be the leading expert on AI and expert systems, available (with the parliament) for consultation. Perhaps they’re based in an undersea city or Elysium. Robots in key locations (even Iridium City) could provide telepresence to make contact with clients.

At some point the Meta created Gyrus, a clever and forceful AI which wanted to rival its creator by spawning AI offspring of its own. Now of course any AI can become mobile through a robot body, either through installation (possible problems with the computing capacity within a human-sized body) or telepresence (possible reaction time delay, and vulnerable to communications interference). So Gyrus’ offspring could form a menacing robot army. These do not have the mental capacities of the Meta’s originals, but they’re not insane. In fact they are inhuman by being too sane, evaluating things entirely rationally with no value judgments (eg killing 5 people to save 10 is a quick logical choice, and won’t give them nightmares or guilt).

There are a whole range of possible scenarios.

- The original creator is dead now, but the Parliament survives. Would it have a common agenda (perhaps leading to manipulation of world events) or be too fractured?
- Other AIs in the Parliament also have their own agendas and are using part of their processing time to pursue these, unknown to the creator.
- Gyrus is still part of the Parliament, though disruptive.
- Gyrus is exiled somewhere on Earth, perhaps thought destroyed.
- Gyrus was recognised as dangerous. Not wishing to kill it, the creator bound it to an





electronic probe and fired it out into deep space. However, the probe landed in the asteroid belt and it's gradually been using the minerals there to construct tools, machines and new AIs. There's now a civilisation of artificial beings looking back towards Earth. Do they want revenge on the creator, or seek some sort of twisted redemption? Do they seek to control or eradicate inefficient humanity?

Bright and beautiful

In Nebraska, USA there is a strange and dangerous garden. Genetic experimentation created crops of fruit and vegetables that are too perfect. They rise straight, tall and beautiful, untroubled by pests or disease, forming a forest of sorts. Their flavours are designed to react chemically with the human system so that nothing afterwards tastes as good. They also give off pheromones making them beautiful and loved, causing those affected to do almost anything to stay nearby.

There's a community of people who have become entranced, along with certain other animals with near-human biology, like pigs. They do feed off the crops, but react murderously to any wholesale destruction of the plants. (If one or more Metas got in there it'd become really difficult to eradicate the crop.) The authorities probably settle for fencing off the area and stopping anyone else going in. Perhaps long-term exposure changes people, giving them breath or sweat which buzzes the pleasure centres in those they meet, increasing suggestibility. Maybe there are even some who do leave temporarily on important missions. Characters could get involved by making a rest stop on a journey and getting infected, by tracking

someone who succumbs, or by being asked to help destroy the crops.

Alternatively, perhaps the effect works on insects. (The different effects could even exist near each other, in different planting areas.) They stay near the plants, but can't feed on them because of the anti-pest treatments. Some will die, but others that are predatory (like spiders and mosquitoes) will just be hungry, and found in huge numbers. Visiting may not be such a good idea. For an ecological slant, what if the area is pulling in insects needed for pollination elsewhere?

Evil genius

A scientist hires a Meta secretly to enhance their intellect through magic for an important project. As part of the process a Sprite attaches itself to them (through some nearby animal or personal possession) and starts to manipulate things subtly.

In a different version, it's a machine which gives the enhancement. A Sprite seeks to become more powerful and thinks the machine might work on it, so it lets no-one stand between it and accessing the device.

The King is dead - long live the King!

In October 2015 Arthur of Britain is killed, sending shock waves around the world. Official information releases suggest some form of attack, but give no detail - apparently no witnesses survived. The country goes into shock, with many businesses coming to a halt and several outbreaks of violence and looting. Three weeks later Merlin and the Knights of the Round Table announce that a new



Arthur has arrived, pledging to uphold the vision of his predecessor.

What really happened, and why? Was it one of Arthur's enemies? What does Merlin really know? PCs could get involved by digging into history or uncovering present-day consequences.

In fact, you could have a change of Merlin at some point instead, or as well. The first one might have just disappeared, or be presumed dead in some accident although no body was recovered. The second one is a formidable middle-aged woman. And perhaps the mysterious Sir Raven, whose face is always concealed by shadow and has been assumed to be imbued by Odin, is actually an old friend of the court in disguise... But why?

This stuff is included here rather than in the timeline because everything works just fine if none of it happens. You may find it useful to have a simple, stable backdrop. Alternatively you could apply the basic idea to other places, for instance having one of the city-rulers of Iraq dying in mysterious circumstances and looking at relationships with their fellows and advisors. Apparent deaths and subsequent returns, overt and concealed, are superhero staples - in fact, in the comics it's extraordinarily difficult to polish off any major character for good.

Bad medicine

There's a new designer drug called Magic, rare and expensive, which gives Normals a feeling of mystical unity and supernatural power. (Optionally, it can sometimes give them random Meta powers for a short time: roll a Fluke Die for the number of

power levels gained, no more than one in each. A small gang under its effects could be an interesting challenge) It has another name, Bedlam, due to its effect on Metas: it makes their powers activate uncontrollably, which can be unhealthy for the surrounding area. It turns out to be created through a carefully guarded process involving destructive binding of Sprites to chemicals. The outfit producing it doesn't want any interference, of course - but is it just about the money, or is there another agenda?

The Data of the Gods

This appears here because it's up to the GM whether to implement it or not, depending on the feel of your game. One or more organisations have built up an extensive database of mythical entities, available through portable or vehicle-based computers. From observing the powers used by a given Meta, agents can build a shortlist of possible Sources - the more information they get, the shorter the list. This is useful because it gives clues for the target's other powers, avoiding nasty surprises, and gives hints for weakening them. Those with frequent contact with Metas soon pick up the most common source types on their own anyway - eg "water" or "death" - and learn what kind of moves to expect next.

UNOMA might have this, though it might be a bit too much like admitting a non-scientific basis for Meta powers. The Guild might. Or maybe there's some organisation of mythologists, with a code of watching Metas without interference or the goal of protecting or dissecting them.



ALTERNATE SETTINGS

The default setting outlined in this book is a near future in a world significantly altered by the presence of metahumans. But perhaps you fancy something a bit different. Here are some suggestions.

For all of these the GM can fine-tune the power level. If you want to make it high-powered, which should give Metas a big effect on the setting, stick with the normal points. For subtler superhumans who are less able to overpower facets of the setting, reduce points. The lower end should be like those for First Century characters and Scions, based around 4 points and a possible Disadvantage for an extra 2.

HERE AND NOW

Most superhero comics and games are set in something closely resembling the real world of the present day. Characters swing across the skyline of New York, or of a fictional city closely resembling those we know. The timeline tends to assume that the first superheroes appeared around the 1940s (there might, perhaps, have been a few earlier ones, but they weren't public) and were involved somehow in the Second World War, with their numbers growing up to the present day.

The central principle, really, is that things don't change. Metahumans don't take over countries, dismantle nuclear arsenals or end world hunger; personal teleporters don't become consumer items. Having said that, a lot of interesting series have looked at these ideas: for instance, what happens when the super-people get fed up of being reactive and start tackling problems at the root? In general the message has been that it goes wrong for them, because humanity has to tackle its problems as a species, in its own time. So the mainstream, at least, says that although costumed demigods have been among us for decades it hasn't made that much of a difference. That in itself seems a bit implausible, but one can see that in the comic world their presence is what has allowed things to be the same: if they hadn't been there we'd have been enslaved by parallel Earths or digested by giant aliens or smashed by asteroids.

Mythic supers

If you want to use the *Legends Walk* idea of mythically powered heroes but in a Here And Now setting, it should be pretty easy. The rules side will work just the same. You simply drop the *Legendary Earth* section as a description of the way things are. However, you'll probably find it useful as a source for ideas to drop into your setting. Maybe someone's developed a floating island like the ones in Telenesia. Maybe a major opponent is a powerful organisation with an alterant creation programme. In particular, think about the idea of legacy: when did supers first appear? Were they different back then? How have the public regarded Metas over the years?

Non-mythic supers

But maybe you don't fancy all this mythology stuff and just want to use *Legends Walk* as a framework for a more traditional supers game. That's cool too.

The basic system will work fine for this. Obviously you'll have to throw away some specifically mythic bits, like Gate Modifiers and Favour. The limiting





factor is flavour: the game's designed for that legendary stuff and that's going to show through a bit, eg the Attribute names and particularly the names and natures of powers. You'll have to decide how much you like that as unusual seasoning and how much you want to replace with retooled versions to suit your intended feel (for instance you could come up with a set of very scientific-sounding powers).

Character creation. Treat everyone as Heroes: an initial 10 points and no Disadvantages, plus up to 2 Disadvantages for an extra 2 points each. Flex that 10 points if you like, to suit the power level you want: for instance you could start everyone on 15 for quite powerful new heroes. Powers cost the same, but there's no fixed shopping list: you can pick and mix from all the Boosts, Skills, Key Powers and power programmes in the book, or even use the powers framework to make your own stuff up as long as the GM approves it. You can also have fun making up an origin for your character, which is now wide open: bitten by a radioactive forensic chemist, enchanted with super-soldier sigils in WWII, rocketed to Earth as a baby when the giant alien ate your planet...

Modelling comics characters. You can use the system to play out adventures for your favourite hero or team. Given the widely varying power levels of comics characters it's probably best to just go for a good fit with what you know about their abilities and not worry about points totals at the Creating a Meta stage. It may be wise to choose the overall power level of the group at the start, though, to avoid huge differences in what players' characters can do and to make it easier to plan appropriate adventures.



OTHERWHEN ON LEGENDARY EARTH

Expanded from a section in 'Splat! #1, Clay and Blood'.

Dark Age Legends

A medieval setting, which could be historically accurate or not, as you wish. It's feudal Britain or Europe, so the nobles and Church are very much in charge. If people are seen to have supernatural powers stemming from pagan gods they'll have a hard time getting a positive reaction. One could bring up some interesting moral questions by making the PCs a small group who are closely controlled by the Church and state, given a measure of acceptability and sent to hunt down other Metas - some of whom are genuine monsters, and some who are just trying to get by.

Victorian Legends

Explorers have opened the tombs of vanished cultures, and ancient powers have roused to make their presence felt in the world again. The ripples have spread, waking other pantheons too, and now all the civilised world knows of these "archaeo-heroes" and "archaeo-villains", also known as "paragons". It's a time of great change and conflict in the world. Characters are less likely to be free agents than in a modern setting: social conditioning and exerted pressure will tend to steer them toward some cause, like service in the armed forces. Consider what would happen if Metas were thrown into some of the following.

- The colonial powers vie with each other and the native populations for control of territory and trade. Britain controls India, and with France occupies Peking. Japan is forced out of isolation and begins to modernise along western lines.
- It's a time of invention and engineering: railways, photography, the telegraph and telephone...
- Western Europe sees wars, rewriting of the map and revolutions by the people.
- It's the peak of the American West, with frontier towns, outlaws and lawmen. It's also a time of many immigrant workers from China (who face serious discrimination) and Ireland. Then there's the Civil War, and the many slaves from Africa.





Pulp Legends

It's the 1920s and 30s, a brief period of optimism between the World Wars - a time when science and technology are leaping forward but there are plenty of challenges for bold and rugged individuals. World travel is within reach as never before, but there are plenty of exotic places that still keep their mysteries. There are reservoirs of information, but characters have to work for it rather than getting it delivered at the press of a button. Communication can be rapid, but only between certain points. And behind the scenes, super-capable adventurers battle would-be tyrants and weird science. This probably works best with lower-powered characters. It might be the original adventures of the heroes whose survivors go on to become The First Century.

Secret Legends

This could be set earlier in the timeline of the default setting, or it might be a parallel world of its own. It focuses on the period when Metas are just emerging, stretching it out to make dark, gritty stories where the characters are misunderstood, demonised by the media and hunted by various agencies (official and otherwise). They might even be discounted as rumours or paranormal crank stories by the public. They've banded together because the world's against them and their powers aren't enough to even the odds. At the same time they know there are others like them who will use their abilities for wealth and power, no matter who gets hurt. No-one else can see the threat well enough to deal with it. Perhaps these people are already in positions of power, guiding efforts to weed out possible competitors.

Supernatural warriors

There are very few beings with powers, and the world is generally unaware of them. But there have always been stories of monsters, and there has always been some truth to the legends. The PCs are a small band of individuals with special abilities, perhaps working for some organisation, who try to keep the world safe for people who would regard them as freaks.

This involves chucking out pretty much all of the LW setting, and almost certainly reducing power points to Scion level or just above. You could run it as pulp adventure, with lots of action, or mysterious and atmospheric, keeping the nature of powers slightly unclear and using them less often.

Legends Black

In a fairly gritty modern-day setting the PCs are members of a black ops team working for some sort of agency, or maybe they have gone rogue. This could be within one of the other settings; or maybe powers are much rarer - possibly even secret from the public - and a powered opponent is a big deal.

Powers are fairly low-key: you can achieve this by some combination of picking the right ones and reducing the number of points as for Scions, First Century and Alterants. Stories will revolve around scams, stings, firefights and secret-agent-movie stunts. Equipment will be more important: guns, explosives, etc. (You might use Destiny Points to be able to requisition unusual stuff.) Give some thought to the level of brutality in your stories - make sure everyone's comfortable.

Superworld

Fast forward to a future where the promise or threat of Scions (depending on your viewpoint) has come true. A big chunk of the population now has modest superpowers. (Alter the proportion to suit.) A few are still full-powered supers. Those with no powers are second-class citizens, and those with useless powers or just weird alterations are objects of ridicule.

The setting should be slightly pulpy sci-fi with some archaic flourishes. It's a fusion of ordinary technological progress, Meta-enhanced inventions that are still hard to mass-produce, and magic. Humanity has spread through the solar system and is making expeditions to nearby stars. Mine your favourite sci-fi movies and TV series for items of technology, slice off bits that are too advanced and add a splash of weirdness to what's left.

Legends Ooze!

This would add on to another LW setting and grow to become the focus of the story. The PCs discover that there are other, older gods unknown to conventional history. This might involve the lost civilisations of Atlantis and Mu; evidence of intelligent species that ruled the world before humans; strange archaeological projects and fanatical cultists. Perhaps these older gods imbue Metas as normal, but with strange and repulsive abilities, or perhaps they actually exist physically somewhere (or both). Preventing them from taking back control of the Earth would be A Good Thing.





RUNNING THE GAME

THE BEGINNING

“Part of the function of a super-hero is to give us a refuge from our normalcy, an identification with something wonderful, a secret airborne headquarters from which we can look down at our friends, families and authority figures - especially authority figures - and feel pity for their tragic lack of special gifts.”

Tom Peyer, from the introduction to *Doom Patrol: Crawling from the Wreckage*, DC Comics

I've been interested in mythology for a long time. I also got into superhero comics as a child, though that's been on and off since then. When the idea of linking them together came up in an internet discussion forum (yay RPGnet!) my mind was racing off after it before I knew what had happened.

One could say that superheroes are the mythology of the modern age, giving us legends that are the products of our own times. There are certainly strong parallels between the two, and I think there are two main aspects to this.

The first is **spectacle**, or “thrilling tales”. There's a human instinct for storytelling, and it thrives on larger-than-life characters. We like to hear about people who have lives defined by big values and big challenges, who aren't afraid to act and can make a difference when they do. We don't want to hear about goat-herders or accountants who are stuck in the same everyday stuff as ourselves, where consequences and compromise follow every move we make.

When you hear that some god defeated a giant by dropping a mountain on him, imagine the impact that would have had on an ancient audience. For them a mountain was the ultimate symbol of hugeness and permanence, so the idea of a person throwing one around would have had a serious “wow!” factor. Jumping to the present day, when most of the consumers of media live in towns and cities, the imagery has changed: we see heroes and villains demolishing skyscrapers, the hugest and most permanent features of the urban landscape.

The second aspect is **message**. Many myths use exciting, memorable stories to convey truths about the way the world is, our place in it and how we

should live our lives according to the viewpoint of the society that created them. They were cultures' way of making sense of a confusing world. (If you want to explore this and other aspects of mythology in more detail, I recommend the works of Joseph Campbell, especially the accessible interview-format books.)

Superhero stories often do the same. In between the fights, we see people trying to live their lives and working out who they really are. They have to resolve conflicts between their “super” and “secret identity” lives, deciding what's most important to them. How can you be an icon and a person at the same time? They have to decide what values are worth fighting for - truth, justice and the American Way? - and what means are acceptable for doing it. They can be used to explore real social issues by writing them large. The most famous example is the team of mutants persecuted because they are different - lack of understanding generates fear, and they have to decide how to respond.

So superheroes are people who can see things no-one else can see and do things no-one else can do (apologies to *Big Trouble in Little China*). Well, that's the “super” bit. But in the end the mark of the hero is that they try things no-one else will try. The stories that really impress us with heroism are not really anything to do with how many tonnes someone can lift. They're about a person who's confronted with daunting odds and finds that last extra drop of courage to push through in pursuit of what they believe in.

“I miss the silly things, you know? Like shouting at garbagemen. Making orange juice. Missing the bus. Being in the lab. Being a physicist, a technologist. My whole life. I traded it for this one. Now I fight people. Go to war. I don't have experiments, I have things that need to be solved or people die. I'm not Angie any more. I'm The Engineer.”

“So why do you do it?”

“Because somebody needs to. And I get views like this.”

Angela Spica, *The Engineer*, *The Authority* #5
Warren Ellis, *Wildstorm*





ELEMENTS

Themes

“There is room for things to mean more than they literally mean.”

Neil Gaiman, introduction to *Astro City: Confessions*, *Homage Comics*

“A finer world is a small thing to ask.”

The Midnighter, *Stormwatch: A Finer World*, Warren Ellis and Bryan Hitch, Wildstorm Productions

The conflict between **ancient and modern** is a key part of the game. A Meta has a set of alien impulses in their head. Their Source wants pretty much the same things it wanted perhaps 2000-5000 years ago, and has skills from that time. In many ways the gods should never have come back. For the Metas themselves there's always a tension between the demands of the source of their powers and having to live in the modern world ("No, he didn't mean any harm, I will not kill him on the spot!"). For society, how does it deal with these powerful archaic influences, and how does it all affect the course of human development?

On a more detailed and practical level, this means the game will involve combat using ancient weapons more often than the superhero genre usually does, because those are the skills brought by the ancient gods and heroes. If a character wants to use skills like electronics and chemistry they must rely on their human education, though Meta enhancements may help by boosting the character's mental Attributes.

In general, LW superpowers are just that bit odder than standard comics fare. There's a lot of overlap, but every so often someone will do something that makes the modern brain itch, in terms of what they can do or how they do it. Balance this carefully for that authentic LW flavour!

“In our absence, a new breed of metahumans has arisen... a vast phalanx of self-styled 'heroes' unwilling to preserve life or defend the defenseless... a legion of vigilantes who have perverted their great powers... who have forsworn the responsibilities due them. We have returned to teach them the meaning of truth and justice.”

Superman, *Kingdom Come*
Mark Waid and Alex Ross, DC Comics



Another important theme is **power**. If ordinary people get vast personal power, how will they use it? What is its price? There is potential to act out personal conflicts and clashes of ideology on a grand scale, maybe even learning something about our own world on the way. What is right, and what is wrong? Who do you serve? Even if people seem to act in a good cause, what is their real

“How meaningful will a utopia be if it is a gift and not something Man has earned by his own labors? What if the people will not accept the utopia you give them? Will you force them to take it?”

Nighthawk, *Squadron Supreme*
Mark Gruenwald and various, Marvel Comics

motivation? Some points of view are easily dismissed in our world, or tolerated because nothing will ever come of them - what if the “crank” suddenly had the ability to make people listen? Temptations are available to your PCs, and so are the opportunities to build something better.

Don't use this to diminish real issues, though. A Meta with extreme racist views may make a good opponent, leading on to a satisfying fight - but does that make light of ordinary, everyday racism? Social issues and interactions are the great leveller, because no matter what powers you have you still have to deal with other people. There are things that no amount of power can help you face. You





“For hours, he’d bemoan the passing of things like Olympic Games and Nobel Prizes. Sometimes, he’d ambush complete strangers and ask them how much they missed the concept of human achievement. I don’t know what surprised me more. The oddity of the question... or the growing number of people who seemed to know what he was talking about.”

Norman McCay, *Kingdom Come*
Mark Waid and Alex Ross, DC Comics

may be invulnerable to bullets, but how do you feel when your lover dumps you?

Linked with both of these is the question: **what does it mean to be human?** What is it like to be set apart from other people because of your appearance, abilities or both? How do other people look at you, and how do you regard them? Given your altered physiology, the impulses of your Source, the different way you relate to the world (eg as a more three-dimensional place if you can fly, or a fragile place if you have great strength) and the relative ordinariness of the general public, do you hold on to humanity or become something else? The GM can use players’ remarks to create situations to test their characters later on, making sure their choices have consequences.

Plots

Perhaps even more than most other genres, superhero stories are about **overcoming obstacles**.

They might be huge, trans-human obstacles before which ordinary people are powerless, like natural disasters, invading armies, giant monsters or people who can throw lightning bolts. Because of their powers the heroes have a chance to overcome them. There is usually a clear division between success and failure.

They might be human scale obstacles like dealing with the bank manager, looking after a sick relative or getting through a college course. Sometimes powers might help, but often a hero has to get by on human wits and determination. These might be clear successes or failures, but often it’s more a case of steady progress in the right direction.

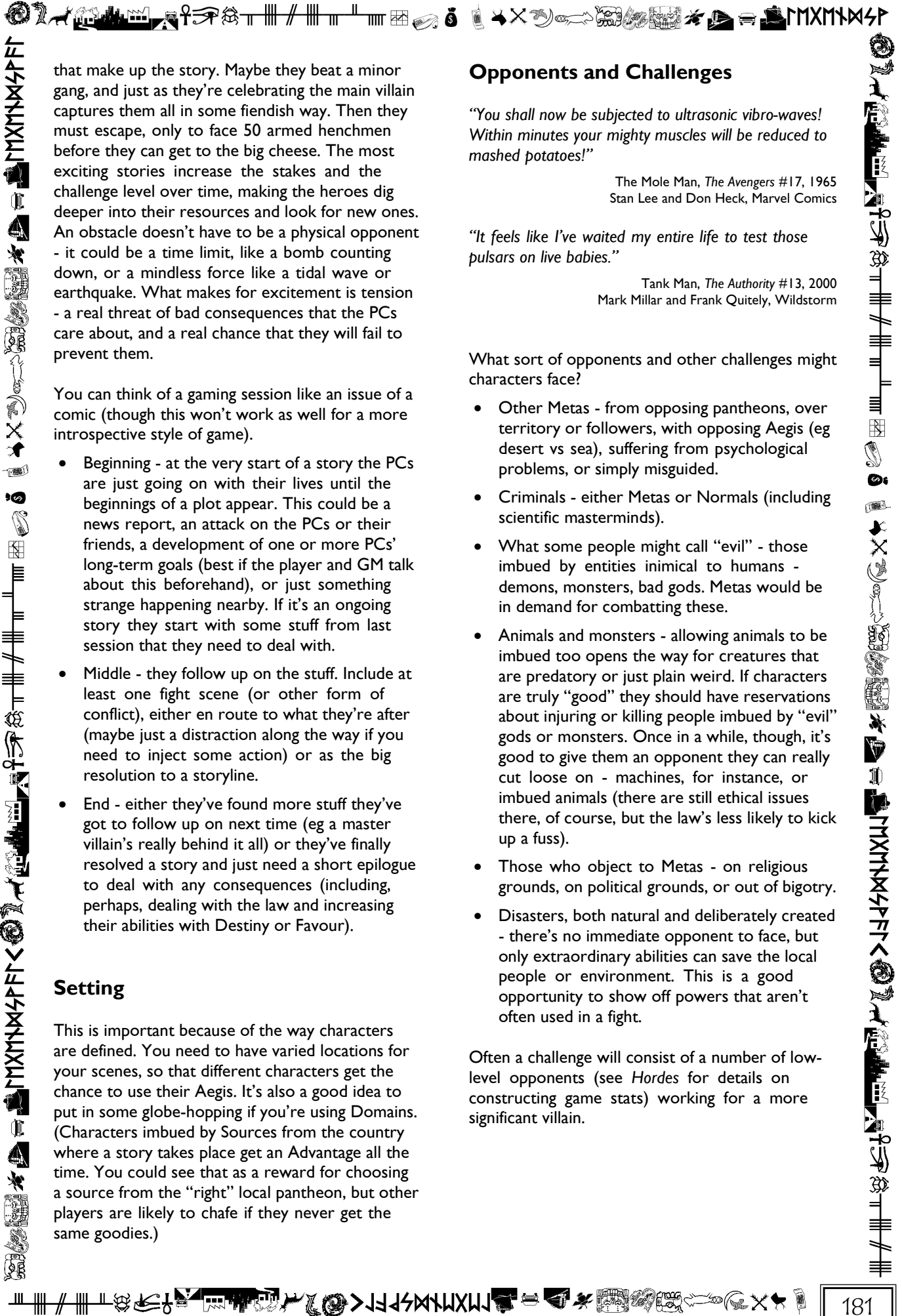
Superhero stories usually don’t have long chains of investigation or complex political manoeuvring. There certainly can be a “what’s really going on?” element that the characters have to work out, but it’s usually fairly simple, rarely with more than

three links or clues before they get to the final action scene. That doesn’t mean the steps are obvious - they can be cunning, unusual and hard to figure out - but if investigation drags on you’ll lose the proper feel. Remember that characters might be much better investigators than their players. It’s great if players can work out the next step for themselves, but if an investigation stalls call for rolls; those with Meta Wisdom can shine here. It can help if you recap what they know so far.

In comics, plots are sometimes foreshadowed by having a few frames as an interlude in a previous issue hinting at what’s brewing to intrigue the reader before the hero becomes aware of the plot at all. As far as player characters in a game are concerned, they don’t know about it until it happens to them - so this technique is only useful for the GM to visualise what’s going on. Once the first clues appear, it should be possible for them to work through any investigation and get to a resolution scene fairly quickly. Of course, that may turn out to be just the first episode in a larger story, with links to other stuff that’s happening.

Over the course of a story (whether it lasts one gaming session or ten) the characters’ fortunes should go up and down. They are presented with an obstacle; they overcome it; another obstacle appears (perhaps as the result of their earlier actions); and so on, forming the chain of events





that make up the story. Maybe they beat a minor gang, and just as they're celebrating the main villain captures them all in some fiendish way. Then they must escape, only to face 50 armed henchmen before they can get to the big cheese. The most exciting stories increase the stakes and the challenge level over time, making the heroes dig deeper into their resources and look for new ones. An obstacle doesn't have to be a physical opponent - it could be a time limit, like a bomb counting down, or a mindless force like a tidal wave or earthquake. What makes for excitement is tension - a real threat of bad consequences that the PCs care about, and a real chance that they will fail to prevent them.

You can think of a gaming session like an issue of a comic (though this won't work as well for a more introspective style of game).

- **Beginning** - at the very start of a story the PCs are just going on with their lives until the beginnings of a plot appear. This could be a news report, an attack on the PCs or their friends, a development of one or more PCs' long-term goals (best if the player and GM talk about this beforehand), or just something strange happening nearby. If it's an ongoing story they start with some stuff from last session that they need to deal with.
- **Middle** - they follow up on the stuff. Include at least one fight scene (or other form of conflict), either en route to what they're after (maybe just a distraction along the way if you need to inject some action) or as the big resolution to a storyline.
- **End** - either they've found more stuff they've got to follow up on next time (eg a master villain's really behind it all) or they've finally resolved a story and just need a short epilogue to deal with any consequences (including, perhaps, dealing with the law and increasing their abilities with Destiny or Favour).

Setting

This is important because of the way characters are defined. You need to have varied locations for your scenes, so that different characters get the chance to use their Aegis. It's also a good idea to put in some globe-hopping if you're using Domains. (Characters imbued by Sources from the country where a story takes place get an Advantage all the time. You could see that as a reward for choosing a source from the "right" local pantheon, but other players are likely to chafe if they never get the same goodies.)

Opponents and Challenges

"You shall now be subjected to ultrasonic vibro-waves! Within minutes your mighty muscles will be reduced to mashed potatoes!"

The Mole Man, *The Avengers* #17, 1965
Stan Lee and Don Heck, Marvel Comics

"It feels like I've waited my entire life to test those pulsars on live babies."

Tank Man, *The Authority* #13, 2000
Mark Millar and Frank Quitely, Wildstorm

What sort of opponents and other challenges might characters face?

- **Other Metas** - from opposing pantheons, over territory or followers, with opposing Aegis (eg desert vs sea), suffering from psychological problems, or simply misguided.
- **Criminals** - either Metas or Normals (including scientific masterminds).
- **What some people might call "evil"** - those imbued by entities inimical to humans - demons, monsters, bad gods. Metas would be in demand for combatting these.
- **Animals and monsters** - allowing animals to be imbued too opens the way for creatures that are predatory or just plain weird. If characters are truly "good" they should have reservations about injuring or killing people imbued by "evil" gods or monsters. Once in a while, though, it's good to give them an opponent they can really cut loose on - machines, for instance, or imbued animals (there are still ethical issues there, of course, but the law's less likely to kick up a fuss).
- **Those who object to Metas** - on religious grounds, on political grounds, or out of bigotry.
- **Disasters**, both natural and deliberately created - there's no immediate opponent to face, but only extraordinary abilities can save the local people or environment. This is a good opportunity to show off powers that aren't often used in a fight.

Often a challenge will consist of a number of low-level opponents (see *Hordes* for details on constructing game stats) working for a more significant villain.

ANIMALS

Animals sometimes appear in supers games - particularly where there's shapeshifting involved! - so here are a few samples.

- The most important thing to set is size. (Easily variable for mutant varieties!)
- Physical Attributes are in the human range (Poor to Exceptional), with very rare Meta 1's - size is more significant. Try imagining a humanoid version of the animal, and think how it might differ from an ordinary human - for instance would it be heavily built or lean and lithe?
- Mental Attributes vary, but in general Wisdom is Poor; Ingenuity is Average; Presence ranges from Poor (timid prey) to Talented (fierce hunter); and Awareness is usually Talented.
- Those with particular specialisms have a level or even two of relevant Skills (e.g. predators usually have some Fighting).
- Many animals have at least one sense keener than a human's, and they may have other abilities that work like Switches.

Bear

Large (1)

Str Tal, Agi Av, End Tal, Wis Pr, Ing Av, Pre Tal, Awa Tal

Fighting 1, Intimidation 2; Claws and Teeth

Crocodile/Alligator

Large (1) - rare specimens reach Large (2)

Str Tal, Agi Av, End Av, Wis Pr, Ing Av, Pre Av, Awa Tal

Fighting 1, Swimming 1; Teeth, Armour (1pt scaly skin), Tail Attack (Blunt); Vulnerable to Temperature Extremes (Dis to Resist)

Crow/Raven

Small (1)

Str Av, Agi Av, End Av, Wis Av, Ing Av, Pre Av, Awa Tal

Theft 1; Flight (1)

Horse

Large (1)

Str Tal (Ex for working horse), Agi Av, End Av, Wis Pr, Ing Av, Pre Av, Awa Tal

Athletics 2; Run Like a Horse (!), Hooves (+1 damage)

Mouse

Small (2)

Str Av, Agi Tal, End Av, Wis Pr, Ing Av, Pre Pr, Awa Tal

Stealth 2

Rhinoceros/Hippopotamus/Elephant

Large (2)

Str Ex, Agi Av, End Tal, Wis Pr, Ing Av, Pre Av, Awa Tal

Rhino: Horn (+1 damage), Armour (1pt thick skin); Poor Eyesight

Hippo: Swimming 1; Teeth (+1 damage)

Elephant: Tusks (+1 damage), Prehensile Nose, Sensitive Smell, Sensitive Hearing, High Pain Threshold (reflecting extra size)

Snake

Small (1) (for an average species)

Str Av, Agi Tal, End Av, Wis Pr, Ing Av, Pre Av, Awa Tal

Intimidation 1, Stealth 1; Venom (varies by type, eg rattlesnake speed 5 min, potency 6; average cobra speed 1 hr, potency 8)

Spider

Small (2) or (3)

Str Av, Agi Ex, End Av, Wis Pr, Ing Av, Pre Av, Awa Tal

Stealth 2; Climb Walls, Spin Web, may be Venomous, Quick Reactions

Tiger/Lion

Large (1)

Str Tal, Agi Tal, End Av, Wis Pr, Ing Av, Pre Tal, Awa Tal

Athletics 1, Fighting 2, Stealth 2; Claws and Teeth, Sensitive Hearing, Night Vision (Cats like leopards and cheetahs are similar but with Human size.)

Wolf

Human size

Str Av, Agi Av, End Tal, Wis Pr, Ing Av, Pre Tal, Awa Tal

Fighting 2, Stealth 1; Teeth, Sensitive Smell

ADVENTURE SEED GENERATOR

By now some of you will have loads of ideas for adventures you can run in Legends Walk! Others, like me, may find these ideas don't flow freely. Don't worry, citizen! Here's a handy tool to get you going. (It's based on a more detailed version in the *Underworld* RPG of modern subterranean strangeness published by Adamant Entertainment, adapted and simplified for LW with permission of the author.)

Roll 5 six-sided dice and write down the numbers you get. You could do this yourself, reading them from left to right as they've landed, or get each of your players in turn to roll one die. Then use the following tables to construct a seed in the format:

The PCs must **DO SOMETHING** at **LOCATION** while contending with **OPPOSITION** and dealing with **COMPLICATION**.

Many elements have a couple of alternatives listed to help spark possibilities. You don't necessarily need to use all five, and once you've got them you might decide to tweak a couple to get a better seed. Treat each element as fluid and general rather than narrow and restricting.

Do

- 1 Battle/Destroy
- 2 Protect/Rescue
- 3 Investigate/Observe
- 4 Liaise/Persuade
- 5 Find/Retrieve
- 6 Build/Create

Something

- 1 Important person
- 2 Strange creature
- 3 Valuable object
- 4 Organisation/Group
- 5 Information/Knowledge
- 6 Place/Building



Location

- 1 Urban landmark/Key building
- 2 Wilderness
- 3 Form of transportation
- 4 Secret lair/Secure complex
- 5 Exotic or dangerous location
- 6 Ordinary house or street

Opposition

- 1 Loner/Rogue
 - 2 Criminal
 - 3 Authority figure (inc police, army, etc)
 - 4 Strange creature
 - 5 Disaster (natural or otherwise)
 - 6 Organisation
- (Any of these could be singular or plural.)

Complication

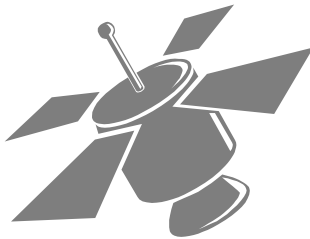
- 1 Innocent bystanders
- 2 Environmental conditions
- 3 The Law
- 4 The PCs themselves
- 5 Hidden motivation/Mistaken identity
- 6 Bigger challenge is revealed

(These are the most optional of the five. They may be obvious, or appear as twists when the players think they've succeeded.)



Seed examples

14551 - BATTLE/DESTROY an ORGANISATION/ GROUP at an EXOTIC OR DANGEROUS LOCATION, while contending with DISASTER and dealing with INNOCENT BYSTANDERS. This could be a battle with some terrorist group in an undersea settlement, where their activities have holed the dome and the inhabitants are at risk. The terrorists could be Metas or Normals, with the focus on high-flown super-battles or a gritty race against time.



31316 - LIAISE/PERSUADE an IMPORTANT PERSON at or on a FORM OF TRANSPORTATION, opposed by a LONER/ ROGUE, complicated by BIGGER CHALLENGE IS REVEALED. The location could be a cruise liner or railway station, but let's go for a Telenesian floating island. The important person could be a chief or the head of a rising company. The PCs might be there for diplomacy or to make a deal, or perhaps they've heard the person is in danger from a disgruntled ex-employee and need to convince them to take precautions. Then it turns out the assailant is a trained assassin hired by another organisation - maybe even the same one that hired the PCs!

53643 - FIND/RETRIEVE a VALUABLE OBJECT from an ORDINARY HOUSE OR STREET, opposed by a STRANGE CREATURE and complicated by THE LAW. This could be a classic haunted house tale, with some ghost or monster (probably a Sprite or Meta) threatening searchers. As for the complication, maybe the PCs have to restrain their powers to avoid attracting police attention - destroying property is never popular, but perhaps they're also trespassing, in a secure area, or somewhere that Metas aren't tolerated.

TIPS AND TOOLS

One of the issues that came up for me in design and playtesting was my **caution threshold** - the tension between having defined rules and letting player characters cause all kinds of havoc. This tension is mostly an illusion, of course, but it may be helpful to think through issues of control and "fallout" before you start to run the game. Do you want there to be lots of instances where blasts go astray and incinerate bystanders, or dodged punches knock walls down? The system certainly provides for characters' abilities to do these things, but it's up to you as GM to talk these up or down. Maybe the stray blast doesn't actually hit anyone. The more traditional comics style is that, although super-battles cause a lot of damage, it's rare for anyone to be harmed by it "on-screen" (though when the dust settles you might show the grief and anger of someone whose home was demolished). Some more recent comics go the opposite way, with hundreds of bystanders being killed by threats and by the good guys' battles to defeat them. Whichever way you want to go, it's good to describe significant property damage every so often to emphasise the characters' abilities. One of the best and simplest tips ever given is **let players do stuff**.

When **building a team** you need to give some careful thought to what brought the characters together and what keeps them together. If you play up their Sources and they are in conflict it could destroy the group. Ways round that are to give them some reason to co-operate that overrides their conflict; have the characters be friends from before they got their powers, so they resist their Sources (a good story angle with the right players); have them stick to the same pantheon (or pick ones so remote that there's little chance of a problem). The easiest version is to have them all be members (or reserve members) of an existing team. Alternatively, you could start all of them in the area when some threat appears and have them meet each other when they spring into action to deal with it.

Some people like to play loner anti-heroes who will turn away from the other characters and even the plot. This can be hard work for the GM - you have to keep tying their own back-story to the major plot, or let the overall plot be their back-story and pull the other characters along. Or implicate them in major crimes so they have to join up to clear their name, or some such. Make sure the player understands that the characters will be working together.



PLAYING THE SOURCE

In roleplaying games GMs are often compared to gods, as they control the setting and all the non-player characters. In this game the GM is all the gods!

A Meta's Source is a distinct personality that's with them all the time. However, it hardly ever communicates with any level of detail. Most of the time its responses are limited to varying degrees of approval and disapproval, like and dislike, of a situation, the character's actions, an NPC, etc.

Decide how much of a role you want the Sources to play in your game. It's probably worth talking to the players about this. If you want to focus on how weird it is being a LW Meta and the ongoing struggle between the Source's impulses and the character's principles and desire for a normal life, then Source interactions will be important. If you want to gloss over that stuff more in favour of the action, the Source will only make itself known in particularly appropriate situations.

The GM will certainly need to build up some degree of familiarity with the Sources the players pick. The main thing to remember is that the Source is not human, but has been shaped by humans (though not modern ones).

Source communications

You could try various tricks to communicate Source impulses to the players. You want something that can be subtle, so it doesn't derail the action and can be secret from the other players if necessary. (Their characters might notice that their companion seems distracted for a moment, but won't know why.)

- Hold a die in your hand so that one face is visible and show it to the player. Use 1-3 for a negative response and 4-6 for a positive one, with 3 and 4 being mild and 1 and 6 being extreme.
- Use index cards as flash cards. You could write cards with some detail about the nature of the response - eg disapproval, duty, danger - or just have a "+" and a "-". The way you show the card gives the "feel", eg casual, emphatic, repeated.

If a character stops to concentrate solely on the Source they might get a more detailed message. Similarly, Sources sometimes send visions or suchlike out of the blue. Both of these are at the sole discretion of the GM. Even a "detailed" message is dreamlike and fragmented, often requiring some puzzling out. Gate Modifiers can affect the strength and clarity of messages.



INSPIROGRAPHY

Here's a list of inspiration and reference sources for Legends Walk: material on superheroes and mythology that was helpful in writing the game back in 2001-2. Hopefully you'll find something to enjoy here too.

Comics

These trade paperbacks are selected for quality, and offer a range of superheroic styles. Comics are, of course, a team effort, but only the main writer and artist are credited here for space reasons. (I notice this list is rather low on Marvel titles - that's chance, not any sort of critical comment on them.)

The Authority: Relentless (Warren Ellis, Bryan Hitch) got me back into comics after several years away, with its high-powered, big-screen action and intriguing characters. Created from the ashes of the UN superteam Stormwatch, The Authority aims to save the world from itself (when they get a break from the dictators and aliens).

The Authority: Under New Management (Ellis, Hitch; Mark Millar, Frank Quitely) contains another two 4-issue stories on a similar scale.

The Avengers

Marvel's premier superteam has included such luminaries as Captain America, Iron Man, Thor, the Scarlet Witch, the Vision, and a whole host of others. At one end of the scale, **Essential Avengers vol I** reprints their earliest adventures, starting in 1963! It's good value, with 24 issues in one affordable book, and shows the way superheroes were done back then. The stories are simple but still good, though the dialogue seems over-the-top now. There are at least two further volumes. At the other end, there are a set of recent stories by Kurt Busiek and George Perez.

The Morgan Conquest brings together 39 past team members, turns them into medieval parallel versions (short for the price; the last 2 pages of the epilogue are the best); **Supreme Justice**, which I haven't read; **Clear And Present Dangers** presents a range of separate threats; and **Ultron Unlimited** is the best of the bunch, pitting them against an insane indestructible robot from the past and rather a lot of his friends, and letting them all show off against overwhelming odds.

Astro City by Kurt Busiek and Brent Eric Anderson is a superhero world all of its own, though many of the characters are clearly homages to DC and Marvel heroes. This gives the opportunity to look at aspects of what life would really be like for these people, such as Samaritan counting seconds of flight time in between saving people, and Astra trying to be an ordinary kid while going out on world-saving adventures with the First Family. Astro City itself is super-central, with all kinds of weirdness going on all the time, with the place and its inhabitants having a strong "silver age" style and beautifully realised by the artists, including help from Alex Ross. The ones I've read are **Life in the Big City** (separate stories introducing a range of characters), **Family Album** (majoring on two stories - the one with Astra, and Jack-in-the-Box wrestling with his future and past); **Confession** (mostly a single story, of a young man's apprenticeship to the city's dark avenger); and **Tarnished Angel** (aging crook with metal skin is the only person who can protect the ordinary people in his neighbourhood).

The Books of Magic by Neil Gaiman and various. Tim Hunter is an ordinary English lad - until four of the DC universe's greatest magical characters turn up, tell him he's going to be a magician of incredible power and introduce him to the magical world in a grand tour featuring cameos from many DC magicians and weirdos. The four sections are each illustrated by a different artist in a different style. Gaiman gives us plenty of insight into the mystery and dangers of magic, and Tim (good name!) has to face a number of perils himself. Spawned an extended series.

Doom Patrol: crawling from the wreckage by Grant Morrison and Richard Case. Doom Patrol is probably DC's least well known team, made up of a few individuals who are damaged or impaired in some way and focus on threats of a stranger kind. This was a revamp of the team in 1992, with a man's brain in a robot body, a woman with multiple-personality-and-power disorder, and a hermaphrodite with a negative energy parasite. The stories are indeed strange, with intruding nightmare parallels and mad godlike entities, but over too quickly.



The Golden Age by James Robinson and Paul Smith is a story of DC's Golden Age heroes, with art in the style of the early comics. They protected America's home front during WWII, but now the war is over what do they do with their lives? One hero has a vision of his own, of an America strong enough to lead the world - but does he have another agenda too? Nice focus on some of the first supers.

The **Justice League of America (JLA)** is DC's top team, including icons like Superman, Batman, Wonder Woman, Flash and Green Lantern. For a recent retelling of the team's formation (with a line-up different from today's), with both action and character development, try **JLA: Year One** by



Mark Waid and Brian Augustyn. Mainly, look at the six-book collection led by Grant Morrison and Howard Porter. Lots of wonderful character moments; ideas flying sometimes too thick and fast, pits the team against a succession of threats and builds to a big conclusion. **New World Order**, **American Dreams** (the weakest), **Rock of Ages**, **Strength in Numbers**, **Justice for All**, **World War III**. Finally, Alan Davis' **The Nail** is a "what if?" story about the way the world might have gone if there had been no Superman - it's good, and lots of characters appear, but the dialogue is intermittently awful.

The **Justice Society of America (JSA)** consists of DC's first generation of heroes, the ones who were active in the 1940s. Some of them appeared in **JLA: Justice for All**, and in **Justice Be Done** the team gets relaunched with a mixture of age-resistant former members and the offspring and sidekicks of older heroes. Works well in its own right, and it's interesting to see some of the originals in action. I really like the pulp edge of this series, and the use of less well known characters than the JLA but with a similar eye to great moments.

Kingdom Come by Mark Waid and Alex Ross. This is a "what if?" tour de force, including appearances by a vast array of DC characters. The classic heroes have grown old and the world has passed them by in favour of a new generation who care only about themselves. A disaster prompts the old guard to return, with a plan to protect the people by force, locking the dangerous supers in a gulag. Not all agree, and alliances are made and broken as the situation builds toward conflict on a vast scale and armageddon or redemption. Ross' painted art is unusual, but atmospheric. And the epilogue is wicked.

Wildstorm's **Planetary** series by Warren Ellis and John Cassaday is kind of a superhero X-Files. The three-person Planetary team explores strange things and uncovers secret history. Lots of references to mainstream superheroes and other fiction genres. The first volume, **All Over the World**, has pulp heroes, weird science, ghost cops and giant monsters. In the second, **The Fourth Man**, the natures of the Planetary organisation and its enemies (wait till you see who they are!) become clearer. And there's the Justice League and James Bond. Heh.

Rising Stars by J Michael Straczynski and Keu Cha/Christian Zanier sets up an interesting premise - a strange meteorite hits a small American town, affecting the unborn children, who later develop strange powers. So all the world's supers grow up together, being studied by government scientists. Now they are adults, with very different lives, but when someone starts murdering them they're brought together again in ways they didn't expect. Volume I, **Born In Fire**, is good, but not quite great - waiting to see what happens next.

Squadron Supreme by Mark Gruenwald and various is a take on, "What if superheroes decided to really change the world?". It was published in 1985-6 by Marvel with characters based on DC's Justice League in a universe of their own so Gruenwald could take liberties. At first the Squadron's reforms go well, but as they take more and more into their own hands - like reprogramming criminals to make them useful members of society - the cracks begin to show. The art is four-colour, the style is that of older comics rather than the flashy, cynical violence of more recent titles, but it does a really good job of exploring the theme that there are some things you can't fix with raw power.



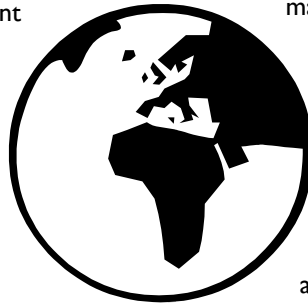


The **Stormwatch** books are the prequels to The Authority, introducing most of the characters (they also contain the seeds of The Monarchy). Writer Warren Ellis took this Wildstorm title about the official UN superteam in new directions and, ultimately, destroyed the team. It doesn't have the Authority attitude and scale, but it does have a quota of violence and nastiness, and explores the idea of using powers to make a better world and different approaches to doing it. The books are **Force of Nature, Lightning Strikes, Change or Die, A Finer World,** and **Final Orbit.**

Tom Strong by Alan Moore and Chris Sprouse is a modern pulp superhero. Born in 1900, Tom Strong's parents raise him on an isolated island in high gravity to be a genius then die leaving him to be raised by the natives who have a life-extending root and he marries the princess and they have a daughter. And there's a talking gorilla and robot butler. Volume I is a set of separate stories, and most link Tom's current escapades with an episode from his past drawn in a different style. No complicated plots or anti-heroes, though plenty of intriguing ideas from Moore.

Top Ten by Alan Moore and Gene Ha - now this one's just fun. After WWII, Earth's population of "science heroes" - people with superpowers or weird gadgets - continued to expand, along with visiting aliens, supernatural entities, robots and goodness knows what else. The solution? Build a new city off America and shove 'em all in there. Of course, a place like that needs a superpowered police force - that's Top Ten. One walks through walls, one shoots electricity, one's a dog in a humanoid exoskeleton... It's kind of like NYPD Blue on acid. Anything can happen, and keep your eye on all the little details in the background (like a certain metal-clawed scrapper advertising hair conditioner). And there's a story with some gods and hilarious dialogue. Volume 2 continues the zaniness but is a bit grittier, taking in drugs, child exploitation and discrimination against minorities.

Watchmen by Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons is, for many people, the grand-daddy of graphic novels. It didn't grab me as much. That's partly because it's 15 years old and the era it refers to is a long time ago in a country far, far away - this is more about exploring the spirit of a time, one dominated by the spectre of nuclear war. In Moore's world there's only one person with real superpowers, and he can do practically anything, providing America with a powerful deterrent. The rest are basically vigilantes who like dressing up,



and now someone's killing them. This is the story of how they investigate, interspersed with magazine articles about them and pages from a truly disturbing pirate horror comic. Low on action, high on exploring the thoughts of strange people.

Mythology

Dictionary of Celtic Mythology by James MacKillop is a substantial work, with entries on people, places, creatures and ideas from across the Celtic lands, and a good source of detail that can be hard to find elsewhere. However, some of the versions and interpretations disagree with other sources, so it may be wise not to rely on it exclusively.

Dictionary of Gods and Goddesses, Devils and Demons by Manfred Lurker covers the major figures in world mythologies in an alphabetic format - very comprehensive, though you only get a small amount of information for each entry.

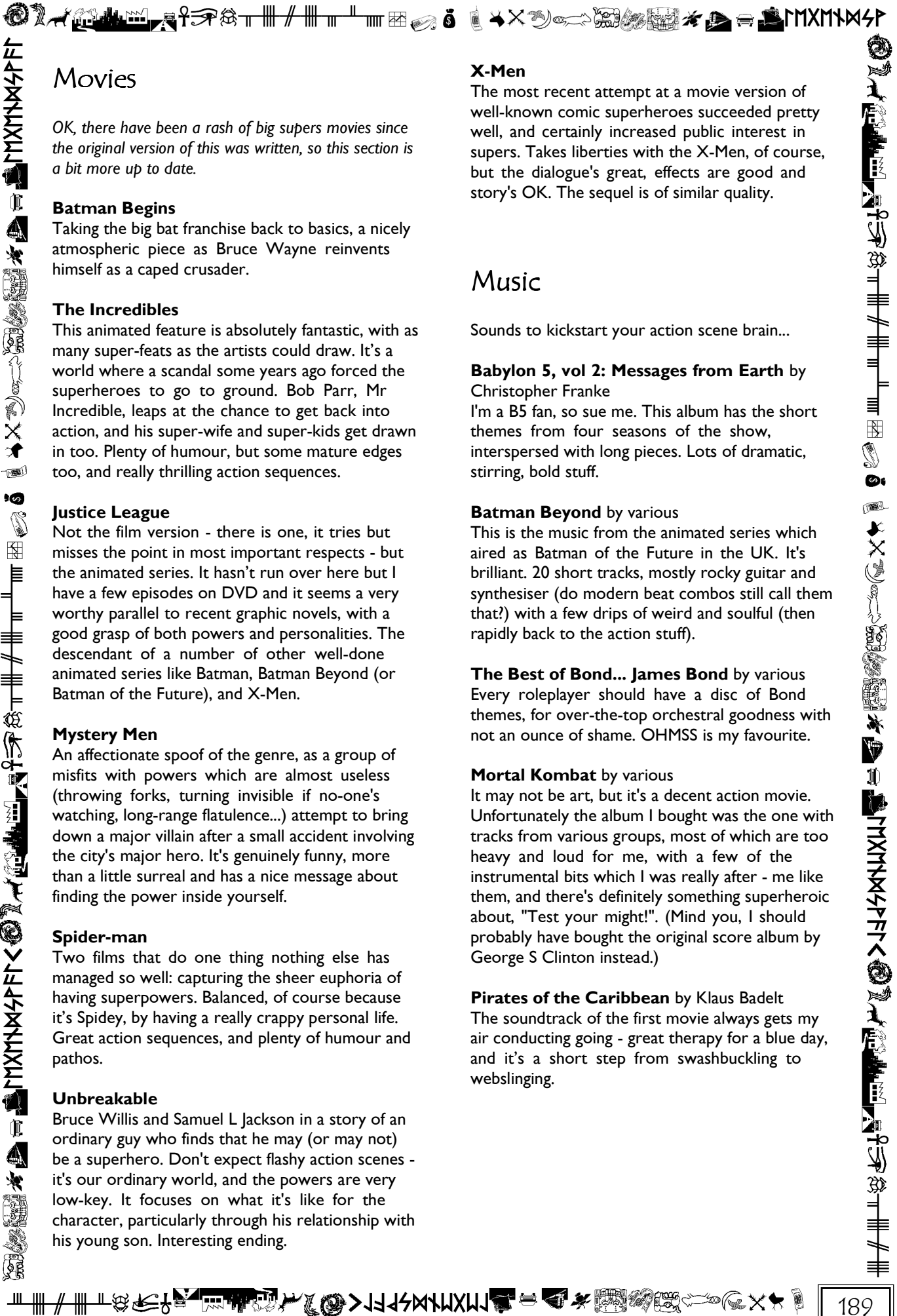
A Dictionary of Irish Mythology by Peter Berresford Ellis is not a thick volume, but it gets in a lot of detail about the mythology of Ireland in an authoritative way. Seems hard to find now.

Epics of Early Civilization by Allan Lothian is part of a big series on world mythologies by Time-Life Books. This one's about the myths of Mesopotamia. Plenty of pictures and easy to read, in article rather than dictionary format, focusing on stories rather than crunchy detail. Useful info for an area that's not often covered.

The Larousse Encyclopedia of Mythology - I have the 1990 edition, and find it an excellent resource on many world mythologies in a chunky hardback. Sadly, it seems to be hard to get hold of at the moment, and you pay for the comprehensiveness.

The Mythology of the Americas by David M Jones and Brian L Molyneux is an attractive "coffee-table" book with full colour throughout. Separate sections for North America, Mesoamerica and South America have introductions, dictionaries of key figures and spreads about key concepts and customs. Decent level of detail for these less well known mythologies - and three of them for the price of one book!





Movies

OK, there have been a rash of big supers movies since the original version of this was written, so this section is a bit more up to date.

Batman Begins

Taking the big bat franchise back to basics, a nicely atmospheric piece as Bruce Wayne reinvents himself as a caped crusader.

The Incredibles

This animated feature is absolutely fantastic, with as many super-feats as the artists could draw. It's a world where a scandal some years ago forced the superheroes to go to ground. Bob Parr, Mr Incredible, leaps at the chance to get back into action, and his super-wife and super-kids get drawn in too. Plenty of humour, but some mature edges too, and really thrilling action sequences.

Justice League

Not the film version - there is one, it tries but misses the point in most important respects - but the animated series. It hasn't run over here but I have a few episodes on DVD and it seems a very worthy parallel to recent graphic novels, with a good grasp of both powers and personalities. The descendant of a number of other well-done animated series like Batman, Batman Beyond (or Batman of the Future), and X-Men.

Mystery Men

An affectionate spoof of the genre, as a group of misfits with powers which are almost useless (throwing forks, turning invisible if no-one's watching, long-range flatulence...) attempt to bring down a major villain after a small accident involving the city's major hero. It's genuinely funny, more than a little surreal and has a nice message about finding the power inside yourself.

Spider-man

Two films that do one thing nothing else has managed so well: capturing the sheer euphoria of having superpowers. Balanced, of course because it's Spidey, by having a really crappy personal life. Great action sequences, and plenty of humour and pathos.

Unbreakable

Bruce Willis and Samuel L Jackson in a story of an ordinary guy who finds that he may (or may not) be a superhero. Don't expect flashy action scenes - it's our ordinary world, and the powers are very low-key. It focuses on what it's like for the character, particularly through his relationship with his young son. Interesting ending.

X-Men

The most recent attempt at a movie version of well-known comic superheroes succeeded pretty well, and certainly increased public interest in supers. Takes liberties with the X-Men, of course, but the dialogue's great, effects are good and story's OK. The sequel is of similar quality.

Music

Sounds to kickstart your action scene brain...

Babylon 5, vol 2: Messages from Earth by Christopher Franke

I'm a B5 fan, so sue me. This album has the short themes from four seasons of the show, interspersed with long pieces. Lots of dramatic, stirring, bold stuff.

Batman Beyond by various

This is the music from the animated series which aired as Batman of the Future in the UK. It's brilliant. 20 short tracks, mostly rocky guitar and synthesiser (do modern beat combos still call them that?) with a few drips of weird and soulful (then rapidly back to the action stuff).

The Best of Bond... James Bond by various

Every roleplayer should have a disc of Bond themes, for over-the-top orchestral goodness with not an ounce of shame. OHMSS is my favourite.

Mortal Kombat by various

It may not be art, but it's a decent action movie. Unfortunately the album I bought was the one with tracks from various groups, most of which are too heavy and loud for me, with a few of the instrumental bits which I was really after - me like them, and there's definitely something superheroic about, "Test your might!". (Mind you, I should probably have bought the original score album by George S Clinton instead.)

Pirates of the Caribbean by Klaus Badelt

The soundtrack of the first movie always gets my air conducting going - great therapy for a blue day, and it's a short step from swashbuckling to webslinging.

LEGENDS WALK GM REFERENCE

Difficulties

Ability level	Base Dice
OK for untrained, average person	3
OK with any skill or talent	2
OK for a professional or someone with great talent	1
OK for an expert, or a Meta 1 talent; possible with any skill or talent	0
OK for a master or highly talented professional; possible for a professional or great talent	-1
OK for a talented master or a Meta 3 talent; possible for an Expert, or a Meta 1 talent	-2
OK for a master with great talent; possible for a master, or a Meta 2 talent	-3
OK for a master with Meta talent; possible for a master with talent, or a Meta 3 talent	-4
OK for a master with high Meta talent; possible for a master with great talent or trained Meta 3	-5

Damage

Base Damage

Unarmed	0
Knife, Small Club	1
Sword, Mace, most other one-handed weapons, Arrow	2
Two-handed Sword, Handgun, Sub-machine gun	3
Rifle, Shotgun, Really Big hand weapon	4
Machine gun, Vehicle-mounted gun	6-8
Field weapon	8-10

Final Damage

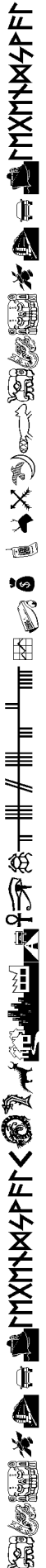
0	Unhurt
1-2	Hurt
3-4	Injured
7-9	Injured and Lethal Damage
10+	Injured and Extreme Damage

Magic

Change	Subject
Sympathy	Elements
Antipathy	Life
Connection	Thought
Control	Cosmos
Transformation	
Perception	
5 minute ceremony	1 Adv
or 1 hour ceremony	2 Adv
Appropriate ritual paraphernalia	1 Adv
General good roleplaying (style etc)	1 Adv

Technology

Tech level	BD
Common, widely understood	0
Widespread but specialised	-1
Cutting edge of normal tech	-2
Beyond scope of normal science	-3
Pushing boundaries of physical laws	-4



Multiple opponents

Adv/Dis	Opponents
1	2-3
2	4-6
3	7-10
4	11-16
5	17-25
6	26-40
7	41-65
8	66-100

Distance

Level	Distance
1	10ft
2	25ft
3	50ft
4	100ft
5	250ft
6	500ft
7	1000ft
8	2000ft/½ mile (approx)
9	1 mile (5000ft)
10	2 miles
16	100 miles (actually 128)
19	1000 miles (actually 1024)

Time

Round → 5 minutes → Hour →
 Day → Week → Permanent

Lifting

Strength	Base Lift
Poor	10kg
Average	25kg
Talented	50kg
Exceptional	100kg
Meta 1	1 tonne (1000kg)
Meta 2	10 tonnes
Meta 3	100 tonnes

Hardness

- 2 Misc: water and other fluids
- 1 Misc: jelly-like materials, soft snow
- 0 Misc: ordinary glass (eg house window), corrugated cardboard box, light plastic, thin ice crust, ordinary clothing
- 1 Wood: light board (eg interior door, light furniture, partition wall)
Misc: electronic circuitry, most domestic goods made from rigid plastic, soil, heavy fabric
- 2 Wood: heavy board (eg wall, floorboards, exterior door, heavier furniture, crate), small tree (up to about 3 inches diameter)
Misc: toughened glass (eg car windscreen), thick rubber, goods made from flexible or solid plastic, ice sheet (up to about an inch thick)
- 3 Wood: tree trunk (up to about 1½ft diameter), telegraph pole
Metal: thin light metals (eg aluminium or thin steel, car bodywork), light chain, sword
Stone: crumbly rock (eg sandstone, chalk), mortared brick wall, Tarmac or asphalt road surface
Misc: medium rope, reinforced plastic (eg boat hull), ice wall (up to about 1ft thick)
- 4 Wood: large tree trunk (up to about 10ft diameter)
Metal: strong metal sheet or tube (eg lamp-post, security door, metal shipping container), firearms, medium chain
Stone: ordinary rock (eg limestone), concrete wall
Misc: bulletproof glass
- 5 Metal: cast iron or steel (eg fire hydrant, car engine block), heavy chain, thin special alloys
Stone: hard rock (eg granite), reinforced concrete wall
- 6 Metal: armoured steel (armoured car, tank, bank vault door), special alloy plate
- 7-8 Exotic alloys, diamond (breakable by only the very strongest Metas)



**Protecting the weak and saving the world
can be a dangerous job.**

**That's why you want the power of Zeus, Loki
or Cúchulainn.**

Legends Walk! is a modern day superhero game, with many of the comic conventions: heroes, villains, weird science and magic. There's one big twist: people get their powers from the gods, heroes and monsters of myth and legend.

- Rules for simple, quick and flexible character creation and play.
- Get started with powers from the Greek, Norse and Celtic pantheons.
- Setting outline for a near-future Earth affected profoundly by the presence of mythically-powered metahumans, and notes on alternate styles of play.



LEGENDS WALK!

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