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# ALTERNITY®

Science Fiction Roleplaying Game Accessory

## BEYOND SCIENCE

### A GUIDE TO FX



**Sean K Reynolds**



# ALTERNITY®

Science Fiction Roleplaying Game

## BEYOND SCIENCE: A GUIDE TO FX

**SEAN K REYNOLDS**

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# CHAPTER 1: FX RULES

Heroes wielding FX (short for *special effects*) powers come in all shapes and sizes. The elderly human wizard, the robust demonologist, the patient sesheyan mystic, the gruff wren shaman, and the hard-edged fraal master of Chi are all possible FX characters. As with mutations, psionics, or cyberware, any race or profession may use FX as long as the Game-master allows them.

## FX SKILLS

FX skills are structured similarly to the psionics skills in Chapter 14 of the *ALTERNITY® Player's Handbook*. The various types of FX—Arcane Magic, Faith, and Super Power—are divided into different FX broad skills. As with psionics, no FX broad skill can be used untrained. Clustered beneath the broad skills are their FX specialty skills. These represent specific spells, miracles, or super powers within each type of FX. Some FX specialty skills can be used untrained. The majority of the Faith FX skills fall into this category. Others cannot be used untrained, which is the case with most Arcane Magic and Super Power FX skills.

Arcane Magic FX broad skills are called *schools*, and specialty skills are called *spells*. Faith FX broad skills are called *faiths* (or sometimes *religions*), and specialty skills are called *miracles*. Super Power FX broad skills are called *categories*, and the specialty skills are called *powers*. Regardless of their names, all of them function identically in terms of game mechanics.

FX energy flows from different sources. Some types of FX rely on mental fortitude or clarity of thought. Will is the primary Ability

Score for those FX. Others rely on memorizing long, complicated formulas and rituals. Intelligence is the primary Ability Score for those FX. Some FX draw on the physical reserves of the user. FX of this type are based on Constitution. A rare few FX depend on the user's ability to persuade, cajole, or threaten. These FX use Personality as their base Ability Score.

## Rank Benefits

Many FX specialty skills have rank benefits. Those rank benefits marked with the ⊗ symbol cannot be purchased early, while those preceded by the ► symbol can.

## Purchasing FX Skills

A hero uses skill points to purchase FX skills just as she would mundane skills. Most often, heroes begin play with FX skills, so starting skill points must be used to purchase these skills. At the Gamemaster's discretion, certain FX skills may be learned after character creation. These skills must be purchased with achievement points earned during the course of play.

Unless a hero has the Adept profession (described below), she must pay the full skill point cost for all broad and specialty FX skills. FX specialty skills are improved in the same manner as other specialty skills. In other words, to improve a skill to a higher rank costs the list price plus the current rank.

## Using FX Skills

Using an FX skill works very much like using a psionic skill. Each use

### Optional Rule: FX Achievement Points

Sometimes you'll want to run a game with high levels of supernatural or amazing powers. Unfortunately, the FX skills are more expensive than most skills, which prevents heroes from advancing their abilities very far without sacrificing advancement in their other skills. FX achievement points are a way to circumvent this problem to run a high-FX game.

Using this optional rule, heroes start with additional skill points at character creation: 15 for Arcanists, 18 for Believers, or 12 for Super Heroes. These additional skill points can only be spent on FX broad or specialty skills. Every time heroes reach a new level and gain achievement points, they also receive an equal number of FX achievement points that can only be spent to buy or improve FX specialty skills. Heroes can still spend regular skill and achievement points on FX abilities.

This option allows for improved FX progression without having mundane skills fall by the wayside. Be forewarned, however. A 5th-level hero built with this optional system has at least 30 FX achievement points, and a 9th-level hero has 76 additional achievement points. These heroes are going to be more powerful than a non-FX hero in the same campaign and much more powerful than a transplanted hero of any type from another campaign.

causes the loss of a certain number of FX energy points (see below).

## FX-Related Skills

Some of the FX skill descriptions note mundane skills that can assist in their use. Gamemasters



may want to design additional skills that interact with FX skills. For instance, a Knowledge—arcane lore skill might give bonuses to the use of Arcane Magic FX skills, while Technical Science—super-science might make the creation of Super Power FX devices easier. The DARK•MATTER™ campaign setting provides some examples of such skills.

## FX ENERGY POOL

With rare exceptions, FX skills cost FX energy points to activate, just as psionic skills require the use of psionic energy points to activate. All FX characters have an FX energy pool that is depleted when FX skills are used. The energy points in this pool are restored over time. The number of points in a character's FX energy pool depends upon whether the Gamemaster is running a realistic, heroic, or superheroic campaign. Characters begin with 5 points in their FX energy pool if they are in a realistic campaign, 10 points if the campaign is heroic, or 15 if it is superheroic. Campaign levels are discussed in Chapter 2: Using FX in the Campaign.

When a player chooses to use a hero's FX skill, he marks off the appropriate number of FX energy points and attempts the skill check. A character with no FX energy points cannot use any of his FX skills. Most FX specialty skills only cost 1 FX energy point to activate, but some of the more powerful ones cost 2 or even 3 points to use. If a character is attempting an untrained skill check, the cost of an attempt is increased by 1 FX energy point.

Some Super Power FX specialty skills are constantly active. Instead of paying points to use them, the FX character permanently reduces his FX energy pool by a set amount and can then use these powers whenever desired. This option is discussed in the Always Active

Super Powers sidebar in Chapter 5: Super Power FX.

## Recovering FX Energy

When a character's FX energy pool is below her maximum, she can roll a Resolve—mental resolve skill check to recover some of that energy every hour that no FX points have been expended. A Critical Failure or Failure means no points are regained. An Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result returns 1, 2, or 3 FX energy points to the character. If a character spends 8 hours resting and not using any FX, all points in the FX energy pool are recovered. No check is necessary for this to happen.

While the game mechanic to regain energy points is identical for many of these FX, the in-game actions of the character are very different. Most Faith FX heroes need to pray or perform other sorts of religious devotions during this recovery period, Arcane Magic FX characters need to study their books of knowledge, and so on.

## Increasing the FX Energy Pool

A hero's FX energy pool can be enlarged through spending achievement points. The cost of increasing an FX energy pool varies with the campaign level. The cost is 15, 10, or 5 achievement points per FX energy point increase for characters in a realistic, heroic, or superheroic campaign. (See Chapter 2: Using FX in the Campaign.) A character's FX energy pool can only be enlarged to twice its starting value.

## FX PERKS AND FLAWS

These perks and flaws work just like regular perks and flaws found in the *ALTERNITY Player's Handbook* and have the same limitations. (FX

perks count toward the maximum three perks per character, for example.) Many regular perks and flaws can easily be altered to be more appropriate for an FX character. For example, the Animal Friend perk may be helpful in dealing with animal spirits, the Infamy flaw may mean the character is known as an FX user in a campaign where such activity is illegal or feared, and the Powerful Enemy flaw may represent the enmity of a conclave of secretive wizards that the character abandoned before her training was complete.

## FX Perk Descriptions

The following perks are new to this book and may only be purchased by an Adept or an FX talent. Perks listed in *italics* on TABLE F1: FX PERKS can only be selected at character creation.

### FX Awareness

Cost 3, INT, Active

Like the Psionic Awareness perk, this perk allows the character to make a perk check to recognize that a type of FX power is being used in his vicinity. The player should choose one type of FX that he is aware of: Arcane Magic, Faith, or Super Power. The perk otherwise works like Psionic Awareness.

### FX Mastery

Cost 4, Ability Score varies, Active

The hero has mastered one particular FX specialty skill. In game terms, the character has a -1 step bonus to the use of that specialty skill.

### FX Resistance

Cost 5, Ability Score varies, Active

This perk provides the hero with a +2 resistance modifier against one sort of FX: Arcane Magic, Faith, or Super Power.



TABLE F1: FX PERKS

Perk	Cost	Ability	Type
<i>FX Awareness</i>	3	INT	Active
<i>FX Mastery</i>	4	Varies	Active
<i>FX Resistance</i>	5	Varies	Active
<i>Mentor</i>	4	PER	Conscious
<i>Rapid FX Recovery</i>	5	WIL	Active

Perks in *italics* can only be selected at character creation.

### Mentor

Cost 4, PER, Conscious

This is a variation of the Powerful Ally perk. The hero has a mentor in her FX specialty. This mentor may be called upon for advice, or may assist in performing FX ceremonies or rituals, or may even use the Teach skill to help the character advance in her learning. When this perk is selected, the player and Gamemaster should discuss the nature of the mentor. Given the nature of FX, the mentor may be simply an FX-empowered Powerful Ally, or she or he might be something as exotic as a familiar, demon, guardian angel, or ancestor spirit. (See Chapter 6: FX Creatures.)

### Rapid FX Recovery

Cost 5, WIL, Active

The character regains FX energy points at double the normal rate. The character can roll a Resolve-*mental* resolve skill check to recover FX energy every 30 minutes instead of every 1 hour, and only 4 hours of rest are needed to fully restore his FX energy pool.

## FX Flaw Descriptions

The following FX flaws are new to this book. Flaws that affect the user's own FX skills or energy pool can only be selected by an Adept or FX talent.

A player can never select more than three flaws for a hero, although the Gamemaster may assign additional flaws to a character over the course of a campaign.

### Fixed FX Recovery

+3 bonus skill points, WIL

The character cannot regain FX points on an hourly basis. Instead, all of the character's energy points return every day at a particular time of day, such as high noon, sundown, sunup, and so on. This time is chosen when this flaw is purchased. This time may represent when the character's tome of knowledge opens, the prescribed time for prayer, or the regular cycle of a supernatural device.

### Inhibited FX Recovery

+1/3/5 bonus skill points, WIL

The character is sensitive to a certain material or materials. This material hinders the recovery of FX energy points when the character is within 100 meters of it. No recovery can be made in these circumstances. For example, a hero who specialized in Pyromancy (a fire-based Arcane Magic FX) might be unable to regain FX energy if she is near a quantity of water the size of an Olympic-sized swimming pool or greater. Likewise, a druid might be unable to recover FX energy when he is close to large artificial constructs (bridges, buildings, automobiles) or concentrations of unnatural materials (asphalt, concrete, plastic, refined metals). A Super Power FX hero might not recover energy while in the presence of xenonite,

the meteoric metal that was created when her homeworld exploded.

Adjudication of the power level of this flaw requires the Gamemaster's discretion. Being hindered by materials common to the campaign is a 5-point flaw, being hindered by uncommon materials is a 3-point flaw, and being sensitive to rare materials is a 1-point flaw. Hindrances that are so rare as to have no effect on the game should be disallowed. For instance, while large quantities of refined metal and the void of space would be common hindrances in the STAR\*DRIVE® campaign setting, the same things would be rare and nonexistent, respectively, in an American Civil War-era campaign.

### FX Require Recharging

+5 bonus skill points, WIL

The character's FX energy points do not recover naturally, either at an hourly rate or through rest. Instead, only a particular event (such as a full moon) or a power source (such as a fragile alien artifact kept in a safe place) can restore the character's FX energy pool. Except in unusual circumstances, the character can only restore her FX once per day. This procedure should take at least 1 minute if it is tied to a specific object or 1 hour if it is not. Whatever amount of time it consumes, when the procedure is completed, it restores the character's FX energy pool to its full value.

This flaw is similar to and slightly overlaps Fixed FX Recovery. The Gamemaster should take care to ensure that a hero selecting both flaws actually suffers the effects of both.

TABLE F2: FX FLAWS

Flaw	+SP	Ability
Fixed FX Recovery	3	WIL
Inhibited FX Recovery	1/3/5	WIL
FX Require Recharging	5	WIL
FX Susceptibility	3/6/9	WIL
Slow FX Recovery	5	WIL



## FX Susceptibility

+3/6/9 bonus skill points, WIL

The character is especially vulnerable to one or more types of FX. For 3 bonus skill points, the character has a -2 resistance modifier against one type of FX: Arcane Magic, Faith, or Super Power. For 6 skill points, the character suffers the penalty against two kinds of FX. For 9 skill points, the hero suffers the penalty against all three kinds of FX. Characters must select different kinds of FX rather than doubling or tripling their susceptibility to one kind. In campaigns where one or more types of FX do not exist, susceptibility to these types of FX cannot be selected.

## Slow FX Energy Recovery

+5 bonus skill points, WIL

The character regains FX energy points at half the normal rate. The character rolls every 2 hours to recover FX energy instead of every hour, and a 16-hour period of rest is needed to restore all FX points.

## THE ADEPT

Like mindwalking, the use of FX is such an unusual ability that someone whose primary focus is FX doesn't fit into the four-profession model established in the *Player's Handbook*. Arcane Magic, Faith, and Super Power FX specialists are unique enough to merit their own profession: the Adept. Adepts should be extremely rare in all but superheroic campaigns. Most heroes with access to FX powers are FX talents. Adepts fall into three categories, depending upon whether they use Arcane Magic, Faith, or Super Power FX.

Arcanists are Adepts who specialize in manipulating Arcane Magic FX. They are the Tech Ops of the supernatural. They learn the paths of magic to increase their knowledge and ability. They are more comfortable using magic than weapons or technology. Most

Arcanists specialize in one type of Arcane Magic FX rather than dabbling in several sorts.

Believers are those Adepts blessed with the ability to use Faith FX. These people have the sincere faith, devotion, and natural talent to actually communicate with spiritual entities. They hold their religions first and foremost in their lives, and spreading the word of their faiths and assisting fellow believers run close behind. Since each type of Faith FX requires a different sort of belief, characters cannot have more than one Faith FX broad skill at a time. In general, learning a new Faith FX broad skill requires abandoning the spiritual paradigm necessary for the old Faith FX to work. For this reason, if a new Faith FX broad skill is learned by a Believer, his old broad skill and its specialty skills are lost. Believers also lose the skill cost reduction noted below if they change from one Faith FX broad skill to another.

Super Heroes are Adepts who have somehow gained special powers without the use of arcane spells or faith miracles. Many types of Super Heroes exist: scientific geniuses with phenomenally high-tech weaponry, courageous patriots with superhuman strength and endurance, crafty speedsters who can outrun cars, advanced mindwalkers, and so on. In many ways, though, the Super Hero profession is just an extra layer of gloss on a character's true nature, which is represented by one of the five professions listed in the *Player's Handbook*.

## Adept Special Benefits

► **Action Check Score Increase:** An Adept's action check score is increased by 1 point.

► **Skill Cost Reduction:** Choose one FX broad skill. That broad skill and its specialty skills can be purchased at *list price -1* instead of *list price*.

► **Secondary Profession:** Like a Diplomat, an Adept selects a sec-

ond profession. All skills from that profession can be purchased for *list price -1* instead of *list price*. This secondary profession determines all other aspects of the hero (starting money, achievement benefit costs, and so on). An Adept who chooses Diplomat as a secondary profession does not gain an additional secondary profession. The character only gets the cost reduction on Diplomat skills.

**Note:** Diplomats with the secondary profession of Adept can buy one FX broad skill and its specialty skills at *list price -1* instead of *list price*, but they have the same number of FX energy points as an FX talent. (See the FX Talents section below.)

**Note:** Remember that FX energy points and psionic energy points are not interchangeable. An Adept who selects Mindwalker as her secondary profession must track these two sets of energy points separately.

## FX Talents

Any hero who uses FX without being an Adept is an FX talent. FX talents can purchase only one FX broad skill. An FX talent gets no reduction in the cost of that broad skill or its specialty skills.

Two of the talent's FX specialty skills can be improved to rank 6. All others can be raised no higher than rank 3.

FX talents begin with half the normal number of FX energy points, rounded up. Thus, if an Adept starts with 10 FX energy points, an FX talent in the same campaign begins with 5. FX talents can increase this total to no more than double its starting level by spending achievement points, as noted above.

## Adept Careers

With the variety of FX powers and abilities available, it is impossible to describe all the potential careers of an Adept. A few examples are listed below. An FX talent might also select from these



careers; however, skill point costs must be adjusted appropriately.

Because of the high cost of FX skills, Adept careers tend to be more expensive than normal careers. This will limit some low-Intelligence heroes from selecting certain careers without also taking flaws that give them the extra skill points they require.

### Crusader

A crusader is a combat-oriented Believer Adept who calls the fury of Heaven down to defend the weak and the righteous. Armored by his faith, the crusader brooks no disparagement of his methods. Almost all crusaders have the secondary profession of Combat Spec, though a few Free Agents act as spies on the holy front lines.

► **Signature Equipment:**

Fatigues, personal radio, first aid kit, pistol.

► **Skill Package:**

Monotheism—*aura, blessing, cure*; Melee Weapons, Modern Ranged Weapons—*pistol*; Knowledge—*first aid*. Cost: 36 points (Combat Spec) or 39 points (Free Agent).

### Entertainer

The entertainer is an Arcanist Adept who uses her FX abilities to amuse and entertain people. Whether she works in clubs, on street corners, or on television shows, the entertainer understands what people like and works to produce a positive audience reaction. Entertainers tend to have Free Agent or Diplomat as their secondary profession.

► **Signature Equipment:** Trained animal (pet), videorecorder, handcuffs, lockpick set, padlock.

► **Skill Package:** Illusion—*clamor, conceal, static image*; Manipulation—*prestidigitation*; Entertainment—*act 2*; Interaction—*charm 2*. Cost: 36 points (Diplomat), 37 points (Free Agent).

### Firebug

The firebug is an Arcanist Adept who specializes in Pyromancy. He often serves in a military unit as an expert in incendiary devices

and demolitions. He assembles, maintains, and uses regular explosive munitions and provides some specialized firepower in times of need.

Firebugs tend to be wild-eyed and obsessed with blowing things up. The smarter ones take precautions when using their magic (such as wearing fire-resistant clothing), while the dumb ones just don't live very long. Most firebugs are Combat Specs, though some Tech Ops also enjoy this career.

► **Signature Equipment:**

Fatigues (fireproof), protective goggles, personal radio, demolitions pack.

► **Skill Package:** Pyromancy—*fiery bolt, fire wall, storm of flames*; Heavy Weapons—*indirect fire*; Stamina—*endurance*; Demolitions—*scratch-built, set explosives*. Cost: 42 points (Combat Spec) or 44 points (Tech Op).

### Investigator

An investigator is a Believer Adept who has become an accidental student of the Alienism Faith FX. Introduced to the twisted but miraculous powers granted by the alien gods through witnessing a strange or traumatic event, the investigator balances the threat of insanity against the chance to block the cultists that serve Alienism. Most investigators are Tech Ops from a scholastic background, while some are Free Agents working as police officers or private investigators.

► **Signature Equipment:** Briefcase, business dress, audio-recorder, cellular phone.

► **Skill Package:** Alienism—*circle of the thousand broken angles, eyes of the dark ones*; Life Science or Physical Science; Investigate; Resolve—*mental resolve 2*. Cost: 38 points (Tech Op) or 39 points (Free Agent).

### Ranger

A ranger is a druidic nature activist who operates on the fringes of normal society to protect the natural world. This Believer

Adept works to stop people and activities that would harm her natural home and teaches others about the beauty and wonders of the wilderness. Ecoterrorists and park rangers are the extreme ends of this career's mentality. Most rangers are Free Agents, although some Combat Specs take up the cause as well.

► **Signature Equipment:**

Bedroll, fatigues, climbing gear, binoculars, compass, rifle, first aid kit.

► **Skill Package:** Druid—*kinship of beasts, life endures*; Modern Ranged Weapons—*rifle*; Survival; Investigate—*track*. Cost: 39 points (Combat Spec or Free Agent).

### Tinkerer

A tinkerer is a Super Hero Adept who specializes in the construction and repair of Super Power FX devices. While tinkerers are often secondary characters in a campaign, some of them take a step beyond repairing and building devices for others and construct some for their own use, becoming high-tech Super Heroes. Tinkerers are nearly all Tech Ops.

► **Signature Equipment:** Toolkit, shabby casual dress, lab coat, workshop, desktop computer.

► **Skill Package:** Metaconscious—*genius, super Intelligence*; Computer Science—*hardware*; Knowledge—*deduce*; Technical Science—*invention, juryrig, repair*. Cost: 36 points (Tech Op).



# CHAPTER 2: USING FX IN THE CAMPAIGN

FX aren't something that should be dropped into an existing campaign or included in the plans for a new campaign without some forethought. Gamemasters must consider the role of FX in their games, the power level of the prospective FX, whether or not heroes have access to FX, FX's potential for unbalancing the game, and how FX interact with other optional rules, such as psionics, cybertech, and mutations.

## INCLUDING FX IN YOUR GAME

Gamemasters planning to use FX in their campaigns should ask themselves the following questions:

► *Are FX something new, or are FX a part of the campaign's history?*

Designing a campaign in which FX have existed for some time involves a lot of work. The ability to place curses on your enemies or to raise the dead and the existence of demons and angels quickly cause a real-world timeline to veer from its course unless certain controls are established. Having FX be a recent addition to the campaign is a much easier path and provides many adventure hooks for players to explore. Some example campaign setups for the introduction of FX might be that a strange energy event bathes the planet and people begin manifesting super powers, or that an angel manifests on Earth and hundreds of people find themselves able to pray for true miracles, or that people in a small Wisconsin town wake from nightmares to find that they can summon demons. Such a triggering event opens up numer-

ous subsequent adventure possibilities that branch off from it, such as discovering what caused the event, rounding up all of the people affected, looking for a cure for those afflicted with harmful powers, and so on.

► *How did FX come about?*

This question is closely tied to the previous one, but it delves more deeply into the origin of FX. Was the energy event a government experiment or an alien spacecraft exploding? Was this angel sent as a promise or a warning? Why were the people in this one town chosen for this gift, and what is expected of them?

► *Can anyone with the time and interest use FX, or does the ability to use FX require a special gift or membership in a select group?*

If FX use requires a particular inner gift, gene, or inheritance, this sharply limits its spread in a campaign. The Gamemaster does not need to worry about why the diabolist villain hasn't trained a hundred students in the basics of Diabolism. These people just don't have the talent for it. This approach also prevents a radiation-empowered character from blasting away at his friends until they develop super powers of their own.

If FX can be learned or acquired, the Gamemaster needs to establish a mechanism for that. Arcane Magic FX could be learned through attending schools of magic or perhaps taught by one old wizard with the ability and patience to do so. Faith FX could be acquired by studying at temples and monasteries that educate and train the next generation of empowered worshipers or through joining a mystical ancient order

whose members pass on the secrets of true faith. Super Power FX could be developed through the experiments of a scientific research team, and anyone with enough cash could pay for these enhancements, or only those selected and cleared for top secret work by the government could receive them.

► *What types of FX exist?*

By no means is a Gamemaster required to use all three sorts of FX in an ALTERNITY campaign. Limiting FX to just one category or even to one broad skill still allows for many variations. A modern-day world with magic on its last legs might only have illusionist arcanists. A lost continent could hold an ancient tribe that never forgot how to speak to the spirit world. Scientists could be trying frantically to figure out how to deal with super-powered mutants created by illegally dumped toxic waste.

► *Do all types of FX have the same power level?*

More than one type of FX could be available, but some FX may be more powerful than others. A magocracy could be methodically stamping out the shamans of an assimilated people. Armies of Faith FX soldiers could be assisted in their work by a few rare metahumans. Petty sorcerers could be hiding out in Manhattan among wall-crawling and weather-controlling superheroes.

► *Will player characters have access to FX?*

This question is similar to the one a Gamemaster faces when considering psionics. FX heroes can solve challenges that would thwart many normal heroes, and many adventures can be devised



around their particular combinations of FX abilities. On the other hand, having heroes be unaware of FX can lead to interesting scenarios when they are assisted by FX allies or confront FX villains.

► *How do FX interact with technology?*

A staple of many fantasy stories is that magic wanes as the power of technology increases. This book assumes that there is no such limitation, but it could easily be modeled by increasing the number of FX points needed to use some FX abilities in the presence of technology or even setting limits on the degrees of success possible for FX rolls under such circumstances.

► *How do FX interact with psionics, cybertech, and mutations?*

The psionics, cybertech, and mutation rules given in the *ALTERNITY Player's Handbook* are of a lower power level than the FX rules. The Gamemaster needs to consider the ramifications of these combinations. Can an FX character use psionics? Do the spirits object to a shaman with a cybernetic arm? How does a mutant with the Improved Natural Attack mutation compare to one with the Energy-energy blast power? More information on combining these optional rules is given in the Campaign FX Levels section below.

► *How common are FX?*

Characters with FX may be so rare that the heroes never encounter one, or their main foe may be the one FX character in the entire campaign. In some campaigns, FX may be so common that you can hardly go to the corner store without bumping into a super hero. If FX are common, the Gamemaster has to decide if there are FX police to combat FX criminals, special measures to prevent FX athletes from playing professional sports, and so on.

► *Does the general public know about FX?*

If the average person hears about super hero battles on the evening news, there's no reason why the heroes can't show up in their super hero costumes to deal with a bomb threat. However, if the presence of FX is unknown, any unusual events—including villains conjuring demons, people throwing lightning bolts, and relatives coming back from the dead—are going to arouse unwanted attention. The characters must keep a low profile if they want to keep from being hauled off to be studied, plagued by the curious, shunned or blamed by the fearful, or simply exploited.

► *Are there sociological controls placed on FX?*

This ties into several of the other questions in this section. If FX are well known, FX users may be social pariahs, depending on how they got their powers. For example, very few people want to spend time around someone who can conjure up *real* demons. Most folks don't invite super heroes who gained their powers through exposure to radiation over for a pool party. (What if they are still radioactive?) Characters with certain Faith FX may be shunned as members of cults. Such treatment tends to promote vigilantism in heroes and criminal behavior in those of lesser moral character.

## CAMPAIGN FX LEVELS

For simplicity, campaigns with FX are divided into three power levels: realistic, heroic, and superheroic. These three campaign levels and the variance between the FX in them are described below.

### Realistic

In a realistic campaign, FX are rare, very rare, or even unique. In a world populated by normal peo-

ple where only a small fraction of those people are capable of being a professional character, an even smaller fraction of the population can and do use FX. Such people are one in a million or more. FX might only be usable by a small tribe of sesheyans, a hidden conclave of supertelepaths, or one lone wizard holding back the hands of death with an ancient spell.

In this sort of campaign, the heroes are usually not FX-wielding characters. They may encounter them as interesting supporting cast members or work against them as long-term foes, but in these situations, the abilities of FX are new and unfamiliar to the players. In those rare situations where heroes can use FX in this type of campaign, they probably all use the same type of FX and are the only ones of their kind. They are the last believers in a particular faith, followers of the one true wizard, or super-powered agents working to overthrow an occupying alien army.

Awareness of FX in a realistic campaign is practically nonexistent. People hear stories of cults of magicians, of inexplicable miracles, or of freakish superhuman abilities, but these accounts are always third- or fourth-hand. Another possibility is that people know or suspect a person or group of having FX abilities, but the FX users are always remote or shunned, and their powers are never able to be proven. An example of such an FX user might be the apparently mentally ill homeless man with the power to talk to the trees, the elderly foreign nun who cures the sick, or the czar's adviser who had to be killed three times before he stayed dead.

The STAR\*DRIVE setting is a realistic FX campaign.

### Heroic

In a heroic campaign, FX are uncommon or rare. A good example of this level of FX would be our world if all of the things you heard



people talk about really were true: Some magicians could practice real magic, cancer could be cured through prayer and laying on hands, and ninjas could walk across leaf-covered floors and not make a sound. Perhaps one in a hundred professioned characters in such a campaign have the potential, if not the actual ability, to use FX.

In a heroic campaign, FX users are plentiful enough that different ones turn up repeatedly, and they have different types or specialties of FX. One space station may be under the sway of a scheming diabolist, and as soon as the heroes have cleaned up that mess, a ship arrives captained by a woman who can fly, teleport, and breathe fire. The heroes are more likely to use different sorts of FX than in a realistic campaign, and they may know of others who do as well.

While first-hand experience with FX is still not common in a heroic campaign, most people believe the supernatural to be true. Reports by the media of strange occurrences are not just the purview of tabloid newspapers. Evening news stations might contain reports of miraculous events and evidence of arcane activity, and the police would have encountered elements of FX use often enough for some to believe in its existence.

The DARK•MATTER setting is a heroic FX campaign.

## Superheroic

In a superheroic ALTERNITY campaign, FX are common or uncommon. A campaign of this level has a very large number of FX characters in circulation. FX users might be present in every town, suburb, or city block, or—in the extremist case—everyone could be capable of using FX. Almost all heroes in such a campaign are FX users of some sort or at least have unusual abilities beyond the norm, such as psionics, cybernetics, or mutations. These campaigns usually

## Supporting Character Template: The Super-Thug

These supporting cast members are Super Power-enhanced thugs hired as cheap muscle. Such individuals generally appear only in superheroic campaigns. They come in many shapes and sizes, from chemically altered goons to guys in funky armor to alien androids. FX skills marked with an asterisk (\*) indicate always active powers. Ability Scores include the effects of always active powers.

	M	O	G	A
STR	10	11	13	15
DEX	10	10	11	12
CON	11	11	13	15
INT	8	9	10	11
WIL	8	9	11	12
PER	8	9	10	11
Action check	9/4/2	11/5/2	13/6/3	14/7/3
#Actions	2	2	2	3
FX energy points	—	—	5	5

**Marginal Skills:** Brick-body armor\*, super Constitution\*; Athletics; Unarmed-brawl; Modern

Ranged Weapons; Vehicle Operation; Stamina; Knowledge; Awareness; Street Smart; Interaction.

**Ordinary Skills:** Brick-body armor 2\*, super Constitution 2\*, super Strength 2\*; Unarmed-brawl 2; Melee-bludgeon; Modern-pistol; Stamina-endurance; Street-criminal; Interaction-intimidate.

**Good Skills:** Brick-body armor 4\*, super Constitution 3\*, super Strength 3\*; Movement-flying; Energy-energy blast; Unarmed-brawl 4; Melee-bludgeon 3; Modern-SMG; Stamina-endurance 2, resist pain; Resolve-physical; Street-knowledge.

**Amazing Skills:** Brick-body armor 4\*, super Constitution 4\*, super Strength 4\*; Movement-flying 3; Energy-energy absorption\*, energy blast; Modern-pistol 3, SMG 2; Business-illicit; Tactics; Street-criminal 3, knowledge 2; Leadership-command 2.

**Equipment:** Jumpsuit, 9mm pistol or 9mm SMG, club.

grow beyond the genre of science fiction and into science fantasy or the realm of comic books.

In a superheroic campaign, most foes have FX or work directly for someone who does. Certain cities, nations, or planets may specialize in particular types of FX, and the places to learn and develop your own FX may be as accepted—and competitive—as real-world colleges. Heroes in an adventuring group could each use a different sort of FX, and their skill level might even be a step above that of everyone else. They are like Mindwalkers when compared to psionic talents.

FX are well known in this sort of campaign, whether it's because the average worker often sees a guy flying overhead during his drive home, reads about the menace of a particular vigilante hero in his daily newspaper, or dons a cape and fights crime in his own free time. Just because FX are well known doesn't mean they are well accepted, however. Prejudice and

intolerance could still exist in a world full of magical heroes. Similarly, if FX are so common as to be taken for granted, those with inferior or nonexistent FX abilities might be the targets of ridicule or violence.

Most of the comic books in circulation today provide examples of superheroic campaigns. The name of this type of campaign does not limit the type of FX that might be present to Super Power FX. A fantasy campaign full of wizards or priests would also qualify.

## Mixing Campaign Levels

There's no reason why a campaign with several types of FX has to have all of them at the same power level. Campaigns where one sort of FX is dominant while others are in decline pose interesting challenges to players regardless of which side they're on. For example, in a world where Faith FX are common and the dominant



## Sidekicks

A common element in many FX campaigns is a trusted sidekick who follows the hero around, helps out occasionally, and often gets into trouble. While sidekicks are not truly creatures, describing them in this section is convenient.

Sidekicks are usually younger and less experienced characters than the hero. If you don't want to go through the trouble of designing a full-fledged character, an easy way to create a sidekick is to use one of the supporting cast templates in Chapter 6: The Supporting Cast in the *Gamemaster Guide* as a base, then build upon it. Brawler, Reporter, Scientist, and Spy are good choices. Unless the hero is very powerful, most sidekicks should use the Marginal or Ordinary quality supporting cast template. Give them the hero's FX broad skill for free and 10 skill points of skills per level of quality (M/O/G/A). The sidekick should also have a flaw: Bad Luck, Clueless, Clumsy, Oblivious, and Obsessed are preferred (and archetypal to sidekicks). The sidekick should have no skill of a higher rank than the hero's highest rank in any skill and should only have one or two FX specialty skills, and those only at rank 1. The sidekick's FX energy pool is half of the hero's starting pool (rounded down).

The sidekick is both a source of unskilled help for the hero and of potential adventures for the Gamemaster. Sidekicks can be kidnapped or mind-controlled, can activate traps, may get into dangerous situations, can discover secret entrances, and (if lucky) might manage to arrive just in time to deactivate the doomsday device while the hero battles the super villain. A good player can use the sidekick as an opportunity for roleplaying and character growth, and a sidekick has the potential of turning into a full-fledged character after spending a lot of time learning from the hero. Such a sidekick-turned-hero would automatically start play with the Powerful Ally or Mentor perk for free (representing the relationship with the original hero).

religion has destroyed almost all arcane lore, the heroes may be crusaders hunting the heretical wizards, or they may be members of a wizard rebellion fighting for acceptance and acknowledgment of their rights.

The easiest way to help or hinder a particular sort of FX in a mixed-level game is to penalize one sort by restricting its campaign level. The above scenario could easily be modeled by developing Faith FX at the superheroic level while limiting Arcane Magic FX to the heroic or even realistic level. As the balance of power changes, the Gamemaster can increase or decrease the cost of additional FX energy points and the maximum number of FX energy points attainable. As the Arcanist heroes lose ground in the battle against the Believer supporting cast, they may find their magic weakening on a weekly or even daily basis.

Another way to approach this is to leave the campaign levels the same, but give step bonuses or penalties to different types of FX. A world where evil is ascendant might have a -1 step bonus to all Necromancy and Diabolism FX rolls, while Hermeticism and Illusion FX magic might have a +1 step penalty.

## FX AND OTHER OPTIONAL RULES

The rules systems presented in the three optional chapters in the *Player's Handbook* generally are of a lower power level than the various FX skills presented here. Part of this is mitigated by the reduced cost for those abilities. Psionic broad skills are cheaper, cybertech requires only money and a one-time achievement point cost, and mutations are paid for with drawback points. However, comparing these three types of characters to an FX character shows that the FX character has

an advantage. The following are suggestions on how to use psionics, cybertech, and mutations in a campaign with FX as well as how FX can be used to enhance each of these and vice versa.

## Mindwalking

Mindwalking, or psionics, is easily brought up to par with the average FX by converting Mindwalkers to FX user-Mindwalkers, which usually results in a doubling of psionic energy points. Alternatively, Gamemasters might want to consider making nonpsionic characters slightly vulnerable to mental powers. In this case, nonpsionic characters would have a -1 resistance modifier against all psionic skills used against them.

If the Gamemaster permits it, a character can have psionics and FX, either as a Mindwalker/FX talent or FX Adept/psionic talent. In this case, *psionic energy points and FX energy points are two separate and noninterchangeable types of energy*. A FX/psionic character who runs out of FX energy points cannot use psionic energy points to fuel FX skills. The surprise benefit of this is that the two pools replenish themselves separately. A hero can spend all of his FX energy points, then start using psionic energy points while the FX energy pool is recovering. In other words, using psionics does not disrupt FX energy recovery, and vice versa. The Gamemaster should be careful about allowing characters of this sort to specialize in one particular field. A necromancer-psionist with ranks in *Biokinesis-rejuvenate* and *Necromancy-fortitude* could turn into a real combat monster, and he could walk away from a terrible fight in perfect health by using a combination of *Biokinesis-heal* and *Necromancy-knit wounds*.

## Cybertech

Cybertech is more of an additive measure than an entirely new system of powers. All cyberware is





either an enhancement of the physical form or something someone could do without cyberware so long as she had the right piece of interface equipment. A character with cyberware is on a different power level than an FX character, but not too different from a standard noncyber non-FX character in most cases. What the cybered character lacks in power is made up for in reduced achievement point cost and unlimited usage. (She has no cyberware energy pool to become depleted, for example.)

An FX character with cybertech presents some interesting options. A necromancer could store her book of spells and other references in a nanocomputer or on a holoprojector built into her arm. A hermetic wizard could keep his cryptography programs online in his nanocomputer and decode spells while he sleeps. An illusionist could use an optic screen to provide 3D models for images she wishes to create. A voodoo

priest might keep especially rare ingredients or offerings for spirits within a cybernetic storage compartment. A super hero with the *Brick-body armor* specialty skill could benefit from body plating or CF skinweave. A flying super hero could keep in touch with her teammates with subdermal comm gear.

Cybertech may also *interfere* with certain FX. A super hero with the ability to boost his strength with adrenaline might find that it doesn't affect the power of his cyberlimb. A diabolist with visible cyberware may suffer a negative reaction from a flesh-obsessed succubus he's trying to bargain with. A voodoo priest with two cyberoptic eyes may find that he can no longer see the spirits he calls. A shaman may find out that her ancestor spirits look unfavorably upon her use of modern technology.

## Mutations

Like cyberware, mutations are generally only enhancements to or

detractions from a character's natural abilities. None are particularly powerful when compared to FX, and the ability to pay for mutations with disadvantages makes them extremely inexpensive by comparison, especially since most of them are continually active or can be used repeatedly.

None of the mutations or drawbacks presented in the *Player's Handbook* would greatly add to or detract from a character's ability to use FX in ways other than what is obvious. A mutation that lowers a character's Will Ability Score makes it more difficult to roll successes on Will-based FX, but it does not otherwise prevent the character from using Will-based FX. Likewise, the Major Physical Change drawback may affect encounter reactions in the real world, but in the symbolic and ephemeral spirit world, many things have strange or monstrous forms, so a shaman with this drawback does not suffer any penalties when interacting with spirits.

The mutations presented in the *Player's Handbook* are often weak when compared to the powers available through Super Power FX. In addition, at no time should the term *mutant* used to describe characters created with the *Player's Handbook* mutation rules be confused with super heroes that gets their FX powers from being a mutant. (See Chapter 5: Super Power FX for more information on types of super heroes.)

## Mixed FX

Some Gamemasters may feel hindered by the broad skill classifications of the various sorts of FX presented here and want to have more versatile characters in their campaign. An example of when these FX divisions are probably inappropriate is in a campaign in which *ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS*® fantasy roleplaying game characters have been translated into an *ALTERNITY* game. In games such as these, Arcanists



could get all Arcane Magic FX broad skills for a flat cost or even for free, Believers could get all Faith FX broad skills for a flat cost or free, and Super Heroes would have access to all Super Power FX broad skills. Any of these Adepts could still choose to specialize in one broad skill within their kind of FX to reflect a preference or training in that field. From this they would gain a -1 step bonus and the benefit of paying *list price* -1 for that broad skill and the specialty skills beneath it. Specific requirements for particular fields, such as deciphering for the Hermeticism spells and trances for the Shamanism miracles, could be retained or dropped. If they are dropped, though, the point costs for those skills should be adjusted using the rules in Appendix: Creating New FX Skills.

## CAMPAIGNS WE'D LIKE TO RUN

This section discusses a few possible FX campaigns that might fire a Gamemaster's imagination. Feel free to tinker to your heart's content.

### Fated Super Heroes

In the near future, aliens have come to earth and laid siege to the planet, taking slaves and goods from cities, restricting air travel and destroying all military craft. A freak experiment by a lone scientific researcher results in the test animal getting strange powers. Refinement and study of this process gives more reliable results but discovers the one drawback: Those altered by this process die within a year as their bodies eventually violently reject the treatment.

In this superheroic campaign, the heroes would all have Super Power FX. Keeping careful track of time would be necessary, and a mechanic for accelerating the

character's demise with any Critical Failure on a Super Power roll would be needed (such as rolling a d20 and subtracting that from the number of days a hero has remaining). It is recommended that the FX Achievement Points optional rule be used for this campaign scenario.

While the concept may seem morbid, this sort of campaign can bring out some excellent roleplaying, as the players realize that their characters are doomed from the start. A heroic sacrifice that saves hundreds of people at the expense of a hero gives them something inspiring to reflect upon for the rest of their gaming career.

### Heaven and Hell

The seals have been broken, and the time of apocalypse is upon us. The forces of Heaven and Hell walk Earth, each fighting to assure that their side is the victor in the true war to end all wars. The heroes could be young angels, rooting out havens of evil in these last days. They could be young demons, fighting to make a name for themselves in the infernal hierarchy should Hell's legions win. They could also be a mixed group that is trying to find the keys to undo the Armageddon prophecies and return the world to the status quo, delaying the fighting to another day.

This campaign would be another superheroic one. It would rely heavily on Diabolism, Enochian (from the DARK•MATTER campaign setting), and Monotheism Faith FX, or the heroes could be built using Super Power FX to reflect their unique abilities.

### Night Hunters

Vampires exist. They walk the cities, but live in fear of the vampire hunters. Many vampires simply wish to be left alone, and they work hard to conceal their presence, with most only feeding upon willing victims. However, some ambitious vampires seek to gain

ascendancy over the daywalkers, others think that a political coup is in order, and others think that a vampire refuge on some sort of remote island is the solution to their oppression. The heroes can be vampires of any of these factions, working with or against the well-organized and well-supplied vampire hunters in an effort to strike a balance between the living and the undead, or the heroes can be the hunters, making alliances with the peaceful vampires in order to destroy the hostile ones.

This campaign could be of any level, with weak or powerful vampire characters who use Super Power FX and human characters who are aided by superscience technology (Super Power FX) or even Monotheism Faith FX.

### Mutant Uprising

In the far future, some countries wage war with genetically engineered battle mutants made from unwilling subjects: convicted criminals mutated and then brainwashed into obedience. Since the creation of such battle mutants is illegal at best and inhumane at worst, one country has decided to end its mutant-creation activities by killing its last batch of product (mutants) and incinerating the manufacturing plant. The heroes are this newest generation of mutants that is as yet untainted by brainwashing. They must fight against their captors, escape, get their story out into the public, and try to find acceptance in a world that considers them doubly dangerous because of their past and their power.

This campaign should at least be of the heroic level, and the mutant heroes should all start with some level of the Infamy flaw. The characters would have Super Power FX and would initially be up against high-tech guards who know how to deal with difficult, violent, and hostile mutants.



# CHAPTER 3: ARCANE MAGIC FX

Arcane Magic encompasses a wide variety of effects, but most skills (spells) of this type rely on obscure formulæ and rituals that allow the user to cause energy or beings to do her will. These rituals may change lead to gold, manipulate light, animate the dead, or command extradimensional beings, to give a few examples. Most users of Arcane Magic specialize in one category (or school) of spells, such as the summoning and control of otherworldly creatures or the manipulation of light and sound to produce convincing

illusions. Each of these types of Arcane Magic is a separate FX broad skill. The individual spells beneath it are specialty skills.

The various spells of Arcane Magic FX draw their power from the caster's rarefied intellect, personal energy, willpower, or domineering personality. In TABLE F3: ARCANE MAGIC FX SKILLS, each spell has an associated Ability (CON, INT, WIL, or PER) listed in parentheses. For specialty skills that can be used untrained, the hero uses the Ability Score associated with the specialty skill as his or

her effective broad skill score. This skill score may vary depending on the psecialty skill used.

The following are some of the more common types of Arcane Magic FX. Each is described briefly and followed by some of the more common or better-known spells of that school. In many cases, spells from different schools have similar effects. These effects are brought about by totally different methods. Different ALTERNITY campaign settings may feature variants of these types of Arcane Magic and contain more

**TABLE F3: ARCANE MAGIC FX SKILLS**

Arcane Magic FX Skill Name	Cost	Pg.	Arcane Magic FX Skill Name	Cost	Pg.
<b>Diabolism</b>	12		<i>Programmed response</i> (INT)	2	
<i>Binding</i> (PER)	4		<i>Static image</i> (WIL)	4	
<i>Black warding</i> (WIL)	3		<b>Mesmerism</b>	10	
<i>Command</i> (PER)	4		<i>Befriend</i> (PER)	4	
<i>Hellfire</i> (WIL)	4		<i>Confuse</i> (WIL)	2	
<i>Rend the weave</i> (WIL)	2		<i>Dominate</i> (WIL)	3	
<i>Spiritwrack</i> (PER)	4		<i>Emotion</i> (PER)	3	
<i>Summoning</i> (PER)	5		<i>Encourage</i> (PER)	5	
<i>Tongue of the damned</i> (PER)	2		<i>Forgetfulness</i> (WIL)	3	
<b>Hemomancy</b>	10		<i>Hypnotize</i> (PER)	4	
<i>Blood debt</i> (INT)	3		<i>Mindshatter</i> (WIL)	5	
<i>Bloodlust</i> (INT)	3		<b>Necromancy</b>	10	
<i>Hunger</i> (INT)	3		<i>Animate dead</i> (INT)	5	
<i>Lifeblood</i> (CON)	4		<i>Energy drain</i> (CON)	4	
<i>Reciprocity</i> (CON)	4		<i>Fortitude</i> (CON)	3	
<i>Runs cold</i> (INT)	2		<i>Haunt</i> (INT)	5	
<i>Stigmata</i> (CON)	3		<i>Knit wounds</i> (INT)	3	
<i>Thicker than water</i> (INT)	4		<i>Mummy's curse</i> (CON)	5	
<b>Hermeticism</b>	9		<i>Speak with dead</i> (INT)	2	
<i>Daedalus improved</i> (INT)	4		<i>Steal the soul</i> (CON)	4	
<i>Glamour</i> (INT)	4		<b>Pyromancy</b>	11	
<i>Homunculus</i> (INT)	4		<i>Cloak of the phoenix</i> (CON)	5	
<i>Ligature</i> (INT)	3		<i>Fiery bolt</i> (WIL)	4	
<i>Shapechanging</i> (WIL)	5		<i>Fire wall</i> (WIL)	4	
<i>Sleep of Morpheus</i> (INT)	4		<i>Flame gauntlet</i> (CON)	3	
<i>Transmutation</i> (INT)	4		<i>Immolation</i> (WIL)	3	
<b>Illusion</b>	8		<i>Incendiary seal</i> (WIL)	4	
<i>Clamor</i> (WIL)	4		<i>Storm of flames</i> (WIL)	5	
<i>Conceal</i> (INT)	5				
<i>Everyman</i> (INT)	4				
<i>Moving pictures</i> (WIL)	5				

Skills that cannot be used untrained are shown in color.



specific information about the source and use of these magic powers in that game.

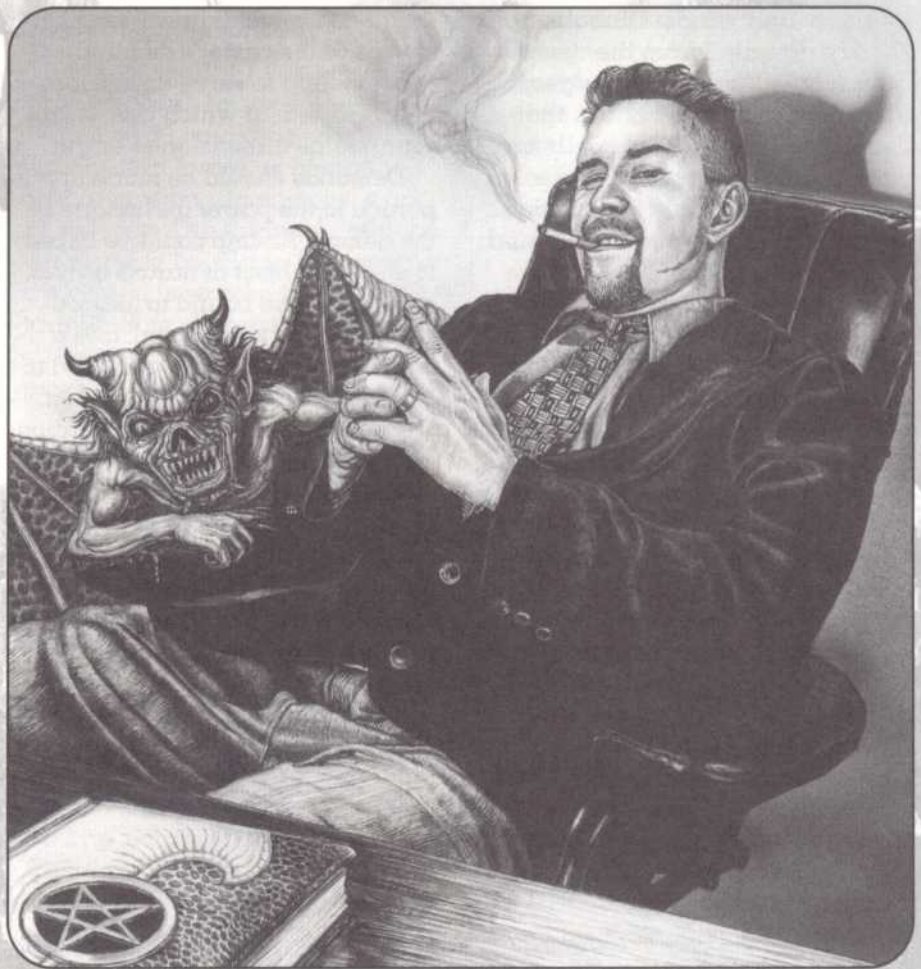
## DIABOLISM

Diabolism focuses on summoning and controlling malevolent supernatural and extradimensional forces and beings. Demon-worshipping cults, a sorcerer bringing a curse or plague to a city, and a crazed man who performs cattle mutilations at midnight are all examples of diabolists in action. Whether or not the forces or creatures summoned originate from a Judeo-Christian idea of Hell is irrelevant. The existence of the diabolist only requires that malevolent otherworldly things can be contacted.

Diabolism is a relatively easy sort of magic to practice. After all, these supernatural creatures—call them demons, for simplicity's sake—constantly look for an excuse to visit the caster's dimension, and the rites required to attract their attention are simple. However, Diabolism is fraught with danger, as demons aren't friendly toward the human race and must be dealt with carefully. A Critical Failure result on the casting roll usually has some sort of detrimental effect on the caster.

A diabolist must speak from a position of strength to the weaker demons and be respectful toward those with greater power. Threats and minor rewards are usually all it takes to command weaker creatures, while the more powerful demons require flattery and larger sacrifices of valuables or living creatures. Thus, most of a diabolist's spells are based on Personality, although those that call and shape energy rather than creatures use Will.

The core of a diabolist's bargaining position is an offered sacrifice, which is something to entice the demon to agree to a task or to grant the energy required for a spell. For heroes who practice diabolism, such sacrifices take the form of personal life energy—stun, wound, fatigue,



or mortal points—lost in the casting of the spell. The quality of the sacrifice (Marginal, Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) dictates the specific type of durability point (stun, wound, fatigue, or mortal, respectively). Such losses heal normally. Diabolists appearing as supporting cast members, particularly those who have devoted their lives to evil, may have alternative methods of powering their spells that allow them to escape the need to sacrifice personal life force. When such characters appear in game products, the Gamemaster will be provided with the pertinent information.

A caster can choose to make a greater or lesser sacrifice than required. Each step up in quality grants a -1 step bonus to the die roll. However, each step down in quality—for instance, making a Marginal sacrifice when an Ordinary sacrifice is required—inflicts a cumulative +3 step penalty to the casting. No sacrifice may be

raised above Amazing or lowered below Marginal.

Environmental conditions may also affect the diabolist's spellcasting. An area warded against the presence of demons, such as holy ground, gives a +1 to +3 step penalty, while a place that has seen especially vile deeds, such as a mass murder site or the trophy room of a serial killer, gives a -1 to -3 step bonus. The presence of like-minded cultists assisting in the ritual grants a -1 step bonus for every factor of ten participants above the required number of participants in the spell. For example, a spell that can be cast alone would have a -1 step bonus for success if ten others assisted the primary caster, whereas a spell that requires ten people working together would need one hundred people cooperating for the -1 step bonus. Even when more than one participant is involved in a ritual, only the caster himself may spend last resort points to improve the skill check.



Interestingly, most Diabolism spells originated from the demons themselves. Those knowledgeable about such subjects believe that demons often use these spells on each other and therefore make such spells available to mortals so as to have them summon and bind their hated rivals.

## Binding

*Transform spell; 1, 2, or 3 FX energy points*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell restrains demons so that the diabolist can bargain with them or force them into service. The spell functions normally against least demons. Against lesser demons, the diabolist must spend 2 FX energy points and cast the spell at a +3 step penalty. Binding a greater demon requires 3 FX energy points and inflicts a +5 step penalty. (The Gamemaster should consult Chapter 6: FX Creatures for descriptions of the various demon types.)

This spell is normally cast upon a magical circle or pentagram into which the demon is summoned. (See the *summoning* spell below.) Properly inscribing the appropriate diagram requires 1 hour. It is also possible to attempt this spell upon a free-roaming demon, though this applies a +2 step penalty to the caster's skill check. A bound creature cannot leave its immediate location, attack the caster or his assistants (if any), or use any magical ability (such as *rend the weave*) to dispel the *binding*. Typically, the diabolist keeps the demon imprisoned until it agrees to perform a service. The demon must make a *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check each week to keep from capitulating to the arcanist's demands. This roll is made at a cumulative +1 step penalty for each week of imprisonment. If the *spiritwrack* spell is used in conjunction with the *binding* spell, the demon must roll each day. In this case, the penalty increases each day it is affected by the *spiritwrack* spell rather

than each week. If the demon agrees to the caster's demands, it is compelled to serve until the task is completed, at which time it can return to its dimension of origin.

Demands should be made in proportion to the power and nature of the demon. An imp could be asked to steal an object or harass a rival, a nali could be bound to assassinate an important official, and a demon prince might be required to break into an enemy fortification. Tasks that are not finite in duration (demands such as "Guard this spot for the rest of eternity") give the demon a -2 step bonus to its *mental resolve* skill check to resist. If a demand is not made of the demon within 1 day of the binding, it is automatically released and becomes free to act as it wishes.

The required sacrifice depends on the type of demon being bound. Binding a least demon requires an Ordinary sacrifice, a lesser demon requires a Good sacrifice, and a greater demon requires an Amazing sacrifice. The creature to be bound must be within 30 meters of the caster.

On a Critical Failure result, the specific target creature can no longer be affected by the diabolist's spells.

## Black Warding

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

*Black warding* creates a faint field of shimmering purplish-black light that protects the caster from all forms of attack, whether melee, ranged, psionic, or magical. The aura grants +2 to the caster's resistance modifier against such attacks. If the caster suffers any wound damage (in other words, damage that is not absorbed by armor) while the spell is active, the caster must make a *Resolve-physical resolve* skill check or the spell fails. The spell automatically fails when the caster runs out of wounds or suffers any mortal damage.

The required sacrifice is a small drop of blood that costs the caster a single stun point (Marginal).

If a Critical Failure result is rolled, the caster suffers a -1 to her resistance modifier against all ranged and melee attacks until she stands in full sunlight for a full action round.

⊗ **Increased Defense:** At rank 4, the resistance modifier increases to +3. At rank 8, it increases to +4. At rank 12, it increases to +5.

## Command

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell bends the target's will to that of the diabolist. The caster can *command* a victim within 30 meters to perform any one simple action that can be described in fewer than a dozen words, such as "Walk out of town" or "Give me your money." The duration of the activity cannot exceed 10 minutes. The spell cannot affect a victim who does not understand the caster's language.

The victim is entitled to a *Resolve-mental resolve* check to resist the *command*. This check has a modifier based on the success of the diabolist's skill check (+1, +2, or +3 step penalty for Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success). Attempts to force the target to commit a violent or self-destructive action grant the victim a respective -1 or -3 step bonus.

The spell requires a Good-quality sacrifice, regardless of the spell's success or failure.

If a Critical Failure result is rolled, the victim becomes immune to further *command* attempts by that diabolist.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 4, the commanded activity can take up to 30 minutes.

⊗ **Increased Efficacy:** At rank 8, the victim suffers an additional +1 step penalty to the *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check. At rank 12, this increases to a +2 step penalty.



## Hellfire

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell calls forth demonic fire to strike the diabolist's enemy. The hellfire can hit any target within 30 meters that is visible to the caster. It inflicts  $d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m$  (En/O), and armor is effective at reducing this damage. This spell requires a Marginal-quality sacrifice. This sacrifice is usually a drop of blood that costs the caster a single stun point.

On a Critical Failure result, the attack is redirected against the caster, who suffers Ordinary damage.

⊗ **Increased Damage:** At rank 4, the damage inflicted becomes  $d6+1w/d8+1w/d4+1m$ . At rank 8, the damage firepower becomes Good. At rank 12, the damage increases to  $d8+1w/d8+3w/d4+2m$ .

## Rend the Weave

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*

This spell negates other Arcane Magic spells or Faith FX miracles. It is automatically successful against the caster's own magic. When directed against another's spell or miracle, the Will resistance modifier of the targeted caster modifies the roll. The primary effect of the targeted spell or miracle must be within 30 meters of the diabolist for this spell to affect it. Targeted miracles from the Monotheism Faith FX broad skill inflict an additional +1 step penalty. A success means the targeted spell ends immediately. A failure indicates that the diabolist cannot attempt to negate that effect until his skill rank improves or until nine full moons have passed.

This spell requires an Ordinary-quality sacrifice.

On a Critical Failure result, the spell backfires upon the caster, causing the loss of an additional FX energy point, or the loss of a fatigue point if the caster has no FX energy points remaining.

## Spiritwrack

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell creates a painful resonance that torments beings native to other dimensions, such as demons. The targeted creature, which must be within 30 meters of the caster, is wracked with debilitating pains. Any actions attempted by the target suffer a +3 step penalty.

This spell requires an Ordinary sacrifice in addition to specific components: an elaborate wooden tablet and substances inimical to the creature. The tablet is inlaid with gold, and on it is written the runes of the spell using the caster's own blood. Creating it costs 1 fatigue point in addition to any self-inflicted damage from the sacrifice. The inimical substances depend on the type of creature. They can include items such as silver, powdered iron, or holy water. Due to the last requirement, this spell is normally prepared in advance against a particular creature or type of creature. A nonspecific *spiritwrack* is less painful and inflicts only a +1 step penalty to the target's actions.

If cast upon a creature held with the *binding* spell, the duration of the pain is determined by the result of the *spiritwrack* casting roll: Marginal, 1 round; Ordinary, 1 hour; Good, 1 day; Amazing, 1 week. If cast upon an unbound demon, the duration is shorter: Marginal, no effect; Ordinary, 1 round; Good, 5 rounds; Amazing, 10 rounds.

Some diabolists prefer to use this spell instead of taking the time for extensive bargaining or making the appropriate sacrifices. (See the *binding* spell.) While this is less costly in the short run, demons subjected to this spell tell others of their kind about it, making other demons less likely to answer the diabolist's call. Each time the diabolist uses this spell, he must make a Personality feat check or suffer the permanent effects of the 2-point Infamy flaw with respect to creatures from the

spiritwracked being's dimension. (This penalty is cumulative with repeated uses.) The Infamy penalty applies to the diabolist's Personality-based spells as well. A diabolist wishing to restore his standing with such creatures must make an Amazing sacrifice for each step of penalty he wants to remove.

On a Critical Failure result, the spell only causes enough pain to enrage the demon. If bound, it receives an immediate *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check to break its binding. If not bound, it receives a -1 step bonus to any attacks against the caster for 24 hours.

⊗ **Increased Efficacy:** At rank 4, any penalty inflicted by this spell increases by +1 step. At rank 8, the penalty increases by another +1 step.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 12, the duration of the spell increases. Any duration noted in rounds becomes minutes, 1 hour becomes 1 day, 1 day becomes 1 week, and 1 week becomes 1 month.

## Summoning

*Summon spell; 1, 2, or 3 FX energy points*

This spell allows a diabolist to summon a demon to the caster's current location and dimension. The demon is not required to serve its summoner, although it may be willing to bargain with the diabolist. The more reticent demons can be manipulated with the *binding* spell.

A summoned demon is attracted by the words of the spell and inclined to be pleased with the summoner because of the sacrifice. The diabolist may then attempt to convince the demon to perform a service or reveal information. The demon appears within 30 meters of the caster.

This spell requires a complex skill check, with the number of successes and type of sacrifice required based on the type of demon summoned. Once summoned, a demon remains in the



diabolist's dimension until it is slain or somehow returned to its home dimension, such as through an exorcism.

Summoning a least demon requires an Ordinary sacrifice, costs 1 FX energy point, and can be accomplished by an individual caster. The complex skill check requires 3 successes, and the caster may make one check per phase.

The ritual required to summon a lesser demon requires ten participants and a Good sacrifice, costs 2 FX energy points, and applies a +2 step penalty to the skill check. The complex skill check requires 5 successes, and skill checks can be made once per round.

Summoning a greater demon requires one hundred participants and an Amazing sacrifice, costs 3 FX energy points, and applies a +4 step penalty to the check. The complex skill check requires 8 successes, and skill checks are made once per minute.

The caster can increase the time interval between any two rolls by one grade (phase to round, round to minute, minute to hour) to gain a -1 step bonus to the skill check. This increase may be applied only once to any particular casting.

On a Critical Failure result, the creature to be summoned is aware of the call and is annoyed with the bungled attempt. It may appear personally, send an inferior demon to investigate or attack the diabolist, or even attempt possession, in which case the caster must immediately make a Resolve-*mental resolve* skill check with a +2 step penalty or be possessed by the demon's spirit. The demon or its chosen subordinate has a -1 step bonus on all actions against the diabolist for a week.

## Tongue of the Damned

*Augur spell; 1 FX energy point*

Some demons keep up on events in the mortal world, and this spell, which requires a Good-quality sac-

rifice, allows the caster to speak to them and gain information without having to actually summon a demon to the material world. A successful casting of this spell allows the caster to question a demonic intelligence, essentially duplicating the effects of any of the following psionic skills: *clairaudience*, *clairvoyance*, *postcognition*, *precognition*, *psycholocation*, or *psychometry*. The spell's degree of success determines the degree of success for the psionic skill. The caster may spend additional FX energy points to maintain the link with the demon on a 1-round-per-point basis.

This spell can also be used to ask a single question that can be answered with one word or a short phrase. The effect is similar to the use of a spirit planchette. The degree of success determines the precision of the granted information. An Ordinary result gives a vague but mostly truthful answer, a Good result indicates more precision, and an Amazing result grants a truthful and useful answer.

This spell can be assisted by the Lore-*occult lore* skill. A successful *occult lore* skill check grants a -1, -2, or -3 step bonus (for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success) to the *tongue of the damned* skill check. This represents the caster's ability to locate a specific demonic intelligence more likely to be able to answer her particular questions. (The Lore broad skill and its specialty skills are described in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. If this skill information is not available, ignore this reference or use the rules for making similar skills found in Appendix: Creating New FX Skills to make a similar skill.)

On a Critical Failure result, the demon becomes irritated by the diabolist's questioning and attempts to possess the caster. A demon communicating through an object spells out a terrifying prediction to those watching, hurls the object across the room, and attempts a possession. The caster

must immediately make a Resolve-*mental resolve* skill check with a +1 step penalty or be possessed by the demon's spirit.

## HEMOMANCY

Hemomancy is magic of the blood. Its focus is how blood works within the body, how it establishes kinship between people, and the essential nature of life that is tied to blood. Hemomancy is often confused with Diabolist because of its use of blood, but the two are very different, as blood sorcery does not involve demons or supernatural creatures in any way. Those who study Hemomancy are often concerned with familial and social relationships, as well as the breakdown of those relationships: psychologists, sociologists, genealogists, and sometimes members of long-time feuding families.

Hemomancy is similar to Necromancy (see below) in that a person who studies either school of magic must abandon many ideas about the physical relationship between things and focus instead upon the mystical relationships between them. However, blood magic does not have the effect upon its users that Necromancy does.

Most hemomantic spells require a certain amount of either the blood of the arcanist or of the target to function. This life currency normally amounts to little more than a drop (the equivalent of 1 stun point), but sometimes may be as much as a cup (the equivalent of 1 wound point). The arcanist can use additional blood to make a stronger connection. Doubling the amount (and the durability equivalent) gives a -1 step bonus to the skill check. The blood sorcerer can prepare a certain amount of blood ahead of time, but blood that isn't fresh grants these spells no power. Anything more than 24 hours old is unsatisfactory unless kept chilled until just before use, and preservative chemicals taint the blood, making it unusable. In most cases, blood taken from a weapon or dripped



from a wound is satisfactory for the purpose of this magic.

Blood sorcerers must be strong enough to survive frequent blood loss and intelligent enough to comprehend the metaphysical connections that blood can be used to establish. Hemomancy spells are based on Constitution or Intelligence. While hemomancers don't gain any benefit in their magic use from the Medical Science skills, most learn Medical Science—*treatment* or Knowledge—*first aid* to protect themselves when they need to use their own blood.

Hemomancy spells are slightly less effective against creatures from outside a hemomancer's own species. When casting a spell on a creature outside his own species, a hemomancer applies a +1 step penalty to the casting. This species penalty can be offset with the appropriate *xenomedicine* skill. Hemomancy spells only work on living creatures that have bloodlike fluids (Gamemaster's discretion).



## Blood Debt

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell intensifies the recipient's emotions toward a specified individual. Range is no factor in naming this target, whose identity must be at least vaguely known by the caster. The spell functions most effectively if at least a drop of the specified individual's blood is used in the casting. The *blood debt* can be forged against any individual within 30 meters without this component, though this inflicts a +2 step penalty to the *blood debt* skill check.

For the next hour, the spell's recipient gains a -1, -2, or -3 step bonus (for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result) on all melee attacks against the specified individual but suffers a similar penalty (+1, +2, or +3 steps) to Personality-based skill checks used against that individual. These effects last for 1 full hour.

⊗ *Increased Duration:* At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the duration increases to 2, 5, and 10 hours, respectively.

## Bloodlust

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell makes the target extremely strong, violent, and aggressive (much like a berserk state). The hemomancer must take at least 1 wound point of the target's blood and feed it to her. For every degree of success of the skill check, the target gains 1 point of Strength and a -1 step bonus to all Stamina—*endurance* skill checks and loses a like number of points from both her Intelligence and Personality Ability Scores. This change lasts 10 minutes.

⊗ *Increased Duration:* At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the duration increases to 20 minutes, 1 hour, and 3 hours, respectively.

## Hunger

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This strange spell alters the target's metabolism so that it can only derive sustenance from blood. The target must consume at least 1 pint of blood (roughly equivalent to 2 wound points or 1 mortal point) of its own species per day in order to survive. Consuming other materials has no effect. For every day that the victim doesn't consume the proper amount of blood, he takes 1 point of fatigue damage. Each pint consumed restores 1 point of fatigue damage lost in this manner.

Every day the victim may make a Resolve—*physical resolve* skill check to return to his normal metabolism. This check is penalized for every degree of success of the *hunger* roll. A hemomancer can also negate the spell with a successful *hunger* skill check. The target must be no more than 30 meters away when this spell is cast.



⊗ **Increased Effect:** At ranks 5 and 10, the victim's need for blood increases to 2 and 3 pints per day.

## Lifeblood

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows the hemomancer to heal wounds and correct biological difficulties. If the arcanist spills a few drops of her own blood (suffering 1 point of stun damage), she can repair  $d6+1$  points of stun damage or  $d4+1$  points of wound damage, while spilling a cupful of blood (1 point of wound damage) repairs  $d4$  points of mortal damage. The spell requires the hemomancer to touch the target.

⊗ **Blood Doping:** At rank 3, the caster can give a person a  $-1$ ,  $-2$ , or  $-3$  step bonus on all Constitution-based feat and skill checks for the next hour by increasing the potency of the target's blood. This requires 1 point of stun damage of the caster's blood.

⊗ **Cure Blood Disabilities:** At rank 6, the blood sorcerer can neutralize diseases, infections, or poisons that act upon the bloodstream or blood-generating tissue. This requires 1 point of wound damage of the caster's blood.

⊗ **Negate Clotting:** At rank 9, the arcanist can slow the target's ability to stop bleeding. For the next 10 minutes, every time the target takes stun, wound, or mortal damage (not including secondary damage), she takes an additional point of that type of damage at the beginning of the next 1, 2, or 3 rounds, depending upon the result of the skill check (O/G/A). Armor, force fields, or similar defenses do not affect this additional damage. This form of the spell requires 1 point of wound damage of the caster's blood.

## Reciprocity

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell creates a link between the hemomancer's life

force and that of a target creature up to 30 meters away. Once this link is established, every time the hemomancer suffers physical damage (as opposed to damage caused by a *mind blast*, sleep poison, and so on), the target takes the same amount of damage. The target's damage is not reduced by armor of any sort. The spell lasts 2 rounds and requires 1 stun point of the caster's blood. An increase in the quantity of the caster's blood to 1 wound point gives a  $-1$  step bonus to the skill check.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 3, 6, and 9, the duration of the spell increases to 4 rounds, 8 rounds, and 16 rounds, respectively.

## Runs Cold

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell reduces the ability of the target's blood to carry necessary energy to the brain and muscles. The target, which must be touched by the arcanist, gets a  $+1$ ,  $+2$ , or  $+3$  step penalty (for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result) on all actions for the next 4 phases. The caster must expend 1 stun point worth of blood for this spell.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 3, 6, and 9, and 12, the duration of the spell doubles.

## Stigmata

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell causes a target within 30 meters to bruise and possibly even bleed. The hemomancer expends 1 stun point worth of blood, and the target suffers  $d4+1s/d6+1s/d4w$  (LI/O) of damage that cannot be reduced by armor.

⊗ **Increased Damage:** At rank 4, the damage increases to  $d4+2s/d6+2s/d4+1w$ . At rank 8, it increases to  $d6+2s/d8+2s/d4+2w$ . At rank 12, it increases to  $d8+2s/d12+2s/d4+4w$ .

## Thicker than Water

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows the hemomancer to make a mystical link with the blood from a target and track him using that link. The link can be created and used at a range of up to 10 kilometers. Once the hemomancer successfully casts the spell, he gains the equivalent of rank 4 in Investigate-track with respect to the target, or four additional ranks in track if he already possesses the specialty skill.

The spell requires 1 stun point of the caster's own blood and lasts 10 minutes per degree of success. The arcanist can extend the duration a like amount by expending 1 FX energy point for as long as the hemomancer has FX energy points available.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 3 and 9, the base duration increases by 10 minutes.

⊗ **Increased Range:** At ranks 6 and 12, the range at which the hemomancer can create and use the link increases to 100 kilometers and 1,000 kilometers, respectively.

## HERMETICISM

Alchemy—the more familiar name for this type of magic—dates back to Egyptian and Arabic practice. The name itself comes from *Al Keme*, the name of the rituals the Arabians used when robbing tombs in Egypt. (*Keme*, their name for Egypt, means "black land," and was used in reference to the fertile soil of the Nile's banks.) The magic words they used were believed to open and reveal invisible tomb treasures—things hidden from plain sight through magic. Indeed, much of Hermeticism's content is encoded knowledge from the Egyptian magicians. But because hermetic secrets are hidden in codes and symbols, few alchemists make much progress in perfecting themselves and their experiments. Later, the word *alchemy* came to mean the trans-



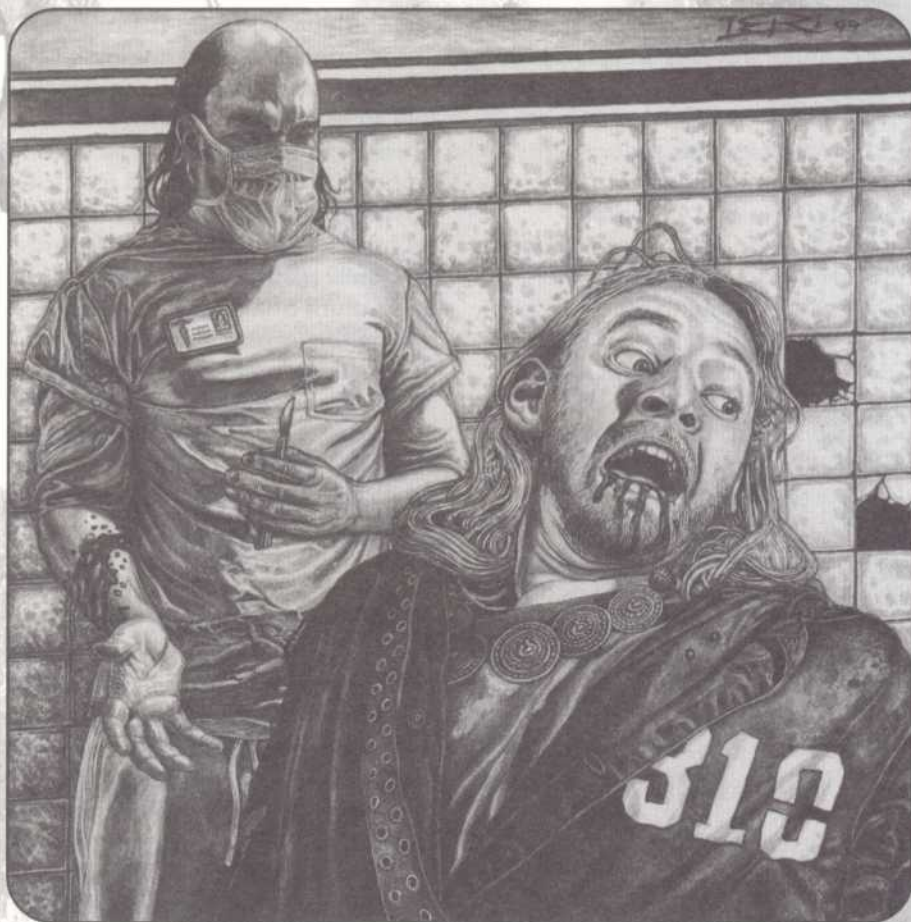
mutation of matter by spells and incantations.

Based on the writings of Hermes Trimegistes, hermetic magic combines astrology, philosophy, and Gnosticism. Most of its secrets are written in classical languages, though some of the oldest hermetic texts are actually Egyptian. The later codification of hermetic principles from Egyptian knowledge remained remarkably true to the ancient ways, but many adepts argue that the greatest secrets were hidden or stolen away by the Companions of Horus, a group that lived in Egypt for centuries before leaving for the East (presumably with much esoteric knowledge in hand). The medieval alchemist, the Egyptian seer-priest, and the British lore-scholar are potential alchemists.

Hermeticism works using complex *mystic formulae* that give structure to the energies of the spells. The formulae are on the whole difficult to find, must be deciphered to be understood, and require materials that are rare, illegal, or dangerous. Any errors in performing a hermetic spell, such as substituting components or focus items, mispronouncing the words of the spell, or using incorrect proportions of the necessary ingredients, inflict a +1 to +3 step penalty toward casting the spell. A Critical Failure result while casting the spell means that a serious error has been made, and the magic backfires upon the hermetic magician.

Because the early practitioners of alchemy were very secretive, their books of knowledge were usually written in code and with strange nonalphabetic symbols. Many aspiring alchemists do not get very far in their studies before reaching a difficult cipher.

Every time an alchemist discovers a new formula, she must decipher the text in order to learn the spell. If the hero has at least one rank in the language of the text, she can make a complex Knowledge-language skill check to learn the spell. If she has no train-



ing in the language of the document to be deciphered, she can use the Social Science-*linguistics* skill instead, though this applies a +1 step penalty to the attempt. (The Social Science broad skill and its specialty skills are described in the DARK•MATTER campaign setting. If this skill information is not available, ignore this reference or use the rules for making similar skills found in Appendix: Creating New FX Skills.)

In either case, the complex skill check requires a number of successes equal to twice the base skill point cost of the spell being learned. (A *glamour* spell, for example, requires 8 successes.) The hero may make one roll per day of studying. If the hero has previously decoded a spell by the same author, she receives a -1 step bonus to the skill check.

Success indicates that the hero has learned the spell and must immediately pay the appropriate skill point cost. Failure means that

the alchemist cannot make another attempt to translate the spell until she improves her skill rank in the language of the document or improves her ability to translate documents per the *linguistics* skill.

A beginning hero with the Hermeticism broad skill should start with knowledge of no more than one or two spells. The player should work with the Gamemaster to determine the hero's starting spells.

Since a sharp mind is needed to properly process the complex components of this magic, most Hermeticism spells depend on Intelligence.

## Daedalus Improved

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
This skill can't be used untrained.

This spell gives an alchemist the ability to fly at his Fly (or Glide, at the hero's option) movement rate. He can move in any direction at will and can hang in



place effortlessly. This spell even works underwater or in space, although it gives no ability to survive without air. (Furthermore, the drag from the water reduces any movement in that environment to one-quarter of the Fly rate.)

Active flight requires thinking about abstract mental equations, so penalties apply to other actions taken during flight. (See TABLE P11: COMBAT MOVEMENT EFFECTS in the *Player's Handbook*.) Hovering requires no effort and imparts no penalty. The spell lasts 10 minutes per degree of success.

On a Critical Failure result, the caster suffers from severe vertigo for 1 minute (5 rounds). All actions during this time suffer a +2 step penalty, and his movement is reduced to half normal.

⊗ **Enhanced Speed:** At rank 4, the alchemist's speed when flying or gliding increases to double the listed rates. The base rates triple at rank 8 and quadruple at rank 12.

## Glamour

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell creates strong auditory and visual illusions that change as the caster desires. It can be used to alter a single creature or item or an area of up to 25 square meters. The light and noises it makes can be no louder than Good intensity. (See the Range of Vision and Sound sections in Chapter 3 of the *Gamemaster Guide* or TABLE F4: LIGHT and TABLE F5: SOUND in the Illusion section following this one.) The illusion is otherwise so realistic that it inflicts a +3 step penalty to all Awareness–perception checks of those viewing it and attempting to discern what is real. The illusion can even fool electronic equipment such as cameras.

While the illusionary effects can cover an object with the image of another object of larger size or obscure a sound with a louder sound, they cannot make something disappear or silence a noise. Particularly unlikely results

(green flying pigs, for instance) automatically entitle a viewer to an Awareness–perception roll with a –1 to –3 step bonus to detect the illusion, at the Gamemaster's discretion.

The spell's duration is 1 hour, and the alchemist must remain within 30 meters of the area, item, or creature affected. If the caster leaves this area before the end of the spell, the spell lasts for d6 additional minutes or until the maximum normal duration of the spell. The spell requires a powder made from a fistful of narcotics, sweat taken from an onstage performer, and crushed leaves of the poisonous herb belladonna.

On a Critical Failure result, the alchemist's senses are affected by spectral visions and noises perceived only by him for the duration of the spell. The caster suffers a +1 step penalty on all actions that require sight or hearing during this time.

⊗ **Increased Effect:** At rank 4, the caster's control of the auditory and visual effects extends beyond a human's sensory capabilities. Thus, the caster could create a high-pitched sound audible only to dogs or mask an infrared component to thwart infrared sensors. At rank 8, the area of effect increases to 100 square meters. At rank 12, the visual and auditory images can be of Amazing intensity.

## Homunculus

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*(permanent)*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows an alchemist to slowly grow an artificial life-form that obeys its creator's will. The process requires a broad range of ritual materials, including human bodily fluids (especially the blood of the caster), mandrake root, bear's gall bladder, shark cartilage, and human growth hormones extracted from brain tissue or bought from a medical supply or biochemical company. (More primitive alchemists

used entire ground-up brains.) Any deviation from this process applies a +1 to +3 step penalty.

The spell requires a full month of near-constant activity consuming at least 12 hours of the caster's every day to grow and shape the homunculus, at which point the alchemist must make a *homunculus* skill check. If successful, the homunculus is fully developed, knows the caster's language, and has the ability to act independently, though it remains under its creator's control. Failure indicates that the partially formed homunculus dissolves into a useless sludge. Regardless of success or failure, the FX energy point spent on the spell is lost permanently, though the alchemist may spend achievement points to replace it as covered in the rules for gaining FX energy points.

Homunculus game statistics appear in Chapter 6: FX Creatures. A trained homunculus can act as a messenger, spy, and scout. With a successful *homunculus* skill check and the expenditure of 1 FX energy point, the hero can communicate with her homunculus telepathically at any distance for up to 1 hour.

If a Critical Failure result is rolled, the creation process has gone awry, and the homunculus flees immediately. It haunts its creator for the rest of its existence, perhaps even seeking out an enemy of its creator to serve. This does not affect the caster's chance or ability to telepathically communicate with her homunculus, though such communication grants the caster no power of control over her failed creation.

⊗ **Sensory Relay:** At rank 4, the creator can, with a successful skill check and the expenditure of 1 FX energy point, use the homunculus's sensory organs as if they were her own for up to 1 hour. At rank 8, the homunculus's sensory capabilities grant a –1 step bonus to any skill checks made by the creator using its senses. At rank 12, the durations of telepathic communication and sensory relay increase to 6 hours. These rank benefits apply even to



homunculi created before the rank benefit was achieved.

## Ligature

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell wraps the target in hundreds of magical metallic threads that snap tight and restrict movement. The target's Strength resistance modifier applies to the alchemist's *ligature* skill check. On an Ordinary success, the target is only partially bound. He moves at half normal rate and suffers a +2 step penalty on all Strength- and Dexterity-related skill and feat checks for the next d4 rounds. On a Good success, the target is rendered immobile for d4+2 rounds. On an Amazing success, the target is held motionless for d8+2 rounds. In any case, the victim may still use abilities that do not require movement, such as psionics and mentally activated mutations and cybernetic devices.

The strands from the *ligature* spell cannot be broken by Strength alone, but they can be cut away. The strands have a durability of 3 and an Ordinary toughness. Only damage from edged or energy weapons can sever them.

On a Critical Failure result, the *ligature* entangles the alchemist as if the spell result were a Good success.

⊗ **Increased Effect:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the alchemist creates more and thicker strands, cumulatively increasing the duration of the spell by 1 round and the durability of the strands by 1 at each of these ranks.

## Shapechanging

*Transform spell; 2 FX energy points*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This complex and dangerous ritual allows the caster to assume the exact form of a specific animal, gaining its movement, vision, special abilities, and skill ranks.

This does not grant the caster any specific memories or factual knowledge, just qualities present in the target's species (expressed as skill ranks), such as a tiger's stealth, a fraal's mindwalking skills, or a wolf's ability to track by scent. The caster retains his own Intelligence, Will, and Personality Ability Scores.

To complete the ritual, the caster must have a well-tanned hide of the animal whose form she chooses to adopt. The ritual requires 1 round to complete. *Shapechanging* can even allow an alchemist to assume the form of a human, an alien, or a supernatural creature such as a demon, so long as a well-tanned skin is available. However, assuming the form of a nonterrestrial creature applies a +2 step penalty to the skill check.

In addition to the tanned hide, an optional ritual material for *shapechanging* is rendered bear fat, whale oil, or another lubricant. This lubricant makes the transition from one shape to another easier, granting a -1 step bonus. Items do not transform with the alchemist, and the animal skin must be held against the alchemist's own skin during the casting. Wearing any natural items (cotton clothing, leather shoes, and the like) during casting imposes a +1 step penalty to the roll, while metal, plastic, or other artificial items inflict a +2 step penalty. Thus, to maximize their chances for success, most casters choose to perform this spell naked. The spell lasts 4 hours plus 1 hour for every degree of success (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) of the skill check.

On a Critical Failure result, the alchemist loses partial control of her own faculties and suffers a +1 step penalty to all actions for 1 hour.

⊗ **Increased Durability:** At rank 4, the alchemist gains a bonus stun, wound, fatigue, and mortal point when she assumes animal form. Any damage taken is first subtracted from these bonus points, which

are lost when the hero returns to normal form. An additional point is gained in each category at rank 8 and again at rank 12.

## Sleep of Morpheus

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This simple spell causes a living creature located up to 30 meters away from the caster to fall asleep for a few minutes. The victim is entitled to a Resolve-*mental* resolve skill check to resist the effect entirely. The alchemist's degree of success (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) inflicts a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to that check. Particularly vigilant targets, such as sentries, receive a -1 step bonus to resist this spell.

If the victim succumbs to the spell, he falls asleep for a number of minutes equal to 20 minus his Constitution (minimum of 1 minute). Attempts to wake the target entitle him to another *mental* resolve skill check. If the victim is attacked or otherwise injured while asleep, he immediately wakes to full consciousness. Noise alone cannot wake the victim.

The ritual material for *sleep of Morpheus* is a spinning or swinging object, such as those used by hypnotists.

On a Critical Failure result, the spell affects the alchemist, who has a +2 step penalty to the Resolve-*mental* resolve resistance roll.

⊗ **Increased Efficacy:** At rank 4, *mental* resolve checks made to resist the spell suffer an additional +1 step penalty. At rank 12, the penalty increases by another step.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 8, the duration of the *sleep of Morpheus* increases to 30 minutes minus the target's Constitution.



## Transmutation

Transform spell; 1 or 2 FX energy points

This skill can't be used untrained.

This carefully guarded spell allows the alchemist to transform one substance into another. The alchemist who discovers and deciphers this spell rarely shares this secret, and so the total number of copies of the spell remains unknown.

The spell requires an extended ritual. This ritual is represented by a complex skill check requiring 10 successes and allowing one roll per 2 hours. Failure means the spell fails and the material to be transformed becomes corrupted and unusable. The ritual involves a fully stocked alchemical or chemistry laboratory and ingredients such as aqua regia, exotic mineral salts, a source of flame, and large amounts of quicksilver (mercury). Setting up such a laboratory costs \$5,000, and maintaining it consumes lab supplies costing \$100 per casting of *transmutation*. Each use of the spell can transform up to one-half kilogram of matter.

For the purposes of this spell, four types of substances exist. In increasing order of complexity, these are light elements (such as oxygen or hydrogen), heavy elements (such as mercury, iron, lead, or gold), simple compounds (such as water, air, pure alcohol, carbon dioxide, or steel), and complex compounds (such as wood, leather, wine, blood, or gasoline). Any *transmutation* involving one or more compounds requires 2 FX energy points rather than the standard cost of 1 FX energy point.

A bonus or penalty is applied to the skill check based on the original and desired substance, as noted on the following table. For example, an alchemist changing nitrogen (a light element) into helium (another light element) would receive a -1 step bonus to the skill check. If the hero wished to transmute nitrogen into air (a simple compound), he would suffer a +3 step penalty to the skill check.

	Lt	Hvy	Simple	Cplx
	Ele	Ele	Cpnd	Cpnd
Light Element	-1	+1	+3	+5
Heavy Element	+1	0	+2	+4
Simple Compound	+3	+2	+1	+3
Complex Compound	+5	+4	+3	+2

The alchemist has no control over the temperature of the material. Thus, he couldn't turn oxygen into liquid oxygen, which requires intense cold, or stone into magma, which requires great heat.

The new material appears in the approximate shape of the old material, taking into account the potential difference in size due to changes in density. Because of this, the alchemist cannot transmute a hunk of granite into a statue or an iron bar into a gold ring. Also, this spell cannot affect living animal or plant tissue, nor can it create living matter. Thus, the alchemist could not transmute a tree into a flagpole or a corpse into a living creature.

The duration of the *transmutation* depends on the result of the skill check. On an Ordinary result, the duration is 1 hour per skill rank. With a Good result, this duration is 1 day per skill rank. With an Amazing result, the transmutation is permanent.

The Physical Science—chemistry skill can be used to assist *transmutation* skill checks. The result of the chemistry skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) grants a -1, -2, or -3 step bonus to the *transmutation* attempt.

If a Critical Failure result is rolled, the transmutation spell goes awry and creates a volatile or explosive material that detonates, injuring all nearby and destroying valuable equipment. Anyone within 5 meters of the spell can make an Acrobatics—dodge skill check to duck out of the way. Those who fail take  $d8+1w$  (En/O), and the alchemist must rebuild the laboratory, which takes  $d4+2$  weeks and the appropriate expense.

⊗ *Increased Effect:* At rank 4, the alchemist can transmute up to 1 kilogram of matter. This increases to 3 kilograms at rank 8 and to 5 kilograms at rank 12.

## ILLUSION

The art of illusion involves the manipulation of light and sound to produce artificial images and noises. The beginners at this craft can normally only affect a small area and are limited in the illusions they can create, but as their expertise increases they are able to affect progressively larger spaces and create incredibly complex illusions. Most illusionists are people with a natural talent for creativity in the visual arts who use this talent to create more realistic results. In many cases, specific Creativity specialty skills may give bonuses to the use of Illusion spells.

While Illusion magic requires no physical trappings, having a model to work from greatly simplifies the procedure for crafting an illusion. For example, an illusionist wishing to create an image of a werewoman would enjoy a -1 step bonus to the spell skill check if she had a picture or small sculpture, such as a doll or action figure, on hand to use as a model. Having an actual werewoman present to base the illusion on would increase this bonus to -2 steps. Because of this, many illusionists carry a small library of reference pictures (or sounds) to aid in the creation of illusions. Holoprojectors and handheld computers with audio are both handy tools for the modern illusionist.

An interesting aspect of Illusion magic is that its spells can be combined together and invoked at the same time. Thus, while visual and auditory effects are caused by two different spells, an illusionist can cast them as part of the same action and generate both effects simultaneously. Doing this causes no penalty for performing multiple actions at once, although each spell's FX energy cost must be



paid. Essentially, the separate effects combine into a single spell. Also, most illusions are dependent upon the attention of the person who created them. They remain static unless actively controlled. However, as long as the duration of the spell has not expired, the illusionist can influence the existing illusion with no penalty.

Illusionists need to be able to visualize complex images in motion and do so in a way that is convincing to those that behold them. Therefore, those who use Illusion magic tend to have high Intelligence and Will Ability Scores. Their spells are based upon these two abilities.

Illusions are only effective against things that can perceive them. The most realistic image in the world cannot convince someone who can't see, for example, and creatures that rely heavily on scent, such as dogs, are not fooled as easily as those that primarily rely on sight. However, as this sort of arcane FX manipulates light and sound instead of minds, it is effective even when the illusion is viewed through cameras or other sorts of electronic recording devices.

## Clamor

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell creates sound by causing vibrations in the area of effect. The sound could be as simple as a single tone or as complex as intelligent speech, but it may not be greater than Ordinary intensity.

Multiple sounds can be created within the same area, but unless developed carefully, they are likely to overlap each other and become unintelligible. Sound cannot be silenced, but sounds of equal or higher quality can be used to conceal them.

This spell can create sounds up to 30 meters away from the caster. The effects last 10 minutes per degree of success of the skill check.



⊗ **Increased Volume:** At rank 3, the illusionist can create Good-intensity sound with this spell. At rank 9, she can create Amazing-intensity sound.

⊗ **Increased Range:** At rank 6, the illusionist's range extends to 100 meters. At rank 12, it extends to 300 meters.

## Conceal

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows the illusionist to cover an object or objects up to 30 meters distant with an illusion of nothingness. Essentially, the item becomes invisible to the visible spectrum, although infrared, ultraviolet, and other scans using the farther reaches of the electromagnetic spectrum reveal its presence. The object can be picked up, moved, or manipulated without disrupting the illusion. Even painting the object does not reveal it, as the illusion also covers the paint. Objects placed inside an

invisible object become concealed but appear again if removed, while a multipart object that is rendered invisible can be separated into its component invisible pieces. Trying to find or target an invisible object gives a +3 penalty to all attempts made to do so; otherwise, the object remains unnoticed.

The illusionist cannot see the invisible objects created with this spell, and an invisible creature cannot see itself, although it can see its surroundings normally. The spell only affects discrete items. A section of wall or floor cannot be turned invisible, nor can only part of a creature be made invisible. Also, particularly coherent beams of light, such as lasers, can pierce this spell, though the recipient's resistance modifier against such attacks is improved by 2 steps.

The spell lasts 1 minute per degree of success of the skill check and affects up to 2 cubic meters of material.



⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 3, the spell's duration becomes 5 minutes per degree of success.

## Light and Sound

Many of an illusionist's spells depend on determining the intensity of illumination or sound. Use these guidelines to determine the appropriate intensity.

The modifiers given on TABLE F4: LIGHT and TABLE F5: SOUND apply as follows. For illumination, the modifier applies to a hero's chance to spot something (with Awareness-perception or Investigate-search, for example), chances for surprise, and ranged attacks. (In the case of ranged attacks, only penalties apply.)

For sound, two modifiers exist. The first applies to a hero's chance of detecting the sound. (It is impossible not to detect an Amazing-intensity sound, and an Extreme lack of sound cannot be "detected.") The second applies to any hearing-based skill checks made in the area of such sound. These two modifiers are cumulative. For instance, if you're near a jet engine (+4 step penalty), it's even difficult to hear a scream (-2 step bonus).

The intensity of sound or illumination decreases as the distance from the source increases. Specifically, it varies inversely with the square of the distance from the source. (This principle is called the Inverse Square Law.) In other words, if the distance from the source doubles, the intensity becomes only one-fourth of its original.

To approximate this in game terms, use TABLE F4: LIGHT and TABLE F5: SOUND below to estimate the distances at which the intensity of illumination or sound decreases to the next higher degree. In some circumstances, light or sound may be perceptible at greater distances (a bright light in darkness) or may fade to obscurity much more quickly (a gunshot behind a heavy door). In such cases, the Gamemaster should use her judgment in place of Table F5 and Table F6.

⊗ **Increased Effect:** At rank 6, the spell affects up to 10 cubic meters of material.

⊗ **Increased Spectrum:** At rank 9, the spell also renders the object invisible to infrared and ultraviolet sensors. At rank 12, the object is hidden from all electromagnetic scans and enjoys a +3 resistance modifier against any weapons using electromagnetic energy to inflict damage upon it, including lasers, masers, and arc guns.

## Everyman

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows an illusionist to create a disguise for herself or another person. A person, in this case, also includes anthropomorphic robots, dead bodies, store mannequins, and the like. Initially, the spell can only alter the basic features of a target such as eye/hair/skin color, general build, and facial features. A specific individual cannot be emulated, although the target's features can be altered to be similar to those of a particular person, giving a +1 step penalty for every degree of success of the skill check to any Awareness-perception checks made to see through the disguise. Thus, a human male could be made to appear as a mechalus, a small weren, a female human, and so on, with a different eye or hair color, clothes, and so on. A fraal could be disguised as a t'sa, a small human, or a mechalus.

The illusion follows the target's movements, so a disguise of formal wear on a person clad in a bathing suit would bend and wrinkle in the appropriate places. The spell could also conceal or give the appearance of having a cyberlimb, scarring, a minor physical mutation, and so on.

The spell produces no auditory effects, so a careful observer may notice that the illusory formal wear doesn't rustle as it moves, a voice might not match the concealed individual's apparent form, and so forth. The spell only affects

visible light, so an infrared, radio, or sonar scan would reveal the true form if it is radically different from the illusory one, a heat scan would not register heat for a dead body or mannequin, and so on.

The spell lasts 10 minutes per degree of success of the skill check.

If the illusionist has the disguise rank benefit of Entertainment-act, she receives a -2 step bonus to the everyman skill check.

⊗ **Increased Precision:** At rank 4, the illusionist can disguise someone as a specific person who is at hand. If the illusionist is working from a picture or video recording rather than a target at hand, apply a +2 step penalty to the everyman skill check.

⊗ **Increased Change:** At rank 8, the disguise can radically change the apparent size of the target. A fraal could be made to look like a weren or vice versa, a person in a body tank could appear unarmored, and so on.

⊗ **Increased Spectrum:** At rank 12, the spell also alters the target's profile in the electromagnetic spectrum so that it matches the assumed form, including adding a heat signature, if appropriate.

## Moving Pictures

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell creates visual illusions that can duplicate motion in real time to create realistic movement within the area of effect. Thus, the illusionist could make an illusion of a wall of fire, an operating sensor gauntlet, a person typing, or a spinning sky-car. The illusion appears real, although it stops moving if the illusionist stops paying attention to it.

The spell lasts 10 minutes per degree of success of the skill check and affects 2 cubic meters at a range of 30 meters. The minimum reasonable dimension of the illusion's area is 0.1 meter (10 centimeters). While objects smaller than this can be shaped, this



**TABLE F4: LIGHT**

Intensity	Illumination (Source)	Modifier
Amazing	Bright sunlight (floodlights)	-3
Good	Well-lit room (hand-held spotlight)	-2
Ordinary	Average day (headlights)	-1
Marginal	Cloudy day (bonfire, flashlight)	0
Slight	Twilight, light rain (torch, campfire)	+1
Moderate	Moonlight, fog (candle, computer monitor)	+2
Extreme	Total darkness	+3

*Light Reduces to Listed Intensity at Range*

	1 m	3 m	10 m	30 m	100 m	1 km	3 km	10 km†	30 km
A	A	A	A	G	O	M	s	m	e*
G	G	G	G	O	M	s	m	e*	e
O	O	O	O	M	s	m	e*	e	e
M	M	M	s	m	e*	e*	e	e	e
s	s	s	m	e*	e*	e	e	e	e
s	m	e*	e*	e*	e	e	e	e	e
e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e

\*Light source is visible but provides no illumination at this range. Some light sources (such as flashlights) may provide directed illumination at greater ranges than those listed.

†Beyond 10 kilometers, virtually no light source provides illumination unless circumstances specifically allow.

**TABLE F5: SOUND**

Intensity	Sound	Modifier
Amazing	Jet engine, explosion, firefight (130+ dB)	-/+4
Good	Scream, single gunshot, car horn (90-130 dB)	-2/+2
Ordinary	Conversation, car engine (60-90 dB)	0/+1
Marginal	Loud whisper, quiet office (30-60 dB)	+2/0
Slight	Quiet whisper, person sneaking (10-30 dB)	+4/0
Moderate	Shallow breathing (1-10 dB)	+6/0
Extreme	Complete silence (0 dB)	-/-1

*Sound Reduces to Listed Intensity at Range*

	1 m	3 m	10 m	30 m	100 m	1 km	3 km	10 km†	30 km
A	A	A	A	A	G	O	M	s	m
G	G	G	G	G	O	M	s	m	e
O	O	O	O	M	s	e	e	e	e
M	M	s	m	e	e	e	e	e	e
s	s	m	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
m	m	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e
e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e	e

†Beyond 30 kilometers, virtually no sounds are audible unless circumstances specifically allow.

limitation simply means that the illusionist cannot "stretch" the illusionary area to .01 meters by 10 meters by 20 meters to create a huge wall, for example.

An appropriate Creativity specialty skill, such as *painting*, *sculpting*, and so on, can be used

to assist the *moving pictures* skill check.

The spell can only increase or reduce light in an area by two degrees on TABLE F4: LIGHT. For instance, an illusionist could create an illusion of torchlight in total darkness or turn a moonlit

evening into the equivalent of a cloudy day.

⊗ **Increased Illumination:** At rank 3, the illusionist can alter the ambient light in an area by three degrees. She can change illumination by up to four degrees at rank 6, by five degrees at rank 9, and by six degrees at rank 12.



⊗ **Increased Volume:** The illusionist may affect up to 10 cubic meters at rank 4, 50 cubic meters at rank 8, and 250 cubic meters at rank 12.

## Programmed Response

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell does nothing by itself, but it adds a set of programmed instructions to the *clamor* or *moving pictures* spell (and rarely, to the *static image* or *everyman* spell), causing the spell it affects to continue its actions without the attention of the illusionist. Thus, a wall of fire would continue to move, an illusionary person could continue to type, and a sky car would continue its motion even if the illusionist stopped paying attention or left the area.

*Programmed response* repeats a single default action for the illusion. The spell has the range, area, and duration of whatever spells it is linked to.

⊗ **Triggered Response:** At rank 3, the illusionist can program a trigger-response pair into the spell. Examples include an illusionary typist giving a quizzical look if spoken to, the wall of fire flaring up if approached, the car rolling up its windows if it starts to rain, and so forth. The spell triggers auditory or visual responses (or both) as appropriate to the spell or spells upon which it is cast.

If linked to the *static image* spell, the trigger brings into play a preset still image, so a metal wall could show bullet holes if fired upon, a dead body could open its eyes if approached, and so on. It could also be linked to the *everyman* spell to cause a disguise change once certain conditions are met.

At ranks 6, 9, and 12, the illusionist can program an additional trigger-response pair into the illusion. These triggers can be reprogrammed at a rate of one per

phase should the illusionist wish to change them later.

## Static Image

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This simple spell creates a visual illusion of a nonmoving object such as a wall, a one-piece weapon, a body, or a vehicle. The illusionist can alter the image to give the appearance of motion, but the perceived motion occurs in a jerky fashion at one frame of animation per phase. Anyone viewing this very rough animation has a -3 step bonus to any rolls made to realize that it is an artificial image.

The spell's duration, area of effect, and maximum change in illumination are identical with those of the *moving pictures* spell. An appropriate Creativity specialty skill can be used to assist *static image*.

⊗ **Increased Illumination:** At rank 3, the illusionist can alter the ambient light in an area by three degrees on TABLE F4: LIGHT. He can change illumination by up to four degrees at rank 6, by five degrees at rank 9, and by six degrees at rank 12.

⊗ **Increased Volume:** The illusionist can affect up to 10 cubic meters at rank 4, 50 cubic meters at rank 8, and 250 cubic meters at rank 12.

## MESMERISM

This school of Arcane Magic FX focuses on influencing and controlling living minds. In many ways this discipline overlaps other sorts of magic and even several psionic skills. Some of the more common sorts of mesmerists include hypnotists and some public speakers (especially politicians and televangelists), although spies and assassins also find this magic very useful.

Mesmerism requires some study but is not a difficult art. A practitioner with sufficient Will and natural ability quickly masters the basics of this Arcane Magic FX, although only rare indi-

viduals grasp the most difficult exercises.

Mesmerists are usually willful and charismatic. A mesmerist must attract a target's attention and be strong enough to retain it long enough to overwhelm his resistance. Thus, mesmerists usually have high Will and Personality Ability Scores, and their spells are based on these two Abilities.

Mesmerists require no cumbersome trappings to work their FX, although some spells are aided by a focus object or require an extended period to take effect. Mesmerist skills can easily be confused with psionics, but abilities such as psionic awareness do not detect Mesmerism, nor do mutations such as Psi Resistance or psionic defenses such as *Telepathy-mind shield* give any aid in resisting them. Mesmerists must be able to make eye contact with their targets, and their targets must be in range. In addition, most spells require the target to hear the arcanist's voice. If the mesmerist does not speak in a language that his target can understand, apply a +2 step penalty to the spell's skill check.

## Befriend

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*

This spell is essentially an improved version of the *Interaction-charm* skill. It allows the user to adjust the mental attitude of a target within 2 meters with a successful skill check. Even Hostile or Combative targets can be affected. The target's attitude is shifted one, two, or three categories toward Fanatic with an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success. All modifiers normally associated with the *charm* skill apply. The spell lasts 1 hour.

⊗ **More Targets:** At rank 4, the mesmerist can affect three targets simultaneously. At rank 8, this number increases to ten, and at rank 12, it increases to thirty. When multiple targets are to be affected, a single control die is rolled, and the appropriate situa-





tion die for each target is rolled and applied to that target or group of targets.

◆ **Example:** A mesmerist with rank 8 in *befriend* attempts to affect ten targets. Six have no modifiers to the die roll, three have a +1 Will resistance modifier, and one has a +2 Will resistance modifier. The player would roll the control die normally and compare the number rolled to his skill rank to determine success against the first six targets. He would add the result of a d4 to the control die to determine his success against the next three targets, and he would add a d6 to the control die to determine his success against the last target.

## Confuse

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*

When casting the *confuse* spell, the mesmerist utters a droning incantation that puts the thoughts of the target, who must be within 10 meters, slightly out of focus, reducing the target's ability to

accomplish tasks relying on mental faculties. The result of the *confuse* skill check (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) applies a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to all Intelligence- and Will-based skill checks of the target for 5 rounds.

The mesmerist can continue droning after a successful skill check is made. This extends the spell's duration, allowing the spell to last for 5 rounds after the illusionist stops droning. Any damage suffered or any other speech uttered by the mesmerist automatically ends the droning, at which point the 5-round duration begins.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 4, the confusion lasts for 5 minutes after the caster ends her droning. At rank 8, it lasts for 20 minutes. At rank 12, it lasts for 1 hour.

## Dominate

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell subsumes the will of a target within 2 meters, making her

a puppet of the caster. The victim gets a *Resolve-mental* resolve skill check to avoid this control, although a Good or Amazing success by the mesmerist gives a +1 or +2 step penalty to the resistance roll. If the target fails this roll, she unquestioningly obeys the mesmerist's orders for the next 1 minute (5 rounds). Commands that are obviously suicidal (such as jumping into an incinerator or firing weapons at one's own head) allow the target another *mental* resolve skill check to resist at a -2 step bonus. Subtle commands that aren't directly harmful (such as drinking an unknown liquid or driving into a busy intersection) do not.

The caster can continue to give orders to the subject through visual or verbal cues for the duration of the spell. After the spell ends, the victim is entitled to make a *mental* resolve check to realize that her actions were not of her own volition.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 4, the domination lasts for 5 minutes. At rank 8, it lasts for 30 minutes. At rank 12, it lasts for 2 hours.

## Emotion

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows the mesmerist to affect the emotional state of her subject. The caster can cause the subject to feel any one emotion of her choice for the duration of the spell, such as fear, courage, joy, sadness, hate, love, friendship, enmity, hope, or discouragement. The exact effect of this emotion on the target is up to the Game-master. Normally it results in a -1 to -3 step bonus (based on the success of the *emotion* skill check) to skill checks made by characters acting upon that target with appropriate spells, skills, or psionic powers. For example, a mesmerist who infused her target with love and rolled an Amazing result would grant a -3 step bonus to *Interaction-seduce* skill checks made against that target.



The target's emotional state artificially gravitates to the chosen emotion even if later stimuli would counteract this. For example, a target made to feel sad remains so for the duration of the spell, and any number of greeting cards, pep talks, and mood-elevating pharmaceuticals can alter this only slightly.

Alternatively, the spell can enhance certain of the target's skills with the same step bonuses listed above. For example, an actor performing in a tragedy could be made to feel sadness with this spell, giving him a bonus to his Entertainment-act skill. Likewise, a leader could have her feelings of hope boosted, giving her a bonus to her Leadership-inspire skill.

The spell lasts 1 hour, after which time the subject's emotions quickly drift back to their previous state. At that time, the subject is entitled to make a Resolve-mental resolve skill check to realize that his emotions were artificially altered.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the duration of the emotional effect increases to 2, 5, and 10 hours, respectively.

## Encourage

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows the mesmerist to put thoughts into the head of a target. The target perceives these thoughts as her own. The encouraged behavior lasts 1 hour for every degree of success of the skill check.

Like the Telepathy-suggest mindwalking skill, *encourage* cannot instill behavior that would be permanently or immediately detrimental to the target, and the Gamemaster may assign a bonus or penalty to the skill check to reflect how extreme the encouraged action is. (See Telepathy-suggest in Chapter 14: Psionics in the *Player's Handbook* for more specific information.)

⊗ **More Targets:** At rank 4, the mesmerist can affect two targets simultaneously. At rank 8, this number increases to five. At rank 12, it increases to ten. When multiple targets are to be affected, a single control die is rolled, and the appropriate situation die for each target is applied individually to that roll.

## Forgetfulness

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell clouds the target's memories of the last 10 minutes. The target simply has no recollection of that time having passed, as if it were spent daydreaming, sleeping, or simply being "out of it." The spell requires a Good complex skill check to succeed (5 successes, 1 check per phase), and the target must remain within 2 meters of the mesmerist throughout the time of casting. The caster can shorten the length of time forgotten to less than the maximum. Repeat uses of this spell in succession extend the *forgetfulness* effect. (For instance, using it twice in a row erases the target's memories of the previous 20 minutes.)

⊗ **Implant False Memories:** At rank 4, the caster can implant simple false memories of repetitive or constant events, such as reading, walking, or sleeping, in place of the forgotten ones. At rank 9, complex memories can be implanted in place of the erased ones. Examples of this sort of false memory implant include intelligent conversation, working, or even something as intricate as surgery.

⊗ **Increased Erasure:** At rank 6, the caster can cause a target to forget up to the last 1 hour. At rank 12, the past 6 hours can be erased.

## Hypnotize

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*

A mesmerist uses this spell to put a single individual within 2 meters into a more receptive mood for mental influences. The use of the spell requires an Ordinary

complex skill check (3 successes, 1 check per minute). The target's Will resistance modifier applies to the skill check. This spell can be cast on an unwilling target, though this applies an additional +3 step penalty to the skill check.

The mesmerist has a -3 step bonus to any Mesmerism spells or encounter skill checks against a hypnotized target. Thus, interrogating, bluffing, or charming such a target becomes much easier. Others using such skills against the target also enjoy a -1 step bonus.

Also, a mesmerist may enhance a hypnotized subject's Strength or Dexterity through the power of suggestion. This effect raises the appropriate Ability Score by 1 point, but it lasts only 10 minutes or the remaining duration of the spell, whichever is less. This effect also causes 1 point of fatigue damage to the target, which is suffered when the hypnosis ends.

The hypnosis lasts a maximum of 30 minutes. The mesmerist can bring a person out of hypnosis at any time. Whether or not a hypnotized target remembers anything that happened during the spell's duration is completely up to the mesmerist.

⊗ **More Targets:** At rank 4, the mesmerist can affect five targets simultaneously. At rank 8, this number increases to twenty-five. At rank 12, it increases to 125. When multiple targets are to be affected, a single control die is rolled, and the appropriate situation die for each target is applied individually to that roll.

## Mindshatter

*Transform spell; 2 FX energy points*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This potent spell fragments the various cognitive parts of a target's mind, leaving him with the intellect of an infant. The subject cannot speak, feed himself, walk, crawl, or perform any other actions that a six-month-old child could not do. The mesmerist must touch



the target during the casting of the spell for it to have any effect. The target receives a *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check with a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty (based on the success of the *mindshatter* skill check) to resist the spell.

The spell lasts a minimum of 6 hours for every degree of success of the skill check. At the time of casting and every 24 hours after the end of the base duration, the target can make another *mental resolve* skill check to break free of the spell's effects. This skill check includes the original penalty, but modifies that penalty with a cumulative -1 step bonus per day that has elapsed.

⊗ **Increased Effect:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the target receives an additional +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to his *mental resolve* skill check to resist or break free from the spell.

## NECROMANCY

The school of Necromancy involves the manipulation of life energy, usually via living or dead bodies but sometimes independent of a physical shell. Brain-eating zombies, haunted houses, and thousand-year-old mummy sorcerers are the result of Necromancy. A necromancer's craft doesn't require any particular religious belief, for this magic can call back a human spirit regardless of the afterlife to which it has fled. Necromancy deals with the movement of energy regardless of its origin.

Necromancy is a difficult sort of Arcane Magic FX. Life energy does not obey the physical laws that constrain other types of energy, and some necromantic spells require a high level of knowledge of anatomy. Furthermore, casting necromantic magic can take a toll upon the user, and necromancers tend to become more reclusive and inhuman as their work progresses. Each time a necromancer rolls a Critical Failure result when casting a spell, he must make a Personality feat check or suffer one of the following flaws, chosen or determined ran-



domly by the Gamemaster: Poor Looks, Obsessed, or Phobia. Multiple effects of the same flaw are cumulative. These flaws can be removed as normal.

A necromancer's power stems from his knowledge of the material world and the nature of life energy, as well as his ability to endure the physical stress of casting necromantic spells. Therefore, a necromancer's spells are based on Intelligence and Constitution. Also, necromancers have the ability to use their own life force to activate their spells when they are out of FX energy points. Each FX energy point substituted for in this fashion to activate a spell results in the loss of 2 fatigue points. A necromantic item called a *life battery* can be used to store the siphoned life essence of the necromancer's victims. The essence in the life battery can be used to fuel necromantic spells, with each mortal point of the person in the life battery providing 1 FX energy point. Each time the life battery is used in this man-

ner, the spirit trapped in it must make a *Stamina-endurance* skill check or dissipate. Unfortunately, there is no easy way to detect if a once-full life battery is now empty other than to call upon it for FX energy points to no effect. (See the *steal the soul* spell below for more information.)

Since much of a necromancer's practice involves the study of bodies, such characters often benefit from knowledge of medical practices. Any specific bonuses are noted in the spell descriptions below. The necromancer suffers a +5 step penalty when attempting to use his spells on any creature whose basic chemistry differs from his. For instance, a human necromancer casting *animate dead* on a silicon-based lifeform would suffer this penalty. The proper Medical Science-xenomedicine skill allows the character to reduce this penalty, which becomes a +3 step penalty at rank 1 and progresses according to the skill's rank benefits thereafter.



## Animate Dead

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell is the staple of classical necromancers. Being able to cast this spell is proof of a necromancer's dedication to the art. This spell imbues one or more dead bodies with enough life energy to allow them movement and rudimentary reactions. The magic is largely dependent upon brain mass. It can revive a single creature with the approximate brain size of a human (fraal, sesheyen, t'sa, and weren included). It can also be used to animate multiple creatures whose combined brain mass doesn't exceed this amount (two medium-sized dogs, three cats or monkeys, or twenty rats). The zombies obey the caster's verbal commands to the best of their ability. The commands they can interpret are generally limited to simple concepts expressed in direct verbs such as "Guard," "Attack," and "Walk." The body to be animated must be within 30 meters of the caster at the time of animation.

The spell requires a dead body to be the recipient of the magic. The body's state of decay applies a penalty to the spell's chance of success: dead 1–6 weeks, +1 step penalty; 6–12 weeks, +2 step penalty; 12–24 weeks, +3 step penalty. Bodies dead for more than 24 weeks are unsuitable for the spell.

The duration of the animation is determined by the result of the skill roll: Ordinary, 1 day; Good, 1 week; Amazing, 1 month. A necromancer can have a maximum number of animated zombies (or proportional number of creatures based on brain mass) equal to his *animate dead* skill rank.

A necromancer with the *Medical Science—medical knowledge* specialty skill gains a bonus to his *animate dead* skill check of –1 step at rank 2, –2 at rank 5, –3 at rank 8, and –4 at rank 12.

⊗ **More Durable Zombies:** At rank 6, any zombie animated by the necromancer gains +1 to each of its durability ratings. At rank 12, this gain becomes +2.

## Energy Drain

*Transform spell; 2 FX energy points  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell causes a beam of black light to unerringly strike a target within 30 meters. The beam inflicts  $d6+1s/d8+2s/d4+1f$  (En/O). This damage is due to disruption of the target's life energy, so armor does not protect against it, though magical wards and other defensive spells can affect the damage.

⊗ **Increased Damage:** At rank 5, the damage increases to  $d6+2s/d8+3s/d4+2f$ . At rank 9, it increases to  $d8+2s/d12+3s/d4+3f$ .

## Fortitude

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell augment's a living target's durability rating with an infusion of external life energy based upon the result of the spell skill roll: Ordinary, gain  $2s/1w/0m/0f$ ; Good, gain  $3s/2w/1m/1f$ ; Amazing, gain  $4s/3w/2m/2f$ . The target must be either the caster or someone touched by the caster when the spell is cast. Any damage sustained by the recipient is marked off in these extra boxes first, with damage greater than that amount carrying over into the target's normal durability.

The spell ends when all of the extra boxes have been used or when 10 minutes have expired, whichever comes first. Any damage remaining or encountered after that point is handled normally.

Multiple castings of this spell on a single target are not cumulative. This spell does not revive a hero rendered unconscious due to loss of stun, wound, or fatigue points, nor does it resurrect a hero who has died through losing all her mortal points.

◆ **Example:** Evanthal the necromancer casts fortitude upon Alli'Esh, his faithful sesheyen servant ( $9s/9w/4m/4f$ ) and gets an Amazing result, raising her durability to  $13s/12w/6m/6f$ . She takes 2 points of mortal damage from a

pistol. These are marked off in her extra durability boxes from the spell, leaving her at her normal total of 4 mortals. She later takes another 3 points of mortal damage from a gravmace and decides to sit out the rest of the battle. She hopes that she can get some medical attention very soon. Had she avoided being hit by that second attack, she would have been completely unharmed when the spell expired.

⊗ **Increased Fortitude:** At rank 4, the durability increase goes up by 1 in each category. This repeats at ranks 8 and 12.

## Haunt

*Summon spell; 2 FX energy points  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell summons a minor ghost—the life energy of a deceased person—and binds it to a person, location, or object within 30 meters of the caster. This ghost frightens, harasses, and annoys the target if it is bound to a person, or it hounds people within 10 meters of its target if it is bound to a location or object. This attention from beyond the grave results in a +1 step penalty to all actions by anyone so plagued.

The ghost is not affected by physical barriers and can only be harmed by magical attacks. Effects that block or dismiss supernatural beings, such as *Monotheism—exorcism*, can thwart it. The duration of the haunting depends upon the result of the *haunt* skill check: Ordinary, 1 day; Good, 1 week; Amazing, 1 month.

## Knit Wounds

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows the necromancer to tap into the deep recesses of a living creature's life energy and repair damage that it has suffered. The amount of wound damage healed by this spell depends on the result of the *knit wounds* skill check: Ordinary, 1 wound point; Good, 2 points; Amazing, 3 points.



Each use of this spell causes 1 point of fatigue damage to the target. The necromancer must touch her intended target.

The necromancer can make a Medical Science—*treatment* specialty skill check to assist the *knit wounds* skill check. An Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result grants a -1, -2, or -3 step bonus, respectively.

⊗ **Healing Mortal Damage:** At rank 6, a necromancer gains the ability to heal mortal damage. Change the skill check results noted above to: Ordinary, 2 wound points; Good, 3 wound points or 1 mortal point; Amazing, 4 wound points or 2 mortal points.

## Mummy's Curse

*Transform spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell puts a blight upon the target's life energy. The target, who must be touched by the necromancer when the spell is cast, makes a Resolve—*physical resolve* skill check to resist the spell. Failure indicates that he immediately begins to suffer as if he were at the Ill stage of a disease. The affliction progresses as if it were a disease, except that Constitution feat checks cannot result in the character recovering beyond Ill. He wanders between Ill and Terminally Ill until he either dies or the spell is removed.

The spell can only be removed by effects that dispel or counter hostile magic or possession-type effects, by the necromancer's will, or by the necromancer's death.

The necromancer uses a portion of her own life force to create this blight and sustains 1 point of wound damage when she casts the spell. This damage cannot be healed while the spell is in effect.

## Speak With Dead

*Summon spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell summons a particular ghost to answer questions. If the former body of the ghost is

nearby, the spell skill check is made with a -2 step bonus; however, apply a +1 step penalty for every week that has passed since the individual died.

The necromancer may ask one, two, or three questions of the ghost depending on the result of the spell skill check. The questions must be simple, and while the spirit is compelled to answer truthfully, it is not required to be friendly. If it was hostile to the necromancer in life, it continues to be so in death.

The ghost can only answer questions that it could have answered in life. "I don't know" is an acceptable truthful answer. The ghost remains for a maximum of 5 minutes. Any unanswered questions left when the ghost leaves are forfeited.

⊗ **More Questions:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the necromancer may ask an additional question.

## Steal the Soul

*Transform spell; 2 FX energy points*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows a necromancer to remove a victim's life force from her body and store it in a specially prepared container called a life battery. (See the introductory discussion on Necromancy for more information on this item.) The target must be within 10 meters of both the caster and the life battery and must be physically restrained. The target makes a Resolve—*mental resolve* skill check to resist this spell. Failure means that the victim's life energy is stripped away and that the necromancer can transfer the energy into the life battery. If there is no life battery present, the life energy slowly disperses.

A life battery can only contain the life essence of one being at a time. The life force of a new being can only be added to a previously filled life battery after the spirit of the previous being contained in the battery dissipates. If the necromancer tries to insert a new spirit into a still-full life battery, he suffers

the effects of a Critical Failure and the spell has no effect on the target.

The necromancer can return the life energy to its proper body within 1 hour of the spell being cast with no harm to the target. For every hour after this point, the body must make a Resolve—*physical resolve* skill check or suffer 1 point of mortal damage.

If a corpse drained of its life force in this manner is used for the *animate dead* spell, the necromancer gains a -2 step bonus to the *animate dead* skill check.

⊗ **Increased Potency:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the target suffers a +1 penalty to the *mental resolve* skill check made to resist this spell.

## PYROMANCY

The essence of Pyromancy is the creation and control of heat and flame. More versatile than the Telekinesis—*pyrokinesis* psionic skill, Pyromancy is a dangerous and destructive art that can sometimes get the better of even its most powerful and experienced users. Its most common users are military-minded people, on the one hand, and pyromaniacs, on the other.

The basics of Pyromancy are simple, but controlling the powers created with this sort of magic is not easy. Those with a serious interest in Pyromancy avoid using spells in which they are unskilled out of interest for their own health. Characters casting Pyromancy spells untrained suffer a Critical Failure on a control die result of 19 or 20. A hero with the Bad Luck flaw suffers a Critical Failure if he rolls an 18, 19, or 20 when using Pyromancy spells untrained.

Pyromancers need extreme determination to control these spells and physical stamina to survive their training and the effects of their magic. Therefore, successful pyromancers have high Will and Constitution Ability Scores.

Pyromancy spells generally do not work underwater or in locations without oxygen, but the biggest drawback and hazard to Pyromancy is the chance of a backfire. A pyro-



mantic spell backfires in some way when the caster rolls a Critical Failure. The exact details of a backfire result are described under each individual spell, but they are invariably risky for the caster.

## Cloak of the Phoenix

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*

This spell surrounds the pyromancers with a protective shroud of flame. In addition to keeping the arcanist comfortable in polar environments, this shroud provides protection of d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4+1 (En) and has Ordinary toughness. Anyone who successfully strikes the caster in melee automatically sustains d4 points of wound damage (En/O). The caster cannot inflict additional damage in melee with this spell, nor does the *cloak of the phoenix* ignite flammable materials. The spell lasts 5 rounds for every degree of success of the skill check.

On a Critical Failure result, the fire of the cloak rages out of control and burns the caster for d4-1 points of wound damage every phase until he makes a successful *cloak of the phoenix* roll to extinguish it. This extinguishment roll requires no FX points and does not cause an additional backfire if another Critical Failure is rolled.

⊗ **Improved Armor:** At rank 4, the protection of the cloak increases to d4+1 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4+2 (En). At rank 8, the offensive damage becomes d6 (En/O). At rank 12, the cloak's defensive value improves to d6+1 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d6+2 (En).

## Fiery Bolt

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*

This spell forms a sphere of extremely hot fire that appears above the caster's open hand and flies at her target of choice within 30 meters. It strikes unerringly for d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m (En/O). Despite the flame's heat, it does not exist long enough to ignite objects unless they are extremely flammable.



On a Critical Failure result, all spheres created by this spell strike the caster instead of the intended target. They inflict normal damage.

⊗ **Multiple Bolts:** At rank 4, the spell creates a second sphere of fire at no additional FX energy cost that may strike the same or a different target. If it is aimed at the same target, armor is rolled separately for each sphere. At rank 8, it creates a third sphere. At rank 12, the damage type upgrades to En/G.

## Fire Wall

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*

This spell creates a wall of flames with an area of up to 20 square meters (for instance, 2 meters tall and 10 meters long). The wall can be any of shape the caster desires, although the minimum dimension is 1 meter. The wall is 10 centimeters thick, semi-opaque, and provides light cover. These factors impose a +1 step

penalty to anyone firing through it. Those who contact the flames must make a Constitution feat check to determine the damage they take. (Amazing, no damage; Good, d6s; Ordinary, d6w; Failure, 2d6w; Critical Failure, 3d6w.) Those actually passing through the wall suffer a +1 step penalty to the check. The wall lasts for 5 rounds for every degree of success of the skill check.

If a Critical Failure result is rolled, the conjured fire appears briefly around the caster, requiring a Constitution feat check with a -1 step bonus to determine how much damage the pyromancer takes. The flames vanish after the backlash occurs.

⊗ **Increased Area:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the area of the *fiery wall* increases by 10 square meters.

## Flame Gauntlet

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*

This spell creates a nimbus of flame around one of the caster's hands and any weapon in that



hand. The caster can then use this flame to inflict additional damage in both armed and unarmed melee combat. The flame inflicts d4w/d6w/d8w (En/O) in addition to any damage the character would cause with such an attack. The spell lasts 1 round plus 1 round for every degree of success of the skill check.

Alternatively, the caster can attempt to ignite a target. Attempting ignition requires a successful melee attack, but instead of causing normal damage, it forces the target to make a Constitution feat check to determine the damage suffered. (Amazing, no damage; Good, d6s; Ordinary, d6w; Failure, 2d6w; Critical Failure, 3d6w.) If the caster is attempting to ignite a flammable target, such as wood or paper, it automatically ignites. Regardless of the success of the attack or the damage inflicted, this attempt immediately ends the spell.

If a Critical Failure result is rolled, the fire of the gauntlet affects the caster, burning him for d4-1 points of wound damage every phase until he makes a successful *flame gauntlet* roll to extinguish it. This extinguishment roll requires no FX points and does not cause an additional backfire if another Critical Failure is rolled.

⊗ **Increased Damage:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the damage inflicted by the *flame gauntlet* increases by 1 point in each category.

## Immolation

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell causes one target within 30 meters to erupt in flames. The target takes d4 (En/O) points of wound damage every phase until the spell ends. Armor protection applies to each phase's damage. As the flames created by *immolation* are magical in nature, they cannot be extinguished by mundane means.

The duration of *immolation* is 2 phases for every degree of success of the skill check.

On a Critical Failure result, the caster becomes the target of the spell. The caster sustains damage as normal until the duration runs out or she makes an *immolation* skill check to negate the spell. This extinguishment roll requires no FX points and does not cause an additional backfire if another Critical Failure is rolled.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the spell lasts an additional 2 phases.

## Incendiary Seal

*Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point*  
*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This spell allows a pyromancer to place a magical bomb upon a book, door, box, or other closeable object no larger than 2 cubic meters in size. The next time the object is opened normally or broken open, it explodes, inflicting d4 points of mortal damage to anyone in contact with it, d6+2 points of wound damage to anyone within 2 meters, and d4+2 points of wound damage to anyone within 4 meters. All damage is En/O. The object also suffers the equivalent of d4 points of mortal damage.

The spell requires an Ordinary complex skill check to cast (4 successes, 1 roll per round) and normally lasts for 1 hour or until detonated, whichever comes first. However, at the end of casting the spell, the arcanist may choose to expend an additional 1 FX energy point to make the spell last up to 1 month. The pyromancer cannot regain the FX energy point used to create the *seal* until the *seal* is triggered or the spell's duration runs out.

On a Critical Failure result, the spell detonates immediately. The damage it inflicts is determined by the number of successes the character achieved in the complex skill check before failing: 0 (zero), none; 1, d4+2 points of wound damage; 2, d6+2 points of wound damage; 3, d4 points of mortal damage. This spell only backfires if a Critical Failure is rolled during the complex skill check. Failing by rolling

three normal Failures does not cause a backfire.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the spell's duration increases to 2 hours, 3 hours, and 4 hours, respectively. This becomes 2 months, 3 months, and 4 months if the pyromancer chooses to extend it by spending an additional 1 FX energy point.

## Storm of Flames

*Conjure spell; 2 FX energy points*

This spell fills the target area with roaring flames. The target area is a cube approximately 5 meters by 5 meters by 5 meters. All within that area are subject to a fire hazard. (See *fire wall* or *flame gauntlet*.) Apply a +1 step penalty to the victims' Constitution feat checks if the *storm of flames* skill check was a Good success or a +2 step penalty if it was an Amazing success.

The *storm of flames* conforms to the shape of the area in which it is cast and expands to its normal volume if possible. *Storm of flames* has no explosive force, so it cannot blow down doors or knock down victims. Anything within the *storm* has the normal chance to be set afire.

The spell lasts only 1 phase, but secondary fires last until they are extinguished or consume their fuel. The caster can center the effect anywhere within 30 meters of himself.

On a Critical Failure result, the spell is centered upon the caster.

⊗ **Increased Range:** At rank 4, the range of this spell increases to 60 meters. At rank 12, the range increases to 250 meters.

⊗ **Increased Volume:** At rank 8, the volume of the *storm of flames* increases to 10 meters by 10 meters by 10 meters.



# CHAPTER 4:

## FAITH FX

Faith FX encompass a variety of magical effects, but most effects of this type rely on the FX user's inner talent to communicate with the spirit world. The spirits may grant knowledge, enhance the user or another, offer protection, bring about harmful events, or even manifest in the material realm directly or through possession. Faith FX users are almost invariably dedicated to one group or pantheon of spirits or deities such as ancestors of the priest's tribe, druidic nature spirits, or animist spirits of particular creatures. Each of these types of Faith FX is a separate FX broad skill, although the different broad skills may call upon similar beings or even the same ones in unusual circumstances. The miracles and abilities granted to Faith FX wielders are each separate specialty skills under these broad skills.

Because of the dedication required by such divine powers, unless specifically permitted by the Gamemaster, no hero may learn more than one Faith FX broad skill. If, during the campaign, the Gamemaster deems it reasonable for a hero to discard one faith in favor of another, the old broad skill and its specialty skills become unusable by the hero. If such a situation arises, the player and Gamemaster should work together to forge an appropriate transition.

Most Faith FX rely on the power of conviction of their users. Those of steadfast belief establish a stronger connection to the spirit world and have a more tangible presence to the beings there. Similarly, these beings prefer to be spoken to with respect and deference, so a person with charisma and skill in communication in more

likely to gain the favor of the spirits. Therefore, most Faith FX skills rely on Will and Personality. In TABLE F6: FAITH FX SKILLS, each miracle has an associated Ability (INT, WIL, or PER) listed in parentheses. For specialty skills that can be used untrained, the hero uses the Ability Score associated with the specialty skill as his or her effective broad skill score. This skill score may vary depending on the specialty skill used.

The following are several sample types of Faith FX. Each is described briefly, and information is given on common faith miracles from each of those broad skills. As with Arcane Magic FX, certain miracles from different faiths have similar effects, but the magic may originate from greatly differing beings. Similarly, each ALTERNITY campaign setting may have variants of these types of Faith FX as well as more specific information about the source and use of these powers in that game.

### ALIENISM

The Alienism faith is a group of related beliefs that hold that vastly powerful godlike beings live in the far reaches of space. The existence of these beings partially overlaps with neighboring dimensions and other periods of time. These beings are immensely powerful forces of an unimaginable nature, though generally malicious, who have a desire to rule over all living things. Ancient and probably immortal, their influence has waned in recent millennia. Some have been imprisoned until a time when other cosmic forces are in the proper alignment. Their lesser servitors travel time, space, or other dimensions in search of

resources to use for their masters' ends and for beings who can be corrupted to serve their terrible masters.

Alienism is an enigmatic faith. Unlike most Faith FX broad skills that use rituals to call the attention of benign powers and beseech their aid (and without whose support the magic would fail), Alienism uses rituals to channel the power of old gods without needing their attention or permission. Even those who work against these beings can use these rituals to great effect. It is possible that these god-monsters are so powerful and so focused on higher and stranger levels of consciousness that these miracles are as beneath their notice as a bacterium feeding on its human host's flakes of dead skin. Then again, perhaps these beings are aware of the contact and know that those who dabble in these sorts of things are soon corrupted by the power they borrow.

The greatest disadvantage of Alienism is that it works with things that normal creatures were not meant to know. Anyone dabbling in these powers risks undergoing psychological changes, and eventually even madness, due to the bizarre and unfathomable nature of the beings from which this power is drawn. Every time a Critical Failure is rolled during the invocation of one of these miracles, the alienist must make a *Resolvemental resolve* skill check. Failure indicates that the Believer gains a flaw chosen by the Gamemaster: Clueless, Forgetful, Oblivious, Obsessed, Phobia, or Temper. These flaws start at the lowest level but increase in degree each time they are selected. Characters gain no skill points from these flaws. In addition, such characters



TABLE F6: FAITH FX SKILLS

Faith FX Skill Name	Cost	Pg.	Faith FX Skill Name	Cost	Pg.
<b>Alienism</b>	11		<b>Exorcism (WIL)</b>	3	
<i>Bend space (INT)</i>	5		<i>Guidance (PER)</i>	2	
<i>Circle of the thousand broken angles (WIL)</i>	3		<i>Signs and portents (PER)</i>	4	
<i>Dirge of the null-mind (WIL)</i>	5		<i>Vision (PER)</i>	4	
<i>Gibbering larvae (INT)</i>	3		<b>Shamanism</b>	13	
<i>Eyes of the dark ones (WIL)</i>	3		<i>Animal voice (PER)</i>	3	
<i>Life siphon (INT)</i>	5		<i>Dreamwalking (WIL)</i>	5	
<i>Tongue of the infinite stars (INT)</i>	4		<i>Ghost dance (PER)</i>	4	
<b>Druidism</b>	12		<i>Guide my hand (WIL)</i>	3	
<i>Call the sky father (INT)</i>	5		<i>Hunter's stare (WIL)</i>	3	
<i>Child of the earth mother (WIL)</i>	5		<i>Spirit of the beast (WIL)</i>	2	
<i>Kinship of beasts (WIL)</i>	4		<i>Trance visions (PER)</i>	2	
<i>Life endures (INT)</i>	3		<i>Venom spirit (WIL)</i>	4	
<i>Surge of greenery (WIL)</i>	4		<b>Taoism</b>	13	
<i>Voices in the grass and sky (INT)</i>	3		<i>Confidence (WIL)</i>	3	
<i>Wield the ley line (INT)</i>	4		<i>Embryonic breathing (WIL)</i>	2	
<b>Hatire</b>	14		<i>Energy spiral (PER)</i>	5	
<i>Body and soul (WIL)</i>	3		<i>Interior alchemy (PER)</i>	4	
<i>Disrupt technology (WIL)</i>	3		<i>Not doing (WIL)</i>	3	
<i>Heart of the Cosimir (WIL)</i>	4		<i>Peace (PER)</i>	5	
<i>Reward of toil (WIL)</i>	4		<i>Permeation (WIL)</i>	2	
<i>Righteous wrath (PER)</i>	4		<i>Talisman (PER)</i>	4	
<i>Swords into plowshares (PER)</i>	3		<b>Voodoo</b>	13	
<b>Monotheism</b>	14		<i>Ayza's juju (PER)</i>	2	
<i>Aura (PER)</i>	4		<i>Erzuli's fetish (WIL)</i>	4	
<i>Blessing (WIL)</i>	4		<i>Gris-gris (WIL)</i>	2	
<i>Cure (WIL)</i>	3		<i>Helpful possession (WIL)</i>	4	
<i>Demon ward (WIL)</i>	4		<i>Legba rides (PER)</i>	2	
			<i>Loa of healing (WIL)</i>	2	
			<i>Negate the spirit (WIL)</i>	5	

Skills that cannot be used untrained are shown in color.

lose 1 point of Intelligence but increase their FX energy point pool by 1. A Critical Failure on this Resolve-mental resolve skill check means that the character loses an additional point of Intelligence. Should a character's Intelligence drop below 4 or should she or he get to the highest level on all of the listed flaws, the character is considered totally insane and incapable of taking any voluntary actions.

Alienism miracles are based on Will and Intelligence. They use intuition and higher orders of thought to channel the power of the far gods across the reaches of space and form it into working effects.

Many of the creatures that serve these strange gods are monstrous

in shape and of similar temperament to their masters. Some are mindless, while others are intelligent and capable of using Alienism FX. For simplicity, you can use the statistics for angels or demons given in this book and creatures given in the Alien Compendium section of Chapter 17: Creatures & Aliens in the *Game-master Guide*. Assume that these creatures' bodies and minds reflect the uncanny nature of their origin. All of them are vulnerable to the sorts of magic that ward or bind servitors of the Alienism gods.

## Bend Space

*Summon miracle; 2 FX energy points*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This miracle causes space to behave in a manner inconsistent with normal geometry, allowing the alienist to travel vast distances in the blink of an eye. Travel in this fashion is instantaneous in terms of this reality, although to those traveling it seems to take anywhere from a few seconds to 2 hours. (Roll 3d20 and multiply them together. The result is the number of seconds the trip seems to take from the perspective of the travelers.)

The sights and sounds experienced during transit are traumatic, and any mortal being undergoing



this transport must make a *mental resolve* skill check with a -2 step bonus or temporarily suffer the penalties described in the Alienism description above. (Gain one flaw, and lose 1 point from Intelligence.) This effect lasts for d4 days.

The alienist can transport up to 4 people including himself to any point within 100 kilometers that he has previously seen. All those to be transported must be in physical contact with one another.

⊗ **Increased Range:** At rank 3, the alienist can travel anywhere within 1,000 kilometers. At rank 6, his range extends to 10,000 kilometers. At rank 9, it increases to 100,000 kilometers (effectively any point on Earth). At rank 12, it extends to 1 million kilometers (easily from the Earth to the Moon).

⊗ **Increased Capacity:** At ranks 4 and 8, the alienist can transport an additional four people.

## Circle of the Thousand Broken Angles

*Conjure miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle wards against the servitors of the Alienism powers. It can be used to guard a person from an external threat or to contain a creature.

Although it costs only 1 FX energy point to create the 2-meter-radius circle, the alienist can expend additional points at the time of its creation to make a stronger barrier. The circle lasts 5 rounds.

No creatures of Alienism origin can cross the circle, nor can any of their FX powers do so. However, such a creature can break such a circle by spending five times as many FX energy points as were used to build it. Thus, while most servitors remain trapped, the alien powers themselves would be able to dispel this barrier if they chose to.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 3, the duration increases to 15 rounds (3 minutes). The duration increases to 50 rounds (10 minutes) at rank 6, to 150 rounds (30 minutes) at rank 9, and to 300 rounds (1 hour) at rank 12.

## Dirge of the Null-Mind

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle causes a repetitive sound to begin. This sound instills lethargy and a sense of vapidness into all within 10 meters except the alienist.

At the start of each round after the miracle is invoked, those within the area of effect must make a *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check or suffer 1 point of fatigue damage and temporarily lose 1 point from Intelligence and Will. Targets whose Intelligence or Will drops to 0 (zero) fall unconscious until the miracle ends, at which point the lost points return. Fatigue damage must be recovered normally.

The dirge lasts 1 round for every degree of success of the skill check.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 3, 6, 9, and 12, the duration increases by 1 round.

## Gibbering Larvae

*Summon miracle; 1 FX energy point*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This miracle summons one or more sluglike alien creatures that appear at the alienist's feet and attack targets indicated by the alienist. The larvae have Ability Scores and skill scores equivalent to the scorpion in the *Animal Compendium* section of Chapter 17: *Creatures & Aliens* in the *Gamemaster Guide*. In addition, they possess a +3 resistance modifier vs. mental attacks and an always active form of *eyes of the dark ones* (see below). Their jaws inflict d4s/d4+1s/d4w (LI/O), and they lock onto their target with a





successful hit. Every phase thereafter, they automatically inflict 1s/2s/1w, depending on the degree of success of the original attack roll. This damage only ends with the death of the larvae or the end of the miracle's duration.

The gibbering larvae remain for 5 rounds. One larva responds to the summons for every degree of success of the *gibbering larvae* skill check.

⊗ **More Larvae:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, an additional larva is summoned.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 3, 6, and 9, the larvae remain for an additional round.

## Eyes of the Dark Ones

*Augur miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle lets the alienist see things that are concealed by arcane or technological means. Any sort of device or FX that hides something from sight through mental deception, warping light rays, or any other means is useless against this miracle, which reveals all such objects within 30 meters of the alienist and limns them with a sickly greenish glow in his sight. Occasionally even inhabitants and scenery of nearby dimensions are revealed in a limited fashion in locations where the barriers between dimensions are thin.

This miracle lasts 10 minutes per degree of success of the skill check.

## Life Siphon

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This miracle establishes a connection between the life force of a target within 2 meters and the alienist, then shifts the balance of the energy in favor of the alienist. The target sustains d4s/d6s/d8s (En/O) and the alienist is healed of that amount of damage minus 1 point. Any points in excess of what the alienist needs to be

healed are lost. Armor provides no protection against this miracle.

⊗ **Increased Range:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the maximum distance of the target increases to 10, 30, and 60 meters.

## Tongue of the Infinite Stars

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This miracle allows open communication between all intelligent creatures within 30 meters of the alienist. All such creatures communicate as if they were speaking the same language. This mutual communication is achieved regardless of a creature's native form of language. For instance, a human would be able to understand a crystalline entity that used flashes of light to communicate, a volcanic creature that used modulated heat patterns, or a telepathic being, and vice versa.

The miracle actually translates each creature's language into a bizarre alien universal language while simultaneously allowing the recipients to comprehend this language. Anyone outside the area of effect hears (or senses in their native sensory fashion) nothing but a strange chaotic babble. Anyone within 10 meters of the miracle's area must make a *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check with a -2 step bonus or suffer the temporary effects of a Critical Failure on an *Alienism* miracle skill check. (Gain one flaw and lose 1 point of Intelligence. No FX energy points are gained.)

Alternatively, the miracle can be used as an attack against one creature within 30 meters. That creature must make a *mental resolve* skill check or suffer the temporary effects of a critically failed *Alienism* miracle skill check. (Gain one flaw and lose 1 point of Intelligence. No FX energy points are gained.) If this attack is desired, it must be chosen at the time of invocation and precludes any translation effect.

The translation ability of the miracle lasts 1 minute plus 1 minute per degree of success of the *tongue of the infinite stars* skill check. Any trauma from failed *mental resolve* rolls wears off in d4 days.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the translation ability of the miracle lasts an additional minute.

## DRUIDISM

The druidic faith is a belief that the earth is the mother and source of all life. The faith reveres the earth and other natural things, observing and maintaining the circle of life, death, and rebirth. Historically, druids acted as advisers to chieftains and held significant political power. In most places these aspects of their duties have declined, which has led to a subsequent increase in druids' desires to protect the natural world from artificial threats (such as the exploitive efforts of civilized people) as well as to aid in restoring damaged ecosystems. Modern-day druids might be field botanists, forest rangers, or members of aggressive ecologically minded groups such as Greenpeace.

Druids tend to be secretive and hold their faith and its practices private from outsiders, although they carefully observe those they encounter for hints of an aptitude for and interest in the faith. The participation of others with druidic talents enhances druidic miracles, and when great works are needed, druids assemble to link their power. Only one druid in the group expends FX energy points to activate the miracle. This person is usually the most powerful or skilled at the miracle being invoked. The other druids cannot perform any other actions while assisting in the miracle invocation. Three druids working together give a -1 step bonus to all *Druidism* FX skill checks of the lead druid, nine grant a -2 step bonus, and 27 give a -3 step bonus.



These numbers must be precisely three, nine, or 27, and each participant must be within 2 meters of another involved in the magic.

Druids prefer to congregate on sites resonant with the power of Mother Earth. These areas are usually earthen mounds, stone megaliths, or even great carvings in the shapes of animals. Many of these structures predate the druids themselves and may have been created by an earlier culture with similar or shamanistic beliefs. These locations also act to enhance Druidism, giving a -1 or -2 step bonus, depending upon the power of the site, to Druidism FX rolls.

The presence of technological or unnatural items hampers the practice of Druidism. Worked metals, electronics, most plastics, concrete, and similar substances give a +1 penalty to Druidism FX rolls if more than a very small quantity of them are within 5 meters.

Many Druidism miracles specifically note that they affect animals. For the purposes of this broad skill, an animal is defined as a living natural creature that has an "Animal" listing for Intelligence and Personality.

The miracles of Druidism require a combination of understanding how the pathways of natural energy work and sufficient will to manipulate those pathways to result in physical changes. Therefore a druid's miracles are based on Intelligence or Will.

## Call the Sky Father

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

This miracle shifts the subtle interactions of air, moisture, and temperature that determine the current weather. The druid can make it warmer or cooler, disperse or gather small clouds, speed or slow the wind, or cause rain to fall or cease.

The effect occurs in a 30-meter-radius area centered on the druid and lasts for 10 minutes, after

which the prevailing conditions quickly override the magically induced ones. As it works through shifting the natural conditions rather than forcing radical change, the miracle cannot create a type of weather inappropriate for the terrain, such as desertlike heat in the arctic or snow in a jungle.

The *call the sky father* skill check is always a complex check with one roll allowed per round. The amount of change desired determines the complexity of the check. Weather variations common to the current season require only an Ordinary skill check (for instance, a snowstorm during winter in Minnesota). Unusual weather changes or those common to adjacent seasons (such as an autumn blizzard in Minnesota or a winter snowstorm in Washington state) require a Good skill check. A successful Amazing skill check allows any weather possible to that terrain and climate, regardless of season.

The precise number of successes required within each skill check's range is determined by the Gamemaster, who specifically notes how drastic the change is from the current conditions. Changing a rainstorm to a snowstorm might require only the minimum number of successes, while summoning a tornado from a cloudless sky might require the maximum. The Environments section in Chapter 3; Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide* has information on dealing with climatic extremes.

If the conditions are appropriate for lightning (rain, clouds and wind, heat and clouds, and so on), the druid can spend an additional FX energy point to use this miracle to strike a target within 30 meters of himself with an arc of electricity. This electrical bolt is not as strong as natural lightning. It is treated as a lightning hazard except that the target receives a -2 step bonus to his Constitution feat check. (See TABLE G15: ELECTRICAL DAMAGE in the *Gamemaster*

*Guide*.) This effect can be used no more than once per minute.

⊗ **Increased Duration and Area:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the duration and radius of this miracle double, including the range of any lightning strikes.

## Child of the Earth Mother

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle focuses energy into a piece of stone, giving it mobility and limited intelligence. The created creature, called an earth elemental, is slow but strong. (See Chapter 6: FX Creatures.) It unquestioningly obeys the orders of the druid who summoned it. The elemental can be used to move objects, to dig or fill holes, as an ally in combat, or to perform similar tasks that require brawn but not much brains.

The miracle lasts 10 minutes plus 10 minutes for every degree of success of the skill check. The druid can invest the elemental with more energy at the time of invocation. Each additional FX energy point used for this increases the duration of the miracle by 50%.

Invoking this miracle on worked stone, such as a statue, inflicts a +1 step penalty. Invoking it on manufactured or aggregate stone-like substances, such as bricks or concrete, inflicts a +2 step penalty.

## Kinship of Beasts

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle allows the druid to form a powerful empathic bond with an animal. The druid can use this bond for several different effects.

First, the druid can sense and influence an animal's emotional state. This works much like the ESP-*empathy* and Interaction-*charm* skills but is limited to animals and is accomplished with a



single *kinship of beasts* skill check. The druid can even affect animals specially trained to attack intruders, such as watchdogs.

Second, the druid can communicate with the target animal as if she and the animal were speaking the same language. The animal's intelligence and its perception of events limit its responses. Depending upon the type of animal, it may focus more on scents than colors or react fearfully to the presence of human beings. Furthermore, most animals have a very limited understanding of numbers and would have difficulty describing tools or technological items.

Third, the druid can use the miracle's empathic bond to summon an animal or animals to her presence. The miracle can call a single animal of 45 to 175 kilograms (the size of a python or a medium to large dog), up to three creatures of 25 to 45 kilograms (about as big as a cat or a rattlesnake), or up to ten creatures that weigh less than about 10 kilograms each (such as squirrels or rats). The druid chooses a type of creature, and if that sort is within 100 meters (Gamemaster's discretion), it arrives within  $d4+1$  minutes. If the requested creature is not available, a similar creature within that distance is summoned instead.

A summoned animal is well disposed toward the druid but not required to act on her behalf. The druid needs to convince the animal to help her. (Bribes of food are suitable persuasions.) The animal is hesitant to act against its instincts or do things that threaten its life (such as prey animals attacking one of their natural predators). This use of the miracle takes 2 entire rounds to invoke, although once it is invoked, the other two uses of the miracle covered above automatically work on the summoned animal.

The miracle lasts 10 minutes, after which time the animal reverts to its normal behavior patterns. This usually means that it

tries to leave if it senses any sort of threat. Trying to use this miracle on a nonterrestrial (alien) animal inflicts a +1 to +3 step penalty to the roll. The degree of penalty depends upon how dissimilar the creature is to animals with which the druid is familiar (Gamemaster's discretion).

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 3, 6, and 9, the duration of the miracle increases by 10 minutes.

⊗ **More Animals:** At rank 4, the druid can summon twice as many animals as listed or a single animal of up to 900 kilograms (such as a tiger, gorilla, or bear). At rank 8, the druid can summon four times as many animals as listed, two animals of up to 900 kilograms, or a single animal weighing as much as a metric ton (such as a horse or a crocodile). At rank 12, the druid can summon a single animal of any size.

## Life Endures

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle allows a druid to heal damage to and cure diseases in himself or others. The druid must touch the target to be healed during the invocation of this miracle.

The result of the *life endures* skill check indicates how much damage the miracle heals: Ordinary, 1 wound point; Good, 2 points; Amazing, 3 points.

For disease, the following results apply: Ordinary, reduce the illness by one grade (from Extremely Ill to Ill, for instance); Good, by two grades; Amazing, by three grades.

This miracle cannot be used on the same creature a second time until 4 hours have passed. When used on animals (as defined in the introductory section to Druidism above) or plants, the druid receives a -2 step bonus to the skill check. When used on heroes with cybernetic or other artificial implants (not including the free cyberware of a mechalus), apply a +2 step penalty to the skill check.

⊗ **Healing Mortal Damage:** At rank 6, the druid can heal mortal damage. Change the skill check results to: Ordinary, 2 wounds; Good, 3 wounds or 1 mortal; Amazing, 4 wounds or 2 mortals.

## Surge of Greenery

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle charges nearby plant life with vital energy and nutrients, causing them to grow at a rapid rate. The plants grow the equivalent of one month's normal growth for every rank in *surge of greenery* the druid possesses. While lawn grass would not grow more than 50 centimeters tall, wild grasses and some crops reach 2 meters or more in height, bushes become thick and intertwining, and saplings make great headway at becoming trees.

The enhanced vegetation provides appropriate cover to anyone hiding behind or within it. Creatures in or passing through the area while the miracle takes effect must make an *Acrobatics-dodge* or *Movement-trailblazing* skill check to avoid being entangled and slowed by the greenery. Short grass merely reduces movement by 25%, long grass reduces it by 50%, and brush or other thick growth halts all movement.

The miracle affects all plants within 20 meters of the druid, although she can choose to affect a smaller area than the maximum.

## Voices in the Grass and Sky

*Augur miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle allows a druid to make rudimentary communication with plants or vague predictions about the future by measuring the positions of heavenly bodies.

The first form of the skill use duplicates the effects of the psionic skills *ESP-postcognition* and *ESP-psychometry*, except that it works only in the presence of living



plants. In fact, the images, emotions, and sensations the character gets from this miracle are a human approximation of the limited awareness a plant has of its environment. For each rank in this skill, the druid can draw on experiences of the surrounding plants dating back 1 hour.

The second form of this miracle requires the presence of and use of devices for determining the positions of stars and celestial bodies. Standing stones specially placed for this purpose are preferred. When the miracle is invoked, the druid is informed of a future event. On an Ordinary success, vague information is conveyed about a type of event, such as that there will be a victory, defeat, tragedy, or war. The parties involved in the event are not revealed. A Good success provides more specific information about the event type and its qualifying situation, such as victory in a negotiation, defeat in battle, a tragic romance, or war with another clan (as opposed to war with another nation). An Amazing success gives the type of event, its situation, and a hint about the identity of the prophecy's target. Examples of Amazing results would be "The silver fox will make peace with his neighbor" (for a white-haired diplomat attempting to get a peace treaty signed), "The blood of the most brave shall cover the ground at the new moon" (for a terrible defeat during a suicide attack made on a night of the new moon), "The hate of two houses shall kill the love of their children" (for a situation such as that in *Romeo and Juliet*), and "Swords shall rise against he who murders his brother" (for a coming rebellion against one suspected of regicide).

In all cases, the precognitive ability of this miracle is vague enough to be left open to interpretation. The true meaning only becomes clear as the events of the prophecy loom near. The use of this form of the miracle is a good method for inspiring good stories

as well as sending heroes off on wild goose chases.

This second form of the miracle can predict events up to 1 week in advance for every rank in the skill. The events predicted will have some relevance to the druid. He does not discover portents occurring in a distant land or planet unless they will have some sort of direct effect on him at some point, such as a planetary or interstellar war.

## Wield the Ley Line

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle channels the energy of the earth. It gives the druid the ability to lift a heavy object weighing up to 100 kilograms into the air and move it about at a combat movement rate of 1 in any direction.

The miracle generates very little net force when the lifted object is pushed against something. It is impossible to crush someone to death by pushing on him or her with the levitated object, although normal impact damage applies if a heavy object is moved to a position above a target and then released. The object retains its mass, so any attempts to push it faster than the miracle's speed must generate enough force to do so.

The miracle requires 1 full phase of concentration after it is invoked to take effect. During this period of time, the energy required is building to no visible effect. If the druid suffers any damage during this phase, she must make a *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check or the miracle fades to no effect. However, once the miracle has taken effect, the druid need not concentrate fully on the task. She can undertake any other actions desired without the miracle failing.

The druid cannot move the object more than 30 meters away from her current position. If the druid moves or is moved away

from the lifted object so that this range is exceeded, or if she is rendered unconscious or slain, the lifted object immediately succumbs to gravity. The object then causes and suffers impact damage according to the distance it falls.

This miracle lasts for 1 minute (5 rounds) and can automatically be extended a like amount by spending 1 FX energy point per extension. If the target object is made of stone, the druid gains a -2 step bonus to the skill check. Note also that if multiple druids invoke this miracle simultaneously, they can pool their weight limits to move a single object of great mass.

While this miracle is in effect, electronics and machinery in the area tend to function erratically, giving a +2 step penalty to anyone attempting to use such a device. Even characters using cybernetics suffer this penalty when using their cybertech. (This does not apply to a mechalus's free cybernetic gear.)

⊗ **Increased Effect:** At rank 3, the druid can move an object weighing up to 400 kilograms. This effect requires 2 full phases of concentration before it takes effect. This limit increases to 2,700 kilograms and requires 3 phases at rank 6; to 6,400 kilograms and 4 phases at rank 9; and to 12,500 kilograms and 5 phases at rank 12.

## HATIRE

The Hatire faith developed in the STAR\*DRIVE campaign setting as a group of people who eschewed the use of technology and embraced the idea of hard work for the benefit of all in the community. This religion became somewhat popular and eventually had a following large enough to populate a planetary colony. During the exploration of their new planet, Haven, the Hatire discovered ancient ruins that spoke of a deity—called the Cosimir—worshiped by the planet's former inhabitants. This being was a proponent of purity of spirit, an ideal that the Hatire also held. The Hatire combined the worship



of the Cosimir into their own religion and continued their work in their region of space.

Reflecting the Hatire mores of perseverance, patience, and continuous striving, Hatire miracles are easier to invoke if some time is spent in prayer before invoking the miracle. If a Hatire priest spends an entire round in prayer before invoking the miracle, the priest enjoys a -1 step bonus to the miracle's skill check. If the priest can spend a full 10 minutes in prayer, he gains a -3 step bonus to invoke the miracle. The priest must maintain concentration during this time, or the miracle and any FX points used to activate it are lost. Any damage suffered during this period or any actions taken other than prayer immediately break concentration.

The Hatire faith is a splinter group of a monotheistic religion. Therefore, the use of Hatire Faith FX requires strong Will and Personality Abilities similar to the Monotheism Faith FX, and its miracles are based on those two Ability Scores.

## Body and Soul

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

This miracle channels holy power into the target, which must be touched by the priest. It heals wounds. At higher ranks, it also cures diseases or afflictions.

The miracle requires 1 full round to invoke. If the priest suffers any damage during this time, the miracle is ruined, though no FX energy points are expended.

With an Ordinary success, the priest can heal 4 stun, 2 wound, or 1 mortal or fatigue point. A Good success doubles these numbers, while an Amazing success doubles them again to 16, 8, or 4. In any case, excess cured points from one durability category can not be transferred to another type of damage.

When this miracle is invoked upon others of the Hatire faith, apply a -2 step bonus to the body

and soul skill check. This miracle does not function on any individual with cybernetic or other artificial implants. (This restriction does not apply to a mechalus's free cybernetic gear.)

► **Cure Diseases:** At rank 6, the hero can cure diseases or other physical afflictions. The result of the skill check indicates the amount of improvement in the target. An Ordinary result improves the target individual's condition by one level (for instance, from Extremely Ill to Ill), a Good result improves it by two levels, and an Amazing result improves it by three levels (in other words, from Terminally Ill to Healthy). This effect cannot be used on a particular individual more than once unless the individual's condition worsens or the individual is suffering from a different disease or affliction. (For instance, if a diseased individual's condition is improved from Extremely Ill to Ill, but it later worsens again to Extremely Ill, the miracle may be used again.) If the target individual suffers from an affliction that does not fit into the disease categories established in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*, the Gamemaster should adjudicate the effects as she sees fit.

## Disrupt Technology

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle causes one target within 30 meters of the priest that relies on electronic circuits (including most cybernetics) to stop functioning for the duration of the miracle. Examples of targets that may be affected include a computer, a control station for a ship, or a person with one or more cybernetic implants. The last case would render the implants non-functional but not otherwise affect the person.

Any mechalus or similar being targeted by this miracle also suffers a +2 step penalty on all

actions including action checks due to a temporary shutdown of interior nanites and electronic systems. Such beings cannot use their natural ability to link with computers.

The miracle lasts 1 round plus 1 round for every degree of success of the skill check.

## Heart of the Cosimir

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle gives the targeted creature clarity of thought and spirit. For the duration of the miracle, the target has a -3 step bonus to all actions, but it cannot use any technological device of Progress Level 4 or greater, or the miracle ends immediately.

The priest must touch his intended target for the miracle to have any effect. The duration is 1 round plus 1 round per level of success of the skill check.

## Reward of Toil

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle makes it easier to perform tasks that take extensive time or effort, such as working in a farmer's field or traveling overland by foot. The recipient of the miracle, who must be touched by the priest, enjoys a -1 step bonus on all actions of this type and to any Movement specialty skill checks. She also suffers no fatigue damage for any such efforts made while the miracle is in effect. The miracle lasts 2 hours plus 2 hours for every degree of success of the skill check.

## Righteous Wrath

*Conjure miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle directs a barrage of mystical energy at the priest's opponents. The priest makes a single skill check against all targets within a 5-meter-radius sphere centered on any point within 30 meters of him. Resistance



modifiers do not alter the *righteous wrath* skill check. All within this area suffer damage of  $d4s/d6s/d8s$  (En/O). *Righteous wrath* ignores any armor worn by the targets.

Any target with cybernetics or other artificial implants suffers an additional 2 points of stun damage, while those of the Hatire faith reduce all damage suffered by 2 points. (The damage to cybernetics users does not apply to mechas equipped with only their free cybernetic gear.)

⊗ **Increased Damage and Area:** At rank 4, this miracle inflicts +1 damage on all results. At rank 8, this becomes +2 damage. At rank 12, the area of effect increases to a 10-meter-radius sphere.

## Swords into Plowshares

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle inflicts a +2 step penalty to all hostile actions taken by any individuals within 10 meters of the priest. A hostile action is considered to be any action the person to be affected would consider harmful or dangerous. In addition, any individual in this area who does not attempt a hostile action gains +1 to her Strength and Dexterity resistance modifiers. This effect ends immediately for any individual who undertakes a hostile action.

*Swords into plowshares* lasts for 1 minute (5 rounds).

## MONOTHEISM

Stemming from the belief in an all-powerful deity who created the world, monotheistic faiths (including Christianity, Judaism, and Islam) are rich in tales of the supernatural, and their theological histories include stories of angelic visitation, celestial impregnation, spontaneous healing, and all sorts of transformative miracles. In its many forms, Monotheism has pushed the cul-



ture of humanity in many directions since its inception, and those who practice its miracles come from all walks of life.

While a great number of people claim association with a monotheistic faith, only a select few have the strength of belief necessary to pursue a life of religion. Fewer still have the right combination of conviction, potential, and inclination to consistently work miracles. Those who meet these three criteria often either find that their abilities draw supplicants to them like magnets or find themselves alienated from others as fear of their metaphysical talents pushes people away. The role of the monotheistic Faith FX user is not an easy one.

Unlike other users of Faith FX presented here, the monotheist does not require any sort of trappings or ceremony. Rather, the priest (a term used loosely here to refer to one who can use this sort of FX) simply offers a brief prayer to God or Allah (or perhaps Jesus

Christ, the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit, or various saints) for divine intervention. In rare cases, the miracle occurs before the invocation is made or when the priest isn't expecting it to occur. (Spontaneous healings as a result of the priest's touch or presence fall into this category.)

Monotheistic faiths collectively have a multitude of holy relics, from pieces of cloth left at holy sites to bones of prophets and saints to items handled by aspects of divinity. However, most of these items retain very little preternatural value, have lost their power over time, or are complete fakes. A monotheist who possesses a genuine holy relic receives a -1 step bonus to any attempt to perform miracles of her faith. If the activity is particularly relevant to the relic, this bonus could increase to -2 or even -3 steps.

For example, Marcus, a social worker and Christian priest, quietly prays for a *divine blessing* to help himself and some of his young



charges run from a group of men with guns. Marcus receives a -1 step bonus to his skill check because he carries with him a holy relic. If the relic were specifically dedicated to Sebastian, patron saint of athletes, it would grant a -2 step bonus to the act.

Some items are powerful enough or tied so strongly to the source of this faith's energy that they give this improved bonus to all Monotheism Faith FX rolls. (For instance, a fragment of the original tablets of the Ten Commandments would give such a benefit.) Certain holy sites may give a similar bonus, although these are equally rare.

Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are addressed by this FX broad skill, although there are numerous theological distinctions between these faiths and differences of opinion about the nature of divinity. For example, Judaism states that the flesh of man cannot tolerate the true image of God, and so divine manifestations for that faith are of burning bushes, pillars of fire, and the like, whereas Christianity reveres a deified man as an aspect of God, and so images from on high are usually of Christ or the cross. These points of doctrine exemplify one small way in which the faiths differ. Gamemasters who wish to further codify each system of belief as a separate FX can find abundant resources on these religions at their local library or bookstore.

Like most Faith FX, Monotheism miracles are based on Will or Personality.

## Aura

*Conjure miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle surrounds the priest with an invisible aura of divine energy. This *aura* provides a +2 resistance modifier to all attacks against the priest (melee, ranged, psionic, and FX). Furthermore, all people viewing the priest automatically have their attitude shifted one step toward Fanatic. (See TABLE P25: ENCOUNTER

SKILL EFFECTS in the *Player's Handbook*.) The *aura* lasts 1 round plus 1 round per degree of success (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) of the skill check.

⊗ **Damage Infernal Denizens:** At rank 4, the *aura* gains the ability to inflict damage upon creatures of tainted or infernal origin, such as demons or evil spirits. Such beings automatically take d4 points of wound damage with each contact with the priest, and nothing can prevent or reduce this damage. At rank 8, this damage increases to d8 points of wound damage, and it increases further to d4 points of mortal damage at rank 12.

## Blessing

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle gives indirect aid to the priest and any of her allies within 10 meters. All people affected gain a -1 step bonus to their action checks and a +1 to their Will resistance modifiers for the remainder of the scene. Believers in the faith recognize the touch of the divine in this miracle, but others do not recognize that anything out of the ordinary is going on.

⊗ **Increased Effect:** At rank 4, the effect increases to a -2 step bonus and +2 to Will resistance modifiers. At rank 8, the miracle's area of effect increases to a 100-meter radius. At rank 12, the miracle affects all allies within the hero's line of sight.

## Cure

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

This miracle channels holy power into the target, who must be touched by the priest. It heals wounds. At higher ranks, it also cures diseases or afflictions.

The miracle requires 1 full round to invoke. If the priest suffers any damage during this time, the miracle is ruined, though no FX energy points are expended.

With an Ordinary success, the hero can heal 4 stun, 2 wound, or 1

mortal or fatigue point. A Good success doubles these numbers, while an Amazing success doubles them again to 16, 8, or 4. In any case, excess cured points from one durability category can not be transferred to another type of damage.

▶ **Cure Diseases:** At rank 6, the hero can cure diseases or other physical afflictions. The result of the skill check indicates the amount of improvement in the target. An Ordinary result improves the target individual's condition by one level (for instance, from Extremely Ill to Ill), a Good result improves it by two levels, and an Amazing result improves it by three levels (in other words, from Terminally Ill to Healthy). This effect cannot be used on a particular individual more than once unless the individual's condition worsens or the individual is suffering from a different disease or affliction. (For instance, if a diseased individual's condition is improved from Extremely Ill to Ill, but it later worsens again to Extremely Ill, the miracle can be used again.) If the target individual suffers from an affliction that does not fit into the disease categories established in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*, the Gamemaster should adjudicate the effects as he sees fit.

## Demon Ward

*Conjure miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle protects all within 5 meters of the monotheist from the presence of demons, diabolists, and hostile spirits (such as ghosts). Once the ward is created, any such being must make a Resolve-physical resolve skill check with a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty (based on the success of the *demon ward* skill check) to pass into the affected area. A Critical Failure on the target's roll means the being flees for 2d4 rounds. Any such creature within the ward suffers a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty (again, based on the



success of the initial *demon ward* skill check) to all actions. The ward lasts 10 minutes per degree of success of the roll.

⊗ **Increased Area:** At rank 4, the radius of the warded area increases to 10 meters. The radius increases to 20 meters at rank 8 and 30 meters at rank 12.

## Exorcism

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

This miracle involves a long, complex process that can banish demons and evil spirits from the physical world or otherwise rid a host of a possessing foreign presence. The ritual must be conducted near the location or person to be exorcised and requires great faith, several ritual objects, and dedicated chanting or prayer. The creature being exorcised can resist this process with physical or magical action, such as attempting to flee, attacking the exorcist, specifically resisting the attempt, or threatening to destroy its host.

The *exorcism* requires a complex skill check based on the nature of the target. A least demon or the minor ghost summoned by the *Necromancy-haunt* spell requires 3 successes; a lesser demon, spirit, or psionic possession requires 6; and a greater demon or voodoo loa demands 9. The hero can make one roll per round. The target's Will resistance modifier applies as a penalty to the *exorcism* skill check. If the target specifically resists the exorcism and attempts no other actions during the ritual, it can make a *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check each round with the exorcist's Will resistance modifier applied as a penalty. The result of this check (+1, +2, or +3 step penalty for an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing result) is applied to the hero's *exorcism* skill check.

If the *exorcism* skill check succeeds, the being is banished from its host or location and sent back to its home dimension or, in the

case of a psionic possessor, back to its own body.

⊗ **Increased Efficacy:** At rank 4, the hero receives a -1 step bonus to *exorcism* skill checks. This improves to a -2 step bonus at rank 8 and a -3 step bonus at rank 12.

## Guidance

*Augur miracle; 1 FX energy point*

With this miracle, the priest prays for advice on a particular problem or course of action currently facing the heroes, such as "Should we pursue the strange hermit into the foothills?" or "Can I trust this government agent?" The priest is answered with a feeling or sense of rightness or wrongness about the possible actions. A Good success give more precise answers to similar choices, and an Amazing success may point out an alternative the character had not considered.

## Signs and Portents

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

This miracle causes obvious signs of the divine to manifest in the area around the priest. Trees and flowers bloom in the heart of winter or from dead wood, fierce animals lie down at the priest's feet, lights shine in the skies, levitations occur, and so on.

The hero can choose to make the manifestations visible to any or all within 30 meters of her. The effects last for 1 hour per degree of success of the skill check.

*Signs and portents* can never be used as an attack, but the effects can grant up to a -3 to -5 step bonus to various Personality-based skill checks depending on the nature of the manifestations. For instance, clouds obscuring the sun and rolls of thunder would grant the hero a bonus to *Interaction-intimidate* skill checks, while flowers blooming at the hero's feet might give a bonus to

*Interaction-charm* or *Leadership-inspire* skill checks.

⊗ **Increased Area of Effect:** At rank 4, the effects of *signs and portents* can extend up to or be visible to anyone within 100 meters. At rank 8, the range increases to 10 kilometers. At rank 12, it extends to 1,000 kilometers.

## Vision

*Augur miracle; 2 FX energy points*

Visions are signs from the divine that are often enigmatic or symbolic but that leave no question as to their truth or origin. The priest may pray for a vision when he needs strong guidance on a particular issue. If the priest's faith is particularly strong or weak, the Gamemaster can apply bonuses or penalties to the roll or simply declare the attempt a Failure (for the weakest supplicants).

On an Ordinary success, the priest sees some existing object or person in a new way. The subject of the *vision* is recognized as an object of spiritual significance or as an omen of good or evil. For example, a priest serving as part of a combat unit questions whether or not she should continue to support the unit commander, who has been making erratic decisions. Her prayer for a *vision* is answered when the commander pauses as she steps over a hill, her head surrounded by the fiery halo of the setting sun.

On a Good success, the priest has a miraculous *vision* that somehow relates to his question and cannot be mistaken for anything mundane. The priest in the previous example might see a *vision* of the commander dressed in white with a religious icon upraised in one hand and leading the unit out of darkness. Only the priest perceives the *vision*, of course.

If the roll is an Amazing success and the Gamemaster believes that the priest has been exemplary in his faith, he is granted a direct or indirect visitation. A heavenly messenger comes to the priest either during waking hours



or in a dream to pass along a simple message related to the problem under consideration. Though the intent is much clearer than that of an omen or a symbolic vision, the heavenly messenger is just as invisible to unbelievers as any other form of vision. The priest in the foregoing example might have a dream of an angel telling her that the commander is tortured by memories of bad decisions but will make the right choice when she is most needed by the forces of Heaven.

## SHAMANISM

The shaman is a holy man, a guide and adviser to a tribe who is gifted with the ability to send her consciousness into the spirit world at will and interact with the creatures there. This ability to accomplish what most can only do accidentally in dreams gives the shaman strength in the spirit world, allowing her to rouse the spirits of the dead, see the future, and enlist the aid of animal spirits. Shamanism is normally restricted to human tribes that have retained their ancient beliefs in the face of encroaching technology and new belief systems. The Native American *liplit* (known colloquially as a medicine man), the *kahuna* of Hawaii, and the shamans of Siberia all practice this Faith FX. Such a believer need not reject the modern world. As long as she maintains her faith in the ancient ways, she may take up any career that suits her.

Most Shamanism magic does not occur instantaneously. The shaman typically must first enter a *trance* that allows her to shift her mind into the spirit world. Entering a trance always requires a complex *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check. The intensity of the trance (Ordinary, Good, or Amazing, as indicated in the description of the miracle) dictates the number of successes required. The shaman can make one roll at the beginning of each round of the trance. Rituals such as drumming



and chanting give the shaman a -1 step bonus, and other methods of entering an altered state of consciousness, such as certain drugs or hypnosis, can grant another -1 step bonus (though they may create other concomitant problems).

Once in a trance state, the shaman can perform the miracle. Trying to invoke a miracle before reaching the necessary level of trance inflicts a +1 step penalty to the skill check for each trance success required by the miracle but not achieved. For example, a miracle requiring 4 successes suffers a +2 step penalty if the shaman tries to invoke it after making only 2 successes.

While entering or in the trance, the shaman becomes somewhat disconnected from the real world and suffers a +1 step penalty on all actions not directly related to maintaining the trance or using shamanistic magic. The shaman can pull herself from a trance simply by taking an action to do so. Otherwise, she remains in touch

with the spirit world, even if wounded.

Any miracle that requires an Amazing trance (8 or more successes) has a risk of delaying the shaman in the spirit world. Whenever such a trance is successfully achieved but the skill check for the miracle results in a Critical Failure, the shaman's spirit has lost touch with the real world and must wander the spirit world until she finds a way back. While the shaman is in this state, her body remains unconscious (as if she had run out of stun points).

Finding the path out of the spirit world requires a *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check that can be made once per hour. Success means the shaman returns to the material world. Failure means the loss of 1 fatigue point that cannot be regained until the shaman's spirit returns to the material world. In addition, the shaman continues to wander. A Critical Failure indicates a loss of 2 fatigue points, and a +2 step



penalty is applied to future attempts to return.

If the shaman loses all her fatigue points while her spirit wanders, her spirit loses all connection with her body. The spirit persists for a number of days equal to the shaman's Will, after which it fades forever, leaving the shaman's body in a vegetative coma. The wayward spirit can be found and reunited with its body by another shaman or by a psionically endowed individual with the ESP-sensitivity rank benefit of channeling as long as it is

returned before it fades completely. The searching shaman makes a Resolve-mental resolve skill check modified by the opposite of the lost spirit's Will resistance modifier. (This check is a sensitivity skill check for a psionic hero.) In other words, a strong-willed spirit is easier to find than a weak-willed one. Success indicates that the spirit reunites with its body.

Most of a shaman's miracles are based on Will, since the shaman must push hesitant or restless spirits into action. A few miracles use Personality, especially those that

involve detailed communication with the spirits.

## Animal Voice

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle allows the shaman to speak to animals by becoming attuned to an animal spirit. The shaman communicates through bestial sounds that make sense to animals but that others interpret as nothing more than grunts, howls, bird calls, and so on. The shaman can continue to communi-

## The Spirit World

The spirit world is a dimension connected to the material world in which a shaman physically lives. The spirits of ancestors, animals, and even plants inhabit it, and its laws of reality differ greatly from those of the shaman's native dimension.

First, things do not appear as they do in the real world. While terrain features look similar to their mundane counterparts, the colors, scents, and sounds are more vivid and intense. Plants appear in a representational manner matching the artistic style of the shaman's people. For example, a field of grass and corn could look like a sea of sharp green lines with longer golden lines and ovals interspersed among them. Animal spirits look like elaborate drawings made by the shaman's people, while ancestor spirits manifest as sharp outlines with appropriate features painted on them.

Extreme actions, such as battles or the expenditure of FX energy points, leave telltale signs in the spirit world. These signs are usually shadowy images of their causes or abstract symbols or arrows of different colors. A person can leave such a marker intentionally by making a Resolve-mental resolve skill check. Depending upon the degree of success of the roll, the mark fades over the next 1, 2, or 3 days. Such marks are used to define territories or paths as well as to indicate meeting places or other important sites.

Weather in the spirit world is moderate and only indirectly affects the appearance of things and sensation of experiences there. A rainstorm would merely cause the images of earth, rocks, and plants to shimmer without actually giving the sensation of being wet. If the sun is overhead, it could be an orb of fire or assume a shape relevant to the shaman's mythology, such as a warrior with a glowing shield, a wheel, or a face.

All spirits, including a shaman visiting the spirit world, can communicate with each other despite language barriers, although the intelligence and background of the spirits can still interfere with understanding. (For instance, a modern-day shaman might have trouble explaining a spacecraft to an ancestor spirit from a PL 4 era.) A spirit's image often changes in relation to its communication mode and emotional state. An

aggressive or forceful spirit appears bright and distinct, whereas a frightened or meek spirit is fuzzy and dim.

A shaman in the spirit world appears as a stylized representation of himself. This form is similar to that of an ancestor spirit but recognizable at close range by any spirit or shaman as being a living person. The shaman uses his normal Ability Scores and skills in the spirit world, including FX abilities. The only things that translate to the spirit world when the shaman enters a trance are ceremonial clothing, traditional weapons, and any shamanistic accoutrements. These items also assume representational forms, and FX-empowered items may appear radically different from their true forms. (Ursa's Claws—described in Chapter 7: FX Devices—might appear as strong brown lines in the shape of great claws around the shaman's hands that do not affect anything other than combat.)

Spirits move like real creatures except that all of them have the ability to fly at their run rate. Most who are not bird spirits choose not to, seeing it as unnatural and rude. Even shamans can fly in this manner, but doing so with any accuracy requires learning the Acrobatics-flight skill and marks you as an outsider to the natives. Creatures tire, rest, and recover at the normal rate in the spirit world, although a shaman lost in the spirit world cannot recover any fatigue points lost from being unable to find his way home until his trance is ended. Time usually flows at a normal rate, but it sometimes assumes a dreamlike quality. Unimportant events, such as travel through friendly lands, seem to pass in moments, greatly reducing the apparent time for travel.

Combat in the spirit world occurs as it does in the real world except that true spirits gain a -1 step bonus to their action checks. Spirit entities and visiting shamans can be damaged or even killed by spiritual combat. Most spirits can reform themselves after such a "death." (See Chapter 6: FX Creatures for more information.) A shaman killed in the spirit world is ejected from his trance and suffers 1 point of fatigue damage and d4+1 points of wound damage. He must also make a successful Resolve-mental resolve skill check or permanently lose 1 FX energy point. As detailed in the FX rules, spending achievement points can restore this point.



cate with animals as long as the trance is in effect and he spends 1 FX energy point every hour.

Animals perceive things differently from people, and so they are often unable to provide more than general information to the shaman. Numbers, colors, and words are usually less important to an animal than location, smell, and whether a target is a threat or potential prey.

This miracle requires a Marginal trance (2 successes).

⊗ **Command:** At rank 4, the shaman can make a minor request of the animal with which he is communicating, though the favor cannot put the animal at risk or take longer than 10 minutes to complete. At rank 8, the duration of the task can be up to 1 hour. At rank 12, the duration of the task increases to up to 4 hours.

## Dreamwalking

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

The *dreamwalking* miracle gives the shaman the ability to send her consciousness outside her body and perceive distant events, seeing and hearing locations within 1 kilometer. The shaman can change the targeted location as often as every round; her dream world "eye" moves at the speed of thought.

The miracle lasts for 10 minutes and requires an Ordinary trance (4 successes).

⊗ **Increased Range and Communication:** At rank 4, the shaman can communicate simple concepts to any intelligent creature at the target location as if using the Telepathy-contact psionic skill. At rank 8, the range increases to 5 kilometers, and moderate telepathic discussion is possible. At rank 12, the range becomes 10 kilometers, and the shaman can communicate as if she were present.

## Ghost Dance

*Summon miracle; 2 FX energy points*

The ghost dance summons guardian spirits (animal spirits, ancestor spirits, or simply helpful spirits, depending upon the beliefs of the shaman) to protect the shaman and tribe. These spirits are invisible but can hear the shaman speak. They can even interfere in the physical world. The shaman or one person chosen by the shaman is granted an additional +3 to his resistance modifier against all melee and ranged attacks by this miracle. All other creatures participating in the ritual gain a +2 resistance modifier to all ranged attacks and a +1 resistance modifier to all melee attacks.

This miracle normally requires a full dozen participants for a ritual dance that must continue throughout the invocation of the miracle. The miracle can affect no more people than the dozen participants. For every three fewer dancers who participate than a dozen, apply a +1 step penalty, to a maximum of a +4 step penalty, to the skill check. (The +4 step penalty applies if the shaman completes the miracle alone.) The miracle requires a Good trance (7 successes) and its effects last for 1 hour. If the miracle fails, all participants suffer 1 point of fatigue damage.

⊗ **Greater Effect:** At rank 4, the shaman can affect up to fifty dancers participating in the ritual. This number increases to 250 at rank 12.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 8, the duration of the *ghost dance's* effects increase to 4 hours.

## Guide My Hand

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle calls upon an appropriate helpful spirit (ancestor, animal guide, or the like) to lend the shaman its skill in combat. The shaman gains a -2 step bonus to her choice of one of the

following skills: Melee Weapons-blade or bludgeon, Unarmed Attack-brawl, or Primitive Ranged Weapons-bow or sling.

This miracle requires an Ordinary trance (3 successes) and lasts 1 hour.

## Hunter's Stare

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle allows the shaman to momentarily assume the mental state of a predator and paralyze a target with fear. *Hunter's stare* requires no trance, only a whispered word and an effort of will. The target's Will resistance modifier applies to the skill check. On an Ordinary success, the target loses its next action. On a Good success, the target is frozen for two actions, and on an Amazing success, the target is paralyzed with fright for three actions. In any case, the paralysis is broken if the victim is injured or treated in a manner that would normally wake a heavily sleeping person (shaking roughly, slapping, and so on).

## Spirit of the Beast

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle lets the shaman take on one of the qualities of a particular animal. The shaman actually gains four ranks, to a maximum of rank 12, in a specific specialty skill for 1 full hour. This benefit includes gaining the broad skill if the shaman doesn't already possess it. Sample animals and the abilities they grant include the following:

Animal	Skill
Ape	Athletics-climb
Crocodile	Stamina-endurance
Deer	Movement-race
Great cat	Stealth-sneak or shadow
Mouse	Stealth-hide
Owl	Awareness-perception
Wolf	Investigate-track



This miracle requires a Good trance (6 successes), or if an animal of the appropriate type is within 50 meters when the trance begins, the shaman only needs to achieve an Ordinary trance (3 successes).

## Trance Visions

*Augur miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle allows the shaman to gain a glimpse of the future, although this vision is altered by the perceptions of the spirits that bring it. The events, people, and locations in the vision are represented by allegorical, magical, or symbolic depictions that often hold only vague similarity to their actual selves. How much of this information passes to the shaman depends on his ability to interpret the descriptive vision the Game-master provides.

The degree of success determines how obvious the symbolic forms appear. For example, if a tribal shaman considering a visit to the closest civilized law enforcement office to report poaching on his tribe's land makes an Ordinary success on the skill check, he might receive a vision of a cave (the police station) guarded by two bears (officers lingering at the door). Inside the cave is an owl at a crossroads (the duty sergeant), beyond which is a cage (the jail downstairs) and a great eagle soaring overhead, scanning the ground for prey (an officer already investigating the case). On a Good success, the vision could show more human parallels (a lodge instead of a cave, tribal warriors instead of animals). An Amazing success would provide an even clearer picture. (For instance, the searching warrior/eagle pursues a man carrying a number of animal pelts.)

This miracle requires an Ordinary trance (3 successes). The duration of the miracle is normally no more than 10 minutes, although a complex vision may seem to take longer than that.

## Venom Spirit

*Summon miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle allows the shaman to summon and direct leechlike spirit creatures to attack the life energy of an enemy. The intended target of *venom spirit* must be within 60 meters of the shaman at the time of the miracle's invocation, though the shaman need not be able to see her target to invoke the miracle. Once the miracle has been invoked, range is no longer a factor since *venom spirit* works regardless of the shaman's later proximity.

The invocation of this miracle requires a Good trance (5 successes) as well as the shaman's ingestion of a very small amount of natural poison. This can be venom from an animal or a natural plant or fungus poison. The shaman must make a Constitution feat check with a -2 step bonus to continue the miracle. Failure indicates that the trance is broken, and the miracle cannot be attempted without entering a new trance.

If the skill check is successful, the target sustains 1 point of fatigue damage at once. Every 4 hours, the target must make a Resolve-*mental resolve* skill check to avoid losing an additional 1 fatigue point. If the result of this check is Amazing, the target suffers no further damage from this invocation of the miracle. These fatigue points cannot be recovered while the miracle is in effect. When all fatigue points are lost, the victim falls into a coma. (Treat him or her as Terminally Ill.) It is possible for this miracle to be used multiple times on the same target. Each *venom spirit* attacking the character has its own sequence for causing fatigue damage.

A shaman can remove the *venom spirit* attacking a victim by entering a Good trance (5 successes) and making a successful *venom spirit* roll that is penalized by a number of steps equal to the points of fatigue damage the target has suffered (because such

spirits grow stronger as they feed). Any success drives off a *venom spirit*. A Critical Failure means the spirit attaches itself to the shaman as if a new *venom spirit* miracle had been invoked.

## TAOISM

Taoism is a religion and philosophy that was originated in China by the philosopher Lao-Tzu in the 6th century B.C. Its major tenet is the existence of *Tao*, a substance or realm beyond the Earth that is the source of all things. Acting against nature and the equilibrium of all things takes one farther away from *Tao*, while acting in harmony with these things brings one closer to it. Taoism is unusual in that believers in other religions often hold to the Taoist philosophy. Therefore, many different sorts of Taoism have arisen due to interactions with other religions such as Shinto, Buddhism, and Confucianism.

Taoists seek realization of the order and stability in their own lives and within society. Assisted by the proper circulation of *ch'i* (Chinese for *air, breath, or strength*) within the body and the world, a Taoist works to maximize *te* (Chinese for *power or virtue*), the means by which the *Tao* becomes manifest. In their quest for union with *Tao*, they espouse impartiality and nonintervention in natural events. The idea of *wu wei* is active inactivity that allows the truth of *Tao* to be expressed, thus avoiding actions that are not natural or spontaneous. Although *active inactivity* is seemingly a contradiction, the Taoists point out that the highest skills operate on an unconscious level. For example, a person learning to forge a horseshoe must focus on the details and makes many mistakes, while a master blacksmith can make one without thinking, allowing her reflexes and unconscious will to do the work while setting her conscious mind free.

The most extreme Taoists are meditative ascetics, abandoning all nonessential action in favor of





quiet contemplation. Most Taoists, however, interact with the real world and have developed the means for integrating Tao into their lives.

Another goal of Taoism is immortality. Taoists believe that by following a regimen of diet, exercise, proper breathing, control of generative essence, and moral behavior, they can extend their lives and perhaps find the Isles of the Blessed where the *hsien* (birdlike people or wise old men) reside. This regimen allows immortality through a form of yogic concentration called *nei-tan* (inner alchemy) in which these things combine within the container that is the Taoist's own body. A person who has reached the highest religious ideal is called *chen-jen* (Chinese for perfected).

A sincere Taoist opposes war and oppression and knows that one who tries too hard will fail. Conversely, misfortune seems to pass him by. In game terms,

Taoists express this in a modification of the use of last resort points. A Taoist (any hero who knows the Taoism broad skill) may spend a last resort point to modify his own or an opponent's roll by two degrees of success toward an Ordinary result but cannot move it beyond that. In other words, a Taoist cannot use last resort points to improve rolls beyond Ordinary or reduce an opponent's result to worse than Ordinary. Taoist Free Agents, who can spend two last resort points to alter an action, can go one step beyond this limit, using a second last resort point on that roll to shift an Ordinary result to Good or Failure.

A Taoist must have an intuitive grasp of the Tao's influence on reality and his own part therein as well as the patience and ability to teach this to others. Furthermore, a person who is a channel for the formative essence of the universe usually has great self-confidence and composure. Therefore, Taoist

miracles are based on Will and Personality.

## Confidence

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle strengthens the hero's connection to the Tao, infusing her with a sensation of equilibrium and connectivity to the universe that heightens her confidence (*manyou xinxin*) and self-assuredness. Others perceive an invisible but palpable change in the person's demeanor that results in a -1, -2, or -3 step bonus (depending on the result of the skill check) to any encounter skill checks attempted by the hero in the next 10 minutes.

This miracle can be placed upon another person; however, this requires a full round of prayer and inflicts a +2 step penalty to the skill check.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 3 and 9, the duration of the miracle doubles.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 6 and 12, the recipient gains an additional -1 step bonus to encounter skill checks.

## Embryonic Breathing

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This breathing technique, called *t'ai-hsi*, reverts the hero's breathing to a state like that within the womb. It generates curative effects and increases life span.

This miracle takes an entire round to invoke and can only be used on individuals with the Taoism broad skill or a Taoist hero with the Faith perk. It heals damage based on the result of the skill check: Ordinary, 1 wound point; Good, 2 wound points, Amazing, 3 wound points or 1 mortal point.

The Taoist can spend additional FX energy points when invoking this miracle. Multiply the base damage healed by the number of points spent to determine the total damage healed by this miracle.



Thus, if the hero spends 3 FX energy points and rolls an Ordinary result, he heals 3 wound points. On an Amazing result, he would heal 9 wounds, 3 mortals, or any combination thereof (where 1 mortal equals 3 wounds).

## Energy Spiral

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

Taoists call the fundamental energy in which yin and yang are still producing the universe *yūan-ch'í* (*primordial breath*). This energy is dispersed throughout the world but can be focused by this miracle, which uses Taoist breathing techniques.

This miracle focuses *yūan-ch'í* to alter the balance of yin and yang within a target up to 2 meters away. This effect causes disharmony within the target but disperses the unbalanced energies to the environment, resulting in a net increase in the harmony of the universe at the expense of the target. The result is that the target suffers  $d4s/d4+1s/d4+3s$  (En/O) and suffers a +1 step penalty to all actions for the next 4 phases.

If the Taoist can remain still and focus for 1 or more rounds before invoking this miracle, she gains a -1 step bonus to the success roll, to a maximum of -4, for every round spent concentrating. While a mobile target could easily evade the Taoist or disrupt her concentration (since any damage suffered by the hero ends the concentration), stationary targets cannot, so they are easily affected if there is sufficient time available.

⊗ **Increased Damage:** At rank 4, the damage increases to  $d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+4s$ . At rank 8, it increases to  $d4+3s/d4+4s/d4+6s$ , and at rank 12, it becomes  $d6+3s/d6+4s/d6+6s$ .

## Interior Alchemy

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

The study of *nei-tan* mixes the basic elements of life—*ch'í*, *ching* (*generative essence*), and *shen*

(*spirit*)—within the cauldron of the Taoist's own body. It allows incredible control over the basic life functions.

The Taoist must choose a single effect at the time of the miracle's invocation. The possible effects are as follows:

▶ He can slow down his life functions so as to appear dead even to advanced medical scans and remain so for up to 1 hour. During this time, the Taoist remains mystically aware of his surroundings as if he were awake and alert. The near-death state of the Taoist negates the need for air and halts the progress of disease, hemotoxins, neurotoxins, paralytic poisons, and irritants for that duration. This effect can be extended for 1 hour for every FX energy point spent for this effect.

▶ He can reduce his need for food, water, and air for 1 day. During this time, the Taoist need not eat or drink and requires only half the normal amount of oxygen. The Taoist suffers a +1 step penalty on all actions for each day that appetites are suppressed in this manner. This penalty goes away after a full day of normal consumption. This chosen effect also doubles the onset time of disease, hemotoxins, neurotoxins, paralytic poisons, and irritants. This effect can be extended for 1 additional day for every FX energy point spent for this effect.

▶ He can speed up his metabolism. This effect gives the Taoist a -2 step bonus on all action checks. It leaves the Taoist hungry and tired afterward, and he suffers 1 point of fatigue damage at the conclusion of the effect. This effect lasts for 10 minutes and cannot be extended by spending additional FX energy points.

▶ He can improve his overall activity level. This grants a -2 step bonus on all Stamina—endurance skill checks for 1 hour. This effect inflicts 1 point of fatigue damage when the duration ends. Spending additional FX energy points cannot extend it.

Only one of these four effects can be operating on the Taoist at any given time.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the initial durations of each effect double, as well as the duration extended by spending additional FX energy points.

## Not Doing

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle causes the Taoist to enter a state of *wu wei* where acts against Tao either by or against the Taoist are restricted. The miracle lasts 5 rounds and provides +1, +2, or +3 to the Taoist's Strength and Dexterity resistance modifiers. However, most actions are restricted when under the influence of *not doing*. The Taoist has a +3 step penalty to all her skill checks and feat checks. The only exceptions to this penalty are skills in which the Taoist has rank 6 or higher. These skills have been mastered sufficiently that the Taoist can perform them without thinking about them, letting her spirit flow without focusing her senses.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 3, the duration of *not doing* increases to 5 minutes. At rank 9, it increases to 30 minutes.

⊗ **Heightened Wu Wei:** At ranks 6, the Taoist can use skills with rank 5 or better at no penalty. At rank 12, she can use skills of rank 4 or better at no penalty.

## Peace

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

As an advocate of peace (*he'ping*), a Taoist uses this miracle to encourage peaceful behavior and limit acts of aggression. This miracle causes the Taoist and everyone within 30 meters of him to suffer a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to all hostile actions. A hostile action is considered to be any action the person to be affected would consider harmful or dangerous. Each target must also make a Resolve—*mental* resolve skill check or shift one, two,



or three steps toward Friendly on the Attitude chart. (See TABLE P25: ENCOUNTER SKILL EFFECTS in the *Player's Handbook*.) This change lasts 5 rounds.

## Permeation

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle causes the energy of breath to permeate the hero's whole body in a process called *hsing-ch'i* in which the Taoist visualizes her breath energy as a series of lines moving through her body. The Taoist can focus this breath energy for different effects, one at a time, for the next 5 rounds, depending upon where the energy is focused:

► **Legs:** Energy focused here provides a 50% increase in sprint, run, and walk movement rates and a 25% increase in swim and easy swim movement rates.

► **Attacking Limbs:** Breath energy focused here grants a -2 step bonus on melee attacks.

► **Head:** Energy focused here gives a -2 step bonus to Awareness-perception skill checks and ranged attacks.

► **Torso/Abdomen:** Breath energy focused here grants a -2 step bonus to all Stamina specialty skill checks.

The Taoist can change the desired effect at will once per phase. Multiple *permeation* effects cannot affect the same target simultaneously even if they are from separate invocations.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the duration of the miracle increases by 5 rounds.

## Talisman

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle enchants an object into a talisman (*fu-lu*) designed to ward off evil. The talisman can be any precious metal object that can be worn or carried against the skin. It is usually some piece of jewelry, such as an amulet, pendant, or belt buckle. A talisman

remains active for 10 minutes. The bearer has an additional +2 resistance modifier against all attacks from any evil creatures (demons, evil spirits, or even extremely evil living people). Furthermore, if the bearer rolls a Critical Failure, he can expend the power of the *talisman* to turn the roll into merely a Failure, though this immediately ends the miracle.

## Voodoo

Voodoo is the Hollywood name of an African religion called *vodun*. The name can be traced to an African word for *spirit*. The practice of Voodoo revolves around the possession of the living and the summoning and controlling of spirits. Unlike Shamanism, in which the shaman enters a trance and travels to the spirit world, Voodoo brings spirits from the spirit world to the physical world and bribes or forces them into action. The Voodoo priest, called a *houngan* (male) or a *mambo* (female), can use the power of the spirits and those who believe in them to heal, make prophecies, and even create a spirit-controlled slave called a *zombi*. Most Voodoo priests work to bring good fortune and healing. The ones who practice black magic are called *caplatas*. Learning to contact this world of spirits is an art lost to most of the Westernized, industrialized world, but believers still teach the craft in Ghana, Haiti, and parts of Brazil.

A Voodoo priest summons spirits called *loa* (singular and plural). Most forms of Voodoo organize the *loa* into a hierarchy somewhat like that of the saints of the Catholic church. However, *loa* are much more concerned with everyday matters than saints and have a distinct fondness for material things. The origin of these spirits is unknown. Some have parallels to Christian saints and others appear to be of darker origin, but the believers of Voodoo claim that the *loa* are neither good nor evil,

but rather individual spirits with multiple aspects.

Performing a Voodoo miracle requires a ceremony in which the *houngan* calls to the appropriate spirits and offers them sacrifices such as rum, food, cigarettes, and other everyday items. Each *loa* has its own preferences, and some difficult miracles require an animal sacrifice (usually a chicken or goat). The required length of each ceremony is noted in the miracle's description. A group of at least six worshipers assisting in the ceremony gives a -1 step bonus to the miracle's skill check, as does an animal sacrifice when one is not required.

Critical Failure results when invoking a Voodoo miracle indicate that the summoned spirit becomes displeased and attempts to possess the priest. To avoid this possession, the *houngan* or *mambo* must offer a service to placate it and make an Interaction-*charm* skill check. Appropriate services include building a new shrine, making an elaborate feast, or something else particularly desirable to that *loa*. If the priest's offering is acceptable and he or she succeeds on the *charm* skill check, the *loa* returns to its own realm once the offering is complete. Until that time, the *loa* remains nearby and makes an annoyance of itself, applying a +1 step penalty to the priest's actions.

Should the offering be unacceptable or if the priest fails the Interaction-*charm* check, the *loa* possesses (or *rides*) its summoner for several days, pretending to be the summoner but displaying its natural personality through its actions, whether they be lustful, wrathful, or mischievous. This possession lasts a number of days equal to 20 minus the priest's Personality Ability Score or until the *loa* is driven out magically, such as by *exorcism*. If the Interaction-*charm* roll was a Critical Failure, the ride lasts twice as long, and the *houngan's* or *mambo's* personality is permanently altered to resemble that of the *loa*. He or she now displays such



quirks as a craving for rum, a tendency toward flirtatiousness, or an obsession with funerals, depending on the loa who rode him or her.

Like Shamanism, Voodoo miracles rely on Will or Personality.

## Ayza's Juju

*Conjure miracle; 2 FX energy points*

This miracle invokes the watchful eye of Ayza, a protector loa. At any time during the miracle's effect, the houngan or mambo can choose to have Ayza intervene in his or her favor. This does not count as an action by the hero. This intervention ends the miracle immediately and acts exactly like a last resort point being spent by the hero.

The ritual for this miracle takes 1 minute, requiring only sugar candy and rum. The miracle lasts for 10 minutes for every degree of success of the skill check. This miracle can only be invoked upon the Voodoo priest, and only one invocation can be in effect at any time.

## Erzuli's Fetish

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle creates a link between a Voodoo doll and a victim that can be used to create a variety of malevolent effects in the victim. Invoking this miracle requires hair, nail clippings, or an item taken from the victim to provide the magical link to the doll. Putting the fetish together and reciting the proper appeals to the spirits takes about 2 hours, after which the victim can be attacked through the doll at any time with a simple ceremony that takes only 1 phase to complete.

The mambo or houngan can choose from three different effects when invoking the miracle: pain, paralysis, or illness. The pain effect grants a  $-2$  step bonus to the *Erzuli's fetish* skill check and causes the target to suffer a  $+1$ ,  $+2$ , or  $+3$  step penalty, based on the suc-



cess of the *fetish* skill check, to all actions for 1 hour. The paralysis effect renders the target immobile for 24 hours. Choosing the illness effect inflicts a  $+2$  step penalty to the *fetish* skill check, but if successful, the effect immediately causes illness in the target. (See the Disease section in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*.) This effect lasts until the target recovers completely or until the mambo or houngan ends the miracle. Multiple effects cannot be used on the same target at the same time.

Whatever the effect chosen, the victim receives an immediate *Resolve-physical resolve* skill check with a  $+1$ ,  $+2$ , or  $+3$  step penalty, based on the success of the *fetish* skill check, to avoid the effect. An Amazing result on the *physical resolve* skill check renders the target immune to further uses of *Erzuli's fetish* by that particular mambo or houngan.

Another mambo or houngan can lift the *fetish* miracle effect by mak-

ing a successful *Voodoo-gris-gris* skill roll (see below) that is penalized by one step for every degree of success of the original *fetish* roll.

Appropriate sacrifices for this miracle include strong liquor and tobacco.

Alternatively, a Voodoo priest can prepare a fetish doll without the personal attunement. She or he can then spend an FX point to use the fetish on any person within 30 meters. This causes momentary pain or a twitch in a limb. This pain gives the targeted person a  $+2$  step penalty on his or her next action. The fetish can be used multiple times, targeting the same or a different person each time, with each use requiring an action and the expenditure of an FX point by the priest. The effect is not cumulative; the houngan or mambo cannot build up a penalty on the target beyond  $+2$ .



## Gris-Gris

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle (pronounced “gree gree”) is a mixture of positive white magic and negative black magic that can be used for benign or malevolent purposes to either ward off hostile magic or affect the victim with a powerful hex. It is usually made in the form of a bag of powders, herbs, and rare materials. The recipes for the ingredients are closely guarded by Voodoo priests, but commonly include cayenne pepper, human hair, powdered brick, dried blood, John-the-Conqueror root, and alligator scales. Creating the bag and completing the ceremony requires 30 minutes, after which it begins to work immediately upon meeting the conditions noted below. The houngan or mambo can prepare the bag in advance of invoking the miracle. In this case, only 1 round of ceremony is required to activate the bag’s powers. A houngan or mambo can have no more than one prepared *gris-gris* bag per skill rank. Sacrifices for this miracle usually involve food and alcohol.

A positive *gris-gris* provides a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty to harmful magical or psionic attacks made against anyone wearing it, depending upon the degree of success in enchanting it. A negative one increases its target’s chance of rolling a Critical Failure by 1, 2, or 3 points. (For instance, on an Amazing result, a target would roll Critical Failures on a 17–20.) This effect is cumulative with other effects that increase a target’s chance of Critical Failure, such as the Bad Luck flaw. The victim must be within 5 meters of the bag at some point every day or must have touched it in the past for it to function.

If at any time a target realizes he has been struck by a negative *gris-gris*, he can make a *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check to end it. Of course, any penalty inflicted by the *gris-gris* applies to the *mental resolve* skill check.

Also, another houngan or mambo can invoke a positive *gris-gris* to reverse the effects. Apply a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty per the result of the original *gris-gris* skill check to the second *gris-gris* skill check. Otherwise, the *gris-gris* lasts a number of days equal to the Voodoo priest’s *gris-gris* skill rank.

The priest can also make lesser forms of the *gris-gris* with a –1 step bonus to the skill check. A lesser helpful charm is called a *juju* and a lesser harmful one is a *mojo*. A *juju* grants its bonus only against a certain type of magic or psionics (such as charms or mind reading), while a *mojo* inflicts its penalty only against those skills associated with a single ability (for instance, all Strength-related skills). These lesser forms require a ceremony of only 1 round but last a maximum of 1 hour per skill rank.

No single target can be affected by more than one *gris-gris* (including *jujus* and *mojos*) of the same type—positive or negative—at any one time. This miracle can also be used to lift the effects of an *Erzuli’s fetish* miracle (see above).

## Helpful Possession

*Summon miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle calls a helpful loa to inhabit the body of a willing follower and grant that person additional powers for the duration of the miracle. The houngan or mambo summons a spirit relevant to the task at hand (combat, thievery, and so on) and grants that spirit residence in a willing host body within 30 meters. This host is typically a believer in Voodoo, but sometimes the Voodoo priest volunteers his or her own body. Summoning the spirit requires a 1-minute ceremony. This ceremony can be rushed, if necessary, to a minimum of 1 round. Each round subtracted from the ceremony inflicts a +1 step penalty to the skill check.

Once summoned, the loa automatically enters the body of its host. The result of the *helpful pos-*

*session* skill check indicates the number of bonus steps granted to the target (–1, –2, or –3 steps). These steps can then be divided among as many specialty skills as the host desires. This assignment of bonuses must be done as soon as the skill check is made. This miracle lasts for 24 hours.

A person can be a host to more than one loa at a time, but each additional spirit beyond the first gives a +1 step penalty to the summoning rolls.

⊗ **Increased Effect:** At rank 4, an additional 1 step of bonus is granted on any successful *helpful possession* skill check. At rank 8, this increases to 2 additional bonus steps, and at rank 12, it increases to 3 additional bonus steps.

## Legba Rides

*Augur miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle asks Legba, the loa of the crossroads between the spirit world and the real world, to possess the houngan or mambo and answer his or her questions. Legba answers one, three, or five questions, depending upon the degree of success of the skill check. His answers take the form of a short sentence no more than ten words in length. Legba is a helpful but busy spirit. His answers are terse and to the point.

Legba’s preferred sacrifice is food hung in a sacred tree. Rum, fresh chicken blood, or sweets are also pleasing to him and give a –1 step bonus to the miracle if combined with the regular sacrifice. The ceremony for this miracle takes 10 minutes to complete.

## Loa of Healing

*Transform miracle; 1 FX energy point*

This miracle summons Ogou Balanio, a loa of healing, to possess the houngan or mambo and cure injuries. The ceremony lasts 1 minute (5 rounds) and involves food, rum, and burning herbs. After the ceremony, the spirit enters the body of the houngan or mambo



## Campaign Idea: The Day of Ghosts

When VoidCorp, the stellar nation, discovered Sheya, the homeworld of the sesheyans, it offered the primitive hunters of that world advanced technology and the opportunity to join a powerful galactic society. The price was huge, though: fealty to VoidCorp for the sesheyans and all of their descendants, forever—in short, slavery. Not all sesheyans agreed to this alliance, and so pockets of resistance formed in the isolated corners of Sheya. The heroes are members of this sesheyman resistance. They work with their reclusive shamans and other helpful visitors from the stars to thwart the efforts of VoidCorp. Alternatively, the heroes could be VoidCorp agents trying to stop sesheyman terrorists from sabotaging the education and relief efforts of the natives.

Informally set in the STAR\*DRIVE campaign setting, this campaign should be run at a heroic level of power. Sesheyman characters should have access to the Shamanism Faith FX or at least have a specific Knowledge skill for that faith.

and begins to heal the target, who must be within arm's reach of the Voodoo priest. The loa works slowly, restoring only 1 durability point per round. It always begins with whatever mortal damage the victim has suffered and moves on to wound damage when that has been healed. The loa does not cure stun or fatigue damage.

This healing physically taxes the houngan or mambo, whose body is used by the spirit to channel the restorative energy. The Voodoo priest takes 2 points of stun damage for every mortal point cured and 1 point of stun damage for every wound point cured. The spirit can continue to heal and even heal multiple targets serially for as long as the host has stun points remaining. If the houngan or mambo runs out of stun points, he or she collapses, and the loa returns to the spirit world. The Voodoo priest suffers 1 fatigue point when the miracle ends. The miracle can be invoked in advance of use, but the loa departs if the Voodoo priest does not begin healing a target within 1 minute.



### Negate the Spirit

*Transform miracle; 2 FX energy points*

This miracle suppresses the victim's spirit, making him or her into a mindless slave called a zombi. A houngan or mambo can have a number of zombis under his or her control equal to twice his or her skill rank.

The preparations for the miracle include making a zombi potion that must be fed to the victim for the miracle to work. The potion takes 1 hour to make. The victim is forced to drink the potion and then ritually or literally buried for at least 8 hours. The potential zombi falls into a comatose state and can be dug up after the next sunrise.

The victim's Will resistance modifier, species, and religion modify the success roll for this miracle. Attempts to use the miracle against nonhuman beings suffer a +2 step penalty, while attempts on believers in Voodoo gain a -2 step bonus for their religion. On an Ordinary or better success, the victim becomes a zombi from that time forward and unquestioningly follows the commands of its master.

On a Marginal success, the victim is temporarily poisoned but eventually recovers. A Stamina-endurance check determines the length of the effect, which is 1, 4, 12, or 24 hours for an Amazing, Good, Ordinary, or Marginal success. A victim who rolls a Critical Failure on this endurance check remains a zombi for a full week but checks again each week until she or he recovers.

Voodoo zombis are living beings under the control of another person. Their bodies still require air and food and have no supernatural resistance to damage, although zombis do not react to painful stimuli. Miracles that drive away possessing spirits, such as exorcism, can effectively return zombi victims to normal, although the recovered victims' memories of their altered state will be few and confusing.



# CHAPTER 5: SUPER POWER FX

Super Power FX allow characters to alter the world or themselves without magical rituals or supernatural intervention. Another way of describing this sort of FX would be as any sort of FX that isn't Arcane Magic or Faith. The breadth of Super Power FX is incredibly wide, and each of these FX abilities has many possible origins in a character. Super Power FX could allow a hero to fly, turn into stone, shoot laser beams from his eyes, survive unaided in space, change form, or do any of a number of other unusual things. Super Power FX are the sorts of things you see in most comic books.

Super Power FX are also unusual in that while most heroes must begin their careers with them, it is possible that a character may intentionally or accidentally acquire them after hero creation. In

a Super Power FX game, a character hit by a strange energy beam might suddenly be able to fly, turn invisible, and throw globes of flame. A mild-mannered reporter could be bitten by an irradiated spider and develop the ability to spin webs and walk on walls. A character who falls into a vat of chemicals might emerge transformed and now have red, lumpy skin, four arms, and poisonous breath. These sorts of events are up to the Gamemaster, however, and no amount of cajoling by the players should make these things happen if the Gamemaster doesn't want them to.

Super Power FX differ from Arcane Magic or Faith FX in that while the powers themselves are grouped into broad skills by type of power, many super heroes have super powers from more than one

broad skill. Heroes built in such a manner simply pay the cost for each Super Power FX broad and specialty skill purchased. The skills can be mixed and matched without penalty. Super Heroes (Super Power FX heroes with the FX Adept profession) get their *list price -1* bonus on one Super Power FX broad skill and its related specialty skills, paying the normal cost for any Super Power FX skills outside that broad skill.

In TABLE F7: SUPER POWER FX SKILLS, each power has an associated Ability (STR, CON, INT, or WIL) listed in parentheses. The hero's skill rank in the power is added to his associated Ability Score to determine the total skill score. Purchasing a broad skill provides no benefit other than qualifying a character to buy specialty skills.

TABLE F7: SUPER POWER FX SKILLS

Super Power FX Skill Name	Cost	Pg.	Super Power FX Skill Name	Cost	Pg.
<b>Body Alteration</b>	9		<b>Energy</b>	10	
Extra Limb (WIL)	3		Energy Blast (WIL)	4	
Growing (CON)	3		Energy Control (WIL)	4	
Invisibility (WIL)	5		Energy Field (WIL)	4	
Phasing (WIL)	3		Energy Resistance (CON)	2	
Shapeshifting (WIL)	3		Energy Sheath/Form (WIL)	3	
Shrinking (CON)	3		<b>Metaconscious</b>	8	
Stretching (CON)	3		Genius (INT)	3	
<b>Brick</b>	9		Hyper Learning (INT)	4	
Body Armor (CON)	3		Super Intelligence (WIL)	4	
Impact Conversion (CON)	4		Super Personality (INT)	4	
Invulnerability (CON)	3		Super Will (WIL)	4	
Life Support (CON)	3		Superior Senses (WIL)	3	
Super Constitution (WIL)	4		<b>Movement</b>	10	
Super Strength (WIL)	4		Flying (WIL)	3	
<b>Chi</b>	10		Fusillade (CON)	4	
Danger Sense (WIL)	4		Lightning Speed (CON)	3	
Focus (WIL)	2		Power Swimming (CON)	3	
Healing (WIL)	2		Teleportation (WIL)	3	
Mighty Leap (STR)	2		Super Dexterity (WIL)	4	
Power Climb (STR)	2		Wallcrawling (WIL)	2	
Power Strike (WIL)	2				

Skills that cannot be used untrained are shown in color.



The following are the six general categories of Super Power FX. Each is described briefly along with specialty skills and possible origins for a character starting with or acquiring that sort of super power. Each ALTERNITY campaign setting may have variants of these categories or even entirely new categories. Some campaigns may eschew the categories entirely and allow Super Power FX wielders to purchase the specialty skills as if they were all from one broad skill.

## Body Alteration

The Body Alteration Super Power FX broad skill is a collection of Super Power FX that alter a hero's form or how a hero interacts with other physical matter. Size changes, shape alteration, extra arms, stretching, invisibility, and passing through solid objects are all powers of this type.

Depending upon the power, the hero may simply have an unusual body shape, have fine control over the elasticity and form of his tissues, or may be able to alter the consistency of his flesh on an atomic level. Body Alteration powers require either a high Will to initiate and control these changes or a high Constitution to endure the stresses they place upon the body.

### Extra Limb

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

The user has an extra FX-powered manipulative limb, such as prehensile hair or a telekinetic hand. If chosen as active, this skill can represent an extra arm or a prehensile tail.

The hero can command the extra limb to perform any action her hands could do. It is considered to be an off hand and thus suffers a +2 step penalty to any action.

Using the extra limb simultaneously with one of the hero's normal limbs inflicts the penalties listed

under the Two Actions at Once section in Chapter 3: Heroes in Action in the *Player's Handbook*. If the hero uses the extra limb at the same time she uses both of her hands, the third action receives a +6 step penalty. The Ambidextrous perk reduces any penalty for using multiple limbs to 0/+2 (or 0/+2/+4 for three limbs) regardless of the nature of the limbs.

Each activation of the extra limb lasts for 10 minutes.

⊗ **Improved Control:** At ranks 3, 6, 9, and 12, the penalty for using the FX limb is reduced by one step. This can only reduce penalties and never grants a bonus. Thus, a hero could use his prehensile tail to fire a gun at no penalty at rank 6, while an Ambidextrous hero could fire three guns simultaneously with a +0, +0, and +2 step penalty at the same level.

## Growing

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power allows the hero and all gear he wears or carries to grow in height and mass. The hero's Ability Scores remain unchanged, but growing causes the hero's height to increase by 50%. This has the following game effects:

▶ Multiply the hero's nonflying movement rates (sprint, run, walk, easy swim, and swim) by the change in size. (A hero twice as tall as normal moves twice as fast.)

▶ Multiply the amount of weight a hero can lift by the change in size. (A hero twice as tall can lift twice as much.)

▶ The hero suffers -1 to his Strength and Dexterity resistance modifiers. (A larger target is easier to hit.)

▶ The hero suffers a +2 step penalty to Stealth skill checks.

▶ All melee damage inflicted by the hero increases by 2 points.

Obviously, many other side effects occur when a hero's size changes. The hero may have difficulty operating normal-sized equipment, and very tall heroes may be incapable of entering

## Always Active Super Powers

One unique feature of Super Power FX is that many superheroic characters have powers that are always active, such as body armor, danger sense, or incredible speed. Using the normal FX rules, these characters would quickly run out of FX energy points. However, this effect can be duplicated for some Super Power FX skills in the following manner:

▶ Buy the Super Power FX specialty skill as normal.

▶ Multiply the skill's FX energy cost by 3.

▶ Permanently mark that many FX energy points off the character's FX energy pool.

Therefore, if a hero with 15 FX energy points in her pool has two always active super powers, each with an activation cost of 1 FX point, that hero's player permanently marks off 6 FX energy points from the hero's FX energy pool. This leaves only 9 points available for normal-use super powers.

Super Power FX that can be purchased in this way are identified as *active* after the power's name. In most cases, these powers don't have to be built as always active. The character can still purchase the power on a pay-per-use basis, trading the extended duration for the versatility of using other powers. So, one realistic-level hero who has 5 FX energy points to start with might have the *body armor* skill as always active, leaving only 2 points in his FX energy pool to power his *flying* and *enhanced Strength* super powers. Another similar hero might leave all powers at pay-per-use, allowing her up to 5 uses of her powers in any combination.

Most always active Super Power FX skills are not the sort that have effects that vary with the results of a skill check. Those that do should be rolled each time they are used, treating a Failure as an Ordinary success (or a Marginal success, if appropriate to the power).



buildings. Remember also that mass increases by the cube of the increase in height: A hero who is twice as tall weighs eight times as much as normal!

*Growing* lasts for 10 minutes. During that time, the hero can alter his size as often as desired within the allowable range without spending additional FX energy points.

⊗ **Increased Growing:** At rank 6, a hero can grow to 200% of normal height (twice normal height). Such taller heroes now suffer -2 to resistance modifiers, have a +3 step penalty to Stealth skill checks, and gain +4 to damage. At rank 12, the hero can grow to 250% of normal height (two and a half times normal). Such taller heroes now suffer -3 to resistance modifiers, have a +4 step penalty to Stealth skill checks, and gain +6 to damage.

## Invisibility

1 FX energy point

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power allows the hero to become invisible to all sorts of visual detection including infrared, radar, and other sorts of electromagnetic-based scanning.

An invisible hero can see herself and any other objects she makes invisible normally. The hero can move normally while invisible. Objects picked up or dropped by an invisible hero become visible, though the hero can make such items invisible by another application of the power. Awareness-perception or Investigate-search checks made to locate an invisible target suffer a +4 step penalty, as do any attacks made against such a target once its approximate location is known.

In addition to herself, a hero can make other objects invisible. This power can affect a volume equal to half the hero's skill rank in cubic meters. (A person is about one-half cubic meter.) Targets must remain within 30 meters of the hero to remain invisible. A person made invisible by another has a ghostlike perception of herself and suffers a +1 step penalty

on all actions that require a close awareness of oneself, such as lockpicking or surgery.

*Invisibility* lasts 10 minutes per degree of success of the skill roll. The hero can selectively end this power's effects on specific targets at any time during this duration. Thus, she could turn visible while allowing other invisible targets to remain unseen.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 4, the power's duration becomes 20 minutes per degree of success. At rank 8, it becomes 30 minutes per degree of success. At rank 12, it becomes 40 minutes per degree of success.

## Phasing

1 FX energy point

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This FX allows the hero to shift his body's molecules out of phase with those of his environment, allowing him to pass through solid objects. While phasing, a hero is intangible, though visible (if a bit hazy). He cannot be harmed by physical attacks, nor can he make any. Mental attacks and barriers designed to keep out spirits still affect him. He also can't speak or breathe, though he may spend a single action to phase in, take a breath, and phase back out. This costs no FX energy points and doesn't end the power's duration, though the phasing hero is vulnerable during this action. He can travel in any direction at his walk movement rate.

The phased state lasts for 1 minute, during which time the hero can move through objects of Ordinary toughness with no effort. Good and Amazing toughness objects require a *phasing* skill check with a +2 or +4 penalty, respectively, but with no additional FX energy point cost. Each round of movement through a solid object requires another skill check. Failure indicates that the hero either cannot pass through the object, or if fully within the object, that the person is trapped until he can make and succeed at

another *phasing* skill check to resume movement.

Passing through a living creature is painful and traumatic due to overlapping bioelectric fields. It causes  $d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s$  to both the phased person and the targeted creature. Armor cannot protect against this damage. However, Good or Amazing full-body armor or natural toughness would keep the phasing individual from affecting the target.

⊗ **Improved Phasing:** At rank 6, the hero can move through objects of Good toughness with no skill check, and objects of Amazing toughness inflict only a +2 step penalty. At rank 12, the hero can move through any object of up to Amazing toughness with no skill check.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 3, the power's duration increases to 5 minutes. At rank 9 this increases to 30 minutes. This has no effect on the hero's ability to hold his breath while phasing.

⊗ **Increased Movement:** At rank 6, the hero can move in any direction at his run movement rate while phased. At rank 12, the hero can sprint in any direction while phased.

## Shapeshifting

Active or 1 FX energy point

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power allows the hero to alter her size and physical features. The hero can change her height by up to 10% and weight by up to 25% to appear as another creature of her own species or another humanoid species within that size range. A human could become a mechalus or sesheyan, a short human could become a fraal or a tall 'tsa, and a tall human could become a short, thin weren. If the hero tries to duplicate a specific person, her degree of success depends upon the degree of success of the skill check. The results of the skill check convey a +1, +2, or +3 step penalty (for Ordinary, Good, and Amazing, respectively) to any Awareness-perception





checks to see through the disguise. Extreme details such as fingerprints and retinal patterns are not duplicated.

The hero can change form as often as desired and make up to one change per phase until the 10 minute duration expires. No special abilities of the assumed form are gained with the change. A pseudo-mechalus cannot link with computers, a pseudo-t'sa doesn't have body armor, a pseudo-weren doesn't have claws or camouflage, a pseudo-sesheyan doesn't have night vision or the proper musculature to fly, and so on, because the hero's body remains made of the same substances as before.

⊗ **Improved Disguise:** At rank 3, apply an additional +1 step penalty to perception checks made to see through the shapeshifted hero's disguise. At rank 9, this becomes an additional +2 step penalty.

⊗ **Improved Shapeshifting:** At rank 6, the hero can change her height up to 20% and weight up to 50% from her original form. At rank

12, the hero can assume the form of any creature (humanoid or other) within her size range.

## Shrinking

Active or 1 FX energy point

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power allows the hero and all gear he wears or carries to shrink. The hero's Ability Scores remain unchanged, but *shrinking* causes the hero's height to become 25% of normal. This has the following effects:

▶ Multiply the hero's nonflying movement rates (sprint, run, walk, easy swim, and swim) by the change in size. (A hero one-tenth his normal size moves one-tenth as fast.)

▶ Multiply the amount of weight a hero can lift by the change in size. (A hero half as tall can lift half as much.)

▶ The hero gains +2 to his Strength and Dexterity resistance modifiers. (A smaller target is harder to hit.)

▶ The hero gains a -3 step bonus to Stealth specialty skill checks.

▶ All melee damage inflicted by the hero is reduced by 4 points.

Obviously, many other side effects occur when a hero's size decreases. The hero may have difficulty operating normal-sized equipment, and very short heroes could drown in a child's pool. Remember also that mass decreases by the cube of the decrease in height: A hero who is one-fourth as tall weighs one-sixty-fourth as much as normal!

*Shrinking* lasts for 10 minutes. During that time period, the hero can alter his size as often as desired within the allowable range without spending additional FX energy points.

⊗ **Increased Size Alteration:** At rank 6, a hero can shrink to 10% of normal height. Such shorter heroes now gain +3 to resistance modifiers, enjoy a -4 step bonus to Stealth skills, and suffer a -6 to damage. At rank 12, the hero can shrink to 5% of normal height. Such shorter heroes now gain +4 to resistance modifiers, enjoy a -5 step bonus to Stealth skills, and suffer a -8 to damage.

## Stretching

Active or 1 FX energy point

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

*No skill check required.*

This power gives the hero an extremely malleable body, enabling her to stretch her limbs, body, or neck. The hero can elongate any or all of her limbs by up to one-half meter. These changes allow the hero additional reach, enable her to more easily peer around corners, and so on. These capabilities in turn may grant bonus steps to actions at the Game-master's discretion. A hero with elongated legs gains +1/3/4 to her walk/run/sprint movement rates. Stretching her arms and legs adds 0.5 meters to a hero's climb rate. In melee combat, the hero gains +1 to her Strength resistance modifier if she attacks with elongated arms



because she can attack from out of reach. These and other modifiers apply to every half-meter of the hero's elongation. (See the rank benefit below.) The hero maintains full leverage and muscle power even at full extension.

Unlike the *Biokinesis-morph* psionic skill, the hero is not limited in the number of parts that can be elongated in a phase, nor is there a limit on the total number of parts that can be stretched at one time. (In other words, the hero could go from completely normal to having elongated arms, legs, neck, and body in one phase.)

Changing shape in this manner doesn't alter the hero's clothing or equipment, so a hero in a body tank has a hard time using this power. Each activation allows 10 minutes of stretching.

⊗ **Improved Stretching:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the character can elongate each limb an additional half-meter to a total of 2 meters at rank 12. Each additional half-meter of extension adds an equal amount to the various modifiers listed above. Thus, at rank 8 (1.5 meter total extension), the hero could add up to +3/9/12 to movement, +1.5 meters per phase to climbing, +3 to her Strength modifier, and so on.

## BRICK

The Brick Super Power FX broad skill is a collection of abilities that enhance the body's ability to resist and cause damage. Many super villains are nothing more than brutes with incredible strength who can shrug off bullets. However, the Brick powers are the backbone of many comic book heroes as well, whether these powers originate from a high-tech suit of armor, obvious morphological changes such as rocklike skin, or being made of fundamentally denser materials. In some campaigns, Brick powers are so readily available that any people with the right connections—or even just a lot of money—can have themselves made into a superior physical specimen.

Brick characters are likely to have a high Strength and Constitution. Most Brick powers are automatic or always active. Those that require activation are often Will-based.

## Body Armor

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
 This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power makes the character more resistant to all sorts of damage. The *body armor* provides Ordinary toughness protection equal to d6+1 (LI), d6 (HI), d4 (En). Body armor is usually selected as always active, though some heroes prefer to remain incognito, in which case each activation lasts 10 minutes. If selected as always active, the player can reduce the permanent FX energy point cost from 3 to 2 by stating that the armor represents a significant change in the hero's basic form, such as rocky skin, rigid plates, and so forth.

⊗ **Improved Armor:** At rank 4, the armor improves to d6+2 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d4+1 (En). At rank 8, the armor protection becomes d8+2 (LI), d8+1 (HI), d6+1 (En). At rank 12, it becomes Good toughness.

## Impact Conversion

*Active or 2 FX energy points  
 This skill can't be used untrained.*

This unusual power gives the character the ability to absorb kinetic energy and transform it into enhanced physical power. Whenever the hero is struck by an attack that delivers LI- or HI-type damage, roll d4 and subtract the result from the base damage inflicted regardless of the firepower of the attack. If the attack inflicts mortal damage, subtract 2 from this die roll for the purposes of damage reduction (to a minimum of 1 point), but retain the full value for the power's secondary effect (listed below). Apply the reduced damage total as normal, including calculating armor pro-

tection and any secondary damage inflicted.

This energy is immediately converted into physical might. The hero can add the number rolled to the damage inflicted by her next melee attack. This attack expends the extra energy whether successful or not. Multiple absorptions are cumulative; however, any points remaining at the end of the 5-round duration are lost. If the power is selected as always active, no absorbed energy remains for longer than 5 rounds.

◆ **Example:** Powerhouse is shot by a 9mm pistol (HI damage) for 5 wounds. Rolling d4 for his impact absorption, he gets a 3. He therefore suffers only 2 points of wound damage (5-3) and 1 point of stun secondary damage. His next melee attack inflicts +3 damage. If he is shot again with the same result before he makes a melee attack, he receives +6 to his damage.

⊗ **Increased Absorption:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the hero absorbs and converts 1 additional point of LI or HI damage.

## Invulnerability

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
 This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power gives a hero invulnerability to one unusual attack form. The player should select the attack form at the time this skill is purchased. Examples include cold, corrosion (both acids and bases), electricity, fire and other heat-based attacks, poison, and radiation. The hero ignores all stun and wound damage dealt by such attacks and treats mortal damage as stun damage.

Each use of this power lasts 10 minutes.

◆ **Example:** A hero with *invulnerability* to fire struck by a flamethrower for 6 points of wound damage would take no damage. If hit by a plasma grenade for 3 points of mortal damage, she would suffer 3 points of stun damage.



⊗ **Additional Invulnerability:** At ranks 5 and 9, the character can select an additional invulnerability.

## Life Support

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power allows the character to survive without food, water, sleep, or even air without difficulty. Of course, certain abilities may not function in cases of extreme deprivation. For example, a character who can function without air can survive in space, but she cannot speak in that airless environment. The power sustains the character for up to 24 hours. After using this power, the character must let it rest for an equal amount of time before it can be used again.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 4, the duration of life support increases to 72 hours (3 days). At rank 8, it increases to 9 days. At rank 12, it increases to 27 days.

## Super Constitution

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.  
No skill check required.*

This power increases the character's physical fitness and overall toughness. The character's Constitution is increased by 1 point even if this takes the character above a racial maximum. Durability and all abilities and statistics based upon Constitution should be altered to reflect this new value. The character also gains 1 additional stun point. This change lasts 10 minutes.

⊗ **Improved Constitution:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the character's Constitution and stun points increase by 1. The Constitution increase affects all skills and abilities based on Constitution.

## Super Strength

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.  
No skill check required.*

This power increases the character's physical power and muscle. The character's Strength is increased by 1 point even if this takes the character above a racial maximum. Movement rate and all abilities and statistics based upon Strength should be altered to reflect this new value. The hero can also lift twice as much weight as his Strength would normally allow. (See the Lifting Objects section in Chapter 4: Skills in the *Game-master Guide*.) This power lasts 10 minutes for each use.

⊗ **Improved Strength:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the character's Strength increases by 1, and the character's Strength for the purpose of lifting or moving heavy objects increases to  $\times 3$ ,  $\times 4$ , and  $\times 5$ , respectively.

## CHI

The Chi Super Power FX broad skill represents enhancement to the character's body and mind brought about by discipline and training. Most sorts of fantastic martial arts movies and comic book characters that exhibit exceptional but not superpowered abilities can be modeled with Chi FX. Practitioners of Chi are very dedicated individuals. They have devoted their lives to a religion, a cause, or a form of martial art.

Chi powers take years to develop, and so most characters are not able to pick them up during the course of a normal campaign. Some are more powerful versions of other abilities available to characters. Non-Chi characters can reproduce some of a Chi master's incredible abilities to a lesser extent through perks and rank benefits.

Some Chi Super Power FX specialty skills note that no skill check is required for their use. These include skills that merely augment a hero's other skills, such as *mighty leap* (Athletics-jump) and *power climb* (Athletics-climb).

The practitioner of Chi relies on the power of her body as well as her mind. Thus, Chi specialty skills are based on Strength or Will.

## Danger Sense

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

A Chi character with this ability is in tune with his surroundings to a greater extent than someone with the Danger Sense perk. The power is not cumulative with the perk. The character gets a -2 step bonus on all Awareness-intuition checks, +1 to his Strength and Dexterity resistance modifiers, and any penalty for fighting blind is reduced by 1 step.

This power lasts for 10 minutes per activation.

⊗ **Improved Sensing:** At ranks 6 and 12, the character gains an additional -1 step bonus to intuition checks and an additional +1 to Strength and Dexterity resistance modifiers. Any penalty for fighting blind is reduced by an additional step, but this cannot grant a bonus, only reduce penalties.

## Focus

*1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

Much like the Stamina-resist pain skill, the *focus* Chi power allows the user to push beyond physical and mental pain and trauma to act as if those things simply didn't exist for a time. When this power is activated, all penalties from a dazed state, torture, mortal damage, fatigue damage, poison, and disease are ignored for the purpose of determining what step penalties the Chi user must take when performing an action. Total loss of stun, wound, mortal, or fatigue points has the normal effect on the hero.

A hero could be suffering from 3 points of mortal damage, 2 points of fatigue, a terminal illness, and a paralytic poison, and she could still perform all normal actions without penalty. Situational penalties not related to the character's physical or mental state, such as performing



surgery on an alien or hacking into a bank computer, still apply.

This power lasts 4 phases. At the end of that time it can be automatically extended for 1 FX energy point.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 4, the focus lasts 5 rounds. It lasts 5 minutes at rank 8 and 30 minutes at rank 12.

## Healing

1 FX energy point

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power allows the user to heal damage to himself. A successful skill check heals 2, 3, or 4 wounds. The *healing* power can only be used once per hour. It costs 1 fatigue point with each use.

⊗ **Improved Healing:** At rank 4, the amount healed improves to 3/4/5 points. At rank 8, it improves to 4/5/6 points.

⊗ **Healing Trance:** At rank 12, the hero can, with a successful *healing* skill check, enter a sleeplike trance during which mortal damage is healed at a rate of 1 mortal point per 4 hours. This does not cause fatigue damage.

## Mighty Leap

Active or 1 FX energy point

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

*No skill check required.*

With this power, the Chi user can make tremendous leaps. By spending 1 FX energy point, the character can leap twice as far as the values listed under the *Athletics-jump* skill. The hero also suffers minimum damage (1 point of stun damage) from a Marginal success and only d4 points of stun damage from a Critical Failure.

⊗ **Increased Distance:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the multiplier for the character's jumping distance increases to three, four, and five times normal.

## Power Climb

Active or 1 FX energy point per round

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

*No skill check required.*



This power allows the user to climb up seemingly impossible surfaces or to move rapidly up surfaces that would normally require time to climb. If the surface is climbable by someone with the *Athletics-climb* skill without a penalty, then the character can simply *run* up the surface. She can reach a maximum height of twice her walk movement rate in meters before she must find a more horizontal surface upon which to rest or she falls.

The character can also scale surfaces that have a step penalty to climb by climbing in a more normal manner. When doing this, she climbs at twice the rate listed under the *climb* skill. Each use of this power lasts 1 round.

⊗ **Increased Distance:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the character's multiplier for both running up walls and climbing increases to three, four, and five times the listed values.

## Power Strike

1 FX energy point

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This ability allows the user to focus his will into one unarmed attack and to greatly increase its power and accuracy. The user gains a -1 step bonus on his next unarmed melee attack and inflicts 2 additional points of damage. The enhanced attack must be made within 5 rounds (1 minute) of the *power strike* skill check, or the effect fades.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 4, the effect lasts up to 10 rounds (2 minutes) or until used before fading.

⊗ **Increased Damage:** At rank 8, the character gains an additional -1 step bonus on his next melee attack, and a successful attack inflicts Good-quality damage. At rank 12, the character gets another -1 step bonus to the attack roll and inflicts Amazing-quality damage if it succeeds.



## ENERGY

The Energy Super Power FX broad skill deals mainly with the creation, destruction, and control of energy, including thermal (heat or cold), electrical, and radioactive energy (see the sidebar). Beings with these abilities tend to be very impressive, throwing lightning bolts or shielding themselves in cloaks of fire, but also have a great potential to inflict damage, to which heroes attempting to stop a pyromaniac energy user or FX dinosaur can attest.

Like the Brick Super Power FX broad skill, the Energy FX broad skill can manifest in many different ways and result from varied story origins, such as lasers from an advanced body tank, the bolts from an electrokinetic mutant, or the breath of a creature whose home dimension is made of fire. Energy Super Power FX skills generally rely on the hero's Will to shape the energy, though a high Constitution is also useful.

### Energy Blast

*Active or 1 FX energy point*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power allows the character to shoot blasts of energy (see the Types of Energy sidebar) from his hands, eyes, or mouth. The *energy blast* has a range of 60 meters. The hero can fire no more than one blast per phase. Each blast costs 1 FX energy point. The result of the *energy blast* skill check (including the target's Dexterity resistance modifier) indicates the damage inflicted:  $d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m$  (En/O).

A character who selects this power as always active constantly emits beams of energy and cannot shut them off. Special equipment—such as an energy containment suit, a high-tech visor, or protective gloves—is necessary to keep the character from destroying everything around himself. Even with this option, the hero must make a normal *energy blast* skill check to attack, and Failure indicates a miss.

⊗ **Increased Damage:** At rank 4, the damage increases to  $d6+1w/d6+2w/d4+1m$ . At rank 8, the damage increases to  $d6+2w/d8+2w/d4+2m$ . At rank 12, the damage improves to Good intensity.

### Energy Control

*Active or 1 FX energy point*

*This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power allows the character to increase or decrease the strength of a particular sort of energy. At higher skill levels, it allows a hero to redirect the flow of that energy.

*Energy control* can affect an energy source of up to 125 cubic meters at a range of 30 meters. Each additional FX energy point spent when the skill check is made doubles the volume affected. The effect of this power lasts 1 minute (5 rounds). It can be extended for 1 minute per additional FX energy point spent. Using *energy control* to control a damaging attack form (a laser blast, an energy blast from

the skill of the same name, and so on) costs an additional 1 FX energy point per attempt.

In the hands of a skilled player, *energy control* has an almost limitless variety of effects. The Game-master should use discretion and common sense in adjudicating the effects of this power. In general, the result of an *energy control* skill check (Marginal, Ordinary, Good, or Amazing) indicates the relative amount of increase or decrease in the energy source. In most cases, the hero cannot use the power multiple times on the same energy source. For instance, a hero could not increase a fire's intensity more than once.

◆ **Example:** A fire-controlling hero attempts to suppress or strengthen the flames in a burning apartment. The result of his *energy control* skill check grants a -1 to -4 step bonus or a +1 to +4 step penalty to the Constitution feat checks of the firefighters inside.

◆ **Example:** An electricity-controlling hero attempts to decrease





or increase the power flowing out of a starship's power plant. The result of the skill check reduces or increases the number of available power factors by 1, 2, 3, or 4.

◆ **Example:** A radiation-controlling hero attempts to reduce or increase the ambient radiation level of her immediate environment. In this case, as with others that specifically target elements of the GRAPH system, a Marginal or Ordinary success moves the radiation level down or up one grade (from R2 to R1, for instance), while a Good or Amazing success moves it as much as two grades.

◆ **Example:** A light-controlling hero attempts to increase or decrease the damage inflicted by his laser pistol. This costs 1 additional FX energy point per attempt. The result of the *energy control* skill check applies a -1 to -4 step bonus or a +1 to +4 step penalty to the attack. The hero could improve his own *energy blast* attacks in this manner as well.

⊗ **Increased Range:** At rank 4, the range of this power increases to 60 meters. At rank 12, it increases to 100 meters.

⊗ **Redirective Attack:** At rank 8, the hero can cause the energy to move outside its current area up to

### Radiation in a Super Hero Game

In real life, the effects of exposure to radiation are slow and insidious. Radiation causes illness and long-term health problems. If you would rather run your campaign like the comic books, where radiation blasts are as immediately devastating as any other form of super hero energy, you can treat radiation like fire. Instead of causing illness, radiation attacks from super powers cause burns and other sorts of heat damage. In these situations, treat environmental radiation hazards under the influence of the *energy control* power as fire and have them cause damage as per Table G16 in the *Gamemaster Guide*.

10 meters from the energy source to strike at a single target. Any target struck by this power must make a resistance roll as if she were exposed to the appropriate hazard. This roll is usually a Constitution feat check. (For energy types that don't correspond to a particular hazard—such as light or sound—use the values listed for heat/smoke in TABLE G16: FIRE DAMAGE, in the *Gamemaster Guide*.) Any bonus or penalty in effect due to previous use of the *energy control* power remains in effect for this attack.

If the attack is used against an energy weapon of the appropriate type (a flamethrower, an *energy blast* from another character, and so on), the character can redirect the attack to anyone within range of the attack. The *energy control* skill roll determines whether the redirected attack hits and to what degree the result is effective.

### Energy Field

Active or 2 FX energy points  
This skill can't be used untrained.

This power allows the hero to create a protective barrier that causes attacks to deflect away from anything sheltered by it. The *energy field* can fully protect either the user or another single person of wren size or smaller within 30 meters. This protection has the effect of reducing the firepower of any weapon or attack that strikes the *energy field* by one grade. Thus, weapons of Amazing firepower are reduced to Good, Good is reduced to Ordinary, and weapons of Ordinary firepower inflict no damage to a target protected by *energy field*.

The user can selectively weaken or open the *energy field* to allow the protected individual to attack those outside the field, though this makes the protected individual vulnerable to attacks made in the same phase from the same general direction.

Each activation of the *energy field* lasts 1 minute (5 rounds). Maintaining the *energy field*

### Types of Energy

Many Super Power FX Energy specialty skills (powers) allow the hero to choose the type of energy the power uses or affects. The player of a hero with the Energy Super Power FX broad skill should choose a single type of energy to be wielded by that hero from this list. Examples of weapons or hazards that utilize each type of energy are included.

Energy	Examples
Cold	Environmental hazard
Electricity	Lightning, arc gun
Fire/heat/plasma	Flamethrower, star sword
Gravity	Mass weapons, render weapons
Light Radiation	Laser weapons, Maser weapons, quantum (particle) weapons
Sound	Stutter weapons

requires no actions, even when the user adjusts it to allow attacks outside the field. Switching it to another target requires an action.

⊗ **Increased Area:** At ranks 3, 6, and 9, the character can make a larger *energy field*, allowing her to protect one additional person at each of these ranks.

⊗ **Increased Protection:** At rank 12, the hero's *energy field* reduces damage by two intensities. (Amazing damage is reduced to Ordinary, and damage of Good intensity or less is ignored.) However, this field may only be created around the hero herself and may not include any others.

### Energy Resistance

Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.

This power allows the character to resist one type of energy without harm. The hero is considered to have Ordinary toughness armor



of d4+1 vs. that sort of energy. This protection is checked first, and then any excess damage spills over to his other types of armor. Damage resisted with this power does not cause secondary damage.

Each use of this power lasts 1 minute per degree of success.

⊗ **Increased Protection:** At ranks 4 and 8, the hero's protection increases to d6+1 and d8+1 against the selected form of energy. At rank 12, the toughness of the energy resistance becomes Good.

## Energy Sheath/Form

*Active or 1 or 3 FX energy points  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power has two forms: Either the character can surround herself with a particular type of energy, or she can transform herself and all equipment carried into a mostly solid form of that energy determined at character creation.

Creating an *energy sheath* costs 1 FX energy point, while changing into an *energy form* costs 3 FX energy points. In either case, the power lasts for 1 minute (5 rounds) per degree of success, and can be extended for a like amount of time by spending 1 FX energy point per extension.

The *energy sheath* grants Ordinary toughness armor to the character that provides d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (En) protection, and anyone who touches or hits her while her power is active suffers d4 (En/O) points of stun damage. Likewise, any melee attacks made by the energy user inflict this energy damage in addition to normal damage from her attack. (Roll separately for armor protection against this energy damage.)

The *energy form* provides armor, damages attackers, and increases hand-to-hand damage similar to an *energy sheath*, but it does so to a greater degree. It provides d6 (LI), d6 (HI), d6 (En) protection and inflicts d6 points of stun damage for contact. A hero in *energy form* cannot use any equipment and is

vulnerable to events that affect the chosen sort of energy, such as fire extinguishers for fire energy or another character with *energy control* of the same type of energy as the character's *energy form*.

When the character is attacked by the same form of energy used in her *energy sheath* or *energy form* while the power is activated, increase the En armor rating by 1 point.

⊗ **Increased Effect:** At rank 4, the armor increases to d4+1 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4+1 (En) for *energy sheath* or d6+1 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d6+1 (En) for *energy form*. At rank 8, the damage increases to d4 points of wound damage for *energy sheath* or d6 points of wound damage for *energy form*. At rank 12, the armor toughness and damage category improve to Good.

## META-CONSCIOUS

While the Super Power FX Body Alteration broad skill deals with changes to a hero's body or physical interactions, the Metaconscious broad skill expands the hero's non-physical attributes and awareness of his or her surroundings. Heightened Intelligence, Will, and Personality, rapid absorption of knowledge, and enhanced senses are all part of this broad skill. These powers are all based on superior will or cognitive ability and rely upon Will or Intelligence to function.

### Genius

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power greatly enhances a hero's powers of deduction, reasoning, analysis, and memory. When active, this power grants the hero a -2 step bonus to Knowledge-deduce skill checks as well as any Knowledge skill checks made to determine specific campaign information. (See the Knowledge section in Chapter 4: Skills in the *Player's Handbook*.) This power lasts for 1 hour.

⊗ **Expertise:** At rank 4, the hero can select an Intelligence-based broad skill. While *genius* is active, the hero receives a -1 step bonus to all skill checks made using that broad skill or its specialty skills. At rank 8, the hero can select a second broad skill and gain a similar bonus. At rank 12, the hero can select a third broad skill and receive the same bonus.

⊗ **Analysis:** At rank 6, a hero who studies a situation (such as a battle, a puzzle, a secured building, and so forth) for at least 5 rounds (1 minute) gains a -1 step bonus on action checks or complex skill checks made in relation to that situation. This benefit lasts throughout the current situation. For instance, if a battle were studied, the effect would last until the battle ended. At rank 10, this step bonus increases to -2.

## Hyper Learning

*1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power allows the hero to assimilate new knowledge rapidly and use it as if he were skilled in the appropriate field. To use this power, the hero must witness or otherwise learn about the skill that she is attempting to "learn" for a minimum of 5 rounds (1 minute). If the hero studies for 3 minutes, she gains a -1 step bonus to the *hyper learning* skill check. This increases to a -2 or -3 step bonus with 10 minutes or 30 minutes of study. Examples of study would include watching a baseball game to learn *Acrobatics-throw*, viewing a stock car race to learn *Vehicle Operation-land*, perusing a programming manual to learn *Computer Science-programming*, or attending a play to learn *Entertainment-act*.

If the *hyper learning* skill check succeeds, the hero gains one free broad skill or two ranks in a single specialty skill (no skill rank may be increased beyond 12). Any skills, skill ranks, or rank benefits gained last for 1 hour per degree of success. No game effect allows



the hero to remember bonus skills beyond this duration, including the Photo Memory perk or similar abilities. Only mundane skills can be learned or improved with this power. The hero cannot use it to learn or improve mindwalking or FX skills.

This power is not cumulative with itself. In other words, a hero cannot increase the same skill a second time until the duration of the first increase has ended.

⊗ **Increased Learning:** At ranks 3, 6, 9, and 12, the hero gains two additional ranks in the chosen specialty skill. This rank benefit would allow a hero to learn both a broad skill, using the power's base ability, and two, four, six, or eight ranks in a single specialty skill of that broad skill.

## Super Intelligence

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power increases the hero's mental quickness and learning ability. The hero's Intelligence increases by 1 point even if this takes the character above a racial maximum. All abilities and statistics based on Intelligence should be altered to reflect this new value. The hero also gains a -1 step bonus to any Intelligence-based complex skill checks except for those based on mindwalking or FX skills.

No additional skill points are gained by the heightened Intelligence granted by this power unless it is selected at the time of hero creation and as an always active power.

⊗ **Improved Intelligence:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the character's Intelligence increases by 1. The Intelligence increase affects all skills and abilities based on Intelligence. However, the hero gains no additional skill points from any of these increases.

⊗ **Simpler Complex Skill Checks:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the number of successes for any Intelligence-based complex skill check except for those based on mind-

walking or FX skills is reduced by 1, to a minimum of 2.

## Super Personality

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power increases the hero's social abilities and charisma. The hero's Personality increases by 1 point even if this takes the character above a racial maximum. All abilities and statistics based on Personality should be altered to reflect this new value. The hero also gains a -1 step bonus to Personality feat checks made to determine a target's starting attitude. (See the Personality Skills section in Chapter 4: Skills in the *Player's Handbook*.) This power lasts for 10 minutes.

⊗ **Improved Personality:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the character's Personality increases by 1. The Personality increase affects all skills and abilities based on Personality.

⊗ **Aura:** At rank 4, the hero's presence causes starting attitudes of supporting cast members to be shifted one column to the right, to a maximum of Charmed, on TABLE P25: ENCOUNTER SKILL EFFECTS in the *Player's Handbook*. Thus, targets who would normally be Hostile to the hero begin as Neutral instead. At rank 8, the Gamemaster should shift initial reactions two columns to the right (Hostile to Friendly, and all others to Charmed). At rank 12, all initial reactions are Charmed. Remember that the hero's actions can cause a target's attitude to drop below this level—only the initial impression is affected.

## Super Will

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power increases the hero's mental fortitude and intuitive capacity. The hero's Will is increased by 1 point even if this takes the character above a racial maximum. All abilities and statistics based on Will should be

altered to reflect this new value. The hero also gains +1 to her resistance modifier against FX or psionics that affect the mind. This power lasts for 10 minutes.

⊗ **Improved Will:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the character's Will increases by 1. The Will increase affects all skills and abilities based on Will. The hero also gains an additional +1 to her resistance modifier against FX or psionics that affect the mind.

## Superior Senses

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

When this power is active, the hero's senses (sight, hearing, smell, touch, and taste) are all enhanced to a superhuman level. In general, a hero with *superior senses* gains a -1 step bonus to any skill check or a reduction of one step to any penalty where improved senses could be of help (Gamemaster's discretion). For example, skill checks include Manipulation, Awareness-perception, or Investigate-search or track. Penalties include those for poor visibility, for poor illumination, and so forth. This power lasts 1 hour per degree of success of the *superior senses* skill check.

Unfortunately, the power has a minor drawback: Any attacks specifically targeting one or more of the hero's senses, such as bright light or loud noise, gain a bonus equal to the hero's sensory bonus.

At the time of hero creation or the power's acquisition, the player can choose to have only a single enhanced sense. This reduces the versatility of the power but grants an additional -1 step bonus to the appropriate situations. For instance, a hero with just *superior sight* would have a -2 step bonus to sight-related skill checks, such as perception.

⊗ **Improved Sensitivity:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the bonus for all senses affected by this power improves by 1 step.



## MOVEMENT

The Movement Super Power FX broad skill covers various special abilities that allow the user to move in nonstandard or accelerated ways. Superhuman speed, flight, rapid attacks, and even teleportation are possible with the specialty skills in this group. While flight and swimming are often granted due to simple physiological changes, such as wings or fins, and teleportation works by bending space or breaking dimensional barriers, the other sorts of powers under this broad skill usually originate from a highly accelerated metabolism or the ability to interact with the real world on a different time scale.

Most Movement specialty skills do not require a skill check to use. Those that do require one rely on Constitution or Will to activate the power.

### Flying

*Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.  
No skill check required.*

This power allows the character to fly or glide at the appropriate combat movement rate. This power uses 1 FX point per 10 minutes of use. Normal penalties for taking actions while gliding or flying apply. (See TABLE P11: COMBAT MOVEMENT EFFECTS in the *Player's Handbook*.) Hovering takes no concentration and inflicts no penalty to actions.

If this power is chosen as always active, the hero has the option of having physical wings to provide flight. These wings can resemble those of birds, bats, insects, or something more exotic. A winged character cannot hover. The benefit of choosing to have wings is that always active wings only costs 2 permanent FX energy points instead of 3.

Characters with this power should consider learning the Acro-

batics-flight specialty skill, since this power itself grants no particular maneuverability.

⊗ **Increased Speed:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the character's fly and glide rates increase to two, three, and four times the base rates.

### Fusillade

*1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.*

This power gives the character the ability to attack more often during combat. During combat, the player rolls an action check as normal. However, the hero can make one extra attack during any phase by spending 1 FX energy point and making a successful fusillade skill check. Activating this power does not take an action. Attempting to use this power in a phase earlier than the hero's action check result applies

a +1 step penalty to the fusillade skill check.

This power can only be attempted once per round whether it is successful or not. After the combat, the character takes 1 point of fatigue damage for every extra action taken during combat.

◆ **Example:** A hero with two actions per round gets an Ordinary result on his action check. The player can try to activate this power in the Amazing or Good phase at a +1 step penalty to allow the hero to attack in one of those phases. Alternatively, he can attempt to make an extra attack in either the Ordinary or Marginal phase after taking his normal action for the phase.

⊗ **Improved Reactions:** At rank 8, the character can use this power up to two times per round, although only one extra action can be taken in any given phase.





## Lightning Speed

Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.  
No skill check required.

This power allows the hero to greatly increase her running speed. Purchasing this skill immediately doubles the character's sprint, run, and walk movement rates. This power costs 1 FX point per 10 minutes of use.

⊗ **Increased Speed:** At ranks 3, 6, and 9, the hero's sprint, run, and walk rates increase to three, four, and five times the base rates.

⊗ **Run across Liquids:** At rank 12, the hero can run across liquid or other nonsolid surfaces, including snow, quicksand, or water. She moves as far as her adjusted run rate in meters before starting to sink.

## Power Swimming

Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.  
No skill check required.

This skill allows the hero to move faster in water or another liquid. *Power swimming* allows the hero to swim at 150% of his normal swim or easy swim movement rate at no FX energy cost. The character can also breathe water and survive water pressure at depths as great as 500 meters, though this capability does not translate into protection against attacks. Each activation of the power lasts 10 minutes.

⊗ **Improved Speed and Resistance:** These rank benefits require activation of the super power to work. At ranks 3, 6, 9, and 12, the character's maximum depth and swim rate increase to two, four, six, and eight times the base values.

## Super Dexterity

Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.  
No skill check required.

This power increases the character's agility and reflexes. The character's Dexterity is increased by 1 point even if this takes the



character above a racial maximum. All abilities and statistics based on Dexterity should be altered to reflect this new value. The character also gains 1 point to her action check score. This power lasts 10 minutes.

⊗ **Improved Dexterity:** At ranks 4, 8, and 12, the character's Dexterity increases by 1. The Dexterity increase affects all skills and abilities based on Dexterity. The hero also gains an additional 1 point to her action check score at each of these ranks.

## Teleportation

1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.  
No skill check required.

This power allows the character to move from one point in space to another without crossing the distance between them. The character can travel up to 1 kilometer with each use of this power. The power can only transport the character and about 50 kilograms of material that he holds or carries to a target location.

The target location must be familiar to the character. The character automatically arrives at the target location safely, although if a solid object has been placed at that exact location, the character automatically is displaced up to 10 meters from that spot and suffers 1 point of fatigue damage from the stress. If no open space exists within 10 meters of the tar-

get location that can contain the character, the *teleportation* fails, and the hero suffers 1 point of fatigue damage.

⊗ **Increased Distance and Carrying Capacity:** At rank 3, the character's *teleportation* distance and the cargo he can carry increases to 10 kilometers and 100 kilograms. These numbers increase to 100 kilometers and 200 kilograms at rank 6, 1,000 kilometers and 400 kilograms at rank 9, and 10,000 kilometers and 800 kilograms at rank 12.

## Wallcrawling

Active or 1 FX energy point  
This skill can't be used untrained.

This power allows the hero to move along horizontal or vertical surfaces without penalty at her normal movement rate. The hero can walk, run, or sprint up a wall or hang upside down from a ceiling without fear of falling or the need for handholds.

The gripping strength of this power is equal to the hero's own Strength Ability Score, so it is still possible to force her off a surface with enough force. This power can also be used to hold onto smaller solid objects, such as ropes, weapons, or other equipment. This power lasts 10 minutes per use.

⊗ **Improved Hold:** At ranks 3, 6, 9, and 12, the character's Strength Ability Score is considered to be 1 point higher for the purpose of holding on with this power.



# CHAPTER 6: FX CREATURES

A book this size can't hope to encompass the variety of magical and super-powered creatures that might inhabit an ALTERNITY game. Instead, this chapter provides a sample of several different familiar beasts and spirits from which the Gamemaster can extrapolate to create additional creatures.

## ANGELS

Angels are powerful benign beings, the counterpart of demons (see separate listing). They hail from an alternate dimension or existence generally labeled "Heaven." They wield fiery weapons and utilize powerful Monotheism Faith FX, though their precise connection to whatever power grants this magic is unclear. Possession attempts by angels use the angel's Will Ability Score. (See the Possession sidebar.)

### Guardian Angel

Guardian angels are divine spirits that guard and protect individuals from harm and act as the defenders of holy sites. They are not the most powerful angels, but they can easily hold their own against lesser demons.

**Description:** Guardian angels appear in the form of beautiful humans possessed of an inner glow. They dress in simple white robes and may or may not manifest great birdlike wings and a halo. They can become completely undetectable and/or intangible at will, although sometimes even then children or animals can see them. They have been known to take animal forms and act as mounts for other celestial beings.

**Encounter:** Guardian angels cannot be summoned, but certain prayers and rituals can attract their attention to a particular place in the real world. When they act, they usually do so in a subtle manner. They influence the path of oncoming projectiles, divert people from the path of harm, or direct mortal agents to intervene. They can return to their home dimension (Heaven) at any time by expending 1 FX energy point. They can do so for no FX energy cost at any site dedicated to a Monotheism religion. All guardian angels know several human languages and can communicate telepathically as often as needed. They are constantly protected by the Monotheism-aura miracle at no FX energy cost.

Guardian angels have a -2 step bonus on their action checks when performing their sworn duty of

protection (either of a person or a location). They can spend their last resort points on behalf of whatever they are protecting. They wield flaming swords in combat and prefer to remain hidden until a foe approaches them rather than use ranged attacks. Some guardian angels may have psionics in addition to their above abilities, but none use cybernetics, seeing them as a corruption of the true form that their creator has granted them.

**Habitat/Society:** Though much has been written about the hierarchy of angels, a complete view of angelic society may be unknowable. Guardian angels have a great enmity for demons of all sorts as well as undead and beings that seek to corrupt or destroy humans.

### Guardian Angel Game Data

STR 10 (d8+6)	INT 11 (d6+8)
DEX 13 (d8+9)	WIL 13 (d6+10)
CON 14 (d6+11)	PER 11 (d8+7)





## Possession

Possession is an FX-based power that allows a being such as an angel, demon, or spirit to take over the mind of a living creature and to use his or her physical body as a vessel in the material world. While possessing a victim, the possessor has access to all of its own knowledge, skills, and nonphysical FX abilities but not those of the victim. The possessor uses the Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution Ability Scores of its host as well as any perks, flaws, or mutations that affect the host's body, such as Great Looks or cybertech not requiring a skill point cost to learn how to use. The consciousness of the host may be entirely absent (as if asleep or dreaming), or it may be aware of its body's actions, a prisoner in its own skin.

As with Voodoo Faith FX, sometimes the target voluntarily gives up control over his or her body. In such cases, possession occurs automatically. In most cases, however, possession is a hostile act. An attempt to possess an unwilling target requires an action, the expenditure of 1 FX point, and a Will or Personality feat check (which feat check depends upon the creature doing the possessing) with a base situation die of +d0. The target's Will resistance modifier modifies this roll. The

attacking being can also expend additional FX energy points during the attempt. Each additional point gives a -1 step bonus to the possession attempt. Success means that the target is possessed. A Critical Failure means the acting being cannot attempt to possess that target again for 24 hours.

More than one creature can possess a person at a time, but each being after the first gives a +1 step penalty to the attempt. Simultaneous possessors can communicate with each other through a sort of low-grade telepathy using the victim's own brain. Should more than one choose to act at a time, each must make an opposed Resolve-*mental resolve* skill check. The winner gains control of the body for 1 round.

A possessed victim can sometimes expel an intruder through force of will. The host can make a *mental resolve* roll with a +3 step penalty once every day to shake off the possessing spirit. In most cases, however, *exorcism* or similar miracles or spells are needed to drive out the possessing agent. (See Monotheism-*exorcism* in Chapter 4: Faith FX.) The entity can leave its host and return to its own form at any time.

Durability: 16/16/8/8  
Move: sprint 30, run 20,  
walk 6, fly 40  
Reaction score: Good/3  
FX energy points: 8

Action check: 16+/15/7/3  
#Actions: 3  
Last resorts: 2

### Attacks

Fiery sword	14/7/3	d6+1w/d8+1w/d4+2m	En/G
Unarmed	14/7/3	d4+2s/d4+4s/d4+6s	LI/O
Possession*	13/6/3	—	—

\*See Possession sidebar for details.

### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. all attacks (*aura* miracle)  
+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks (*blade* skill)  
+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks (Dexterity)  
+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills  
+2 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills  
Armor: d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (EN)

### Skills

Athletics [10]; Melee [10]-*blade* [14]; Unarmed [10]-*brawl* [14]; Acrobatics [13]-*flight* [16]; Stealth [13]-*hide* [16]; Stamina [14]-*endurance* [18]; Knowledge [11]-*language (several human)* [15]; Tactics [11]-*infantry tactics* [13]; Animal Handling [13]; Awareness [13]-*intuition* [16], *perception* [16]; Resolve [13]-*mental* [18], *physical* [15]; Culture [11]; Entertain [11]-*sing* [16]; Interaction [11]-*intimidate* [16].

### Mindwalking Skills

Telepathy [11]-*contact* [15] (no skill check or psionic energy point expenditure required).

### FX Skills

Monotheism-*aura* [15], *blessing* [15], *cure* [15], *demon ward* [16], *guidance* [16].

## Warrior Angel

Warrior angels are the swords of Heaven. They are sent to Earth to battle and destroy the forces of evil. In addition to their combat duties, warrior angels are often chosen as messengers to humankind because their great power and association with holiness are obvious to any who behold them.

**Description:** Warrior angels normally appear in a human form similar to that chosen by guardian angels. They include or dispense with wings and halos depending upon how impressive they wish to appear. They can also appear in other strange forms, each of which has its own special abilities, such as a wheel of fire (whose movement rate is tripled) or a four-faced winged being (which can attack in any direction and has all attacks against it considered to be frontal attacks).

**Encounter:** Warrior angels cannot be summoned, although their attention can be drawn to a specific place on the real world using certain prayers or rituals. If in the material realm, they can return to their home dimension (Heaven) at any time by expending 1 FX energy point. They can do so for no FX energy cost at any site dedicated to a Monotheism religion. Warrior angels are direct and to the point. Subtlety is not in their nature, whether delivering pronouncements from Heaven or smiting evil.



Warrior angels have a -2 step bonus on their action check scores when attacking demons or undead. Like their lesser cousins, they wield flaming swords in melee. They enjoy the double-strike rank benefit from their skill in the weapon. They use silvery bows that launch bolts of fire as they close to sword range. Some may have psionics in addition to their other angelic abilities, but none use cybernetics, seeing them as an imperfection in their divinely granted forms. All know several human languages and can communicate telepathically as often as needed. They are constantly protected by the Monotheism-*aura* miracle at no FX energy cost.

While these statistics describe an average warrior angel, some are much more powerful than this.

**Habitat/Society:** Warrior angels are important members of angelic society. They comprise the divine armies. Like guardian angels, warrior angels hate demons, undead, and corrupters of humankind, and are hard pressed to resist combating them if the opportunity presents itself.

### Warrior Angel Game Data

STR 12 (d6+9) INT 10 (d8+6)  
DEX 13 (d6+10) WIL 12 (2d6+5)  
CON 14 (d6+11) PER 10 (d8+6)  
Durability: 18/18/9/9 Action check: 16+/15/7/3  
Move: sprint 30, run 20, #Actions: 3  
walk 6, fly 50  
Reaction score: Good/3 Last resorts: 1  
FX energy points: 10

#### Attacks

Fiery sword	18/9/4	d6+2w/2d6+1w/d4+4m	En/G
Bow of fire	16/8/4	d6+2w/2d4+2w/d4+2m	En/G
Possession*	12/6/3	—	—

\*See the Possession sidebar for details.

#### Defenses

+3 resistance modifier vs. all attacks (*aura* miracle)  
+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks (Strength and blade skill)  
+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks (Dexterity)  
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills  
Armor: d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (EN)

#### Skills

Athletics [12]; Melee [12]-*blade* [18]; Unarmed [12]-*brawl* [16]; Acrobatics [13]-*flight* [16]; Primitive [13]-*bow* [16]; Stamina [14]-*endurance* [20]; Knowledge [10]-*language (several human)* [14]; Tactics [10]-*infantry tactics* [16]; Awareness [12]-*intuition* [15], *perception* [15]; Resolve [12]-*mental* [18], *physical* [15]; Culture [10]-*diplomacy* [13]; Entertain [10]-*sing* [14]; Interaction [10]-*intimidate* [14]; Leadership [10]-*command* [16], *inspire* [16].

#### Mindwalking Skills

Telepathy [10]-*contact* [14] (no skill check or psionic energy point expenditure required).

#### FX Skills

Monotheism-*blessing* [14], *cure* [12], *demon ward* [14], *signs and portents* [14], *vision* [16].

## CONSTRUCTS

Constructs are artificially created beings given life and at least a semblance of intelligence through the use of FX abilities. In general, they obey their creator's orders, following them to the best of their abilities.

### Golem

A golem is a magically empowered humanoid construct made out of an inert material, such as stone, plastic, wood, metal, or even dead flesh. It is given mobility and limited intelligence. It is almost mindless and obeys only the orders of its creator. It functions like a robot with only a limited ability to interpret its programming.

**Description:** Most golems stand between 1.5 and 2 meters tall and weight anywhere between 50 and 300 kilograms, depending upon the material from which they were formed.

**Encounter:** A golem is most frequently encountered as a guardian or sentry, though some people create golems as assassins. A golem cannot speak or be reasoned with, and its most common reaction is to kill anything its creator doesn't define as acceptable and not to be killed. It obeys the vocal commands of its creator and can be given instructions to trigger at a certain time or event. Its primitive awareness is sufficient to note attacks upon itself and obvious hazards, such as a pit of spikes, fire, or electrical wires. It can also evaluate danger from opponents and use experience to modify its assessments somewhat. For instance, after being attacked by both a bazooka and a stutter pistol, the golem would rate the bazooka's wielder as a greater threat.

Golems are never dazed by loss of stun, wound, or mortal points. While "conscious," golems continue to function as long as they have at least 1 mortal point remaining even if most of their bodies have been destroyed. If knocked down from stun damage, a successful Stamina-*endurance* roll allows golems to rise again at the beginning of the next round with all of their stun points restored. Golems do not heal wound or mortal damage naturally and must be repaired by their creator when they suffer such damage. Golems do not suffer fatigue damage, nor are they harmed or fooled by any attack form that affects a living mind, such as *mind blast*, psionic illusions, and so on.

Many golems are created with one or two generally attack-oriented FX abilities that are typically related in some way to their composition. Those that are



equivalent to existing FX specialty skills should be considered to be rank 3. For example, a golem of bronze or iron might breathe fire equivalent to Pyromancy–*fiery bolt*. A plastic-based golem might emit toxic fumes in a radius of 5 meters that are treated as a caustic agent with an onset time of 1 round and a duration of 5 rounds (1 minute). A flesh golem created as an assassin might be able to track its victim via Hemomancy–*thicker than water*. In any case, each use of the FX ability costs 1 FX energy point.

Some golems are created with specialty skills beyond those listed. Common additions include Athletics–*climb or jump*, Melee Weapons–*blade or bludgeon*, and sometimes Stealth–*shadow*. Such skills are limited to those based on Strength, Dexterity, or Constitution.

The given Ability Scores and statistics given here are for a typical golem of average material strength, such as one made of clay, flesh, or bone. Golems made of lighter materials, such as glass, ice, light plastic, or wood, should subtract 2 from Strength and Constitution and add 2 to their Dexterity Ability Score and action check score. Those made of stronger materials, such as heavy plastic, stone, or metal, would add 2 to their Strength and Constitution Ability Scores and subtract 2 from their Dexterity Ability Score and action check score. A golem's skill scores, damage, resistance modifiers, and other statistics may be altered by these changes.

Though this description applies primarily to magical golems, the same criteria could be used to create battle robots or other Super Power FX creations of this type.

**Habitat/Society:** As a construct, the golem has no true society. It exists only to serve its master.

### Golem Game Data

STR 12	INT 3
DEX 10	WIL 10
CON 14	PER 1
Durability: 14/14/7—	Action check: 12+/11/5/2
Move: walk 4	#Actions: 2
Reaction score: Ordinary/2	Last resorts: 0
FX energy points: 2	

#### Attacks

Punch	13/6/3	d4+2s/d4+4s/d4+1w	LI/O
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#### Defenses

Armor: d4+1 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (En)\*

Immune to mental attacks

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

\*Base armor value. Subtract 2 from all values for light or fragile construction materials, and add 2 to all values for stronger materials.

#### Skills

Unarmed [12]–*brawl* [14]; Stamina [12]–*endurance* [16]; Awareness [10].

#### FX Skills

Skills vary. See description for details.

## Homunculus

A homunculus is created through a specific alchemical ritual. (See the Hermeticism–*homunculus* spell.) It is a small artificial lifeform that obeys its creator's commands.

**Description:** A homunculus usually resembles a small ugly humanoid about 0.5 meters in height with batlike wings. It is capable of only gliding flight.

**Encounter:** A homunculus is usually encountered with its master, though it is occasionally sent out to perform tasks. If its task does not involve interaction, it flees any encounter with a person. The creator of a homunculus can spend last resort points on behalf of his creation.

Rare encounters involve homunculi who have broken free of their master's control. In such an instance, the rogue homunculus seeks to sabotage its creator's plans, sometimes even working directly with the alchemist's enemies.

**Habitat/Society:** The homunculus has no society. It lives wherever its master tells it to live. The homunculus is effectively ageless, though it dies instantly upon the death of its creator.

Within a month of its creation, the homunculus speaks its maker's language and can act independently, though always in accordance with its creator's wishes.

### Homunculus Game Data

STR 5 (d4+2)	INT 7 (d6+3)
DEX 15 (d4+12)	WIL 7 (d6+3)
CON 6 (d4+3)	PER 6 (d6+2)
Durability: 6/6/3/3	Action check: 14+/13/6/3
Move: glide 20, sprint 20,	# Actions: 1
run 12, walk 4	
Reaction score: Ordinary/1	Last resorts: 0

#### Attacks

Bite	9/4/2	d4–1s/d4s/d4w	LI/O
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#### Defenses

–1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

Rubbery composition: d4 (LI), d4–1 (HI), d4–1 (En)

#### Skills

Athletics [5]–*climb* [10], *jump* [10]; Unarmed [5]–*brawl* [9]; Acrobatics [15]–*dodge* [18], *flight* [16]; Manipulation [15]; Stealth [15]–*hide* [18], *shadow* [18], *sneak* [21]; Stamina [6]; Knowledge [7]–*language* (same as creator) [10]; Awareness [7]–*perception* [10]; Interaction [6].

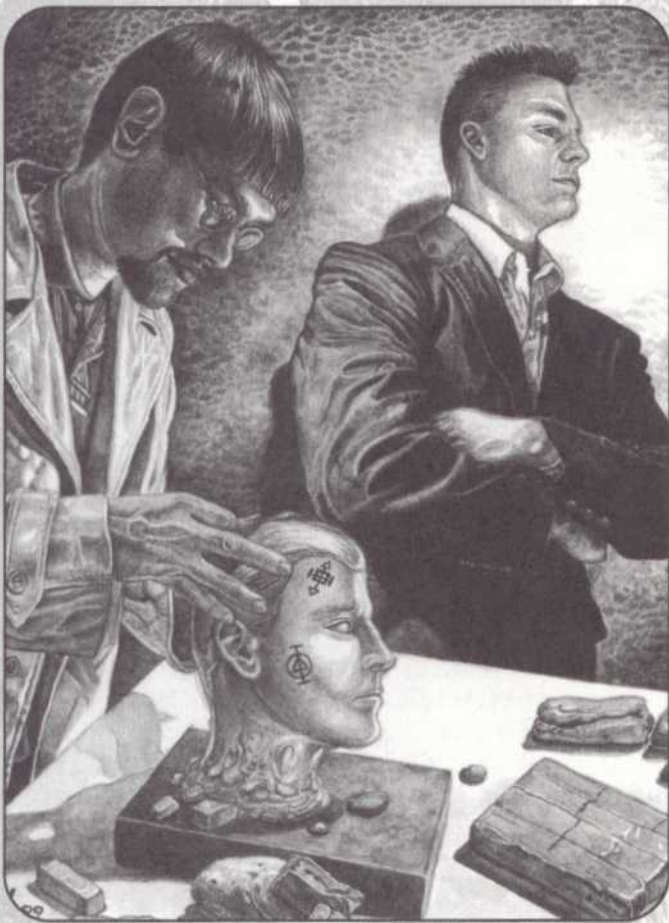


## Simulacrum

A simulacrum is a sort of inferior clone. Fashioned of snow, clay, synthetic flesh, or some other similarly malleable substance, it is given a rough form, and then a form of FX is used to give it the appearance and some knowledge of the person to be duplicated. Creating a simulacrum with Arcane Magic FX may merely empower the body with energy, Faith FX might call a helpful spirit to possess the body, and Super Power FX might involve some sort of strange scientific procedure or might be the process of building a very advanced robot duplicate. Some flesh or blood taken from the being to be copied is required to form the simulacrum, and other trappings related to the sort of FX being used to create it may be necessary. At the end of the creation process, the simulacrum is an exact physical duplicate of the targeted creature. It also possesses some basic knowledge of the being whom it copies.

**Description:** The simulacrum appears as an exact copy of the creature to be duplicated, with some limitations (see below).

**Encounter:** A simulacrum is usually encountered in one of two situations. First, it might remain with its creator, a duplicate of a lost friend or a beloved. Second, it might serve as a spy or secret agent, having assumed another's role in a corporation, government, or other organization.



Regardless of its role, the simulacrum has a personality very similar to the original, though not as vivid. Those people who are familiar with the original can make an Awareness-perception check with a +2 step penalty to determine that there is something amiss with a simulacrum. The simulacrum does not necessarily feel any loyalty to the one who created it, and so a simulacrum of someone hostile to its creator probably needs to be controlled in some way to achieve the creator's goals.

The simulacrum has Ability Scores equal to those of the duplicated person less 2 points per Ability Score. All secondary abilities dependent upon the Ability Scores are calculated according to these new values. The simulacrum also has all broad skills of the original, but all specialty skills are lost with the exception of specialty skills that cannot be used untrained, which are reduced to rank 1. This includes any psionic powers, FX abilities, and so on. Cybernetics and other bodily changes that aren't inherent in the original's genetic structure do not appear in the simulacrum and must be added later if desired. (The exception is the innate cybernetic enhancements that all mechalus share, which are duplicated.) A simulacrum can never have any last resort points. A simulacrum can be built to have fewer skills and lower Ability Scores, but such a poor copy is even easier to spot.

A simulacrum does not heal wound or mortal damage normally. Its owner must repair these injuries by spending FX energy points. Each point spent repairs 1 point of mortal damage or 2 points of wound damage. If reduced to 0 mortals, the simulacrum reverts to its original construction materials, usually losing its form in a dramatic and surprising manner.

**Habitat/Society:** Simulacra have no society. Each one is an individual with no links to others of its kind.

### Simulacrum Game Data

STR original -2	INT original -2
DEX original -2	WIL original -2
CON original -2	PER original -2
Durability: varies	Action check: *varies
Move: varies	#Actions: varies
Reaction score: varies	Last resorts: 0

**Attacks**  
Varies

**Defenses**  
Varies

**Skills**  
See description.



## DEMONS

Demons are implacably evil beings from an alternate dimension that some call "Hell." Their society is somewhat caste-based and contains least, lesser, and greater demons. Each of these types is described below.

The demons described in this book are by no means the only types that can be encountered. The Gamemaster is encouraged to use the templates provided to create unique demons for her own campaign.

### Least Demon

Least demons are the weakest of their kind. They generally serve more powerful masters, such as other demons or diabolists, though some operate independently. The most common type of least demon, the imp, is described below.

**Description:** The imp is a small humanoid with claws and batlike wings. Imps' skin color can be gray, green, red, brown, or combinations of colors. They are no more than 1 meter tall and have gargoylelike features and tiny sharp teeth.

**Encounter:** Imps are rarely encountered alone. They prefer to operate with other imps or are found in the service of diabolists or more powerful demons. They are rather stupid, and their combat tactics usually involve simple ambushes after which they attack in droves in an attempt to overbear their opponents.

**Habitat/Society:** When serving another, imps often work as petty fighters or messengers, handling tasks that don't require much of a brain. Sometimes an imp can be found in the role of a familiar (see separate listing) or a mentor, although the benefits of such an association to either party are dubious.

#### Imp Game Data

STR 7 (d6+4) INT 7 (d8+2)  
 DEX 9 (2d4+4) WIL 6 (d6+3)  
 CON 12 (2d4+7) PER 7 (d6+4)  
 Durability: 16/16/8/8 Action check: 9+/8/4/2  
 Move: sprint 20, run 12, #Actions: 2  
 walk 4, fly 32  
 Reaction score: Marginal/1 Last resorts: 1

#### Attacks

Claws 14/7/3 d4w/d4+2w/d6+2w LI/O

#### Defenses

-1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills  
 Armor (Ordinary): d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4 (En)

#### Skills

Athletics [7]; Melee [7]-bludgeon [8]; Unarmed [7]-brawl [10]; Acrobatics [9]-flight [12]; Stamina [12]-endurance [13]; Knowledge [7]; Awareness [6]; Interaction [7].



### Lesser Demon

Lesser demons are the low-to-mid-level leaders of the demonic hierarchies. Lesser demons can enter the world if summoned or at times or in places where the barriers between dimensions are weak. They can return to their home dimension automatically simply by spending 1 FX energy point.

**Description:** This book describes two kinds of lesser demon: the nali and the succubus. Many other varieties of lesser demons exist, each with a different general form. Most are humanoid and about 2 meters tall, with dark red or brown skin, sharp features, and claws. They often appear as male or female, though gender appears to have almost no relevance among demons. Physical variations in appearance include changes in the shape or location of the eyes, vestigial or functional wings, spines, color variants, or a tail. Some lesser demons may have psionics, cybernetics, or some sorts of Arcane Magic FX.

Nali stand slightly more than 2 meters in height and possess dark brown or black skin. They have nasty claws but no wings. Reports claim that they often smell of sulfur.

In their natural forms, succubi appear as human-like females between 1.5 and 2 meters tall with black hair, reddish skin, and claws. They can change their appearance to resemble almost any human, mechalus, or fraal. They usually choose to be an attractive member of the appropriate species. (Treat



this as if the succubus had the Great Looks perk toward the species she is emulating.) Some succubi even take the form of males, although these prefer boyish male forms rather than muscled bodybuilder types.

**Encounter:** Physically powerful, nali are often called in times of desperation or used as guards in an inner sanctum. They like using large impressive archaic weapons such as elaborate spears, swords, and battle axes.

Succubi are special demonic agents that use their appearance and abilities to discover information, corrupt individuals, and even perform assassinations. Despite their lack of an impressive physical presence, they are respected because of their magical abilities. Their powers of persuasion and seduction allow them to control people and strike when their targets are the most vulnerable.

**Habitat/Society:** Smart, fierce, and capable, lesser demons command imps and others of their kind, though they are confident of their abilities and are not afraid to fight on their own. They can function independently in the world, often building complex plans over a great length of time. They keep themselves well informed about what's going on in their native dimension and with other demons in their current dimension, and these communication skills make them excellent mentors or allies for diabolists.

If operating on their own, nali are not averse to summoning imps or lesser demons if they need the help, although most prefer sticking to local labor, as it is cheaper (and quite tasty). They have also been known to work with succubi, although there does appear to be some sort of rivalry between nali and succubi.

When working with lesser demons or demon princes, succubi assume a deferential attitude. In front of weaker creatures, including imps, humans, and other mortal races, they demand attention and respect. Succubi tend to utilize human technology more than most other types of lesser demons. Their desire to fit in with humanity while on a mission leads many to carry cell phones, laptop computers, or pistols.

### Nali Game Data

STR 11 (d6+8) INT 11 (d8+7)  
 DEX 10 (d6+7) WIL 8 (d6+5)  
 CON 14 (2d4+9) PER 10 (d6+7)  
 Durability: 18/18/9/9 Action check: 12+/11/5/2  
 Move: sprint 20, run 12, #Actions: 2  
 walk 4  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 1  
 FX energy points: 10

#### Attacks

Claws	14/7/3	d4w/d4+2w/d4m	LI/O
Melee weapon	14/7/3	Varies	LI/O
Hellfire	14/7/3	d6+1w/d8+1w/d4+1m	En/O

#### Defenses

Armor: d4+1 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4+1 (En)  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

#### Skills

Athletics [11]—*jump* [14], *throw* [12]; Melee [11]—*blade* [14]; Unarmed [11]—*brawl* [14]; Stamina [14]—*endurance* [15]; Knowledge [11]—*language (specific human)* [14]; Awareness [9]—*perception* [11]; Resolve [9]—*mental* [11]; Culture [10]—*etiquette (human)* [12]; Interaction [10]—*intimidate* [12].

#### FX Skills

Diabolism\*—*hellfire* [14], *rend the weave* [12], *summoning (least demons only)* [13].  
 \*Lesser demons do not have to make sacrifices when casting Diabolism spells (except for *summoning*), nor do they suffer side effects if they roll a Critical Failure when casting.

### Succubus Game Data

STR 8 (d6+8) INT 11 (d8+7)  
 DEX 13 (d6+10) WIL 9 (d6+5)  
 CON 10 (d6+7) PER 14 (d6+11)  
 Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 13+/12/6/3  
 Move: sprint 20, run 12, #Actions: 2  
 walk 4  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 3  
 FX energy points: 10

#### Attacks

Claws	10/5/2	d4w/d4+1w/d4+2w	LI/O
Pistol	14/7/3	Varies	HI/O

#### Defenses

Armor: d4 (LI), d4-1 (HI), d4-1 (En)  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 +1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

#### Skills

Athletics [8]; Unarmed [8]—*brawl* [10]; Modern [13]—*pistol* [14]; Acrobatics [13]—*defensive* [14], *dodge* [14]; Stealth [13]—*hide* [14]; Vehicle [13]—*land* [14]; Stamina [10]—*endurance* [13]; Knowledge [11]—*computer* [12], *language (specific human)* [14]; Awareness [9]—*intuition* [11], *perception* [13]; Investigate [9]; Resolve [9]—*mental* [11]; Culture [14]—*diplomacy* [15], *etiquette (human)* [15]; Deception [14]—*bluff* [15]; Entertain [14]—*dance* [16]; Interaction [14]—*bargain* [16], *charm* [18], *seduce* [18].

#### FX Skills

Diabolism\*—*black warding* [13], *command* [17], *rend the weave* [12], *tongue of the damned* [16].  
 \*As a demon, a succubus does not have to make a sacrifice when casting Diabolism spells, nor does she suffer side effects if she rolls a Critical Failure when casting.



## Greater Demon (Demon Prince)

These very powerful creatures can only be summoned through great sacrifice in the material world, although if conditions are right, they can force their way through dimensional barriers without being called. They can return to their native dimension by spending 1 FX energy point and prefer to leave hopeless fights even if it means that several of their minions will be killed.

Demon princes can sacrifice 1 point from their FX energy pools to empower a person with the ability to use Diabolism FX. This grants a one-time discount of 3 skill points from the base cost of the Diabolism broad skill, though specialty skills must still be purchased as normal. In exchange, the mortal servant swears fealty to the demon prince. This allegiance is documented in a written contract signed with the mortal's blood. Sometimes the prince offers other incentives for signing such a contract, such as possession of an imp servant, study time with a succubus, mortal wealth, and so on.

**Description:** Greater demons superficially resemble lesser demons, though most tower up to 2.5 or even 3 meters in height. Greater demons are commonly called demon princes, but the term "demon prince" is an inclusive one that refers to male, female, and sexless demons of great power. Greater demons' body types, limbs, and sensory organs tend to vary more than those of their smaller counterparts. This variability may be an outgrowth of their superior powers or the shedding of the humanoid form may be required to achieve their levels of power. Demon princes have been known to have the heads of animals; appear to be skeletal; have strange skin colors; or have insect-like exoskeletons, cloven hooves, tails, extra limbs, wings, strange irregular growths, or horns. Some princes also have psionic abilities or use cybernetics.

**Encounter:** Demon princes are a terror in battle. They command lesser demons and imps while tearing creatures apart with their bare hands. They prefer elaborately decorated simple weapons such as spears, swords, and polearms when they use weapons, although some of them use weapons of fire or electricity. (Treat such weapons as a star sword.) They also like to use their FX abilities to panic and scatter their foes.

**Habitat/Society:** Demon princes are rarely seen in the real world. They prefer to work headquartered in their home dimension through their servant demons and diabolists. In addition to directing their underlings remotely, demon princes sometimes answer summonings indirectly without manifesting physically. Instead, they manifest as a presence in the supplicant's mind or by possessing a nearby person. Greater demons use their Personality Ability Score when attempting to possess a target. (See the Possession sidebar for more information.)

## Typical Greater Demon Game Data

STR	13 (d6+10)	INT	12 (d8+8)
DEX	12 (d6+9)	WIL	12 (d6+9)
CON	15 (d6+12)	PER	12 (d8+8)
Durability:	20/20/10/10	Action check:	17+/16/8/4
Move:	sprint 28, run 18, walk 6	#Actions:	3
Reaction score:	Good/2	Last resorts:	2
FX energy points:	15		

### Attacks

Claws	17/8/4	d4w/d4+2w/d4m	LI/O
Sword	19/9/5	d6+1w/d8+1w/d4+2m	LI/O
Possession*	12/6/3	—	—

\*See the Possession sidebar for details.

### Defenses

**Armor:** d8 (LI), d8 (HI), d8 (En)  
+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
+1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills  
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

### Skills

Athletics [13]; Melee [13]—*blade* [19]; Unarmed [13]—*brawl* [17]; Stamina [15]—*endurance* [18], *resist pain* [16]; Knowledge [12]—*deduce* [15], *language (human specific)* [16]; Law [12]—*human/demonic contracts* [15]; Awareness [12]—*perception* [14]; Resolve [12]—*mental* [16], *physical* [16]; Culture [12]—*diplomacy* [13], *etiquette (human)* [15]; Interaction [12]—*bargain* [16], *intimidate* [16]; Leadership [12]—*command* [14].

### FX Skills

Diabolism\*—*binding* [18], *black warding* [15], *command* [18], *hellfire* [16], *rend the weave* [16], *spiritwrack* [16], *summoning* [17], *tongue of the damned* [15].

\*Demon princes need not make a sacrifice when casting Diabolism spells, even for *summoning*. It is assumed that princes summon one of their underlings, who must answer the call. They do not suffer side effects if they roll a Critical Failure when casting.

## ELEMENTALS

Elementals are semisentient animated masses of matter formed through the use of specific Arcane Magic FX spells. Four types of elementals are described here: air, earth, fire, and water. The Game-master should feel free to devise others using these as templates.

**Description:** Each elemental appears as a collection of the substance for which it is named. An air elemental is an amorphous and barely visible cloud of gas about 1 cubic meter in size. An earth elemental is a roughly anthropomorphic piece of stone about 1.5 meters tall with short legs, long arms, and a lump on its shoulders where a head should be. A fire elemental is a mercurial area of leaping flames 1 to 2 cubic



meters in size (about as big as a bonfire). A water elemental is a blob of fresh or salt water that usually takes the form of a puddle or hemisphere about 1 cubic meter in volume.

**Encounter:** As a nonliving animated piece of matter, an elemental does not feel pain, nor does it have any true sensory organs, a brain, or an instinct for self-preservation. Thus, it obeys the individual that gave it its semblance of life, carrying out its orders to the best of its intelligence and ability. As a side effect, all elementals are immune to any effects that target the mind. This includes encounter skills, ESP—*empathy* and *mind reading*, all Telepathy specialty skills, and any FX spells, miracles, or super powers that fit into this category.

Each type of elemental tends to have specific kinds of tasks assigned to it. The air elemental is weak but good at moving swiftly and carrying small objects or messages. It can mimic anything it hears with surprising accuracy, and can remember and recite noises and conversations it hears for up to 1 hour after hearing them. It flies naturally and hovers effortlessly, although its speed can be affected by adverse winds. It attacks with blasts of air (range 3/6/9 meters) or small thrown objects that it can hurl as if it had a Strength of 12.

The earth elemental is best at tasks that require strength without needing finesse, such as breaking down walls, moving heavy objects, or pounding opponents into oblivion. Its ability to hide has more to do with its substance than skill. It can assume its untransformed shape indefinitely, during which time it looks just like a normal piece of rock.

The fire elemental is best at tasks that cause a lot of destruction without regard for preservation of anything valuable nearby. Its touch causes burns. Merely coming in contact with it causes d4 points of stun damage, and it can throw incendiary sparks up to 3/6/9 meters. Either its touch or the sparks it can throw are capable of igniting flammable materials. The elemental itself is completely unharmed by heat or flames, and it requires no fuel to exist.

A water elemental can creep through small spaces, and its substance allows it to easily short out electrical equipment, although it suffers d4+1 points of stun damage when it does so. A water elemental's fluid form protects it from most damage, including falling, and its familiarity with the dynamics of working in an underwater environment allow it similar freedom in situations of low gravity. In addition to a bludgeoning attack with a watery pseudopod, it can envelop a target with a successful attack roll, causing its victim to suffocate. (See the Suffocation section in Chapter 3: Gamemasters in Action in the *Gamemaster Guide*.) Any damage taken by an enveloping water elemental inflicts equal damage to its victim, though the victim enjoys the benefit of the elemental's natural armor. The water elemental looks like an ordinary puddle of water when it relaxes itself and is able to hide in

plain sight in this fashion. For similar reasons, it is nearly impossible to detect when moving through liquid. Its malleable body and subtle attack form make it an excellent infiltrator, saboteur, and assassin.

**Habitat/Society:** Elementals have no society since they are nothing more than simple matter given animation through magic. They exist outside the normal chain of life.

An elemental that is destroyed due to damage or whose animative spell runs out returns to its original form. Air elementals disperse into nothingness, earth elementals crumble into pieces or return to their original shape if not destroyed, fire elementals burn out, and water elementals lose their cohesion.

### Air Elemental Game Data

STR 4	INT 4		
DEX 14	WIL 8		
CON 10	PER 1		
Durability: 10/10/5/5		Action check: 15+/14/7/3	
Move: fly 60		#Actions: 2	
Reaction score: Ordinary/2		Last resorts: 0	

#### Attacks

Air blast	14/7/3	d4s/d4+2s/d4+4s	LI/O
Thrown object	10/5/2	Varies	LI/O

#### Defenses

-2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Immune to mental effects (see above)  
 Intangibility: d6 (LI), d6 (HI), d4-2 (En)

#### Skills

Athletics [4]-*throw* [10]; Acrobatics [14]-*flight* [18], *zero-g* [18]; Stealth [14]-*hide* [16], *shadow* [16], *sneak* [16]; Stamina [10]-*endurance* [12].

### Earth Elemental Game Data

STR 15	INT 4		
DEX 6	WIL 8		
CON 16	PER 1		
Durability: 16/16/8/8		Action check: 10+/9/4/2	
Move: walk 4		#Actions: 2	
Reaction score: Marginal/1		Last resorts: 0	

#### Attacks

Pummel	18/9/4	d6+3s/d6+5s/d4+3w	LI/O
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#### Defenses

+3 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 -1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Immune to mental effects (see above)  
 Armor: d6+2 (LI), d4+2 (HI), d4 (En)

#### Skills

Unarmed [15]-*brawl* [18]; Stealth [6]-*hide* [10]; Movement [16]-*trailblazing* [20]; Stamina [16]-*endurance* [18].



**Fire Elemental Game Data**

STR 6 INT 4  
 DEX 12 WIL 8  
 CON 12 PER 1  
 Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 14+/13/6/3  
 Move: walk 4, run 12 #Actions: 2  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 0

**Attacks**

Burning touch 12/6/3 d6s/d6w/2d6w En/O  
 Spark 10/5/2 d4s/d4w/d4+2w En/O

**Defenses**

-1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 Immune to mental effects (see above)  
 Immune to heat and fire  
 Intangibility: d4 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d8+2 (En)

**Skills**

Athletics [6]-climb [10], jump [10], throw [10];  
 Unarmed [6]-brawl [12]; Stamina [10]-endurance [14].

**Water Elemental Game Data**

STR 12 INT 4  
 DEX 10 WIL 8  
 CON 14 PER 1  
 Durability: 14/14/7/7 Action check: 12+/11/5/2  
 Move: walk 4, swim 60 #Actions: 2  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 0

**Attacks**

Pseudopod 14/7/3 d4+1s/d4+3s/d4+5s LI/O  
 Suffocation attack 10/5/2 Special Special

**Defenses**

Immune to mental effects (see above)  
 Nonsolid form: d4 (LI), d6+1 (HI), d4-2 (En)

**Skills**

Unarmed [12]-brawl [14]; Movement [12]-swim [18];  
 Acrobatics [10]-fall [13], zero-g [13]; Stealth [10]-  
 hide [12]; Stamina [14]-endurance [16].

**SPIRITS**

Spirits are noncorporeal beings of pure life energy. In the material world, they often have little direct power and normally work through living creatures—plants, animals, or faith-endowed sentients. In the spirit world, the resident spirits have true power, and visiting sentients are the supplicants.

In the physical realm, most spirits are considered to have Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution Ability Scores of 0 in terms of being able to directly move or affect material things. They cannot take any physical actions. However, if attacked in a way that can affect their spiritual selves, such as via psionics or FX, they

use their normal Ability Scores to resist. So, a spirit might automatically fail at an attempt to close a door because it has a Strength Ability Score of 0, but if subjected to an FX attack that required it to make a Stamina-endurance check, it would use the listed Constitution Ability Score. Special circumstances also arise when a spirit is possessing or assisting a material creature through methods such as various shamanistic or voodoo miracles. In these cases, the spirit uses the body of its host as a vehicle and relies upon its host's physical Ability Scores for determining skill scores. For example, if a warrior spirit with a Strength of 15 and Unarmed Attack-brawl at rank 5 possesses a fraal with a Strength of 6, the fraal's Strength is used as the base value to which the rank number for *brawl* is added.

These spirits also have an attack called *possession*. The possession attack is presented as the score needed to possess an unwilling host. (Possessing a willing host requires no skill check.) It works as described in the Possession sidebar. The Ability used is noted in the Encounter section for each spirit.

**Ancestor Spirit**

Most shamanistic societies believe that when a person dies, that person's spirit goes to the spirit world and joins other tribal spirits. Shamans are able to talk to these spirits, call on them for advice, and even receive their direct aid. The most strong-willed ancestor spirits tend to be tribal leaders, great warriors, wise people, and other shamans, and it is these sorts of ancestor spirits that a shaman encounters most frequently.

**Description:** In the real world, ancestor spirits are invisible and without physical form, although they can be made to manifest before the shaman or tribe in a ghostly fashion with the proper ceremony. When so manifesting or in the spirit world, the ancestor spirit appears as an ephemeral version of the form she had in life with some modifications based on the nature of the spirit. For instance, warrior spirits generally appear to be in the prime of their lives even if they died of old age.

**Encounter:** Ancestor spirits in the real world seek only to aid their descendants with their knowledge, and prefer to retreat to the spirit world rather than fight directly. (Spirits of dead tribespeople who behaved in a cowardly or self-serving manner are usually confined or destroyed by the other spirits when they reach the spirit world, so malevolent tribal spirits are very rare.) Having been venerated by generations of their people, ancestor spirits expect a certain amount of respect and are not averse to ignoring or punishing shamans who treat them rudely. Killing an ancestor spirit in the material world only results in driving it back to the spirit world.

In the spirit world, ancestor spirits are proud protectors of their people who exchange their knowledge



and aid for news of their tribe and specifically their descendants. An ancestor spirit that is destroyed in combat within the spirit world can spend a last resort point to reform itself. Last resort points spent this way take a year to recover.

Ancestor spirits have the same Ability Scores as they did in life. Most have Ability Scores of at least 12 in their profession's most important Abilities, and few have any Ability Scores below 9. Ancestor spirits, just like powerful living heroes, can be assumed to have spent achievement points on increasing their Ability Scores. Their spirit selves have the same values in durability, action check scores, and so on as their living selves did. The statistics and skills presented below illustrate a warrior spirit. The Gamemaster should use this as a template for creating other ancestor spirits.

Ancestor spirits use their Personality Ability Score to possess targets.

**Habitat/Society:** Ancestor spirits exist in an extradimensional spirit world among others of their kind. Apparently, it is possible for them to interact with one another in the spirit world. In fact, when different tribes of shamanistic people go to war, their ancestor spirits sometimes fight each other in the spiritual realm. One tribe's misfortunes in the physical world can even be due to preemptive attacks in the spirit world from the ancestor spirits of another tribe. In times of spiritual conflict, the shamans make sure that their people speak of the ancestor spirits and that ceremonies are performed on their behalf. These actions maintain and renew the strength of the tribe's spirits.

### Ancestor (Warrior) Spirit Game Data

STR 12 (2d4+7) INT 9 (2d6+2)  
 DEX 10 (2d6+3) WIL 10 (2d6+3)  
 CON 12 (2d4+7) PER 9 (2d6+2)  
 Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 13+/12/6/3  
 Move: fly 36 #Actions: 2  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 1

#### Attacks

Possession*	9/4/2	—	—
Unarmed**	15/7/3	d4+1s/d4+2s/d4+3s	LI/O
Spear**	16/8/4	d4+1w/d4+3w/d4+1m	LI/O
Bow**	14/7/3	d4w/d4+2w/d4+3w	LI/O

\*See the Possession sidebar for details.

\*\*In spirit world only.

#### Defenses

Invisibility (+4 to resistance modifiers vs. melee and ranged attacks)  
 Intangibility: d8+2 (LI), d8+4 (HI), d8 (En)

#### Skills

Athletics [12]—throw [14]; Melee [12]—blade [16];  
 Unarmed [12]—brawl [15]; Acrobatics [10]—flight [14];  
 Primitive [10]—bow [14]; Stealth [10]—hide [12], shadow [12], sneak [12]; Movement [12]—swim [14]; Stamina [12]—

endurance [16]; Survival [12]—training (specific terrain) [14]; Knowledge [9]—language (specific human) [12], tribal history [14]; Awareness [10]—intuition [11], perception [12]; Investigate [10]—track [12]; Resolve [10]—mental [11]; Interaction [9]; Leadership [9].

## Animal Spirit

Shamanistic societies believe that every type of animal has one or more spiritual counterparts in the spirit world. These animal spirits are stronger, wiser, and more powerful than their representative animals and can be convinced to aid others.

**Description:** In the real world, animal spirits are invisible and without physical form. In the spirit world, they appear as large and powerful versions of the animal they represent.

**Encounter:** Animal spirits in the real world recognize that they are outsiders and prefer to retreat to the spirit world if confronted. Killing one in the real world only results in driving it back to the spirit world.

In the spirit world, animal spirits are ancient and powerful examples of animalkind. They are used to being treated with respect by visitors, including shamans, and enjoy flattery and gifts. A shaman who attacks or angers an animal spirit may awaken from her trance mentally crippled for her transgressions against the spirit world.

An animal spirit that is destroyed in combat within the spirit world can spend a last resort point to reform itself. Last resort points spent this way take a year to recover. When an animal spirit is killed in this fashion, it reflects badly upon mundane animals of that type, resulting in sickness, fewer births, and so on. When these signs are noted, shamans perform ceremonies to lend strength to the animal spirit to speed its recovery.

To create a typical animal spirit, begin with the statistics for a normal animal of its type. Animal spirits add +1 to all Ability Scores and use the "Animal" scores as the base for Intelligence and Personality. Thus, a crocodile spirit is dimwitted, stubborn, and crude, while a lion or elephant spirit has mental faculties superior to the average human being. Animal spirits also have a +1 to action check scores, specialty skill ranks, and resistance modifiers vs. melee and ranged attacks when compared to normal animals of their kind. The statistics below illustrate a typical wolf spirit. Skills in **color** are possessed by all animal spirits at the appropriate rank. Animal spirits understand **zoology** for the purpose of identifying other animals and animal spirits and understanding how they fit into the ecology of an area (predator or prey). Their Culture skill only pertains to the culture of the people who venerate them.

Animal spirits use their Will Ability Score to possess targets.

**Habitat/Society:** Like ancestor spirits, animal spirits seem to have some sort of spirit world society or





hierarchy, though almost nothing is known about how it functions.

### Animal (Wolf) Spirit Game Data

STR 12 (d4+10) INT 12 (d4+10)

DEX 12 (d4+10) WIL 13 (d4+11)

CON 10 (d4+8) PER 12 (d4+10)

Durability: 10/10/5/5 Action check: 15+/14/7/3

Move: sprint 56, run 36, #Actions: 2  
walk 10, fly 60

Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 2

#### Attacks

Possession\* 13/6/3 — —

Bite\*\* 14/7/3 d6+1s/d4+1w/d4+3w L/O

\*See the Possession sidebar for details.

\*\*In spirit world only.

#### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks

+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

+1 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

+2 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

Invisibility (+4 to resistance modifiers vs. melee and ranged attacks)

Intangibility: d8+2 (LI), d8+4 (HI), d8 (En)

#### Skills

Acrobatics [12]–flight [15]; Stealth [12]–shadow [14];

Movement [10]–race [12]; Stamina [10]–endurance [14];

Knowledge [12]–language (specific human) [15]; Life [12]–zoology [15]; Awareness [13]–intuition [17], perception [15]; Investigate [13]–track [18]; Resolve [13]–mental [16], physical [15]; Culture [12]; Interaction [12].

### Common Loa

The loa, or voodoo spirit, is an enigmatic supernatural entity called to this world by a houngan, or voodoo priest. Hundreds of different loa populate the spirit world in the voodoo faith. Some are particularly powerful and specialized, while others are weaker and more varied in ability. Each has its own preference for sacrifices, and the proper combination of sacrifice and ceremony is needed to call a particular loa to the real world.

**Description:** Loa without bodies are invisible and virtually intangible. They can only be detected and affected by certain psionic or FX abilities. However, each loa has a known physical appearance and a preference for a certain style of dress and behavior. A possessed person tends to dress like the loa possessing him and to assume its mannerisms. Sometimes his facial features even change to resemble the possessing loa. Loa that have animal aspects often result in odd behavior in their hosts, as a snake loa will move about by slithering and not use its host's limbs. Individuals possessed by loa can always recognize each other as such and identify their respective loa.

**Encounter:** Loa are generally called to help people, and the sacrifices make them feel obligated to do so.



A loa only turns malicious if mistreated or not given a proper sacrifice. If attacked when it has no body, it immediately attempts to possess its attacker, hanging around for a time if successful to disrupt the person's life before finally returning to where it came from.

Voodoo spirits can exist independent of a body when in the material realm, but they prefer possessing (generally called *riding*) a body (called a *cheval*, a word meaning "horse") both for the sake of comfort and to acquire the ability to experience physical sensations such as smoking, drinking, and eating. (An un-bodied loa must make a *mental resolve* roll every round to avoid the compulsion to possess a nearby person. Loa use their Personality Ability Scores to possess targets.) It is because of this intense desire to experience physicality that the houngan normally acts as the recipient of the loa or has a volunteer host the spirit. If someone does not do so, the loa cannot enjoy the goods sacrificed to it, which are usually consumed by the *cheval*. A loa that is refused a host often becomes angry and attempts to ride the houngan that called it. If a loa without a body is killed or its *cheval* is killed, it is forced back to the spirit world.

The listed statistics describe a common loa of no particular specialty. Loa dedicated to specific interests, such as agriculture, serpents, love, war, storms, or water, have skills more appropriate to their specialty. More powerful loa have higher Ability Scores and skill ranks as well as more FX energy points.

**Habitat/Society:** Little is known of what the voodoo spirit world is like. However, complex relationships exist between many loa, particularly the more powerful ones. Some are said to be married or otherwise related to one another.

### Common Loa Game Data

STR 8 (d12+2) INT 9 (d8+5)  
 DEX 12 (d6+9) WIL 10 (d8+6)  
 CON 8 (d12+2) PER 11 (d8+7)  
 Durability: 8/8/4/4 Action check: 14+/13/6/3  
 Move: fly 60 #Actions: 2  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 1  
 FX energy points: 6

#### Attacks

Possession\* 11/5/2 — —  
 \*See the Possession sidebar for details. Physical attacks of possessed body vary.

#### Defenses

Intangibility: d6+1 (LI), d6 (HI), d4+1 (En)  
 Invisibility: +4 resistance modifier vs. melee and ranged attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

#### Skills

Stamina [8]—*endurance* [10]; Acrobatics [12]—*dodge* [14], *flight* [14]; Manipulation [12]—*pickpocket* [14], *prestidigitation* [14]; Awareness [10]—*intuition* [12],

*perception* [12]; Resolve [10]—*mental* [11]; Interaction [11]—*charm* [12].

#### FX Skills

Voodoo—*Erzuli's fetish* [14]; *helpful possession* [14], *loa of healing* [13].

## UNDEAD

The FX creatures called *undead* are beings that are no longer alive but maintain an existence either through force of will or necromantic energy. Undead creatures can be animated bodies, parts of bodies, or disembodied spirits. As they are not alive, they do not require air, sustenance, or sleep, and are unaffected by ailments of the flesh such as disease, most poisons, and fatigue. They can function normally in any radiation environment, atmospheres that are inert, moderate, or toxic, pressures less than crushing, and temperature environments from frigid to torrid. Undead creatures without bodies, such as ghosts, have an even greater range of acceptable environments. The fact that undead beings lack living brains makes them immune to direct attacks upon the mind such as *mind blast*, possession, and so on. Most do not heal if damaged, although the more powerful or intelligent sorts can repair themselves with surgery or supernatural ability.

## Ghost

A ghost is a bodiless spirit. It is usually the spirit of a sentient creature that suffered a traumatic death, but sometimes it is the victim of dark magic. Though ghosts share some characteristics with spirits, they do not fit into the same category of being as ancestor spirits, animal spirits, and loa.

**Description:** A ghost normally appears as a transparent, faintly glowing, barely visible version of its living self, although a few unusual ghosts have looked so normal that those they interacted with didn't know they were dead. In bright light, ghosts become virtually invisible and require a successful Awareness—*intuition* roll to detect. A hero with the Psionic Awareness perk or ESP—*sensitivity* can detect a ghost's use of mindwalking powers.

**Encounter:** Because it is practically invisible on a good day, a ghost usually has to resort to making noises, blowing drapes, or making candles or light bulbs flicker to be noticed. In important circumstances, a ghost can use Telepathy—*contact* to converse with the living. Heroes familiar with spiritual interactions, such as shamans, houngan, and necromancers, may possess FX abilities that facilitate normal conversation with a ghost.

A ghost generally resents its undead state and only persists in its half-existence to right a wrong, haunt those that caused its death, or convey a message, although some ghosts have gone mad and are



completely malevolent toward all living things. A ghost is usually restricted to the area of its physical death or the location of its body. Those that engage in combat utilize their telekinetic abilities to manipulate light, air, and physical objects. Many ghosts also have the power of possession. (See the Possession sidebar.) Ghosts use their Will Ability Scores for possession. Some possess FX powers, such as Mesmerism or Illusion Arcane Magic FX.

A ghost's partial presence in the material universe protects it from most things that would cause it harm. Some mystical or chemical property of silver interferes with a ghost's residual life force, and so weapons of silver ignore most of a ghost's intangibility. Weapons specifically enchanted to affect spirits (FX devices) also have this effect.

Physical barriers do not affect ghosts, so they might appear within a sealed room or in deep space. Only FX-based or psionic barriers can prevent a ghost's movement. (Certain scientific devices used to track or contain ghosts would be considered FX devices.)

If a ghost is dispersed through magic or violence, it can use its last resort point to reform itself. This last resort point takes a year to be restored, and since during this time the ghost is vulnerable to a permanent death, it normally goes into hiding if it perceives even the slightest threat.

**Habitat/Society:** Ghosts live among humans near the place where they died, but they are rarely seen by anyone. They have little or no society of their own and can linger for hundreds or even thousands of years.

### Ghost Game Data

STR 4 (d4+2) INT 9 (2d6+2)  
DEX 10 (2d4+5) WIL 11 (2d6+4)  
CON 8 (d4+6) PER 8 (2d6+1)  
Durability: 8/8/4/4 Action check: 15+/14/7/3  
Move: fly 28, sprint 14, #Actions: 2  
run 10, walk 4  
Reaction score: Ordinary/2 Last resorts: 1  
Psionic energy points: 6\*  
\*Add 1 psionic energy point per 10 years of the ghost's existence.

#### Attacks

Psychokinetics 14/7/3 Special LI/O

#### Defenses

Intangibility: +5 resistance modifier to melee and ranged attacks (only +2 vs. silver weapons)  
+1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills

#### Skills

Acrobatics [10]—*flight* [15]; Stealth [10]—*hide* [20], *sneak* [20], *shadow* [20]; Stamina [8]—*endurance* [20], *resist pain* [20]; Awareness [11]—*perception* [14]; Interaction [8]—*intimidate* [12].

#### Mindwalking Skills

Telekinesis [11]—*photokinetics* [14], *psychokinetics* [14]; Telepathy [8]—*contact* [10].

#### FX Skills (Rare)

Illusion—*moving pictures* [14] or *Mesmerism—emotion* [12].

## Skeleton

A skeleton is a set of human or alien bones given artificial mobility with the application of necromantic energy.

**Description:** A skeleton is literally nothing more than an animated set of bones that maintains its cohesion through magic. The bones move stiffly but are nearly as agile as a normal human being. Many skeletons carry simple weapons.

**Encounter:** Skeletons are practically mindless and cannot think for themselves. They exist only to obey the commands of their creators. Because they are too stupid to understand how to reload weapons, they are normally given simple fighting implements such as clubs, axes, or swords. They usually attack en masse to wear down or distract potential threats to their creators.

A skeleton's nonliving nature also makes skeletons extremely resistant to damage. Any stun damage they take goes away at the beginning of the next combat round. Skeletons are never dazed from stun, wound, or mortal damage. Skeletons are also tireless and never suffer fatigue damage.

The statistics given are for a human skeleton. A fraal or t'sa skeleton has a Strength and Constitution 1 point lower than a human. A mechalus has +1 on all three categories of armor due to metallic enhancements of its skeletal structure. (Cyberware that requires an active mind to use is nonfunctional, but an extended battleclaw works normally.) A sesheyan has the same modifiers as a fraal skeleton and is unable to fly. A weren has a Constitution 1 point higher than a human. The skeletons of other creatures may vary. The Gamemaster should determine statistics using these as a template.

**Habitat/Society:** Skeletons have no societal structure or place within a natural habitat.

### Skeleton Game Data

STR 7 INT 2  
DEX 8 WIL 3  
CON 10 PER 1  
Durability: 10/10/5/— Action check: 11+/10/5/2  
Move: run 10, walk 4 #Actions: 2  
Reaction score: Marginal/1 Last resorts: 0

#### Attacks

Claws 8/4/2 d4s/d4+2s/d6+2s LI/O  
Blade or bludgeon 11/5/2 Varies LI/O



**Defenses**

Armor: d4+1 (LI), d4 (HI), d4-1 (En)

Blunt weapons (those using *Melee-bludgeon* to attack or clublike powered weapons such as the gravmace) inflict an additional 2 points of damage vs. skeletons.**Skills**

Melee [7]-blade [11], bludgeon [11]; Unarmed [7]-brawl [8]; Stamina [10]-endurance [15].

**Vampire**

A vampire is a human or alien that has been changed supernaturally into an undead creature that feeds upon blood. Vampires possess a broad range of personalities and mentalities and can be animalistically brutish or calculatingly brilliant.

**Description:** Vampires appear to be alive, though a little pale, unless scrutinized carefully. A hero who makes a successful *Awareness-perception* check with a +2 step penalty can note small clues to their undead state, such as slightly reddened eyes, enlarged incisors, or an odor of dirt or old blood.

**Encounter:** When they wish to feed, vampires usually isolate victims and use their skills, supernatural powers, and Strength to overpower them. A vampire's bite attack doesn't necessarily mean it is draining blood from its target. The vampire's ability to *command* works exactly like the *Diabolism-command* skill but without the infernal connections or requirement of a sacrifice. The vampire can use this ability up to three times per day as long as it has fed in the past 24 hours.

Vampires are never dazed from stun, wound, or mortal damage and continue to function as long as they have at least 1 mortal point left. If knocked out due to damage, the vampire makes *Stamina-endurance* skill checks to recover as normal. A successful check means that the vampire recovers all its stun points and can act, but not that it recovers wound or mortal damage.

A vampire must feed on blood by draining at least 1 mortal point from a victim every 24 hours, or it loses 1 point from its Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution. If this loss occurs, each additional mortal point drained from a victim restores 1 day's loss. A vampire reduced to 0 in one or more of these Ability Scores cannot move and dies if it runs out of mortal points due to this starvation. As long as it has fed in the past day, a vampire heals 1 point of wound damage every 4 hours and 1 point of mortal damage per 24 hours.

Vampires cannot abide sunlight. They sustain 2 points of wound damage every phase they spend in it. They are also vulnerable to fire, taking an extra point of damage from fire-based attacks. Disease and most poisons cannot harm them, although they can convey these hazards to those upon whom they feed. Unlike most undead creatures, vampires become lethargic during the daytime and suffer a +1 step penalty to

action checks and all actions during this time. They prefer to spend the day resting in a safe, secluded place.

A vampire can create a new vampire by draining all blood from a victim and then expending 1 FX point just before the victim dies. This FX point expenditure represents the feeding of some of the vampire's blood to the victim. The targeted creature rises from its state of apparent death in a number of hours equal to 24 minus the creature's Constitution Ability Score. The new vampire possesses its original abilities, all the powers of a vampire, and 0 FX energy points. Such vampires are loyal to their creators. To resist its creator's commands, a new vampire must make a *Resolve-mental resolve* check with a +3 step penalty. Every month that passes after creation this penalty goes down by one step, and the young vampire gains 2 FX energy points. After 3 months, the young vampire is free of its master's control and can now create vampires of its own.

The statistics given are for a common human or mechalus vampire. A fraal vampire has a Strength and Constitution 2 points lower than a human but has all the mindwalking abilities it had in life. A sesheyen vampire has a Strength and Constitution each 1 point lower than a human but a Dexterity 2 points higher. A t'sa vampire has +1 to armor in all three categories and a +2 to its Dexterity, while a weren has a Strength and Constitution 2 points higher than a human and a +1 to claw damage. Also, older or more powerful vampires may have higher Ability Scores and additional supernatural powers such as shapechanging, flight, and advanced mental abilities.

**Habitat/Society:** Unlike most undead creatures, vampires have something vaguely like a societal structure, though not all vampires occupy spots within it. A vampire generally demands obedience from those newer vampires it creates. Also, younger, less powerful vampires often defer to the wisdom or control of their elders. Conflicts between vampires are frowned upon. Of course, vampires existing in isolated areas may know nothing of this society.

**Vampire Game Data**

STR 12 (d6+9)	INT 10 (2d6+3)
DEX 12 (d6+9)	WIL 12 (2d4+7)
CON 12 (d6+9)	PER 10 (2d6+3)
Durability: 16/16/8/8	Action check: 15+/14/7/3
Move: sprint 30, run 20, walk 8	#Actions: 3
Reaction score: Ordinary/2	Last resorts: 1
FX energy points: 6	

**Attacks**

Claws	13/6/3	d4+1w/d4+2w/d4+1m	LI/O
Bite	13/6/3	d4w/d4+1w/d4m	LI/O
Drink blood*	—	1m	—

\*This attack can only be made against a helpless victim (one who is sleeping, unconscious, or otherwise



unresisting). It automatically succeeds and inflicts 1 point of mortal damage per round.

**Defenses**

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 +1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills  
 Armor: d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4-1 (En)

**Skills**

Athletics [12]—*jump* [18]; Unarmed [12]—*brawl* [13];  
 Stealth [12]—*hide* [16], *shadow* [16], *sneak* [16]; Stamina  
 [12]—*endurance* [16], *resist pain* [14]; Knowledge [10]—  
*language (specific)* [13]; Awareness [12]—*intuition* [14],  
*perception* [14]; Interaction [10]—*charm* [13], *seduce* [16].

**FX Skills**

Mesmerism—*dominate* [16].

**Zombie**

A zombie is a human or alien corpse artificially animated with necromantic energy. The zombie should not be confused with the voodoo *zombi*, who is a person under the influence of a particular Voodoo miracle.

**Description:** Zombies appear as decomposing corpses. Sometimes they possess a faint magical glow in their eyes or eye sockets. They rarely carry weapons or tools and usually rely upon their hardened nails in combat.

**Encounter:** Zombies are practically mindless and cannot think for themselves. They exist only to obey the commands of their creators. They are often used as expendable guards or soldiers.

Like all undead creatures, zombies are immune to many types of attacks. However, certain attacks that specifically target animal tissue, such as flesh-eating bacteria, simply result in the zombie decaying into an animate skeleton over the course of the attack. (See the separate Skeleton entry.)

Zombies are extremely resistant to harm. Any stun damage they take goes away at the beginning of the next combat round. Zombies are also never dazed from stun, wound, or mortal damage and continue to function as long as they have at least 1 mortal point left.

The statistics given are for a human or mechalus zombie. Zombies cannot use any cyberware that requires thought, although body plating or an extended battleclaw works normally. A fraal zombie has a Strength and Constitution 1 point lower than a human zombie. A sesheyan has the same modifiers as a fraal skeleton and cannot fly. A t'sa zombie has +2 to armor in all three categories. A weren has a Strength and Constitution 1 point higher than a human zombie and can use its normal claw damage, but it is not able to use camouflage.

**Habitat/Society:** Zombies have no society. They serve only as loyal troops for a necromancer.

**Zombie Game Data**

STR 12	INT 3		
DEX 8	WIL 3		
CON 14	PER 1		
Durability: 14/14/7/7		Action check: 9+/8/4/2	
Move: walk 4		#Actions: 2	
Reaction score: Marginal/1		Last resorts: 1	

**Attacks**

Claws	13/6/3	d4+2s/d4w/d4+2w	LI/O
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**Defenses**

+1 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 Armor: d4 (LI), d4 (HI), d4-2 (En)

**Skills**

Unarmed [12]—*brawl* [13]; Stamina [14]—*endurance* [16],  
*resist pain* [20].

**OTHER FX CREATURES**

A variety of other FX creatures that don't fit into other categories exist for use in a Gamemaster's campaign.

**Familiar**

A familiar is an animal companion to a user of Arcane Magic FX. As long as the familiar is within 10 meters of the arcanist, the two are in contact via a special form of Telepathy—*contact*, although the communication is considered at the Ordinary level for that skill and limited by the animal's intelligence.

**Description:** A familiar is usually a small creature such as a bird, cat, rat, toad, or small snake, but it is more intelligent than a normal animal of its type and has a mystical bond with its master. Extremely unusual familiars are sometimes supernatural creatures in animal form. These unusual creatures are most commonly associated with diabolists. Such a familiar has normal statistics, but it generally has one FX specialty skill at rank 1.

**Encounter:** Familiars do not initiate combat unless directed to do so by their arcanists. Typically, they flee or hide if threatened, but defend themselves if cornered. Familiars usually attack in the manner typical of their animal species, though they do so with more cunning.

When a familiar is in physical contact with its arcanist, the arcanist gains a -1 step bonus to his FX rolls. The familiar also has 1 FX energy point that the arcanist can use while in physical contact with it. The familiar recovers this point every 24 hours. A supernatural diabolist familiar can also opt to use its FX energy point to power its own FX specialty skill. While a familiar and its arcanist are in contact, what-



ever magical or mundane defenses the arcanist is using also protect the familiar.

The familiar has its own last resort point, and the arcanist can spend his own last resort points on the animal's behalf. If the arcanist purchases a last resort point, the familiar gets one as well if it doesn't already have one.

**Habitat/Society:** Familiars don't generally socialize with other familiars, though they sometimes interact as animals with others of their species. They never let the bonds or calls of their species take precedence over the bond they have with their arcanist, though. Should a familiar ever be killed, the arcanist immediately takes stun and wound damage equal to the familiar's Constitution Ability Score and permanently loses 1 FX energy point. These losses do not apply if the familiar dies of natural causes.

### Familiar Game Data

STR 2 (d4)      INT 4 (Animal 12 or d4+9)  
 DEX 10 (d4+9)      WIL 10 (d4+9)  
 CON 4 (d4+2)      PER 4 (Animal 12 or d4+9)  
 Durability: 4/4/2      Action check: 10+/9/4/2  
 Move: sprint 12, run 8,      #Actions: 1  
       walk 2  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2      Last resorts: 1 (see text)  
 FX energy points: 1 (see text)

#### Attacks

Bite/claw      4/2/1      d4-2s/d4-1s/d4s      LI/O

#### Defenses

-2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +1 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks

#### Skills

Unarmed [2]-brawl [4]; Stealth [10]; Stamina [4]-endurance [8]; Awareness [10]-perception [15]; Resolve [10]-mental [11].

Each familiar has additional skills that vary by species. Here are some examples:

*Bat:* Acrobatics-flight 3. (Move: glide 12, fly 24)

*Cat:* Athletics-climb 2; Acrobatics-fall 3;

Stealth-shadow 3, sneak 3.

*Rat:* Stealth-hide 3, sneak 1.

*Snake:* Stealth-sneak 3.

*Toad:* Movement-swim 3. (Move: easy swim 1, swim 2)

## Gardhyi

The gardhyi are an alien species of beings of unknown origin that have been spotted with increasing frequency in the frontier regions of space. More information on the gardhyi appears in the *Alien Compendium: Creatures of the Verge* accessory for the STAR\*DRIVE campaign setting.

**Description:** Gardhyi are tall humanoids who average about 1.8 meters in height. They have hairless, gray skin and can pass for a human or mechalus with



the proper clothing, such as a dark coat, dark eye-shades, and a dark hat or hood. They have four fingers and two thumbs on each hand; narrow, slitted eyes; a wide mouth full of sawlike, triangular teeth; and a flexible, cartilaginous frame.

**Encounter:** Gardhyi investigate ancient alien sites and work to discredit witnesses of alien or paranormal encounters. They often work in pairs and pretend to be agents of some secret government organization or mysterious corporation. They are extremely hardy and capable of amazing physical feats. They also have mindwalking powers and several unique FX abilities that they use to further their agenda.

**Habitat/Society:** Nothing is known of the gardhyi's society, if any exists. Any captured gardhyi quickly manage to kill themselves rather than be interrogated. It is possible that they serve some sort of alien social structure or master, perhaps even an alienist god.

### Gardhyi Game Data

STR 12 (d6+9)      INT 13 (2d4+8)  
 DEX 14 (d6+11)      WIL 12 (2d6+5)  
 CON 13 (2d4+8)      PER 11 (2d4+6)  
 Durability: 13/13/7/7      Action check: 16+/15/7/3  
 Move: sprint 26, run 16,      # Actions: 3  
       walk 6, swim 12  
 Reaction score: Ordinary/2      Last resorts: 2  
 Psionic energy points: 12  
 FX energy points: 10



## Gardhyi Shadow FX

The essence of the gardhyi's Shadow FX abilities is the use of darkness and shadow to conceal, confuse, and mislead. It is not known how the gardhyi achieved this power over light, but all gardhyi encountered have been able to use it to some degree. Unlike many other sorts of Arcane Magic FX, there appear to be no complex rituals needed for or drawbacks involved in gardhyi Shadow magic; this ability to employ the magic so easily may be an advantage that just the gardhyi have. If they were to teach Shadow magic to another race or if the secrets were stolen from them, there could be strange side effects. (Skills that cannot be used untrained are shown in color.)

Skill (Ability)	Cost
Shadow	8
Call Shadows (WIL)	3
Darksight (WIL)	3
Shadow Bolts (WIL)	3
Strange Eyes (WIL)	3

### Call Shadows

Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point  
 This skill can't be used untrained.

This spell causes the shadows in the area immediately near a gardhyi to gather and deepen, making it more difficult for people to notice the gardhyi. Observers and passersby get a +1 penalty to all Awareness checks to spot the alien for every degree of success of the skill check. The spell only covers an area about 2 meters in diameter. This area of effect covers up to just beyond the reach of a typical gardhyi. The effect is immobile and remains in place even if the gardhyi leaves. It lasts for 1 hour.

⊗ **Increased Effect:** At rank 4, the gardhyi can enlarge the area to approximately 4 meters across. At rank 8, the shadows deepen, increasing the penalty to +2 steps/+3 steps/+4 steps. At rank 12, the effect can move with the gardhyi, although only at a movement rate of 2. If the gardhyi moves faster than that, it passes out of the shadowed area, and the shadows remain in its former position.

### Darksight

Transform spell; 1 FX energy point  
 This skill can't be used untrained.

This spell allows the gardhyi to see better in low-light conditions or even total darkness. The spell lasts 10 minutes and reduces the penalty from low light or darkness by 1, 2, or 3 steps.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At ranks 3, 6, 9, and 12, the duration increases by 10 minutes.

### Shadow Bolts

Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point  
 This skill can't be used untrained.

This spell creates a dark bolt of energy that fires from the gardhyi's hand to numb the target on a successful hit. The bolt has a range of 10/20/30 meters and inflicts d4s/d4+2s/d4+4s (En/O). Because these bolts give off no light and cause no sound, they are often used from positions of concealment, such as the *call shadows* spell.

⊗ **More Bolts:** At rank 4 and 8, the spell creates an additional bolt of energy.

⊗ **Increased Damage:** At rank 6, the damage increases to d4+2s/d4+4s/d6+4s (En/O). At rank 12, it increases to d4+4s/d6+4s/d6+6s (En/O).

### Strange Eyes

Conjure spell; 1 FX energy point  
 This skill can't be used untrained.

This spell, which is similar to *Mesmerism-confuse*, affects the mind of the target, causing him or her to be more susceptible to mental influences. Furthermore, it causes the target to have difficulty remembering the encounter with the gardhyi. The target of the spell has a 1, 2, or 3 step reduction in its Will resistance modifier (reducing the modifier to 0, but never lower) and a similar penalty to rolls to recollect specific details of the encounter with the alien. For the greatest benefit it must be cast near the beginning of the encounter. The spell lasts 10 minutes, although the memory difficulties surrounding the conversation are permanent.

⊗ **Increased Duration:** At rank 4, the spell lasts for 30 minutes. At rank 8, it lasts for 1 hour. At rank 12, it lasts for 2 hours.

#### Attacks

Unarmed	16/8/4	d4+4s/d6+4s/d4+2w	LI/O
Blacklaser pistol	17/8/4	d4+2w/d6+2w/d4m	En/O

#### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. melee attacks  
 +3 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
 +2 INT resistance modifier vs. encounter skills  
 +1 WIL resistance modifier vs. encounter skills  
 Armor (improved CF long coat): d6+2 (LI), d4+3 (HI), d6+1 (En)

#### Skills

Athletics [12]-*climb* [14], *jump* [14]; Unarmed [12]-*power* [16]; Manipulation [14]-*lockpick* [16]; Modern [14]-*pistol* [17]; Stealth [14]-*shadow* [17], *sneak* [15]; Vehicle Operation [14]; Stamina [13]-*endurance* [15]; Knowledge [13]-*language (specific)* [16]; Administration [12]; Awareness [12]-*intuition* [14], *perception* [14]; Investigate [12]-*interrogate* [14], *search* [13]; Resolve [12]-*physical* [13], *mental* [13]; Culture [11]-*diplomacy* [13]; Deception [11]-*bluff* [12], *bribe* [12]; Interaction [11]-*intimidate* [14].



### Mindwalking Skills

ESP [13]—*clairvoyance* [14], *mind reading* [15], *navcognition* [14], *postcognition* [15], *sensitivity* [14].

### FX Skills

*Shadow-call shadows* [15], *darksight* [13], *shadow bolts* [14], *strange eyes* [14].

### FX Devices

**Star Web (Superscience Gadget):** This device is a special nanotech web implanted under the skin of the gardhyi that allows an advanced form of teleportation. The device has to be programmed with the coordinates of a location when the user is at that location, so it can only teleport its user to somewhere it has been before. The star web can travel up to 25/50/75 light-years with an Ordinary, Good, or Amazing success.

The star web causes fatigue damage every time it is used. The damage it inflicts and the number of FX energy points needed to activate it depend on the distance it is used to travel: 1 point for 100 kilometers or less, 2 for a more distant location on the same planet, 3 for travel to a location in the same star system but off the current planet, or 4 for travel to another star system. These costs double for the second use in a day, triple for the third, and so on. If the gardhyi runs out of fatigue points, the device starts inflicting mortal points instead. These costs are in addition to the normal FX energy cost of activating the device.

The star web also acts as a self-destruct device. If a gardhyi is ever knocked unconscious, the device engages this self-destruct subroutine and fries itself, killing the gardhyi in the process. Gardhyi can also voluntarily engage this effect to kill themselves to avoid being captured alive.

## Genius Loci

A genius loci, or *local spirit*, is a localized supernatural entity that seeks to drive off or kill anyone who enters its territory. Most are formed because of serious emotional trauma that takes place in a certain location, such as a series of ritual killings or a mass drowning, or as the residue of terrible magic being used at a site, such as the summoning of a powerful demon or the magical torture or imprisonment of many souls.

**Description:** Typical genius loci are a haunted ship or house, a creepy forest, a lake or river, or even something as large as an entire planet. A genius loci is so closely tied to its location that it is not a distinct being. It has no discrete parts that can be wounded or manipulated with conventional or even psionic attacks. To “kill” a genius loci would require the accomplishment of the difficult feat of the destruction or magical alteration of the entire territory it controls (such as through a series of exorcism miracles). Localized phenomena (trees, doors, and so on) can be harmed normally, but this does not affect the genius

loci as a whole. In fact, such actions only tend to make it more angry.

**Encounter:** Genius loci have an awareness of all living creatures within their territory. Some choose to attack anything within this area, including animals, while some only strike against sentient beings while leaving the native creatures alone. A genius loci attacks with whatever means are on hand: a lake would form a small whirlpool to pull people downward into itself, a forest would snap or drop branches, a house could slam doors, and so on. Regardless of the form of the attacks, they all inflict the damage listed below. These attacks do not use FX energy points.

Genius loci are effectively immune to most attacks a group of heroes could direct against them, which is why they have no durability or armor scores. The best option is to try to escape from them.

Genius loci also use their skills and FX abilities against trespassers in creative ways. The *throw* and *psychokinetics* skills might be used to hurl stones from the sky, *Animal Handling* and *emotion* could be used to frighten riding animals, while *emotion* and *suggest* could be used on native creatures to compel them to attack intruders. *Photokinetics* could be used to cause strange lights in the distance, and *animate dead* could be used to send slain associates to harry and kill. Other genius loci have additional FX abilities that they use to intimidate their prey, such as causing blood to ooze from walls, inflicting nightmares on a person's sleep, and so on.

Whether the genius loci's powers are psionic or FX in nature, FX energy points power them all. They recover FX energy points in the normal fashion, and so they prefer to conserve their energy by using their special abilities on one person at a time. They also hope that they can drive their target into attacking others in its group. For every person it kills, a genius loci's FX energy pool increases by 1.

While a genius loci avoids communication unless trying to get someone to leave, it is possible to communicate with one on a rudimentary level with psionic or FX abilities such as *empathy*, *contact*, and so on. This communication is limited by the intentions of the spirit and usually consists of little more than “Leave this place” or “You will all die here.” Certain protections, such as the *aura* and *demon ward* miracles, are effective in thwarting a genius loci's attacks for a time, although the sheer mass of the haunted place is enough to eventually wear down defenders.

When left unmolested, a genius loci becomes dormant, losing 1 point from each of its Ability Scores every week that it is undisturbed. As soon as someone enters its field of awareness, however, its Ability Scores return at a rate of 1 per hour until they are at their full normal values.

**Habitat/Society:** Genius loci essentially are their habitat. They have no social structure, just enmity against those that cross their paths.



**Genius Loci Game Data**

STR 10 INT 10 (d6+7)  
 DEX 10 WIL 13 (d4+11)  
 CON 10 PER 10 (d6+7)  
 Durability: — Action check: 11+/10/5/2  
 Move: — #Actions: 1  
 Reaction score: Marginal/1 Last resorts: 1  
 FX energy points: d6+4

**Attacks**

Varies 10/5/2 d4+1s/d4+3s/d4w LI/O

**Defenses**

See text.

**Skills**

Athletics [10]—throw [11]; Unarmed [10]—brawl [11]; Stamina [10]—endurance [12]; Manipulation [10]; Animal Handling [13]; Awareness [13]—intuition [14], perception [14]; Interaction [10]—intimidate [14].

**Mindwalking Skills**

Telepathy—illusion [11], suggest [13]; Telekinesis—photokinetics [16], psychokinetics [16].

**FX Skills**

Mesmerism—emotion [13]; Necromancy—animate dead [11].

**Methrahn**

The methrahn (singular and plural) is a species of alien creatures from a distant region of space. These creatures serve the godlike beings that dwell in their home.

**Description:** The main body of a methrahn is a wrinkly ovoid mass of pale green tissue one-half meter across. It is covered in a hard chitinous resin. Six black eye-spheres are organized near the front of this ovoid. Extending from the underside of this mass are four wiry muscular legs built into an "X" pattern. These end in narrow feet that have toes that extend both toward and away from the central body. A wide hornlike protrusion extends upward from the back of the central body. Its translucent material shows green and blue liquid circulating slowly within it. On each side of and next to the horn are two 1-meter manipulative tentacles. Each tentacle is 1 centimeter thick and very flexible. Fine hairs line one side of each tentacle. Finally, the rear of the creature sports two vestigial batlike wings. Thin black tissue connects the narrow wing-bones.

A methrahn can walk or run in any direction at its normal speed. It can also climb up nearly vertical surfaces at its walk rate without penalty so long as the material being climbed is soft enough for its strong toes to penetrate, which is the case with wood, earth, or soft stone. This method of travel uses only a methrahn's feet and therefore leaves its tentacles free to manipulate objects. Its wings are useless for flight or gliding, although they do extend and flap when it



is agitated or excited. It communicates by vibrating fluid within its horn and can simulate most human-like languages. It can breathe water or air, and it requires only small amounts of oxygen to breathe.

**Encounter:** Methrahn are most often encountered working at the center of alienist cults or orchestrating other strange occurrences. When discovered, they seek to destroy intruders in preference to interacting with them. In combat, a methrahn can rear up on two of its legs at a time, striking with its claws, although it often prefers to use a strange energy weapon that humans have dubbed a warp pistol. This wandlike object is designed to be held by a methrahn tentacle. It apparently taps into the methrahn's own store of FX energy points to fire a small spacewarp at its target. This effect is vaguely similar to the mass pistol's short-lived singularity. Each use costs the methrahn 1 FX energy point. Statistics for the warp pistol appear below.

Methrahn augment their natural hardiness with a force field of alien design. Their items are apparently powered or recharged with Alienism magic, as they quickly become useless outside the hands of a methrahn or an Alienism cultist.

Methrahn prefer to flee (using Alienism—bend space) rather than allow themselves to be slain. However, if killed, most of a methrahn's body dissolves into a goo that smells like cherries. This goo is a potent contact neurotoxin (onset time 1 minute, attack



duration 5 minutes). Anyone who touches it receives a +2 penalty to the Constitution feat check necessary to navigate this poison hazard. What remains after a methrahn is killed are any items it carries, most of the central body's resinous shell, and several large splinters of bonelike material.

**Habitat/Society:** The methrahn are agents of the Alienism gods. They travel across the reaches of space, forming small enclaves of their kind to search for disciples and useful artifacts that can aid the cause of their strange masters. They do not suffer any negative effects from using Alienism magic. Methrahn like to train students in the ways of Alienism and then turn them free to form cults of worshipers. They subsequently frequently sacrifice such cultists en masse in order to power some strange device.

### Methrahn Game Data

STR 8 (d4+6) INT 14 (d4+11)  
DEX 14 (d4+12) WIL 13 (d4+11)  
CON 14 (d4+12) PER 8 (d4+6)  
Durability: 14/14/7/7 Action check: 17+/16/8/4  
Move: sprint 20, run 12, #Actions: 3  
walk 4  
Reaction score: Good/3 Last resorts: 1  
FX energy points: 15

#### Attacks

Claws	8/4/2	d4s/d4+1s/d4+2s	LI/O
Warp pistol	16/8/4	d4+2w/d6+2w/d6m	En/O

#### Defenses

+2 resistance modifier vs. ranged attacks  
Armor: d4+2 (LI), d4+1 (HI), d4-1 (En)  
Force Field: +2 resistance modifier vs. melee and ranged attacks

#### Skills

Modern [14]-pistol [16]; Manipulation [14]; Stealth [14]-shadow [15]; Stamina [14]-endurance [16], resist pain [15]; Computer Science [14]; Knowledge [14]-deduce [15], language (methrahn) [17]; Life [14]-xenology [18]; Medical [14]-surgery [15], xenomedicine [15]; Physical [14]-astronomy [15]; Technical Science [14]; Awareness [13]-perception [14]; Resolve [13]-mental [15]; Culture [8]; Interaction [8].

#### FX Skills

Alienism-bend space [20], dirge of the null-mind [16], eyes of the dark ones [16], tongue of the infinite stars [20].

#### Weapon Information

**Warp Pistol:** Skill Mod-pistol; Acc -1; Md F; Range 20/40/80; Type En/G; Damage d4+2w/d6+2w/d4+1m; Actions 4; Clip Size special; Clip Cost —; Hide +1; Mass 1; Avail —; Cost —.

## Shapeshifter

The shapeshifter is a strange creature with the ability to assume the forms of humanlike creatures. It nor-

mally only wants to be left alone. To accomplish this goal, it assumes the identity of a dead or forgotten person and lives that person's life.

**Description:** In its natural form, the shapeshifter is about 1.6 meters tall, slight of build, and has gray skin and androgynous features. However, it can assume any humanoid form using its FX ability (see below).

**Encounter:** If a shapeshifter's identity is discovered or even if someone just gets suspicious of one, the shapeshifter tries to silence that individual. After all, finding a new identity is tedious and requires extensive research, planning, and subtle *mind reading*. However, if it can't dispose of the target, it instead flees the area, shifting through multiple forms as it mixes with a nearby crowd. When attacking someone who suspects it, a shapeshifter prefers to use direct physical means such as its claws or a well-placed bullet.

**Habitat/Society:** Most shapeshifters are loners who prefer to live quietly at the fringes of society, though some instead prefer to hide among the populations of large cities. A society of shapeshifters has never been discovered, nor do they appear to interact with each other on a regular basis.

### Shapeshifter Game Data

STR 10 (d6+7) INT 12 (d4+10)  
DEX 11 (d6+7) WIL 13 (d4+11)  
CON 12 (d4+10) PER 11 (d4+9)  
Durability: 12/12/6/6 Action check: 13+/12/6/3  
Move: sprint 20, run 12, walk 4 #Actions: 3  
Reaction score: Good/3 Last resorts: 2  
Psionic energy points: 6  
FX energy points: —\*

\*The shapeshifter's FX powers are considered always active, so they require no FX points to use.

#### Attacks

Claws	11/5/2	d4+2s/d4w/d4+1w	LI/O
Pistol	12/6/3	Varies	HI/O

#### Defenses

Malleable flesh: d4-1 (LI), d4-2 (HI), d4-3 (En)

#### Skills

Athletics [10]; Unarmed [10]-brawl [11]; Acrobatics [11]-dodge [13], fall [13]; Manipulation [11]-pickpocket [13]; Modern [11]-pistol [12]; Stealth [11]-hide [13], shadow [13]; Vehicle [11]-land [12]; Stamina [12]-endurance [13]; Survival [12]; Knowledge [12]-language (specific human) [15]; Medical [12]-psychology [14]; Awareness [13]-intuition [14], perception [14]; Resolve [13]; Culture [11]; Deception [11]-bluff [14]; Interaction [11]-charm [12].

#### Mindwalking Skills

ESP [12]-mind reading [16]; Telepathy [11]-mind shield [15].

#### FX Skills

Body Alteration-shapeshifting [16].



# CHAPTER 7: FX DEVICES

Physical objects that have been imbued with FX abilities are called FX devices. They are predictable, relatively easy to use, and limited in what they can do. FX devices that use Arcane Magic FX are called magic items, those that use Faith FX are known as holy relics, and those that use Super Power FX are superscience gadgets. All three function in essentially the same manner, and have the following features in common:

- ▶ All have only one FX broad skill.
- ▶ Most have only one specialty skill at rank 1.
- ▶ Most can be used once per day and cost the user no FX energy points to activate.
- ▶ When activated, most devices automatically generate an Ordinary success.

FX devices have one of four possible types of operation:

- ▶ They are mentally, verbally, or physically activated by their bearers.
- ▶ They are activated automatically when certain conditions are met.
- ▶ They are activated automatically at a regular chronological interval.
- ▶ They operate constantly.

The first type of FX device is any sort that requires a conscious effort by the bearer in order to function, such as an alien weapon with an obvious trigger or a lamp that summons a genie when rubbed. The second type includes devices built to act automatically in emergency situations, such as a pair of boots that levitate their wearer whenever he falls more

than 2 meters or a helmet that activates a psionic shield whenever it detects psionic activity nearby. The third is a cyclic device, such as a ring that automatically heals its wearer of 1 wound point of damage every 24 hours or a belt that adds to its wearer's Strength from sunrise to noon. The last type is always active, such as a cloak that adds +1 to its wearer's Dexterity resistance modifier or an amulet that gives its wearer +2 to her resistance modifiers against Arcane Magic FX.

Superscience gadgets deserve some extra attention at this point. Many types of Super Power FX-wielding characters don't have any innate super powers but instead rely upon superscience gadgets. These gadgets can be as simple as a flight ring or as complex as an alien suit of attack armor with the power to teleport, control electricity, and heal its wearer. Superscience gadgets utilize science and technology beyond the normal level for the campaign. In a PL 7 campaign, a body tank is a normal piece of equipment. In a campaign played in the American Old West, a body tank is a superscience gadget that would require FX energy points be spent to use it. Similarly, if the PL 7 campaign had a body tank with the ability to teleport, it would be a superscience gadget that used FX energy points to power the teleport ability. The Gamemaster should keep the following question in mind when creating a superscience gadget: *Is there an item available that duplicates these effects without using FX?* If the answer is yes, it might be a

good idea to use the mundane item and save the FX for something else.

## CREATING FX DEVICES

This section discussing how to build FX devices for a campaign is written with the expectation that its rules will be used by a player with an FX-using hero (with the Gamemaster's permission, of course). The rules work just as well for Gamemasters looking to create FX devices for heroes or supporting cast members. Anyone building an FX device must have three things in mind: the device's powers (FX skills), the device's means of operation, and the device's power source.

### Phase 1: Imbuing FX Skills

A hero building an Arcane Magic or Faith FX device must possess the appropriate FX broad and specialty skills that the device is to contain. A character without at least a single rank in *Diabolism-summoning* cannot create a device with that specialty skill. A hero who is building a Super Power FX device need not have the skills desired. Instead, she can create a superscience gadget that uses any skill or skills desired.

Given these strictures, the constructing hero must spend skill points equal to the full *list price* of the appropriate broad skill and the desired rank of any specialty skill or skills being built into the



device to make it. An FX device must have at least rank 1 in one or more FX specialty skills to function. The only limit to the number of FX specialty skills and their ranks is the number of skill points the hero wishes to spend.

## Phase 2: Means of Operation

While the hero is creating the device, he needs to decide what sort of trigger the device is to have: by bearer, by condition, chronological, or constant. For the first two types of triggers, the hero must define exactly what the trigger is, such as a command word, a gesture, exposure to vacuum, and so on. For the third type of trigger, the hero must decide when the device triggers itself, such as at sunrise, at midnight, on Wednesdays, and so on. The fourth trigger doesn't need a declaration, but it does affect Phase 3 of the device's construction.

In any case, the duration of the effect depends on the duration of the spells, miracles, or powers placed within.

## Phase 3: Power Source

Once the hero has chosen the device's skills and defined its trigger, she next must set the device's power source. Two methods of powering an FX device exist. The easier and less costly method is for the user to provide the FX energy to power the device. She merely spends the appropriate number of FX energy points at the time the device is triggered, and the desired power activates. Of course, this power source means that if the hero has no FX energy points, the device is useless. However, it also means that the device is less likely to be used against the hero if it falls into the wrong hands, since a character without FX energy cannot activate the device.

Most devices are instead built with their own supply of FX energy so that anyone can operate them. Such energy supplies regenerate every 24 hours. Most simple devices are built with 1 FX energy point. This point allows the device's FX specialty skill to be used once per day. The builder can place more FX energy into the device to increase its number of uses per day appropriately, giving it two uses for 2 FX energy points, and so on. These figures assume the FX specialty skill uses only 1 FX energy point. More expensive skills require a proportionally higher FX energy investiture for similar results. For example, a device with a 2 FX energy point skill needs 2 FX energy points built into it to be usable once per day, 4 to be usable twice per day, and so on.

For every FX energy point built into an FX device, the hero creating it *permanently* marks off one box from her FX energy pool. The hero is depleting her own energy to create the device. These points can be replaced by spending achievement points to increase the size of the hero's FX energy pool as per the rules in Chapter 1: FX Rules.

If an FX device is to operate constantly and is to have its own FX energy, the device requires that three times the normal number of FX energy points be invested in it. A device with a skill that costs 1 FX energy point to activate must have 3 FX energy points built into it by its creator in order to function constantly. A device with two such powers would require 6 FX energy points built into it, and so on.

If an FX device is to operate constantly and has no FX energy of its own, 1 FX point must still be built into it. To activate the device, the user must spend FX energy points equal to three times the activation cost of the device's FX skills. These points cannot be recovered while the device is in use. The user's FX energy pool is effectively reduced by that many points while the device is being used.

## Phase 4: Completing the Work

Creating an FX device is not an instantaneous process. The procedure takes two days for every skill point built into the device plus 10 days for every FX energy point built into the device. In this case, one "day" means approximately 8 hours of work in a 24-hour period. The hero is allowed to rest between these sessions but cannot skip a day, or any skill points or FX energy points invested in the device are wasted.

When this period has ended, the hero must make a skill check using any of the skills that he included in the device (player's choice) if building an Arcane Magic or Faith FX device, or the hero must make a Technical Science-*invention* skill check if building a Super Power FX device. At the Gamemaster's discretion, one or more other skills may be used to assist. For instance, if he was building a computerized FX device, a hero might use Computer Science-*hardware* to assist. If creating a magical potion, Physical Science-*chemistry* could help. If the item to be imbued with FX power was a piece of art, one of the Creativity specialty skills could be useful.

With an Ordinary or better success, the device is completed and is functional. A Failure or Critical Failure means that the device does not work and that all skill points and FX energy points invested in it are lost. Of course, last resort points can be used to alter the results of this check.

## EXAMPLES OF FX DEVICES

Here are a few sample FX devices.

**Infernal Toad:** This magic item is a copper statue of a fang-mouthed toad. If a cup of human blood is poured into it at midnight, it uses the Diabolism-*summoning*



## Building FX Constructs

The creation of homunculi, golems, and simulacra follows different rules from those used for the creation of other FX devices. (See Chapter 6: FX Creatures.) For homunculi, refer to the *Hermeticism-homunculus* spell in Chapter 3: Arcane Magic FX.

For golems, begin with a base skill point cost of 5. To this, add 5, 10, or 15 skill points for golems made respectively of light, medium, or heavy materials. Next, determine the total skill point cost for all additional mundane or FX skills the golem will have above the default skills listed in the creature description. Add half of this to the base cost and materials cost to determine the final total of skill points required. The creator must then contribute 1 FX energy point, plus 1 FX energy point per FX specialty skill possessed by the golem, plus 1 FX energy point per 2 FX energy points to be possessed by the golem. (Remember that golems can't have more than 6 FX energy points.)

To creating a simulacrum, begin with a base cost of 5 skill points. Add 1 skill point for every 10 points of Ability Scores of the individual to be duplicated. Then add 2 points for every broad skill possessed by the original individual. The creator must also contribute 2 FX energy points plus a number of FX energy points equal to the number of points the simulacrum is to have.

When determining skill point costs for creating golems and simulacra, round all fractions up. Calculate creation times for golems and simulacra in the same manner as for other FX devices.



spell to summon a least demon. The activating character has to bargain with the demon normally to get a task from it. The blood is the sacrifice necessary to entice the demon. The blood cannot be replicated with achievement or FX energy points. Cost: 15 skill points (*Diabolism-summoning 1*); 1 FX energy point; 40 days.

**Flying Mathematic:** This small, winged figurine is made of twisted wire, and parts of the wire display a series of numbers. Once per day, if it is held and the numbers are concentrated upon, this magic item allows a person to fly at double the normal fly movement rate for up to 10 minutes. Cost: 27 skill points (*Hermeticism-Daedalus improved 4*); 1 FX energy point; 64 days.

**Cup of Life:** This holy relic is a gold thimble stamped with an image of a cross. Once per day it

can be filled with holy water that can then be used to bless one person with a *Monotheism-cure* miracle. Cost: 16 skill points (*Monotheism-cure 1*); 2 FX energy points; 52 days.

**Ursa's Claws:** This necklace is made of yellowed bear's claws. Once per day this holy relic can give its wearer a -2 step bonus to *Unarmed Combat-brawl* skill checks for 1 hour. Cost: 14 skill points (*Shamanism-guide my hand 1*); 1 FX energy point; 38 days.

**Lightning Gauntlet:** Three times per day this silvery steel glove superscience gadget can shoot a bolt of lightning up to 60 meters, hitting one creature for  $d4+1w/d6+1w/d4m$  (En/O). Cost: 14 skill points (*Energy-energy blast 1*); 3 FX energy points; 58 days.

**Kinetic Armor:** This superscience gadget is a suit of titanium alloy armor with strength actu-

ators that absorb kinetic energy. This always active superscience gadget provides  $d6$  (LI),  $d6$  (HI),  $d4$  (En) armor of Ordinary toughness and transforms LI and HI damage into added strength (as per the *Brick-impact conversion* power). Cost: 16 skill points (*Brick-body armor 1, impact conversion 1*); 6 FX energy points; 92 days.



# APPENDIX: CREATING NEW FX SKILLS

While this product covers a wide variety of FX, the scope of the ALTERNITY game is so broad that it is impossible to think of everything that a Gamemaster might need for a particular campaign. Therefore, included here are the guidelines used for determining the costs of newly created FX broad and specialty skills. Each is broken down into categories of effects followed by a numeric value. If the category applies to the skill, add that numeric value to a base number of 0. The final result is the skill point cost for that skill. Some of the category descriptions have more specific adjustments to that category's base value that end up in half-points. Total these half-points normally, and then round up when there are no further numbers to add to the cost in order to arrive at the skill's final value.

## BROAD SKILLS

FX broad skills that cost more than 15 points or fewer than 6 points should be exceedingly rare. A viable FX broad skill should have between 5 and 8 specialty skills.

► **Breadth of specialty skills: +2 to +4**

A broad skill with specialty skills focused on a particular sort of effect, such as just defense, should cost less than a broad skill with a wide variety of specialty skills under it, such as one that includes offense, defense, information, movement, and so on. Consider the specialty skills built for this broad skill and decide if it is focused (worth 2 points), semifocused (worth 3 points), or general (worth 4).

◆ **Examples:** Pyromancy (focused), Hemomancy (semifocused), Diabolism (general).

► **Power level of specialty skills: +2 to +4**

Certain broad skills are more powerful than others because of the power level of their specialty skills. Compare the power of this broad skill to the ones presented in this book. A broad skill with weaker than average specialty skills adds 2 points, an average one adds 3, and a more powerful one adds 4.

◆ **Examples:** Illusion (weak), Necromancy (average), Pyromancy (powerful).

► **Number of specialty skills usable untrained: +4 to +7**

A broad skill that has many specialty skills that can be used untrained means that a hero with that broad skill has more skill points to spend elsewhere. If the broad skill has no specialty skills that are usable untrained, add 4 points. If it has 1 or 2, add 5 points. If it has 3 or 4, add 6 points. If it has 5 or more, add 7.

► **Unusual requirements: -1 to -2**

Requirements worthy of a cost reduction include but are not limited to the following: increased FX energy point cost; difficulty in learning or using the FX; requirement of components, trappings, sacrifices, or extended rituals; and effectiveness vs. limited targets, such as a certain type of creature or substance. For this category to apply, no more than one specialty skill in a broad skill can be exempt from the requirement. If more than one specialty skill is exempt, no cost reduction to the broad skill is in order. Instead,

apply the "Unusual Requirements" costs to the specific specialty skills with those requirements when consulting Table F8 to determine specialty skill costs.

◆ **Examples:** Diabolism (sacrifice; -2), Hermeticism (deciphering; -1), Shamanism (trance; -2).

► **Gamemaster's discretion: ±1 to 3**

After calculating the cost, the Gamemaster should compare the new FX broad skill to existing FX broad skills. If she thinks the broad skill is too weak or too powerful for its point cost (for instance, if it has effects or limitations outside those listed above), she can adjust the cost up or down by 1 to 3 points.

◆ **Example:** Diabolism (Critical Failure results; -1).

## SPECIALTY SKILLS

To properly determine the cost of a new FX specialty skill, add together the points derived from consulting TABLE F8: FX SPECIALTY SKILL BUILDING COSTS. No FX specialty skill should cost fewer than 2 skill points, and FX specialty skills costing more than 5 points should be very rare. In most cases, the effect of an Ordinary result on the skill check is used to calculate the skill point cost.

## Notes on Table F8

These notes explain the information presented on TABLE F8: FX SPECIALTY SKILL BUILDING COSTS.

**Inflicts Damage:** Specialty skills that cause damage to a tar-



**TABLE F8: FX SPECIALTY SKILL BUILDING COSTS**

Category.....	Cost.....	Category.....	Cost.....
<b>Inflicts Damage</b>		<b>Range</b>	
d4/d6/d8.....	1	Self.....	-1
d6/d8/d4↑.....	2	Touch.....	0
d8/d12/d6↑.....	3	Up to 30 meters.....	1
Stun damage.....	-1	Up to 60 meters.....	2
Wound damage.....	0	Up to 250 meters.....	3
Fatigue damage.....	2	Up to 1 kilometer.....	4
LI.....	-0.5	Up to 10 kilometers.....	5
HI.....	0	Up to 100 kilometers.....	6
En.....	0.5	<b>Duration</b>	
Ordinary firepower.....	0	Single phase.....	-0.5
Good firepower.....	1.5	Up to 1 round.....	0
Amazing firepower.....	3	Up to 1 minute.....	1
Ignores armor.....	2	Up to 10 minutes.....	2
<b>Protects Target</b>		Up to 1 hour.....	3
Each +1 resistance modifier.....	0.5	Up to 6 hours.....	4
d4 armor.....	1	Up to 1 day.....	5
d6 armor.....	2	Up to 1 week.....	6
Ordinary toughness.....	0	Indeterminate/unlimited.....	7
Good toughness.....	2	Can maintain for additional FX cost....	0.5
Amazing toughness.....	4	<b>Area of Effect</b>	
Increases durability 3s or 2w or 1m.....	1	1 target or 2 cu. meters	
<b>Alters Target</b>		or 10 sq. meters.....	0
Each +/- step to all actions.....	2	Per doubling of targets, volume,	
Each +/- step to attacks.....	1	or area.....	0.5
Each +/- to Ability Score.....	1.5	<b>Rank Benefits</b>	
Each +/- step to broad skill.....	1	None.....	-1
Each +/- step to specialty skill.....	0.5	One or more.....	0
Grants specialty skill.....	1 per 4 ranks	Significantly increase power.....	1
Kills target.....	6	<b>FX Energy Point Cost</b>	
Incapacitates target.....	4	1.....	0
Controls target.....	2	2.....	-1
Increases base move 50%.....	0.5	3.....	-2
Allows flight.....	2	Permanent cost.....	-2
Grants teleportation.....	=Range	<b>Unusual Requirements</b>	
Heals damage.....	2 to 4	Components.....	-0.5 to -1
Other alteration effect.....	1 to 3	Sacrifice.....	-1 to -3
Allows target to resist.....	-1	Extended ritual.....	-1 to -2
<b>Other Effects</b>		Effective vs. limited targets.....	-1 to -2
Creates illusion.....	1 to 3	Trappings.....	-0.5 to -1
Dispels magic.....	1 to 2	<b>Gamemaster Discretion.....</b>	
Divines truth or future.....	1 to 3	+/- to 2	
Summons or creates beings.....	1 to 3		

get fall into this category. A "d4" can include d4 or d6-1; "d6" can include d4+1, d6, or d8-1; "d8" can include d4+2, d6+1, d8, or 2d4; and "d12" can include d6+3, d8+2, d12, or 2d6. When "↑" appears in the chart, it indicates that the damage for an Amazing result is one grade higher (from stun to wound or wound to mortal, depending on what is selected). These values are cumulative, so an attack that

inflicted d4s/d6s/d8s (En/G) would be worth (1 + -1 + 0.5 + 1.5) 2 points. If "Fatigue damage" is selected, the damage should be no greater than 1f/2f/3f.

**Protects Target:** Each category of resistance modifier (Strength, Dexterity, Intelligence, and Will) is cumulative. Thus, an FX skill that granted a +1 to all four categories would incur a cost of 2 points. In some cases, a skill might adjust a

resistance modifier in a limited manner (for instance, only against FX or psionic powers). In such cases, the cost should be slightly lower. As noted under "Inflicts damage," the specific dice used for armor can fluctuate slightly. Durability increase costs are cumulative.

**Alters Target:** Any effect that doesn't cause or prevent damage fits into this catch-all category,





including alteration of skills or Ability Scores, change in movement rate or capability, incapacitation or control, and so forth. Bonuses or penalties to skills, Ability Scores, and actions should only rarely exceed 3 steps. For skills that heal damage, compare the skill to *Medical Science-treatment*. If the FX skill is weaker, add 2 points to the cost. If equal, add 3 points, and if greater, add 4 or more points. "Allows target to resist" refers to those specialty skills that allow the target a skill or feat check, such as a *Resolve-mental resolve* skill check, to avoid their effects. Any FX skill that has the effect "Kills target" should have a chance of resistance.

**Other Effects:** This category is a catch-all one used for the various strange abilities granted by some FX skills. In general, if an FX skill has multiple possible but nonsimultaneous effects, add 1 to the most expensive effect to determine the cost.

**Range:** "Self" indicates that the specialty skill cannot affect anyone except the skill's user. For

ranges greater than those listed, add 1 skill point per multiplier of 10 to the range.

**Duration:** "Instantaneous" effects—such as healing, single-phase attacks, and so on—have a base duration cost of 0.

**Area of Effect:** Add 0.5 to the cost every time the area of effect is doubled beyond the listed numbers. In cases where the area of effect does not fit neatly into these numbers, the Gamemaster should determine the appropriate cost using these numbers as guidelines.

**Rank Benefits:** Most rank benefits occur at regular intervals such as 3/6/9/12 or 4/8/12. If the rank benefits significantly increase the power of the FX specialty skill (by doubling damage dealt, dramatically increasing the range or number of targets affected, and so on), add 1 to the skill cost.

**FX Energy Point Cost:** If a specialty skill has a variable FX energy point cost, average the costs to determine the appropriate skill point cost. No skill should

cost more than 3 FX energy points to use.

**Unusual Requirements:** If the specialty skill has specific limitations not shared by its parent broad skill, subtract points depending on the severity of the restriction. Sample limitations include, but are not limited to, effectiveness vs. limited targets (such as a certain type of creature) and the requirement of components, trappings, extended rituals, or sacrifices.

**Gamemaster's Discretion:** If the Gamemaster thinks that this skill is more or less powerful than its point cost would indicate or if it has effects or limitations outside those described here, add or subtract 1 to 2 points to the skill's cost.



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