

The Mystic World

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The Review:

Reviewed By Gordon Feiner

The Upside:

The Mystic World is a source book to magic and dimensions in the Champions Universe. It is not a sub-genre book to running a Mystic Campaign, but it can be used as a template to setting up your own mystic setting.

Chapter One - Worlds Upon Worlds. The Mystic World describes the many many universes and dimensions that make up the Champions Universe in total. Not all of them, as there are an infinite variety to include in your game, Chapter One instead goes into the structure of the Multiverse as it pertains to the Champions Universe.

The Four Worlds describes the underlying concepts that connect the various dimensions of the Champions Universe, it uses a fictional variation on Kabbalism and the Sephirothic Tree as a descriptor. Describing each of the four realms and what kinds of Dimensions are in them. The Astral Plane is described next, this is the connecting dimension between all the others, one has to go through the Astral Plane in some manner to get to another dimension. Four dimensions are important to the Champions Universe and each gets significant detail, Faerie: The Land Of Legends (where old Pantheons live, as well as elves and classic inhabitants of Faerie), Elysium (land of Heavens), Netherworld (Hells), and Babylon: The City Of Man (created on secular rather than spiritual beliefs). After that some other Dimensions are varying types and levels on the Sephirothic Tree are described, a total of nine other worlds are given a short description with some ideas on using them in a game.

Enough interesting worlds and ideas for worlds are provided that a GM could base an entire campaign around dimensional travel if that wanted.

Chapter Two - The Shadow World. This chapter has two sections, Mystic People and Mystic Places. Mystic People covers the difference between Supermages and everyone else who is a mystic, the vast majority are not Supermages. It also covers important people to the Mystic World, which is a very secretive society, organizations, and how they all get along. Two important aspects are brought out, that are sure to come up if you're running a Mystic Campaign. First is the idea of the Archmage, an individual assigned the task of protecting Earth and it's closest dimensions (Faerie, Elysium, Netherworld, and Babylon), in fact those four dimensions are so important to Earth they're considered a part of it spiritually. The second is the role of Gods, which are very real entities in the Champions Universe, and how they interact with the realm of mortals. The number and kinds of Mystic related peoples and beings described here should be enough for a GM to add a lot of variety to a game that uses Mystics as a center piece, or to choose the right kind of being for the focus of a Mystic

adventure.

The second part of the chapter is Mystic Places, describing how the land and architecture relate to Mystics and magic in general. It gives some sample locations and how they became mystically charged. It also provides an example of how a building, or similar, location gains mystical importance and powers. Along with this it provides what effects these places have on magic itself.

All the people and places described are a good addition to a Mystic Campaign, or can be used for a signal adventure for a non-Mystic Campaign.

Chapter Three - The Book Of Wisdom. This is a chapter dedicated to creating a Mystic Character. It covers the difference between Superheroic and Heroic mages, as well as magic styles and how to incorporate them into a game.

It also provides a bunch of Spells (power write-ups with a magic special effect), twenty-seven spells in total are provided, which is a good start for a magic wielding character. Along with these three extremely powerful spells are described, mostly these are plot devices. Magic Items And Artifacts has six items described. First are three rather mundane magic items that can be used as a template for ideas to create more, such as a "Gadget" based Mystic character that enchants items instead of just casting spells. Next three artifacts of power are described, just like the three spells of power these are mostly plot devices. Entire story arcs, or campaigns even, can be focused around the three greater spells or artifacts described in this chapter.

Character Creation is the last section of this chapter. It covers useful Skills and Perks that are specific to Mystic Characters. The Powers section here goes into some detail regarding Enhanced Senses, such as creating a Mystic Sense Group, and the Dimensional Sense Modifier. Extra Dimensional Movement also gets some space, and expands on Time Travel as well as restructuring the Cost of the Power. All of these changes made it into the Revised version the Fifth Edition Rules. Also introduced is the idea of Range Modifiers for the Transdimensional Advantage, these are specific to the Champions Universe, but serve as a good look at how you can set up such Range Modifiers for your own games set of Dimensions.

Chapter Four - Mystic Master Villains. Three master villains are described in detail in this chapter. Each one of these could be the focus of an entire campaign as the main adversary. Ambitious games can include two or even all three in an epic battle for the fate of Earth (for even more fun also introduce Istvatha V'han from Conquerors, Killers, And Crooks into the mix). Unlike your normal Supervillain these Dimensional Lords have vastly larger resources to call upon, if your game isn't Mystically centered or you don't want to involve Dimensional Travel I would suggest finding a more regular style arch-villain to use.

Skarn The Shaper doesn't just conquer dimensions to rule, he reshapes them to fit his whims. As a conqueror Skarn is very traditional in his methods of conquest, he has an army run by lieutenants also of great power. His patchwork of dimensions is called the Congeries and some of them are quite random in nature. If you want a foe that comes complete with surreal and weird obstacles to overcome and quest through on top of lots of fights with underlings and soldiers (including some political intrigue once you get to his home), then Skarn is a good choice.

Tyrannon The Conqueror, on the other hand, is a completely different kind of enemy. Tyrannon conquers dimensions so he can consume them whole and add their inhabitants and raw material to his own dimension. Instead of massive armies Tyrannon is the Thousand-Headed God, he possess eight-hundred and eighty bodies at once, broken down into levels of power. Starting with his weakest

form he infiltrates a dimension and conquers a small part, that builds a dimensional gate that allows his next higher levels through. His highest level, and most powerful form, is immobile in his home dimension. Eventually any fight against Tyrannon must be taken to him. He is good for a game where you want to take power levels to a near epic scale.

The biggest differences between the two is that Skarn can be negotiated with, he's a more traditional foe. Tyrannon can only be defeated or be victorious.

Lastly, there is The Dragon. The Dragon is the embodiment of all that is evil about mankind. The Dragon doesn't conquer anything, it's chained to the underside of Faerie. Instead it infiltrates the dreams and minds of man to work it's will. Campaigns centered around The Dragon take on a very spiritual nature as fear is it's biggest weapon, not external fear and threats, but the internal fear generated by mankind. If the Dragon gets loose he will cause destruction on an epic scale. If you want an apocalypse for your Champions or Mystic campaign this is a good way to do it. Opposing the Dragon are the Nagas, a race of reptilian beings that work to thwart the Dragons plans.

The Downside:

While a number of allies are mentioned the book could have used a few good guys to go along with the master villains presented. Allies that the GM and Players can use in a Mystic game.

Some advice on running a Mystic Campaign would have been helpful, pointing out the differences between it and a standard Superheroic campaign.

The Otherside:

If you're running a Mystic Oriented Superheroic Campaign (Hero System or otherwise) this source book is an excellent addition. You can use it as a template for creating worlds, people, and places of importance, or use it in total. Chapter One is a good guide to what to think about if you're setting up the cosmos of a world and want to add your own unique twists.

Even for non-Superheroic games this is a good source of ideas. Occult focused Dark Champions games can still use the People and Places in Chapter Two, and even the Dimensional aspects of Chapter One, to set a game against.

I would call this a must have book for anyone wanting to add a Mystic Element or Focus to a Hero game.

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