URBAN FANTASY HERO

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A Genre Book for the HERO System

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INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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

Chapter Two, *The Wonders Of Creation: Urban Fantasy Character Creation,* covers the topic of creating characters for *Urban Fantasy Hero* games. It has two sections. The first includes Package Deals for Urban Fantasy characters. It includes a mix of Packages representing races, professions, and backgrounds that often appear in Urban Fantasy stories. The second reviews the *HERO System* character creation elements like Skill and Powers, discussing how best to use them in the genre and providing expanded or optional rules for them when necessary.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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OTHER RESOURCES

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

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

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

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

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

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

CHAPTER 1

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MAGIC MEETS THE MUNDANE

THE URBAN FANTASY GENRE