

THE MAGIC SYSTEM

This is a basic, stripped down description of the Jolrhos Magic System. For greater explanation and information, The Fantasy Codex has much more detail, plus a ton of spells and useful tips.

THE JOLRHOS MAGIC SYSTEM

The philosophy behind this system is simple: Magic is difficult and somewhat dangerous, but very powerful and flexible. The “memorize and forget” system of some games is rejected for a ready set of spells, but all magic requires *mana* to cast. All spells have a skill roll required, and some have dangerous side effects that penalize a failed skill roll.

The trick in Fantasy Hero is to build a magic system which feels like a wizard casting spells in a fantastic setting rather than a superhero picking from a list of powers. Further, magic-using character ideally should be no less and no more powerful than any other well-built character with the same point value.

In other words, the magic system should be true to the literary sources it is simulating (Lord of the Rings, Belgariad, Game of Thrones, Discworld, etc) while staying true to the game system being used to simulate it.

The Jolrhos Magic System is the one that has been used in the Jolrhos Fantasy Hero campaign for decades, with modifications over time as it has evolved and grown.

The basic system covers everything a campaign requires to add magic to their adventures, and the advanced, optional rules can make magic more challenging, limited, or even potent.

It is structured to make a mage flexible, but limited, with great power, but great weaknesses. The concept is that a mage should be no more powerful, overall, than a warrior for the same points. The warrior will be more survivable, reliable, and easy to take action, but less flexible and capable of less significant effect on the game world.

Because the system is built around talents instead of a power framework, spells can be built *as* power frameworks, allowing spells to be designed as multipowers and power pools.

THE BASIC SYSTEM

In summary, all magic draws on *mana*, an extradimensional material that can be tapped into by those able to use magic and used as “fuel” for shaping reality by the force of their will. All characters have a personal *mana* stat as well, representing their ability to manipulate mana easily.

There are five different Orders of magic; five combinations of magical concepts that can be learned together. Each of these groups has Schools within it that are more specific and may be learned separately.

Learning the Orders of magic is done by buying talents called Mastery. There are five ranks of Mastery, each more expensive than the last and giving access to ever more powerful magic.

Spells are learned not with points, but with time, money, and study. Characters can teach spells to each other or learn them from a master, study them from ancient texts and runes, see them being cast and try to learn them, or create the spells on their own.

Cold iron and other items do not directly affect magic but their weight and encumbrance will.

Magic requires concentration, learning, and focus to attempt as represented by an Intelligence-based magic skill roll. This roll is affected by damage sustained, the difficulty of the spell, and circumstances during casting. Just casting a spell can be detected by nearby fellow spell casters.

MANA

Mana in fantasy stories and games is the fuel of magic, the stuff that lets people use magic. The ability to tap into this energy is what makes someone a spellcaster as opposed to a mundane fighter. All characters have mana, even if they do not use it, representing their personal ability to manipulate mana safely and easily. If a character runs out of mana, they are still able to cast spells but at great personal cost.

Each spell that the mage casts costs mana, using up some of the personally stored magical energy that a given caster has to call upon. This mana is not endurance, that’s for physical activity. It is another source of energy entirely.

To represent this, all spellcasters in the Kestrel Spell System have an extra characteristic. The new stat is called Mana (MAN), the pool of energy used to cast spells with. Mana is similar to ordinary END, but is used only for casting spells and using some magical items. This stat has a maximum like any characteristic in a heroic game, of 50 for normal humans.

Mana is a base 20 in a human and costs 1 point for 5 extra Mana a character starts with. All characters have mana, even if they have no spellcasting ability—they just don’t use it for anything, but it can be drained out of them by spells and effects.

This new characteristics means that mages by default will cost slightly more to build than other characters, but are balanced by typically needing fewer combat skills which tend to be more expensive.

MANA COST

Each spell that has a listed END cost under this system instead costs mana. All spells in the Codex are listed with an “Endurance Cost” to make it easier to use them with other spell systems; treat this as Mana cost in the Codex Magic System.

EXAMPLE: Merlin casts *Static Field*, which has an END cost of 4, which means he must pay 4 mana to cast the spell in the Mana Spell System. To maintain Static Field, he must spend 4 Mana each phase.

If a spell has reduced END Cost or some other END modifying effect, then that is applied to the Mana cost of a spell.

EXAMPLE: The spell *Immolate* has the Half Endurance Cost advantage, which reduces the mana cost by half from 4 to 2

Spells which have several elements, such as powers linked together for a single spell, cost Mana based on each separate element. Thus, a spell made up of 3 seven-point powers would cost 1 Mana per element, totaling 3 instead of 2 based on its combined active cost of 21.

ZERO MANA

When a mage reaches zero mana, they can still cast spells using Stun. Every two points of mana used costs 1d6 Stun just like using END you don't have. It hurts to use up all your mana. The resulting damage of mana cost using up stun may in fact exceed the character's Constitution (particularly a wimpy mage) which would stun the caster and prevent the spell from being cast, *plus* triggering any appropriate side effects.

Thus, any mage who runs out of mana will truly need to be careful and should only attempt to cast spells if they are very greatly needed.

LONG TERM MANA

Casting some spells will cost the mage long term mana, representing a great strain on the character. Others will not. The GM may wish to assess Long Term Mana (LTM) costs like Long Term Endurance costs if some campaigns to limit and weaken magic use.

Recovering LTM uses the same rules as recovering long term endurance: rest will give back a certain amount, based on the amount of rest and the character's Mana Recovery. There may be some very rare and dangerous herbs or items that heal long term mana loss, at the GM's discretion.

EXTERNAL MANA

Potions, even locations may have mana that can be used as well, and existing constructs that restore END or store up END for the use of spell casting would in this system instead have Mana for that purpose.

MANA RECOVERY

Mana recovers in the same manner as normal Endurance, Using normal recovery. Recovering mana occurs at the same time as any other use of recovery (post 12 or taking a phase at 0 DCV to recover with no other action). Mana may be healed with magical effects, such as a Healing spell bought to affect mana, or some magical items such as potions.

A Game Master may rule that some areas are mana-rich or mana-poor, and as a result, mana recovery is affected by that status.

EXAMPLE: Merlin is in an area of incredible magic power, the mana here flows like water. The GM rules that Merlin's mana recovers at +2 MRec while he is in this area. Later, he visits an area that is blighted, almost totally lacking in magic. The GM rules that he can only recover mana in the post-12 recovery phase.

Game Masters should be very careful with mana regeneration abilities as they can overpower mages by taking away one of their most significant limitations.

There are some rare areas in the Jolrhos fantasy world that have no mana at all for a variety of reasons. These “null mana zones” do not allow any mana regeneration and once a character has used up their personal pool of mana, they cannot use any magic at all (even using stun and Body as described above). Magical items typically do not work in a null mana zone.

Other areas are so rich in mana that mana recovers significantly faster, and in some areas spells cost half as much mana to cast and maintain.

MAGICAL SCHOOLS

There are seventeen different schools of magic, each focusing on a slightly different type of magical power. These schools are not organized educational institutions, merely groupings of spells and magical study. A mage usually learns spells from several different schools rather than one, although it is not unheard of to have a dedication to a single school of magic. Some of these schools are more obscure or difficult to find training in than others, and some are even considered evil and banned by most teachers and magical institutions.

These are the seventeen schools of magic: Aether, Air, Castle, Commerce, Demonology, Earth, Fire, Faerie, Ice, Illusion, Mysticism, Nature, Necromancy, Shamanism, Summoning, and War.

MAGICAL ORDERS

For the sake of brevity and organization, sometimes these schools are gathered together into “Orders” of magic, which indicate a broader category for purposes of classification, listing, and in cases of some magical items or books. There are five orders of magic.

Court: Court magic is the realm of the soldier and working mage. It is the magic used in battle, in defending and capturing. War Magic focuses on the acts of politics, combat, and the castle. *Schools: Castle, Commerce, and War.*

Dark: This is the magic of evil and monsters, but others will sometimes learn a few of these spells to better combat evil. Dark magic cannot normally cure or heal (although it can take from others to help one’s self). Dark magic cannot create, only destroy or move. *Schools: Demonology and Necromancy*

Elemental: The elements make up the world around us, including the realm of thoughts and dreams. This is the magic of the old elven kingdom in Morien and has the most schools in it. *Schools: Aether, Air, Earth, Fire, Ice, and Water*

Natural: The magic of the uncivilized, the barbarian, and the crude. Goblins, Orcs, and Beastmen learn this kind of magic, as do Wood Elves, druids, and rangers. Nature Magic cannot create orderly structures, nor can it civilize or work with writing or information. *Schools: Faerie, Nature, and Shaman.*

Scholastic: The magic of theory and learning, dealing with concepts and ideas of magic and its applications. Scholastic magic cannot heal, it does not deal with the natural world or animals other than as simple servants. *Schools: Illusion, Mysticism, and Summoning.*

The spell listing which takes up the bulk of *The Fantasy Codex* starts out with summaries of the spells each Order and School contain. These summaries list the spells by Mastery and in alphabetical order in each order and school. Learning how to use magic requires buying Schools of magic at different ranks of power, called Mastery.

MASTERY

Magical Mastery is the amount of learning and power a given mage has in each kind of spell group. A Grandmaster is a frighteningly powerful mage, while a Novice barely can use any magic at all.

In order to use any magic whatsoever in a given School or Order of magic, the character must pay character points at the power level desired. Without buying ranks of Mastery, the character cannot cast *any* spells in that Order or School of magic, and cannot cast spells more powerful than the rank of Mastery they have purchased.

Characters may buy spells from any School and mix as they choose, buying Orders and School from specific Orders to their taste.

EXAMPLE: Merlin buys Journeyman in the Order of Scholastic Magic and the Apprentice in the Schools of Fire, Earth, and Nature.

Mastery can be purchased with five ranks of talents. They may not be adjusted by modifiers in any way.

Novice: Learning magic starts at the Novice level, where the fundamentals of spellcasting, constructing spells, and harnessing and using mana to cast them are learned. A Novice has little power, but can do a few tricks of the given type of magic. Some orders have few novice spells, such as Dark and Demonology. The magic of these dread groups is so deadly and powerful, there is no entry level. Novice level spells have a range of 1-9 Active Points.

Apprentice: As the mage studies, they swiftly move into the realm of the Apprentice. In this level of Mastery, the mage has significantly more flexibility and access to spells that are capable of dealing significant harm. Apprentice spells have an Active Cost of 10-24 points.

Journeyman: The Journeyman is the third level of Mastery. This is a powerful mage, one able to function on their own in the world, earn a living, and gather not just respect, but earn their keep with their magic. Most mages go no further in their training. Journeyman spells have an Active Cost of 25-49 points

Master: Magical Masters are the fourth level of Mastery. In this realm of magic, the mage is able to do astounding things and has become truly dangerous. Where the Journeyman can fight battles, the Master can wage wars. This is a feared and rare mage. Master spells have an Active Cost of 50-74 points.

Grandmaster: This is the final level of Mastery. Few ever achieve this level of power in any magic. A Grandmaster is capable of unbelievable feats of awesome power, manipulating their reality with terrifying power and catastrophic effect. Grandmaster spells are at least 75 Active Points, with no maximum power level.

BUYING MASTERY

Buying ranks in mastery includes lower ranks in their cost (so buying Journeyman in Fire also pays for Apprentice and Novice mastery). Dark Magic mastery costs double the listed price for each school or the whole order. No Order can be purchased at the Grandmaster level of mastery. Each School must be purchased separately as a Grandmaster in a type of magic.

BUYING SPELL MASTERY

Expertise Rank	Active Points	Cost for Each Order	Cost for Each School
Novice	1-9	4	2
Apprentice	10-24	10	5
Journeyman	25-49	25	12
Master	50-74	50	25
Grandmaster	75+	n/a	50

EXAMPLE: Merlin's purchases above cost 25 for the Journeyman Scholastic Order and 5 points each for the Apprentice Fire, Earth, and Nature Types, for a total of 40 points spent on magic. Later with experience, he could buy a higher rank in any Mastery or purchase new Orders or Types entirely.

BUYING SCHOOLS INTO ORDERS

A character who has purchased Types in an Order and later on buys the full Order needs only pay the remaining total cost difference. If they have paid more than the cost of the Order, then they are not refunded any points. For some Orders, it is significantly cheaper to buy the whole Order rather than even a majority of Types.

EXAMPLE: Merlin later buys Apprentice Order of Elemental Magic. He already has purchased Fire and Earth, costing 8 points, so he only has to pay 2 more points to buy the whole Order.

A character can buy Types of magic of higher rank than the Order he has purchased.

EXAMPLE: Merlin now has Apprentice Order of Elemental Magic. He decides he wants his Fire magic to be even more powerful, so he buys Journeyman in the Fire Type for 7 additional points. All of his elemental magic is limited to 24 active points at most, except fire, which can be 49 active points.

Gaining access to the most powerful spells is very expensive for a character. Add to the cost of Mastery all of the points required to buy Intelligence, a Magic Skill Roll, Mana, and any related skills such as research and building a spellcaster can be quite expensive. However, being a very minor spellcaster is possible for quite a minor cost.

An observant reader will notice that under this system, certain orders effectively cost more than others because they have fewer types. For example, while Elemental Order has six Schools, Natural has three and Dark has only two; yet each of these orders still costs a given amount per School. Thus, buying Elemental gives you a lot more magic for the same cost as the same rank of Mastery in Dark. That's deliberate: some magic is easier to learn and more common in the world, while other sorts are less common and more challenging.

MAGIC SKILL

The spells in the Codex simply list a generic "Requires Magic Skill Roll" limitation in the 'Bonus,' but the GM could require different rolls for each different Order or Type if desired (such as a Fire Magic skill or a Martial Magic Skill). In the Kestrel Magic System, there is only one generic magic skill; Mastery covers the cost and limitations on magic types.

A mage may buy whatever spells he can afford with points and money, but he can only *cast* what he can realistically roll with his Magic Skill Roll. Thus, the skill is a significant force limiter, and GMs consider how high the roll is purchased.

MODIFIERS

All spells have a set magic skill modifier that they impose, based on a -1 penalty per 2 real points in the spell. All spells have this penalty, no matter what their cost. The active cost of a spell determines its mastery and mana cost, the real cost determines its actual difficulty to cast. Spells with more limitations are more complex to prepare, but easier to successfully cast.

If the mage is knocked down while casting, they suffers a -5 penalty to their skill roll. Any modifier to DCV due to encumbrance is also applied to the Magic Skill roll. If the mage is stunned or knocked out while casting, the spell fails, and any side effects for the spell are applied.

The GM can assign modifiers based on circumstances and location, and on page 14 there are many other different optional modifiers that can affect a Magic Skill roll attempt.

When a spell or effect has more than one element (such as two powers linked together) then the magic skill roll modifier is based on the total active point cost of both abilities added together. Thus, 3 seven-point powers linked together would be an active cost total of 21, and thus a -2 to the Magic Skill Roll.

MULTIPLE SPELLS

A spellcaster may only keep a certain number of spells active at any given time. That limit is based on their Intelligence score, with a total of INT/3 as a maximum called "spell slots."

EXAMPLE: Merlin's 23 INT allows him to keep 7 different spells running at the same time; or 7 spell slots. If he bought his INT up to 24, he would then have 8 spell slots..

There are some spells, items, and magical effects that can increase this total. With a GM's approval, a character could buy extra Intelligence with the limitation "only to increase spell slots" (-1).

ENCUMBRANCE

Cold Iron does not normally affect magic by its mere presence. It is true that certain spells might be affected by cold iron, but in general magic is not specially affected. However, the weight of iron, and everything else the Mage carries does have an effect. Spellcasters don't wear plate armor and carry lots of weapons for the simple reason that magic often requires delicate control and complete freedom of movement.

Any DEX roll or DCV modifier and any movement modifier due to encumbrance is also the subtraction to the Magic Skill. Any perception roll subtraction due to a helm is also applied as a Magic Skill modifier.

ENDURANCE

Spells in the Kestrel Magic System do not cost ordinary Endurance, they use Mana instead. However, a spell may be *bought* to cost Endurance as well with an additional -1/2 limitation. Such a spell would cost *both* Endurance and Mana when cast (see also page 14 for an optional variant that involves this idea).

A Game Master may rule that in their campaign, spells cost Long Term Endurance as well as mana, which would limit the amount of magic that a mage could attempt in a given time period and notably weaken their overall power.

SPECIAL EFFECTS

All of magic is assumed to have a single special effect, "Magic." This is applicable for such effects as Dispel and Suppress, which can target a special effect for a +1/4 advantage. Within this special effect are "sub effects," such as a flame attack or flying upon gusts of wind. These "sub-effects" function the same as standard special effects as defined in the Hero rules.

Special Effects can be grouped differently, for example a power that dispels any fire-based attack could be built with "any attack power" as an advantage then "only fire attacks" as a limitation. However, an alternative to this is to treat this as a small special effect advantage instead. Some spells in the *Codex* are built under this assumption.

PREPARING SPELLS

A spellcaster does not have immediate access to every single spell he has ever learned at any given time. He must take time to refresh and "ready" spells that will be available to cast at will. Once these spells are readied, they can be cast without "memorization" or otherwise readying spells, but only those spells.

A given character can ready a number of spells equal to their Intelligence. Thus, a character with 23 INT could ready 23 spells of any type, order, and cost. This can be adjusted by magic or enchanted items that grant more Intelligence but any spells prepared over that character's base intelligence should be noted, as they will be forgotten and lost if the added intelligence is lost for any reason,

It takes time and access to the character's spellbook to ready a given spell. The amount of time required is based on the Mastery of the spell being readied:

- Novice: 1 phase per real point cost
- Apprentice: 1 turn per real point cost
- Journeyman: 1 minute per real point cost
- Master: 5 minutes per real point cost
- Grandmaster: 20 minutes per real point cost

While readying a spell, the spellcaster must not be engaged in any activity more stressful than riding a calm horse on a plain, easy path. They cannot engage in anything but the most basic conversation, and any interruption requires an INT roll to not lose the time already spent to learn a spell. If the character is interrupted and prevented from studying for one minute or longer, they must ready the spell afresh, taking the full time listed above.

While readying a spell, the character is 1/2 DCV, is only partly aware of his surroundings, and must make a perception roll at -1 to notice activity nearby (adjusted by range).

If a character does not have their spellbook, they may attempt to ready spells they know with a Spell Research check at a -1 penalty per 10 active points of the spell (and 1 minute/real point of the spell).

Once readied, a spell is always available to cast. However, a character can "forget" a spell if they are rendered unconscious or incapacitated long enough. If the spellcaster does not use any magic for 24 hours, they must make an INT roll at -1 per day without using magic to maintain readied spells, each day.

If a character is knocked out, they may lose readied spells. When a character wakes up, they have to make an INT roll to remember all their spells. For each point the roll is failed by, they lose one random spell. This roll is adjusted by -2 per level of unconsciousness the character is rendered beyond the initial level (so if the character suffers so much stun they recover only every post-12 phase, they have a -2 penalty on their INT roll to remember spells, and so on).

Sleep will remove all readied spells unless they are somehow maintained by an item or a spell of some sort. However, any persistent spell that is active while the character is unconscious or asleep and is still active when they wake will always automatically be ready regardless of the time period.

OPTIONAL MAGIC SYSTEM RULES

If a Game Master desires, he may modify this basic system with various optional variants and rules. These optional make the Codex Magic System more complex, more difficult for characters to use. They also make the magic seem more difficult and magical, more unpredictable and potent.

Only advanced players should use these rules; players and Game Masters very familiar with the Hero rules system and this magic system.

MAGIC SKILL ROLL

As an optional rule, the Magic Skill roll has many other modifiers while casting a spell. These modifiers represent the need to maintain concentration under hostile circumstances

Certain areas may be mana-poor or mana-rich, and might modify this roll as well. Moving or taking any action other than casting a spell will make the roll somewhat more challenging as well.

When a spell caster is hit, the Magic Skill roll must be re-rolled at a modifier equal to the location's stun modifier. The lowest this modifier can be is -1, although target that take no stun are unaffected by this modifier. In addition, there is a -1 per Body damage the attack did, after defenses, before any modifiers for location.

Casters may take extra time to try to ensure success with their Magic Skill roll. Each step slower up the time chart from the initial casting time of the spell adds +2 to the chance of casting the spell successfully. With Game Master approval, some spells can also be "rushed," applying a -2 penalty to the spell roll each step quicker down the time chart.

Having any requirement interfered with ends spellcasting as well, such as having your arms held with a spell that requires gestures.

All of these modifiers are cumulative. Thus, a character could sacrifice time to maintain concentration and successfully cast a spell to offset being knocked back and suffering body damage, for example.

These changes increase book work and perhaps consultation of the rules a bit more for each spell cast, but will increase the limits on the power of mages and make stopping a spellcaster somewhat easier for player characters.

NOTICING SPELL CASTING

Any character with a Magic Skill may notice spells being cast nearby. If a character casts a non-attack spell, any spellcaster nearby will automatically perceive that spell with a successful Magic Skill roll, modified -1/2m distant. Any attack spell cast can be noticed much further away, the magic skill roll reduced by normal range modifiers. This roll is also modified by +1 for each 10 active points in the spell.

MAGIC ROLL MODIFIERS

MOD	EVENT
-1	Per 2 real cost of the spell
-1	Any other non-zero phase action taken this phase
-1	Each perception roll modifier due to equipment
-1	Each DCV modifier due to encumbrance
-1	Each 2m movement modifier due to encumbrance
-1	Each unmodified body suffered after defenses
-1	Per stun multiplier by location when hit
-1	Each spell currently active (unless in an item)
-1	Per OCV modifier due to environment
-1	Each 1m knocked back while casting
-2	Per step down the time chart below casting time
-5	Being knocked down
+2	Per step up the time chart beyond casting time

EXAMPLE: A Goblin Shaman begins to cast Tattoo on a fellow Goblin. This is a 30 active point spell. Merlin is 14m away, and might perceive the spell being cast; he has a modifier of (+3 for the active cost)+(-7 for the range) -4 to his Magic Skill roll.

A spellcaster can perceive spells being cast through any barrier, regardless of the type and direction. Only an "null mana zone" will block this perception.

Success only indicates that a spell was cast and a rough estimate of power (minor, powerful, very powerful, etc). No other details can be perceived with this ability.

This has the advantage of making spell casting less stealthy and not as safe to attempt in secrecy, but might make casters too cautious in dangerous situations and may give players more information about their enemies and their surroundings than the GM prefers.

TIRING MAGIC

Another level of difficulty that the GM can place on magic is to require every spell cast to cost 1 Endurance. This END cost would be in addition to any cost normally required by any spell (Mana, Body, etc).

This will put an absolute cap on the amount of activity a mage can engage in during combat, and will tend to make mages less dynamic and more academic. It also will tend to restrain certain concepts such as battle mages or spellswords; the kind of character that uses their magic to enhance their combat ability.

At the same time, it will keep spellcasters from being able to accomplish powerful effects during combat with little cost or limitation, since Mana is a separate pool from Endurance.

SPELLCASTING SUCCESS

With this optional rule, casters do not always succeed with maximum effect on every spell. The total effect of a given spell when successfully cast is 10 active points, plus 10 for each point the roll is successful by.

EXAMPLE: Merlin casts Fireball, and makes his skill roll by 3. This means he gets 10 active points base, plus 30 more active points worth of Fireball, for a total of 40.

Simply casting a spell does not ensure it will work at peak power. In fact, the more difficult and powerful a spell is the less likely you will get it at full power. This particularly applies to any new Mastery Ranks learned. Over time, the character will learn to use this magic more effectively and gain full power over their spells more readily.

If a spell has an absolute effect (such as invisibility) then there is no change in the power level, it successfully casts if the Magic Skill roll succeeds.

This has the advantage of simulating learning and limited ability with magic but has the drawback of making magic less reliable. This option may discourage some casters from using their more difficult spells for fear of getting poor results.

CRITICAL FAILURE

With this optional rule, even spells which have no side effects can be dangerous to cast. All spells have a slight chance of blowing up in the face of the spellcaster when poorly attempted.

When a spellcaster fails to make a magic skill roll while casting a spell, the GM rolls 3d6. If this roll is under the amount the Magic Skill Roll was failed by, then the spell was a *critical failure*. A natural 18 may be considered to always be a critical failure, or the GM may simply add 3 to the failure chance above.

If the GM rolls under this chance of critical failure, then the caster suffers 1d6 damage, plus 1d6 for each point the GM's roll was under the necessary roll.

EXAMPLE: Merlin tries to cast *Dream Walk* so he can travel about in spirit form and scout a new area. He sneezes during the incantation and blows his roll by 6 points. The GM rolls 3d6 to see if the spell has a critical failure. He rolls a 5, which is under the amount Merlin failed by. Merlin suffers 2d6 damage with no defenses, suffering Body and Stun damage as the mana is released in a cascade of power on the hapless mage.

Merlin suffers 7 stun and 2 body and rethinks his scouting idea.

As with ordinary side effects, there are no defenses to this damage. This has the advantage of making magic more mysterious and dangerous, but the drawback of likely making casters more cautious and less likely to take chances with their spells.

MULTIPLE SPELLCASTERS

This optional rule allows other spellcasters to assist a fellow in casting a particularly challenging spell. If the other optional rules about success and critical failure are used, this may be the only safe way to attempt some spells.

Each spellcaster past the most powerful one adds their successful Magic Skill rolls to the primary caster as complimentary rolls (adding 1 point for every 2 they make their roll by).

The additional casters do not need to know the spell in question or even have the Mastery to cast it, they are merely lending stability, concentration, and support to the primary mage.

If a support caster fails their roll, they do not harm the spell but may suffer side effects if the overall roll fails. All casters involved must pay the full mana cost of the spell to participate and assist the mage, plus any other casting costs (such as stun or endurance).

EXAMPLE: Merlin and his 3 buddies help Merlin cast *Dream Walk* since it went so poorly last time. *Dream Walk* has a -10 Magic Skill Roll modifier. Merlin fails his roll by 4, and all but one friends make theirs. Each caster pays 10 mana. The successful friends roll well enough to give Merlin +3 to his roll, and the spell fails again.

If the primary spellcaster fails their roll, everyone suffers any side effects and critical failure, if applicable. The side effects take full effect on the mage and half effect to each assistant mage, unless the effect cannot be reduced by half.

EXAMPLE: Merlin suffers a 2d6 Mental Entangle with 2 defense from *Dream Walk*'s side effect. Each of his friends suffers a 1d6, 1 defense mental entangle. All are paralyzed until they can manage to break out.

The Ritual limitation described in Fantasy Hero sourcebook requires multiple casters to attempt a spell. If the caster desires to have more assist in an attempt than the Ritual limitation requires, they can use these rules to do so.