

Modern Times Background

Version of 16 Mar 2013 Copyright John M Reynolds

Permission granted for personal non-commercial use.

The World

Throughout history there have been people with the ability to bend reality to their will. However, these people are rare: those with power but no training typically make little progress, go mad or kill themselves. Thus most magically active people form groups for mutual protection and advancement.

One prominent group are the Guardians of Fate. Formed many centuries ago when mages from the Order of Hermes in Europe fled magical war to China and joined forces with an ancient order of monks.

The Guardians have been dedicated since then to protecting the populace from mystical threats.

One threat faced by the Guardians are a variety of mystical creatures. Though some are friendly many have long preyed upon the fringes of society. Fortunately, they too are rare. They generally shun humans, as despite their power, they've learnt that a mob is dangerous and the world is often inhospitable.

Magic

Each of the different groups has its own view of how magic works and what it can do. However, there are a number of common beliefs:

- Blatantly affecting reality is hard. Bending reality is easier than breaking it. This is one reason that mystical creatures often inhabit other realms which are more malleable.
- Directly affecting other people is really hard. A sorcerer could conjure a ball of flame and throw it at another, setting fire to them, but not be able to cause them to burn directly.
- Affecting yourself is much easier. Some magicians do little else.

Major factions

The Guardians of Fate

The Guardians of Fate are headquartered in their ancient home of a monastery in a remote mountainous region of China.

They have an uneasy alliance with the government of China, but members of the Guardians are now drawn from many nationalities, and they have operations around the world.

In modern times they have become fashionable as a religion with celebrity following, which provides a convenient cover for their operations.

Order of Hermes

The Order of Hermes remains an independent force in Europe, made up of many powerful sorcerers.

They are on good terms with the Guardians but usually more concerned with their own power.

Allied Operations Executive

NATO organisation for the investigation of supernatural happenings. Though they have very few magically capable individuals themselves, they have significant resources and information. AOE is made up of many separate national divisions.

They are on generally good terms with the Guardians and the Order of Hermes, though would like to know more about them.

C-15

Supposedly part of the US government (though not listed on any public records), C-15 have a reputation for extreme ruthlessness and willingness to use power.

Though nominally supposed to be helping the Allied Operations Executive, they are known to be extremely secretive and reluctant to share information.

They have worked with the Guardians in the past (or at least individuals probably working for C-15 have) and generally don't directly clash, but their methods and motives are unclear.

Fel Brotherhood

The Fel Brotherhood are a faction clearly at odds with humanity.

Well known for consorting with demons, they seem to aim to acquire power at any cost. Not a great deal else is known about them, except that they have a number of powerful sorcerers and frequently cause trouble.

Some speculate that they are a breakaway group from the Order of Hermes, though this is strongly denied by the Order.

Mystical creatures

Dragons

Rarely seen, the dragons are creatures of immense power. They have many forms, and most can shapeshift, so will often appear as human.

Generally solitary creatures, they tend to live in remote areas or in their own realms.

The Guardians have benefitted greatly from alliances with various dragons.

Fae

The Fae are not a single faction, but seem to take delight in ridiculously complicated internal conflicts. While generally divided between grouping of seelie and unseelie, this is more of a guideline.

The Fae come in many different forms mostly humanoid, and generally reside in alternate realms, rarely interacting with humans.

Spirits

Spirits are fairly common but rarely interact with people. In the rare cases they are even visible, they may appear as ghostly apparitions.

Demons

Demons have great power, but are rarely seen operating in the world, unless summoned for such purpose.

Demons usually look much like humans, though often with scaly skin.

The Oni

Possibly a form of demon, the Oni are giant humanoids with great strength.

The Host

Extremely rarely seen (and many believe actually legendary), the Host appear as humans with powerful abilities. Some have speculated that they are also a form of demon, but others consider them to be Angels, and rumours of acting to protect humanity in desperate situations seem to support this.

Minor factions

There are many other more minor factions. Some examples are.

The Eighth Department

Part of the PLA of China. They would love to get hold of the power of the Guardians but for now largely let them be.

Organised crime

Various organised crime factions have a few individuals with mystical powers.

Section 27

A part of the FBI, tasked with investigating unusual happenings. They have very little power themselves, but are extremely diligent and turn up surprisingly often. Most other factions try to avoid them before they ask awkward questions.