

# Elementalism

This odd version of Sorcery is new -- so new, in fact, that neither Heaven nor Hell has noticed it yet. Note the use of the word 'yet.' After the smoke clears, most researchers on both sides are going to find the entire nature of Elementalism to be highly confusing. It's clear that the skills and rituals listed below are Sorcerous: the requirements for users are the same as for regular Sorcerers, and the disciplines seem to draw upon the intersection of human will and the Symphony in roughly the same way.

It's just that **nobody** will be quite ready to believe that comic books can be a legitimate route to apotheosis.

## Becoming an Elementalist

As near as anyone can tell, the minimum requirements are a Will of 6 and at least the potential for 6 Forces. Possession of the Sorcery Attunement (or Symphonic Awareness) is not required, at least at first: the potential Elementalist will be picking those up along the way, provided that he or she is worthy.

The triggering mechanism seems to be, terrifyingly, comic books. Lots and lots of comic books. Entire shelves -- nay, rooms -- of comic books, read over and over and over again. Sometimes, when conditions are correct, the potential Sorcerer will begin to see an underlying pattern to the myriad graphics and story lines. If these patterns are obsessively mapped out and analyzed there is a good chance that a qualified researcher will be able to make the conceptual leap to seizing the power that lies just beneath their quivering fingertips. This conceptual leap, among other things, will provide the researcher with the Sorcery Attunement, one Skill/1 and one Ritual/1. If the Elementalist doesn't have 12 points available to pay for this (the Symphonic Awareness comes free), he or she will also gain one or more of the Disadvantages found below.

In general, it takes roughly twenty uninterrupted hours of research to allow the use of an experience point for learning or developing an Elementalist skill/ritual. Once a particular issue of a comic has been 'researched' it cannot be used to gain further points. Also, note that the research does not give free points: PC Elementalists will have to pay for their new insights either with earned experience, or else take one of the Elementalist disadvantages.

## **Skills**

### **Air (Will)**

This skill governs movement; it is the least understood of the four Elemental Skills (or possibly just the most ritualized).

### **Earth (Will)**

This skill deals with various defensive disciplines; most Elementalists will have it at respectable levels.

### **Fire (Will)**

This skill permits various forms of Sorcerous attack; it is usually the first one learned by Elementalists, and mastery of it is pursued with zeal. It is also the least indirect.

### **Water (Will)**

This skill negates Sorcery. This includes other types of Sorcery; Elementalist rituals are merely the ones most vulnerable.

### **SCIENCE! (No default)**

This is knowledge of the *true* physics of the universe: not the puny science of those fools back at the University, but the way things **really** are. Armed with this superior knowledge, the character can create wondrous devices

that duplicate the awesome powers demonstrated by the below rituals: also, this skill is a prerequisite for Gadgetry. Incidentally, regular Sorcerers would call this skill Enchantment, for good reason: it is.

### **Gadgetry (Intelligence)**

This skill is used to create *temporary* devices that utilize the principles of SCIENCE! In game terms, it is treated as an exact duplicate of the Alchemy skill, mostly because it actually **is** the Alchemy skill.

### **Rituals**

It should be noted that the below Rituals are generic: each Elementalist learns on his or her own, and routinely develop variants. Unless specifically noted, each variant Ritual is to be treated as a distinct entity, and must be learned separately.

### **Air Rituals**

#### **Faster Than... (Air/1)**

A success at this ritual allows the Elementalist to drastically increase the CD of a successful Running or Swimming roll (chosen at the time that the Ritual is learned): double the CD for every level of the ritual.

Duration: CD minutes

Time: 15 seconds

Essence: 1 per 2 levels.

### **Able To... (Air/3)**

This ritual is essentially equivalent to Numinous Corpus: Wings, except that there does not necessarily have to be actual wings involved, and speed is a base 100 yards per round for every 2 Essence spent.

Duration: CD hours

Time: 1 minute

Essence: 2 to 6

### **Jumpy Flippy Guy (Air/6)**

Use of this ritual allows an Elementalist to essentially ignore gravity and inertia. He will be able to run up walls, fall from the top of a skyscraper and land safely, sneer at relative velocity and generally act as if he had a permanent target number of 12 on his Acrobatics rolls. In combat, add the CD of the ritual to all of the Elementalist's Dodge rolls, and subtract the same from the Dodge rolls of his opponents (attacking from odd directions, and all that).

Duration: CD minutes

Time: 5 minutes

Essence: 6

## **Earth Rituals**

### **Costume (Earth/1)**

This ritual will make one's clothing (and up to 5 pounds of items) more or less immune to the side effects of using one's other powers. This can be handy for individuals that (for example) routinely burst into fire...

Duration: 24 hours

Time: 15 seconds

Essence: 1

### **Tough as Nails (Earth/2)**

This ritual increases the Toughness of the performer, giving him Protection equal to (the level of the ritual) times (the amount of Essence spent).

Duration: CD minutes

Time: 1 minute

Essence: 1 to 3

### **It's Just a Flesh Wound (Earth/3)**

This ritual regenerates Body Hits at the rate of 2 per round.

Duration: 2 minutes

Time: 3 minutes

Essence: 3

### **Cat-Like Reflexes (Earth/4)**

This ritual makes it harder for others to hit the performer: subtract a successful ritual's CD from all corporeal attacks made against the Elementalist.

Duration: CD minutes

Time: 1 minute

Essence: 4

### **Rhino Hide (Earth/4)**

There are many distinct Rhino Hide Rituals: each one will allow the performer to utterly ignore **one** type of attack (chosen at the time that the Ritual was learned; it may not be changed later). Some common types are hand to hand combat; lasers; fire-based attacks; cold-based attacks; guns ; and so on.

Duration: CD minutes

Time: 1 minute

Essence: 5

### **Sponge (Earth/6)**

Like Rhino Hide, only more so: the performer is effectively immune to all corporeal damage while the ritual is in effect. If the Corporeal Song of Shields could have blocked it, so will Sponge.

Duration: CD minutes

Time: 1 hour

Essence: 6

## **Fire Rituals**

### **Stronger Than... (Fire/1)**

A successful use of this ritual increases the performer's Strength by the (the level of the ritual) plus (the CD). This will not increase Body Hits, but will affect Fighting and Large Weapons rolls.

### **Blast (Fire/2)**

There are -- or will be -- literally *hundreds* of versions; the idiosyncratic nature of Elementalism is nowhere more obvious than in the Blast ritual. No matter the variant, they all have the following statistics:

Power (level of Blast + CD + Essence spent), Accuracy 0, Range 75. This attack may be Dodged.

Duration: Instantaneous

Time: 1 round

Essence: 1 to 6

### **Flame On! (Fire/3)**

Despite the name, flame is not necessarily involved: essentially, the Elementalist will become covered with some sort of dangerous substance (chosen at the time that the ritual is learned). Some examples of this would be fire, ice, acid, electricity or poisonous smoke. The performer will be immune to the effects, but anyone in the

same hex will suffer CD/2 (round up) Body Hits per round, and anyone who comes in actual contact with the substance will suffer CD hits per round.

Duration: CD hours

Time: 5 minutes

Essence: 4

### **Jet (Fire/4)**

The ritual allows the performer to project some sort of damaging substance (chosen at the time that the ritual is learned): this substance causes CDx2 Body Hits per round of contact. As for Jet, the attack may be Dodged.

Duration: 1 minute

Time: 2 minutes

Essence: 4

### **Zap! (Fire/5)**

Much like the Blast ritual, except that the Accuracy is +2 and armor only protects at only half value.

Duration: Instantaneous

Time: 2 rounds

Essence: 6

There is currently no Fire/6 ritual, but not for lack of looking.

## **Water Rituals**

### **Drain (Special)**

This Ritual is the Banish of Elementalism: a successful use of it will negate any Sorcerous Ritual. However, there are restrictions. First off, a variant of it must be learned for each specific type of Ritual. For example, a Drain Blast will work against any Blast, but will do nothing for Zap! Also, if the Ritual to be Drained is known at a higher level than the effects of that Ritual are mitigated, instead of cancelled. To continue the example, a Drain Blast/2 will stop any Blast/1 or Blast/2, but only reduce the effective level of any higher Blast Ritual by 2. Finally, a Drain may never be learned at a higher level than the Elementalist's Water skill.

It **is** possible to learn a Drain ritual that will let one Drain someone else's Drain, but any Elementalist who goes down that path too far will find himself in deadly danger of succumbing to a nasty case of infinite regression.

### **Appropriate Disadvantages**

Most Elementalists will have at least one of these, at varying levels.

### **Metahuman (Corporeal) (3pt/level)**

This represents an obvious alteration in body type (such as turning into a living-metal statue, becoming a glowing field of anthropomorphic energy, etc, etc). Elementals with this Disadvantage must make a Will Roll (plus the level of the Disadvantage) to assume their Metahuman form before they can perform their Rituals: unfortunately, it takes a Will Roll (**minus** the Disadvantage level) to turn the Metahuman form off. The higher the level of the Disadvantage, the more obvious the changes; also, many celestials generally react at -2 per level to Elementals in their Metahuman form (as will some humans).

### **Punster (Corporeal) (1pt/level)**

Self-explanatory: Elementals with this Disadvantage just won't stop, and thus get a -1 reaction per level from roughly 95% of the population.

### **Angst (Ethereal) (3pt/level)**

Individuals with this Disadvantage tend to act in a fairly morose and depressed manner. They also have a bit of a problem with pulling their punches (Will roll to make any attack at less than full level), which gives them lots more to be depressed about. They also like to wear dark-colored clothing. Anybody that has to deal with their sudden mood swings will usually react at -2 per level.

### **Compartmentalized Life (Ethereal) (2pt/level)**

Elementalists with this Disadvantage go to exceedingly long lengths to keep their 'secret identities' secret: this preoccupation with secrecy and deceit is worth -2/level for anybody close to them who doesn't know of their extracurricular activities. You can only miss so many dinners before you start hurting the ones you love.

### **Evil Overlord (Ethereal) (3pt/level)**

A favorite of those Elementalists out there that decided to use their powers to Rule the World (or a portion thereof), this Disadvantage keeps things somewhat balanced. Those with this Disadvantage, whenever they develop a nefarious plan (or just make a Tactics roll), must also roll against Intelligence, minus the level of Evil Overlord. If they fail, the plan or tactic will look fine, but will have a flaw in it that an ordinary five-year-old could see through. No reaction modifiers on this one: it's bad enough as it is.

### **Fashion Victim (Ethereal) (1/pt level)**

Wearing colored underwear outside long johns is just the tip of the iceberg for Elementalists with this Disadvantage. It just gets worse from there. It's worth a -1 reaction per level from people with any sense of style.

### **Four-colored Glasses (Ethereal) (3pt/level)**

Elementalists with this Disadvantage have a real difficulty in *not* dividing the universe into simple dichotomies (the two most common ones are Good vs. Evil, and Us vs. Them). Moral absolutes are the order of the day: this should be role-played. In tricky situations, the Elementalist may make a Will Roll to properly deal with ambiguity -- but they should still be portrayed as disliking it exceedingly. Generally, the higher the Disadvantage, the sharper the dividing line: this is usually good for a -2 per level reaction from those on the other side of it.

### **Glory Hound (Celestial) (4pt/level)**

This Disadvantage doesn't interfere with Essence gathering: quite the contrary. It allows the Elementalist to better draw Essence from crowds. Normally, a group of 10 people can provide about 1 Essence to a particular ritual by acting in an appropriate manner. For Elementalist purposes, 'an appropriate manner' is equivalent to 'looking up in the air and pointing,' and the number of people needed per point of Essence drops by 1 for every level of this Disadvantage. The Essence may only be used to fuel Elemental Rituals going on **at that exact moment in time**. Still, this is hardly a flaw: indeed, the only reason why Glory Hound is considered a Disadvantage at all is due to the base -6 to reaction rolls per level that the Host will

show to anyone with it, once Heaven works out what's going on.

## **Elementalism in a Campaign**

There are two things that have to be remembered, here. First off, Elementals are Sorcerers, with all the advantages and disadvantages that the state entails: they can learn regular Sorcerous rituals without difficulty (provided that they have the right teaching materials), have Symphonic Awareness, can engage in Will Wars -- and are exceptionally willful individuals. They simply filter everything through their own unique viewpoint. This can cause headaches for celestials, as even the humblest Elemental is willful nearly beyond human ken.

The second (and related problem) is that Elementals are possibly the one set of Symphonically Aware entities with no real interest (or reason) to keep the War quiet. They may very well identify themselves with one side or another -- demons and angels are staples of superhero comics, after all -- but they generally see no reason to keep things quiet. Indeed, with their ability to tap a crowd for Essence (something probably best left unrevealed, at first), they have a vested interest in as much publicity as possible.

Neither the Host nor the Horde is going to go along with this, of course -- too many necessary things would become too difficult to do -- but there's the minor problem that, physically at least, Elementals are formidable entities indeed. The perceptive reader will note that this particular flavor of Sorcery doesn't seem to deal much with mental abilities, whether offensive or defensive: this is deliberate, in order to allow celestials some sort of potential controlling mechanism on the entire thing. Still, the raw power of Elementals can be troublesome, both in the short and long term. This particular phenomenon could have deleterious effects on attempts to keep the secret of the War.

You have been warned.

- Moe Lane

- <http://www.moelane.com>

*The material presented here is my original creation, intended for use with the In Nomine and GURPS systems from Steve Jackson Games. This material is not official and is not endorsed by Steve Jackson Games.*

*In Nomine and GURPS are registered trademarks of Steve Jackson Games, and the art here is copyrighted by Steve Jackson Games. All rights are reserved by SJ Games. This material is used here in accordance with the SJ Games online policy.*