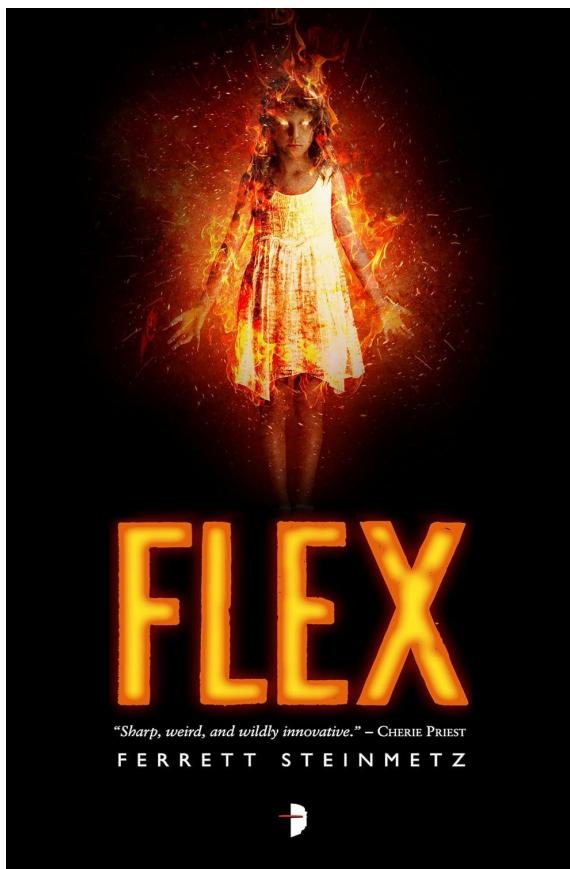




The 'Mancer Series

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Magic is love, so deep and abiding it rewrites the universe itself.

Paul Tsabo is a man who loves order, structure, bureaucracy. He has spent many a night in the office at Samaritan Mutual just filling out forms, helping people navigate the complex and confusing paperwork of the insurance company he works at. He's even frequently volunteered to do his fellow employee's paperwork for them. He does this out of a genuine, deep, and abiding love for paperwork, for bureaucracy, for structure-out of a belief that bureaucracy is what elevates humanity above the beasts.

One day his love crosses an invisible threshold and transcends the laws of the universe, and so Paul Tsabo became a bureaucromancer.

This world is not kind to magic users; SMASH squads hunt them down and take them in to be brain-burned into Unimancers-hivemind former 'mancers who have had all individuality and unique magic burned out of them in favor of governmental control. So the government line goes, at least. There's no denying that being a 'mancer legally makes you an unperson, someone who is constantly hunted by the government, has effectively no rights, and is deeply hated by the mundanes. The last time 'mancers were allowed to live freely was before World War II, and the loss of Europe saw an end to that state of affairs.

Paul Tsabo would seek to get a hold on his magic, learning to control this new force that he could command. This goal would see him befriend Valentine, getting kidnapped by criminals, falling into the Flex drug trade, and having to face his own daughter's suffering as she would end up developing her own 'mancy, the youngest known 'mancer at six years old, through immensely traumatic affairs. Things would not get any easier for him from there.

This is the world that you will be entering, about a year or so before Paul develops his bureaucromancy. You'll be starting in **New York City**, though you are free to make your way wherever you wish from there. That said, you might want to avoid Europe. Physics isn't exactly what it used to be over there.

Have **1000 CP** for your troubles, and remember; 'mancy already makes the universe capitulate in the face of overwhelming love. If you truly believe in yourself, there's nothing you can't do.

Just consider what happens after.

Origins

Being able to choose your place in the world is a wonderful gift, in and of itself. **You may choose your age and gender for free**, though take note; there is no record of any 'mancer who is younger than six years old. That doesn't make it impossible mind you, just highly, absurdly improbable. It's "common knowledge" that 'mancers can't really awaken until their early to mid twenties, so if you'd like a suggestion, that would be an age to aim for. And on that note, **all origins may be treated as drop-in as desired**.

Pencil Pusher

-You're not anyone particularly special. If you're an adult, you'd have an office job, a wife or husband, a steady financial situation, and the like. You file your taxes on time and keep on top of your bills. You live a comfortable, ordinary life...except for maybe one particular hobby or quirk of yours. Besides this one quirk, you're about as normal as it gets-and you're able to push this secret passion of yours to the side for the sake of your greater life. This simple ordinary life and perspective is a remarkable power that many, *many* 'mancers lack. It will offer you opportunities and perspective that many other 'mancers will never have.

Free Spirit

-You were waiting all your life for a spark, for something remarkable to happen. A letter from Hogwarts, an old man with a lightsaber, a mysterious stranger smoking a cigar with a mission especially for you. That never happened. You fell through the cracks in society, burying your disappointment and escaping into something...and that escape woke something in you, through sheer love and obsession. You have a chance now, a real chance to make something truly incredible out of yourself-and one way or another, you're going to shake things up.

Agent

-You exist in a certain space in society, elevated above others. You have something that sets you apart-wealth, influence, authority...you're someone that matters and your word holds weight. But it only holds weight as long as you keep your thumb pressed on the scale, and your position in society also comes with responsibilities. Responsibilities like making sure that the very structures that elevate you above the common man keep spinning along. Your obsession may be a way to act out against your role, or it may be the very tool through which you elevate yourself. You have the world on your side-but this is a world where love can overcome the world itself.

Perks

As always, **perks are discounted for their origin, with 100 CP perks made free.**

General Perks

'Mancy -300 CP/Free

-There is no special organ, mystical gene, or unique physiological difference between a mundane and a 'mancer. The only thing that divides a 'mancer from a mundane is obsession. A deep and abiding love for some specific subject, whether that's a physical thing, an idea, an intellectual property, an activity-anything that a person can obsess over can be the subject of a 'mancy. It's not enough to merely love such a thing though-you must be truly obsessed with it, to the point that it shapes your very worldview on a fundamental level. Eventually this love grows so great that it overcomes the laws of the universe itself.

-For **300 CP** you gain access to 'mancy, able to choose exactly what sort of 'mancy you develop to your taste as well as having an intuitive grasp on the basic tricks and powers of your magic. You'll also have a moderate level of skill with managing your Flux from the outset, giving you a headstart compared to other 'mancers. Of course, if you don't want to pay for your 'mancy you can instead take it **for free, in return for the drawback "A Mancer's Obsession"**. This will ensure you are hit with the full force of obsessive love that 'mancers are known to hold for their specific obsession. It can be managed, if you're careful and have friends. But make no mistake; this is a love that can easily consume you.

-By becoming a 'mancer you gain access to magic, defined and confined by the bounds of your own experiences and obsession. For example, a videogamemancer might be able to do such things as turn a fight against someone into a Mortal Kombat duel, or summon forth guns straight from Doomguy's arsenal. But if that specific videogamemancer doesn't know about a game or dislikes a genre of game, they simply wouldn't be able to do anything with those games. **You may choose ONE 'mancy, no more and no less.**

-Of course, all of this is without mentioning the costs of magic. Each time you do magic you must contend with Flux-bad luck that strikes back in rough proportion to how much magic you threw around. This bad luck will always seek to affect the caster first, and can even become good luck for your enemies as long as it would hurt you more. There are ways to deal with Flux, but they will require skill and effort to develop. See the notes on Flux for more details.

-All forms of 'mancy have rough parity and potential; some forms of magic will grant you vastly more upfront power but have lower versatility such as Fight Club-mancy, or have immense versatility but low staying power such as Junkmancy, or have both high versatility and power but extreme Flux costs such as videogamemancy, or have versatility, staying power, low Flux costs, and still be so comically slow that you can be taken out by a mundane if you're unprepared such as bureaucromancy. Every form of 'mancy has its unique benefits and drawbacks, and how you approach your obsession has just as much effect on those benefits and drawbacks as the subject of your obsession itself.

A Heart That's Pure -800 CP

-There's a price to every act of magic, this is common knowledge. This price is called Flux-the universe itself exacting its dues in return for however much you twisted it with the weight of your obsession. But...that's not quite true. Flux is a negotiation with the universe. Normally the easiest method to deal with it is simply to pay the piper, but in some truly rare and exceptional circumstances you can simply stand your ground and tell it that your accounts are clean. And with enough will and confidence, with absolutely no fear, regrets, or doubts in your heart...the universe will take you at your word. And thus will any Flux cost to your magic dissolve, like dust in the wind.

-This is a sort of enlightenment, a state of absolute certainty in the rightness of your actions that allows you to simply negate any cost to using your 'mancy. With this absolute certainty you can achieve magical effects that utterly boggle the minds of lesser 'mancers. You can conjure forth permanent magical constructs from nothing, create lasting magical changes to reality, manipulate and rewrite entire cities at will, and much more. There is *no cost* to this sort of magic, not for you, because your heart is pure.

-It should be noted that, while you can fully negate the Flux cost of your actions, this doesn't prevent other issues. You will still be limited to the fundamental paradigm of 'mancy that you operate through; you can't suddenly switch from being an origamimancer to a Star Wars-mancer, for example. But as long as you are even vaguely capable of justifying it within the bounds of your 'mancy and know that it's possible, it can happen. This also, very pointedly, does NOT prevent the opening of broaches; that remains a risk, perhaps even more so as your magic can be so overwhelmingly powerful that it can very quickly wear reality thin if you're not careful. See the notes on broaches for more details.

-Another major weakness; this is ultimately a state of mind. It is easy for you to maintain, but it is possible to shake your heart, make you fear and doubt-and the benefits of this perk will fade as long as your heart is shaken. Luckily you are naturally skilled at regaining your mental and emotional stability, though you might need anywhere from a few hours to a few weeks depending on how deeply you've been shaken. You are guaranteed to eventually find your center once again as long as you actively wish to.

-In future worlds or regarding other magical systems, you will be able to apply this state of mind to them as well. It might take you time to adjust yourself for a given magical system, but you will be able to eventually reach a state of enlightenment that allows you to fully negate the costs of magic-with the same caveats that it doesn't negate other drawbacks, limitations, and can be lost if you lose your emotional stability.

Pencil Pusher Perks

A Mind Like A Steel Cabinet -100 CP

-If there is one quality that separates the average from the exceptional, it lies in the mind. Some people are born forgetful and thoughtless, unable to remember simple things like what tax forms they need to fill or how to structure their requests to properly engage bureaucracy. But you are exceptional; your memory is crystal clear, effortlessly remembering even the least details of every single bit of paperwork you lay your eyes on. This sort of memory also applies to your general memories, ensuring you'll never have to worry about remembering where you put those files or papers.

Soulless Bureaucrat -100 CP

-If there is one place that is closest to hell, that is probably Europe. Second place is generally considered to be the DMV. You are made of sterner stuff than the average man, able to face the horrors and madness of such a soul-crushing place day after day without flinching. You're also remarkably good at keeping your cool, even in highly stressful or extreme situations; even getting kidnapped and tied to a radiator for three weeks by a gang lord would only leave you mildly annoyed. You've faced much worse after all.

Flexing Your Magic -200 CP

-The creation of Flex is the one universal magic-but that doesn't mean that every 'mancer is good at it. You are good at it. No, you're better than good at it; you have a natural talent for stripping your magic of all personality and crystallizing it into a form that others can use, able to easily create B-1/Pure Flex the very first time you take a crack at it, and you'll only get better from there. More than that, through whatever method makes sense for your particular 'mancy you've figured out how to apply a sort of metamagic influence to your Flex; making it useable only on specific terms and conditions, making it specifically empower certain acts, or making it so that any Flux load it carries leads to particular outcomes, all of these and more are possible with enough effort and skill on your part-and you've got the skill side down pat. This can have *extraordinary* implications if you let it...or it could just be a way to secure your product.

A Small Price To Pay -200 CP

-It takes a certain kind of miracle for a mundane to defeat a 'mancer. A certain kind of miracle for a fresh 'mancer to learn how to manage their Flux. A certain kind of miracle to stare death in the face time and again without flinching. You've got that sort of miracle on your side; you have a knack for figuring out how to manage to take the least amount of harm possible from any sort of danger you're facing. Sometimes that's getting away clean entirely. Most of the time that's just choosing exactly what you can sacrifice; crack your ribs to avoid breaking your spine, or lose a foot to avoid losing your head. And sometimes there's nothing that can be done-the harm you're facing is so overwhelming that there's no "least bad" choice. But that threshold will be much, much higher for you than it would be for others, and you know exactly how to manage it. This does, of course, apply to Flux as well-giving you an intuitive knack for bleeding it off in controlled bursts of misfortune that has very little long-term effect on you. Just don't take on too much at once.

Slow Is Smooth -400 CP

-The wheels of bureaucracy turn slowly but inexorably-and with utterly crushing momentum. Whatever form your magic takes, you have a certain knack to it; by slowing it down and drawing out your magic over a long period of time, both the cost of it and the detectability of it drop exponentially. You could do magic in a room surrounded by other 'mancers and affect a room full of magic-detecting opals on the other side of the country, and both nobody and nothing will detect a single thing as long as you take your time about it. Your Flux costs for such magic will also exponentially decrease, in some cases being almost unnoticeable if you take your time with things and work alongside your paradigm. Of course-if you want or need to you can still use your magic without slowing it down like this. Just take care if you spend a lot of time keeping your magic slow-you might accidentally surprise yourself just how loud and costly normal magic becomes.

The Beauty In All Things -400 CP

-Magic, all magic, is an expression of pure and utter love. It is obsession so grand that it warps reality, but that obsession is beautiful beyond belief if you open your eyes to it-that someone fell so deeply in love with something that they exalted it beyond the very laws of the universe. But here's the secret: anything can be magic. All things are beautiful. Life itself, and all things in the universe, are beautiful. Open your eyes to the beauty of the world and you'll find the strength of your own love growing, fed by the beauty of the world-and as your love grows, so too does your 'mancy. This requires more than obsession on a single subject, but a full breadth of experiences and appreciation of the world around you-but as long as you continue to live, experience the world, and appreciate the beauty within, you'll naturally find your magic growing stronger and broader in scope as well.

The Rules That Hold It All Together -600 CP

-All of reality follows a set of rules, regulations, and procedures. There is a logic, a narrative, a structure to existence. And something about that structure resonates with you, all the way down to the very core of your being. You know the laws of physics like you know your own heartbeat, the speed of light like the firing of your neurons, the cosmological principle of gravity like the marrow of your bones. This is an unconscious knowledge, one with very few applications...until you tap into your magic. Your magic is able to tap into this unconscious understanding of reality and bring it forth, aligning your magic with the very structure of reality in a way that only Paul Tsabo himself could achieve.

-Normally this should only be possible with bureaucromancy-or at the very least, it's only ever been observed with that. But somehow you've found a way to make your own unique 'mancy work alongside the universe's structure as well. The most prominent power this gives you is the capacity to close broaches-truly close them, fully restoring any lost laws of physics and damage to reality in the process, rather than just patching them up and suppressing them as Unimancers do. You can also completely negate the very logical existence of extradimensional demons, rejecting their existence and causing them to simply fall and vanish in a puff of logic. One more trick up your sleeve is the capacity to reinforce reality-making any other 'mancy besides your own much, much more costly in terms of Flux. There might be more to this, waiting to be discovered...but you'll have to figure out the full potential of this universal attunement yourself.

Free Spirit Perks

Wireless Controller -100 CP

-You can't be said to have a lot to your name, so you've learned to make due. Sometimes that means stretching a single meal for days on end, sometimes that means...putting aside the things you love for the sake of survival. But that doesn't mean that your love for those things is any weaker. You know how to hold on to the things that matter-and as an extension, your 'mancy knows how to work with literally nothing. Your 'mancy doesn't need anything except your imagination to operate; no tools or tricks, just raw will and gestures. This doesn't change how it works mind you, it just means you can never be truly disarmed. What you love lies in your heart, after all.

A Gamer's Focus -100 CP

-It takes a certain kind of mindset to develop 'mancy, a deep and obsessive focus that can be maintained for weeks, months, sometimes years at a time. You know what that sort of focus is also useful for? Learning completely mundane skills. Picking up a couple martial arts, learning lockpicking, developing people skills, breaking bad habits and building up new ones...all easily possible with just a month or two of your obsessive focus on any given topic. It's not exactly comfortable given you only have one 'mancy in your heart, but you can temporarily shift and adjust your obsession to help you rapidly learn mundane skills to remarkable levels. It won't last, your heart always returns to your love, but within a year or two someone might genuinely mistake you as utterly omniscient.

Flux Capacitors -200 CP

-Living free isn't exactly an easy life. Sometimes it means taking a beating and just getting right back up. But you know a thing or two about that. You're hardy, tougher than the average person. And this translates to your 'mancy too; most 'mancers can barely hold onto their Flux for hours, maybe a day at most. You? You can hold onto it for days, even a couple weeks. What would be lethal for anyone else is something you can just sorta handle. You still have to bleed it out slowly and steadily, but you're better at controlling the flow-making sure that only as much as you can handle leaks out at a time. Your capacity isn't infinite by any means and this doesn't mean the Flux doesn't affect you-but you can handle quite a bit.

Wild Eyed Freedom -200 CP

-Here's the trick that a whole lot of 'mancers tend to miss: it's not just the nature of your obsession that matters, it's also what you understand of your own obsession that matters. Two videogamemancers can have entirely different powersets simply based on what videogames you like...and your obsession's a bit broader than most people's. Whatever your obsession is you know how to stretch it, pushing its breadth and depth far beyond the average 'mancer. If you're a "Fight Club"-mancer, you could take inspiration from other movies by the director of Fight Club, or other action movie tropes, or just work straight from the narrative themes rather than any specific trick from the movie itself. It takes a bit to figure out these sorts of tricks, and the further from your base obsession the more costly they become-but you'll always find new ways to develop your love and your magic as long as you look for it.

Agape And Eros -400 CP

-On a fundamental level, magic is born from love. Love that consumes, overwhelms, and shatters the very laws of the universe itself. Obsession by any metric, and yet-love regardless. And you have a certain...affinity for love. You easily connect with others, both platonically and romantically, easily making friends for life, finding lovers, and building bonds-regardless of what you look like or how abrasive your personality might be. You simply know how to reach out to others and resonate with them. And this includes their magic; with your help, your love, even the weakest magic can jump many orders of magnitude in strength and versatility, and many competing forms of magic can work together. This is a power unknown to many, believed impossible by most...but love transcends what is possible. That's the very essence of magic, after all.

Eyes Wide Open -400 CP

-Sometimes, there's no way out...except right on through. A time to throw all caution to the wind and give everything you got, because any less means there's absolutely no chance you're getting out of there. When there's no other options, when it's do or die, you can burn your magic at every end its got-pushing so hard you surpass all your normal limits and could easily match the strongest 'mancers to ever live...for a little bit, at least. Flux won't even bother you while you're in this moment, pushing your magic to levels that are outright mythical...but once its over, you better have a good strategy for dealing with it. If you die during this final stand, no harm and no foul; your Flux will dissipate with your life. If you live...well, your Flux will try its damndest to correct that error. Or at the very least, make you sincerely regret it.

Ready Player One -600 CP

-One 'Mancer, one 'mancy, that's the rule. There are no exceptions to this rule, as far as anyone knows. Even Unimancers obey this same rule-sharing their singular 'mancy amongst many 'mancers, but incapable of using their original 'mancies while being Unimancers. As a 'mancer you get exactly one bag of tricks. Its a broad and powerful bag, certainly, and can be stretched in incredible ways if you're clever, but a kitemancer can't suddenly become a masqueromancer for example. You...can't break this rule. But you are about as close as someone can get to breaking this rule without actually doing so.

-Through whatever method makes sense for your particular 'mancy, you have a method of imitating others. As a masqueromancer you might make masks representing fictional characters or even other 'mancers; as a bureaucromancer you could write up full legal documentation for an alternative identity for yourself. As a videogamemancer you could reskin yourself into other characters or people. Besides the obvious use of disguises...this also gives you all the *powers* of those particular characters or people. A videogamemancer skinned as Psycho Mantis could use telekinesis and fly about as a psychic super soldier, for example. Now, there's caveats to this trick; the powers you can copy are fundamentally limited both by your own understanding of those powers *and* however much power you can pull out to fuel them. The more powerful the effect you're trying to replicate, the more costly it's going to be for you. But this trick gives you the sort of versatility that other 'mancers could only dream of.

Agent Perks

Systemic Subversion-100 CP

-Human civilization is governed by a series of systems, laws and legislature to define how the world ought to run. But laws are ultimately governed by people, and you're good at twisting people around your finger. Whether it's getting friends on the police force to investigate rivals, getting a local mayor to give you a tax break or kickback, or simply being so pretty that you can pull off a jury nullification even with damning evidence against you, the rules of society just seem to bend right out of your way. This is a potent influence on the mundane world and in legal space...but take care as it can only go so far, and relies on your likeability. If someone can't stand you, don't expect special treatment from them.

Shoestring Budget -100 CP

-From the outside it might look like governments have more money than god, but more often than not they're running straight into red lines of debt and desperately trying to stretch every single cent to make things happen. You are their saving grace; you have a keen nose for discounts and corners that can be cut without harming end results, along with an instinct for how to raise money, manage budgets, and build capital such that you could go from a smalltime drug dealer to a massive insurance company owner within a decade or so. With you managing the finances, a corporation or even an entire government division really can sell the illusion of endless resources at their beck and call.

Nameless And Faceless -200 CP

-For a long while, nobody knew who "Anathema" was. There was no face, no name, no signature, nothing. The very name "Anathema" was assigned by the news simply to have a moniker to refer to them by. This was, in and of itself, a sort of protection-and it's a protection you can replicate. As long as you act through proxies and avoid direct actions, you can ensure there are absolutely no traces of your involvement in various actions. This can even protect you from various magical attempts to scry and discover your existence...though it's not absolute, and with enough time and dedication your proxies can eventually be traced back to you. Not easily though, and you'll always have a mystical sense informing you when you are being traced and discovered-just in case.

The Halo Effect -200 CP

-Good looks good. This is a frank lie, a misconception that is, regardless, embedded into the very fabric of the human subconscious. And you look good, so clearly you *must* be good...at least in the minds of many. Your sheer looks, your natural charm and charisma, are such that you can easily convince most people of your way of thinking simply by making yourself out to be the "good guy". And as long as you don't break that initial impression, that idea that you're the "good guy", you can get away with a truly disgusting amount. Someone who has been raised to hate and fear you for their entire life could even be made to slowly and steadily fall in love with you simply through daily exposure as long as you remain peaceful and charming. That said...this isn't going to help in the moment. If someone's trying to kill you and you don't fight back, you'll make for a very pretty corpse. And just because you look good doesn't mean people won't fight back if you try to kill them.

The Power Of One -400 CP

-Not all people are created equally, as much as some might wish it was so. Some people are smarter, or stronger, or faster, or more beautiful than others. Even amongst 'mancers, there's those who can barely pull off cantrips...and then there are capital M 'Mancers. You are among the latter. Right out of the gate you're capable of magic that make most 'mancers look like dabblers, having immense power, versatility, and Flux efficiency that turns you into the sort of 'mancer that can easily destroy entire city blocks, or tear down an entire city with some buildup. You even have a unique trick; through some twist of your magic you can create permanent magical locations. Most 'mancers consider this impossible, and even for you it's immensely difficult and costly in Flux...but it's definitely possible for you.

Three Steps Ahead -400 CP

-The ultimate keys to success lie in properly planned preparations, and this is one area where you excel beyond all reason and probability. Your capacity to make plans and prepare for upcoming difficulties borders on the precognitive; with nothing but guesses and hunches you'll frequently prepare exactly the sort of countermeasures necessary to counter exactly the people or events that would otherwise ruin your plans. You could have squads prepared to fight a videogamemancer's instinctive loadout with the exact weapons that their own videogame logic says should stun and oneshot them, or have exactly the right resources monitored to know when someone is making Flex in your city. This isn't perfect mind you, and random chance, luck, or changes to reality through retroactive edits can derail even the best plans. But barring luck or magic, your plans are nearly unstoppable.

The Power Of Many -600 CP

-A 'mancer is born when their love, their obsession, transcends the laws of reality. The sheer force of such magic can do incredible things-warping reality and even rewriting an entire city all at the behest of a single 'mancer. But you understand something that very few 'mancers have come to understand throughout the ages: nobody is as strong as everybody. Every human in the world has the potential for magic, and when people work together the sort of magic that one can achieve is manifold times more powerful than what a single individual can achieve. And it's all at your behest.

-You have a knack for forming magical "networks"; other 'mancers can do the same of course, but where a bureaucromancer could spend years building up a magical contract just to share Flux amongst participants, you could do the same with a few hours and a website. But you can do much, much more than just sharing Flux. You can monitor every single participant in a network that you form, from their positions to their very thoughts. You can draw on the magics of everybody in your networks, redistribute Flux, and even suppress magic for those who are part of your network. You could draw on the latent magic within every mundane person inside of a network you form to massively-though temporarily-empower yourself. At your height you could even create a self-sustaining magical paradigm, a method of doing magic that forcibly connects to people like a virus. It would replace whatever native magic they have with your own network, built on rules you define, and guided by your principles and paradigms. People would still need some sort of magic for such a thing to hook into them, but the sheer potential of such a network at your beck and call can't be understated.

Items

Items also, of course, follow the same pricing rules as perks.

General Items

The Most Illegal Drug In The World -Free/100/300 CP

-There is exactly one universal magic that all 'mancers share, and that is the creation of Flex. Flex is the crystallization of distilled, personality free magic-giving you cloudy crystals that let the consumer twist fate to their whim...for a time. It can be powdered and snorted, or just consumed directly; it dissolves into pure magic once you take it into yourself either way. Of course, there's a minor problem; *'mancers can't actually consume it*. This is a drug usable only by mundanes, and producible only by 'mancers...though as a special treat, **any Flex gained through the paid versions of this item can also be consumed by you.**

Whether you just want the probability manipulation or want to store up raw magic to use for later, go for it. Just take care for the side effects of such.

-For Free, you get all the tools and resources required to make your own source of Flex out of your own personal 'mancy. A glass alembic to help you focus your raw magic and strain it into a personality-free form that can be harnessed by mundanes, copper wires to help you redirect your magic and Flux load, a bingo rolling cage to help you judge how much raw magic you're throwing around and check to see if any Flux is leaking into your product, and of course the all important hematite-the only substance that can crystallize magic into a consumable form. You'll get about a ton of hematite per week-more than enough to make about two hundred pounds of Flex. Considering a fingernail-sized crystal of Flex is more than enough to make you an untouchable god for several hours...

-By paying 100 CP you can skip all the work and get straight to the product; Flex, ready and waiting for a customer. Of course, this isn't exactly premium quality stuff; it's cloudy, and has something of an electric charge on the tongue. It'll give you probability perception and manipulation alright, but your customers are gonna have to deal with the Flux charge that builds up as they expend their Flex-leaving them with terrible luck and horrible accidents that leave them begging for a hit of supernatural good fortune. And if they take too much and don't deal with that Flux...well, Final Destination's a good example of what'll happen. You'll get a metric ton of the stuff a week-more than enough to fuel a supernatural drug empire.

-For 300 CP you can toss all that out though and go straight for the premium shit. Grade B-1 Flex, clear as polished glass. This stuff gives its consumers the same probability perception, the same capacity to twist fate to their will-but with no downsides. You can walk into any casino and become a millionaire, find a 10/10 sexbomb who will drop everything to take you to bed, jump off a building and get caught by a lucky breeze without ever getting hurt...you're basically as close to a 'mancer as a mundane can get. And when it wears off you're smelling like daisies; no bad luck for you, just good clean fun. You'll get about 500 pounds a week of it; not as much as the lower-quality stuff but it's premium for a reason.

Paper Pusher Items

America Runs On -100 CP

-Donuts, one of life's greatest pleasures-according to some, at least. You get a box containing a baker's dozen of donuts every time you open it. Every time. Maybe some 'mancer was really, really obsessed with donuts and made this. They're otherwise totally mundane donuts, though of a random variety every time. You're guaranteed to get at least two or three donuts of the kind that you're craving, at least. Makes for a weirdly good personality test to judge others by their taste in donuts. If the box is lost or destroyed, you'll get a new one within a week.

Acts Of God And Magic -200 CP

-Through some act of quite possibly literally mystical bureaucracy, you have gained a truly remarkable insurance plan. This insurance plan covers everything; medical, dental, accidents, damages, thefts, even acts of god. It won't pay out if you actively destroy your own stuff mind you, but if you don't it will not just pay out for anything you need but outright replace any of your lost or destroyed property within a month, regardless of the actual value and rarity of the property in question. This insurance comes pre-paid for one decade per jump, though will require annual payment of roughly \$100k (circa 2020) after that. Payable in other currencies or raw magic as well.

Works Of Love -400 CP

-Permanent magical locations, worlds of one's own, are nearly impossible to create with magic...but 'mancers can occasionally make items and artifacts, trinkets and toys infused with some potent power of their own. You've got a wooden trunk, filled with an assortment of seemingly random knick-knacks; a mask, a sheaf of papers in a binder, a doily, a videogame cartridge, a number of other odds and ends. Each of these are enchanted items, holding unique magics from a given 'mancer; the doily is fractal and enraptures anyone who sees it, the mask perfectly hides your identity, the papers are a magical contract that can mystically bind the parties who sign it, and so on. There's dozens of things in the chest, each object unique and strange in its power, and as you encounter new 'mancers the chest will add more items to its hoard based on every unique form of magic you encounter. Now finding the right thing for the right situation, that's the real trick.

Jumper Mutual -600 CP

-You own an extremely profitable, large company of some sort-by default an insurance company. This gives you both legal standing in the world, a source of capital, a customer base...and a place to practice your magic. What's off the records is that this company is structured in some way to benefit your magic; if you're a bureaucromancer it has all the relevant permits and licenses to help you cut through red tape and all the paperwork for you to fill out. If you're a videogamemancer it's a gaming company with all the consoles and gaming paraphernalia you could ever need. One way or another, this place will support you and your magic-allowing you to reach vastly beyond your normal capabilities while you're there, and all while protecting you from any legal or mundane backlash by giving you the perfect mundane alibi.

Free Spirit Items

Tools of Escapism -100 CP

-What is a 'mancer without the subject of their obsession? Whatever the subject of your obsession is, you receive a supply of media, tools, or facilitators of it-nothing that is actually significantly powerful or valuable, but something that reminds you of it, warms your heart, and gives you something to toy with whenever you've got a free moment. As a videogamemancer for example, you wouldn't receive every single game in existence, but you would receive a small selection of games and consoles to play them on that you deeply love. Playing with these foci will even help you focus and refine your 'mancy, though only to a limited degree and only for a little bit after you stop playing.

Med Packs -200 CP

-Regardless of what 'mancy you personally have, you've gained a certain trick-or perhaps a blessing-from a videogamemancer. If you go looking around in your environment for a minute or two, you'll always be able to find a glowing green health pack. You can only hold onto one health pack at a time, and when used it will immediately heal and stabilize you...but only for a few hours per pack, after which the effects will fade. You can also use these packs on other people. This can even work on lethal wounds, though it is still temporary healing; you'll need a real doctor to prevent your death once it wears off.

A Quiet Place -400 CP

-Sometimes you just need to get away from it all, some place where you can just be yourself without worries. Luckily, you know a place. This hidey hole will never be somewhere particularly convenient, but it will always be well-stocked with all you and a couple dozen friends need to live comfortably for years on end-practically a little end of the world bunker. Just being inside this bunker will deter any attention on you and will it be impossible for mundane means to find you-but not magic, this place can only endure so much magical scrutiny before it's discovered. Even then, it'll take quite a bit of effort to find. As long as you're careful, you can have your own little paradise away from it all.

The Junkman's Junkyard -600 CP

-For every 'mancer that SMASH has caught, there's one or two that deliberately went unreported simply because of how useful they are. This is one such 'mancer; whatever his name was, he's the Junkman now. He runs a Junkyard. He has no idea he's a 'mancer, and any attempts to explain such to him-even magical ones-will fail. The thing that makes him special is that he can find *anything*, and I do mean *anything*, in his Junkyard. Cars, tools, papers, parts, people, clues, literally anything you can imagine, he can find it in the junkyard-that said, there are caveats. Everything comes from a junkyard, so don't expect things to be in good condition-and the more valuable or unique something is, the longer it'll take him to find it. If it's just a common car part he could find it in an hour; if it's a specific person, expect him to go looking for weeks. And of course-it has to exist *somewhere* for him to find it. He can't just pull stuff out of nowhere. He runs a business, so expect him to require payment for his services-usually about 10% of the value of the item he finds. He'll cut you a discount if you bring donuts.

Agent Items

Opals -100/200 CP

-There is exactly one substance on earth that reliably reacts to ambient magic usage, and it is opal gemstones. In the presence of magic, opal gemstones crack and blacken; this is the most reliable method mundanes have to detect when magic is being used on or around them...but it does make them single-use objects. You get a supply of ten “government grade” opal gemstones per week; these can only detect when magic is being used on them or something they’re touching. **For an extra undiscounted 100 CP** you can upgrade to “high-grade” opals, which blacken and shatter when any sort of magic is used in a radius around them. Just make sure to actually check them regularly; detection only helps if you realize that they’ve detected something after all.

Magiquell -200 CP

-There’s no such thing as a drug that suppresses magic usage. Magiquell is the next best thing; a drug that heavily impairs concentration, focus, and willpower to prevent a ‘mancer from actually being able to do any *intentional* magic. It tends to leave one nauseous and disoriented as well, though doesn’t seem to have any long term side effects. The same set of qualities it suppresses also makes it quite useful for interrogation or mental conditioning, if you think about it. You get a crate of Magiquell syringes, enough to keep a dozen ‘mancers docile for a week, also restocking each week. They can also be fired as darts.

Improbable Transportation -400 CP

-SMASH and Unimancers have a wide variety of technologies available to them, but this is one of the more absurd ones. What you have here is a complement of six jet-engine equipped coffin-sized and shaped drones, capable of full 3D movement and equipped with a variable weapon loadout-by default something like a couple standard rifles. These drones are notably hollow inside, holding a surprisingly comfortable bed-like cavity within them that can fit a very large, fit adult inside them easily-which is exactly what they’re intended for, as these are actually transport drones designed to ferry people to other places at *mach speeds*. Their actual 3D combat movement is much slower, but once they spool up and take off they can circle the world in less than a day. Weirdly enough, they don’t seem to need fuel.

United Nations Anti-Terrorist... -600 CP

-By international agreement SMASH can operate just about anywhere in the world and can draw upon the resources of entire nations...as long as they’re working to capture ‘mancers or deal with broaches. You have the same sort of mandate now; both here and in future worlds you’ll have a unique position and relationship with just about every legal authority you come across, able to operate freely within their territory and even draw on their resources...up to a point. This is a quid-pro-quo; you need to actually act in their benefit to keep it going. You can get away with a lot mind you, even committing warcrimes on their own citizens, but you need to deliver results to them at the end of the day to maintain this sort of latitude-and if you screw the pooch too much, expect to get shut out of their resources for a few years. And while you are free to act, every time you call on the actual resources of an authority expect them to want something in return-results or materials.

Companions

Canon Companion -Free/50 CP

-There's a wide variety of interesting characters in this world to meet and befriend, if you're willing to go looking for them. **You can companion them for free** as long as you can convince them to come along with you on your chain. That said, if you wish to guarantee things, **you can pay 50 CP to guarantee they'll come along. This will also provide them a build from this jumpdoc if you so wish**, though their origin will be a sort of "drop-in" or aligned best with whatever they would have naturally been.

Import/Create Companion -50/200 CP

-Perhaps you have some people in mind to accompany you as is? **For 50 CP, you can either create or import a companion to join you.** As part of this process they will receive **800 CP and an origin-with all associated discounts and freebies.** But perhaps you want more than just that; **for 200 CP you can create or import up to eight companions at once.** Now you've got a real party going on; just take care, because that many 'mancers in one place can cause quite a bit of chaos, let alone the risk of broaches.

Truly Devout -100 CP

-You could call them something of a callback to an earlier era, or perhaps someone whose particular obsessions just so happen to align in a way that's socially acceptable. This 'mancer is someone who lives and breathes religious scriptures; they can quote any random passage from their holy books at the drop of a hat-not just in English, but in the original languages they were written in as well as a half-dozen interpretations. Their every action aligns with religious virtues, and the very thought of not attending their religious duties simply doesn't compute. In many ways they are an ideal; humble, caring, loving, generous, and so comically obsessed with their religion that it's a miracle nobody realized they're a 'mancer-perhaps least of all them. How aware of their own magic they are is up for debate; they might be aware, or they might interpret it as being blessings from their religion. Their exact age, body, and the nature of the religion they worship is up for you to decide; they receive **800 CP and the "Pencil Pusher" origin** for you to make a build for them.

Kinning Cosplayer -100 CP

-It was bound to happen at some point. Some people develop parasocial relationships with fictional characters; this one went many, many steps beyond that. They became utterly, maddeningly obsessed with a particular fictional character, to the point that the very laws of the universe gave in and simply allowed them to *become* that character. For all intents and purposes they have become that character, in body and in action...though with caveats. Their magic is only so strong; if the character they're embodying is too powerful they just can't live up to that. And while they are utterly obsessed with said character, there is still the original 'mancer living under that character's skin. Given their neuroses and maladaptations they'll originally peak through, especially when they're feeling down and nervous. Perhaps you can help them learn to live as themselves-or embrace their persona even further. Their exact age, body, and the character they embody is up for you to decide; they receive **800 CP and the "Free Spirit" origin** for you to make a build for them.

Antimancer -100 CP

-There truly are no limits to what forms 'mancy can take...even forms that are completely self-contradictory. This character has a strange, self-defeating obsession: they are utterly, maddeningly obsessed with being "normal". They try to live as average a life as possible, embrace the mundane, and utterly loathe the unexpected or the unique. They have no idea, none whatsoever, that their obsession with normality has transcended reality and awakened them as a 'mancer-and not a normal one, either. They're an Antimancer-a 'mancer whose specific magic exists to *counter* the magics of others, reinforcing natural laws and making any 'mancy much, much more Flux-costly. They might have more powers up their sleeves, but they'll never willingly explore said powers; they truly believe in their own normality, and the idea of them being a 'mancer might just mentally shatter them. For some reason they count you as a friend, though they might look at you with disdain or think of you as their "worst" friend if you display any magic or unique traits. Their exact age and body are for you to decide; they receive **800 CP and the "Agent" origin** for you to make a build for them. **Uniquely, they may also buy "The Rules That Hold It All Together" at a discount**, to represent their utter obsession with normality.

Drawbacks

'Mancers are no strangers to the idea of trading their suffering for power. If you'd like, you can embrace that idea yourself and take on some additional burdens for power. **There are no limits to the drawbacks you can take** beyond your own capacity to endure them, of course.

A Mancer's Obsession +0 CP

-Sane, rational, and level-headed people generally aren't the kind of people who develop magic. It takes obsessive and prolonged focus on a single specific topic to become a 'mancer, the sort of focus that is more often than not characterized as some sort of compulsive disorder. And now, you're going to experience the full force of that sort of obsession. Whatever the focus of your 'mancy, you will be all but consumed by it; you'll define your life around it and will constantly feel compelled to indulge in your focus regardless of any other obligations you might have. You'll view reality itself through the lens of your focus, and will genuinely struggle to comprehend that solutions to problems that don't make use of your focus even exist.

-And don't think this gives you a powerboost to your magic; it takes more than just obsession to be a truly powerful 'mancer. This obsessive focus of yours will make you a worse 'mancer, not better. It will make it much harder to connect to others and to stretch the limits of your magic, simply due to how much it narrows your mind to possibilities that could expand your paradigm. It's not impossible to manage this obsessive focus, and with time, effort, and companionship you might become a more well-rounded person...but it won't be easy. **You cannot take this drawback without 'Mancy, and this drawback provides no additional points beyond making the 'Mancy perk free.**

Footloose +100 CP

-It seems life has already taken its toll on you-quite literally at that. Choose a limb, such as a hand, a foot, or even an eye. You lose that extremity for the duration of the jump. Beyond the obvious disability it's also going to itch and occasionally ache, just to really rub in what's missing. And no magic will be capable of restoring it for the duration of the jump. You can get prosthetics for it, but none will ever feel quite right.

Once Bitten +100 CP

-Perhaps you've visited Europe, despite all suggestions to stay far, far away from there. Perhaps you've been on the frontlines of a fight between 'mancers. One way or another, you've got a permanently bleeding wound on you from a buzzsect bite; an interdimensional demon literally bit a chunk out of your existence and left a bleeding pit that will never heal. Luckily it doesn't seem to have any particular health consequences despite eternally bleeding...but it does mark you as someone who's had a rather close encounter with demons. Expect to be recognized and scrutinized for it. And you're not going to be able to hide it either; it'll always bleed through eventually, even if you use magic to hide it.

A Small Debt +100 CP

-So, you may have made some shady deals and promises to certain people, or perhaps took on certain obligations that you didn't meet. One way or another, you're in debt to the tune of...oh, about \$1.4 million worth of Flex. A significant amount, but one good batch of Pure Flex could easily pay it off many times over. That said, your debtor happens to be a criminal gang, and if you pay them off...well, don't be surprised if they want more after that. Once you're in the game, you don't get out easily. And if you don't pay? They'll take it out of you one way or another. That said, they're a mundane criminal gang-a particularly large one, but mundane still. Now, if they get their hands on some Flex, things might get dicey...

Unstained Hands +100/200 CP

-There are certain lines a person can't cross without it fundamentally changing who they are. Taking a life is one of those lines. And for the rest of your time here, it's a line that you will simply be unable to bring yourself to cross. Enemy soldiers, police, gangbangers, even enemy 'mancers, you just can't end their lives-always going for nonlethal solutions regardless of the stakes. This isn't absolute, but it would take a lot, and I do mean a lot, to bring you to the point of being willing to kill-and even then, you'll give your enemy every chance to walk away first. While this only applies to you, **for an extra 100 CP** you can become unwilling to allow your allies and companions to kill as well-actively stopping them from doing so whenever necessary.

SMASHed In The Mouth +200 CP

-SMASH has an international mandate to hunt down any and all known 'mancers and bring them in for Refactoring-the process that converts a 'mancer into a Unimancer under government control. And one way or another, you've become a known factor to SMASH. They're coming for you, bringing highly advanced technology, Unimancer squads who can make magic massively more Flux-costly and operate in a knowledge and skill-sharing hivemind, and the tacit support of just about every world government to take you in. And if they manage to bring you in, they *will* be brain-burning you until there's nothing left; no peaceful integration for you. That said, they're still a government agency. They can be avoided, misled, and outright fought if you have the guts for it.

Payne In The Ass +200 CP

-As much as SMASH hunts every known 'mancer, there's still plenty that slip through the cracks. 'Mancers who are too small time to notice, too useful for certain people to be reported...and some rare, clever 'mancers who put themselves into positions of great power and influence. One such 'mancer has you on their shitlist. They're old, powerful in several senses of the word-political, financially, and mystically-and their influence is far reaching. They can't act overtly, mind you-they're still a 'mancer in a world where that would leave them with no legal rights if it's known, so their influence is generally felt through covert actions that will empower and coordinate your enemies against you. But they are *very* good at covert actions, and their magic means they can even do things like rewrite recent history to act against you-or direct your enemies right to your position. The real trick to fighting this 'mancer will be just figuring out who they are in the first place; their magic is extremely subtle and they've had decades to perfect their craft and social disguises.

Heart On Fire +200 CP

-The common understanding is that only those at least in their early twenties can awaken 'mancy; something about a child's brain preventing it, or only adults being able to obsess for so deeply and for so long. This common knowledge has been broken by Aliyah, Paul's six year old daughter...and it has been broken again. You have a young companion, a daughter or sister, who has suffered so much that her coping attempts awoke 'mancy within her. She isn't emotionally stable and she's not very good at controlling her magic-let alone the Flux she generates. But nevertheless you must care for her; if she dies or is captured by SMASH, your chain ends. You may choose what form of 'mancy she awoke, and may take her with you after the jump. You can even make a build for her with **800 cp**, but **she will only receive the benefits of this build after a decade** to properly grow into her power.

A Poisoned Heart +200 CP

-Fears, doubts, insecurities, guilt, regrets...these things are poison to the heart. Even in a mundane life these can easily tear away any chance at a happy life, and when magic gets involved things only get worse; these sorts of negative emotions can massively increase the Flux one generates for even the most innocuous forms of magic. Something in your life has poisoned your heart with these sorts of negative emotions-some regret, guilt, or torment that will haunt you. These negative emotions-and the immense Flux cost they push onto any sort of magic you do-will plague you for the duration of your stay; it's not impossible to overcome them, but it will not be an easy process and will take years, nearly a full decade, of dedicated focus and efforts before you can overcome the darkness plaguing your heart.

Anathema +300 CP

-As much as some might wish it so, oftentimes there's simply no rhyme or reason in who, how, and when 'mancy develops in people. Sometimes two 'mancers can arise in the same city, nearly at the same time, with 'mancies of complete and utterly antithetical nature, for no particular reason and become irredeemable enemies simply due to the nature of their 'mancies. This is an event that has happened to you personally; sometime around when you enter this setting, another 'mancer will arise who happens to have 'mancy that is utterly antithetical to your own. Their personality, their ideals, their very existence stand in direct opposition to all that you consider good, and their magic serves as a direct counter to your very existence. Worse, through their own magic they'll be able to sense your influence regardless of any actual traces and will work to undo all that you have done and all that you are. You specifically cannot reason with them, and fighting them will be nearly impossible for you as well...but not for others. They specifically counter *you*, not other 'mancers, and they are fundamentally a normal human when not supported by their 'mancy. All that said, take care; they're clever and thoughtful in their hatred of you, and don't wish to just kill you-but to undo all that you have done and all that you are.

Lost In Wonderland +300 CP

-‘Mancy doesn’t generally develop in those who are mentally and emotionally stable, but it also rewards those very facts-empowering those who have life experiences and connect with others far beyond their natural means. You...have no experience with that fact. You have a series of anxiety disorders, or perhaps simply utterly lack any and all social capabilities. Either way, you retreated into yourself and your own personal world-and this is where your ‘mancy was born. And while it provides you comfort with surprisingly low Flux costs, it is also remarkably *weak*. You will struggle intensely to do anything beyond the most minor of cantrips, at least until you can get out of your shell and connect with the world around you-an experience that will be both mentally and emotionally agonizing for you. And while your Flux costs are low due to your weak magic, they’re not zero-and you have extremely terrible discipline for your ‘mancy due to your poor emotional regulation. If you want to survive, you’re going to have to go out and connect with others.

Friends On The Other Side +300 CP

-Something about you-your physical structure, your magic, your ontology-it...well, it *appeals* to the demons that lie in alien dimensions. The nonphysics beyond reality that peek through when ‘mancers clash with each other or when enough magic is thrown around, they hunger for you. Something in particular, something truly vast and terrible, has a particular interest in you. Maybe it likes you. Maybe it likes how you taste. One way or another, it’s trying to push through-to the detriment of everything that can be said to exist. When you do magic or when magic is done near you, broaches will open many, MANY times faster than normal-and they will be much, much more resistant to closing even if you’re capable of such. And *something* is going to constantly be trying to reach through them. Something that recognizes you. Something that can’t die, that can’t be hurt, can only be temporarily pushed back to its home dimensions. It’s too *big* to fit through a small broach, but it can send swarms of buzzsects through. And it will be eager to make small broaches much worse-and hopefully emerge. Be very, very careful, because this thing emerging might mean the death of the whole world-but it will make sure to take its time with you first.

Cinematic Ending +300 CP

-Having magic powers is pretty awesome, right? Being able to warp reality with the force of your will and your sheer love for some subject is amazing. But nothing lasts forever; even the greatest books have an ending, and the greatest movies a finale. You can have your ‘mancy for a single continuous month, thirty-one days. You can even choose when this month starts, allowing you to choose when you awaken as a ‘mancer. But when that month is up...your powers fade. You’ll have to figure out how to make your way in this world without your ‘mancy supporting you-and just because your ‘mancy faded, doesn’t mean your obligations went with it. Your enemies will still hunt you, and the dangers of this world will remain. Take note-**this drawback also applies to powers from outside of this jump**. You get one glorious month of power, and the rest of your time spent here will be mundane. Better make it count.

Ending

You've managed to make it a decade in this world of magic and obsessions. Perhaps you've come out stronger for it. Perhaps you just barely survived. Regardless, as always, **all drawbacks are revoked at the end of a decade spent here**. Now you have one final choice to make.

Return: Perhaps you've had more than enough of venturing across the multiverse, and yearn for your home. You return with all you have gathered so far.

Stay: Maybe you've made relationships you can't bear to break, hold obligations that mean too much to you, or simply decided that this is where the train ride stops for you. Regardless, this is where you'll be spending the rest of your life.

Continue: The chain continues onwards; off to the next world in an endless journey.

Notes

General Jump Notes

You don't need to take 'mancy if you don't want to, though it would make many of the perks in this jump largely useless unless you have some other form of magic available to you.

Any perks that apply to this world's magic system will also apply to future magic systems, though the exact details of how are up to fanwank.

This isn't World of Darkness, and Flux isn't Paradox. Just bears noting. And on that note, "A Heart That's Pure" won't negate Paradox...though it will negate things like Quintessence cost. Also applies to Chronicles of Darkness/New World of Darkness Paradox. They are two distinct things. *Neither* are covered by "A Heart That's Pure".

The Junkman needs to actually know what he's looking for to find it; he can't just go searching for "a solution to all your problems", because he has no fucking clue what that looks like. Nor can he go find "someone perfect for me", because again he has no idea what that looks like. And obviously he can't find meta shit because that doesn't really exist; he can't find "the author" because that's not a thing, nor can he find "an extra 1000 CP" because that's also not a thing. "But what if I'm in a setting where those are things?" He doesn't get it and still can't find it. As far as he's aware he's a normal guy and he won't get all your meta nonsense.

If you truly believe that your form of 'mancy is capable of something that's outlined in the capstone perks but didn't actually buy it, then you should be able to train and develop your 'mancy to do it...eventually. It will never be easy and will require an immense investment of time and effort, but fundamentally nothing is stopping you from doing so. The perks make it manifold times easier and make it so 'mancies that can't justify any method of doing something will still be capable of it, somehow. If you truly think the specific 'mancy you chose can do something, go right ahead with it.

Metamancy/magicmancy/omnipotencemancy/other wanked or gamebreaking 'mancies are just as powerful as normal 'mancies like rock stacking-mancy, knittingmancy, or the like. They might provide you some unique advantages like messing with other magics or being faster to cast, but will have downside that bring them inline with other 'mancies like being stupid Flux-costly or requiring specific conditions before it's useful at all. Have fun with your 'mancy, don't try to metagame it. The 'mancy that you love and that fits your themes/desires will be the best one for you.

What's Up With Europe?

While on the surface this world greatly resembles a more mundane Earth, make no mistake-it's a wholly different world with a divergent history. That history was never really explored in detail in the series, but there are certain facts. 'Mancy has been around since well before World War II, and potentially for as long as humanity has existed. It's unlikely that many 'mancers were born before the modern age as few had the simple time and energy to spend on being obsessive enough to develop 'mancy, but it is known to have existed at least for a century. What is known is that Europe was unique amongst the world for being the global center of magical history and development, prior to World War II.

All of that changed during World War II. The story goes that the various nations involved in the war began to forcibly recruit 'mancers into their armies and began militarizing the usage of magic. The clashing of so many forms of magic by so many 'mancers would eventually lead to broach after broach opening until eventually the entirety of Europe was a hellscape of broken physics and reality-consuming demons. In the modern day only Unimancers and military forces to support said Unimancers live there, desperately containing the broaches that were opened up there in World War II-not closing, the Unimancers are incapable of actually closing broaches, simply containing them so they don't continue to expand.

World War II and Europe in general represented a turning point in history for 'mancers, and not for the better. Magic was criminalized, 'mancers unpersoned, and a global policy of persecution against all 'mancers was enacted; nobody wanted a repeat of World War II and would ensure the death of magic by any means necessary. Over time this would evolve into SMASH and the Unimancer program, two aspects of the UN which work together to suppress magic and 'mancers as best they can while simultaneously and constantly searching for any sort of solution for the broaches.

As far as the public is aware, SMASH hunts down, captures, and forcibly "brain-burns" 'mancers to make them into Unimancers-a hivemind without any unique thoughts, personality, or will that is wholly under the control of the government. The public has been deeply convinced of the fundamental evil of 'mancers, with regular advertisements of a hotline to call SMASH forces for any suspected 'mancer activity and many otherwise ordinary people able to express seething hatred of 'mancers at the drop of a hat.

Make no mistake, this hatred and fear is a righteous thing. The sort of horrors unleashed in World War II are unconscionable, and enough conflict between 'mancers or uncontrolled magic could very well see the entire planet consumed in a broach one day... But this is also a blind hatred that will ensure humanity will never actually solve the problems it faces-because only 'mancy of a very specific kind can actually deal with broaches. It is an understandable hatred born of fear and survival instinct, but it is also a scar tissue that prevents true healing.

What's a Broach?

The fabric of reality can only take so much stress. A single 'mancer doing truly absurd levels of magic is, in almost all cases, never enough to actually cause a broach. Several 'mancers working together can ensure their magic doesn't overly strain reality while still pulling off incredible feats. Generally speaking, it is only when multiple 'mancers come into active conflict with each other and begin throwing around magic against each other that there's a risk of a broach. For the vast majority of the time, you are at no risk of causing a broach.

When reality wears thin, alien dimensions beyond Earth will begin to peek through. If reality wears *too* thin, then demons will begin to emerge. These demons typically take the form of "buzzsects"-creatures that look like a cross between a buzzsaw and a flying insect. These creatures will immediately begin consuming reality around them, both the physical reality and the very laws of physics, causality, and logic that holds reality together. The more they consume the more they replicate, and the more they replicate the more they consume in a spiral of destruction that can render large areas utterly uninhabitable in very short order. Buzzsects are also very notably immune to *nearly* all magic, consuming it and using it to replicate even faster.

As far as the world is concerned, it is impossible to truly close a broach once one has opened. The only method that humanity has for dealing with broaches is to call in Unimancers, who can use their magic to strengthen the laws of reality and contain a broach-only contain, never actually close. Paul Tsabo is unique amongst the world in that he is capable of actually, permanently closing broaches-and his magic allows him to negate the existence of buzzsects as well, making him uniquely capable of dealing with all things related to broaches.

Buzzsects are not the only inhabitants of the demon dimensions. Deep within the demon dimensions are...things. It is impossible to describe what exactly those things are, only that they are very large and they want to enter this reality. They exist within alien physics utterly inimical to our reality and are likewise effectively immune to magic; even the greatest effort of thousands of Unimancers directed by a bureaucromancer is barely enough to push one of them back, which gives Paul the opening he needed to close the broach that said *thing* was attempting to use as an opening to Earth. The sheer scale of these entities is difficult to describe, but it is known that they could be seen from space. One of these *things* emerging in reality would essentially be the end of reality.

What else may lie beyond a broach is impossible to tell. The only universal constant is that whatever's beyond there is hostile to Earth.

What is 'Mancy?

Put simply, 'mancy is reality warping in accordance with the themes established by the obsession that sparked it into existence. By reality warping I really, truly do mean reality warping; Paul's bureaucromancy allows him to do all sorts of things from delivering things to arbitrary locations, retroactively creating cars or houses, retroactively sabotaging dozens of flashbangs by rewriting their quality inspection forms to ensure that they were actually always duds, rip up medical forms to retroactively undo critical medical treatments a person underwent and leave them crippled in the present, and at his peak even rewriting the events of an entire day to save millions of lives. Valentine, a videogamemancer, is able to reskin herself into the bodies of videogame characters to take on their powers, turn herself into a giant boss monster, turn her surroundings into a videogame level, evade police via GTA logic, endure bullets to the face by converting all damage done to her into HP damage to a health bar, trap you in a turn-based battle, and much more.

There are limits to your reality warping of course-besides just Flux, which will be explained later. Your greatest limitation is also your strength; your reality warping has to *make sense* to your own personal paradigm. Valentine, for example, loves violent videogames like GTA, DOOM, Mortal Kombat, and some other classics. This gives her a wide variety of powers, but she also has a distaste for "childish" games such as Scribblenauts, Animal Crossing, or Cooking Mama-and thus can't access any powers from those specific games. She also can't break her own videogame logic; if she wants to teleport away she has to be in an area with no enemies or use line of sight with a Portal Gun, or if she wants to turn on the power in a building that's in the middle of a blackout she *has* to go through a videogame level in order to do so.

Another limitation is, quite simply, your own life experiences. The more you experience life, the more you connect with others, and the more you broaden your horizons, the more you'll be able to do with your 'mancy. In Book 2 (The Flux) there were sixteen 'mancers that were hidden in an asylum by Lawrence Payne, the main antagonist of that book. These 'mancers were...nearly powerless. Not because Lawrence had actually done anything to them, but simply because they never got out, experienced life, and broadened their own horizons; living a sheltered life will make your magic weaker and less versatile, while living a stressful but full life will actively empower and broaden your magic.

Finally, this needs to be said: no specific 'mancy is truly better than any other. Each 'mancy has their own strengths and weaknesses defined by their paradigms; videogamemancy has a great deal of versatility and power, but has high Flux costs for example, while bureaucromancy is great at a wide variety of effects and especially temporal shenanigans, but is incredibly slow to actually manifest. Every single 'mancy has roughly the same sort of potential, depending on what perks you choose. You can reach just as high with a "rock balancing"-mancy as you could with an "omnipotence" or "magic"-mancy. What sort of 'mancy you choose should be something that you love or fits your own personal themes; the power of such a thing will flow naturally from there.

To get a better feel for what 'mancy is and how it works, here are a number of examples.

Paul Tsabo, Bureaucromancer: Writing up forms for retroactive ownership of properties (houses, cars, apartments), writing up forms for the retroactive *creation* of properties, scanning through the documents of entire cities or nations via FOIA request forms and other information forms, retroactively sabotaging grenades, drones, and other weaponry by rewriting the inspection and quality control forms, writing out a “hazardous materials delivery” form to send his Flux far away from himself, writing out delivery forms or recall forms to deliver things to arbitrary locations or pull his allies back to himself, tearing up documents to make certain events retroactively have never happened, managing and programming the ‘mancy of others through rules, regulations, and bureaucracy that he enforces on it, writing up unbreakable contracts and contracts to share Flux amongst all participants, and at his peak harnessing the laws of physics themselves as the most powerful form of bureaucracy to close breaches and negate demons as well as writing counterfactual reports, forms, and documentations for the events of an entire day to rewrite recent history.

Valentine, Videogamemancer: Calling forth arbitrary weaponry from various videogames, Super Mario jumping, calling forth Mario powerups, harnessing Grand Theft Auto logic to escape any sort of pursuit, generating a Portal gun to teleport between portals, summoning a health bar to avoid actual physical damage, turning a battle into a turn-based RPG, trapping her enemies in a Stealth Game to sneak around via Metal Gear Solid logic, undoing a blackout by going through a videogame level full of zombies and finding a giant button, summoning temporary healing medpacks via searching for a minute or two, becoming a giant boss monster, “reskinning” herself into various videogame characters (such as Psycho Mantis) complete with their powers, “reskinning” herself and her allies into various disguises or granting them the powers of their disguise, using Sims logic to restructure a house in an instant, turning a search for clues into a quest for herself complete with quest markers and key items, and at her pinnacle saving and loading to prevent her death, even at the hands of demons.

Anathema, Paleomancer: Disabling and negating electronics in her vicinity, hunting targets across immense distances with essentially no information, creation of natural locations like caves or the like, summoning forth ancient beasts, forcibly negating the ‘mancy of other ‘mancers by returning things to a “primal state”, improbable amounts of sneaking and stealth despite being in clear view of others, uses her magic to entrance people with basic needs (food, thirst, etc), can transform others into mindless beasts with enough effort.

Lawrence Payne, Authorimancer: Can take on the Flux charge of any ‘mancers that swear fealty to him and distribute it to anyone who has agreed to the End User Licence Agreement on his company’s website, can perceive the actions of anyone under his authority or anything that happens in his personal building, appears to-though is never confirmed to-have an aura of authority around him that makes it much easier to agree with him and much harder to disagree with him, can work ‘mancy through paperwork to an unknown though lesser degree than Paul, can store and draw power from those under his authority, and can theoretically turn back time to retroactively achieve effects-though he never successfully pulled that off and was eaten by buzzsects before he could do so.

“Tyler Durden”, Fight Club-mancer: Complete conceptual erasure of his original name, permanent transformation into a new body in the shape of the character “Tyler Durden” from the movie Fight Club, an enraging effect that makes anyone he taunts want to fight him in melee up to and including snipers, damage negation that reduces any damage he takes to a cinematic bruise and bloodied lip, summoning forth armies of fake people, improbable action-movie skills, organization and empowering of mundane individuals in a sort of cult of personality, at one point he had sex so hard he caused a small earthquake.

Rainbird, Pyromancer: Can generate fire, is immune to fire, can manipulate fire, can move through fire, can live in magmatic liquids, regenerates from fire, can teleport through fire, is near-constantly on fire to the point that his internal organs are on fire, can empower his physical movements with fire. While he possesses incredible regenerative capability through fire, it is limited by the base condition of his body when he’s not on fire; if his base body is crippled, he can’t regenerate that.

The Illustromancer: Summoning up moving paintings, portraits, and the like, bringing art to life and giving them the capacity to act outside of their artistic medium, using said creations to attack. Little is known about her ultimate capabilities.

The Junkmancer: Little is known about his ultimate capabilities as he does not even realize he’s a ‘mancer and he is only briefly mentioned, but it is known that he is able to find quite literally *anything* in his junkyard as long as he’s given enough time to do so.

“The Hothouse Flowers”: A collection of 16 ‘mancers, including a kittenmancer, an origamimancer, a masqueromancer (mask-magic), a culinarmancer, a Lucas Films-mancer, a plushiemancer, and others. None of them are capable of great feats; the kittenmancer can turn her room into a small domain of infinite kittens, the origamimancer can create impossible fractal origami shapes, the masqueromancer can create impossibly intricate and lifelike masks, the plushiemancer can make her plushies move a bit, and so on. It is noted in-universe that their lack of experiences and connections to others weakens their magic; once they start connecting with Aliyah they immediately begin demonstrating much stronger magic-which fades when Aliyah isn’t around to help them.

Take note; this is, by no means, a comprehensive list. This is just a sampling of various ‘mancers throughout the series and a listing of their capabilities. There are as many ‘mancies as there are subjects to obsess over. The only limits are your own love and imagination.

What Is Flux?

Whenever a 'mancer works their magic, they generate *Flux*. Flux is basically bad luck that happens in rough proportion to however much you warped reality. Note that this is a *rough* proportion, and there are both ways to mitigate it as well as ways to increase it. Before we get to that though, some important properties of Flux. Flux will always target its creator first, seeking not just to do them harm but to make them suffer-whether that be physically, emotionally, or the like, the Flux will do whatever hurts you. Flux can actively aid your enemies, bringing them good luck as long as it makes you suffer. And developing a Flux charge is a uniquely unpleasant experience. It's repeatedly described as something between a migraine, a head cold, and some sort of demon whispering in your ear and asking what would hurt you the most, what do you love, and so on. Depending on how much Flux you accumulate, said whispers could evolve into shouting and screaming.

There are ways to control how much Flux you generate. While it is true that being highly overt with your reality warping will generate an immense Flux load, this can be mitigated by factors such as acting within the themes of your obsession and having immense confidence in your actions. If you're a videogamemancer and turn yourself into Doom Slayer to go blasting people with a super shotgun, then even though you're punching people's heads off and blowing shit up with your huge guns you're not actually going to be generating that much Flux-especially if you believe that what you're doing is correct and right. Likewise, acting against your themes and having immense doubts and fears in your heart can massively spike your Flux generation even when using subtle magics; if you're a bureaucromancer and wave your hand to retroactively make a bunch of drones fall out of the sky, you'll generate so much Flux that it will actively refuse to allow you to die until you suffer so much you have multiple mental breakdowns.

There are other ways to deal with Flux, and it is very notable that you can in fact use your 'mancy to manipulate your Flux load if you're clever and skilled enough. In Book One (Flex) Paul was able to send his Flux load from brewing Flex away from himself by writing out a Hazardous Materials Delivery form and just sending it far away from himself; this triggered a minor earthquake around New York, but it didn't affect him nor did it actually hurt anyone. Lawrence Payne, an Authorimancer (authority-mancer), was able to distribute his Flux load amongst his followers and anyone who signed an End User License Agreement on his company's website, allowing him to cast immensely costly magic to absolutely no harm to himself. Paul also learns this trick by the third book.

It is not just possible but entirely reasonable that you could figure out other methods of dealing with Flux that work within the paradigm of your obsession with enough time, effort, and training. The reason that all 'mancers don't is both incredibly simple and incredibly obvious; very few 'mancers are rational actors. They're obsessives who deeply love a single specific subject and view the entire world through that lens. They simply don't have the mental bandwidth to explore such implications and are often killed by either the government or their own Flux before they figure this out.

What is Flex?

It's unclear who discovered Flex, how it was discovered, or how old the method for making Flex is. What is known is that it's the one universal magic that all 'mancers share. The process for creating Flex only truly requires two things: a 'mancer and a supply of hematite, also known as iron oxide, or simply rust. You generate raw magic by allowing your 'mancy to flow, and then you forcibly strangle it-stripping it of all your love, your obsession, your will, until you're left with a dead slurry of raw potential-that you then force into the hematite. This process shrinks the hematite down by 90%, leaving behind crystals only about a tenth of the weight of the hematite used to create them. These crystals are Flex.

Flex is a drug, highly similar to methamphetamine. It's a crystalline substance that is safe to consume in any form you care to; orally, nasally, hell there's implications you can safely consume it as a suppository. Once it's inside your body one way or another it disappears, leaving no chemical traces or the like-just pure magical potential thrumming in your veins. While Flex is in your system you gain two very distinct powers. The first is probability perception; you can directly perceive the probabilities of anything happening around you, perceiving the world as a "cloud of numbers" that tells you exactly how likely this or that event is. The second and more known power is the power to "flex"; you can forcibly adjust those probabilities as you see fit. Turn the probability of something happening all the way up to 100%, regardless of how impossible it would normally be. Turn the probability of getting hit by a storm of bullets to 0% and walk through them while every gun simultaneously jams. Turn the probability of landing safely while jumping off a building to 100% and watch as the universe gently catches you before you fall.

Unlike normal 'mancy, the cost of Flex is pre-paid by the crystal...but this means that there's only so much magic inside the Flex crystal to spend. Simply perceiving probabilities is effectively free, and you can retain a Flex charge for hours, days, or even weeks if you don't actively harness your Flex. Once you start spending it though, you'll also have to deal with the prepackaged Flux as well.

Flex comes in varying grades, depending on how "pure" it is-the ratio of how much Flex to Flux there is inside the crystal. Low grades, such as "N-31" or "I-15", have a higher Flux content. Higher grades of Flex have less Flux built into them, until you reach Grade B-1, Flex with absolutely no Flux content. Pure supernatural luck with absolutely no downsides. Making B-1 Grade Flex means you have to deal with the Flux somehow; normal Flex simply sees you infusing your magic-both the magic itself and the Flux-directly into the crystal, but B-1 requires that the brewer take on the Flux and deal with it some other way. And this ties back into how Flex is actually made.

While technically you only need your magic and hematite, the tools for making Flex make it much easier. A glass alembic helps you strain and distill your magic to make it usable by mundanes, and copper wiring allows for better control of how your Flux flows-allowing you to more easily direct it to, say, a prized possession or beloved pet-giving you a "safe" way to bleed off Flux. And of course, methods that you develop through your personal 'mancy to deal with your Flux will also work to deal with Flux made from brewing Flex as well.

Fun facts about Flex

Hematite is amongst the most abundant substances on planet earth. Trying to ban or regulate its usage would be akin to trying to regulate sand or dirt. In many places hematite can, in fact, be found in the sand and dirt. In point of fact: another word for hematite is just “rust”.

As a brief reminder, Flex comes in various grades from incredibly low-quality Flex with a high Flux content to “B-1” Grade Flex which has absolutely zero Flux within it, allowing for free usage and supernatural luck with absolutely no backlash. This implies that the Flux content of Flex lies on a scale, scaling up to 100% Flex and 0% Flux, and much lower qualities of Flex where the scale can go to something closer to 50-50, or perhaps even lower.

It is possible to use bureaucromancy to program Flex that you create with terms and conditions, making it so that a person could eat pounds of B-1 Flex and get zero benefit until they agree to a contract with specific terms of usage for that Flex. It is also possible for a paleomancer to induce specific compulsions and guide specific outcomes for Flex usage in the Flex that they brew. From such examples, it can be assumed that ‘mancers can influence and program the Flex that they create in various ways.

At one point Paul destroys several Flex crystals at once, releasing crystallized magic that he knew he was able to direct in various ways if he wished to. At another point Project Mayhem (a ‘mancer rights support group/terrorist organization) used and dumped comical amounts of Flex throughout New York to saturate the city with so much magic that even the smallest usage of ‘mancy would induce a broach. This implies that it’s possible to use Flex environmentally or as an area of effect technique, rather than simply as a drug that only activates when consumed by a person. At yet another point a person consumes Flex and does not expend their Flex charge for weeks, just saving it up for an emergency.

Very few of these implications are ever actually explored in the series.

Is it possible to create Flux Crystals-crystals with 1 part magic and 100 parts Flux? Is it possible to create specific blessings or curses via programming your Flex/Flux crystals to only operate in specific ways? Is it possible to use Flex or Flux to influence the ambient luck of various places? Could someone retain a Flex charge indefinitely and use probability perception as a permanent intelligence tool? Given everything shown in the series, all these things **should** be possible, but they are never done so in the series. It should also be noted: ‘mancers are very often not rational actors. Conscious and rational exploration of all of magic’s fundamental properties and potentials is not something that is ever actually done in the series. Make of that what you will.

What Are Unimancers?

The truth about Unimancy is both more and less fucked up than the propaganda that SMASH puts out about it.

At some point either just before or during World War II, there was someone who was deeply, madly, utterly obsessed with the idea of harmony, friendship, goodwill-the idea of the collective triumphing and all people getting along. This was the seed that would become Unimancy. This woman spread out her magic to others, inducting 'mancers into her magic-forming a hivemind network of Unimancers. Those 'mancers who allowed the magic into them would "contract" Unimancy much like a virus, forever developing and maintaining a connection to the Unimancy network. At some point the original Unimancer died. Her magic outlived her and continued to spread and spread, a self-sustaining magical paradigm.

Unimancy is not torture, nor is it "brain-burning". It is a voluntary joining of minds with the Unimancy Network...somewhat. Sometimes drugs, peer pressure, Stockholm syndrome, psychological manipulation, gaslighting, and other methods are involved. But it's *totally consensual, for realsies*. Once a 'mancer joins the Unimancy network, they are filled with a profound sense of love, community, harmony, and comfort-developing a deep abiding empathy for all other Unimancers within the network...but also develop an obsession with "Consensus"; while some actions are able to be taken individually, the Unimancy Network functions primarily on Consensus-and the weight of thousands of minds can very easily drown out the voice of the individual, leading to choices and actions on the parts of the individual that would disgust said individual but satisfy them thanks to the Consensus.

The whole of the Unimancy Network is extremely narrow-minded, able to only hold a single opinion on a single topic, constantly debating amongst itself to achieve objectives, and the like. It is also a sort of "lossy hivemind"; while the memories and experiences of others can be loosely retained, personalities are lost very easily upon the death of any member of the hivemind, making it nearly impossible to use as an afterlife.

In return for these various downsides, there are certain upsides. Unimancers are able to share skills, senses, and knowledge amongst themselves-making them perfectly coordinated and able to react to anything any member of the hivemind perceives. They are able to stabilize and reinforce reality-though not heal it. They're even able to share the Flux load of any magic they do amongst the hivemind, reducing any Flux they experience to near null. They are theoretically capable of other magics, but the Consensus mechanic of the hivemind prevents them from holding the sort of confidence and obsessive will to retain any of their original 'mancy. That said, they can theoretically greatly empower the magics of other 'mancers...assuming they don't induct them into the hivemind, at least.

Several of the psychological problems and fundamental limitations of the Unimancer hivemind will be dealt with by Paul Tsabo near the ending of Book 3 (Fix). Until then though, they are highly limited and generally a great deal weaker than any actual 'mancer, while only offering highly marginal upsides and governmental approval.

So What Happens Here Anyways? Part 1: Flex

Paul Tsabo is an ex-cop working at *Samaritan Mutual*, an insurance company. About a year or two before the story begins, he got assigned to a case to hunt down a 'mancer. Following the paper trails led him to the illustromancer, who had been selling Flex to make enough money to buy paintings from a museum that she had a deep love for. Paul fell in love-not with the illustromancer, but with the very magic that the illustromancer was using. The illustromancer didn't react well to his presence and tried to kill him. Paul fired back, shooting her brains out-and got his foot crushed under rubble in the process. Paul proceeded to retire from the police force and join Samaritan Mutual instead, helping people by filing insurance claims and navigating paperwork.

Paul's secret, deep love for magic would estrange him from his wife, who would cheat on him with a politician named David. The two of them would get a divorce, sharing custody over their six year old daughter Aliyah. In the wake of the divorce, a certain grieving for the death of the illustromancer, and other stressors in his life, Paul drowned himself in his work-developing an obsessive love and focus for paperwork. Just a couple months before the story begins, Paul develops bureaucromancy-though it takes him a couple weeks to realize it and several more to come to terms with it. Luckily his magic is remarkably subtle and near-costless in terms of Flex, so he hides it easily.

Just as Paul is getting comfortable with the idea of being a 'mancer, a man overdoses on Flex provided to him by Anathema. Said man didn't realize that the Flex was specifically programmed to cause a disaster that would take two lives-his own and the woman he was having sex with. This led to an apartment fire that consumed Paul's apartment and burned Aliyah so badly she needed heavy reconstructive surgery across her whole body. Aliyah would later learn over the news that the fire was caused by 'mancers, and would develop a deep hatred for 'mancers from this. Paul partially blames himself for the fire, having believed his Flux made it much worse than it otherwise would have been, and decided on two things. The first is that he needs to learn how to manage his 'mancy from a more experienced 'mancer. The second is that he needed to find the culprit of this incident-named "Anathema" by the general public-and get revenge.

He traced evidence of 'mancy in paperwork and in the news until he found a videogamemancer who he would later learn was named "Valentine". Valentine agreed to teach Paul to cook Flex-the one universal magic that all 'mancers shared, which should theoretically give Paul a methodology for learning how to deal with his Flux as well. Valentine also wanted Paul to cook Flex specifically so she could pay off the hostage ransome of her boytoy (not a boyfriend) from a gang leader named Gunza. On his very first attempt Paul proceeds to create B-1 Flex, pure Flex, and use a hazardous materials delivery form to send the Flux he generated from the act far away from himself-causing a minor earthquake in the process. This was unfortunately not a good thing for him, as it made Gunza rather greedy.

Gunza would proceed to use the Flex that Paul had cooked to capture Paul and coerce him into cooking more Flex, intending to grow his criminal empire off of the supernatural drug.

Paul cooked...and sent the Flux directly at SMASH headquarters, calling down several SMASH squads against Gunza's gang of Flex-empowered crooks. Valentine came to help and used the opportunity to try and sneak Paul out of Gunza's grasp, only for them to be caught by Unimancers. During the firefight Valentine's boytoy was killed by Valentine's own Flux, nearly drowning her in grief and making her lash out against the Unimancers. So much magic-from Unimancers, Flex users, and Valentine-resulted in a broach opening. Said broach quickly killed many and nearly killed Paul, until he finally gathered himself together and figured out how to close the broach. This event left a bleeding pockmark on his arm where a buzzsect bit him, which continues to bleed for several years afterwards-utterly incapable of being sealed but providing no other negative health effects.

Despite all these efforts Gunza still recaptures Paul and holds him hostage for nearly three weeks, tied up to a radiator and kept away from any sort of writing implements so he can't use his bureaucromancy. Meanwhile, Anathema had been using her own tainted Flex to cause increasing catastrophes with an exponentially growing number of deaths; four, eight, sixteen, thirty two, sixty four, a hundred and twenty eight...the incident that would claim 256 lives was very intentionally aimed at Paul by Anathema, specifically because she could sense his bureaucromancy-and as a paleomancer, it sickened and disgusted her so she wanted it destroyed. The vast majority of Gunza's gang would be killed by a kid dosed on tainted Flex, though it would only briefly distract Gunza as he had too much of Paul's B-1 Flex in his system to be taken down that easily.

It would distract Gunza long enough for Valentine to make her second rescue attempt, which gave Paul enough time and insight to realize that he could achieve a sort of revocation of contract and completely dissolve all the Flex he had ever made into pure ambient magic-which he simply let fade away because he was too taken aback by the sheer beauty of magic. Valentine proceeds to kill Gunza. The two of them reconvene at the hospital holding Aliyah, trying to figure out their next move and figure out where to go from here.

Anathema proceeds to attack the hospital-and more specifically Paul-directly, causing a blackout and sneaking in to try and kill Paul with a stone spear. Paul just barely survives long enough for Valentine to return and save him, managing to drive off Anathema as SMASH forces arrive once again-though not without Valentine getting heavily wounded. Knowing that Anathema was actively hunting Paul and would do anything to hurt him, Paul has to drag his burned daughter Aliyah away alongside a heavily wounded Valentine. They proceed to take residence in a building that Paul retroactively owned via his bureaucromancy.

Urgently needing medical treatment for both Valentine and Aliyah, Paul decides to turn towards illicit services once again-contacting Gunza's elder brother Oscar and promising him Flex in return for an underground doctor. He does this while wearing the skin of Psycho Mantis from the Metal Gear Solid series, thanks to Valentine disguising him. Paul proceeds to cook up a new batch of Flex, but this time also writes up a contract that interfaces with the Flex he brewed to make it completely and utterly inert until you fill out a form and sign

a contract with Paul detailing exactly what you are going to do with that Flex, ensuring it can't be used against him again.

The deal goes through and both Valentine and Aliyah get the treatment they need, but Aliyah is mentally traumatized by learning that her father is a 'mancer. She starts to hate her father for a time, until Valentine manages to convince Aliyah that not all 'mancers are bad and that Paul is hunting the bad 'mancers. Just as Oscar is coming to collect his Flex, Anathema sends another random kid dosed on tainted Flex to destroy the building that Paul, Valentine, and Aliyah are staying in. Paul manages to save many lives and even preserve the life of the random kid dosed on tainted Flex by quickly drafting a contract to take on the Flux load that the kid had accrued from the impure Flex. The following Flux discharge leads to one of Paul's closest and oldest friends discovering that Paul is a 'mancer... which is a problem because said friend has a fanatical hatred of 'mancers. After a great deal of effort Paul manages to square things with his friend, but it remains a tense situation.

Paul entrusts his daughter with his oldest friend as a sign of trust and responsibility, while Paul and Valentine go searching for Anathema's lair; Paul theorized that if Anathema could sense him via the clashing of their magic, then Paul could almost certainly do the same. Paul manages to do so and finds a strange cave sitting in the middle of Central Park which is vastly bigger on the inside than it is on the outside, has Flex crystals growing inside of it, has an ancient night sky covering its ceiling, and has magical cave paintings covering it. Paul learns the history and motivations of Anathema through those cave paintings, learning that she was a gawky daughter of a wealthy family who was never good enough for her family and never loved by her parents, so after a lifetime of trying to live up to their standards proceeded to kill them. She got away with it because she was pretty, and this mentally broke her to the point that she believed that any society that wouldn't punish her must be wrong, so all society is wrong, so she must return to monke. No, I'm not kidding.

Paul realizes Anathema's plans just a little too late, trying to call in police, inspectors, and the like to stop a sporting event that has millions hosted within it. Anathema had hypnotized and convinced everyone serving drinks and food at the event to use her tainted water bottles that were laced with her impure Flex, and within an hour millions of people were literally bursting into rampaging monsters and going on a violent rampage. Paul realizes he can fix this, and manages to fight his way out of the scrum with the help of Valentine and the police force until he makes his way back to Samaritan Mutual. There, he proceeds to ask Valentine to look after his daughter, and does an insane amount of magic to rewrite the events of an entire day to prevent Anathema from ever having the opportunity to taint the food supplies of the sporting event at all-rewriting history and saving the lives of millions. He even achieves a state of effective enlightenment during this moment and completely negates the Flux cost of doing so.

Paul, Valentine, Kit (Paul's oldest friend), and Aliyah are relaxing in Kit's apartment after that near miss. Kit falls asleep, and Valentine heads out to get some snacks. Anathema manages to sneak up on Paul and hold him at spear point. Then the two proceed to talk and discuss their philosophies, with Anathema explaining that she wanted to destroy society by

creating as many 'mancers as possible by creating tragedies that would drive people into coping via obsessions. This would tear society apart in her mind and lead to a better world. She also believed that she was the one to create Paul and thus it was only natural that he was her arch-nemesis.

Paul reveals that he had actually been a 'mancer for a good two or three months before Anathema began her rampages at all. This mentally destabilizes Anathema, leading to her denying and desperately demanding that he HAD to be her creation because it only made sense. This mental destabilization also very temporarily disables Anathema's magic-or at least, I assume so because the following scene makes no sense otherwise. During this event Aliyah wakes up, sees her father being held at spearpoint by Anathema, and in a protective rage she proceeds to awaken videogamemancy, turn into Fire Mario, and burn Anathema to death; Anathema had awakened at least one 'mancer. Aliyah cries and screams in the wake of this, as she now says she's a 'mancer so she has to burn. The book ends with Paul realizing that Aliyah's first act of magic came pre-paid because the worst thing that could possibly happen to her (becoming a 'mancer) had happened.

And thus is the story of the first book of the 'Mancer series.

So What Happens Here Anyways? Part 2: The Flux

Almost but not quite three years have passed since the ending of the last book.

Since the ending of the last book, Paul quit his job at Samaritan Mutual and was hired by the mayor's office to manage a state-level anti-'mancer program; thanks to Paul rewriting history during Anathema's rampage nobody (except Kit) had learned he was a 'mancer, and thus Paul was trusted as the mundane king of 'mancer hunting. Paul proceeded to use his job specifically to try and search for and protect 'mancers, though few if any seemed to appear in the wake of Anathema's rampages.

In the meanwhile Paul kept up his criminal obligations with Oscar, cooking up Flex...until recently when someone nicknamed "The King Of New York" kept repeatedly calling in anonymous tips whenever Paul started cooking up Flex, leading to the police nearly busting him multiple times and a several month dry streak of Flex-cooking that left Paul \$1.4 million dollars in debt to Oscar. This is not helped by the fact that Aliyah (now eight, nearly nine years old) keeps using her 'mancy to break into wherever Paul is cooking Flex to watch and try to "protect" her father, which only causes more chaos, nearly kills many police squads, and leads to Paul having to take on massive Flux loads that his daughter generates by claiming ownership of her Flux via parental contracts.

One such incident happens in the opening scene of the book, leading to Paul getting a dressing down from David-the politician that fucked his ex-wife-and getting fired from his job which David promptly takes. No longer in an office with legal standing to request various forms, Paul's bureaucromancy weakens-and he still needs to find the King of New York. So he decides to go work for Samaritan Mutual once again to get access to governmental forms and have a stable income. This leads to a very tense encounter with Samaritan Mutual's CEO Lawrence Payne, an 80+ year old man who berates and abuses Paul for ever leaving and says he always cared for Paul-even when he was denying Paul's insurance claims required for reconstructive surgery on his daughter nearly three years ago. Nevertheless, Paul manages to get back the job-and even has a plan to find the King of New York.

Paul conducts a test to figure out exactly how the King of New York has been getting his information, traces ownership and quality inspection forms, and eventually discovers traces of 'mancy in the forms-from his boss, Lawrence Payne. Lawrence Payne, in turn, has magic that detects when he's being detected, and deploys his legbreaker "Rainbird". Rainbird teleports in while Paul is still trying to disentangle himself from the paperwork, and Paul very nearly manages to negotiate a ceasefire...until Valentine busts in, misunderstands the situation, and forces Rainbird to flee after a short turn-based battle.

Afterwards Payne and Paul manage to hash things out, with the two of them realizing that they were on the same side the whole time and even had "the same magic". Payne introduces Paul, Valentine, and Aliyah to The Institute, an asylum that he made to protect 'mancers from the world. There they meet the Hothouse Flower-mancers, who Aliyah almost immediately befriends and practically falls in love with as she can just have fun with

magic for the very first time without any fear. Valentine is deeply suspicious of the whole thing and believes that all of this is just a golden cage, but after an argument with Paul is willing to give this whole thing a try even though she's not happy about it.

In the meanwhile Paul retroactively conjures up the existence of an entire school for his ex-wife to visit to give credence to the idea that Aliyah's at a special school that could handle her behavioral outbursts and PTSD. Things go okay for a little while...but cracks continue to emerge, especially when a new 'mancer is discovered. Said 'mancer is "Tyler Durden", who retroactively erased his real name and is basically just living out his Fight Club fantasies. Paul, Valentine, and Rainbird go to rescue him before SMASH captures him, only to arrive just a little too late as local police-led by David-use advanced technologies designed to deal with 'mancers. Paul uses some bureaucromancy to retroactively turn said technology all into duds and they nearly escape cleanly...until Rainbird tries to kill all the police. Paul and Valentine save them, but it nearly costs them the escape. Tyler escapes on his own while Paul and Valentine return to the Institute.

Valentine argues with Paul, and things come to a head when Tyler makes a massive magical mess to get Valentine's attention as a sort of flirting effort. This causes a divide between Paul and Valentine because Payne no longer wants to rescue Tyler-believing he'd bring too much heat down on the Institute-while Valentine refuses to let him go. So Valentine goes alone while Paul tries to live peacefully at the Institute. In the meanwhile Rainbird has been quietly conditioning Aliyah to play more violent videogames like God of War to train her into being a murderer, unknown to Paul. On Imani (Paul's ex-wife)'s next visit to the fake school things get heated between Paul and David when David reveals he doesn't give a shit about Aliyah and wants Imani to just be a lawyer instead of a mother, and Paul punches him out.

Paul is almost completely disfavored by Payne at this point and is treated terribly, but Paul believes it's all worth it as long as Aliyah is happy-completely unknowing that Aliyah is being quietly abused and trained by Rainbird to become more accustomed to violence and become a killer. Eventually Payne suggests that Paul deal with his old criminal connections by squaring away his debts-even providing a little shack out in the woods for Paul to brew his Flex in so that he can deliver it to Oscar. Unknown to Paul, Payne has been inciting a gang war between Oscar and another gang, and is about to leak Paul's location to the second gang to get rid of Paul and Oscar in one fell swoop. Things go wrong when two friends of Paul manage to show up and save him at the last minute, while Aliyah also manages to fight off the gangsters-but her Flux leads to the death of Paul's friends.

Paul wakes up with jumbled memories in the aftermath of the event, and believes that Oscar has turned on him, his daughter hates him, and that the world would be better off if he was dead. So he leaves the Institute and unwrites himself out of bureaucracy and existence, becoming nothing. Meanwhile Aliyah is nearly forced to murder David in cold blood, actively burned and abused by Rainbird if she refuses to do so. She manages to fake doing so, just barely managing to preserve her innocence-at least that much. In the meanwhile, Imani is looking for her ex-husband, because she realizes something fucky is going on and she needs his help.

Imani manages to find the alleyway where Paul had written himself out of existence and calls him back by explaining what Payne had been up to and doing, which causes Paul to get so angry he rewrites himself into existence and rewrites every single piece of media in a five mile radius to just repeat "PAYNE!" over and over again. Paul proceeds to go rescue Valentine and Tyler, who were nearly captured by SMASH after two or so weeks on the run, and plan out how to kill Payne and Rainbird.

On Payne's orders Rainbird killed all the Hothouse Flower-mancers...because they were apparently too hot a commodity at this point or something, it's not very well explained. Valentine manages to fight Rainbird for a time, then frees Aliyah who fights Rainbird...and both of them can't quite defeat him. Then Paul walks in, tears up two medical forms, and leaves Rainbird paralyzed and with crippling complications from childhood malaria. He walks away after that as Aliyah doesn't want to become a killer...but Rainbird refuses to give up so Valentine kills him.

Paul walks into Payne's CEO office in Samaritan Mutual and the two of them chat, with Paul trying to get Payne to show any sign of remorse for his actions or turn himself in, while Payne believes he has Paul in a stalemate and will just go to some other city to rebuild his power structures while Paul can live free. Paul rejects this and, with the help of Tyler, several normal people (operating under the organization name "Project Mayhem"), and an absolute shitload of Flex, manages to bomb every single building that Payne owns in the city-crippling Payne's Authorimancy as a king derives their authority from keeping their promises and because those buildings were insured Payne has to either pay them-something he can't do-or have his magic crippled. Payne tries to use his Authorimancy to turn back time like Paul does and undo Paul's actions-but the city is saturated in so much magic at this point that the attempt immediately opens a breach right on top of him, immediately consuming and killing him. Paul closes it up effortlessly afterwards.

In the aftermath Paul goes on the run with his again-wife Imani, Valentine, Tyler-who renamed himself as "Robert Paulson" after Paul-and Aliyah while attempting to start up a grassroots pro-'mancer rights movement.

Thus ends book two of the 'Mancer series.

So What Happens Here Anyways? Part 3: Fix

A little more than five years after the ending of the last book ~~and several complete narrative lobotomies~~, Paul, his wife Imani, Valentine, her boyfriend Robert, and Aliyah have been on the run and building up Project Mayhem to close to 30k active members. Aliyah desperately wants to be normal and promises that she can control her 'mancy these days, so Paul finds the most remote and theoretically 'mancer friendly community he can so that Aliyah can relax and have fun amongst mundanes for a while. Aliyah promptly shits the bed and accidentally use 'mancy during a soccer game, somehow generating so much Flux that reality is already on the verge of a broach. Paul attempts to take care of it via a contract that connects all of Project Mayhem-allowing him to distribute otherwise lethal Flux loads amongst all participants-but a random hillbilly's wife shoots him with a taser before he can do so-destroying the contract in the process. And thus a broach opens.

Aliyah and Valentine manage to distract the Buzzsects that emerge for long enough to wake Paul back up after he was tased, giving him the chance to deal with the buzzsects-but not fully close the broach as he's driven off by local authorities before he can do so. Within hours news stations picked up on the story and declared it the "first broach on US soil", blaming Paul entirely for it. Project Mayhem gets declared a terrorist organization and UN forces get called in to deal with Paul by any means necessary.

Paul, finally getting back to some paper and pens, discovers that the UN soldiers had kidnapped literally everyone they could from the small town and were going to basically unperson them and imprison them without any sort of paperwork or legal protections, all to taunt Paul and force him to give himself up. The whole crew decides to stop this from happening and attacks the airport where the UN forces are stationed to try and free the citizens. This whole plan goes tits up extremely quickly as Paul generates a "lethal Flux charge" just from disabling the UN's drones ~~(something he was able to do very easily back in book 2, if you remember)~~, Valentine nearly gets captured by Unimancers, Paul has to step in personally to try and protect her, and eventually Aliyah gets captured by the Unimancers and shipped off in a drone after Ruth (a Unimancer) promised him that she'd put a bullet through his eye and make his daughter pull the trigger.

Here, the story splits between what's happening with Aliyah and what's happening with Paul. Aliyah is being held by the Unimancers in a bunker in Bastogne, which in this world is the site of the final battle of World War II and is host to one of the larger broaches in Europe. She is kept drugged on Magiquell, a drug that suppresses a 'mancer's concentration, focus, and jumbles up their memories in order to keep her from using magic on such a dangerous location. She's only allowed to have contact with Unimancers, who constantly try to shove into her face the crimes of Paul Tsabo, the cruelties and dangers of uncontrolled magic, and the like while also treating her kindly, giving her donuts, playing with her and teaching her skills, and the like. ~~Can you see how the Stockholm Syndrome happens? Because apparently the author can't and thinks this is a romantic situation where Aliyah consensually and without any sort of coercion develops a crush on Ruth.~~

Meanwhile Paul is desperately trying to find out where the Unimancers took his daughter before they torture and brain-burn her into another Unimancer. He is, of course, wholly unaware that Unimancers are actually *totally* consensual and the torture thing is just propaganda that the Unimancers use for the sake of operating under the auspices of the various world governments. Paul's magic is on the fritz because he generated so much Flux during that battle earlier, so he has to go looking for other 'mancers to help him-including a huntermancer who can help him track down his daughter. During this whole process there's a lot of what I can only describe as completely pointless drama between Valentine and Robert, who's been wanting to marry Valentine lately.

Paul basically goes on a rampage across the US searching for his daughter with the help of the huntermancer, at one point having Valentine burn down a retirement home...that is entirely staffed by the criminal mob and had 'mancers locked up and de-limbed to keep control of them. It takes Paul roughly two weeks to figure out where Aliyah's been taken, then another four days to procure a boat to cross the Atlantic, and another month of travel time across the Atlantic to get to Europe. Meanwhile Valentine, Robert, and Imani have been getting more and more concerned with Paul's mental state because he's more willing to kill in these situations, as if he hasn't killed before and these aren't insane situations that would push any normal father to the brink of madness.

When Paul lands in Europe there's 150 Unimancers waiting for them. But Paul had a plan to deal with this and used his bureaucromancy to have a missile launched ahead of time. All the Unimancers sent to ambush Paul die in the missile blast. Meanwhile, Aliyah is kissing Ruth, joined the Unimancer hivemind, and truly believes that she was born to be a Unimancer. When she realizes what her father did via the Unimancy network, she's hit with the network's grief and rage at Paul's actions. Aliyah is basically forced by the Unimancer hivemind to hate Paul and everything he's done up to this point, completely ignoring the circumstances surrounding his various actions and wholly focusing on the pain and suffering that he's caused the Unimancers-with every single sin that Paul has committed that Aliyah knows of dredged up from her mind by the Unimancers are more proof of Paul's evils.

The Unimancy network achieves Consensus to unite them in opposition of Paul, and Aliyah is used as the mouthpiece to make Paul stand down-emotionally manipulating Paul to head to Bastogne with the plan to take him down there. Paul, of course, immediately rushes off to Bastogne because *he's been searching for his daughter this whole time and **literally all his crimes in this book were either self defense or because the Unimancers just wouldn't give him his fucking daughter back.*** Of course he hikes across Europe to Bastogne to rescue his kid, only to find that his daughter is a Unimancer at the end. Paul tells Valentine to get her out of there so he can deal with things, but Aliyah yells out that the Unimancers aren't NPCs-making Valentine immediately dismiss the idea that Unimancers are a brain-burned hivemind ~~EVEN THOUGH ALIYAH IS SAYING THAT WHILE SHE'S ACTIVELY UNIMANCED AND VALENTINE SHOULD FUCKING KNOW THAT UNIMANCERS ALL SHARE THOUGHTS AND MEMORIES SO SHE WOULD KNOW EXACTLY WHAT TO FUCKING SAY TO GET VALENTINE ON HER SIDE.~~

Paul still tries to get Aliyah away from the Unimancers so he can start closing up the broaches and destroying the Unimancer hivemind, but of course Aliyah tries to hit Paul with a taser and take him down. Paul planned for that and nearly takes down his daughter and all the Unimancers present...until Valentine turns on him because apparently he's long since crossed a moral event horizon because he's been killing Unimancers. Then Paul does this whole "donut test" to prove that Aliyah is still Aliyah despite being a Unimancer ~~EVEN THOUGH, AGAIN, THE UNIMANCER HIVEMIND HAS ALL OF ALIYAH'S KNOWLEDGE AND MEMORIES SO IT WOULD EASILY BE ABLE TO PASS ANY SUCH TEST.~~ Paul horribly regrets all the actions he did during his rampage to find his daughter, and negotiations begin to occur for how Paul will join the Unimancers and fight back against the broaches.

Paul tries to close the Bastogne broach, but the Thing inside of it nearly pushes out of it-forcing an evacuation where Valentine sacrifices herself to fight it back for long enough that everyone else can get away. Valentine proceeds to get stuck in a loop of saving and loading to preserve her life while fighting the Thing for over a week. In the meanwhile, it's revealed that SMASH and the Unimancers were all totally good guys all this time for realsies, doing everything they could to contain broaches and never actually inducting anyone who didn't want to be part of the Unimancer hivemind into themselves, trust us bro. So a bunch of negotiations happen, Paul regrets the actions he committed in his rampage to try and free Aliyah from the Unimancer's clutches.

Eventually does some absurd bureaucromancy to rebuild the Unimancer hivemind, solving many of its problems and making it so people could be individuals within it while still being connected to it, then the Unimancers and him work together to basically energy blast back the Thing in the broach back through to the demon dimensions-then Paul closes the broach up. Valentine managed to escape in the meanwhile and, through a moment of enlightenment, completely negated any sort of Flux buildup she would have generated. The book ends on an epilogue four years later showing that Aliyah is in a relationship with Ruth, working as a Unimancer while Paul tours Europe and steadily closes more and more broaches. All ends happily.

God what a shitshow.

Changelog

- V. 1.1
 - Added note that specifies that specific 'mancies can do things that the capstone perks outline, but never easily.
 - Added an additional note about metamancies and gamebreaking
- V. 1.0
 - Jump completed!