

EXPANDED METAPHYSICS

Buffy
the Vampire Slayer™



BY
JASON VEY



The Gifted in Buffy

Rules guidelines by Jason Vey

INTRODUCTION

The *Magic Box* sourcebook for the Buffy RPG presents an amazingly workable system for translating Witchcraft Metaphysics into a Buffy game. However, after using the Metaphysics from Witchcraft in a home Buffy game, it becomes evident that it's difficult to create a character that is quite as potent magically using the rules in the Magic Box as it is using the Essence-based rules from Witchcraft (for what sense that sentence made). This may be deliberate on the part of the designers in order to maintain the feel of the Buffyverse and maintain Sorcery as the primary method for magic, or it may be that the designers feel that "pumping up" the magic levels in a Buffy game could unbalance the game and draw focus away from the Slayer, an arguably legitimate fear.

While at first it may seem that the lower power level serves to balance out the game, this isn't exactly true, either. In practice, Witchcraft Gifted are in fact roughly the same as Buffy White Hats. With that in mind, I sought to come up with a method to let characters gain a bit more in the way of metaphysical abilities, while still being able to afford standard Qualities. The following guidelines present two new Character Types that accomplish that. One is based upon the White Hat template, but adds points for Metaphysics while subtracting from the initial Drama Point pool; the other is based upon the Hero template in a similar fashion.

In addition, below you will find guidelines for using other creatures and Metaphysics from Unisystem™ games, including Chi Abilities as presented in *All Flesh Must Be Eaten*, and a new breed of Vampire adapted from the Witchcraft Vampyres, for use with the cinematic Unisystem. The ultimate goal of this document is to continue the growth and adaptation of cinematic Unisystem mystical options available to Players and Directors wishing to run a far-reaching modern dark fantasy game that is not limited to the "canon" Buffyverse.

NEW CHARACTER TYPES

In the *All Flesh Must Be Eaten™* sourcebook *Enter: the Zombie*, two new Character Types are introduced: the Shooter and the Martial Artist. Neither of these Character Types are really appropriate for use in an "essenceless" Buffy campaign; however, "standard" Hero Types may not possess quite the distribution of points to gain all the Metaphysics they should. Thus, in the interest of play balance, and allowing characters to pick up a reasonable number of starting abilities, we are introducing two new Character Types for these rules: the Gifted, and the Mystic Hero.

THE GIFTED

The Gifted are men and women (let's not be sexist, 'kay?) with a natural, innate flair for magic. These are those wizards, warlocks, and witches whose talent is more innate than even Buffy Sorcerers. With a simple Invocation, the Gifted can accomplish astonishing and varied results from their channeling of mystical energies. Some Gifted even possess the ability to commune with and control the spirits of the dead! Gifted Characters may purchase any type of Metaphysics, including Chi Abilities, with the sole restriction that those Cast Members who possess Divine Inspiration may not purchase any other type of Metaphysics unless they purchase the Divine Magi Quality (see below).

When using the new Character Types below, the costs for Invocations, Necromancy Paths, Tao Chi Abilities, and other 2-point-per-level Metaphysics from *The Magic Box* should be slightly inflated, costing 2 points per level up to level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter, rather than the flat 2 points per level as listed in the book.

New Character Type: Gifted
Attributes: 15
Skills: 15
Qualities: 10
Drawbacks: up to 10
Metaphysics: 20
Drama Points: 10



THE MYSTIC HERO

Mystic Heroes are men and women who possess a spark of power beyond that of normal people. Call them superheroes, hedge wizards, latent mages, whatever you like. Regardless, these characters possess abilities above and beyond those of normal mortals. In practice, they are roughly equivalent to Hero-level characters in the *Buffy* core rulebook, with fewer Drama Points and a pool of points to spend on Metaphysical abilities. Mystic Heroes may purchase Drama Points with experience at the same cost as Heroes. Also, the Mystic Hero Character Type may *only* be used to create characters who possess Chi Abilities, not Metaphysics as presented in *The Magic Box*, and not normal Buffy characters (yes, this means no Slayers, Vamps, or Werewolves built with the Mystic Hero template).

Character Type: Mystic Hero
Attributes: 20
Skills: 20
Qualities: 15
Drawbacks: up to 10
Metaphysics: 15
Drama Points: 5



Alternately, rather than using one of these two Character Types, Directors may opt to use the Gifted, Lesser Gifted, Shooter, and Martial Artist Character Types from the various other Unisystem™ books. However, when using these characters, Drama Points must be purchased by players during Character Creation, using Quality or Metaphysics points, at a cost of 2 points per Drama Point. In addition, the starting pool of Metaphysics points should be reduced by five, as there is no need to purchase the Gift Quality for characters in a cinematic Unisystem game.

METAPHYSICS POINTS

Metaphysics points are special points used to purchase Qualities and Special Skills that are representative of Metaphysics imported from other Unisystem games (like Chi Abilities...nice how that works out, huh?). They may not be used to purchase standard Qualities; however, standard Quality points (and points gained from Drawbacks) may be

used to purchase additional Metaphysics. Such Qualities are hereafter referred to as Metaphysical Qualities.

CHI ABILITIES

Chi Abilities were introduced in the *All Flesh Must Be Eaten*™ sourcebook, *Enter: the Zombie*. They represent mystical martial arts and "gun fu" techniques seen in Hong Kong Action Theater style films, television, and games. Chi Abilities (not to be confused with Tao-Chi, presented in *Magic Box*) allow your characters to play characters that can go all Jackie Chan or John Woo with the spinning and the guns and the flips, without the wires and expensive special effects budgets.

These guidelines seek to provide a means by which Chi powers can be used in a *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*™ campaign, based upon the Metaphysics guidelines in the *Magic Box*™ sourcebook. As such, the concept of Essence is removed entirely, which results in minor "flavor" changes to the abilities; some become a bit more powerful for the lack of Essence Channeling, while all gain the possibility of a failure at some point in time particularly if and when the Role of Luck is imported into a *B:TVs* game from the "full" version of the Unisystem as presented in *AFMBE*. For details on the Role of Luck, readers are encouraged to check out the *AFMBE* core rulebook, or the "Quick Start" rules found at <http://www.allflesh.com/>. If not using the Role of Luck already, Directors may want to think about importing it along with these abilities, as a roll of 1 can act as an important balancing factor to abilities such as these.

WHAT YOU WON'T SEE HERE

No power descriptions. Sorry. If you want the range of Chi Abilities and what they can do and add to your game, you're going to have to pick up a copy of *E:tZ*. I'm sure Eden wouldn't want me giving away freebies here, and I don't want to get anyone (least of all me) in trouble. Sorry about that. Here be Guidelines, not Power Lists.

NEW QUALITIES

Chi Focus (Variable Metaphysical Quality)

All Chi Abilities work on the principle of *Chi Focus*. Chi Focus represents a character's ability to channel their inner life force to achieve astounding results. All Chi Abilities work off of a Focus Test. To use a Chi Ability, roll Willpower + Chi Focus. Each ability has a Power Level, just like spells, which must be achieved for the ability to function. Most abilities can be used as "free" actions; in other words, they don't use up one of the standard actions of the Cast Member. However, there is a limit to how many

Focus Tests a character can make per round of combat. In general, a character gets one Focus Test every round, plus one extra for every two levels of Chi Focus they possess above 4 (rounded up), as shown on the cost table below.

For Example: Chiang-Lee, a Mystic Hero with a Chi Focus score of 5, wishes to use her Chi Abilities. She automatically gets one free attempt to use a power, plus one because her Chi Focus is 5-6, as shown below. Now, if her first attempt fails, she gets a second shot at it. If it succeeds, bonus! She can enact (or try to, anyway) a second ability this round!

Chi Focus costs 2 points per level up to level 5, and 5 points per level thereafter at Character Creation. After character creation, additional levels of Chi Focus cost the next level in experience points, with a minimum of 3 (going from level 5 to 6 costs 6 experience, and going from level 6 to 7 costs 7 experience, but going from level 1 to 2 costs 3 experience) and each level must be paid for in full (so jumping from level 5 to 7 after character creation costs 13 experience points). At least one level of this Quality must be purchased at character creation, or the character may never use Chi Abilities.

The table below shows the costs to purchase levels of Chi Focus at character creation, costs to improve the Quality with experience, and the number of extra uses of the Quality per round of combat.

Table: Chi Focus Costs

Level	Cost (initial)	Cost (improve)	Extra Attempts
1	2	n/a	0
2	2	3	0
3	2	3	0
4	2	4	0
5	2	5	1
6	5	6	1
7	5	7	2
8	5	8	2
9	5	9	3
10	5	10	3
Etc...			

Divine Magi (4-point Quality)

Divine Magi are those pure souls who have learned to reconcile the supernatural with the touch of their deity. Characters possessing this Quality may freely combine Inspired Miracles with other Metaphysics, so long as all other prerequisites are met (the Inspiration Quality must also be purchased to use miracles).

Vampiric Focus (4 point per level Quality)

Prerequisite: Moroi (Vampyre)

This Quality is available only to Moroi, or *Witchcraft*-style vampyres, detailed later in this text. Vampiric Focus adds to the roll to activate any metaphysical power a Moroi has, from regular vampyric powers to Invocations to Chi Abilities. Whenever the Moroi makes a roll to activate any Metaphysical power she possesses, she may add her levels of Vampiric Focus to the result for determining success.

Using Chi Abilities

Now for the good part, the actual powers. Each Chi Ability is a separate Metaphysical Quality. Its cost to purchase is the same as the cost listed in *EtZ*. Basically, the power's cost in Essence per time unit is the cost to purchase the Quality at character creation. After character creation, new Abilities cost double the Essence cost per time unit to acquire. Each ability's function is self-explanatory; all variable values (i.e. powers whose use results in die rolls) use the parenthetical value as a set score. Thus, a power that deals an extra D4(2) x Willpower damage in *AFMBE* will deal an extra 2 x Willpower in *Buffy*.

Using a Chi Ability works off of a Chi Focus Test, as described under that Quality, above. The Power Level of each Chi Ability is equal to its Essence Cost to use for a single time unit. A Cast Member attempting to use a power must achieve success levels in their Focus Test at least equal to the power level of the ability to make it work at a basic level. Thus, a Quality that would normally cost 2 Essence per turn is a Power Level 2 Ability. This means that the Mystic Hero must achieve 2 success levels just to enact the Quality.

For the majority of Chi Abilities, the cost listed is "x Essence per y," where x is equal to the Essence cost and y is equal to the time unit that the ability will remain active when x is paid. For example, a Chi Ability's cost might be listed as "2 Essence per turn," meaning that for each turn the Cast Member wishes to maintain the power, he must pay a cost of 2 Essence points. In a *Buffy* game, each additional success level above that required to activate the power adds an additional time unit to the power's duration before a new Focus Test must be rolled.

In the example above, the ability in question would be Power Level 2 (because it costs 2 Essence to activate). A Focus Test that achieves 2 success levels would activate the power for 1 round. Each additional success level

beyond 2 would maintain the power for 1 extra round. Please note that for some abilities the time unit is as small as "1 attack," while in others it is per round.

Some Chi Abilities do not deal with time units, but with attribute formulae per Essence cost. For example, a power might cause Willpower damage per 2 Essence spent. In this case, the ability is still Power Level 2, because it costs 2 Essence to activate, but each success level beyond the 2 required to activate the ability does additional damage equal to the user's Willpower. So gaining 3 successes on a Focus task would inflict Willpower x 2 extra damage (Willpower x 1 for the 2 success levels required to activate the power, plus an additional Willpower x 1 for the third success level.)

THE MOROI: WITCHCRAFT-STYLE VAMPYRES

Now that the *Buffy the Vampire Slayer* television series is over, players of the roleplaying game are no longer strictly mired in the canon mythology of the series (not that we ever were) and we can now be free to explore extremely non-canon ideas. One of the most interesting possibilities for exploration is the combination of elements from Eden Studios' other supernatural games, *WitchCraft* and *All Flesh Must Be Eaten*. Inserting the creature types and varied organizations and mythologies from these two games into a *BtVS* setting can make for a fascinating game, indeed, if a very unorthodox one. Imagine a Slayer trapped in one of the Deadworlds from *AFMBE*. Or better yet, how do the Watchers deal with the appearance of the Rosicrucians on the scene?

Of course, this brings up some unique logistical problems. Of particular interest is the integration of the *WitchCraft* versions of certain supernatural creatures: Demons, Vampyres, and Ferals among them (zombies as described in *The Magic Box™* are really just another kind of custom flesh-eater and are easily compatible with any *AFMBE* or *WC* zombies that might be slotted in). Demons are not overly difficult: these are far more powerful than your "typical" *Buffy* demon, and could simply be another type of "true" demon as explored in the core rulebook, *Monster Smackdown*, and season 3 of the series. Ferals, too, aren't much different from those presented in the core rulebook and *Smackdown*, just more detailed and "fleshed out." Not much of an integration problem there.

Vampyres, however, present a singular challenge. Vampyres in *WitchCraft* are extremely different from those in *BtVS*, and are entirely reliant upon Essence for their special abilities and their very survival. Since Essence does not exist in the standard *Buffy* game, how do we convert these creatures to make them work, and further, how do we justify their existence

opposite "standard" vampires? That's what this supplement will explore.

THE STRIGOI AND MOROI

While it is extremely rare, it is possible for a standard vampire to regain their human soul—their identity, conscience, and sense of self from their days as a mortal. The ways this can be done are various and sundry; Gypsy curses and demonic quests are two possibilities that have been explored. But what if there is another, slightly more common means of vampires possessing souls? What if there are those who possess the significant strength of will to hold on to their humanity, or at least some spark of it, at the moment they are sired? These creatures could then go on to make more like them, undead leeches who feed on the life force of mortals just as standard demonic vampires, but who still possess a sense of right and wrong, and the free will to pursue one or the other? If these creatures exist, there are then two breeds of vampire walking the earth: demonic (or "dead") vampires, the Strigoi; and living vampyres, or Moroi.

The Moroi are quite rare compared to Strigoi, as they are far less likely to sire (they refer to the process as "embracing" or "bringing across") others out of vengeance, spite, or for mere cannon fodder. Moroi tend to sire out of very strong emotions, be they the desire to hold someone very dear to them close for all eternity or the drive to punish those they hate with the curse of immortality. Strigoi sire for these reasons as well, but also tend to sire at a whim or out of sheer fascination with a subject. Thus, Strigoi are a plague compared to Moroi, who tend to stay low key and pursue their ends privately.

The Moroi view the Strigoi as base and disgusting creatures, little more than animals exhausting a food supply with no thought to the eventual consequences. As such, Moroi sometimes use their unique ability to enter the Death Realms to thwart the siring process of a Strigoi, by dragging the departed soul of a victim back, and forcing it to coexist with the demon inside, or even driving out the demon. This results in the creation of a new Moroi rather than a demonic vampire. More often, however, a Moroi who is present at a demonic siring will simply attempt to kill the new vampire and its sire rather than risk failure or the creation of a flawed living Vampyre.

Strigoi view the Moroi as pompous pretenders who refuse to simply accept what they are, and there have been times where small armies of Strigoi have been spawned to wipe out a few Moroi. The war between the two species of vampire has lasted for millennia, with each

species claiming to be the first, original, and true vampire. Unfortunately, the Moroi are on the losing end of this eternal war. Their human souls refuse to allow them to create the army of cannon fodder that the remorseless Strigoi are willing to sire, and the Moroi know this. As such, most Moroi in the modern era are content to keep their numbers low, their existence secret, and live out their long years doing what they can when they can. Indeed, it has been so long since a battle broke out between the Strigoi and Moroi that most Strigoi have forgotten the existence of their ensouled cousins.

MOROI EXISTENCE

Moroi are more communal in nature than Strigoi, and can get along more often than not without the need for a "pack leader" who dominates the rest of the coven. Unfortunately, the comparative rarity of Moroi generally holds such groups to minimal numbers. The most notable societies to include Moroi are the Twilight Order and the House of Thanatos (detailed in the *Magic Box* sourcebook). However, there have been Moroi members of many secret societies through the ages, though most of the time these creatures keep their true nature a secret out of fear of being killed from a lack of understanding by their human companions.

Generally speaking, the existence of a Moroi is a lonely and sad one. The vast majority of Moroi spend years, decades, even centuries of existence searching for the meaning of what they are, the reason why they still walk the earth and haven't passed on to some sort of Afterlife. Even those Moroi who exist out of a voluntary decision to become what they are often regret the decision as years turn into decades, and decades into centuries, without any comfort or companionship to see them through.

Relationships held by Moroi are often shallow and short-lived, as these immortal creatures find it more and more difficult to watch those mortals they come to care for grow old and die while they never change. Those who do learn to cope with their endless, unchanging existence often become hard, cold, and unfeeling. Still, there are those Moroi who manage to maintain both their humanity and passions, and cope with immortality at the same time. These are some of the most powerful and potent champions of light in the world.

It cannot be stressed enough that Moroi are extraordinarily rare among the vampire population. Sheer numbers and brutality keep the Strigoi holding the upper-hand in their eternal struggle, and the Moroi prefer to live in peace with humankind as a general rule. Moroi villains are cold, calculating, and incredibly ruthless, often dominating packs of Strigoi from behind the scenes, like a criminal mastermind dispersing his pawns, to the eternal detriment of the heroes. Such a monster

would make an extremely formidable Big Bad for a series, particularly if one of the players happens to be running a Moroi Cast Member.

PLAYING A MOROI

Playing a Moroi is not much different from playing a Strigoi, or standard Buffyverse™ vampire. Moroi Vampyre is a Quality that gives players access to a set of special abilities and powers beyond those of normal humans. The details of this Quality are as presented in the *Mystery Codex*, for *Witchcraft*, on pages 32 and 97. This section will explore the *differences* and modifications that must be made to transport such creatures into a setting where Essence does not exist.

In the cinematic Unisystem, rather than keeping track of Essence and Life Points, Moroi gain a particular vulnerability to certain types of attacks, and a particular resistance to others. They also lose their standard regeneration against attacks that they are vulnerable to. All attacks that are designed to harm supernatural creatures can kill a Moroi; if an deals Essence damage in the full Unisystem, it deals full life point damage to Moroi in the cinematic. Life Points lost to attacks the exploit the weaknesses of a Moroi can only be regained through feeding, described below. Thus, magical attacks such as Soulfire (see *Witchcraft* core rulebook for details on Soulfire) are particularly potent weapons against Moroi. In addition, all standard weaknesses of Vampyres as listed in the *Mystery Codex* deal Life Point rather than Essence damage to Moroi in the cinematic Unisystem. Slash/stab attacks deal only ½ of their normal base damage (and do not double) against Moroi; further, the Moroi regenerates damage from such attacks at the rate of 1 point per Constitution level per turn.

For Example: Drake, a Moroi with a Constitution of 6, gets shot by a 9 mm handgun. The handgun normally deals 12 points of damage; against a normal human, this damage would be modified by success levels and then doubled, for a minimum of 26 (12+1 for success levels, doubled for damage type). However, against Drake the weapon deals only half the base (round down and success levels still count). So he'd suffer a minimum of 6 points of damage. Worse, at the end of the round he heals his Constitution level in life points back from that damage. Since his Constitution is 6, that shot from the handgun isn't going to even scratch him.

Example the Second: After Drake sucks up the shot from the handgun, a witch nails him with a Soulfire blast that deals 15 points of damage. Drake takes that full 15

points of damage, and can only regenerate it if he feeds. A few of those puppies, and Drake is a pile of bones.

This requires a bit of bookkeeping on the part of the player and Director, but is the easiest solution to the problem of Essence. Likewise, rather than spending Essence to maintain their bodies, Moroi must spend Life Points, which also do not replenish without feeding. The cost to maintain one's existence costs the same in Life Points as the Essence Point costs on page 102 of the *Mystery Codex*. However, on the up side, it does not cost Life Points for a Vampire to use their Manipulations of the Flesh abilities, or any special powers which they purchase using Quality or Metaphysics points. Using Manipulations of the Flesh requires a Moroi to make a Willpower (doubled) roll. A basic success (9 or better) means that the vampyre can manifest claws, fangs, or funky facial features as listed on page 102. Moroi using this ability can mimic a Strigoï's game face if they so desire, but do not automatically manifest a game face when they use their powers, as Strigoï do. Moroi do not naturally (un-naturally?) possess a game face as Strigoï do; such an alteration of features is a conscious act of will on the Moroi's part, and most Moroi find the appearance of a game face rather distasteful; they only manifest the features when attempting to "blend in" among Strigoï (usually for survival purposes).

Moroi gain access to a number of special powers that Strigoï do not have. These are the Powers and Qualities, Drawbacks and Vulnerabilities listed in the *Mystery Codex* starting on page 103. Many of these powers refer to the means of feeding by the Moroi. In the Buffyverse, every Moroi is required to purchase a mode of feeding; no Moroi can simply feed off of any old strong emotion. More detail will be given on this below. Others are special abilities that Moroi gain access to because of their supernatural natures. Activating a power requires rolling Willpower (doubled) against the power level of the ability in Question. Optionally, the Moroi may purchase a 4 point per level Quality, Vampyric Focus. This Quality works similar to Sorcery or the Necromancy skill and adds to the Willpower roll to activate Vampyric powers; Each ability is also a separate Quality, with the costs as listed in the *Mystery Codex*. The power level of an ability is equal to the Essence cost required to activate the ability. For abilities that drain Essence from living creatures, see "feeding," below.

MOROÏ AND FEEDING

Lest you begin thinking that Moroi are the fluffy puppy dogs of vampirism, be assured that they feed off of the life essence of human beings just like Strigoï do. In some ways, Moroi are worse, as they cannot simply exist off of the blood of animals. However, while Moroi must feed on human beings to survive, they need not kill their victims to do so. Moroi must purchase a Power or Vulnerability that represents their means of feeding (Blood Addiction is the most common) and can only regain Life Points from vampire specific attacks (defined above) and from maintaining their own existence through this feeding process. In many ways, this makes the existence of a Moroi even more tragic, for they have a soul and thus, the means to feel remorse over their parasitic nature. Yet they are bound to it, still.

For purposes of the game, the vampyre regains 1 Life Point for every Life Point she drains through blood drinking (if that is her vulnerability); use of other means of feeding gives the vampyre 1 Life Point back for every 2 Life Points she inflicts upon her victim. Damage inflicted in Life Points is equal to the listed Essence Point damage in the book. However, human vessels recover from attacks that do not inflict physical harm at the rate of 1 Life Point per Constitution Level per hour, unless the attack kills the victim (reduces them to -10 Life Points or less). Attacks such as Blood Drinking and Withering inflict visible physical damage as the flesh is either pierced or rotted, and thus only heal as normal damage.

MOROÏ AND METAPHYSICS

Moroi may purchase any Metaphysics except for Divine Inspiration, including Chi Abilities from *Enter: the Zombie*, in addition to any normal vampyre abilities they may purchase. They may be built using either one of the new Character Types listed here, the basic Hero Character Type from the Core Rulebook, or by using the Undead Character Type as presented in the *Mystery Codex*. However, if using the Undead Character Type, the pool of Metaphysics points should be reduced by 5, and starting Drama Points must be purchased using Metaphysics, Quality, or Drawback Points at a cost of 2 points per Drama Point.

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