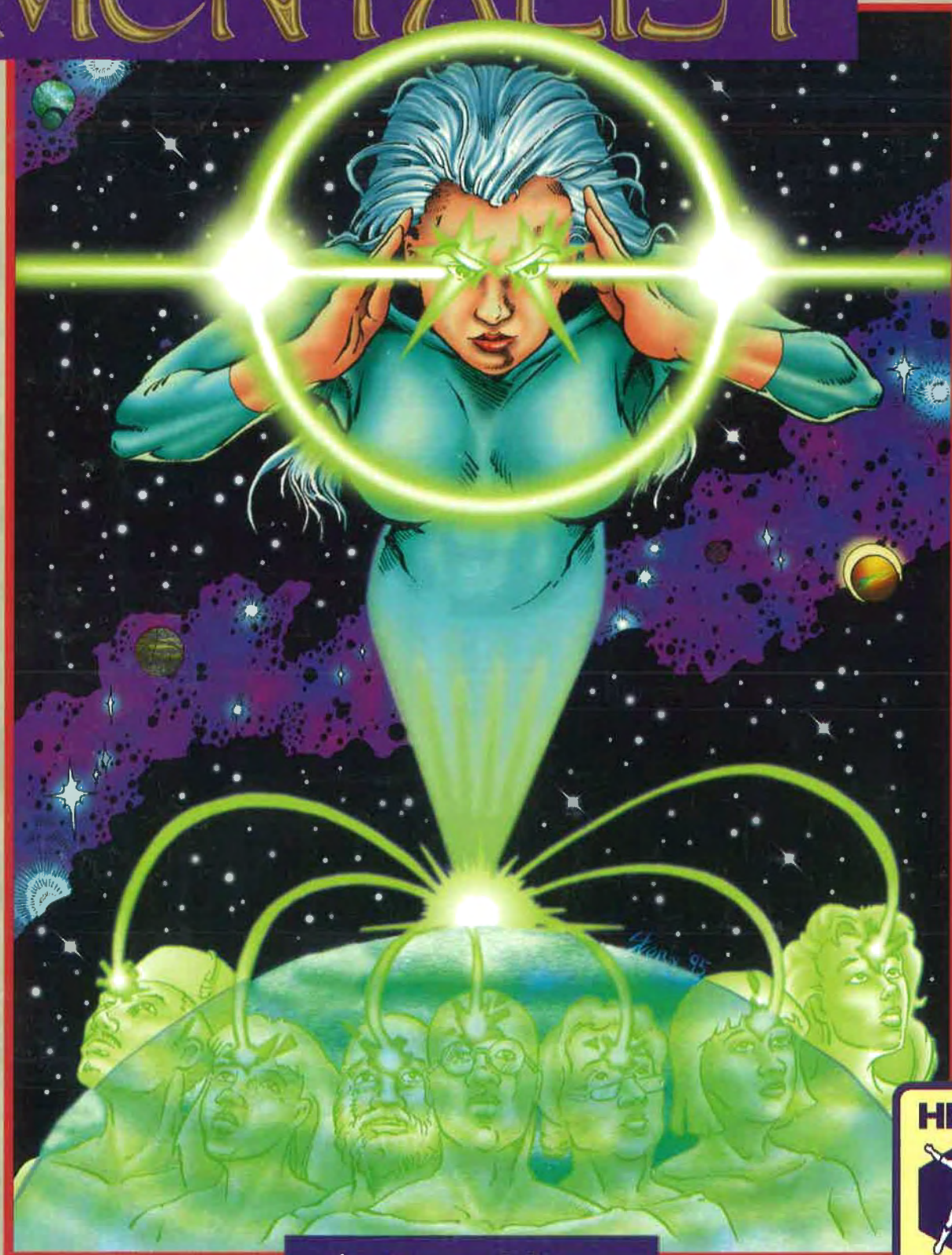


# THE **ULTIMATE** MENTALIST™



by Steven S. Long



# THE ULTIMATE MENTALIST™

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**Dedication:** I would like to dedicate this book to two good friends, John Grigni and Thom Foster, who have been playing mind games with me for years now.

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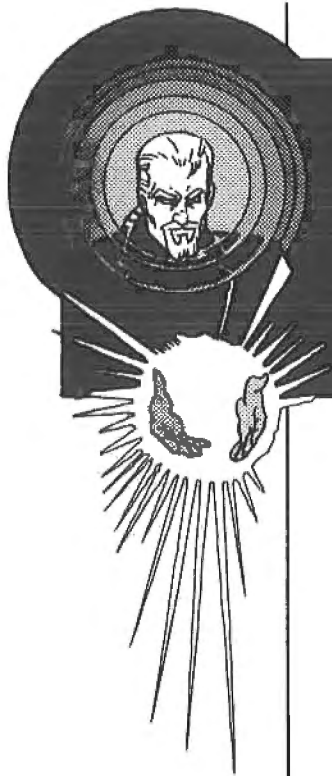
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# INTRODUCTION

Solitaire awakened, coughing. The dust was thick in the air around her. She shook her head to clear the ache away. She looked up, and was pleased to see that Widget had escaped the destruction.

*You okay?* she asked the floating crystal telepathically.

Yes, it replied, glad that she was awake.

Next, Solitaire looked for Seeker. There he was, lying on the floor, covered with bits of rubble. Fortunately, he appeared to have escaped the worst of the cave-in; her healing powers did not seem to be needed. As she pulled the rubble off of him, she thought back to what had happened just a few minutes ago. The Champions had been pursuing Dr. Draconis, who they had discovered was still alive, and had finally managed to uncover his base. They had split up into three groups, hoping to explore the base quickly and find him before he could escape.

Unfortunately, she and Seeker had found him almost at once, on one of the lower levels. His counterattack had brought the entire lab down on them, trapping the two of them inside a tiny pocket of air. Heaven only knew what had happened to him; he'd probably escaped—again.

Seeker began to stir. "Oy, Soli," he said groggily, holding his head in one hand, "didja get the number of the truck that hit us?" He grinned, slightly, and she knew he was all right.

"Sit still a moment, Seeker. I'll get us out of here." She looked at one of the larger rocks, and used the sheer power of her mind to pick it up and move it out of the way. As she began to lift it, the other rocks around it shifted, too, so she quickly put it back.



She began to concentrate, casting her mind outwards, searching for a mental presence quite familiar to her—Defender. It wasn't long before she found him and Obsidian—in another part of the base. *Defender, we could use some help!*

*What's going on, Solitaire?* he responded.

*Draconis has trapped me and Seeker in some rubble...*

*So that was the rumbling we felt a few minutes ago!*

*...and we need your help to get out. I think I could*

*move most of these rocks and bits of machinery with my psychokinesis, but I'm afraid of causing the whole thing to collapse further. If you and Obsidian help, we should be able to do a safer job.*

*Okay, we're on our way! ... Er, where are you?*

*We're on Sublevel 3-B. First you need to find a stairwell...*

For centuries the concept of mental powers has fascinated humanity. Men have often dreamed of employing vast psychic powers—reading thoughts, foreseeing the future, mentally controlling other men, moving physical objects with the sheer power of the mind—for their own benefit, or the benefit of mankind.

With the advent of modern-day fantastic fiction, this fascination has continued; often, mental powers become the focus or theme of a particular story or film. Science fiction characters from Luke Skywalker to Telzey Amberdon have possessed mental powers. The wizards of fantasy fiction can ordain the future and invoke other mental powers with their magic. Mental abilities even creep into horror fiction on occasion; the terrible havoc they can wreak, and the fright that having your mind invaded can inspire, can act as a perfect springboard for a horror author's work.

Mental powers have probably seen their greatest elaboration in comic books. Comic-book mentalists use all of the standard mental powers, such as telepathy and telekinesis, but may be able to “expand” these abilities. Some superheroic mentalists can manipulate molecules and atoms with their mental powers, or teleport themselves, or do dozens of other things which stretch the definition of “mental powers” to the breaking point. Indeed, some of these characters simply use the term “mental powers” to describe the origin of their abilities, not any particular limitation of or conception for those abilities.

Whatever type of mentalist character you like to play, *The Ultimate Mentalist* has something to offer you. It deals with all aspects of *HERO System* mental powers, from the “mechanical” aspects of creating them, to how to use them in your campaign without letting them ruin it, to structuring entire campaigns around them. *The Ultimate Mentalist* even has psionic gadgets and other source book material that you can drop right into your campaign.

Finally, *The Ultimate Mentalist* includes conversion notes for a number of popular roleplaying systems, so you can use these rules for mental powers with the system that you like.

## Preconceptions About Mental Powers

In the author's experience, it is common for gamers, particularly *HERO System* gamers, to rework a game's rules on mental powers to suit their particular conception of how mental powers should work. In writing this book, an effort has been made to avoid enshrining any particular preconceptions about how mental powers work by turning those preconceptions into hard and fast rules. Some of this is unavoidable, but the author and editors have tried to minimize it as much as possible. Since every reader is free to pick and choose what he likes from this supplement (or any other), no one has to use a preconception that he is uncomfortable with. For example, in *The Ultimate Mentalist* you will find a discussion of “mental signatures” and “mental traces.” If you don't believe that mental powers would leave signatures or traces, ignore those sections.

*The Ultimate Mentalist* lets you decide how mental powers will work in your campaign; design guidelines are included (as well as a campaign design form). For further discussion of this subject, please refer to the section on Campaign Creation.



## HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

If you're a Game Master, you'll want to read all of this book, paying particular attention to the Campaign Creation section. You'll need to decide how to integrate these new rules into your campaign, or whether you might want to start up a new campaign based on these rules. The handy Campaign Checklist form helps you keep track of the decisions you make about mental powers and how they work in your campaign.

If you're a player looking for new abilities for your mentalist character (or if you'd like to design one for the first time), read through the Character Creation section, and certainly browse through Combat and the Source book sections, too. Before you start working on your characters, though, you'll need to check with your GM and find out just what decisions have been made regarding your campaign rules. *The Ultimate Mentalist* allows for all sorts of ways for mental powers to work, and it's up to the GM to decide exactly how things work in their campaign.

*The Ultimate Mentalist* assumes that you have a working knowledge of the Hero System rules, or are familiar with one of the game systems mentioned in the Appendix where the system conversions are presented. Since *The Ultimate Mentalist* is written in terms of the Hero System, an effort has been made to define or explain some basic Hero System terms. If you're not a Hero System guru, don't worry; questions about other game systems are dealt with in the Appendix. Just read through the book and get a feel for how things work, then turn to the Appendix for details on conversions to your favorite system.





# THE COMPLETE GUIDE TO MENTAL POWERS

*The Ultimate Mentalist*<sup>™</sup> is a complete resource guide to mental powers in the Hero System<sup>®</sup> and beyond — complete conversion notes are included for major roleplaying systems! You'll find everything you need to design and play characters in any genre with psychic powers of any description. *The Ultimate Mentalist* is the definitive reference work for roleplaying the powers of the mind.

*The Ultimate Mentalist* offers detailed descriptions of mental powers and their use, along with related skills, combat maneuvers, and modifiers. Mentalists in combat now have a full range of tactical choices to add a distinctive flavor to psionic duels. Campaign and genre notes show GMs how to add psionic powers to existing campaigns, or design campaigns based on mental powers. Players will find hundreds of new ideas for creating and playing characters with mental powers.

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- Mentalist characters and campaign information
- Psionic gadgets
- Conversion notes for using mental powers in popular roleplaying systems
- Notes for use with *Champions*<sup>®</sup>, *Fantasy Hero*<sup>®</sup>, and all *Hero System*<sup>®</sup> games
- And more!



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