Malleus Maleficarum

This is a story set in 1581, in the world of Harry Potter.

Real Life Events

Malleus Maleficarum (*the Hammer of Witches*) was a treatise on witchcraft, written by the Catholic clergyman Heinrich Kramer of Speyer, Germany in 1487. It endorses the extermination of witches, which it does by formulating a complex theological framework, in which witches are the instrument of the devil, corrupting the holiness of God’s work.

The *Malleus* elevates sorcery to the criminal status of heresy and prescribes inquisitorial practices for secular courts in order to extirpate witches. The recommended procedures include torture to effectively obtain confessions and the death penalty as the only sure remedy against the evils of witchcraft.

Magical acts had long been forbidden by the church – and all magical rites except prayer and traditional worship were considered evil and were banned. However, *MM* elevated these acts from mere sins to acts of heresy of the highest order – desecrating the work of the Almighty.

The publication and popularity of the book sparked the Early Modern Witch Trials, a moral panic whereby the population attempted to root out ‘witches’ via cruel means – fake trials, torture, ducking, pricking and so on. Tests were often faked by charlatans to provoke and extend the hysteria, which saw nearly 100,000 people executed across the continent.

The height of the witch trials were between 1560 and 1630, with the most notable being Trier, Germany (1581-1593), Fulda, Germany (1603-1606), North Berwick, Scotland (1590 – notable for King James VI of Scotland, future King James I of England, approving of them, out of fear that witches would bring about his downfall).

Antagonists

**John Dee (Born 1490, publicly claims 1527)**

John Dee is the main antagonist of this campaign, the Dark Wizard orchestrating things behind the scenes to his own ends. Dee is the chief advisor to Elizabeth I, Queen of England, and was the chief architect of the beginnings of the “British Empire” – a term he is credited with coining. A fanatical imperialist, he believed that the British Empire would rule the world, with him advising its rulers for generations to come.

Unbeknownst to those at court, Dee was actually a powerful wizard, having used his mastery of illusion magic to hide in plain sight, and to climb up the rungs of power in the nation. He was known as one of the most learned men of his age, with an interest in both science, and the divine nature of the occult. He was publicly obsessed with messages from “angels”, which often led him to leave on long sabbaticals in search of these angels. In reality, these angels were actually just an excuse for his magical endeavours.

As part of his quest to make the British Empire a supreme power in the world, headed up by a league of British battlemages, Dee instigated the Witch Trials in Europe, disseminating copies of *Malleus Maleficarum*, in order to spark a moral panic, which would force the wizards on the continent underground. This in turn would pave the way for the British wizarding community to emerge, and then (unchallenged) use their magic to expand the British Empire across the globe, ushering in a new era of magic.

However, during travels in Europe in 1580, he uncovered a magical rune – the *monas hieroglyphica* – a deep and ancient magic which had long since been hidden from the history books. Hailing from an era of wild and primal magic, the *monas* allowed the wielder to absorb the soul of a sacrifice and use that power regardless of if the sacrifice was magical in origin or not.

This changed Dee’s plans – as he no longer needed the rest of the community to help him take over the world. If he could use the *monas* to absorb enough power, he could single-handedly be the most powerful entity in the universe. John therefore changed his plans – he spread the hysteria far and wide. He no longer cared about the witch trials hunting only the magic-born, he simply needed as much blood spilled as possible, even on British soil.

Dee formed several groups – including the Order of the Holy Flame – and armed them with magical artefacts under the guise of Holy Relics. These “relics” made the witch hunting groups almost impossible to stop, and every execution was carried out with a weapon branded with the *monas*, transferring ever more power to Dee.

A supremely powerful illusionist turned Dark Wizard, John Dee has spent the past 5 years studying ancient and evil magical runes, even etching them into his very skin to grant himself immense powers. Dee resides in the tower of London, where he spends most of his time. His magical workshops are buried deep underground there, as well as his store of Soul Jars, which contain the souls of all those that the *monas* has absorbed.

Dee has a Hazel and Unicorn Hair wand, and thousands upon thousands of Soul Jars. He carries at least 1 on him at all times.

**Antioch Brightflame (Born ~1525)**

**Antioch Brightflame is a muggle, the Chief Priest (and founding member) of the Order of the Holy Flame, an organisation dedicated to eradicating witchcraft across Europe. Antioch is fanatically devoted to his organisation’s stated cause, and is unaware that the Order was set up as a ploy by a Wizard in order to damage his enemies. He is unaware that the equipment he wields is not, as his benefactor claims, blessed by holy spirits, but is enchanted with the very power he seeks to destroy.**

**Antioch once went by a different name, and was once a farmer in a village in the south of England with a wife and two adult children. His wife contracted a wasting disease that left her in excruciating pain. Antioch took his wife to see the local village healer – a known wielder of magic. The healer could not help Antioch’s wife, and she perished in agony. Antioch, mistaking the healer’s inability as not *wanting* to help muggles, murdered her in a cold rage.**

**Vowing to exterminate the people that let his beloved wife die, Antioch wandered Europe with his sons, joining some of the nascent witch hunts in the mid 1570s. In 1581, he was approached by an Angel (actually a disguised John Dee), who delivered to him a message: that he was God’s chosen warrior, who would lead the charge against the stain upon His creation, and purge the world of Witchcraft. The angel declared him a new man, and re-christened him Antioch Brightflame, the Sword of God.**

**Upon the Angel’s orders, Antioch formed the Order of the Holy Flame, and embarked upon a crusade to exterminate every hint of witchcraft, with the fervour of a true fanatic. The Angel provided the Order with Holy Relics (actually magically enchanted items), with which to carry out God’s work.**

**Ch’ana, Praetoriate of the 5th Paladin’s Regiment**

Ch’ana is a limax paladin, the highest echelon of Limax society. The Limax are a secretive hyper-intelligent race, with a torso of a four-armed humanoid, and a serpentine lower body. More adept at using magic than even humans, nobody knows where their civilisation is actually located. Most Limax have taken a solemn vow of pacifism, after some horrific conflicts in their past decimated Limax society. The only people allowed to wield combat magic or weapons are the Paladins: the holy knights, who defend Limax society from evil.

Ch’ana was the Praetoriate (second in command) of the entire 5th Paladin’s Regiment, an outstanding and well-recognised warrior, who had guarded one of the secret entrances into the Limax kingdom for decades, before going out on a holy pilgrammage into the wider world. Such an undertaking was traditional for a warrior of his standing: they went out into the world to combat evil head-on, rather than waiting for it to come to them, and to seek spiritual enlightenment.

During his wanderings, Ch’ana garnered the attention of John Dee, who approached Ch’ana in the guise of an Angel, as he did with Antioch. Convinced that this was an indication of the spiritual enlightenment that she sought, Ch’ana vowed to serve the Angel, to fight against the darkness.

For years, Dee used Ch’ana as his personal assassin, using his Angelic facade to convince her that the targets were evil sinners who needed to be extinguished in order for the Light to prevail. Ch’ana, in her righteous frenzy, did not question these orders for years, killing many hundreds of Dees enemies all across Europe.

Eventually, Ch’ana discovered the *monas*, the rune that Dee was using to drain the souls of victimes to further his own ends inscribed on the inside of her blades. As the limax had not lost all knowledge of this evil magic, she recognised it instantly, and knew what she had done: her killings had all been to further the aims of Dee.

Horrified by what she had been tricked in to doing, Ch’ana attempted to assassinate Dee. However, Dee demonstrated the power of the Soul Jars on her, increasing her power a thousandfold. He promised her a share of the soul jars he was accruing, promising that, in the long run, he was serving the light. He asked her how the Limax could justify `serving the light’, when all they ever did was cower behind their walls, and let inoccents fall to the dark powers outside. The only way to defeat the darkness was to become more powerful than it.

Her soul shattered and disillusioned with the limax way of life, Ch’ana gave in, and now serves Dee as his willing servant.

London in 1580s

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| Name | Colour | Location | HQ | Leader | Description |
| Agrarian Guilds | Dark Green | Farming lands, North-West of city walls | Gray’s Inn of Court |  | Often thought of as a simple group of farmers with no real influence, the Agrarian Guilds in fact wield significant wealth and political power, to protect their interests. Allied with the Drapers, they make formidable enemies. |
| Banking Clans | Dark orange | Candlewick Street | Royal Exchange | Pierre Harache | A group of exceedingly wealthy entities, the Banking Clans control almost all of the money in the City – even thr crown owes them significant amounts of money. |
| Bilgerats | Dirty green | Queenhithe | The Warehouse | Gurge the Angry | A criminal organisation consisting mostly of the lwoest of the low – widely derided as disgusting lowlifes, the Bilgerats are not a group to cross lightly. |
| Book-binding Guild | Yellow | Billingsgate Ward | The Presses | Henry Shorteye | Knowledge is power – and the Book-Binders hold the key to knowledge. Though mostly muggles, there are more than a few arcane secrets hidden away by the Book-Binders. |
| Brave Knights | Cyan | Covent Garden & Environs | Arundel House | Sir Anthony Forsythe | The Brave Knights are a group of wealthy aristocrats who have taken the unusual step of personally enforcing the peace and wellbeing of their neibourhoods. Older gentlemen in full suits of armour might not be the most intimidating sight – but it appears to be effective. |
| Bridgemasters | Pale Blue | London Bridge | Gatehouse | Abraham Brodeway | London Bridge houses some 50 establishments, and dozens of residents, and acts as an important gateway to the City. The Bridgemasters extract a heavy toll for a crossing, and they wield significant influence and power. |
| Catspaws | Brown | Cripplegate Ward | The Cat’s Cradle | Roger Scrogs | A petty gang of pickpockets, nobody quite knows how the Catspaws manage to retain their control over a region, when bordered by such fierce enemies – but they manage it somehow. |
| City Watch | Bright green | City Wall | Aldgates | Samuel Marcheford | The City Watch are the group charged by the Crown to maintain order and civility within the walls of London. In practice, they only really control the Wall – though they do use this influence to try to keep undesirables out of the city. Not very effective against the undesirables already inside, however. |
| Clergymen | Pink | Blackfriars & Whitefriars | St. Paul’s Cathedral | John Aylmer, Bishop of London | The Clergymen control London’s most holy sites – the Friaries, as well as their headquarters, St. Paul’s Cathedral. Since the reformation in the 1530s, they are sworn to the head of the Church of England – Her Majesty the Queen – though they exercise a large amount of autonomy in their pursuit of faith and the rooting out of heresy. The Church has formally condemned the actions of the Witch hunters as going against the word of God, which has led to animosity between these groups. |
| Dockmasters | Dark Blue | Billingsgate & Bridge Ward | Billingsgate Docks | Humphrey Boatswain | The Dockmasters Guild are the finest shipbuilders in the entire nation – constructing the entirety of the nations fearsome naval fleet. They guard their trade secrets jealously, and there have been more than a few rumours of their enemies being found floating face down in the river… |
| Draper’s Guilds | Pink/purple | Dowgate Ward | Rose Manor | Isaac Wolrond | The Draper’s Guild (Cloth Merchants) control England’s most profitable market: wool and cloth. They wield immense political power over the Crown, but face extreme hatred from the other Guilds for their position of prominence in the nation, with the exception of the Agrarian guilds, with whom they care closely allied. |
| Entertainer’s Gulid | Purple | West Southwark | Bearbaiting Ring | Eggard the Entertainer | The entertainer’s guild controlled the playhouses, the musicians, the jesters, the bear baiting – any activity that people watched in their spare time, the Entertainer’s Guild had their fingers in it. |
| Guildmasters | Royal Blye | Cheap ward | Guildhall | Lady Katherine Fysher | The Guildmasters is the name taken by a particularly bloodthirsty gang, who killed the *old* Guildmasters (a group in charge of arbitrating decision between various guilds), and took their place. A vicious gang of killers, they do not play politics like the other factions – they kill first, and don’t bother asking questions later. Their leader is a disgraced former noblewoman, who now kills for fun… |
| Mercer’s Guild | Dark purple | Cordwainer Street | Grand Markets | Miles Mylner | The Mercer’s Guild are those who control the markets – general merhants from all walks of life. If you need something rare and exotic, there’ll be a merchant somewhere with what you want. The Mercer’s guild is the richest of the Guilds, though the area they control is relatively small. |
| Nightrunners | Dirty dark green | Bread Street Ward | The Catacombs | Scrag the Small | The Nightrunners are a crime syndicate who make their homes in the network of catacombs lying beneath the city. They use this network to travel vast distances across the city, strike, and then disappear without a trace. |
| Order of the Holy Flame | Blue/Green | East Southwark & Cripplegate | Horbey Down | Antioch Brightflame | A fanatical order of Witch hunters, who have perpretrated many of the Witch Trials across the Kingdom. Though their political influence is small, their influence over the commonfolk is growing at an alarming rate – having recently taken over almost all of Sothwark in just a few months. They have not yet been allowed inside the city gates, however. |
| Outlying Villages | Bright blue | Bishopsgate & Shoreditch | St. Botolph’s Church | James Longtooth | The villages outside of the City walls are a disparate group, only loosely allied together. They do, however, control the important Gunfoundry facility – the primary manufacturer of the cannons and artillery introduced only 50 years prior. This gives them a large amount of political (and military!) power to use. |
| Smithing Guilds | Dirty yellow | Smithfield | Saracen’s Head | William Strongarm | The Blacksmiths were kicked out of the city walls because of the noise and foul smells their forges produced – they retaliated by forming one of the first Guilds, to protect their interests. |
| The Crown | Pale Green | Westminster | Whitehall | Queen Elizabeth I | The Crown Holdings are those lands directly under the control of the Crown, and Her personal forces. A rich and affluent area, those who reside here are the people who control the fate of the nation. |
| The Fallen Lords | Orange | Castle Baynard Ward | Baynard’s Castle | Edward Fitzmontague | The Fallen lords are a crime syndicate who, as their name suggests, were once members of the nobility. After losing most of their money, and falling out of favour with the crown, the Fallen Lords turned to a life of crime – and were surpsingly good at it. |
| The Lawless | Blue/grey | Christchurch | None | None | The Lawless is a region of London where chaos reigns. There is no order. All attempts by any of the factions to gain control of it have ended disatrously. An area best left alone – even by the Vampie lords. |
| Vampire Trimuvirate | Black | Broad Street & Bishopsgate | (Multiple) | Consus the Harvester  Aife the Fallen  Malachor the Dread | The Vampire Trimvirate are 3 ancient vampires who have carved out a section of the city for themselves – as often at war with each other than with the other factions, the Trimvirate are known to often harbour dark and dangerous magics within their streets. |
| Wizard’s Council | Red | Tower of London & Environs | Tower of London | Elfrida Clagg | The Wizards council is the precursor to the Ministy of Magic. Much more actively involved in Muggle politics than their successor, the Wizards council were not afraid to let their power be known. |