

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE™ SOURCEBOOK

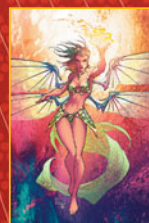
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Samplefile



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BY MICHAEL TURNER
& PETER STEIGERWALD



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MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE™ SOURCEBOOK ISSUE 1

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Welcome to the world of...

MICHAEL TURNER'S SOULFIRE

2003 marked the beginning of something truly magical: the birth of Aspen Comics. Industry superstar Michael Turner founded his own publishing company on the principle of celebrating all the amazing and wondrous aspects of life. With Soulfire, Turner's second created comic book series, and the first to launch with the now-iconic Aspen logo, he sought to embody that ideal, weaving together a story of magic, technology, and – above all – hope. A Soulfire Preview issue was originally released within the pages of Wizard Magazine as part of a voting contest for Aspen fans to decide Michael Turner's next published property, followed by a nine-page prelude story entitled Soulfire: Beginnings, that sold out its debut weekend. Soulfire quickly went on to become one of the top-selling independent comic books of the year and has thrived ever since.



Much like its Fathom predecessor, Soulfire Sourcebook is your definitive guide to the expansive, imaginative, and ever-evolving world that Michael Turner envisioned. Spanning from an Earth that doesn't look too different from the world we live in today to the magical realm of the Everlands, let this volume be your reference for all things Soulfire. Allow your imagination to soar...

Sample



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MALIKAI



Malikai

Occupation: Samusara

Identity: Malikai is a citizen of the Northwest Conference of America with no criminal record, whose identity is not known to the general public

Height: 5'6"

Weight: 150 pounds

Hair: Blond

Eyes: Blue

Known Relatives: None

Aliases/Nicknames: Mal, the Samusara, Bringer of the Light

Skills/Abilities: Malikai, or Mal, has innate magical abilities, among the strongest of any known magic user. He can spontaneously create ethereal wings and generate magical energies from his hands. He can also expel magical energy in an omnidirectional burst. Mal trained in martial arts and magical manipulation and is a capable hand-to-hand combatant. He also has superhuman durability. In times of desperation, Mal can release the malevolent elements of his soul, which manifest as a cloud of demon-like monsters with hugely magnified levels of his own magical strength. His perception can see magical manifestations not visible to normal humans. As Samusara, he may have more powers yet undiscovered, such as telepathy and telekinesis evidenced in other magic users.

Place of Birth: Unknown

Marital Status: Single

Personal History: Malikai grew up an orphan in San Francisco alongside his best friends, potential paramour Sonia and protector PJ. The three were together at a holographic arcade when the Sethoru mercenary Onyx kidnapped him. The stress of the situation caused Mal's first magical manifestation: he blasted Onyx's face with a burst of energy that surprised them both. Mal fell dozens of stories to the ground but survived, unharmed.

The Rahtumi princess Grace showed up, riding a flying motorcycle and demanding that Mal come with her. He reluctantly agreed, but before they could get very far, Onyx attacked Grace and pulled her off the bike, leaving Mal alone in mid-air. A crash ensued, but again Mal miraculously survived.

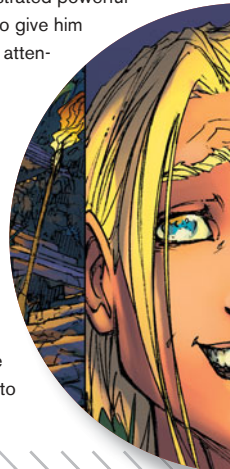
PJ and Sonia showed up and helped Mal get away, but Grace managed to track him down. She expressed the danger and urgency of the situation, and Mal decided to accompany her to Hawai'i – so long as his friends could come too. Seeking inconspicuous transportation out of San Francisco, Malikai and his friends dropped in on the nearby Battle Pit, where combatants in high tech armored suits tested themselves against other scientific weaponry. An engineer there named Benoist, agreed to help them get to Hawai'i in his hydrofoil yacht.

On the way to the island, a set of drones attacked the boat on the orders of their creator Abel, a rival of Benoist's who had been contracted by the Naitali defense contractor Rainier to kill Malikai. The drones attached themselves to Mal and detonated, knocking him overboard. Benoist dove in after the boy and pulled him back aboard the ship. Though at first Mal was unresponsive and seemingly dead, his powers soon kicked in and he awoke, coughing but essentially unharmed.

Mal and his friends arrived at the northern coast of the big island of Hawai'i after nightfall, where the First Master of Samu Sariah's daughter, Pili greeted them. She instructed Mal to leave the others behind and ascend a lengthy set of stairs into the foothills. There he met Kamea Unuhi'Uhani, the First Master. Kamea showed him fiery visions while explaining the reincarnative nature of the soul and Mal's responsibilities as the Samusara. The next morning, Mal was determined to follow this new path but feared endangering Sonia and PJ. He told his friends they could stay in Hawai'i as he continued on, but they protested and pledged to follow him.

Their arrival at their next destination, Tokyo, wasn't as hospitable. The second master Ren Watasu brusquely stated that he would not train "another failure." But when Mal demonstrated powerful magical abilities in defense of PJ, Ren decided to give him a day to "show me that you are worthy of my attention."

That night, Mal couldn't sleep and got into a fight with Sonia over the nature of magic and its effect on his life. Angered by "the pep talk and the guilt trip," Mal stormed away. Outside he found Ren on the roof, contemplating the city. Ren admitted his previous failures at training potential Samusaras and questioned whether or not Mal had the intestinal fortitude to succeed. They challenged each other to move on from their pasts and set out on a course to work together.



Mal spent weeks in lengthy sessions with Ren, learning martial arts and how to control his magic. After Mal's first training session where he managed to stay awake and eat dinner, Rainier's mechadragon suddenly smashed its head through Ren's skyscraper and captured Mal in its mouth, then flew away.

Mal watched helplessly as Japanese soldiers piloting giant attack robots assaulted his mechadragon captor. Grace defended the beast from the military, unwilling to let Mal be hurt. The dragon's wings were damaged and it crashed along the coast. Mal's powers again emerged in the form of a huge omnidirectional blast shattering the mechadragon's mouth and dropping Mal forty feet to the ground. The mechadragon unleashed a huge torrent of fire, immolating Mal and the surrounding beach before limping away into the sky.

Fearing the worst, Mal's friends came down to the site, grieving, when Mal himself emerged – once again essentially unharmed.

Benoist flew Mal and the rest to Macchu Pichu in Peru, where they planned to enter the magical realm of the Everlands. On the way, Mal saw a huge statue turn into a real dragon, which he easily fought off and dispatched with his magic. But after the encounter, Rathumi-like wings emerged painfully from Mal's back. Grace counseled him through the transformation, helping him along through the portal leading to the Everlands.

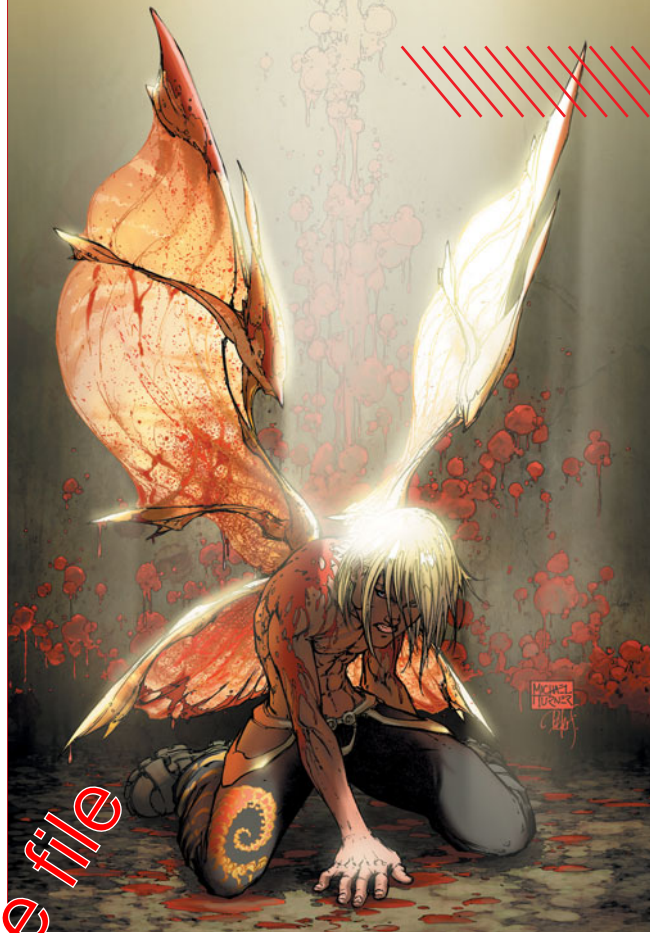
Grace led Mal to the city of Anantia where he met the next two Masters of Samu Sariah: Sethoru king Arlin and Rahtumi queen Faye. The two of them, plus Grace, led a frustrated Mal to the Test of the Dagger, which required walking through a room full of clinging shadows that tore at his clothes but couldn't hold him back. Mal retrieved the dagger and, annoyed with all the hoops he'd been required to jump through, went to find his friends.

Mal discovered them drinking in a tavern, and unleashed his frustration on the group, making Sonia cry as he accused them of celebrating while he suffered. Mal followed Sonia outside and apologized, revealing his fear and his feelings for her. They shared a romantic kiss that was interrupted by a surprise appearance of the repaired mechadragon. Suddenly, Onyx teleported in and snatched Mal away.

Onyx brought Mal before Rainier, who was leading a technological siege on the Everlands. Mal tried to fight them off with magical blasts from his hands, to little effect. Rainier grabbed Mal and forcefully ripped the wings from his back, sending the boy plummeting downwards into the arms of Grace. She revealed that she was the fifth master and plunged the dagger he had retrieved from his earlier test deep into his chest.

Mal rose again, this time reborn with ethereal wings and glowing eyes, wielding the dagger. With newly awakened magical senses, Mal "saw" magic making its return but still chastised Grace for keeping her role and plans secret.

Mal and Grace took to the skies to battle Rainier and Onyx. Together they successfully felled the mechadragon, and Mal unleashed an unprecedented surge of magic to overwhelm Rainier. But before he could be captured, Onyx appeared and teleported Rainier away. Mal came to terms with Grace in the aftermath of the battle, but asked her to be more forthcoming with information in the future. She agreed.



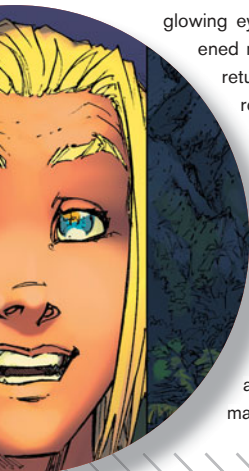
Mal, PJ, and Sonia went to stay with Benoist in Sydney, Australia. While out on a walk one night, Sonia and Mal saw a man roughing up his girlfriend. Mal stepped in to stop it and the man ran off. The woman, Jayden, revealed her growing magical wings, which inspired Mal to help her and made Sonia jealous.

Mal offered Jayden a room at Benoist's, which created more tension in his new romantic relationship with Sonia. These challenges continued as Mal taught Jayden how to fly and they seemed to bond. When confronted, Mal angrily reminded Sonia how challenging his magical transformation had been and told her that he wanted to help anyone else going through the same thing.

After Mal had to help Jayden escape the police because she'd attacked an officer, the argument between the Samusara and Sonia continued. Jayden accused Sonia of not knowing what it was like for people "like us," leading Sonia to storm off again.

Mal was meditating late that night and Jayden, unable to sleep, came to find him. He gave her some rudimentary lessons in controlling her power and encouraged her to continue developing without fear. She kissed him, and Sonia saw from the doorway. Sonia was ready to leave the next morning, claiming that Jayden was duplicitous and she wouldn't stand for it. But Mal admitted the kiss had been a mistake and an accident, so Sonia agreed to stay.

That night, Grace arrived at the apartment and asked for Mal's help in rescuing captured dragons from Rainier's clutches. The group traveled to Los Angeles, where Grace recruited the help of Pili and a retired Rahtumi warrior named Dex, who'd chosen exile after a tumultuous breakup with Faye. The combined company headed to San Francisco through a series of abandoned tunnels. When they emerged, they found Rainier's troops brutalizing civilians and leapt to rescue the innocent.





MALIKAI

Sample file

Mal fought it until the mysterious creature fled.

The team was winning until reinforcements arrived for Rainier's men – seven-foot tall techno-magic hybrids called Nightstalkers, reminiscent of Rainier's virtually extinct race, the Naitali. As they attempted a retreat, Jayden put Sonia in mortal danger and Mal had to step in to save her. Mal berated Jayden for her behavior, and she left in a huff.

That night, Mal woke up to discover that Grace had left on a solo mission with Dex without telling anyone. Mal asked Sonia to stay close to Benoist and pledged to protect her before leaving to follow Grace.

Mal found Grace face-to-face with the previously friendly dragon Marigold, now corrupted by Rainier's machinery. Grace asked him to save the dragon hatchling Rainier had in his skyscraper while she dealt with Marigold. Mal found both the hatchling and also Jayden, trapped in a cage. When he tried to rescue her, Jayden betrayed Mal and blasted him as a team of Nightstalkers closed in for the kill. Rainier attempted to use the captured serial killer Cole to leech Mal of his powers, but the Samusara unleashed a huge burst of magic that disabled the Nightstalkers and blew the top off of Rainier's skyscraper.

Cole and Jayden went after Mal together and tried to drain his power, but he overloaded each in turn, completely disintegrating Cole in the process. Mal destroyed an entire wave of Nightstalkers by himself, then ruthlessly attacked and killed Marigold. Horrified with his own actions, he fled the area to contemplate his life.

Mal turned up in St. Petersburg, Russia, still wandering. Muggers tried to take his jacket and he forcefully knocked them aside. Mal ended up at a bar in a mining town called Amalji, missing Sonia and lamenting his lack of control. A young bartender named Paula took him in after he closed out the bar and showed him the borithium mines. Mal started bussing tables at Paula's bar. After a normal shift, Paula saw a huge, dusky monster with dozens of arms attacking people in alleys.

A band of magical women warriors appeared in the town, led by one named Miya, determined to kill him. Miya's appearance gave Mal flashes of the life of a previous Samusara as he hid in a cave to evade his pursuers. More multi-armed monsters appeared out of the shadows and Mal had to escape the cave, but Miya was waiting for him when he emerged. Mal was shocked to see his hands had grown gray and necrotic after his encounters with the monsters.

Mal returned to the Everlands to ask for help, but had to hide when Miya appeared in the magical realm shortly thereafter. Everyone who saw her fell to their knees, calling her the Saoteria – or "savior" – as she had killed the malevolent first Samusara named Khaaz thousands of years prior.

Miya claimed that the monsters appearing around the world were manifestations of the darkness in Malikai's soul and insisted that the only way to save them all was to kill him. Hiding in secret, Mal asked if Miya could be right and Grace – one of his staunchest advocates – admitted she didn't know.

An army of Sethoru attacked Anantia, amplified by long-forgotten shadow magic. Mal felt responsible for returning magic to the formerly unified races and leapt into the battle, only to be attacked by Miya. Onyx, now leader of the Sethoru army, created an enormous dragon out of shadow magic. The only way Mal could see to defeat it was to unleash the darkness in his own soul, which made a faceless monster as large as the shadow dragon. His plan worked, but he was unable to control his creation as it turned on Anantia.

Mal dove into the heart of the monster and fought the ghosts of every previous Samusara within. Focusing all of his energy on his love for his friends, he was able to create the most powerful blast of magi-

cal energy yet, shattering the monster. When it was gone, there was no sign of Mal. Later, Grace discovered Mal in the dimension of chaos, trapped in a stone wall and depicted as being tortured by demons. With the help of the other masters, Grace managed to pull Mal back into reality.

Mal took some time to relax with his friends in Hawai'i. Pili, who had assumed her father's role as the first master of Samu Sariah on the island, had a vision that demonic forces had infected Grace when she'd saved Mal from the chaos realm. Mal, Pili, and the others embarked on a mission to track down Grace.

When they finally found Grace in New Pompeii, Italy, she was calling herself "Oris" and sat atop a throne of corpses. Grace animated the corpses and used them to attack her friends. Mal got within range of Grace and confronted her, but she set the entire building aflame in retaliation. A dragon of flames emerged as the fires grew to encompass the building.

As the city burned, Mal attacked Grace at the center of the dragon. He tried to draw her away from the civilians and his friends, but Benoist was grievously wounded in the fight and Mal was just barely able to save him. They managed to escape and left "Oris" to destroy the city.

Mal returned to Anantia and urged Faye to permit a mixture of magic and technology in order to save the dying Benoist, and she reluctantly agreed. The "cure" ran wild at first – Benoist almost hurt people with his out-of-control tech – but a blast from Mal returned him to a catatonic state. Later Mal confided in Sonia, who reminded him that magic could do harm as well as good. Luckily, Benoist emerged from his coma with newfound abilities that encouraged Mal to seek more bridges between magic and science.

Mal and his friends procured hybrid equipment that used magic as a fuel for technology, then returned to confront Grace and her four elemental dragons in New York City. Mal tried to reach out to Grace during the fight, but the spirit of Oris transformed her body into a huge winged demon.

Mal was unable to stop the dragons' attack and switched to a tactic that had worked previously: overloading Oris with a huge volume of magical energy. Mal pulled power from each of the masters and magic users nearby and fed it into Oris, causing a huge detonation that left behind a massive crater and Grace's lifeless body.

They brought Grace back to Anantia. Her soul was trapped in the chaos realm, though her body was physically fine. Mal swore to return to the chaos realm and save her as she had once saved him. While most of the masters held off the stony chaos demons, Mal entered the realm and pulled Grace's soul loose amidst a raging fight between the gods of chaos and order.

Mal, Sonia, and Grace returned to San Francisco to support PJ's newfound career as a mecha fighter. But, Mal noticed Grace's regular absences and sought her out. Grace felt a massive weight of guilt for her actions while Oris had possessed her, and Mal promised to help her heal.

When PJ and Benoist were invited to Paris for the international mecha fighting competition Pandemonium 7, Mal, Sonia, and Grace were eager to join. The trio were excited to explore the Parisian night as soon as they arrived, but soon came upon a temple run by a group called Gabriel's Voice, which claimed to seek the "light of magic." Mal was intrigued by the elderly cleric Henric and wanted to investigate.

Sonia pulled Mal away in the middle of Henric's explanations, reminding him that though he brought magic back, he was not the whole of magic himself. He wondered if being Samusara meant acting as a beacon for others and a frustrated Sonia stormed off.

The next day, Mal and Sonia visited a museum. Mal found himself captivated by a particular painting of a ship lost at sea, dwelling on the sailors: "Clinging to that fleeting sense of hope because it's all they had left. Just waiting for a sign." Sonia took the hint and together they returned to the Gabriel's Voice temple. But before Mal could speak to anyone when he arrived, an "angel" named Michael came down to the group bearing four feathered wings.

Mal questioned Michael's claim to be magical, and Sonia chided Mal for what she perceived as jealousy. Protesters amassed outside, calling the Gabriel's Voice crowd "gypsies" and demanding that they leave. Michael pulled his sword out and initiated a fight with the crowd. Mal flew out to grab protesters and protect them from harm. When policemen arrived on the scene and tried to arrest Sonia, Mal stepped in to stop them while Michael continued to swing his sword at the police. Mal tried to calm the crowd by splashing them with water, then turned the hose on Michael. When he got closer, Mal realized that the angelic wings were cybernetic enhancements and revealed the fraud. Distraught, Henric tried to strike at Michael but Mal pulled him back. Henric retreated into the temple and revealed that he was dying of cancer. Mal kept his powers secret, claiming his wings were also cybernetic enhancements much like Michael's, and left, frustrated with hurting people even when he wanted to help.

Grace later found a sullen Mal and comforted him. Mal noted that Grace's romantic involvement with newcomer Vanyss was making her happy, and accepted that he too could be happy, just not on that particular day.

Mal and his friends were cheering PJ on in the Pandemonium 7 finals when Benoist exposed ruthless engineer Abel's revenge plot. Abel unleashed a ten-headed mechadragon from the ground. Mal leapt into the air to attack the mechadragon alongside Grace and together they were able to eventually destroy it. When the battle was won, Mal and his friends boarded Benoist's plane and left the madness in Paris behind.

