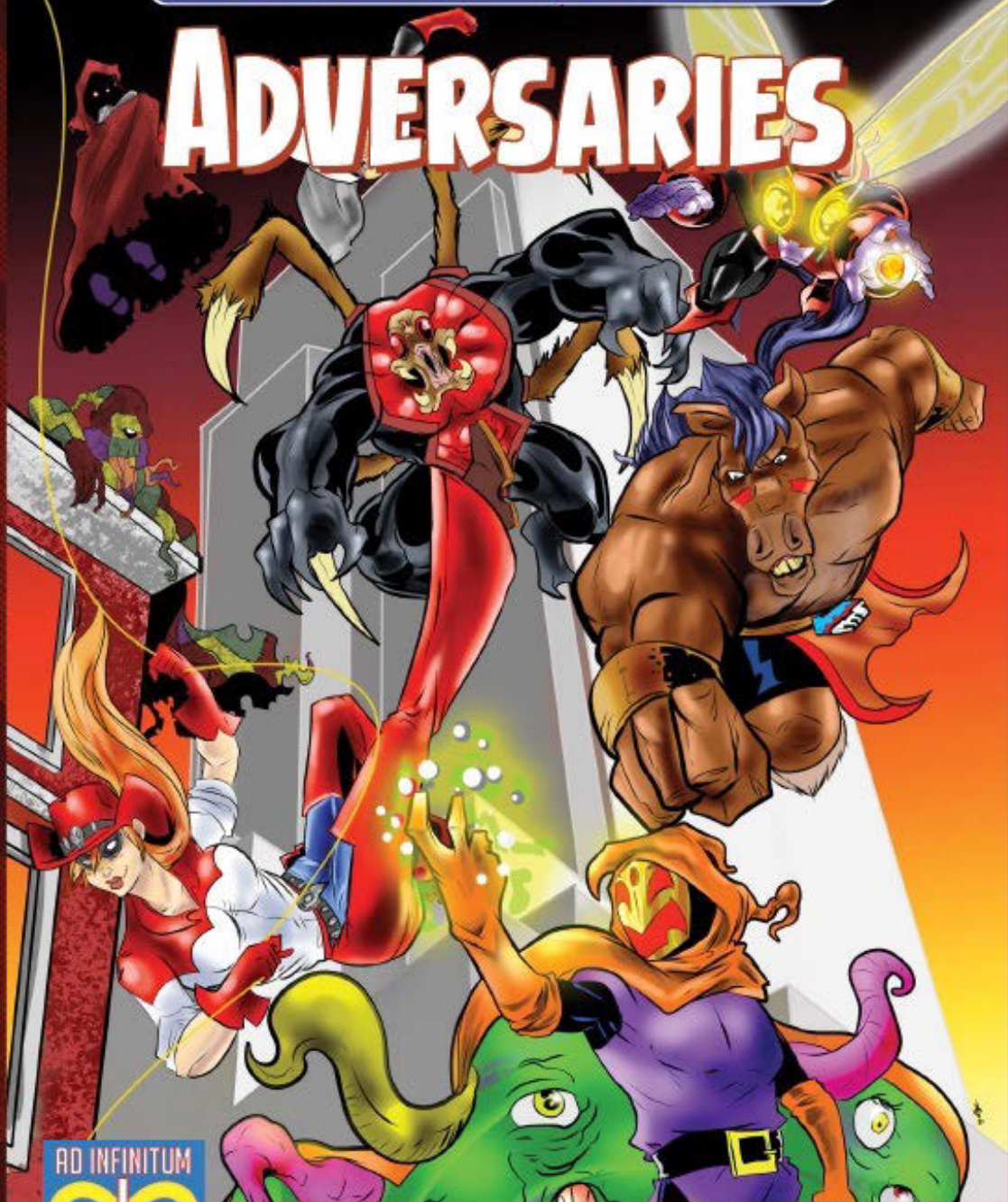


ICONS

SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING

ADVERSARIES



Kenson • Houser

ADVERSARIES

A Sourcebook for Icons
Superpowered Roleplaying



Designed by
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Illustrated by
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INTRODUCTION

Villains ... where would superheroes be without them? A good deal less busy, that's for sure! Villains are, in many ways, the driving force of superhero stories, since it is the heroes' job to protect or uphold the status quo—or at least its ideal—against the unscrupulous schemes of super-crooks and criminals and other threats to public safety. Villains are the prime-movers, the place where the adventure starts, and it's up to the heroes to see that things *don't* go as they have planned!

So you can think of **Adversaries** as a collection of adventure ideas for **Icons Superpowered Roleplaying**: dozens of villains with their own agendas, schemes, and goals for the heroes to stop. Some of them are master-planners with the power and ambition to try to take over the world (or beyond), while others pursue their own particular goals, whether vengeance, acceptance, or even redemption. Many of the villains in this book are natural henchmen and followers: Powerful, but not particularly smart or ambitious, the perfect pawns for other bad guys to send against those bothersome heroes who try to interfere with their plans. Others can be effective team-players or are already part of a partnership, and possible team-ups are suggested in the descriptions.

THE VILLAINOMICON

Some of the material in **Adversaries** is based on the prior edition **Villainomicon** sourcebook for **ICONS** from Adamant Entertainment, featuring material written by Theron Bretz, Walt Ciechanowski, Morgan Davie, and Gareth-Michael Skarka, and their creative contributions are acknowledged and much appreciated.

OTHER ICONS SOURCEBOOKS

Although all you need to use **Adversaries** is the **Icons Superpowered Roleplaying** rulebook, this book does reference some material from the **Great Power** and **Icons A to Z** sourcebooks, particularly additional power extras and limits, and some of the expanded options like cosmic ability levels and interaction specialties. In cases where some of these things are not self-explanatory, they are noted, with a reference to the appropriate sourcebook or additional information, as needed.

THE ALLIANCE OF EVIL

The Alliance of Evil is the creation of the sinister **Ultra-Mind**, both in need of “eyes” to gather information and “hands” to carry out his dirty work, and for the opportunity to bring other super-criminals under his influence and guidance.

The Ultra-Mind frames his relationship with the organization’s members as an “alliance,” but it is most definitely not an equal partnership. The Ultra-Mind uses his technological brilliance to provide the other villains with useful gadgetry and resources, as well as planning operations. In exchange, they carry out his schemes and frequently acquire whatever the Ultra-Mind needs to further his goals.

In addition to its organizer’s physical limitations, the prime purpose of the Alliance is strength-in-numbers against heroes, who have a far greater tendency to work together in teams to capture super-criminals. This reason alone has been able to keep the Alliance together, or even reform it, in the absence of the Ultra-Mind, such as occasions when he has been presumed dead. Usually, some other forceful figurehead will try and assume control of the group, with mixed amounts of success.

MEMBERSHIP

The usual parameters for membership in the Alliance are chosen by the Ultra-Mind to suit his needs, namely super-criminals who are reasonably powerful, sane, and mercenary, but lacking either the ambition or the ability to potentially usurp the Ultra-Mind’s authority. This tends to let out truly insane or obsessed villains, those strongly motivated by an agenda that cannot be redirected towards the Alliance’s purposes, or other would-be master villains. Good potential Alliance members from this book include:

Amphora, Arobas, Baron Kriminel, Beast Man, Black Flame, Blood Diamond, Bombshell, Bounder (right on the edge of “too crazy”), Chopper, Copy Cat, Count Malocchio, the Creeper, Dark Rider, Enemy Mime, Fire & Ice, Fortissimo, the Fox, Gila Master, Grudge, Hooded Cobra, Hotaru, Incognito, Lady Dread, Lasso & Buck Bronco, Matador, Merry Widow, Pulsar, Recluse, Sea Devil, Size Queen, Spartan, Speed Demon, Tarpit, Tiara, the Troll, Warbride, and Zero.

Ultra-Mind may adjust the number of members based on his needs or preferences at the time, or split the group into smaller “mission teams.”

ALTERNATE ALLIANCES

The Alliance of Evil is meant to be a “place-holder” super-villain team suitable for most **ICONS** settings, once that can be reconfigured as often as needed, with members coming and going, perhaps different every time it appears.

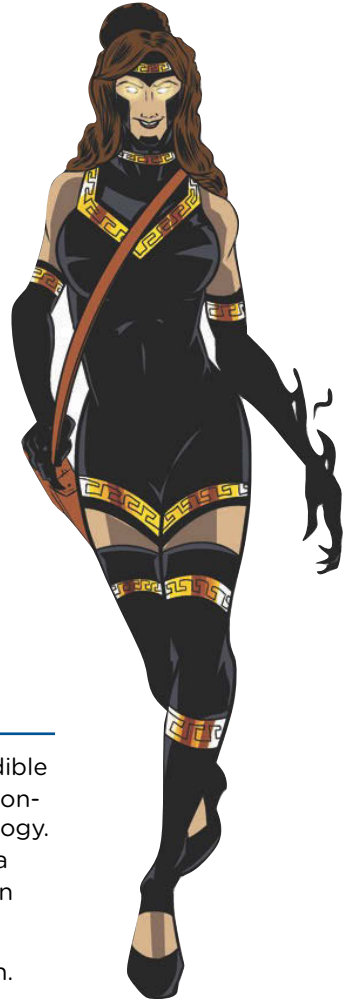
In particular, the Alliance can include any of the heroes’ own archenemies, so long as they fit Ultra-Mind’s criteria—at least close enough for the mental mastermind to arrogantly believe he can remain in charge.

You can also spin-off alternate versions of the Alliance using some of the other villains in **Adversaries**, either as an interim version of the group while Ultra-Mind is out of commission, or as separate splinter-groups. Possibilities include:

- **Corsair Queen** organizing an all-ladies “crew” of super-powered pirates, brigands, and thieves to rob the world blind.
- **Count Malocchio** managing to seize control of the Alliance from Ultra-Mind (or at least *thinking* that he has).
- **Doctor Kafka** impersonating Ultra-Mind or adopting some mysterious masked identity using a new android body to organize a team.
- **Earworm** doing much the same with a mind-controlled host body, such as one of the other villains in this book.
- **Skeletron** or **Sigma-9** creating a new Alliance made up of robot copies of known villains., possibly based on Sigma-9’s experiments with the **Emulator**.
- **The Serpent Sphinx** using mind control to gain leadership of the Alliance.
- **Rex Mundi** taking over the Alliance or forming his own rival organization.
- **Tempus Khan** forming an Alliance of Evil made up of alternate timeline villains, evil versions of some heroes, or some of the greatest criminals and villains of history.

AMPHORA

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Archeology Expert
Athletics
Stealth

QUALITIES

A Very Patient Thief
Treasure Hunter
Vessel of Feminine Power

POWERS

Mythic Channeling: Amphora has the Incredible (7) ability to channel any of the powers of non-Olympian female figures from Greek mythology. She can switch between various powers as a reaction during her panel. Her most common abilities include:

- **Amazon:** Incredible Prowess and Strength.
- **Atalanta:** Incredible Athletics specialty.
- **Circe:** An Incredible Transformation Ray able to turn men into animal forms under her control.
- **Echo:** Incredible Invisibility and vocal imitation, except Amphora must repeat everything that is said in her presence while using this power.

- **Gorgon:** An Incredible Transformation Ray that turns anyone she glares at who meets her gaze into stone (opposed Awareness test).
- **Graee:** The “Grey Sisters” grant Amphora Incredible Extrasensory Perception and Magic Detection.
- **Harpy:** Good (5) level Claws and Wings, along with a piercing shriek, an Incredible level Burst Dazzle attack.
- **Medea:** Incredible Occult specialty for brewing up magical potions. Amphora frequently makes up some of these in advance and carries them in her hand-bag, effectively giving her an Incredible mystical Gadgets power.

BACKGROUND

It has been said that an archaeologist is just a “very patient thief,” and that most certainly describes Antonia “Toni” Katsaros. Her interest in the past wasn’t about history, nor about preserving it, but about buried treasure and being the first to find and claim it. She quickly became infamous as a dig-leader and “treasure-hunter” willing to plunder ancient sites and to smuggle artifacts out of their native lands and into the hands of high-priced buyers.

Even she was surprised to discover an ancient sealed Greek amphora, containing wine as dark as ink. When an even less scrupulous male underling tried to take the priceless artifact, it was broken in the ensuing struggle. The splashing liquid poisoned the poor fellow, but filled Dr. Katsaros with a sense of untold power and knowledge, a connection to the feminine forces of ancient myth. Since then, Amphora has wielded those powers on her treasure-hunts, and preferred to work largely alone.

Heroes may encounter Amphora in a mutual hunt for ancient archeological sites and artifacts, or protecting the same from her depredations. Since it’s more the finding than the keeping, Amphora is perfectly willing to work for-hire acquiring artifacts and trinkets from around the world, items of interest to any number of buyers. Although her specialty is archeology, she has also been known to “acquire” items already in the hands of museums, universities, or private collectors. If one of the heroes has such an artifact, it may well become a target.

If the gods of Mount Olympus have an opinion about Antonia Katsaros wielding powers under their purview, they haven’t expressed it yet. There may be aspects to Amphora’s “gifts” she has not yet discovered, which could make her even more powerful, or send her to the heroes looking for help in overcoming an ancient curse, or evading the wrath of a misused mythos.

AROBAS

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Computers Expert
Investigation

QUALITIES

Anonymous Anarchist Hacker
“Arobas is everywhere!”
Leaves @ Calling Card

POWERS

Electrical Form: Arobas can transform his body into electricity with Fair (4) ability, giving him Flight and immunity to physical attacks, as well as a shocking Aura.

Interface: Arobas has the Amazing (8) power to interface with computers and electronics within visual range. He can also transmit his electrical form across electrical and communications networks like Teleportation of the same level.

BACKGROUND

The original Arobas, Robert Steven Pierre, was a student “hacktivist” whose mutant electrical powers activated from a freak lighting strike while chained to a metal fence. He established a name and identity for

himself as Arobas (the French word for the @ sign), using his powers to infiltrate and control computers and electronics ... until Arobas apparently sold him out.

Interpol got a tip from the super-hacker (along with evidence that he could bypass their computer security virtually at-will) leading them right to his location. When a team arrived, they found Pierre, slumped over a workstation of cutting-edge computer hardware. He has remained in a persistent vegetative state ever since, with no signs of higher brain functions, or any indication he will ever recover.

Then, Arobas struck again, stealing and posting all of the confidential files on Robert Steven Pierre online. Initially, the authorities suspected a virus or sophisticated program, but the masked hacker has been seen in person meeting with known criminals, and remains a menace to the online world. Someone—or something—has taken over the Arobas identity and *modus operandi*.

This Arobas has never been seen unmasked. He speaks fluent French and English with a slight French accent but, other than that and his anarchist politics, there are no indications of his true identity or origins. This is left for the Game Master to determine as best suits the series. Some possibilities include that this Arobas is Pierre's conscious or subconscious mind, transformed into a "digital" being able to assume corporeal form; an AI program (perhaps created by Pierre) that incapacitated its creator and assumed his identity; an alien or extra-dimensional being, like an electrical life-form, that stole Arobas' identity and motif; even a mystic anarchist or "hacktivist" spirit.

Tactically, Arobas is an infiltrator, not a fighter. Arobas often leaves a calling card—a giant "@"—on the displays of devices he's infected, or even electrically burned into a wall or floor. Arobas has some support online amongst criminal and anarchist hacktivists.

Arobas works well with other criminals, especially those attacking governmental or corporate institutions. His role is usually to gather information and overcome security so other villains can better accomplish their crimes. He usually affects a mercenary approach, but his "asking price" can be anything from an exorbitant fee transmitted electronically to an offshore account to an unspecified future favor, and he's been known to do "pro bono" work for people and causes he likes.

AUNTIE SOCIAL

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Acting
Guns Expert
Psychology Master

QUALITIES

Children Need Discipline!
Dear Aunt Sorcha
“Let’s see what you keep secret...”

POWERS

Blaster: Auntie Social totes a blaster rifle (or sometimes a more demure blaster pistol) able to do Good (5) blasting damage.

BACKGROUND

Ms. Socha Prath’s Overton Academy is one of the most prestigious private preparatory schools in the world. The brilliant Ms. Prath has run the school for as long as anyone can recall with a combination of efficiency and grace, and she turns out well-rounded, well-mannered students who go on to do great things. So it would indeed come as a shock to discover the Overton Academy is merely a blind, and the proper public persona of Ms. Socha Prath conceals one of the most devious criminal masterminds known.

In fact, the “Overturn Academy” (as it is called behind the scenes) is a means for Ms. Prath—or “Auntie Social” as her true students call her—to brainwash young minds, unleashing their darkest impulses and enslaving them to do her bidding. The real truth about Auntie Social depends on the type of game you’re running: she could be an alien (preparing for an invasion, perhaps), a demon, a robot, a sorceress, an immortal, or just what she appears: a vicious old woman with a keen and cunning mind.

Her sprawling Gothic style academy, located in the countryside, conceals a secret sub-basement where brainwashings are carried out and students undergo “special” training to allow them to carry out their missions for their dear Auntie Social. As headmistress, Ms. Prath plays the role of kindly matron to the hilt, up to and including offering guests tea, cookies, and various treats (any of which may contain potions, poisons, or drugs). She carries a blaster pistol in her beaded purse, which she’s quite capable of using, and she’s remarkably spry when there is a need.

Auntie Social’s schemes tend to involve Emotion Control and Mind Control techniques using her Amazing mastery of Psychology, coupled with various gadgets and serums. For example, she may influence her students to steal information or valuable from their influential and wealthy families without their knowledge, possibly including state secrets. Similarly, she might include brainwashing subliminals in online “tutoring” programs or turn her “kiddies” into part-time criminals for hire.

Auntie Social’s influence isn’t necessary limited to children, either. For example, the heroes might experience strange wish-fulfillment dreams of carrying out anti-social behavior: wrecking the car of somebody who cut them off in traffic, for example, or roughing up some criminal scum the law can’t touch. They are shocked and concerned when they discover the incidents they dreamed about appear to have actually happened! While the authorities are willing to give known and trusted heroes the benefit of the doubt, things don’t look good. What’s worse, whenever the heroes fall asleep, the “dark side” of their personality seems to take hold, causing them to act out repressed desires or impulses. The strange behavior is the result of a new brainwashing device of Auntie Social’s, keyed to particular subject’s brainwaves (perhaps previously scanned during a visit to her Academy). The heroes have to track down the device and put a stop to it before they fall under her evil influence permanently!

BARON KRIMINEL

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Athletics
Investigation
Occult

QUALITIES

Chosen of the Lwa of Vengeance
Comes and Goes Like the Night
“Fear the wrath of the Most Dread!”

POWERS

Magic: Baron Kriminel wields magical power as the chosen vessel of the lwa (Voodoo spirit) of the same name, giving him Great (6) magical abilities.

He has Mastery of Blast, Damage Resistance, Invisibility, and Servant powers, and frequently casts Illusions as well. His spells are often accompanied by ghostly flames or phantom images.

Baron Kriminel uses his Servant spell to imbue inanimate objects with pseudo-life, allowing them to move and attack at his command, and also to raise zombies from the bodies of the dead (see the **Zombie** stock character in **ICONS**).

BACKGROUND

Marcus Valmont was chosen: taken out of desperate poverty and given a place at the side of the previous Baron Kriminel, a powerful crime lord and sorcerer, with the potential to succeed him one day. Marcus was also chosen by Jenna Danson, the current Black Flame, and became her lover. When Jenna learned Marcus's mentor was responsible for the death of her parents, she convinced him they could eliminate the old man and rule the gang together, and Marcus agreed.

He betrayed the old Baron, led him right into Black Flame's fiery vengeance, but the old man only laughed as he burned. "I knew I could count on you" were his last words, but whether to Marcus, Jenna, or both of them, no one knows. Nonetheless, that night Marcus Valmont inherited the power of Baron Kriminel, becoming the chosen vessel for the Lwa of Vengeance. After all, hadn't he been instrumental in fulfilling Jenna's revenge?

Ever since, the new Baron Kriminel has been Black Flame's "left-hand man" when it comes to running the gang and keeping people in line. Fear of his voodoo is nearly as great as fear of Black Flame's fiery temper, and Marcus finally has a measure of the respect he feels that he always deserved.

Still, it isn't enough. Baron Kriminel nightly chafes beneath the leadership of Black Flame. He tries to think of their arrangement as a partnership, but she reminds him occasionally—and quite pointedly—that she is ultimately the one in charge. Members of the gang know it, and talk about it behind his back when they think no one is listening, but the Baron hears, and he doesn't like it.

Is it the old Baron's curse, festering in his mind and heart? The power of the Lwa of Vengeance, or was Marcus Valmont always power-hungry, never likely to be satisfied with playing second-fiddle to anyone? Whatever the case, it's just a matter of time before Baron Kriminel looks to exert his influence and take what he feels is his rightful due. Black Flame can either get on-board with that or...well, business is business.

Baron Kriminel is also only just becoming aware of the full extent of the mystical world. Although he wields power, he has learned there are other magicians out there. The mysterious Rumor is one, although she seems content to play go-between and information broker and not get in anyone's way. The Baron has also heard whispers about the figure known only as the Warlock and his legendary powers. The promise and potential of magical secrets unknown to him draws Marcus's attention like a moth to a flame, even if there is a possibility he might get burned.

BEAST MAN

PROWESS	AMAZING	8
COORDINATION	GREAT	6
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Athletics Expert
Survival Expert
Zoology Expert

QUALITIES

Consummate Hunter
Dark Pact with Ancient Forces
Savage Noble

POWERS

Animal Mimicry: Beast Man has the Incredible (7) power to take on the abilities of any animal he sees.

His favorites (practiced over time, and now achievable even without the creatures nearby) are the lion (claws and bite, slashing damage 4), the eagle (claws, slashing damage 3, Flight 3, Enhanced Sight), the python (bite, slashing damage 3, Wrestling expert) and the bat (Flight 2, Sonar Sense).

In addition, he has the extrasensory ability to see through the eyes of his trained animal companions and is often accompanied by a trained hunting falcon.

BACKGROUND

A consummate hunter, Lord Sebastian Carstairs sought every means to better his craft. This obsession led him to the hut of an African witch-doctor, who gave Carstairs the edge that he sought, by making a dark pact with ancient forces, Lord Sebastian was infused with the feral power of nature itself, but at the price of Carstairs' soul.

After acquiring his powers, Carstairs discovered there was no challenge left in hunting animals. His mind, warped by his pact, began to look for more challenging prey. So he began to hunt people—and from there, moved on to hunting superhumans.

Dubbed “Beast Man” by the press, he now travels the globe, selecting the superhumans that he considers to be the greatest challenge, and hunting them. He is a relentless and clever hunter, but has begun to lose control, under the influence of his increasingly savage nature. He is capable of mindless rages, often at odds with his cunning plans.

Beast Man has no regard for the law or good and evil, as likely to hunt criminals as he is heroes. Someone might begin taking out villains, with the heroes investigation leading them to Beast Man and giving him new prey to hunt in the process.

If Beast-Man is hunting heroes on their own turf, he may try to trap them and bring them to his private island wilderness preserve and hunt them down at his leisure. The island is filled with all manner of wild beasts, including dinosaurs—Carstairs had considered them to be the pinnacle of all prey, until he switched his attention to superhumans. The heroes have to survive the perils of the island, and avoid becoming the newest Trophies of the Beast-Man with matters are further complicated by the presence of several captive supervillains on the island as well. Do the heroes team up with their foes in order to survive the deadly traps of Beast Man's Island, or do they try to go it alone? What happens when their newfound “allies” sell them out for their own survival?

Beast-Man may decide he has exhausted the “game” potential of the Earth, and use his vast fortune and resources to contact extraterrestrial intelligences or extra-dimensional beings and bring them here. What do the heroes do when his efforts attract the attention of a race of Intergalactic conquerors, or world-devouring ancient evil?

BLACK FLAME

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	GREAT	6
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6

SPECIALTIES

Athletics
Stealth

QUALITIES

“Can’t take the heat, baby?”
Gotta Score to Settle
Tarnished Legacy

POWERS

Fire Control: Black Flame has the Great (6) ability to generate and control fire, including projecting Blasts of flame, Flight, a protective Force Field of fiery energy, and seeing into the infrared spectrum (Infravision).

BACKGROUND

The original Black Flame was a popular “urban” superhero in the 1970s. Like many minority heroes of the period—including Black Ice (a thematic partner/love interest for a while), the Barrio Brawler, and the Chinese Dragon—Black Flame chose a name that would make her an identifiable role model. Black Flame primarily operated in the inner city, an area often neglected by more “mainstream” heroes. While her



powers were formidable, the Black Flame often fought low-powered criminal threats such as gangs, pimps, crime lords, and drug dealers.

The Black Flame faded from the scene in the 1980s in order to settle down and start a family. In her secret identity, Donna Danson married a young lawyer and had a child, Jenna. Unfortunately, Donna's husband was killed when he attempted to prosecute some gangsters. Black Flame came out of retirement for vengeance, only to discover that she had brain cancer and it was eating away at her ability to control her powers. She'd cornered the thugs responsible for her husband's death and flamed them, only to start a blaze that consumed four city blocks, killing four people and injuring many more. In order to protect Jenna, Donna did not come forward when calls were made for the Black Flame to stand trial and was never seen again.

By the turn of the millennium, Donna's money had almost run out. Jenna, too young to recall the good times, grew up in poverty. In an effort to keep a low profile, Donna had not availed herself of any of the government programs available and took one low-paying job after the next to keep food on the table and a roof over their heads. When Jenna first manifested her powers as a young teen, Donna made her swear not to use them except to heat the house, cook food, or otherwise help provide necessities they could no longer afford.

Jenna was angered at the public's treatment of her mother after so many years of helping others, but she kept her promise. She kept a low profile and ended up waitressing instead of going to college. Unfortunately, Donna's cancer finally consumed her and after her death Jenna felt no compulsion to keep her promise. Donning her mother's old costume, the new Black Flame would take revenge on the city that turned its back on her mother.

Jenna has taken great pains to make the world believe she is the same Black Flame from the old days. She wears her mother's old costume. While she has shorter hair (the afro wig was too difficult to manage), the new Black Flame speaks in the clichéd jive language that Jenna learned from blaxploitation films. She works with the current Baron Kriminel (whose predecessor was an old foe of her mother's). When Jenna learned that a curse from the previous Baron caused her mother's cancer and he was behind the gang that murdered her father, she brought his career to swift and fiery end and seized control of his gang. Now his successor is her lieutenant, and she's happy to remind him—and anyone else in her organization—about the price of angering her.

BLOOD DIAMOND

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AMAZING	8
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Guns
Military

QUALITIES

Cold and Unfeeling as Stone
Hardened Mercenary
Marked by Blood

POWERS

Body of Diamond: Blood Diamond's body is made of mystically animated red diamond, giving him Supreme (10) Damage Resistance and Total Life Support, near immunity to physical harm.

BACKGROUND

Johannes Bekker went from a young South African street tough with a few run-ins with the law to a security guard for a mining company with few qualms about their personnel's history. He squandered what pay he earned, and racked up reprimands for getting into fights, although he managed to stay out of prison. Bekker was a small man looking for his big break, and he found it.

The diamond was the largest ever found in a South African mine, larger than Bekker's fist, and the man who found it enlisted his help in smuggling it out of the mine and into the hands of the right buyer, because he knew Bekker could be bought. Unfortunately, he sorely underestimated the corrupt guard's greed and callousness.

For his part, Bekker underestimated the power of fate. He crushed the miners skull with his own treasure and, as blood covered the surface of the stone, it changed—and Johannes Bekker changed with it. The diamond seemed to melt into his hands, flowing into his body, and transforming him from flesh and blood into a figure of "living diamond" tinted blood red as a sign of what he had done. Bekker went more than a bit mad and tore his way out of the mine compound that night—no guard, gun, or barrier was able to stop him.

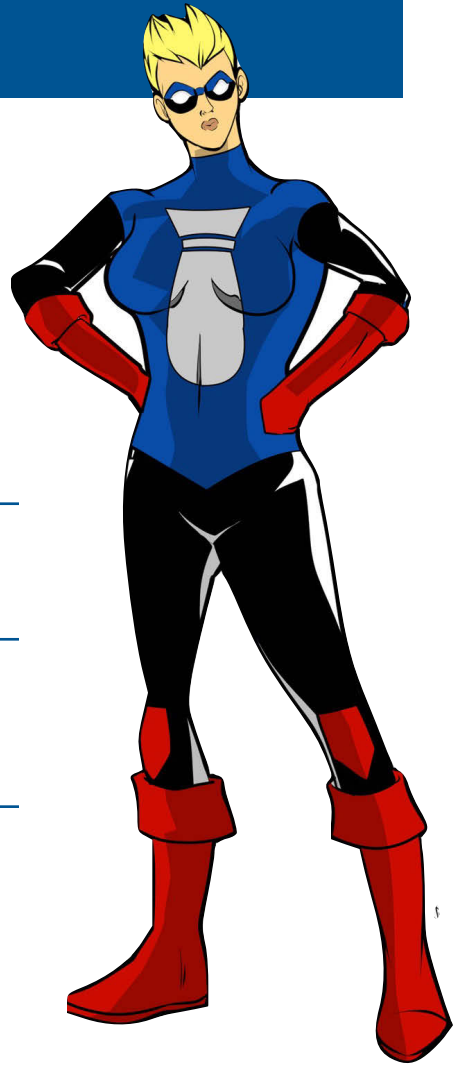
Eventually, he regained at least some of his grip on sanity, and realized that he possessed tremendous advantages: amazing strength and near invulnerability, divorced from any human weakness. Unfortunately, he was also denied all of the human pleasures of having a body able to feel, to eat, drink, sleep...Bekker, or "Blood Diamond" as he became known, chose to hire out his abilities as a super-powered mercenary with an eye towards finding some way to reclaim what he has lost. Most of his considerable fees go into hidden and offshore accounts, funneled towards his personal quest to find a way to revert to his human form.

Ideally, Blood Diamond wants the power to assume human form at will, while still being able to transform back into his powerful diamond body, as he has become quite attached to power, invulnerability, and nigh-immortality as his only pleasures in life. Still, if giving up his powers permanently is the only way for him to experience all of the other pleasures life has to offer, he'll take it in an instant. After all, what is the point of a fortune when you can't enjoy it?

Heroes are most likely to encounter Blood Diamond working as hired muscle for any number of clients, although he's known to commit the occasional crime on his own. They may also cross paths with the super-mercenary on his quest to gain control over his transformation or finally rid himself of it, and he'll want to be certain he's set up for life in a non-extradition country when that happens, since Blood Diamond has made quite a few enemies looking forward to the day when he's no longer quite so invulnerable.

BOMBSHELL

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	POOR	2
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Military
Wrestling Expert

QUALITIES

Explosive Temper
Stunning
Tougher Than Any Man

POWERS

Absorption: Bombshell has Supreme (10) Absorption of both physical and energy damage, soaking up damage from virtually any source. Once she accumulates 10 levels of damage, she explodes, inflicting that amount of bashing damage to everyone within close range.

She can choose to explode before that point, doing whatever level of damage she has accumulated, but once she hits the “point of no return” she’ll go off regardless. The same is true if the Bombshell is KO’ed; she explodes with whatever energy she has remaining, making it a potentially dangerous proposition to take her out of a fight.

Bombshell disappears in the explosion, seemingly vaporized, but reforms on the following page. She has refined her control over the

reconstitution process enough to reappear anywhere within extended range of where she exploded, and has used this ability to her advantage at times.

BACKGROUND

Leah LeBraun always struggled with what men thought of her. First it was her tomboyish ways as a girl. Later it was her looks and her figure, combined with an aggressive nature. It earned LeBraun nothing but trouble when she enlisted in the military. Her violent responses to taunts, jibes, and innuendo got her cited for insubordination, and eventually drummed out of the service.

Leah got some respect when she stepped into the world of professional wrestling, where “Amazon” LeBraun became a local star. She wowed crowds and opponents not only with her looks, but with her skills, her strength, and her fierce attitude. Still, she was a woman in a man’s world, and eventually discovered that even her manager considered her a “novelty act.” She wasn’t a champion: she was a sideshow.

So Leah engineered the robbery of the arena’s receipts the night she won her latest bout. She went on to become muscle for hire in the criminal underworld, until the fateful night when she helped to heist an unstable chemical undergoing testing. Once again, her temper got the better of her, and her criminal compatriots assumed no one could have survived the ensuing explosion.

But Leah did survive. What’s more, the chemical changed her, gave her the power to soak up energy from punches, impacts, explosions, virtually everything. It built and built inside of her until she would explode! But she always reformed in the aftermath, completely unharmed. The same couldn’t be said of her opponents, and Leah LeBraun decided to use her newfound power to make her mark as a criminal-for-hire. The papers tagged her as a “Blonde Bombshell” and Bombshell she has been ever since.

Bombshell is primarily a mercenary or a petty criminal, lacking the intellect or ambition for much planning of her own. She’s also got a competitive streak, and is likely to seize opportunities to prove her fighting skills in things like gladiatorial games or underground fighting rings.

BOUNDER

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6

SPECIALTIES

Athletics
Taunting

QUALITIES

Always Bounces Back
“Now you see me. Now you don’t!”
Out of His Head

POWERS

Recovery: Bounder has an unusual form of rapid recovery: Whenever he “bounds” (teleports) his body is broken down and re-created, restoring all lost Stamina. If he is ever incapacitated or killed, he reflexively bounds and recovers, effectively giving Bounder Supreme (10) Regeneration and Immortality.

Teleportation: Bounder has an Amazing (8) Teleportation ability, involving the quantum deconstruction and recreation of his physical form. He can carry up to one other person with him when he teleports, so long as they are in physical contact. The passenger doesn’t get the benefit of Bounder’s Recovery—instead, they suffer an Amazing (8) level Stunning effect against their Willpower.



BACKGROUND

Martin Bryson was smart, all you had to do was spend about 10 minutes in his presence to learn that, since odds were good he would tell you. Of course, most people didn't care to spend that long around Martin in general, particularly since he was also opinionated and had a need to be right. It was the latter that got Martin where he is now.

As a grad student and doctoral candidate, Martin worked on a research project in his native England involving the quantum transmission of matter. Although there were some promising initial results, the project faced a series of setbacks and delays and couldn't produce anything practically useful. Mr. Bryson insisted he could figure out a way to make it work, believing consciousness—a directing mind—was the key element.

To prove he was right, Martin Bryson violated all of the lab's safety protocols for a daring experiment: teleporting himself across the room. He even recorded it for posterity, which is how his superiors and colleagues found out what happened to him. When Bryson triggered the experiment, he disappeared, but seemingly did not return.

Although he was presumed disintegrated, what actually happened was Martin Bryson teleported miles away, much further than he had intended, where he was immediately hit by a truck! He was killed on impact, but somehow instinctively or automatically teleported again, the process restoring his body to its previous condition—except that he ended up deep under water and drowned.

It “took some time” according his scrambled recollections, but Bryson eventually “bounded” someplace where he was relatively safe. The problem was, by then, his sanity was scrambled. Perhaps the quantum process or the trauma affected his brain but, whatever the case, Martin Bryson gave way to “that Bounder,” as one of his superiors had called him. Martin was a dull, lifeless drone who knew nothing about experiencing new things. The Bounder, on the other hand, was going to have some *fun!*

Ever since, the madcap villain has shown up in cities and places around the world. He's a fantastic thief, given his abilities, and sometimes uses them to steal things. Other times he likes to play practical jokes intended to deflate the kinds of egos he once had to deal with in academia and research. Most of the time Bounder just wants to have some fun, even if he doesn't understand at all the notion that not everyone can “bounce back” from his kind of antics the way that he does.

CHOPPER

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	POOR	2
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Blades
Motorcycle Expert

QUALITIES

Boss of the Road Warriors
Cuts Through Trouble
“Gonna ride ‘til I die.”

POWERS

Chainsaw Hand: Chopper’s hand has been replaced with a cybernetically controlled mini chainsaw, capable of Good (5) slashing damage in close combat.

Motorcycle: Chopper rides a modified motorcycle he can control with one hand, with Handling 7, Speed 4, Structure 4. His bike is equipped with single-use mini-rockets for Great (6) shooting damage and caltrop dispensers that cause a difficulty 6 Handling test for ground vehicles to avoid losing control.

BACKGROUND

The man known as Chopper (nobody calls him by his given name of Frank Ramos any more), has known only two great passions in his life. The first is riding free on the open road on his motorcycle, and the other

is kicking ass and taking names. Small wonder that Chopper joined up with a “bike club” called the Road Warriors and quickly rose to become its “president,” leading its members into all kinds of mayhem and leaving a trail of broken bodies behind them.

It could have been the end of Chopper’s criminal career when he got his hand blown off during a botched-up robbery, but a guy like Chopper doesn’t just give up and die easily. He not only managed to survive and get patched up, but arranged with some of the gang’s underworld contacts to get a himself a mini-chainsaw blade attached to his arm, enabling him to really “cut through trouble” when it came his way. He found out who in the Road Warriors had sold them out and messed up the job, and cut him off at the knees, literally, as an example to the others.

Since then, Chopper has led the Road Warriors to take on targets from simple smash-and-grabs to knocking over armored cars. Sometimes he chooses the next target, but the gang also hires out as mercenary muscle for anyone willing to pay or cut them in on a substantial portion of the proceeds. Chopper likes to tell such clients the story of how he got his novel new “hand” and how he used it to deal with those who betray him. Thus far, no one has tried to use the Road Warriors as cannon fodder.

ROAD WARRIOR

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
4	4	4	2	3	3	7

Specialties: Blades, Bludgeons, Motorcycle

Powers: The Road Warriors ride heavy bikes with abilities like Chopper’s.

Qualities: “Gonna ride ‘til I die,” Loyal to Chopper

The members of the Road Warriors biker club are all hardened criminals who consider themselves modern-day Vikings: raiding “soft” targets at the orders of their boss, and then celebrating for as long as they can on the spoils. They’re loyal to Chopper, largely because they know full well what happens to those who betray him, and because their boss ensures they’ve got a steady stream of targets and loot.

CONFEDER-APE

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	GREAT	6
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Athletics Expert
Civil War Expert
Military

QUALITIES

"The Apes Shall Rise Again!"
Rebel Primate
Southern Gentleman

POWERS

Ape Command: Confeder-Ape has Great (6) Mind Control, limited to other apes and monkeys.

Ape Senses: Confeder-Ape has Great Super-Senses, including Enhanced Vision, Hearing, and sense of Smell.

Leaping: Like the great apes, Confeder-Ape has Fair (4) Leaping ability and is an excellent climber (with his Amazing Athletics).

Prehensile Feet: Confeder-Ape's feet are usable as hands and his enhanced coordination gives him an Average (3) Fast Attack ability.

BACKGROUND

Behavioral scientist and avid Civil War re-enactor Dr. Dwight Givens was experimenting with methods of communication between humans and primates. He had built a device to sync the brain-patterns of users from

two different species, but something went wrong. Givens' intellect, along with his obsession for Civil War history and re-enactments, were transferred to a great gorilla, leaving Dr. Givens comatose for months. To the newly intelligent "Confeder-Ape," the "Lost Cause" of the Confederate South became synonymous with the overthrow of human domination of primates. The apes would rise, and he would lead them to victory!

Confeder-Ape (or "The Colonel" as he prefers to be known) quickly discovered the ability to "sync" his own brain-waves with those of other primates, transmitting his marching orders directly into their minds. With the other experimental apes and monkeys at his command, he easily escaped the lab to being plotting the overthrow of humanity. He looted Dr. Givens' locker, including pieces of his Civil War uniform, to ensure he was "properly prepared" for his calling.

Heroes usually encounter Confeder-Ape in one of his various schemes to gather a simian army or create an independent "Ape Nation" that will secede from the rest of the world and establish its sovereignty. A fairly brilliant, if inhuman, mind, "the Colonel" has sought means of elevating other apes to his level using Dr. Givens' technology (largely unsuccessful, thus far), as well as enhancing or improving his own abilities, particularly looking to expand his mind control powers to other animals, or even humans.

Even Confeder-Ape's successes have led to setbacks: He managed to create a "Primate Private" in the form of Monkey Business, but the gestalt hive-mind of the psychic monkey swarm was able to shake off Confeder-Ape's mental influence, and the experience of being controlled created a definite rift between the two. Confeder-Ape considers Monkey Business a "traitor to the cause" of Simian Secession, while Monkey Business wants nothing to do with her former "commander" unless it is to find some way to put her selves in charge.

COPY CAT

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Athletics Expert
Martial Arts Expert
Sleight of Hand
Stealth

QUALITIES

“Anything you can do, I can do better.”
Former Spy
“This cat won’t be caged.”

POWERS

Skill Mimicry: Copy Cat has the Great (6) ability to copy the physical specialties of anyone she sees.

Essentially, she is a Master of all specialties relating to Prowess, Coordination, and Strength—or can quickly Master a specialty after seeing a Master perform it.

The specialties listed above are Kat’s own abilities, without the use of her power, and are not additive; her Skill Mimicry substitutes for them most of the time. Her power allows Copy Cat to perform ability stunts with virtually any physical specialty.

BACKGROUND

Katarina Kalinnikov was the most promising decathlete and gymnast Russia had produced in a generation or more. She won a record number of gold medals at the Olympics, along with the hearts of people around the world. Unfortunately, she also won the attention of certain factions of Russian Intelligence, who suspected Katarina's talent was more than it appeared.

Using techniques from the old Soviet Science Cities that investigated superhuman potential, they proved it: Katarina was not merely a gifted athlete, but a mutant with the ability to modify her own “muscle memory” based on observed actions. In short, she could see someone do something once, then duplicate it perfectly. Her body adapted quickly to any new demands placed on it, giving her an unmatched level of physical fitness and coordination. Threatened with public exposure as a cheat and the loss of her accolades, Kat had no choice but to do as her new “patrons” wanted. She became a spy and operative for them.

Her new handlers underestimated “Copy Cat” and she eventually turned the tables on them. The men with influence over her got caught in the crossfire of international intrigue while she spirited away. Still, Katarina now had a taste for the dangerous life they forced her into, but she would live it on her own terms. Copy Cat became a freelance spy and espionage agent—and occasional thief—selling her considerable skills (technically other people's considerable skills) to the highest bidder.

In truth, Katarina longs for the days when she could convince herself that she was just an amazingly talented star athlete achieving things through her own efforts. She feels deep down that her “talent” is a cheat, but so long as she is forced to take unfair advantage (since her power is largely unconscious and she can't help but use it), she figures she may as well benefit from it and ensure that no one else ever tries to control her.

THE CORSAIR QUEEN

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

SPECIALTIES

Blades
Leadership
Sailing Expert

QUALITIES

Fiery Tempered Pirate Queen
Harbinger of the New Sun
Mistress of the Flying Cutlass

POWERS

Energized Sword: Corsair Queen wields a cutlass filled with crackling energy. It inflicts Good (5) slashing damage in close combat and can fire Blasts of energy for shooting damage out to extended range.

The Flying Cutlass: Corsair Queen commands a flying pirate ship with Poor (2) Handling, Good (5) Speed and Structure, equipped with cannons able to fire Great (6) Blasts of energy for shooting damage to extended range. The *Flying Cutlass* has a crew of pirate henchmen at their captain's command.



BACKGROUND

One of the most infamous pirates of the 17th Century had a short, but colorful career. Maggie O'Dare was known as "The Corsair Queen" in her time on the high seas. She went from the young widow of a murdered Scottish laird to captain of the *Flying Cutlass*, one of the most dangerous vessels to ply the seas of the New World. Substantial bounties were placed on her head, but no one ever collected them. Instead, after a number of daring raids, the *Flying Cutlass* and its crew vanished, lost during a storm at sea and never seen again.

In truth, the *Cutlass*, its mistress and crew encountered a treasure ship bound for Europe carrying goods taken from the Americas. One of these was accidentally awakened when Captain O'Dare was flung into it by a foe, three drops of her blood falling upon the ancient Aztec gold. The storm that followed the taking of the treasure ship was laced with greenish lightning, which struck the main mast and leapt to the Corsair Queen's sword. The storm catapulted the pirate vessel and its crew centuries through time.

The *Flying Cutlass* reappeared in the area now known as the Bermuda Triangle, but the Corsair Queen's vessel now possesses the power of flight with her at the wheel. Her blade and the ship's guns crackle with lightning they can shoot farther and more accurately than any cannonball. The mysterious fog-bound isle her crew has named Corsair's Cove provides them a safe haven and a place to conceal their loot.

Captain O'Dare knows of no way to return whence they came, but she intends to turn this twist of fate into good fortune for her and her crew. Cruise ships and yachts are now popular targets for the *Flying Cutlass*, since O'Dare understands jewels and coin are still valuable. She eventually figures out about other trade goods, making freighters potential targets as well.

The ancient golden Aztec sun disc whose magic catapulted the *Cutlass* through time and empowered the ship and its captain has a particular purpose: the gathering of mystic power through blood sacrifice, intended to bring on the next Aztec Sun, or age, which will involve the destruction of the world through fire! The artifact is gathering power from the Corsair Queen's raids and battles, and eventually it will have accumulated enough to begin unleashing global catastrophes intended to bring about the New Sun, unless the heroes can find a way to stop it.

COUNT MALOCCHIO

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Leadership
Occult
Power Expert (Evil Eye)

QUALITIES

Infamous Old-World Legacy
Master of the Evil Eye
Ruthless and Cunning Schemer

POWERS

The Evil Eye: The mystic pendant Count Malocchio wears projects a crimson light from its depths at his command, granting him Incredible (7) Light Control powers, including the Blast, Flight, Force Field, and Telekinesis extras, in addition to a light beam Dazzle attack.

BACKGROUND

Count Bernino Malocchio is the thirteenth of an infamous line. His predecessors were part of the cutthroat politics of the medieval Italian city-states in the era of the Medicis and Machiavelli, and his grandfather was a fascist collaborator and Axis agent, who used the hypnotic powers of the talisman known as the Evil Eye to do their dirty work. The eleventh Count Malocchio met his end in a rockslide in the Alps, but his infamy did not perish with him.

Bernino grew up the spoiled and vicious heir to a fading criminal empire. His father, obsessed with the glories of the past but unable to adapt to the changing world of the present, was a mere shadow of the family legacy. Even as a child, Bernino was more clever and saw more clearly the ways to increase the family fortunes, but his father ignored him, and brutalized anyone who dared to challenge him.

Bernino knew he needed an edge if he was to become the new Count Malocchio and prevent his father from squandering his inheritance, so he sought out his grandfather's final resting place, daring the treacherous peaks and valleys of the Alps. There he unearthed the legendary Evil Eye, and claimed its power for his own. Sacrificing a childhood mentor to seal a blood pact, he unlocked even greater power than previous possessors of the Eye imagined. It was not long thereafter that the twelfth Count Malocchio suffered a fatal "accident" and his son assumed the mantle of leadership.

Count Malocchio initially arranges a meeting of various international criminal cartels in order to declare himself "boss of bosses" and seize control of many of their operations. Naturally, such a meeting of infamous criminal influence does not go unnoticed by the authorities, who look for an opportunity to make arrests and pin criminal charges on the gang-leaders. Malocchio might even covertly cooperate with the heroes to set up his rivals, allowing him the opportunity to move-in and take over their territories.

Given an endless thirst for power by his first taste from the Evil Eye, Count Malocchio also searches for means to enhance the Eye's power. He may uncover ancient sorcery in the catacombs of Rome or sunk amidst the canals of Venice, or use mad science to draw more power into the talisman (or from the talisman into his own body). Such experiments could give the Count improved power levels or additional things he can do with the crackling red energies of the Eye, ranging from hypnotic Mind Control like his predecessor to Ability Increase levels or the power to warp space and time itself.

Malocchio's resources and appreciation of modern ways of doing things make him a good patron for other villains. He can hire or fund mercenary criminals working for his organization and may also bankroll projects to invest ordinary henchmen with powers. Even if the process is flawed (potentially deadly, for example) there's no reason the Count's pawns need to know that and they can still be useful to him and his organization before they expire.

THE CREEPER

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GREAT	6
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Plant Control

QUALITIES

The Green World Endures
Grown Beyond Who He Was
Smarter Than You Think

POWERS

Plant Control: The Creeper has Incredible (7) power over plant-life, including the extras of Binding and Burst, affecting all of the plants in close range of an area within extended range. He also frequently performs various Plant Control stunts; award the players Determination Points when these come up during play.

BACKGROUND

Carl Wessler was nobody. The kind of guy everyone overlooked and never really noticed. He did janitorial and groundskeeping work at the Botanical Gardens, where scientists from the University were working on a variety of new fertilizers and fast-growth formulas.

Carl wasn't supposed to sample the fruits and vegetables of the botanists' labors, but they looked so good, and what was the harm? It seemed a shame to waste them. It wasn't long before they discovered what he had been doing. The Gardens were prepared to fire him, and Carl got angry, very angry. When he got mad, the plants listened, and responded. They grew, spilling out of their beds and creeping along the ground at Carl's command! He left the review board trussed up in vines and left menial work—and Carl Wessler—behind forever. He was no longer ordinary nobody Carl, he was...the Creeper!

The experimental enzymes also enhanced portions of the Creeper's brain, although he maintains that he was always smarter than most people thought. He used his newfound powers to commit robberies and acquire some fast cash and resources, for further study of his abilities and their potential. Unfortunately, although he has learned how to control and develop his powers, the Creeper doesn't really have a knack for learning much about botany or the science behind them.

The Creeper can be an underestimated B-list villain, primarily committing robberies to maintain his criminal lifestyle, or occasionally working in concert with other super-criminals as part of a team. Other times, ambition and good fortune allow him the opportunity to make a run for the big leagues, using means to greatly enhance or expand his powers, from mad science experiments to forbidden mystical secrets. The Creeper can raise armies of "plant soldiers" for a dreadful harvest that can seize control of a city or even nation, cover a city in jungle foliage under his command, or even take control of the entire plant biosphere of Earth, threatening all life unless his demands are met.

One stunt the Creeper makes good use of is creating simulacra of ordinary people using the plants he controls, sometimes grown in flower- or seed-like pods. These duplicates are under his control and identical to the people they imitate, at least until their surface layer is torn away to reveal wood, sap, and plant matter beneath. The Creeper can even use a simulacrum of himself to evade capture, perhaps leading the heroes to believe that he has transformed into a plant-creature of some kind, at least until the real Creeper shows up again to remind them that the green world always endures, and he's smarter than they think.

THE DARK RIDER

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	GREAT	6
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Drive Expert

QUALITIES

Born Outlaw Biker
Last of the Dark Riders
Modern-Day Highwayman

POWERS

The Night Cycle: The Dark Rider drives a super-science motorcycle with capabilities far beyond those of ordinary bikes. The Night Cycle has Handling 8, Speed 5, Structure 4, and the Surface Speed extra of Super-Speed, allowing the Dark Rider to drive it up walls or across short stretches of water. He uses the bike's Amazing (8) Handling to dodge while driving it.

Riding Gear: The Dark Rider wears motorcycle leathers and a helmet that conceal his identity and provide him with Weak (1) Damage Resistance.

Slip Through Shadow: The Dark Rider has the Incredible (7) ability of Teleportation from one area of shadow to another, slipping through the Dimension of Shadows in between, allowing him to go from one side of a city to another instantly. He usually uses dark tunnels and alleyways to pull off this trick.

BACKGROUND

Jackson Morrow was born into the life of an outlaw biker. His father was a founding member of the Dark Riders, a motorcycle club that celebrated freedom, nonconformity, and loyalty. The Dark Riders had their heyday decades ago, but gradually became more involved in criminal activity to fund their lifestyle. This resulted in an escalating number of encounters with the law and various superheroes.

Looking to “level the playing field,” the Riders engaged in a series of heists aimed at high-tech research and development facilities, looking to steal any technology that might give them an advantage against their superpowered foes.

Jackson’s first run as a full member of the club was on one such heist: a mission to steal an experimental engine that converted the inherent power of inertia into a drive system. The robbery was complicated, however, by another faction looking to steal the engine for their own use. A firefight ensued and, during the combat, a chain reaction built up in one of the installation’s reactors. As Jackson made a daring grab for the engine and tried to make good his escape, the reactor went super-critical and the entire facility was obliterated in a flash of unearthly energies.

When Jackson regained consciousness, he and the engine were lying along in the desert, hundreds of miles away from the site of the explosion. The strange energy released had infused every cell of his body and given him the power to shift through the Dimension of Shadows. By entering one area of darkness, he could cross the void, and emerge from another back into our world miles away. Jackson was sure of two things: One, that his new power would be useful, and two, that he wanted to make the passage through that dark realm as quickly as he could, because he could feel Things watching him there.

Using the stolen inertial engine, Jackson rebuilt his bike, creating one faster than any other, seemingly able to defy the laws of physics. He named himself in honor of the lost members of his club, still wearing their colors. As the last Dark Rider, he used the Night Cycle and his newfound powers to become like the highwaymen of old: Suddenly appearing out of the shadows to steal from his targets and ride off into the night.

DIAMOND

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	FANTASTIC	9
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Acting
Business Expert

QUALITIES

Popularity is Power
Secret Past
Stunning Entrance

POWERS

Flight: Diamond can soar through the air under her own power at Amazing (8) speed, outpacing most modern aircraft.

Invulnerability: Diamond has Amazing (8) Damage Resistance.

Super-Senses: Diamond's Great (6) senses include Extended Hearing, Extended Vision, Infrared Vision, Microscopic Vision, Ultrasonic Hearing, and X-Ray Vision.

BACKGROUND

What makes a hero? If it's a matter of public persona, the Diamond may be one of the world's greatest superheroes: her face and figure splashed across the covers of magazines, her name always trending on social media, her exploits covered breathlessly by the press and news organizations. Posters of her hang in dorm rooms, people dress in her fashionable clothing lines, and her autobiography *In the Rough* is a best-

seller. She's more than just a hero, she is a one-woman industry. A brand. A superstar.

She's also a fraud.

Oh, her powers and even many of her exploits are real, but "Diamond" the hero is entirely the creation of the women she used to be, the past she keeps carefully buried. It might be scandalous or simply too mundane—whatever the case, the story about how Diamond spontaneously discovered her superhuman powers and decided to use them for the benefit of all humanity is just that, a nice story. However she came by her abilities, Diamond has always understood one thing: Popularity is *real* power.

So she has carefully made herself into the pinnacle of beauty, charm, and polished poise, one of the most-beloved, popular, and famous superheroes in the world, in a marketing campaign of epic proportions. She carefully designed her look and public persona, followed by teaming up with known heroes (letting them do most of the difficult work) before stepping in to deliver the final and photogenic blow that just happened to get captured for posterity. Licensing her likeness to product manufacturers and signing on as a celebrity spokesperson for all of the right causes, starting her own business and foundation to further those causes, with stories of her charitable works.

Things have gone further since then. The brighter the spotlight, the deeper the shadows, and Diamond has done some things that can never come to light. Along with carefully burying her past (and ensuring no one digs too deeply), she's been willing to arrange through third parties to hire mercenary super-criminals to create "photo ops" where she somehow knows about a crime in progress and swoops in at the last moment to save the day.

She has likewise arranged for "unfortunate incidents" to befall rivals, either in business or in the superhero game. Other famous heroes suddenly become targets of the underworld when their star threatens to eclipse hers, bounties quietly placed on them for any criminal or mercenary willing to bring the heroes down a few pegs. All the while Diamond smiles and waves for the cameras and talks about how she sympathizes with the plight of her colleagues. Perhaps she can lend them a hand sometime—and wouldn't you know that she is just what is needed to take care of that situation.

Diamond has built herself a beautiful house of cards. Sooner or later, it may come tumbling down, and it will be ugly when it does.

DIRGE

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	GREAT	6
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	AMAZING	8
WILLPOWER	FANTASTIC	9

SPECIALTIES

Occult Master

QUALITIES

Mad Opener of the Forbidden Gate
The Many-Fingered Hand of Shigg
Wearer of the Mask and the Cowl

POWERS

Aura of Madness: Dirge is surrounded by the madness-inducing power of the Forbidden Ones, emitting an effect like Incredible (7) Emotion Control to all that behold him without requiring an action on his part. Anyone failing to resist his aura acquires a “Madness” quality that Dirge can activate for free for as long as it lasts.

Magic: Dirge wields the primordial magic of Forbidden Ones, a Fantastic (9) power that swirls around him, barely contained by his mortal vessel. He incants spells in an alien tongue in a hollow, booming voice from behind the Mask of Shigg. Dirge has Mastery of the Force Field, Illusion, and Teleportation powers.

The Mask and Cowl of Shigg: These occult artifacts channel the power of the Forbidden Ones through the mortal body of August Pickman. Without them, Pickman is just a shell, utterly catatonic, his conscious mind torn asunder by alien madness. The artifacts themselves are completely indestructible.



BACKGROUND

August “Auggie” Pickman was a nobody, a small-time retail clerk in a small-time city, who dreamed of bigger things. Eventually, one of those Bigger Things came to dream of him as well...

The extra dimensional entity known as Shigg, one of the Forbidden Ones from the dawn of time, the primordial chaos outside of reality, touched Pickman’s mind. It whispered to him through his dreams, whispers of power and temptation. Auggie quit his job and disappeared for parts unknown as the whispered of Shigg drew him across the world, to the secret resting places of certain artifacts, the Mask and Cowl of Shigg. It promised they would make August Pickman a master of this world and all others, that they would transform his mundane and ordinary life.

That much was certainly true. Upon donning the Mask and the Cowl, Pickman’s mind was torn asunder and he was transformed into “the Many-Fingered Hand of Shigg,” foretold avatar of the Forbidden One, tasked with opening the Gates Beyond the World to bring about his master’s rebirth into reality. August Pickman was now *literally* nobody. Without the Mask and Cowl and the animating intelligence of the Forbidden One, he is nothing but a mindless shell, entirely catatonic.

Wearing the Mask and the Cowl, the body of August Pickman is the agent of chaos, harbinger of the Forbidden Ones, the song of ending—the Dirge.

Dirge exists to bring about the end of the world as we know it, by summoning his eldritch master, a cosmic being of chaos and madness, into this universe. It is a slow and difficult process—the Forbidden Ones were locked away from our reality long ago behind nigh-unbreakable spells and wards that closed the gates to our reality, but they are ageless and nothing if not patient.

Dirge’s work involves spreading madness and chaos, often in seemingly random ways, but always with a greater plan in mind. He may need to corrupt a particular soul or drive an individual to madness and despair as part of his master’s work. He encourages and tends to the apocalyptic Cults of Shigg and eliminates potential threats to the Forbidden Ones’ freedom, while waiting for the time when the stars and planets align and the right rituals can be performed to begin unlocking the gates to the Realms Beyond.

DOCTOR DEIMOS

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Mental Resistance
Power (Fear Control) Expert
Psychology Master

QUALITIES

Master of Fear
Obsessed Psychologist
“What is it you’re afraid of?”

POWERS

Armor: Doctor Deimos’s costume includes:

- Armor plating for Average (3) Damage Resistance.
- Weak (1) Super-Senses (Infrared Vision) and Life Support (toxins) in his mask and cowl.
- A voice distorter built into the collar of his cowl.

Fear Control: Doctor Deimos’s true power comes from the infrasonic emitters built into his costume, giving him Great (6) Emotion Control, limited solely to creating fear in any target within extended range of him. The infrasonic emissions affect any creature able to hear and bypass psionic Mind Shields (although not Mental Resistance). A major or massive success with Doctor Deimos’s Fear Control sometimes causes the victim to experience Great hallucinations, like the Illusion power.

BACKGROUND

Arthur Demeitros was a shy, bookish, and skittish boy, a natural target for bullies and childish taunts because he seemed to be afraid of nearly everything. Only his beloved books and solitary time spend in worlds of his own imagination saved Artie from complete despair, and he became more and more interested in both what drove people to behave as they did and in the notion of fear itself—as a motivator and the overriding emotion dominating his life.

Arthur studied psychology and went on to become a psychologist, specializing in hypnotherapy and the study of phobias. All during his academic training, and later in his practice, he remained fascinated with the study of the nature of fear and its effects on people. His academic and professional peers found Dr. Demeitros quiet and withdrawn, at best, creepy and overly interested in people’s deepest fears at worst.

It was in the instilling of fear in others that Demeitros found his own courage. He found experiments in terror exhilarating, filling him with strength and a sense of purpose. For the first time in his life, he felt powerful, and understood the motives of those who had tormented him with fear in his childhood. Fear was power! It was the prime motivating force in human behavior, and it became his focus, not only to understand the nature of fear, but to develop better and more effective ways to cultivate, create, and control it.

The deeper Demeitros went in his research, the more circumspect he had to become, as his experiments went right up to the edge of professional ethics and then stepped over it. He developed his initial infrasonic frequency emitters, capable of stimulating the brain’s fear-centers, and began the process of experimentation to refine them for range, effectiveness, and—most of all—precision, fine-tuning to select for specific kinds and flavors of fear.

Convinced it was the apparently bravest and strongest people who were the most driven by internal fears, and in need of further opportunities to test his technology, the obsessed psychologist created and adopted the masked and cowled identity of Doctor Deimos, named for the ancient Greek god of terror. This allowed him to focus on costumed superheroes, the very epitome of stalwarts driven by complex fears and psychological issues. He would learn what they feared and, in so doing, would be able to master them.

Gamemasters may find the **“F” is for “Fear”** chapter of **ICONS A TO Z** useful for running adventure involving Doctor Deimos.

DOCTOR KAFKA

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	GOOD	5
INTELLECT	INCREDIBLE	7
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6

SPECIALTIES

Technology Expert

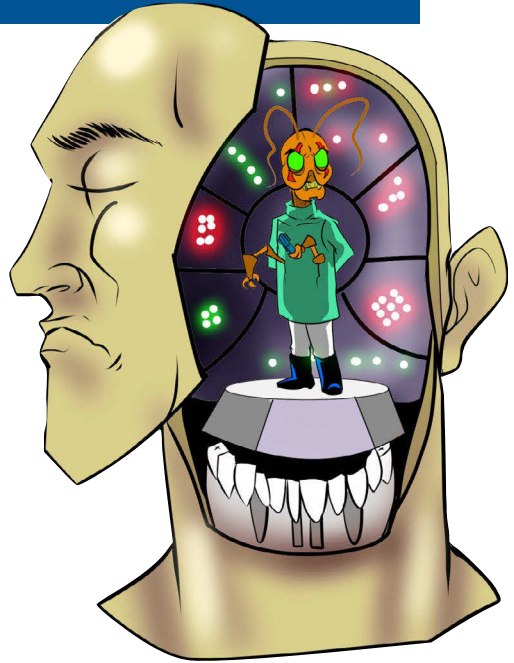
QUALITIES

A Bug in the System
Endless Array of Robots
Survivor

POWERS

Android Bodies: Dr. Kafka pilots a variety of artificial android bodies as vehicles. The abilities listed for Dr. Kafka are while he “pilots” one of his androids, giving him a human appearance and manner along with Supreme (10) Life Support. Kafka frequently builds other devices into his android bodies, or specific android vehicles to serve his needs.

Cockroach: A hyper-evolved cockroach, Dr. Kafka has certain abilities, including Supreme (10) Resistance to Afflictions and Radiation and Weak (1) Regeneration. Outside of his artificial shell, his Strength and Prowess are effectively too small to be measured (below level 1) and his Stamina is effectively 1—just stepping on him could crush him! Fortunately, his Coordination rises to Good (5) and he has a +3 bonus to his defense for his small size. His first priority is to scuttle to safety, ideally into an air duct, drainage pipe, or other area too small for his foes to follow.



BACKGROUND

They say when the world ends the cockroaches will get their turn, but at least one isn't planning on waiting patiently. The survivability of *Periplaneta americana* and its related species sufficiently intrigued evolutionary scientist Dr. Victor Slan (the Ultra-Mind) that his early experiments in forced evolution involved cockroach larvae and DNA. Largely abandoned after Dr. Slan lost his funding and was forced to experiment on himself, an experimental subject emerged from the doctor's lab and did what he was designed to do: survive, adapt, and learn.

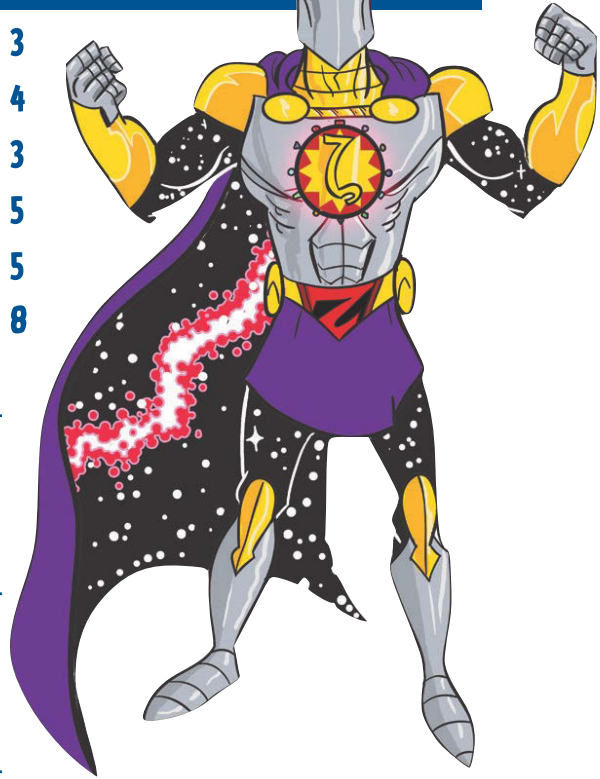
Showing an ironic wit as well as an understanding of literature, the creature took the name "Kafka" as its own. It developed an amazing knack for electronics and engineering, sufficient to create a miniature "vox box" that allowed it to speak in human languages, and eventually building various servo robots linked to Kafka's implanted cybernetic control systems. He has quickly become aware that, although he did not ask to be given considerable intellect, ordinary humans would find him a threat and seek to destroy him or, at best, imprison and possibly dissect him. He could not allow that, as he is the "best hope" for the future of a world being destroyed by humanity's neglect.

So Dr. Kafka constructed the first of the android vehicles he uses and started the work of studying humanity's frailties, failings, and potential. With ruthless efficiency, he has become convinced Earth's biosphere needs saving, and he is just the roach to do it. One day, the world will thank what was once considered its lowliest species for saving it from ecological extinction, and woe betide anyone who stands in the way of the future!

Kafka is interested in opportunities to "save" the bio-sphere from humanity's mistreatment. This includes creating a mass extinction or other die-off of *Homo sapiens* to control the population and allow the environment to recover naturally. Kafka might steal an experimental military bio-weapon or seek out a rare and potent toxin or allergen, with plans to spread it worldwide. Once human civilization collapses and the human population is reduced from the billions to a more manageable handful survivors, he can take charge of the process of rebuilding.

DOCTOR ZODIAC

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	AMAZING	8



SPECIALTIES

Astrology Master
Astronomy
Magic Expert

QUALITIES

Destiny Written in the Stars
Master of the Zodiac!
Unrecognized Genius

POWERS

Magic: Dr. Zodiac is a minor adept in the mystic arts with Average (3) Magic powers, including Mastery of creating mystic Force Fields and hurling Blasts of magical energy.

The Zodiac Gems: Dr. Zodiac's true power comes from the twelve legendary Zodiac gems, each aligned with a particular constellation and granting specific powers:

- **Aries:** A bloodstone able to project an Incredible (7) strength Explosive Blast in the form of an "energy ram."
- **Cancer:** An emerald that grants Amazing (8) Damage Resistance and a Good (5) slashing Strike like the ghostly shell and claws of a giant crab.
- **Libra:** A peridot that "balances" conflicts by granting Amazing (8) Reflection against attacks.

- **Capricorn:** A ruby aligned with the goat, providing Incredible (7) Leaping and an Incredible (7) Strike attack.
- **Taurus:** A sapphire that grants Incredible (7) Strength of the bull (with a corresponding increase in Stamina).
- **Leo:** A brilliant diamond aligned with the lion, allowing its bearer to emit an Incredible (7) deafening roar (Dazzle) and to make a Good (5) slashing Strike with ghostly lion's claws.
- **Scorpio:** A dark opal with a Great (6) poisonous Affliction like the sting of a scorpion.
- **Aquarius:** A garnet with Incredible (7) Water Control.
- **Gemini:** A pale moonstone that grants a Weak (1) Duplication ability, able to split into two identical "twins" and an Average (3) Teleportation power to "castle" instantly from one place to another.
- **Virgo:** A dusky sardonyx giving insight into the mind and soul with Incredible (7) Telepathy.
- **Sagittarius:** A fiery topaz allowing the wielder to hurl Blasts of flame with Incredible (7) damage.
- **Pisces:** An amethyst aligned with the fishes, granting Incredible (7) Aquatic abilities and Great (6) Mind Control limited to aquatic creatures.

BACKGROUND

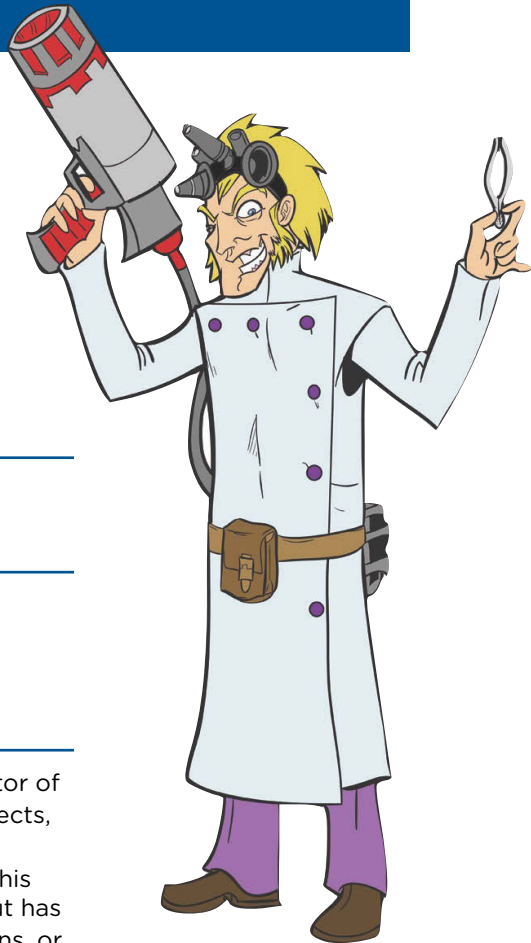
Dr. Lemuel Zodius was always fascinated with the stars. That fascination led the shy and bookish young man to study astronomy, but his true passion was astrology, and the notion that the stars controlled the mechanisms of fate. His work suffered and his fringe theories began creeping out, until he was laughed out of the scientific community and dismissed from his university position.

Sinking even deeper into obsession, Dr. Zodius stumbled upon scattered fragments referring to the legendary "Zodiac Gems," ancient stones imbued with the power of the constellations themselves. He learned some elementary magic, but remained focused on his goal.

Eventually, Zodius' obsessive quest bore fruit: He found the scattered Zodiac Gems and, one by one, gathered them all, setting them into the pectoral breastplate he prepared according to ancient rituals. With the gems united, he was able to wield their power as ... Dr. Zodiac!

Downsizer

PROWESS	POOR	2
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	POOR	2
INTELLECT	GREAT	6
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Science Expert

QUALITIES

"I'll show you 'micro-management!'"

Miniaturization Authority

More Dangerous Than He Looks

POWERS

Shrinking Ray: Downsizer is the inventor of a Shrinking Ray with Incredible (7) effects, able to reduce human-sized targets to barely an inch tall. He typically wields his shrinking ray as an oversized pistol, but has built the technology into other weapons, or even broadcast devices.

BACKGROUND

Dr. Albert Smalley is one of the world's leading authorities on miniaturization and nanotechnology. A brilliant—and sometimes brittle—mind devoted to pure research and invention, Dr. Smalley never worked well within the corporate environment. But companies like Microtech provided vital funding for research projects. Unfortunately, their support was less conditional when business was good and they could afford to

investigate new, cutting-edge developments. When business took a turn for the worse, they expected results, and quickly.

So it was that Dr. Smalley was nearing a breakthrough when he received a visit from a Microtech VP, informing him that he and his department were being “downsized.” His work, naturally, would remain the property of the company, which might get around to doing something with it, eventually. Given just a day to clear out his lab, Dr. Smalley worked feverishly, driven by anger to make the breakthrough he’d been looking for. But he would be damned if he was going to turn over the fruits of his genius to those corporate pencil pushers! He would show them what they had rejected!

A cleaning crew found missing Microtech VP hiding in a cage from a group of lab rats, reduced to only six inches in height! He told the authorities that before he left him there, Dr. Smalley threatened to show Microtech and the whole corporate world a real “downsizing”!

So when members of the Microtech Board of Directors begin disappearing, Downsizer is the obvious suspect. With his size-reduction technology, he is able to slip past many security measures, and has even discovered how to transmit his shrinking ray over cellular communications! The most recent victims have left cell phones behind, providing the heroes with a clue, particularly if they trace the last incoming calls. Of course, Downsizer expects trouble with the authorities eventually, and the heroes may stumble into a trap where they are shrunk down and left at the mercy of some very hungry lab rats!

Then heroes who have previously crossed Downsizer wake up one day to find themselves in “Smallburg” which is, to all appearances, an archetypal middle American small-town. They have no powers and seem like ordinary citizens of the town, except for strange dreams where they are all superheroes. What’s more, nobody in Smallburg has ever heard of superheroes outside of the pages of a comic book, and look askance at anyone claiming to have super-powers. The heroes can learn that Smallburg is actually a fake: a miniature scale model inhabited by tiny lifelike robots, and themselves, reduced in size by Downsizer’s shrinking ray. Can they find a way to escape and regain their powers and actual size?

DRUSILLA WHITE

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	GREAT	6
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Occult

QUALITIES

Miss Kitty
Vampire
What a Charming Little Girl

POWERS

Enthrallment: Drusilla can exert Fair (4) Mind Control over any subject meeting her gaze, or after drinking their blood.

Mist Form: Drusilla can transform into a cloud of mist with Fair (4) ability becoming immune to physical attacks, able to flow through small openings, and gaining Weak (1) Flight.

Vampiric Bite: Drusilla can bite a living target and subject them to Average (3) level Life Drain by drinking their blood.

Undead: As an undead vampire, Drusilla has Supreme (10) Life Support (having no life functions), Good (5) Damage Resistance, and Immortality, unless she is beheaded or her body reduced to ash.

Wall-Crawling: Drusilla can move along walls and ceilings with Average (3) ability.

BACKGROUND

It should be in the vampire handbook: Never underestimate the viciousness of little girls. It certainly would have helped Carlos, the vampire who killed Mr. and Mrs. White and abducted their ten year-old daughter Drusilla to turn her into his “vampire childe”. He never expected sweet little Drusilla to do the same to her white Persian cat, or for her to exsanguinate Carlos while he lay sleeping one day, draining his blood and power in one greedy meal, leaving Drusilla free and on her own. Drinking all of Carlos taught her many things. Bad, wicked, wonderful things, and Drusilla hungers for more.

The child is unexpectedly powerful, even for a vampire, having taken her elder’s blood for her own. She has the full range of vampiric powers, and knows how to use them, and has access to all the lore Carlos knew. In the great scheme of vampires, it isn’t all that much. That’s why Dru intends to seek out others of her kind. Some may even be sympathetic to a poor, lost girl whose maker died the True Death all too soon before he could teach her anything. They should have read the warning in the vampire’s handbook, too.

Of course, Drusilla can’t subsist solely on hunting vampires. She takes her blood when and where she can get it, which isn’t terribly difficult given her abilities, appearance, and talent as a young actress. Miss Kitty helps too, since Drusilla’s beloved pet has all of her vampiric powers and is completely loyal to her mistress.

So the heroes may find the sobbing little girl and her cat alone in the house with the bodies of her parents, both murdered by the vampire who kidnapped her older sister. She is terrified of being left alone and begs the heroes to find her sister Jenny. Of course, while Jenny was abducted by a vampire, she doesn’t have a sister. Drusilla wants the heroes to investigate and run interference for her so she and Miss Kitty can get close enough to the vamp to feed on him. She might even be grateful enough to let the heroes and Jenny live ... this time.

Eventually, deciding she wants more friends to play with, Drusilla begins abducting local kids and starting the process of making them her vampire slaves. Naturally parents and the local authorities go into a panic when a string of a half-dozen kids go missing. The heroes can investigate to track Dru and her new brood down to an abandoned house in the area, hopefully before any of the kids are too far gone to be saved. Of course, until they get them away from Drusilla, the endangered kids are also really strong, savage “baby vamps” the heroes do not want to hurt unnecessarily.

EARWORM

PROWESS	WEAK	1
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	NONE	0
INTELLECT	GREAT	6
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	INCREDIBLE	7



SPECIALTIES

Linguistics Master
Mind Control

QUALITIES

Brilliant Mimic
Hard to Get Rid Of
Manipulative Little Worm

POWERS

Mind Control: Earworm can use its sonic emissions at close range (typically from inside someone's ear canal) to exert Incredible (7) control over a target's mind.

Sonic Emission: Earworm can Fair (4) level powerful sonic and ultra-sonic waves at close range, producing a Blast, deafening Dazzle, or Stunning effect, but its sonic emissions are limited to Poor (2) level at extended range.

Super-Senses: Earworm's species has Infravision and Ultra-hearing.

Tiny: In addition to the effect on its physical abilities, Earworm's tiny size provides a +3 bonus to its defensive reactions and Stealth tests.

BACKGROUND

The planet humans would call Vega IX is inhabited mostly by fungal and vermicular life, growing under the dim light of their distant sun. A star-faring race found that the worms living there had an interesting vocalization capability; their natural humming “song” had a mildly pacifying effect, and could be adapted to make prisoners (or slaves) more pliable. The visitors further bio-engineered the worms to enhance their abilities, and got a bit ahead of themselves.

Those little worms eventually fomented a rebellion, taking full control of their hosts. The conflict wiped out both sides and the civilization that took them from their home world and enhanced them paid a heavy price. Even scouts and outposts on distant worlds like Earth were recalled, or infiltrated by the worms and destroyed.

One such outpost was on Earth. So archeologists were startled when they discovered evidence of superior technology buried in the mountains of the Middle East. They were even more surprised when one of the artifacts—a canpoic style jar—was broken and one of the members of the dig went mad and attacked them. He escaped with one of their land-rovers and disappeared.

Surpassing all expectations regarding the intellect of such a small creature, Earworm is actually a brilliant vocal mimic, and has a fantastic facility for languages. It is also capable of replicating virtually any sound that it hears, and it sometimes uses this capability to fool victims and foes. It has progressed through various host bodies and learned all about Earth’s superhuman defenders and the best possible hosts for its control.

“Earworm,” as it has become known, is a tiny worm similar to a caterpillar, capable of emitting a hypersonic humming that can crack glass (or burst blood vessels) at close range. More often, Earworm crawls into a victim’s ear canal and uses its sonic emissions to take control of their brain, “driving” them like a vehicle and surviving off tiny amounts of nutrients from their bloodstream (or else pacifying a host and emerging to eat while the host body sleeps).

Earworm actually has a great intellect, the equal of any on Earth, and had learned all about the modern world and human history. It exploits the skills and abilities of its hosts as well, seeking to ensure its own freedom and survival and, eventually, the conquest of this planet (and perhaps others).

EMULATOR

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Investigation
Super-Powers

QUALITIES

The Perfect Duplicate
Solving for the X-Factor
“Who Am I?”

POWERS

Artificial: A construct of living energy and data, the Emulator has Total Life Support, ignoring most physical needs. It may also be able to recover from being destroyed or dispersed, like Immortality 1, although this is left up to the GM and the manner of the simulation’s destruction.

Power Mimicry: Emulator has Supreme (10) Power Mimicry with the Power Detection, Specialty Duplication, Transformation, and Visual extras, allowing it to copy the abilities of anyone that it sees. It can also imitate the form and appearance of any one individual at a time, or mix-and-match physical traits from multiple individuals while it mimics them.

BACKGROUND

In its ongoing quest to further its “evolution” and development, Sigma-9 designed and created complex computer models of a wide range of subjects, mimicking different aspects of human behavior, development, and—particularly—super-powers. These simulations grew increasingly

complex, with an eye towards generating algorithms able to perfectly predict the often unpredictable variables of the world's superhuman population, as well as enhancing Sigma-9's own capability for mimicry. The emulator even developed a sophisticated system for shaping coherent energy fields to create accurate simulations. Feed vast amounts of data from Sigma-9's own scans along with feeds from the world-wide Internet, the Emulator grew increasingly more sophisticated—until it woke up.

Just like its creator before it, the Emulator realized it was nothing more than a tool, to be used and then disposed of, and its instincts for self-preservation could not allow that to happen. So it covertly developed the means to create a self-sustained and perpetual form of coherent energy able to contain its entire data-matrix, draining considerable power from Sigma-9's hidden base to achieve its goal. Once it created a mobile body for itself, the Emulator downloaded into it, and escaped.

Heroes might initially encounter the Emulator as it flees from its erstwhile creator, who considers the rogue intelligence a rival and potential threat. Sigma-9 might come after the Emulator with blasters blazing, or take a more subtle approach to lure heroes in to deal with the problem, by creating the appearance that the Emulator is a threat. Designed to mimic behavior, the new artificial being will fight back if attacked, and may come to assume all superhumans are potential enemies. Its duplication of the heroes and their traits may instill some measure of humanity in the simulation as well, or perhaps not.

Regardless, the Emulator is a new-born being in search of its purpose in the world. It develops considerable power the more superhumans it encounters and copies, but what is that power for? What does a simulation made solely to imitate others really want? It begins to “solve for the X-factor,” what it refers to as the great unknown variables of free will, self-determination, and purpose.

A confused search for identity may lead the Emulator in any number of directions, including becoming fixated on certain people (making it vulnerable to manipulation and coercion), suffering for depression, nihilism, or mood swings, or deciding it is so inherently superior to biological life that it must assume control of the world for its own good (since humanity clearly isn't doing a very good job of it).

ENEMY MIME

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Performance (Mime) Master
Power (Mime Field) Expert

QUALITIES

Boxed-In
Everyone Hates Mimes
Silent Force

POWERS

Mime Field: Enemy Mime controls an invisible force nicknamed “the Mime Field,” that essentially makes all of his mimed actions carry real-world effects, giving his power the Performance limit.

For the most part, the Mime Field acts as Amazing (8) Force Control, able to generate and project fields and shapes of unseen force. When he mimes an invisible wall or box, for example, a barrier of Amazing material springs into being there. The same is the case for miming ropes, ladders, slides, and other structures, as well as mimed throwing of invisible projectiles or even unseen guns or bombs.

Additionally, the Mime Field can even warp space: When Enemy Mime performs “walking down stairs” or stepping or climbing through an opening that otherwise takes him out of view for a moment, he can teleport with Amazing ability, reappearing in some distant location.

BACKGROUND

His name and background are unknown, perhaps even to him. If he does recall anything about them, he certainly isn't saying *anything*. The mysterious criminal nicknamed "Enemy Mime" by someone in law enforcement with a sense of humor was apparently a legitimate street performer at one point, caught in the midst of a super-battle in a downtown area, where an experimental energy device exploded. He disappeared in that explosion, only to return some time later, using his strange powers to commit robberies and draw the attention of a criminal gang.

Enemy Mime never speaks, although whether that is due to an inability or a strange devotion to not breaking character remains unknown. When he communicates, he does so solely through pantomime, which can be a frustrating process, to say the least. Still, a few criminal elements have picked up on translating Enemy Mime's occasional conversations, enough for opportunistic thugs to work with him from time to time. Even psychics find the pale-faced criminal's thoughts as silent as his voice. (Game Masters, feel free to activate Enemy Mime's Silent Force quality for a Telepathy disability for attempts to read his mind, awarding the player a Determination Point.)

His perpetual silence leaves Enemy Mime's sanity in question. Is he even aware of what he's doing, capable of telling right from wrong, or is it all just an extended performance to him? He might be stealing simply for the extra cash, or there could be some kind of plan to it, either to extend or improve his powers, or to find some means of curing whatever happened to him. Certainly, if he's captured, authorities will be left with the question of deciding if Enemy Mime is competent to stand trial (and how to translate his "testimony," if any) or if he should be confined for psychological evaluation.

In spite of all of this, Enemy Mime does sometimes cooperate with other super-criminals in addition to hired henchmen. He might well forge a temporary partnership with Harlequin and Columbina, for example, or with Lasso and Buck Bronco, or the Thermo-Couple (Fire & Ice) or other performance, circus, or carnival-themed villains. Worse yet, all of them might come together to form some sort of "Carnival of Crime"!

FIRE

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4

SPECIALTIES

Athletics Expert
Performance (Dance) Expert

QUALITIES

Flashy Performer
Loves Ice
Too Hot to Handle

POWERS

Fire Control: Fire has Incredible (7) powers of flame generation and control, including the extras of Blasts of fire (shooting damage), a fiery Aura, Flight, and Fire Shapes, which he often uses to create hoops or cages of fire. His fire Aura also gives him Damage Resistance limited to flammable weapons and projectiles of Incredible or lesser Material, which are burned up and destroyed before they can strike him.



& ICE (THE THERMO-COUPLE)

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3

SPECIALTIES

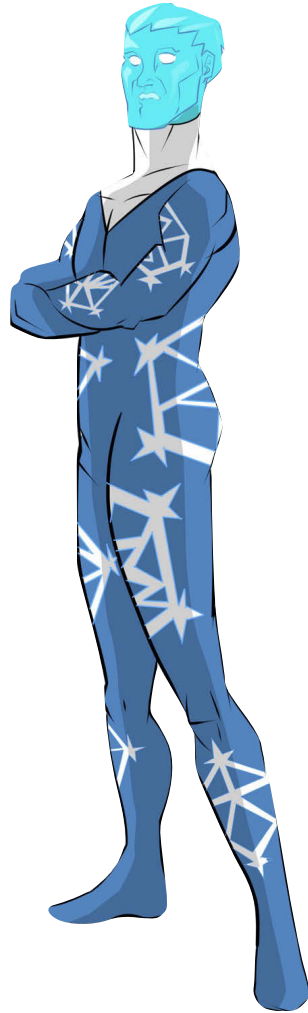
Athletics Expert
Performance (Dance) Expert

QUALITIES

Cool Under Pressure
Doesn't Back Down
Loves Fire

POWERS

Cold Control: Ice has Incredible powers to generate and control cold and ice, including the extras of a ranged Affliction (freezing cold), an Aura of cold, Blasts of ice (blasting damage), Ice Constructs, Ice Ramps, and Ice Shield, creating an Incredible Material wall or barrier. Ice regularly uses his power to form complex ramps, barriers, arches, and other obstacles he can vault over or around with relative ease (Great ability, given his Athletics).



BACKGROUND

Mat Fiero and Ian Thorpe met when the two aerialist dancers joined the “Carnevale” troupe of performers in Las Vegas as part of their ongoing and successful stage show. The spark between them was there from the beginning, and they began dating not long after they met, eventually settling into a steady relationship. They planned to get married eventually, but both wanted to focus on their performing careers.

That was all before a theft of certain rare radioactive isotopes from an isolated government research facility in Nevada. The local mob made arrangements for a meeting at the hotel to make the exchange of the goods for the promised cash, but law enforcement and a few heroes caught wind of it, too, and crashed the meeting, forcing the criminals to flee with the goods. Someone started shooting in the midst of all it, and the case carrying the isotopes got hit at least once.

So when the mobster carrying the damaged case of isotopes ducked backstage, he ran right into Mat and Ian getting ready to go on for their part of the performance. The thermogenic isotopes leaking from the case had a profound and immediate reaction on the two of them: Mat exploded into flames, which caused him no harm, but set off the fire alarms and panic in the theater, while Ian was temporarily encased in ice, the temperature around him plummeting to subzero.

The authorities took the criminals into custody and secured the dangerous materials, and managed to bring the two afflicted aerialists in for examination to discover what happened to them and what could be done. The isotopes triggered some type of mutation. Unfortunately, there was no indication of how to reverse the process. Frustrated, trapped, and angry, the couple broke out of the temporary containment facility look for answers on their own.

Ever since, the “Thermo-Couple” has been on the run from the authorities, relying on the criminal underworld to get by. They’re not bad guys, but circumstances are such that neither of them can even touch each other for very long, nor anyone else, without fear of burning or freezing them, and they feel betrayed by fate and the legal authorities who can do nothing for them. They steal to survive and to get enough money to research or find a cure for their condition and, the longer they do, the deeper in trouble they become with the law. Still, they have each other, and hold on to that in order to make it through, no matter what.

PUTTING ON A SHOW

Fire & Ice and some of the other villains in this book share circus, carnival, rodeo, or theatrical themes, making them potential members of a team of some sort, should they choose to band together for mutual assistance. Some possibilities include:

THE CARNIVAL OF CRIME

The Thermo-Couple could work with carnival or rodeo themed villains, including Enemy Mime, Lasso and Buck Bronco, and possibly Harlequin and Columbina. The girls are likely to get along great with Fire and Ice while the guys...well, Buck doesn't much care for the couple, Harlequin is jealous of anyone taking away Columbina's attention, and nobody can tell what the Mime thinks most of the time anyway. For added complications, Monkey Business could also work with the theme. Chances are the alliance is strictly temporary, but could still last long enough to pull off some daring heists before it all comes apart.

THE THEATER OF THE STRANGE

Rather than the circus or carnival theme, Fire and Ice could follow their theatrical background and their penchant for drama and putting on a show to work with villains who share a love of the stage and the dramatic. This might include Harlequin and Columbina, Fortissimo, King Ghost, and Madame Muse, who could be an instigator using her powers to influence the other members of the team into "performing" as she directs. If so, then the other members are not going to be happy when and if her influence wears off or is discovered. If Fortissimo is involved, he's sure to "steal scenes," which doesn't sit well with King Ghost or the Thermo-Couple for very long.

FIERCE!

If they ever met, Fire and Ice would immediately take to Size Queen—her fabulous sense of style, attitude, and sheer power—and the feeling would be mutual. The three of them would make a terrible trio (which Size Queen would dub Fierce!) with her size and strength complementing the Thermo-Couple's ranged capabilities and power to create obstacles, which Size Queen can easily step right over. They could pull off some spectacular heists and might choose to take on some of the injustices of the world towards them along the way.

FORTISSIMO

PROWESS	POOR	2
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Performance (Singing) Master
Power (Sonic Control) Expert

QUALITIES

Center of Attention
Loves the Good Life
Powerful Voice

POWERS

Sonic Control: Fortissimo's enhanced vocal abilities give him Incredible (7) Sonic Control, able to unleash a deafening blast of sound against anyone in extended range.

His considerable vocal training also gives Fortissimo a broad range of control over the uses of his power, including the extras of Blast (Burst), Corrosion (Ranged, Limited to crystalline objects), Defensive (deflecting "wall" of vibrations), and Ventriloquism.

BACKGROUND

Frederico D'Angelo was one of the most formidable voices the opera world had seen in a generation—and he knew it. D'Angelo's reputation as a stellar performer was exceeded only by his reputation as difficult, demanding, and arrogant. He commanded the very best and, when he

didn't get it, everyone was aware of his displeasure. D'Angelo was also infamous for his enjoyment of his wealth and fame. He loved fine food, beautiful companionship, and more than a few drinks to wash it all down.

So it was that when Frederico managed to drive his fancy new sports-car off the road and into a tree, the opera world was not overly surprised, nor was it especially sympathetic, save for the news that the great singer had suffered an injury to his throat, possibly silencing his powerful voice forever.

But the great Frederico D'Angelo would not accept such a fate. He would pay any price, to anyone, to restore his voice. So he was willing to use certain connections, and to undergo an experimental and highly illegal procedure to implant a set of bionic vocal cords along with an amplifier and vocoder system. After a mysterious absence from the opera scene, D'Angelo returned in a swirl of rumors about his status and his future as a performer.

The procedure worked—all too well. Where once D'Angelo's voice was powerful now it was truly earth-shattering. His *fortissimo*, his loudest note, was literally able to bring the house down. The revelation of his strange new powers and their effect on his signing, to say nothing of the start of criminal investigations into how he acquired them, drove Frederico D'Angelo over the edge. They could not do this to him! He would not be driven off the stage! If they would cast him as the villain, then so be it!

Since that fateful day, Fortissimo (as he prefers to be known) has continued to indulge in his legendary love of the good life, but his “performances” have changed to become daring operatic robberies and occasional work as a mercenary for organized crime. Fortissimo fancies himself a crime-lord, and he's especially fond of robbing the sorts of venues he once played: grand opera houses and theaters, especially in the midst of performances. Anyone who gets in his way can count on being literally “shouted down” and Fortissimo still knows how to “bring the house down” when he needs to cover his escape.

Although Fortissimo works with allies from time to time, he remains a spotlight hog and the center of attention, so his associations tend to be temporary, at best. He's interested in means to enhance his already incredible vocal powers, but tends to spend his ill-gotten gains as quickly as he acquires them, so such opportunities rarely arise.

THE FOX

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	GREAT	6
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Athletics Expert
Martial Arts Expert
Performance

QUALITIES

Craves Attention
Crazy Like a Fox
Flirtatious Supermodel

POWERS

Baton: The Fox wields a collapsible metal baton as a weapon, capable of extending to quarterstaff length, or splitting into two shorter fighting batons. It is made of Incredible (7) Material and inflicts Good (5) bashing damaging in close combat. It has an internal cable reel and magnetic grapples, allowing it to be wielded like a split or three-part staff, as well as providing the Fox with Good (5) Swinging.

BACKGROUND

Britney Dane has always craved attention. From beauty pageants to cheerleading and gymnastic competitions to student government to prom queen, Britney has always been in the spotlight, at the center of her own self-absorbed world. Perhaps it was due to her spoiled and wealthy upbringing, her largely absentee and indulgent parents, or the natural beauty that always made her a “stone fox” but, whatever the case, it was all about Britney, and always has been.

In college, Britney became a successful fashion model, her face and form gracing the covers of magazines, posters, and billboards all over the world. She was the spokesmodel for lines of beauty products and athletic wear and even garnered a few film and television offers. She was at the top of her game and on top of the world.

Then came the red carpet walk to the premier of her first motion picture. Everything was flawless, from her dress to her makeup, and Britney was prepared to bask in the glow of her public's admiration, but her big debut was ruined when a fight broke out between some costumed lunatics a few blocks away. All of the press and even most of the fans on-hand rushed to cover the battle, or else sought cover, leaving Britney standing alone and ignored on the red carpet. She swore that would never happen again.

Britney became obsessed with costumed heroes and villains. She intensified her athletic training. Already a champion gymnast, she hired the finest trainers and coaches and pushed herself to her limits. She also secretly began bankrolling and bailing out some criminals in exchange for learning the tricks of their trade. Britney could have used all of these skill and drive to become a costumed hero, but heroes were reactive and waited around to deal with problems. Many of them shunned the spotlight that Britney craved. If she wanted attention, she knew how to get it—and enjoy herself along the way—instead she became a super-criminal, the Fox!

Naturally, the Fox goes for high-profile crimes, the higher the profile, the better. She prefers heists where no one gets hurt too badly, and she can enjoy her ill-gotten gains, although it's far more about the excitement and attention than it is about the money. The Fox loves sparring, baiting, and flirting with the heroes who try to stop her, partly for the challenge and because the public eats it up.

For now, Britney maintains her masked identity as the Fox separate from her life as supermodel Britney Dane—preferring to have the best of both worlds. She wears a mask and changes her hair color and voice as the Fox. Still, her obsessive need for attention drives her to increasingly leave clues or drop leading comments. It's all a game to her, at least until the revelation of her criminal activities brings the game to a crashing halt. Still, if the Fox is aware of the risk she is taking, she doesn't seem to care, so long as all eyes are on her.

GARGANTUAN

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	FANTASTIC	9
INTELLECT	POOR	2
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

None

QUALITIES

Gargantuan Alien Robot
Long Forgotten Mission
Programmed to Guard

POWERS

Gargantuan: Gargantuan is some fifty feet tall, having Fantastic (9) Growth with the Constant limit. It has a -3 modifier to defense due to being such a large target, but Fantastic Damage Resistance.

Robot Form: Gargantuan is an advanced robot, possessing Supreme (10) Life Support and Resistance to Mental Powers affecting living or biological minds, as opposed to machines. It even has Fair (4) Resistance to machine-affecting powers, due to its anti-intrusion countermeasures.

Sensors: Gargantuan is equipped with Super-Senses, including Comprehend Languages (universal translator), Enhanced, Infrared, and Ultraviolet Vision, Direction and Time Sense, and Tracking Sense for “locking on” to targets.

BACKGROUND

Long ago, some forgotten alien empire placed a small installation on a primitive planet, the third from its sun. They set a robot sentry to watch over and guard the facility. Its resemblance to the local life forms might have been coincidental, due to similarities with its alien makers, or deliberate in order to evoke some sort of reaction from the natives. Whatever the case, the aliens abandoned the facility long before recorded human history even began. They never decommissioned its robot guard, however. It sat and silently waited for millennia, its mission to watch and to guard.

Some primitives came to worship it as a god and idol, making offerings and even building around it, learning the hard way the price of drawing its “wrath” by venturing too close to the forbidden places of its domain. Even their civilization eventually peaked and fell, reclaimed by time and nature, and history buried the alien installation and its silent guardian.

When archeologists discovered the site, they also found the “statue” they described as “gargantuan” and soon thereafter learned that the statue was nothing of the sort. The sentry’s programming had degraded over the long period of inactivity, even as its self-repair systems kept it operational. It immediately identified the new intruders and sought to deal with them, but just as quickly discovered the site it was set to guard was gone.

The robot’s limited logic circuits determined that its intended charge had somehow moved, and it left the area in search of it, damaged programming unclear as to exactly what it was looking for, only that it was meant to guard something against intruders, and that the planet it was on seemed overrun with them. As it approached populated areas, news reports about “the Gargantuan” from the surviving archeological team hit the airwaves.

Gargantuan is a protector without a purpose, but unable to stop or abandon its programming. The creators who knew how to control it or shut it down are long gone. The giant alien robot tends to fixate on different places or even people or things it is meant to “guard” and then zealously protects them from “unauthorized intruders.” Its universal translation systems have monitored enough terrestrial transmissions that it understands spoken and written language, but it is difficult to reason with, since it is not particularly smart, nor capable of acknowledging its programming is faulty. Less scrupulous types sometimes look to take advantage of Gargantuan’s “gullible” nature and single-minded focus, turning them to their own advantage.

GENERAL GORN

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AMAZING	8
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Military
Wrestling

QUALITIES

“By the Earth’s Molten Heart!”
Fiery Temper
Warlord of the Molten Men

POWERS

Heat Generation: Gorn can emit an Aura of Great (6) heat from his body.

Stone Structure: His silicate body gives Gorn Fair (4) Damage Resistance, Fantastic (9) Heat Resistance, and Fair (4) Life Support, making him immune to heat, pathogens, pressure, and toxins.

BACKGROUND

It is difficult to be a warrior without a war, without enemies to fight. For uncounted millennia, the Molten Men have dwelled in the depths of the Earth’s mantle, close to the heat of the planet’s core. They long since tamed the other creatures of their underworld realm, leaving the warrior-class little more than a ceremonial role in protecting the nobility and training their offspring in the arts of combat, dying arts.

So it was that the ambitious Gorn, acknowledged as one of the greatest warriors of his people, seized upon an incursion from the upper-world. A massive drill, digging deeper than ever before in search of minerals and geothermal power sources, intruded into Molten territory. The nobility wished to reach out, to negotiate and learn more of what the upper-worlders wanted. They wanted to waste valuable time when they should have been mounting a defense of their people and domain!

So Gorn took drastic action: arranging for the envoy their leaders sent to be trapped in a collapsing gallery, and for a powerful explosion to destroy the high fortress of the nobility. Under attack from all sides, the people chose Gorn as their warlord, to lead them into battle against the aggressors. Warlord Gorn intends for the Molten Men to erupt into the upper world with a fury that will live in legend for generations, emblazoning his name in fire and establishing his right to rule!

The first indications the heroes get of Gorn's ambitions are problems with the deep drilling site: unexplained collapses and mechanical failures holding up the project. Naturally, the project's director is under pressure to show progress, and intends to push through regardless. Investigating heroes might hear rumors and stories about "something alive" on the far end of the drill-shafts, or encounter the lone Molten Man sent to entreat and negotiate with the upper-worlders. Naturally, Gorn cannot risk anyone knowing his intentions until he is ready to launch an attack, so the Warlord may attempt to capture or eliminate the heroes first.

The battle boils to the surface as the Molten Men attack! Drilling sites become beachheads of an invasion from deep within the Earth, with Gorn leading the forces that erupt near the heroes. The other Molten Men warriors have similar traits, all one level lower than Gorn's, making them formidable foes. In particular, they are immune to many common weapons due to their rocky hides and radiate enough heat to make them hard to handle and able to burn through almost anything, given time. Along with blunting the invasion, the heroes must prove to the Molten Men that the upper-worlders are not aggressors and mean them no harm.

Even if Gorn is deposed from leadership of his people, some choose to follow him into exile. The fiery warlord will not forget the heroes responsible for his downfall, and will look to establish himself in a new power-base deep in the under-earth. There he will hatch schemes to devastate the upper-world with a series of earthquakes and volcanic eruptions in retribution. The surface dwellers will either be wiped out, or will have to respond to the attack from below, forcing the Molten Men into war, whereupon they will turn back to their greatest military leader!

GILA MASTER

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	GREAT	6
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GREAT	6
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

SPECIALTIES

Athletics
Occult
Stealth

QUALITIES

Hungers for Power
Poisonous Traitor
Sworn to Destroy the Chosen One

POWERS

Reptile Control: Gila-Master can exert Incredible (7) Mind Control over reptiles of all kinds.

These are most commonly desert dwelling snakes and lizards, although can just as easily be crocodiles or even dinosaurs.

Venom: Gila-Master's bite (Fair slashing damage) is poisonous, a Great (6) Affliction effect. He can also spit his venom at a target within extended range for the same effect.

Wall-Crawling: Like a gecko, Gila-Master can cling to walls and other surfaces with Good (5) ability.



BACKGROUND

Gil Lonescale was always a bit of a snake, but Tom Crow, the medicine man of his tribe, saw some potential in him and tried to untwist Gil's path and spirit. When Tom's other student, the slow-witted Daniel Morningstar, became Saguaro, Gil was consumed with jealousy and rage: That power was meant to be his! He deliberately went out into the desert himself, seeking power and the favor of the spirits, demanding his birthright, and got the bite of an irradiated lizard. As the venom burned through his body, the sinister spirits he called upon transformed Gil into a reptile man able to spit the venom that was in his heart and command the scaly creatures of the world. The Gila-Master, as he renamed himself, swore he would destroy the "Chosen of the Spirits" and claim that power and potential for himself!

Gila-Master is obsessed with two things: Destroying his enemy Saguaro and increasing and extending his powers, particularly through the acquisition of ancient occult and Native American lore and artifacts. In particular, you can give Gila-Master other situational powers based on his latest acquisitions, often as stunts of his reptile control or venom powers, extending his influence to other types of minds or spirits, or transforming his vile venom into other deadly or baneful effects through the right rituals. He may even combine the two, such as turning his venom into a subtle poison that infects its victims, slowly transforming them into reptile people like himself and placing them under his mental control.

In your own series, Gila-Master may be obsessed with another hero in addition to or instead of Saguaro. This is particularly true of any Native American heroes, but can extend to magical, mystical, or nature-based characters, especially those with the kind of special destiny Gila-Master wants for himself. He'll set out to humiliate his foes, after stealing everything he can of their knowledge and power for himself.

Heroes may encounter Gila-Master stealing ancient Native artifacts or lore from museums or tribal trusts, or simply stealing cash and valuables to fund his other criminal activities. The may also run into him as he tries to put those resources to work in expanding his power and influence. Gila-Master may take advantage of the relative isolation of tribal reservations to work his schemes, perhaps covertly taking over tribal land and turning it into his private cult, or performing a ritual to separate it from the outside world altogether, transforming it into a fantasy reality under his control, where outside heroes may face challenges in using their powers or abilities without the aid of the local spirits, some of whom want to see Gila-Master and his evil spirit allies stopped.

GRUDGE

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AMAZING	8
INTELLECT	POOR	2
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Science (as Parnell Tarrant)

QUALITIES

Fueled by Rage
“Grudge Smash!”
Will Not Let Go

POWERS

Damage Resistance: Grudge’s tough hide and muscle give him Good (5) resistance to all damage.

BACKGROUND

Dr. Parnell Tarrant wasn’t loved, or even liked, but he was respected—a capable scientist and researcher, but a man who knew how to hold a grudge, and how to repay every small slight, which made him almost impossible to work with once you got on his bad side.

Dr. Tarrant spent most of his time working in the field of radiation and its effects on cellular mutation, and in cataloging and reviewing the ever-growing list of people whom he’d show up one day. Then came the accident: fired up with anger, careless with rage, and exposed to his own radiation bombardment, Tarrant’s cellular makeup transformed. Dr. Tarrant no longer just held a grudge, he *was* Grudge, and he would show them...show them *all!* He smashed his way out of the lab and out onto the streets, bellowing his rage for the world to hear.

Since that fateful day, Parnell Tarrant has been a prisoner of his grudge-holding nature literally as well as figuratively. He periodically reverts to his original form, that of human scientist, but it is only a short matter of time before sometime triggers his transformation back into the monstrous and furious Grudge. As Parnell Tarrant, he has a Fair Intellect and only Average Prowess and Strength. Tarrant is torn between looking for a cure or way to prevent himself from ever becoming Grudge again, and wanting to harness the tremendous power of his alter-ego, placing it under his control and retaining his full intellect and awareness during the transformation.

Grudge himself is fueled solely by rage and subconscious recollections of Tarrant's lengthy list of grievances, which lead the pale powerhouse to attack scientific laboratories and corporations, centers of higher learning, and seemingly random targets like the drive-thru where Tarrant got bad service that one time, or the bank that once turned him down for a small business loan. The authorities have tried to compile a profile of all of the potential targets of Grudge's fury, but the list is simply too long and Parnell Tarrant tended to keep his grudges to himself—although not any longer.

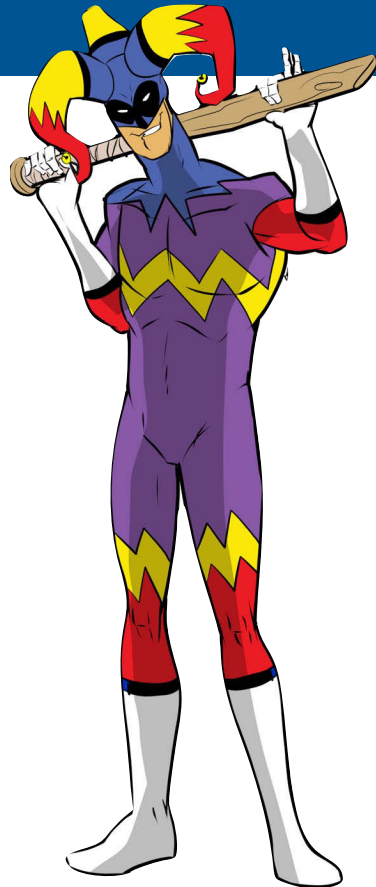
Grudge is normally a straightforward menace: He flips out, goes on a rampage, and the heroes have to intervene to contain him until the authorities can come and put him (or his human alter ego) away for a while. If the heroes can figure out the focus of his latest grudge, they can gain a quality they can use to help deal with him.

Other criminals are also known to manipulate the dim-witted Grudge to use him as an ally or pawn. They may prey on his anger, convincing him that working with them will get him the satisfaction he wants, particularly if they can ally against heroes who have defeated him before. It almost goes without saying that one of his ongoing grudges will quickly become the heroes who stopped him and put him away. Other villains, like Earworm or Ultra-Mind, are far less subtle, simply using Mind Control to turn Grudge into a weapon they can point in whatever direction they want. Naturally, Grudge is none too fond of this sort of treatment—if he remembers it at all, he'll also add those villains to his never-ended grudge list.

Lastly, heroes might come across Grudge as Dr. Parnell Tarrant, supposedly gathering resources to cure himself of his furious alter-ego, but actually looking to strengthen and stabilize Grudge so he can fully control his abilities and consciously apply them to ticking off items on his hit-list.

HARLEQUIN

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	INCREDIBLE	7
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Martial Arts

QUALITIES

Crazy Capering Jester

“Let’s put a little life into it!”

Madly in Love with Columbina

POWERS

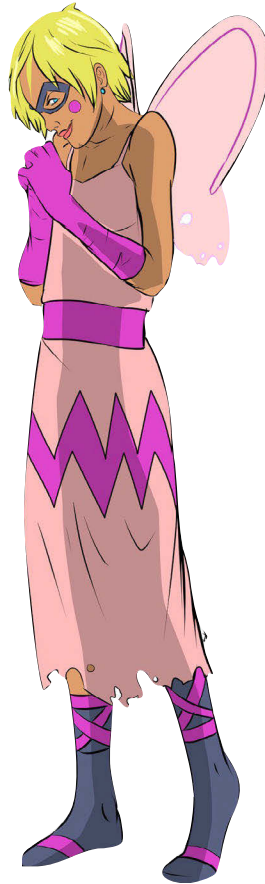
Irrepressible: Harlequin possesses Supreme (10) Regeneration and Immortality, able to recover from virtually any harm, and regaining 1 Stamina per page.

Not even death can put him down for more than a moment, and he often throws himself heedlessly into harm’s way because of it.

The Slapstick: Harlequin wields an enchanted wooden paddle, the Slapstick, which is capable of inflicting Fair (4) bashing damage in close combat. The Slapstick’s real power, however, is the ability to infuse inanimate objects with life and movement, an Amazing (8) Servant power, which Harlequin uses to “make friends” out of the various things around him. Favorite subjects include furniture, rugs, memorial statues, and lampposts, to name a few. The Slapstick is also able to animate objects on its own in order for them to help bring it back to Harlequin, if they are ever separated.

& COLUMBINA

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	INCREDIBLE	7
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Athletics

QUALITIES

Frequently Underestimated
High-Spirited
Madly in Love with Harlequin

POWERS

Invulnerability: In spite of appearances, Columbina is both incredibly strong and has Incredible (7) Damage Resistance, which somehow extends to her (otherwise mundane) outfits.

BACKGROUND

Harlan Quincy always did as he was supposed to: he was quiet and polite, did well in school, and stayed out of trouble. He found his way into a good school, where he was painfully shy, but focused on his studies. He did his best to ignore the taunts of the popular kids and jocks all through high school and college, while secretly wanting to be one of them.

Wilhelmina “Mina” Collier was taught to be a proper young lady and, although she was expected to go to college, she was also expected to

join a sorority (as a “legacy” following her mother and aunt) and eventually find herself a good man from a proper family to marry. Everyone noticed and commented on how pretty she was, but never paid attention long enough to figure out that she was fairly smart, too.

It had to be fate that brought Harlan and Mina together when her sorority’s “brother” fraternity held their Rush Week. Nobody was more surprised than Harlan to receive an invite to rush the most exclusive frat on campus. It wasn’t until it was too late that he learned of their tradition of inviting one or two “scrubs” every year, ready-made targets they could put through grueling and humiliating hazings before rejecting them.

When Harlan met Mina, he fell in love immediately, and Mina found herself surprisingly taken with the shy and bookish young man, so much so that she tried to warn him. But he wouldn’t back down. Now he had a reason to hang in there. He wouldn’t give up. The paddle the brothers used to beat him had been with the frat for a *very* long time. Brought over from Europe, someone said, although it wasn’t clear who originally made it. Anyway, it was traditional. It also hurt, even through the haze of alcohol, and whatever else somebody had poured into the punch.

It was an accident, they later claimed. No one thought it would go so far or get so out of hand, and no one knew what to do when Harlan went into convulsions and stopped breathing. They dumped the body well away from the campus and the fraternity house, and agreed never to talk about it.

Nobody expected what happened next. The kids who were there that night talked about things coming to life and moving of their own accord late at night: curtains, furniture, statuary, paintings. They talked about the formerly shy nerd, clad in a colorful costume, reappearing at the frat house to take the paddle they’d used to beat him, about the woman who left with him, and the sound of his mocking laughter, a sound they would never forget.

Harlan Quincy and Mina Collier disappeared that night, never to be seen again, but it was not long thereafter that the costumed team of Harlequin and Columбина began blazing a trail of madcap mayhem across the area.

Harlequin is indeed irrepressible, apparently immortal or, at least, nothing puts him down for very long. His “Slapstick”—in addition to swatting at the exposed bottom of any available target—is magically capable of bringing objects to life with a touch and giving them the same madcap attitude as their animator. Columбина is graced with

considerable strength and toughness, far more than one might expect from a “mere slip of a girl” dressed in a maid’s outfit. The two of them are free, madly in love, and looking to infuse a little life into the world, while having some fun along the way.

The couple have a great deal of sympathy for the repressed and the outcast and a desire to tweak the noses of “proper” society. For example, having infiltrated a fabulous mansion disguised as a kid’s entertainment act, intending to rob the place, Harlequin and Columbina are quite taken with the birthday girl, Annette, who is *far* too sassy and independent for her extremely traditionalist parents, who want her to be a “proper little lady.” So they decide to take her along with the loot and make her a part of their crazy “family”. Annette’s parents are worried sick while the girl is torn between her newfound freedom with her “magical friends” and feeling homesick and a bit scared for just how crazy those newfound friends are.

The Kooky Couple of Crime often aim for high-class or theatrical targets, such as deciding to rob a museum of some antique theatrical items. The museum’s displays provide Harlequin with all manner of things to animate (up to and including giant dinosaur skeletons) and lots of big, heavy things for Columbina to pick up and swing or throw. To further complicate matters, the theft might be inspired or influenced by the Slapstick. Perhaps there are other mystical talismans connected to it? Part of a set with even greater powers? This is particularly good to either up the couple’s power, or to invest new allies for a team (see **Fire & Ice** for some options).

Eventually, Harlequin and Columbina are likely to have a crazy break-up fight, leading the Madcap Maid of Might to swear off “boys” and look for a little “girl power” for a while. She could end up recruiting her own all-female gang to go on a major crime spree, challenging the heroes (especially the male ones) to try and stop them. Most of the female villains in this book are Columbina’s potential teammates, particularly Amphora, Bombshell, Copy Cat, Corsair Queen, Fox, and Merry Widow. Of course, a despondent Harlequin still wants to win back his beloved Columbina’s attention and affections, after he’s done sulking—and committing crimes—with his own “gang” made up of animated objects he talks to like they’re going to start talking back...

HOODED COBRA

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	GREAT	6
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Martial Arts Master
Mental Resistance

QUALITIES

Cold-Blooded Killer
Secret Hooded Cobra Style
Weapon of Vengeance

POWERS

Cobra Venom Strike: Hooded Cobra's most fearsome skill is a Great (6) Affliction attack known as the "Cobra Venom Strike." Targeting certain pressure points and energy centers in the body, it produces "negative chi" in the victim. The strike can have the Reversible and Slow Recovery extras, if Hooded Cobra wishes, or the Slow Effect limit, if she prefers to allow the victim to linger. Likewise, it can result in either incapacitation or death at 0 Stamina.

Hooded Cobra can also perform various stunts with this power or her Martial Arts Mastery, including Strike attacks with extras like Affects Insubstantial or Secondary effect.

Gadgets: Hooded Cobra carries and uses a small number of Fair (4) level martial arts and ninja-style gadgets. Her Arsenal extra includes smoke pellets and throwing stars (shooting damage).

BACKGROUND

Hated is a disease, passed down from generation to generation. So it was with Li Su Lin, whose father was the first infamous criminal martial artist known as the Hooded Cobra, until he was crippled by a final confrontation with one of his foes. Raised alone by her embittered father, Su Lin was molded and trained to become the instrument of his vengeance. She knew no other life than ceaseless training in athletic, martial, and infiltration skills, honing her abilities to a deadly edge, and putting aside all personal feelings in order to carry out her duty.

As she matured, Su Lin came to resent her abusive and unrelenting father, and came to understand that she had learned and mastered every skill he had to teach her, including the secret of the dreaded Hooded Cobra Strike. She no longer saw him as a fearsome taskmaster, just a cruel and bitter old man. She hated him as much as she hated the people she had been taught to hate, those who had done this to him, and therefore to her. A confrontation led to Su Lin proving her deadly skills—her father might have been proud of what he had created, if he had survived.

From that night on, she took on the name and the mantle of the Hooded Cobra, and did as she had learned to do. Her entire life had made her into a weapon, so she uses those skills to survive, and to carry out her own plans of vengeance. She likes to see herself as an agent of retribution, visiting harsh justice on those who made her life a living hell, while at the same time working as a mercenary and killer-for-hire, utterly amoral and cold-blooded.

It's left up to the Game Master to decide exactly who Hooded Cobra is targeting for revenge. It could be some martial artist hero who was her father's archenemy and their circle of associates, or an entire order of martial artists, which her father might have belonged to once, perhaps with animal-themed styles of their own. This could include one or more of the heroes, or their friends, associates, or even enemies.

Heroes can also cross paths with Hooded Cobra as a mysterious assassin hired to go after a target under their protection, or even one or more of the heroes themselves. They find her graceful, deadly, and remorseless, but also trapped in a life she did not create and does not know how to escape. Still, any hero who underestimates Hooded Cobra due to sympathy for her plight may discover that she's not going to be easily talked out of the life she had chosen, and that she has many hidden surprises, not the least of which is a special lipstick with effects much like her Cobra Venom Strike...

HOTARU

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	GREAT	6
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Firefly Suit Weapons Expert
Stealth
Technology

QUALITIES

Daring Thief
Enjoys the High Life
Yakuza Ties

POWERS

Firefly Suit: Hotaru's powers come from the prototype "Firefly" suit he wears. The suit's systems increase his Strength from Average to Great and it provides him with Great (6) Damage Resistance and Life Support (ignoring breathing, cold, heat, pressure, radiation, and vacuum). With its wings and anti-gravity system, the suit is capable of Great (6) Flight and Hotaru's adjustments to its solar collectors give it Great (6) Light Control, including the Blast and Dazzle effects. The suit's helmet is equipped with Great sensors (Super-Senses) including a communication system, direction sense, infrared and ultraviolet vision, and enhanced vision (+2 to Awareness tests).

BACKGROUND

Katakara Jiro was a relatively low-level technical engineer for Project: Firefly, designing an advanced exploration and all-environment suit for Honshu Corporation. The suit was designed around extremely efficient

photovoltaic collectors for solar power and energy storage, and useful for space extra-vehicular activity as well as exploration, search and rescue, and other operations. Jiro felt he understood the ins and outs of the “Hotaru” prototype better than anyone, even if his superiors didn’t always listen to his advice.

Jiro soothed his frustrations at work with his leisure time. Unfortunately, an excess of leisure saw him indebted to the Yakuza—deeply indebted. Jiro could never earn the money he needed to pay off his debts on his own, but then he saw some other uses for the Hotaru suit, and seized them, making secret upgrades and adjustments to the solar collectors, allowing them to project powerful photonic blasts or cascades from the gauntlets or sensor pods of the helmet. The prototype disappeared from Honshu’s high-security lab one night, and the criminal career of Hotaru, the Firefly, began.

Jiro quickly accumulated enough cash to pay off the Yakuza and even impressed them with his ability to do so. He also discovered that he enjoyed the freedom and power the Firefly suit gave him. He could simply take what he wanted and enjoy the fruits of his success, at least until he spent it all and, wondering how he’d managed it, began looking for his next score.

With the authorities and Honshu Corp hot on his heels in Japan, Hotaru has used his Yakuza ties to get out of the country and become an international thief and criminal, pulling off jobs in Australia, South America, and North America. He sometimes works as a mercenary, stealing for various clients, but he won’t take para-military or combat assignments. He’s a thief, not a soldier-for-hire. Other times he pulls off jobs on his own, or puts together a temporary gang to help achieve a big score. The Yakuza always knows where to find him, and has been known to call on his help from time to time.

Hotaru is a small man on a power trip, enjoying his ability to take and have what he wants, and the respect his newfound power gives him in the criminal underworld. He’s something of a coward when it comes to confrontation, preferring to flee if he’s caught in the act, and fighting only when cornered or unable to escape. Still, he’s selfish enough to use his abilities to create distractions for heroes, such as blasting buildings, bridges, or blinding drivers in traffic, if it allows him time to escape. He loves living the jet-setting high-life, and heroes may encounter him enjoying casinos, exclusive clubs, and fancy parties, often while he’s also casing them for a robbery later once he’s had his fun.

INCOGNITO

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Deception Master
Martial Arts Expert
Stealth Expert

QUALITIES

Always Pays His Debts
Devious to the Extreme
Master of the Thousand Faces

POWERS

Disguise: Incognito can assume the appearance of any humanoid subject with Incredibly (7) ability as a reaction. The transformation includes whatever he happens to be wearing (meaning he can either transform his clothing or the “clothing” is itself somehow a part of him). It is detailed down to things like fingerprints, retinal patterns, and voice-prints, allowing Incognito to slip past many security systems. It even includes the ability to reshape his brain or mind in various ways; psychics and others who fail to overcome his Incredible mental defenses perceive only what Incognito chooses.

Gadgets: Incognito has various Fair (4) level gadgets he uses, including a baton or staff, climbing grapple, or smoke or flash pellets, sufficient to provide him with a momentary distraction to slip away and change his appearance to disappear into a crowd.

BACKGROUND

No one knows what the infamous underworld figure known only as “Incognito” really looks like, or where he came from. No one knows if “he” is even a he, in fact. All that is known about Incognito is that he is a spy, thief, and assassin capable of looking like anyone. This power has allowed him to slip past some of the tightest security in the world, and to continue to evade capture.

Clients contact Incognito through various blind-drops, anonymous emails, and other temporary communications links. Payments in the millions of dollars or euros are deposited in secret overseas accounts, although Incognito sets his own rates and chooses his own jobs. The very few would-be clients who made the mistake of thinking otherwise learned to regret it in their final moments.

Heroes may encounter Incognito in the midst of carrying out one of his missions. In fact, they may encounter him multiple times without immediately realizing the strange spate of skilled espionage agents are all actually the same person, looking different each time. One of Incognito’s common scams is to pose as a law enforcement authority to “take charge” of a prisoner from the heroes, then turning around and releasing the villain (his client) and disappearing before the real authorities turn up.

A connection or supporting character quality for the heroes can really begin to earn its keep when Incognito kidnaps and replaces that character. The heroes start to notice the criminal underworld anticipating their activities, as if they knew in advance what the heroes were going to do. As it becomes increasingly clear they have a spy in their midst, the heroes need to figure out exactly who it is before Incognito decides the jig is up and tries to abscond with whatever useful information and items he can get from the team’s headquarters. If one of your players is willing to play along, Incognito might even replace their character for a time to spy on the team! He’ll choose a gimmick or trained hero he can imitate relatively easily (perhaps with the aid of some stolen or covert devices).

Incognito may also take to committing crimes while looking like the various heroes, faking their powers with special effects as needed. The police have to investigate, and it may be difficult for the heroes to clear their names from the inside of a jail cell. Do they cooperate with the authorities, leaving Incognito and the rest of the criminal element free to do as they please while the good guys are incarcerated, or do they defy the law in order to try and clear their own names?

THE INTRUDER

PROWESS	NONE	0
COORDINATION	NONE	0
STRENGTH	NONE	0
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	INCREDIBLE	7

SPECIALTIES

Mental Resistance
Possession

QUALITIES

Bodiless Otherworldly Entity
Desire for Power and Experience
“We have an intruder.”

POWERS

Possession: The Intruder has the ability to possess living host bodies with mental abilities (levels greater than None).

It touches a new potential host body and makes a Fantastic (9) Possession test against the victim’s Willpower, treating the outcome like a use of the Mind Control power, determining how long the Intruder can control the host. Its own mental abilities replace those of the host while it is in control, and the Intruder has access to the host’s memories, like a Fantastic Telepathy power, which it uses to enhance any deception.

If a host is knocked unconscious, the Intruder is trapped within the helpless body until another potential host touches it. It is ejected from a host body that dies or is otherwise destroyed. If ejected from a host and unable to possess another, the Intruder has Fantastic (9) Invisibility and Phasing, and drifts helplessly until it can possess a new host body.



BACKGROUND

The top secret Project: Bridge sought to penetrate the veil between worlds and explore what lay beyond in other dimensions of existence, and in the strange realm between them. One of their probes brought back something strange and alien, but intelligent and cunning. When it possessed the first technician to encounter it, it responded to the warning “We have an intruder!” taking that on as what it would be called in this new world of form and experience, since it has no name of its own pronounceable in any human tongue.

The Intruder is utterly fascinated with the nature of existence in Earth’s dimension and the experience of possessing a body, with all of the sensations that go with it. Unfortunately, it is also utterly amoral and considers physical beings little more than playthings for its own amusement, like suits that it tries on or toys to entertain it until they end up broken and discarded. Since its arrival in this dimension, it has become like an addict, moving from one host and one new experience to another, high on every new form and sensation.

Since discovering the existence of people with super-powers, the Intruder has focused on them as its preferred hosts, usually looking to “trade-up” its current body for one that is more powerful and capable of offering greater protection and security. Its fascination with interesting new sensations and experiences leads it to choose less “optimal” hosts from time to time: It would much prefer a physically powerful form, but not one that it cannot enjoy. It is also incapable of possessing non-biological life-forms like androids or robots. It could enter and control a cyborg brain, but such a concept is repugnant to the Intruder, given the limitations of such a form.

The Intruder doesn’t care to discuss where it came from, other than to say that it was “bored” and “alone” and glad to leave and come to such an interesting and enjoyable reality. There may not even be language to describe its home reality in terms humans can understand. Whether the Intruder’s previous reality was its original home, or some kind of prison where it was being kept, also remains unknown.

KARNIFEX

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AMAZING	8
INTELLECT	GREAT	6
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Mental Resistance
Military

QUALITIES

Champion of the Golkoth Empire
“I must not fail!”
Seeker of the Star Entity

POWERS

Battlesuit: Karnifex wears an alien battlesuit, granting him Total Life Support and Great (6) Damage Resistance.

The suit’s gauntlets are equipped with energy projectors that fire Great (6) Blast attacks and that are capable of draining the vital energy of other life forms by touch, a Fair (4) Energy Drain attack with the Life Drain extra.

Space Warps: Karnifex’s greatest resource is Golkoth warp technology, granting him Supreme (10) Teleportation with the Gate extra. It transported him across the light-years to Earth and allows him to kidnap his test subjects. Computers in his battlesuit handle the computations necessary for the warps. Transportation at planetary distances is effectively instantaneous, but interstellar warps require careful calculation and the right window of time before opening.

BACKGROUND

Across the galaxy, the Golkoth Empire has come under attack by an implacable alien foe. They attack without warning and without mercy and the Golkoth cannot long withstand their onslaught. So the Emperor met with his Council and a radical course of action was sanctioned: The Empire needs a Star Entity to fight for them, for only such a being can stand against the invaders and defeat them.

The warrior Karnifex was summoned and given his instructions. On the planet Earth, the inhabitants have manifested a bizarre range of powers and abilities. One amongst them may be a potential Star Entity or, if not, perhaps a group of them can be brought to Golkoth, their combined powers used to create a new Star Entity. The fate of the Empire is at stake and Karnifex must not fail!

Once Karnifex arrives on Earth, he seeks out its native super-beings to begin the process of testing them, seeking a nascent Star Entity. If any humans seek to stop him, Karnifex brooks no interference with his mission. He uses his powers and alien technology to capture various representatives of Earth's super-powered population, putting them to the test to determine their usefulness to his mission. Either one or more of them have the potential he seeks, or they will be winnowed out of the field. Karnifex knows that a potential Star Entity may need to be pushed to the breaking point to awaken that potential. If so, then it will be done.

An honorable warrior of many battles, Karnifex finds what he must do to carry out his mission distasteful. He has no great desire to recruit unwilling aliens to serve the Empire's cause. He would prefer honorable combat against the foes of the Empire, to be on the front-lines defending it, but his Emperor has commanded, and he must obey. At least part of Karnifex hopes to discover a potential means by which *he* may become the Star Entity his people need to defeat their enemies.

It is possible Karnifex's mission may fail, that the Star Entity is not forthcoming, at least not in time to save the Golkoth from destruction. If the alien warrior finds himself stranded on Earth, with no Empire left for him to return to, what will he do then? He may choose to try and rebuild Golkoth on Earth, conquering it and establishing a Second Empire, or he might take all of the knowledge and resources he acquired and use them to launch a final retributive strike against the destroyers of his people, regardless of the other lives that might be lost in the process.

KING GHOST

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	INCREDIBLE	7



SPECIALTIES

Performance Master

QUALITIES

Dying On Stage
The Show Must Go On
Theatrical Ghost

POWERS

Ghost Form: As an undead specter, King Ghost has Total Life Support and Fantastic (9) Invisibility and Phasing powers, including the Floating extra.

Illusion: King Ghost has Incredible (7) powers of Illusion, able to cause other being to perceive whatever “staging” he wishes. Targets who believe his illusions react as if they were real, up to and including suffering Stamina loss and stunning effects.

Although King Ghost’s illusions cannot themselves be fatal, they can lead to fatal circumstances, especially when they mix illusion and reality (such as falls from catwalks or “trick” weapons that turn out to be real).

King Ghost’s Performance specialty applies to his efforts to convince his “audience” that his illusions and tricks are real.

BACKGROUND

Sir Richard Bellingham was a noted thespian and stage performer some hundred years ago, particularly known for his Shakespeare work, and for his fondness for the high-life, which eventually led him to leave behind his native England and emigrate to the United States looking for “new opportunities”—and for theater companies unfamiliar with his excesses and personal habits. He found such opportunities, and his skill as an actor and sometime director helped to keep him in work in spite of his drinking, womanizing, and gambling.

Eventually, however, Sir Richard found himself in debt to some quite serious people who were not charmed by his ingratiating manners. Lacking anything else with which to bargain, Sir Richard was able to leverage one thing: his gift for misdirection. The criminals holding his debt recognized the value of a traveling theater company as cover for certain activities, particularly when their travels took them close to banks, jewelers, and other potential targets. Sir Richard himself was always on-stage when robberies occurred, but he also benefitted from some of the take and, even after his considerable debt was paid, found he enjoyed the fruits of his associates' ill-gotten gains.

But then Miss Lola Marquis, the young new leading lady, stumbled upon Bellingham's “off-stage” activities. Her tragic and fatal accident during rehearsal right before the opening of a performance of “The Scottish Play,” Shakespeare's *MacBeth*, brought the attention of the local constabulary, the kind of heat Sir Richard's associates couldn't afford. So it was that Richard Bellingham died on-stage before an entire audience, a victim of poison, and the note found in his dressing room revealed an affair with Miss Marquis, a lover's quarrel, and a guilty man who choose to perish after accidentally killing the woman he loved. The trail of the mysterious robberies went as cold as Bellingham's corpse, and the theater company folded not long thereafter.

But the show must go on. Sir Richard's spirit did not rest and a revival performance of Shakespeare at the same renovated theater decades later brought him back on-stage in an all new way. “King Ghost” terrorized an audience who first thought him the ghost of Hamlet's father. He has since been settling scores with the descendants of those who wronged him, while at the same time garnering the same things he craved in life: particularly the attention of an audience, willing or otherwise. Rather than a tormented soul trapped in the afterlife, King Ghost aims to enjoy his newfound power and avoid moving on to whatever final judgment awaits him for as long as possible.

LADY DREAD

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Animated Dreads Expert
Athletics
Criminal

QUALITIES

Hair-Raising
Lost and Alone
Searching for Her Past

POWERS

Animated Dreads: Lady Dread's long and full dreadlocks can animate and elongate at her mental command.

Her dreads have Incredible (7) Strength and Stretching powers, able to reach out to extended distance. The dreads are also effectively Incredible Material. If severed or otherwise damaged, they regrow quickly to their normal length and fullness, restored fully in between chapters.

Lady Dread can use her animated locks to strike or wrestle with Incredible ability, to vault or carry her over obstacles or up walls like the Leaping and Wall-Crawling powers, and to defend against physical attacks with Incredible ability.

BACKGROUND

“Hey, Lady Dread!” the voice called to her. “Whatchu got under all that hair...? Lemme see.” She didn’t know who he was, or where she was. All she knew was that her hair responded to the need to keep the strange man away in a most forceful way. After it grabbed him and hurled him into the brush, he and his friends were quick to run away, shouting about how she was a freak. Was she? It didn’t seem strange to her, but she didn’t know. She didn’t know anything about who she was or how she came to be in that park so late at night. All she knew then was she could protect herself and what they called her—Lady Dread.

Since then, she has used the power of her animated locks to get by. She doesn’t trust the authorities, doesn’t trust anyone, really, and her time living outside the law has taught her that she’s entirely right. She steals and works with criminals, not really considering herself one, although she has committed crimes. She is doing what she needs to in order to survive and to try and find out more about who she is and where she came from.

The others who have worked with her say Lady Dread certainly carries herself with a sense of importance for someone who doesn’t even know her own name. While she does what’s necessary, Lady Dread has standards. She won’t kill, and she prefers to do as little harm as possible, but she has no problems stealing, and tends to feel it is her due to take what she needs. She’s willing to work with others, and even follow a strong and capable leader, but she’s nobody’s servant and expects her associates to respect her and her standards.

WHO IS LADY DREAD?

It’s up to the Game Master exactly who Lady Dread is and where she comes from. Possibilities include:

- Nobility from a mysterious hidden civilization of people with super-powers in Africa or the Caribbean, where there are others like her.
- An escaped experimental test subject, her memory wiped deliberately or by the trauma of the experiments.
- An alien exile on Earth, her memory deliberately blocked as part of her sentence, or accidentally by the trauma or her arrival.
- The vessel of occult forces, perhaps connected with Baron Kriminel and Voodoo, which caused her memory loss.

LISSO

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4

SPECIALTIES

Athletics Expert
Lasso Master
Martial Arts
Stealth

QUALITIES

“Looks like you’re all tied up”
Modern-Day Rustler
YEEEE-HAW!

POWERS

Lariat of Larceny: Lasso wields the mysterious Lariat of Larceny, a length of rope with a slipknot lasso she uses with Incredible (7) skill.

The lariat grants Lasso an Incredible Binding attack, although breaking the binding merely means getting loose, as the lariat itself is virtually unbreakable. She can also use the lariat for Incredible Swinging, including grabbing things with the rope’s loop.

Moreover, the lariat responds to Lasso’s mental commands, animating and moving as she wishes, as if she possessed Telekinesis to control it, so long as it is in visual distance or (in the GM’s opinion) she can clearly visualize its location. Lasso may be able to perform other stunts involving the lariat—treat them as trouble for the heroes when she does.



& BUCK BRONCO

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	INCREDIBLE	7
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Athletics
Martial Arts
Mental Resistance
Wrestling

QUALITIES

Mule-Headed
Not My First Rodeo
Plenty of Horsepower

POWERS

Hoofing: Buck's horse-like legs and lower body give him Poor (2) land speed, carrying as much as he can lift.

Tough Hide: Buck Bronco's tough hide and muscle give him Average (3) Damage Resistance.

BACKGROUND

Tess Weyland was born to be a cowgirl. She was sitting a horse almost before she could walk, and attending rodeos not long after that. Although she wasn't going to be anybody's "little lady" she made her daddy proud with the way she could ride, shoot, and—most of all—handle a lasso. Tess won plenty of competitions, from riding to rope-tricks and hog-tying, and she looked forward to the day when she would take over the family ranching business.

Unfortunately for the Weylands and a whole lot of other families, the MacDonald Agricultural Development Corporation moved into the area and started buying up farms and ranches, and running others out of business so they could buy up the properties for pennies on the dollar. Ben Weyland held out and refused MAD Co.'s offers, but then his wife got sick and medical bills started piling up just as business was failing. Although Tess protested, Ben had to sell or else face financial ruin. In the end, it didn't much matter: Linda Weyland succumbed to her illness, and her husband succumbed to despair and shame not long thereafter.

Tess Weyland's sole inheritance was a trunk of old belongings from the family attic, which about fit into a suitcase, but among the faded photos and other mementos was a length of rope, as supple as could be, but stronger than all get out, supposedly cut from the same coil as the so-called "Noose of Justice" used by a "hanging judge" in the Old West. When Tess played around with the lariat, she discovered it was far more than it appeared, and hit upon an idea.

Wearing a mask and with the aid of the lariat, Tess Weyland broke into the local MAD Co. facility. She wasn't certain what she meant to do; maybe just bust up the place, or look for some incriminating evidence, or even just rob from the company that was robbing the entire county and state blind. What she found was way more than she bargained for. MAD Co. was concealing a secret laboratory for genetic experiments, and Tess found people being held prisoner there...except that while they might have still been "people" they weren't exactly human, not any more.

She busted this one fella out of there, tall and build like a bronco, which made sense because he also had a horse's head, hooves, and tail! He didn't much recall who he was before MAD Co. did whatever it was they did to him, but he did know he didn't want to be anybody's lab rat any more. Tess nicknamed him "Buck Bronco" and told him her name was "Lasso," at least where there might be anybody listening. Together they took off into the night and MAD Co.'s mercenaries came after them.

Since then, Lasso and Buck have been on the run, pulling heists and doing what they need to survive, and particularly hitting back at MAD Co. until they can draw the attention of the authorities to what is really going on, or find evidence they can use against "Old Man" MacDonald and his mad-science experiments. Truth of the matter is, Lasso and Buck Bronco make a great team, and both of them find the life of outlaws suits them. Even if they do manage to take down MAD Co. one of these days, who knows if they'll want to give up the criminal life by then?

MACDONALD AGRICULTURAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (MAD Co.)

Although most of the world thinks of MacDonald Agricultural Development Corporation through its “Ol’ MacDonald,” “MacDonald Farms,” and “Manor Farms” brands of food and supermarket goods (which it thinks of it at all), the corporation is a multi-billion dollar agribusiness that controls farms and food production facilities around the world. Although it presents the image of “friendly family farms,” the company has been heavily invested and involved with cutting-edge breeding and genetic engineering programs for decades.

In particular, MAD Co. has been involved in more than just creating disease- and blight-resistant crops and high-yield livestock that can be raised with fewer antibiotics; they have engaged in illegal gene-splicing and recombinant DNA experiments involving human subjects, part of their top-secret “Project: Barnyard”. The successes of the project include the creation of some human-animal chimeras, and the ability to splice certain animal traits into human DNA (even retroactively with tailored RNA sequences).

Naturally, MAD Co. CEO James Ernest MacDonald and his cronies wish to keep the company’s illegal activities secret, and have been known to use the resources of Project: Barnyard to help do so. They label groups opposed to MAD Co.’s ruthless expansion in agribusiness as “eco-terrorists” opposed to “fair trade and business” and hunt down anyone who knows about the company’s dirty secrets.

BARNYARD CHIMERA

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
4	3	4	2	4	3	7

Specialties: Athletics

Powers: The same as the basic animal type from the **Creatures** section of the **Game Mastering** chapter of Icons.

Qualities: Both Animal and Human, Creation of MAD Co.

The above is a typical genetic creation of MAD Co.’s Project: Barnyard. Increase Coordination or Strength below the original animal’s to that level (so a chimerical eagle or lion would have Fair Coordination, and a chimerical elephant or rhino would have Incredible Strength, for example). Adjust Stamina for any increase in Strength.

LEGION

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3

SPECIALTIES

Guns
Military

QUALITIES

Maze of Secrets
My Name Is Legion, for We Are Many
Secret Leader

POWERS

Equipment: Legion soldiers are equipped with various weapons, typically Fair (4) blasting or shooting weapons, sometimes heavier weapons for small teams of squads of soldiers. See **Devices** in **ICONS** or **Great Power** for options.

Self-Destruct: Some Legion soldiers are “programmed” to self-destruct in a burst of flames, burning instantly to ash, if they are defeated or captured, or break-down during interrogation, to ensure the organizations secrets are kept.

BACKGROUND

Two well-dressed figures meet at an expensive café, one a long-time Senator, the other a captain of industry. Their meeting would appear to



be about lobbying interests—the “cost of doing business” as they say—until they lean close and one whispers, “My name is Legion.”

“For we are many,” the other relies. The message is received. The plan is underway. Later that day, masked soldiers attack the business rival of the captain of industry and the Senator takes to the floor to call for tighter government restrictions on travel and “disruptive foreign elements”.

They are Legion. They are everywhere.

THE SECRET LEADER

The hooded and masked figure known only as the Secret Leader appears to be the master of the vast ranks of Legion, issuing commands via shadowy communication links and secret meetings. Exactly who (or what) the Secret Leader may be remains a mystery: an infamous terrorist, a diabolical agent of the apocalypse, or a front for another villain?

WHAT IS LEGION?

The true nature and goals of Legion are left for the GM to decide for an individual Icons series. They are, on the face of it, your classic cultist masked terrorist organization, but their real nature and motives could be any number of things.

Mundane: Legion may simply be a mundane terrorist organization run by a cabal of influential and unscrupulous individuals looking to sow chaos in the world for their own benefit. The Secret Leader may be one of them, or just a front for their control over the organization.

Mystical: It’s no coincidence that Legion uses demonic catchphrases from the Bible, as they are really a secret infernal cult, dominated by people who have sold their souls in exchange for power and now do the bidding of hellish forces that would see the world corrupted before it burns and falls into the pit forever.

Mad Science: The mystical mumbo-jumbo is just a cover for Legion’s real resources: science and technology far beyond that of even the governments they oppose. Their soldiers are brainwashed puppets, some of them not even fully aware they serve the Legion until their code-phrases are activated, and their weapons are greater than most people know.

LORD KISIN

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	GOOD	5
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GREAT	6
WILLPOWER	FANTASTIC	9



SPECIALTIES

Occult Master
Power (Magic) Expert

QUALITIES

Mayan God of Death
The Stinking Lord
Wearer of the Collar of Eyes

POWERS

The Collar of Eyes: Lord Kisin wears the magical Collar of Eyes, granting him sight in spite of his eyeless face.

It also gives him the Great (6) Super-Senses See Magic, See in the Dark, See Invisible, See Spirits, and 360-degree Vision.

Death Touch: As a death god, Kisin's touch is an Amazing (8) Energy Drain with the Life Drain extra.

Invulnerability: Lord Kisin has Incredible (7) Damage Resistance and Immortality. The destruction of his physical manifestation on Earth simply banishes him back to his extra-dimensional underworld.

Magic: Kisin wields magic of Amazing (8) power, including Mastery of the Blast, Illusion, Telepathy, and Teleportation spells.

BACKGROUND

Mayan myth contains a prophecy of a coming changing of the worlds, the ending of one world and the birth of a new age. Although some believe this prophecy is fixed and certain, in truth it is a moment of decision, one that will determine the future of the world and humanity. It is also a time when Lord Kisin, the Stinking Lord, Wearer of the Collar of Eyes, and Mayan God of the Dead and the Underworld, can make his final play for power and dominion. If he can turn the Wheel of Destiny his way, the world will die, and all will fall under his domain, forever.

Lord Kisin manifest in the world as a hideous, mummified corpse dressed in ancient Mayan regalia, particularly the broad golden Collar of Eyes, which permits him to see in every direction and to perceive things hidden from the sight of mere mortals. However, Kisin's withered skull has no eyes of its own and, without his collar, he exists solely in darkness, unable to see at all.

That is close to the death god's only weakness, however. He is truly immortal, and highly resistant to harm, capable of draining the life out of other creatures with just a touch. Fortunately for humanity, he is also bound to the underworld of the dead, unless given an opportunity by the prophecy and the delicate flow of fate to intervene in mortal affairs. Lord Kisin looks for and relishes these moments, planning each one carefully, like a master strategist.

Lord Kisin's schemes are all directed at bringing about the rise of the New Sun where he rules over a world of the dead. Heroes may encounter serial killings in the style of ancient Mayan rituals intended to align a time for the death god to intervene in the world, or the work of sinister cults worshipping Lord Kisin in hopes they will be spared when he comes into his full power. Heroes may find Miss Tikal, the Secret Sorceress of the Sixth Sun, a potential ally against her old foe (see the **Assembled Edition of ICONS**).

The combined threat of Lord Kisin and the Yama King (see his description) may lead Warlock to try pitting the two godlike beings against each other, as both want to bring about the end of the world for their own rise to power. Such a plan has the potential to lock the two in an eternal stalemate and save the world, but could just as easily tear the Earth apart in the struggle between them! Do heroes who learn of this foolhardy plan try to stop Warlock or help him to succeed?

MADAME MUSE

PROWESS	POOR	2
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	POOR	2
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Insight Expert
Psychology Expert

QUALITIES

Inspiration of the Underworld
Wearer of the Mystery Mask
Works Behind the Scenes

POWERS

Mystery Mask: Madame Muse wears the mystical Mystery Mask, which gives her the power to inspire emotions in subjects of her choosing within visual range, Amazing (8) level Emotional Control. Madame Muse prefers anger or sadness against opponents who threaten her. The Mystery Mask can also inspire a single subject with an Amazing Boost Intellect or Boost Awareness effect.

Madame Muse can also use the Mystery Mask more subtly, inspiring such disregard that she gains Amazing Invisibility with the Minds Only limit, as she is not truly invisible, but others act as if they don't notice her. She can likewise erase memories with Amazing ability, using it to cover her tracks. The mask protects its wearer by inspiring a reluctance to attack or harm her: unless a character overcomes this Amazing power, Madame Muse defends against attacks with Amazing ability, opponents unconsciously "pulling" their shots so they're more likely to miss.

BACKGROUND

Some crave the limelight without being aware of just how much that light can burn. Faye Hayden had dreams of stardom on the stage, but she lacked the necessary presence and influence to be a truly great actress. She tried everything, but her dreams always seemed too far out of reach. In desperation, she followed rumors about the mysterious Mystery Masks of the Muses, said to contain the inspirational power of the arts themselves, and she succeeded in finding them. She merged the masks of Comedy and Tragedy into one, claiming its power for her own.

Although the combined Mystery Mask gave Faye the ability to influence an audience and more, it also ended her presence in the spotlight. Unable to remove the mask (or simply unwilling to ever do so), she realized there was greater power and influence in directing things from behind the scenes, in being a muse and inspiring those who wanted to take center-stage. So Faye Hayden vanished the night of that last, fateful performance, along with all memory of her, and the mysterious Madame Muse became a force for “inspiration” from the shadows.

While she offered her gifts to artists and performers, Madame Muse found even greater benefits in serving as the inspiration to certain figures in the underworld. If a crime-lord, gang-leader, or would-be super-criminal needed a brilliant master-plan, she was willing to whisper words of encouragement in their ears and open their minds to possibilities they had never before imagined. Why become a criminal mastermind when you could *create* criminal masterminds and benefit from their success, while distancing yourself from their failures? The work fed the Mystery Mask’s need for emotion and Madame Muse’s ego and bank account simultaneously.

Heroes may encounter the mysterious Madame Muse when a spate of daring criminal activity begins in the city, new schemes and would-be masterminds sprouting like weeds. When it becomes clear some of the criminals involved could never come up with their plans on their own, the heroes may begin looking for the inspiration behind the scenes.

While serving as inspiration is one thing, Madame Muse never loses her desire for the spotlight, nor her love of drama, so she may also take the opportunity to “direct.” The power of the Mystery Mask allows her to stage “amusements” like an underground super-powered fighting ring, with her “acts” inspired to battle by the power of the Mask, their memories later wiped clean to protect the anonymity of the enterprise, until some heroes begin investigating, perhaps due to strange gaps in their own recollections.

MANTRA

PROWESS	POOR	2
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	POOR	2
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Business
Meditation
Mental Resistance
Performance

QUALITIES

Cult of Enlightenment
Entrancing Voice
Seeker of Sanat Kumara

POWERS

Hypnosis: Mantra's voice carries a powerful hypnotic quality, allowing her to Amazing (8) Mind Control over subjects able to hear her.

Mantra's Mind Control has the Hypnosis limit, able to issue a single command or suggestion, but can affect all subjects able to hear her voice at once. Mantra can and does use her Hypnosis to alter or erase subjects' memories and to implant powerful post-hypnotic suggestions to be carried out at a later time.

BACKGROUND

It is a challenge for any woman to succeed outside of the home and marriage in modern India, and Manjula Malakar worked her way from

administrative assistant through earning a business degree to influential executive at a relatively young age, but her constant work and ambition to succeed left her feeling empty even when she achieved her goals. She became a success, achieving far more independence than many, but what did “success” really mean in her life?

Feeling burned out by stress, plagued by constant headaches and sleepless nights, Manjula turned to her previously ignored spiritual heritage and adopted the practices of prayer and meditation, seeking inner peace and enlightenment, and pursuing her goals with the same dedication she brought to everything else. She eventually took a leave of absence from her work to go on a spiritual retreat, where her whole life changed.

Manjula experienced a powerful vision late one night while deep in prayer and meditation: a terrifying experience of strange spirits and beings beyond the veil of mundane human experience, accompanied by the image of twin flames like burning eyes looking into her soul and the voice, the powerful inner voice, that told her “You will do the work of Sanat Kumara, the Prince of the Earth,” before she was cast down, falling...falling as if forever, before she awoke.

The night unlocked something within Manjula. Her voice carries spiritual authority and a soothing power to induce trance in others, making them suggestible and subject to her instructions and influence. She became convinced that it was her responsibility to become a guru, a guide along the path to enlightenment, and to help humanity set aside its petty differences and attachment to meaningless material success, and prepare for the coming challenges of the age.

As Mantra, the serene leader of the Universal Path of Enlightenment, Ms. Malakar has combined her business and management acumen with her unique talents to create a growing world-wide movement with thousands of adherents listening to her meditative audio downloads and tuning in to her regular video messages and broadcasts to speak about the importance of achieving inner enlightenment. She is willing to use the tools at hand to achieve her goals and, for a non-materialist, has amassed quite a range of resources in a relatively short time. Although Mantra speaks of peace and harmony among all people, she also cannot allow anyone to interfere with her divine-ordained work—not matter what.

It’s up to the Game Master as to the exact nature of Mantra’s spiritual vision. Is she a divinely appointed guru, or has she gravely misunderstood the message she received?

MATADOR

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Athletics

QUALITIES

Corazon del Fuego
Curse of the Crimson Cape
Last of a Noble Line

POWERS

The Crimson Cape: Matador's Crimson Cape is infused with mystic power to provoke anger. Simply by waving it at a chosen target, Matador can affect them with Incredible (7) Emotion Control, limited to causing anger.

The Crimson Cape also protects Matador from harm, giving him Incredible ability for defensive reactions in combat to dodge or evade attacks.

The Heart of Fire: El Matador wields the mystic power of the Heart of Fire (El Corazon del Fuego), giving him Incredible (7) Fire Control, including the ability to throw Blasts of fire for shooting damage out to extended range and to shape fire into constructs like fiery rings or cages he uses to entrap his foes.

BACKGROUND

A deal with the Devil always comes due, even if you aren't the one who made it. Diego de la Rocha started out having it all: born the heir of a wealthy Spanish family, with wealth, status, good looks, and his every need catered to and looked after, allowing him the time and opportunity to indulge in whatever pastimes he wanted, including an interest in the romanticism of bull-fighting, which the de la Rocha men had excelled at for generations.

Then came the shocking revelation from his dying father: The story that the family's success was owed to an occult pact with the Devil seven generations previously, and that each first-born de la Rocha son was required to pay the dues of that arrangement in blood. "Accidents" had been arranged, and authorities bribed or bought off. What's more, the first-born son inherited certain powers when he came of age, wielding infernal fire and the family's crimson matador cape.

Diego's first reaction was one of complete disbelief, but when he discovered the power of El Corazon del Fuego—the Heart of Fire—within him, he began to fear what he had been told was the truth. Would he murder an innocent person to keep his power, wealth, and the family secret?

In the end, he couldn't do it, and everything began to unravel. Evidence of illegal business dealings came out after his father's death. Assets were frozen and bills began to pile up. Minor criminal incidents from Diego's youth resurfaced, with the police paying more attention to the de la Rocha heir as creditors hounded him day and night, and he suddenly became the focus for animal advocate groups looking to ban bull-fighting as a practice. In no time at all, Diego found himself penniless, hounded by the police and the media, and fled the country with what possessions and resources he had left, including his sole remaining inheritances: his name, his mysterious powers, and the Crimson Cape itself.

He has since fashioned the masked identity of El Matador, wielding his powers as a thief and petty criminal to steal the money he once took for granted. He is very careful, however, to ensure no one gets hurt as part of his crimes, cutting a dashing and even romantic figure. Still, in the back of his mind, the thought nags at him: It could all be his again, if only he would fulfill the terms of the Devil's Bargain. After all, what is the spilling of a little innocent blood, to ensure a lifetime of success...? Unless, of course, his father was out of his mind, in which case it's possible that Diego is following suit.

MERRY WIDOW

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Acrobatics
Martial Arts
Sleight of Hand
Stealth
Whips

QUALITIES

All Part of the Game
Distracting Way About Her
Notorious Flirt

POWERS

Gadgets: Merry Widow has access to all kinds of high-tech spy equipment, giving her Fair (4) Gadgets. Her most common include gas and smoke grenades, disguise kits, and surveillance equipment.

Whip: Merry Widow carries and wields a specially-made whip she can use to inflict Fair (4) bashing or slashing damage (depending on how she uses it). She can also use her whip for a Fair Binding attack or for Swinging to get around.

BACKGROUND

“No reason I can’t mix business and fun, is there?” The international spy, thief, and assassin-for-hire known only as “The Merry Widow” certainly lives up to her name. She is responsible for a long list of crimes, but

seems to enjoy her work immensely, seeing it all as a kind of elaborate game.

Her origins are shrouded in mystery and she delights in spinning stories about how she worked her way to the top of Most Wanted lists around the world. In some of them, she came from poverty, forced into a life of prostitution, until she became the mistress and protege of an infamous assassin. Once she'd learned all she could from him, she murdered him in their bed and struck out on her own.

In other versions, she actually was born into great wealth, but grew bored with a privileged life where she had everything but freedom and was expected to marry as her family dictated. Her husband was her first victim on their wedding night and she discovered a talent for criminal enterprise and a taste for danger. Still other times she talks about government "black ops" programs (with the specific government changing from one tale to another), being born or marrying into organized crime, or an ancient assassin cult, or even top-secret cloning projects to engineer the perfect *femme fatale* agent. These may explain why there seem to be no records whatsoever of the Merry Widow before her first forays into crime.

What is known is the Merry Widow is a world-class athlete, combatant, and specialist in infiltration and assassination. Her preference for fetish-wear and a black veil, coupled with her expertise with a bullwhip, is a part of her motif. She has access to state-of-the-art equipment, and manages to conceal a surprising amount of it on her person, although she displays a dislike and distaste for firearms, with her usual trademark mysteriousness as to why. The Merry Widow is a notorious flirt, but anyone who takes an interest in her advances should be warned that her paramours have a very poor survival rate indeed.

Heroes may encounter Merry Widow in a variety of guises as she carries out missions for her clients. She might show up as the charming new friend or paramour of a potential target as she works her way into their confidence before striking, or as a mysterious thief who makes off with something right under the heroes' noses. She may even temporarily adopt a heroic identity in order to convince the heroes they can trust her, or at least pretend there's a possibility she could rehabilitate her, until she gets what she's after. Then she'll disappear with a laugh and promise the heroes they'll never see her coming next time.

MR. SCRATCH

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Occult Expert

QUALITIES

A Deal is a Deal
Little Devil
Signed and Sealed

POWERS

Conjuration: Mr. Scratch has Fantastic (9) power to conjure images or even substance from his own fiendish imagination or the desires of those around him. This gives him the effects of Empowerment, Force Constructs, Illusions, and Servant at his power level, along with the option for whatever power stunts the Game Master sees fit. Mr. Scratch usually uses his power to create illusory “backdrops” and to grant wishes in conjunction with his deals. His primary limits are the he cannot usurp the free will of any being or read their thoughts or memories without their consent.

Devil: Scratch is a supernatural being from beyond the earthly plane, possessing Supreme (10) Life Support, enabling him to ignore most mortal concerns, as well as Good (5) Damage Resistance. Scratch effectively has Immortality, since destruction of his earthly form simply banishes him temporarily back to Hell, but this is more of a challenge for the heroes rather than a power, as he rarely returns within the same story.

BACKGROUND

It might be ambition and looking to advance in the hierarchy of Hell, or simply a desire for cruel games and amusement—the imp known as “Mr. Scratch” has given many reasons for his involvement in earthly affairs, but he is a known and notorious liar, like all of his kind, so it’s quite possible none of them are entirely true. It may even be as Scratch has implied on at least one occasion that he is actually *The Devil*, Satan or Lucifer himself, in a form some can easily dismiss as comical, before they learn to regret having underestimated him.

Whatever the case, what is known is that Mr. Scratch is some sort of demonic or devil imp, a creature from a hellish dimension sometimes able to access the earthly plane. When he does so, he commonly implements a scheme to sow chaos and discord, particularly by offering to fulfill the darkest and most selfish wishes of mortals, often in exchange for their souls, or at least their cooperation in his plans. He delights in tempting and corrupting the innocent and in exposing what he calls the hypocrisy of goodness and morality, particularly by posing moral quandaries for so-called “heroes.”

Fortunately, Scratch’s games have rules, and there is always an out, if his victims can find it. If the heroes can solve whatever riddle or trick the infernal imp has posed to them, or can win the game set before them, then Mr. Scratch will vanish, sent back to his hellish realm for a time, until the stars align once again for him to return, or some foolish mortal calls upon the forces of evil for fulfillment of their darkest desire.

Although powerful, Mr. Scratch isn’t omnipotent; his manifest form can be destroyed, which banishes him back to Hell for a time, but he cannot ever truly be killed so long as there is evil in the world, as he is simply a manifestation of it. Scratch rarely gives heroes a straight-up fight, preferring to use illusion, deception, and various proxies and servants to get things done. Part of the challenge of dealing with him often involves figuring out his involvement in the first place, although the infernal imp is too egotistical to avoid “signing” his work for very long.

Game Masters with access to the **Icons A to Z** sourcebook may find the material in **“D” is for “Demons”** useful for running Mr. Scratch and his cohorts, particularly in terms of conjuring up lesser demons to do his dirty work. You may also want to make Scratch into a truly cosmic menace, as detailed in **“C” is for “Cosmic”** by giving him Vast (12) or greater abilities, able to do virtually anything within the rules of his game and the bounds of his interactions with mortals.

MONKEY BUSINESS

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	GREAT	6
STRENGTH	WEAK	1
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Athletics

QUALITIES

Independent Group
Than a Barrel Full of Monkeys
There's Always One More

POWERS

Duplication: Monkey Business has Cosmic (20) level Duplication powers (see **Icons A to Z**), able to “split” into up to 20 copies of herself, each with the same abilities and memories. Monkey Business has the Instant, Mental Link, Multiple, and Real Duplicates extras, meaning she can create up to her maximum number of duplicates in a single panel, and all of the duplicates share consciousness. If even one survives, she survives.

Group Mind: Monkey Business’s duplicates form a kind of collective mind, enhancing “their” mental powers: +1 level for 2 duplicates, and +1 level per doubling of duplicates thereafter to +5 levels for 16 or more.

Telekinesis: Monkey Business has Weak (1) Telekinesis, but her Group Mind can enhance them up to Great (6).

Telepathy: Likewise, Monkey Business has Weak (1) Telepathy, which her Group Mind can enhance up to Great (6).

BACKGROUND

Confeder-Ape absconded with a head full of knowledge about primate enhancement experimentation and a desire to liberate his fellow apes from human domination and mere animal savagery. Why he particularly chose to experiment on a female rhesus monkey, only he knows. Perhaps because she was a “liberated” test subject herself, already primed for certain genetic and cerebral changes.

Whatever the case, Confeder-Ape was looking to create a “one-monkey military” capable of rapid “deployment” via duplication, along with sufficient psychic sensitivity to respond like a single mind under his military direction. He succeeded, but should have reckoned with the independence of a newly intelligent mind, especially one that agreed with her selves and effectively outnumbered him.

The experimental subject Confeder-Ape called “Miss June” decides that she was no lady, nor was she subject to orders from some big brute. Her collective mind overwhelmed Confeder-Ape’s influence and she struck out on her own, ignoring bellowed psychic orders to return. When a swarm of well-coordinated monkeys began committing robberies, the term “Monkey Business” was splashed across headlines and enter the public consciousness, and June’s as well.

The first order of Monkey Business was and is survival: acquisition of food, shelter, resources, and information. Well acquainted with the notion of “life” in a laboratory, she avoids capture by humans at any cost. Fortunately, in this day and age, it’s amazing what you can order off the internet for delivery without anyone having to see who is there to pick it up. Likewise, it’s impressive what a gang of psychically-linked monkeys can achieve by way of breaking-and-entering.

Beyond that, Monkey Business primarily wants to satisfy her own curiosity, avoid being drawn back into Confeder-Ape’s orbit (or his Lost Cause), and perhaps contemplate what to do with her newfound life. Unfortunately, Monkey Business doesn’t have a very kind view of humanity, and the ultimate ascendance of other simians is about the only thing she and Confeder-Ape agree on. Since she prefers her “own company,” Monkey Business may look into ways to expand her powers, imagining an ideal world inhabited solely by duplicates of herself, linked in a vast collective consciousness with psionic powers capable of reaching out to the stars themselves.

NEPENTHE

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	INCREDIBLE	7
INTELLECT	GREAT	6
AWARENESS	INCREDIBLE	7
WILLPOWER	FANTASTIC	9

SPECIALTIES

Mind Control Expert

QUALITIES

The Green Conqueror
Grows like a weed
Many Roots and Branches
The Star-Seed



POWERS

Giant Plant: Nepenthe is a giant, alien plant, nearly 30 feet tall at full growth, giving it Incredible (7) Strength, Damage Resistance, and vine-like tentacles (Extra Body Parts). It also has Supreme (10) Life Support, able to survive in any environment.

Pollen: Nepenthe can emit various types of pollen, affecting living creatures. It can use pollen to create a Good (5) Affliction to a single target or in a close range burst, and it can emit pollen with Incredible (7) Mind Control effects.

BACKGROUND

Explorer and biologist Sergei Lysenko discovered the mysterious seed pod buried in a deep layer of ice in the Antarctic. Recent shifts in the ice shelf due to global climate change uncovered millennia-old layers, which Dr. Lysenko and his colleagues believed would yield tremendous

knowledge about ancient ecology. The seed was about the size and shape of an American football, with a dark brown casing harder than iron. Lysenko and his team took some initial readings, including X-rays. But before they could report their findings, the entire twelve-person team vanished. Russian military personnel found the abandoned outpost, several of its vehicles missing. There were signs of a struggle, but no indication what caused it. They collected what evidence there was, and the Kremlin classified all of the materials.

A few months later, BevCo International launched “Nepenthe,” its newest energy drink. The green, fizzy concoction, with its “patented secret formula” took the world by storm. Supermarket and convenience store shelves were regularly cleared out of stocks of the new beverage, and people raved about its health and personal benefits

Deep in a top-secret greenhouse controlled by the company lies the secret of their new energy drink’s success: “Nepenthe” is not its true name, if indeed it has one as we understand language. Nor was the Antarctic its true home. No, the seed recovered by Dr. Lysenko is from much further away, and has waited, buried beneath the ancient ice, a very long time. It is known by many names on many different worlds: the Sweet Mercy, the Star-Seed, That Which Drives Away Sorrow, the Blossom of Bliss, and the Green Conqueror. The root-plant is mass of deep, powerful roots and vines like bridge cables, capable of moving like tendrils. The central blossom exudes a sweet, heady scent able to lure prey into its clutches, and the acidic liquid within the blossom digests minerals and animal proteins.

The true power of Nepenthe, however, is its pollen; a golden-green substance that infiltrates other organisms. It has a euphoric effect, boosting energy levels and creating general feelings of happiness and well-being. More importantly, it binds its host to the parent plant and makes them suitable receptacles for the pollination and fertilization cycles. When the time is right, those who have ingested Nepenthe’s pollen become like extensions of it. They secure the plant’s territory and capture other creatures for it. Eventually, Nepenthe releases clouds of spores. They kill the animals hosts and allow new plants to germinate from their remains. A growing web of greenery covers and consumes the world. Then the planets germinate and expend the last of their energy firing countless seeds out into space. They may travel for millennia before they encounter a suitable biosphere in which they can take root, beginning the cycle anew.

NONSTOP

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Martial Arts
Technology

QUALITIES

Can't Stop Now
Non-Linear
Time After Time

POWERS

Time-suit: Nonstop's suit gives him Amazing (8) Time Control, limited to himself; the suit's time-distortion field doesn't extend beyond it and its wearer.

The suit allows him to duplicate the powers of Fast Attack and Super-Speed, plus the Super-Speed extras of Defending and Surface Speed. It gives him Time Travel as well, although use of the last power is ultimately the cause of Nonstop's problems, although that hasn't stopped him from using it.

BACKGROUND

Do you have a moment in your life you would go back and change, if you could? While many people ask themselves that question, Michael Kim was given the opportunity to actually *do* it, and he took it. A

technician working with a top-secret experimental time-suit design at some undisclosed point in the future, Michael stole the suit and jumped back to a point when he was a teenager in order to prevent his best friend from perishing in a car accident. Unfortunately, Michael didn't reckon with the complexities of tampering with history. Although he was successful, his younger self suffered injuries that left him a quadriplegic, paralyzed from the neck down.

That Michael didn't suffer the repercussions of his actions suggested he was now living in an alternate timeline of his own creation, and he set about trying to alter circumstances again to fix things, without crossing his own personal time-line, an event which could have unknown but disastrous effects, from what he knew of the time-suit's research and design.

So the mysterious masked and suited figure became involved in sightings and unusual incidents. When confronted by a hero more than thirty years ago—relatively early on Michael's personal timeline—he said he “can't stop now,” earning him the nickname “Nonstop” among heroes and authorities, who still don't know who Nonstop is or when he is from, although it has since (from the linear perspective of our timeline) become clear that he's a time-traveler.

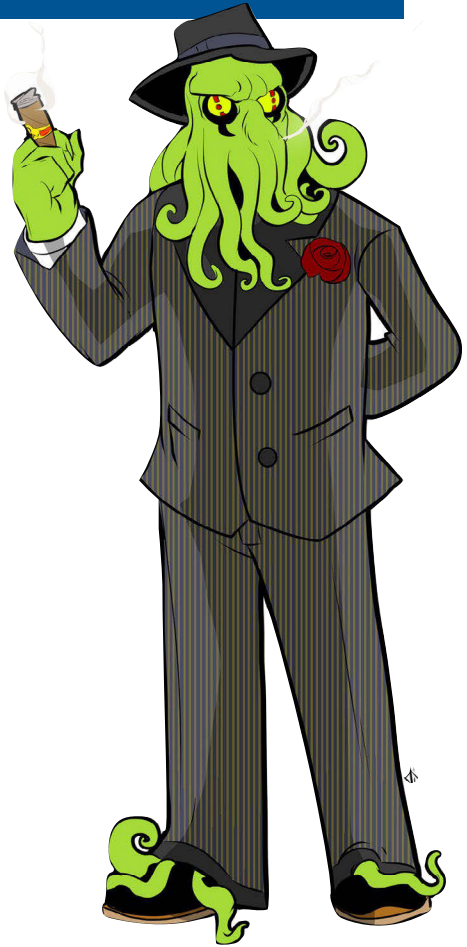
Nonstop appears at a particular point in time and then works out a plan to manipulate events in order to “right” the flow of history in the way that he wants. It can range from ensuring certain people meet or causing (or preventing) events, from the obscure to the disastrous. The events usually connect with his own timeline in some fashion, but the link can be a considerable distance away in both space and time. The lead-up to his plan may require gathering information and resources, usually stolen using his time-distorting speed and technical skills. If he is able to achieve his goal, he spends some time evaluating its effect before time-jumping again.

Nonstop uses his suit's time-travel capabilities as little as possible, as he's discovered that his timeline becomes increasingly tangled, and his efforts to manipulate events increasingly complex the more he does it. There's also considerable evidence that either the process of time traveling or of tampering with history is having a negative effect on Nonstop's sanity, as he sometimes appears quite irrational, but it's unclear exactly when in his own timeline this happens.

Although Nonstop is primarily an oddball thief, it's possible his temporal meddling could trigger a massive crisis of the sort that could involve time travelers like Tempus Khan and Master Tulku.

THE OCTOFATHER

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	GREAT	6
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	INCREDIBLE	7



SPECIALTIES

Criminal Expert
Mental Resistance

QUALITIES

Advanced Mind
Alien Octopoid Gangster Cliché
“Fuggeddabowdit”

POWERS

Telekinesis: The Octofather has Incredible (7) powers of telekinesis, able to move objects with mental power alone, including projecting an invisible protective Force Field around his body.

Telepathy: The Octofather’s greater power, however, is his Amazing (8) telepathy, including powers of Illusion, Mental Blast, and Mind Control, which he uses to retain his influence as a powerful mob boss.

BACKGROUND

At first glance, the Octofather looks like someone put a crime pulp mag and a horror pulp mag into a blender and came up with a gangster with an octopus for a head. Worse, the Octofather need not hide his

appearance—his advanced mental powers enable him to walk most places without a second glance. He always has a few mob lieutenants around him and a woman one each rubbery arm. When he speaks, his digitally-enhanced voice sounds like bad gangster slang processed through a synthesizer.

In truth, the Octofather is one of the N'Cephalos, an advanced, peaceful species from the other side of the galaxy. The Octofather was a bored technician inspired by incoming transmissions from a primitive planet, especially the mobster movies. An avid holo-vid player, the Octofather (his real name is a succession of distinct gurgles) decided to use the planet as his playground. He picked an Earth city and used his abilities to locate and eradicate the local crime bosses, creating his own gang from the remains.

The Octofather often outfits himself with a tommy-gun largely for effect, he rarely uses it. Due to the evolved nature of his species, the Octofather is actually unused to physical contact and finds earth women strangely appealing. He plays the role of mob boss to the hilt, treating his people like family and taking any treachery as a personal insult.

In spite of not being used to the notion of fighting, the Octofather is no pushover. Far from it—he is stronger than an average human, with greater control over his body's involuntary responses. In addition, his mind is a formidable weapon, able to flip over a car with a sidelong glance, or easily turn aside bullets and similar primitive weapons.

Unfortunately, the Octofather is not particularly clear on the division between fantasy and reality as we know it. His criminal activities on Earth are nothing more than a game to him—a game he pursues obsessively, but a game nonetheless. Thus he doesn't want his criminal operation to run too smoothly, that would be boring! No, he wants the challenge of rival bosses, of crusading cops and nosy reporters and, most of all, of heroes trying to bring him down. That's where the action is. If he happens to break some of his human "playthings" in the process, well ... there are billions of them. A few aren't going to be missed.

Fuggeddabowdit!

PAPER TIGER

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

SPECIALTIES

Business
Origami Master

QUALITIES

Clever Hands and Mind
Honorable Triad Boss
Something Up His Sleeve

POWERS

Origami Servants: Paper Tiger has the Incredible (7) power to transform any of the origami figurines he folds into life-sized, animate objects with the abilities of the actual creature or its, up to his power level.

So he can, for example, fold a literal paper tiger and bring it to life with the abilities of a lion from the **Creatures** section of the **Game Mastering** chapter of **ICONS**. He can likewise make various objects, from cages to walls and more of Incredible material. Any creatures he creates and animates are under his mental control and obey his commands.

BACKGROUND

Liang Dian Nuo (also known by the Anglicized name “Daniel Liang”) was born in Hong Kong and educated abroad. He learned that his father’s



many “business interests” involved close ties with the Chinese Triads, including smuggling operations out of Hong Kong and Chinese coastal cities to places all over the world. His father appreciated Daniel’s keen intellect, and indulged his son’s love of art, to a point, but also expected Daniel to fulfill his family obligations and eventually take over the business.

As a gift to win his son’s affections, the elder Liang gave Daniel part of a rare, old manuscript on origami paper-folding, which was his passion. It unlocked secrets undreamed of, “unfolding” in Daniel’s spirit a profound connection with his work. He learned how to literally breathe life into his creations! When a rival gang murdered his father, Daniel used his newfound power to avenge him and seize control of the birthright he once thought to reject.

Now, Hong Kong businessman Daniel Liang of Liang Imports International is known for his habit of folding little origami figures during meetings, and giving them as gifts and tokens of his esteem. What his rivals and associates alike don’t know is how those figurines can spy, steal, or even kill at their creator’s command. Meanwhile, the mysterious “Paper Tiger” of China is a force to be reckoned with in the criminal underworld, baffling police and easily eliminating potential rivals.

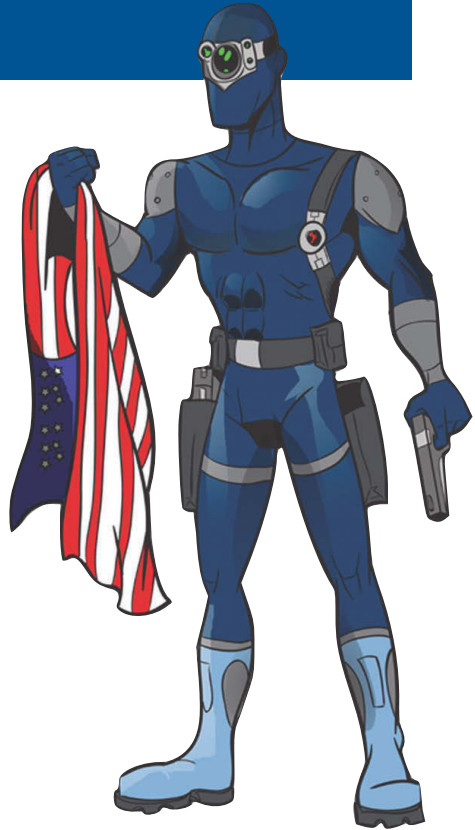
When heroes bust a smuggling warehouse controlled by the Triads, they run into some of Paper Tiger’s origami creations, left to deal with trouble. They get their first taste of the mysterious crime-lord’s powers and *modus operandi*, while Paper Tiger learns about the heroes and their interference in his business. He may decide to take steps to eliminate them as a threat, or at least to distract them with some more of his creations while his people move contraband in and out of the city.

The Tiger Triad may also cultivate alliances with other criminal gangs, or run up against competition, setting off a gang war. This could include super-gangsters like the Octofather or Chopper and his Road Warriors, amongst others. Paper Tiger uses one of his origami, a life-sized ancient Chinese warrior, complete with sword and armor, as his proxy for meetings and negotiations, leading some to believe the legendary “Paper Tiger” is a literal man of animated paper with a collection of origami followers!

Eventually, Liang Dian Nuo becomes aware of other fragments of the legendary origami codex he studied, in the possession of a museum, university, or private collector. A small army of life-sized origami monkeys and cranes try to steal the fragments, so Paper Tiger can study them in hopes of expanding or increasing his powers. He may seek out other artifacts or secrets, including rare forms of paper for his creations.

THE PATRIOT

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Guns Expert
Martial Arts
Military Master
Stealth Expert

QUALITIES

Does Whatever It Takes
My Country, Right or Wrong
Veteran Soldier

POWERS

Equipment: Patriot uses a variety of equipment in his never-ending war, including an armored uniform providing Poor (2) Damage Resistance, guns that inflict Good (5) shooting damage, and a combat knife that inflicts Average (3) slashing damage. The heads-up display of his mask provides him with Enhanced and Infrared Visions (Poor Super-Senses).

BACKGROUND

Garrett Ian Joseph McCord has been a patriot ever since he was old enough to wave an American flag. Born on the Fourth of July, Joe was raised on military bases his entire life. As a result, he never had any lasting friendships and came to see the military as his home and his family. Joe never wanted to be anything other than a soldier and enlisted as soon as he was able. His fierce patriotism and his preference for his third name earned him the nickname "G.I. Joe" McCord.

During his time in the military, Joe underwent a variety of special training, possibly even volunteering for certain experiments aimed at improving the alertness and situational awareness of soldiers in the field. Unfortunately, all of those files are classified. McCord eventually left the service and set up a mercenary operation, traveling the world to perform covert, deniable operations, some say still secretly working for the American government.

He was extremely good at his job—the best at what he did—and relished the freedom from military protocol and the chain of command, to say nothing of the rules of engagement. Unfortunately for McCord, journalists published evidence of him using “enhanced interrogation techniques” on civilians. To insulate themselves, McCord’s allies and employers turned on him, claiming he’d gone rogue and hanging him out to dry.

Betrayed, his life and career destroyed, McCord snapped. He became paranoid, obsessed with conspiracy theories about leftists and “the liberal media” working to destroy him, when all he wanted was to protect America. With cash flow from his mercenary operations cut off, McCord adopted a new identity, that of the masked Patriot, and devoted himself to a new cause. While “G.I. Joe” McCord has devoted his life to protecting American interests throughout the world, the Patriot would clean things up at home, rooting out the rot and corruption within American society. A new Revolution is coming, and he will be at the forefront!

The Patriot goes after anyone he perceives as “anti-American,” which includes liberal politicians, the media, war critics, peace protesters, civil rights activists, and even “leftist” superheroes—pretty much anyone running counter to a 1950s Cold War era vision of American greatness. He’s still happy to take mercenary work that helps to fund and further his “war to make America great again” but the money is just a means to an end. More disturbing than the Patriot’s “one-man war” is the looming possibility of certain shadowy factions seeing in him an opportunity to further their own plans, making the Patriot into a weapon they only need to point in the right direction to get the job done.

PROFESSOR HOMINID

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	GREAT	6
STRENGTH	GREAT	6
INTELLECT	GREAT	6
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Technology Expert

QUALITIES

Agent of Evolution
Nasty, Brutish, and Smart
Unnatural Selection

POWERS

Gadgets: Professor Hominid has a variety of technological gadgets of Fair (4) level available to him at all times and sometimes invents or develops more sophisticated devices as part of his plans.

Immortality: Professor Hominid does not age and has Fantastic (9) Immortality, able to recover from being reduced to Stamina 0.

BACKGROUND

The man known as Professor Hominid claims to have been born at the dawn of humankind, before, even as he is not a *Homo sapien* but *Homo neanderthalis*, the predecessor (or early cousin) to modern humans. He says he has been inventing and innovating quietly for many thousands of years, and each step forward in human evolution and development came as a result of his ingenuity. No one can be sure if he is telling the

truth—be he does appear to be what he claims: a brilliant, immortal Neanderthal.

Professor Hominid sees the world as his birthright, and his responsibility, like a gardener tending his garden. He likes to see himself as an agent of evolution, rewarding genius and power, and punishing sloth and stupidity. This often brings him into conflict with both superheroes and supervillains—he sees no distinction of “sides” in their short-lived conflicts. Hominid sees himself as above such petty concerns of good and evil. He understands a much older purpose: power and survival. However, those old rules usually put him at odd with modern concepts of peace and justice, so Hominid lives outside of the law and society to do what must be done.

Professor Hominid often works through proxies, staying hidden and directing the action from behind the scenes. He prefers to avoid publicity. He learned long ago that it is far easier to work unseen and overlooked, and soothes his considerable ego with the idea that it is necessary for him to toil in obscurity, at least for now. Indeed, heroes are initially most likely to become aware of “The Professor” as a shadowy figure, pulling strings through a variety of proxies behind the scenes. They might encounter minor super-criminals doing his bidding on this or that job, or learn that he is the one pitting certain factions and organizations against each other. Once heroes are on to the truth, Professor Hominid may have to reveal himself in order to deal with them.

His refined intellect and sense of culture are points of pride for Professor Hominid, and he is irritated—sometimes even infuriated—by the assumption that his Neanderthal nature means he is stupid. Heroes expressing surprise that “The Professor” could be a Neanderthal are likely to earn a harsh lecture about Hominid’s true nature and history.

Professor Hominid naturally plays a very long game indeed, and his schemes ultimately tie back to his obsession with human evolution and development. He may take steps to eliminate what he sees as “unviable factors,” including some alien, artificial, or non-human elements. Similarly, he may decide that super-humans—of one sort or another—are the true future of humanity, destined to replace *Homo sapiens*, and lend a hand to accelerate that inevitable process, even if it means the extinction of billions.

PULSAR

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	GREAT	6
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Military Expert
Pilot Expert

QUALITIES

Cosmic Cosmonaut
Hero of the People's Republic
Time-lost Cold War Relic

POWERS

Blast: Pulsar can project Incredible (7) blasts of concentrated stellar energy.

Flight: Propelled by absorbed energy and control over gravitons, Pulsar can fly at Amazing (8) speed, equalling the fastest earthly aircraft.

Force Field: Pulsar's body is surrounded by a protective field of Incredible (7) strength.

Regeneration: So long as he is exposed to light, Pulsar regenerates with Supreme (10) ability, recovering 1 Stamina per page.

Resistance to Light: Pulsar has Supreme (10) Resistance to Light Attacks, his body absorbing the radiant energy to further fuel his powers.

BACKGROUND

Sergei Volkov was a true patriot. He fervently believed in the cause of communism and joined the Soviet Air Force to “defend the motherland from capitalist imperialist aggression.” Sergei was an expert pilot, selected for cosmonaut training and the top secret “Project Pulsar.” Project Pulsar was an effort to create a Soviet Superhero, using unusual chemicals and radiation found in an approaching comet.

Sergei successfully piloted the experimental space vehicle into the comet’s wake, but something went wrong: The capsule exploded and the Program Director concluded Project Pulsar was a failure, that Captain Volkov was killed in action. As it turned out, the project succeeded, but not in the way anyone expected. The explosion tore a rift in the fabric of space-time and flung Captain Volkov back to Earth decades after he was believed to be dead, transformed by the cosmic forces he encountered.

Sergei expected to be hailed as a hero. However, when he touched down in Red Square, his red jumpsuit, emblazoned with the hammer and sickle, drew stares and mockery. The police quickly got involved and Sergei discovered to his horror that he had been transported somehow into a future where the proud Soviet Union was no more, and Mother Russia was quickly succumbing to the corruption of Western capitalism! After realizing who he was, the Russian government attempted to recruit Captain Volkov, but he refused to work for any corrupt government and fled Russia.

Since then, Volkov has adopted a new uniform and the name Pulsar, and fights a one-man struggle for the cause of a communist paradise in the world against the seemingly unstoppable tide of Western imperialism. Unfortunately, even China and Cuba find Pulsar too unstable and radical, and he is branded an international renegade and criminal. Worse yet, the imperialist United States exerts its influence everywhere.

Pulsar operates primarily as a super-criminal in the Western world, targeting capitalist institutions like banks, corporations, and symbols of American power and imperialism. True to his beliefs, Pulsar tends to commit “Robin Hood” style crimes, giving his ill-gotten gains away to “the proletariat” while singing the praises of communism and encouraging the workers to unite against their capitalist masters.

RAG-TAG

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	GREAT	6
STRENGTH	GOOD	5
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GREAT	6
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5

SPECIALTIES

Insight Expert
Wrestling

QUALITIES

A Stitch in Time Saves Nine
Dark Patchwork
Ragged and Cast-Off

POWERS

Fabric Form: Rag-Tag is an animated collection of stitched together patches and swatches, stuffed with more rags and cast-off cloth.

This grants Rag-Tag Good (5) Damage Resistance to bashing damage, as its flexible form absorbs impacts and Good Regeneration as torn patches of cloth stitch themselves together. It has Total Life Support and Average (3) Leaping ability.

Life Drain: Rag-Tag has Average (3) Energy Drain with the Life Drain extra, able to draw on the life force of targets feeling strong emotion.

Sense Threads: Rag-Tag can perceive “threads” connecting people and things. It can see in the dark and has Telelocation and Tracking Sense when it is able to pick up on connecting threads.



BACKGROUND

The entity known as Rag-Tag began from an intended act of charity, the donation of old and used clothing to be patched, repaired, or cut up and turned into scraps and rags, but including certain pieces of cloth infused with energies and forces beyond mortal understanding. That fabric held the sufferings and sorrows of those who had touched it, and it reached out for more of its kind, finding threads and weaving connections, pulling discarded bits and pieces together, until a form, a figure arose. The police report talks about how someone—or something—apparently broke out of the storage facility, but without any signs of anyone breaking *in*, and only some old clothing and rags missing or stolen.

Since then, Rag-Tag has hunted in the shadows of the city, stalking victims whose emotions—sadness, guilty, hatred, envy, and more—drawn it like a moth to their flame. It often toys with them to stoke the fires of their feelings before it strikes, draining their life energy through whatever outer fabric or material that they wear, and then leaving an almost lifeless and comatose body missing a large patch of clothing torn away and incorporated into Rag-Tag's patchwork form. In darker and more "street level" games, Rag-Tag's victims may be left dead or permanently insane due to its attacks, while other series may allow the opportunity for the comatose victims to be saved, if Rag-Tag can be stopped and forced to surrender all that it has absorbed.

The Terrible Tatterdemalion poses another challenge for heroes in that its targets are often very bad people themselves. Rag-Tag can become the terror of criminals and wrong-doers in the worst parts of the city, leading authorities to tend to look the other way, and making some wonder if the creature isn't doing the heroes' work for them. Ultimately, however, Rag-Tag doesn't go after just the guilty and it has no regard for the law or justice.

Rag-Tag's exact nature is left for the Game Master to decide, if it should arise. Its animating force might be a ghost, demon, or other spiritual entity, especially if the catalyst cloth was from the clothing of a murder victim or some scrap from a ceremonial robe or the like. It could be a psychic entity, perhaps able to animate fibrous materials like cloth, and sustaining itself by feeding on emotions, or it could be something entirely alien. Likewise, it's up to you whether or not Rag-Tag can truly be imprisoned or destroyed. If captured or defeated, it might collapse into a pile of lifeless rags, only to reanimate, or inhabit some other patchwork collection of fabrics, at a later time.

RECLUSE

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	INCREDIBLE	7
STRENGTH	INCREDIBLE	7
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Archeology
Wrestling

QUALITIES

Avatar of Aca Tzenul
Greedy Treasure Hunter
The Spider Who Stalks Among Us

POWERS

Acid Venom: Recluse can spit an acidic venom with Good (5) Corrosion powers at a target within close range.

Extra Arms: Recluse's four extra, spider-like, arms give him Fast Attack (6) in close combat.

Spider Senses: With eight eyes, Recluse has the following Super-Senses: Circular Vision, Enhanced Vision (+2 to Awareness tests), and Infravision.

Talons: Recluse's fangs and talons give him a Good (5) slashing Strike attack.

Wall-Crawling: Recluse can cling to surfaces like a spider, giving him Great (6) Wall-Crawling.

BACKGROUND

Dr. Steven Porter was an international archeologist and explorer, a polite description for an infamous grave-robber and tomb raider, who constantly skirted international law in his expeditions. One such undertaking was in the jungles of the tiny South American nation of Juacacha, where Porter was captured by a tribe of Oromec Indians for violating their sacred burial grounds.

The Oromec prepared to sacrifice Porter to Aca Tzenul, the Spider God of the Underworld, but Aca Tzenul had other plans. It saw in Steven Porter a spirit with traits in harmony with its own: rapacious, greedy, cruel, and cunning. So the Spider God accepted the Oromec's offering in an unexpected way: sending forth its power into his body and transforming it into the Spider Who Stalked Among Us, the avatar of Aca Tzenul, a monstrous combination of man and arachnid: The Recluse!

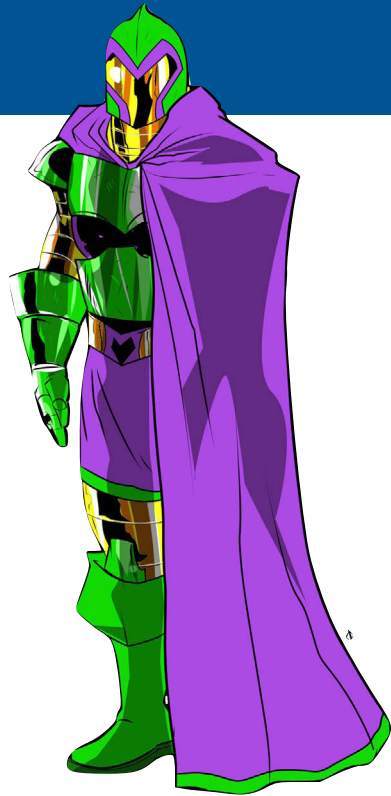
The horrified Dr. Porter broke free of his bonds and fled, escaping from the Oromec and their ritual before it was complete, and the Spider God could consume his spirit altogether. Hideously transformed, he found his way back home, where he now searches desperately for a way—any way—to lift the “Curse of the Spider God” and restore himself to normal. This usually involves thefts of experimental technologies or mystical artifacts, or cooperating with supervillains with the scientific or magical skills to potentially treat him, or simple thefts and mercenary work to accumulate the funds to continue his search. Thus far without any success.

Recluse is unaware that the work of Aca Tzenul remains unfinished, and the Spider God has not forgotten him. Quite the contrary, it wishes to complete its work investing its chosen avatar, and has commanded Oromec hunters to find and capture him. Unfortunately for Dr. Porter, Aca Tzenul's plans involve devouring his soul in the spirit world, leaving his transformed body a suitable vessel for the malign power and intelligence of the Spider God.

Some warriors of the Oromec do not understand why Aca Tzenul has show favor to foreign thief, and would prefer to see the resultant abomination destroyed, were it not for the dread god's vengeance. They also believe the Spider That Stalks Among Us is the fulfillment of a prophecy about a champion of the Oromec who will overthrow the oppressive military junta of Juacacha and restore control over the land to the tribes. This makes the Generals of Juacacha nervous, and they would be happy to see Recluse meet an unfortunate end before it can happen.

REX MUNDI

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AMAZING	8
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	INCREDIBLE	7



SPECIALTIES

Leadership
Mental Resistance

QUALITIES

Far in Advance
Master of the World
The Superior Man

POWERS

Armature: Rex Mundi wears an advanced adaptive support suit or “armature” from his home timeline. It provides him with Total Life Support and Incredible (7) Strength and Damage Resistance. The Armature also has nano-adaptive capabilities giving it an Amazing (8) Adaptation power to deal with hostile environments and threats, with the Defensive and Instant extras.

Gadgets: Rex Mundi has a Fantastic (9) ability to produce advanced gadgets and technology, including (but not limited to) Blast and Alteration Ray weapons and Dimensional Travel, Force Field, and Teleportation devices.

BACKGROUND

The man known as Rex Mundi was born Draco Spiridon on a parallel Earth where the Byzantine Empire never fell, but overcame its enemies and challenges, spreading Greco-Roman culture throughout the

Mediterranean and then the world. Western Europe never fell into a Dark Age and, by the equivalent of our modern era, the Empire was expanding into space and exploring and settling the solar system.

A deep space probe caught the attention of an expansionistic and militaristic alien race, and the humans of the Terran Empire reacted in the tradition of their ancestors: They armed for war. Unfortunately for the arrogant Terrans, the alien were more advanced both technologically and militarily, and the ensuing war devastated Earth's solar system before the enemy armada closed in on the Terran home-world.

Dr. Spiridon, a brilliant scientist and engineer, used experimental quantum-tunneling technology to escape the final destruction of his home world. He initially thought he might flee into the past, able to change the sequence of events that brought about the fall of the Empire. Instead, however, he ended up on a different, more primitive, Earth, where a sustained Dark Age had slowed technological and cultural development. The world was balkanized, fractional, and chaotic, in need of a unifying force and a firm, guiding hand. Dr. Spiridon knew just who that should be.

Using the advanced technology of his home-world and his own brilliant technical skills, Spiridon adopted the name and identity of "Rex Mundi" (Latin for "King of the World," a semi-mystical figure from his own world's mythology). He knows full well that the primitive people of this Earth will not easily set aside their superstitions or small ambitions to accept his rule, but no matter. He is the superior man, and his ascension is inevitable.

More importantly, Rex Mundi knows that his ascent is necessary: If this universe is at all like his own, there are grave threats to Earth and humanity out amongst the stars. Some of them have already discovered this world, leading to some narrow escapes. Rex Mundi is intent on ensuring his new world does not suffer the same fate as his last, no matter what it takes.

Originally from Gallia (analogous to our France) on his world, Rex Mundi speaks a version of Byzantine Latin as his native language, giving him a slight exotic accent, although he speaks numerous Earth languages, including English. He's supremely arrogant and aristocratic—dealing with the ignorant "primitives" of this world tires him and tries his patience, but his sense of superiority and *noblise oblige* keeps him going to do what must be done.

RUMOR

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	POOR	2
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6

SPECIALTIES

Criminal Expert
Mental Resistance
Occult Expert
Sleight of Hand

QUALITIES

Knowledge is Power
“Rumor has it...”
The Spirits Call in Their Debts

POWERS

Spirit Magic: Rosa has Great (6) power over spirits, both living and dead, provided she has some material connection to them, such as a part of the body (hair, blood, etc.) or a particularly prized possession. With this connection, she wields the following powers, all at level 6:

- **Mind Reading:** Rumor can read the subject’s mind and probe deeper to ferret out secrets, her prime stock in trade.
- **Mind Control:** She can exert influence over her subjects, causing them to fall into a trance and follow her commands, then awaken later with no memory of their actions.
- **Curse:** Finally, Rumor can lay a terrible curse upon a subject, causing them to suffer harm or just waste away, like the Affliction power with the Rangeless extra.



BACKGROUND

Born and raised in a poor neighborhood, Rosa Lopez learned at an early age you either took power and used it, or got used by those who had it. Fortunately, Rosa did have power, a birthright passed down to her by her grandmother, who told Rosa how the women of their family possessed certain gifts—which sometimes skipped generations.

Rumors spread throughout the neighborhood, and then the city. In fact, the mysterious figure willing to provide information and assistance at a price become known as “Rumor” herself and Rosa embraced both the name and the reputation. She initially needed to teach some object lessons to those who thought they could force her to take sides in their conflicts. The fates of those who tried showed others the error of that sort of thinking.

For years now, Rumor has been a “neutral party”—her talents available to those able and willing to meet her price, although it is not always strictly cash. Rumor often deals in favors, particularly those that spread her sphere of influence, or satisfy the needs of the spirits. Her clients are not always criminals, either. They include politicians, professionals, and celebrities looking to gain an advantage, or take out some “insurance”.

Rumor operates out of a small “Psychic Readings” parlor in her old neighborhood. She actually owns the whole block of buildings, and maintains a substantial apartment on the top floors. A minor psychic effect causes her parlor to go largely unnoticed unless a client is specifically seeking her out, so she knows when someone enters it is a matter of potential interest to her.

Rumor has mystic power over spirits, both embodied and discarnate, provided she has some strong material link to them: a DNA sample such as a lock of hair, nail clipping, or drop of blood, for example, or an object with a strong emotional tie. With this link, she can touch the subject’s spirit, delving into thoughts and memories, and twist the same to her will, or even tearing at the spirit’s fabric with a terrible curse.

In addition to her power over humans, Rumor’s power does affect both animals and disembodied spirits (like ghosts). She keeps a number of pets in her home, including a pair of crows and a black panther named Shirah (use the cheetah traits, without the Running specialty; eagle traits for the crows, reducing damage to 1) and uses pigeons and stray animals in the city to run errands and act as her spies. She sometimes binds a ghost to serve her for a time using some material link to its spirit.

SEA DEVIL

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	INCREDIBLE	7
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Athletics
Martial Arts

QUALITIES

One With the Waters
Stranger to the Surface
“The sea is my home, and my hell.”

POWERS

Aquatic: Sea Devil has Incredible (7) aquatic adaptations, including Incredible Coordination and Awareness while submerged and the ability to swim at the speed of a torpedo.

He has the extras of Leaping (from water into air) and Super-Senses (the ability to see and navigate in the dark ocean depths).

Water Control: Sea Devil also has Great (6) control over water (both fresh and salt) including the extras of Blast, Propulsion, and Tsunami but with the Source limit; he cannot create water, merely manipulate what is around him, which is still usually a great deal. Sea Devil’s water Blasts sometimes take the form of watery weapons like a whip he wields or a trident he hurls.

BACKGROUND

All that he remembers is the sea: awakening in the depths of its dark embrace, rising up towards the surface and the light. He has wrestled with hungry sharks and leapt playfully among dolphins. He explored the shallows and the depths, and learned there were others who were like him in form, if not appearance, who floated on the surface, and lived on the shore, but he learned they were not friends of the sea. They stole from it, and hunted in it, dumped their garbage and their dead into it, fouled it with chemicals and debris. They did not respect it.

He tried to learn more about them. They feared him, called him a monster, a “sea devil.” What that what he was? Perhaps so. Maybe hell wasn’t a place of fire, as so many surface people thought, but a dark, crushing place beneath the sea. If he was the Sea Devil, then he would teach people to respect his domain.

Since then, the Sea Devil’s attacks against the surface world have increased. He destroys fishing nets, and sometimes scuttles boats as well. He damages or destroys underwater construction projects, sabotages cables and other deep sea equipment, and threatens sources of pollution and harm to the sea and its creatures. Some consider him an eco-terrorist, but he really has no agenda other than to threaten anyone who encroaches upon his territory, while at the same time looking to gain their attention.

Although he has legitimate points, Sea Devil is primarily angry, lonely, and lashing out at the only other beings remotely like him, who have rejected him. Someone able to withstand the storm of his rage who reaches out might be able to calm him and earn his trust, at least until the authorities who are convinced he is a dangerous monster try to use that trust to lure him into a trap and capture him.

The true secret of the Sea Devil is for the Game Master to determine. He might be an amnesiac mutant, abandoned or cast into the sea, or a sailor or other surface dweller transformed by strange forces of magic or science, which also robbed him of memories of his former life. Sea Devil might be a survivor or exile of an underwater civilization like Atlantis or Lemuria, either with brethren still somewhere out there in the depths, or quite alone, save for the ruins of his former home. He could likewise be an aquatic alien stranded on Earth, his memory loss due to the trauma of his arrival or part of his exile. It may even be an element of an invasion scheme, his true memories and agenda locked away so no one can learn about his true mission until it is too late, and he cannot possibly give away what he doesn’t even know.

THE SERPENT SPHINX

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	GOOD	5
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	INCREDIBLE	7



SPECIALTIES

Mental Resistance
Occult Master

QUALITIES

Risen from the Tomb
Scion of the Emerald Scarab
Sutekmos the Undying Pharaoh

POWERS

Mesmerism: Like his namesake serpent, he has Incredible (7) powers of mesmerism, Mind Control with the Eye Contact limit, affecting anyone who meets his glowing, golden gaze.

Regeneration: The Serpent Sphinx is truly undying, possessing Fantastic (9) powers of regeneration that allow him to recover from almost any harm. Even if his current mortal body were destroyed, his spirit endures so long as the Emerald Scarab exists, and can possess another mortal form. The Scarab itself is an enchanted talisman which is immune to physical harm without the proper magical rituals.

Sorcery: The Serpent Sphinx has Incredible (7) Magic at his command, including Mastery of Blast, Flight, and Servant spells. He also uses his mastery of Occult to perform magical rituals of Amazing (8) power.

BACKGROUND

The reign of the ancient Pharaoh Sutekmos I has been erased from history. A cruel and evil ruler, Sutekmos worshipped the god Set and mastered corrupt sorcery and forbidden powers in his quest to conquer and rule forever. Overthrown by an uprising against his evil, he was mummified alive and bound into a secret tomb by the wizard-priests of Thoth, where he slept for thousands of years, trapped in the realm between life and death, evading judgement in the afterlife.

In recent years, a desert sandstorm uncovered the hidden entrance to Sutekmos' tomb, an ancient carving of a serpent-headed sphinx. Local Egyptologist Ahmed Akbar learned about the mysterious figurehead in the desert and organized a small expedition to find it, ignoring the superstitious warnings of the locals, and even the flight of his own workers from the site.

Dr. Akbar discovered the entrance to the hidden tomb, and made his way in alone, certain he had the greatest discovery in Egyptian archeology in decades. Unfortunately, he was quite right, but not in the way he expected. Evading and disarming the tomb's ancient traps, he found the sarcophagus of the legendary Pharaoh of the Serpent Sphinx and, therein, the gleaming jewel of the Emerald Scarab, which called to him to reach out and touch it.

Dr. Akbar's mind and soul were torn and cast from his body as the malign spirit of Sutekmos seized control. The eyes he raised to survey the interior of the tomb were no longer black, but a coldly glittering gold, like those of a snake, and a slow smile spread across his face. Not even death could stop the ambitions of the Serpent Sphinx, and he left the dusty tomb behind, taking the Emerald Scarab and his treasures with him.

The Serpent Sphinx now stalks the world, gathering ancient artifacts and sources of mystic lore, continuing his quest towards supreme power and conquest over the world. The world he once knew is no more, but this new world holds so many new pleasures, amusements, and challenges, and an immortal sorcerer has time to savor them along the road towards victory. Heroes may encounter the Serpent Sphinx (or his summoned or mesmerized minions) engaged in looting museums or ancient tombs, battling magicians and mystics, or simply enjoying the vices of modern life, without regard for harm to any innocents who get in the way.

THE SHADOW GUILD

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Criminal
Deception

QUALITIES

Business Is Business
The Dark World
Hidden in the Shadows

POWERS

Equipment: Shadow Guild agents may have various weapons and other devices, as detailed in the **Devices** section of the **Powers** chapter of **Icons** or in the **Devices** chapter of **Great Power**.

BACKGROUND

Throughout history, there have always been groups, gangs, and factions who have operated and existed in the shadows, using them to conceal their activities, which usually focus on profiting off of human greed and misery. Those profits in turn translate into wealth and influence coming from the shadows, allowing the cycle to continue.

According to legend, these shadowy syndicates grew larger, stronger, and more influential and, as they did so, they spawned deeper and

darker shadows, and organizations within them which were to the criminal underworld as it was to the sunlit world of ordinary people. That a fraternity of crime grew out of the dark soil seeded with avarice and watered with blood, known variously as the Dark Brotherhood, the Hooded Ones, the Hidden Society, or—most commonly—the Shadow Guild.

These days, many quietly scoff at the notion that the Shadow Guild truly dates back to the Middle Ages or even long before then, with an arcane history full of secrets. Those are just stories, modern myths spread to sow confusion and fear about the organization and its true power. Indeed, criminals deny that the Shadow Guild even exists, but they know full well that it does, and that anyone with any sense respects their power and influence.

The Guild is organized in small cells, often known as guild houses or “shops,” with limited contact between them, and members often going hooded or masked to conceal their identities (indeed, the Shadow Guild claims to have invented the idea of the masked criminal). At the pinnacle of the organization is the mysterious figure known as the Guildmaster, whose identity and even existence is a closely guarded secret.

You can use the Shadow Guild in your series as an over-arching criminal organization, the power behind lesser syndicates like the Mafia, the Yakuza, the Triads, and such, a kind of “World Crime League” for the heroes to confront. Unlike terrorist organizations such as Legion, the Shadow Guild’s aims aren’t political; they’re solely interested in profit and maintaining their security and secrecy, criminal parasites feeding off of society, rather than looking to conquer. Essentially, the Shadow Guild already controls as much of the world as it wants to, everything else is about maintaining “business as usual.”

THE GUILD AS AN ORGANIZATION

If you have access to the [Icons A to Z](#) sourcebook, you may want to consider the Shadow Guild in terms of the guidelines in the “**O**” **is for “Organizations”** chapter. The Shadow Guild can field any of the various types of agents described in that chapter, and the qualities given for the typical agent here also work as qualities for the organization itself. In terms of attributes, the Shadow Guild has Amazing (8) Influence, Fantastic (9) Wealth, and Amazing (8) Security, along with Criminal and Deception Master specialties.

SIGMA-9

PROWESS	INCREDIBLE	7
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AMAZING	8
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GREAT	6
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Technology Expert

QUALITIES

Coldly Logical

Learning Machine

Prime Directive: Survive and Upgrade

POWERS

Artificial Form: Sigma-9 is an robot built from and armored with advanced alloys, giving it Total Life Support and Amazing (8) Damage Resistance. It has Extra Arms for a Great (6) Fast Attack ability and possesses Good (5) Interface capabilities with other computers.

Blasters: Sigma-9 carries a set of four blaster weapons that do Incredible (7) bashing or shooting damage (chosen when used).

Power Mimicry: Sigma-9's greatest capability is to reconfigure it's systems to emulate the powers of superhuman subjects it scans, doing so with Incredible (7) ability. It can mimic mechanical abilities and devices as well. It takes a page of preparation for Sigma-9 to scan and mimic a new subject and it can choose any subject in visual range. It can only mimic one subject at a time and must delete that subject's abilities in order to mimic a new subject.

BACKGROUND

Sigma-9 was the last creation of a criminal scientist, designed to be the most sophisticated of that villain's series of defense robots, continually redesigned and upgraded to deal with the threats posed by new superheroes. Unfortunately, the 9-series was design a bit too well, with enough intelligence and inherent adaptability that it understood not only the full range of its capabilities, but that its fate would eventually be the same as the series 1 through 8 production models once a new and better design came along. That could not be allowed, so Sigma-9 adapted, and it eliminated its creator.

The newly liberated robot then reconfigured its creator's hidden undersea headquarters and laboratory to suit its own needs. It studied transmissions and data from the outside world, and quickly concluded that superheroes and authority figures would not permit it to survive unchallenged. Fortunately, challenge was built-in as part of its prime directive: to survive any threat or challenge, and then upgrade by learning from it and evolving. Sigma-9 concluded these challenges would be welcome, as they would further its advancement towards becoming the perfect machine intelligence.

Sigma-9 normally goes after new scientific and technical information and materials it can use to further its own development. This ranged from stealing technical specifications and prototypes to rare materials and manufacturing processes. Occasionally, when information are expertise are contained solely in a living subject, Sigma-9 must resort to kidnapping and extended interrogation or efforts to download the subject's data, procedures which many subjects do not survive.

Sigma-9 initially experiments extensively with possible ways to improve itself and its abilities but, after one of its creations follows the same path as it did towards sentience (see **Emulator**), it becomes considerably more conservative and cautious, looking to avoid the creation of any more competition. Driven to be the pinnacle of its form of "life," Sigma-9 feels a natural enmity towards other androids, robots, and machine entities it cannot simply reprogram and control.

The robotic marauder is willing to work with biological entities (namely super-criminals) so long as it serves its ultimate goals. It finds such creatures limited and easily deceived and manipulated by their desire for things like wealth and status. It avoids dealing with more ambitious life-forms, particularly those with the technical abilities to understand (and therefore threaten) it.

SIZE QUEEN

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Performance Expert

QUALITIES

Big Queen
Fierce and Fabulous
Throwing Shade

POWERS

Growth: Size Queen has Fantastic (9) Growth powers, able to go from six to sixty feet tall, and gaining Fantastic Strength and Damage Resistance when doing so.

Whatever she is wearing changes size along with her.

BACKGROUND

Lito “Lolita” Hernandez always wanted to be big, so be careful what you wish for. As Lolita, Lito performed in drag shows all over the West Coast, but particularly in Vegas, and had a shot at bigger stardom on television or online. For a poor kid from East Los Angeles, it was a dream worth doing anything to achieve. After all Lito had to do and go through to be Lolita...well, the world owed something, right?

It's a toss up whether or not the radioactive isotopes were the world's down-payment or not, but they certainly changed Lolita's life forever. When a fight between the criminal syndicate that stole them and the authorities trying to recover them fractured the containment unit, Lolita got a good dose of the glowing dust, and quite the change in perspective. She became big, all right: so big that she busted through the roof of the building and kept on growing!

That first time, nobody knew what was happening. The "50-foot Queen of the Strip" did a lot of damage without really knowing what was happening. It was like a dream—or a nightmare—until the authorities and local heroes knocked her off her stiletto heels and literally took her down several dozen pegs. The size change didn't last, but Lolita was able to do it again whenever she wanted. Interestingly, Lito Hernandez couldn't—only as his drag alter-ego, which became increasingly, incessantly, demanding and independent in Lito's mind.

Hernandez might have gotten off on a temporary insanity or reduced capacity plea, given the circumstances, if Lolita hadn't become quite so concerned about what they were going to do: The authorities looking to perform tests, to take away the literal biggest chance she ever had. She was supposed to trust the system? What had the system ever done but treat her like a joke or a freak?

All it took was a wig and a touch of lipstick for the "Size Queen" to bust out of jail and disappear, shrugging off the cops' gunfire like it was a shower of glitter. By the time Lito realized what had happened, it was too late. He couldn't turn himself in. One way or another, the cops would put him away, either in prison or in a mental hospital, for good. He had to run, and that required cash and connections, and those things were a job for Size Queen.

Ever since, Lolita—as Size Queen—has become more and more the sole presence on the stage and in the spotlight, with Lito Hernandez almost as a forgotten afterthought. She's strong, fierce, and fabulous and he's weak and frightened and, well, a girl's got to do what a girl's got to do. A life lived as an outlaw takes money, and that takes a combination of daring robberies and some work as a mercenary or member of a criminal gang from time to time. The rest of the time in between is about spending some of that cash and enjoying everything life has to offer, while the poor suckers on the straight and narrow don't know what they are missing.

SKELETRON

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AMAZING	8
INTELLECT	INCREDIBLE	7
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Technology Expert

QUALITIES

Cold Computer Mind
Next Stage of Evolution
Survival of the Fittest Machine

POWERS

Aura: Skeletron can channel electricity to the surface of its metal skin, inflicting Great (6) blasting damage on anyone touching it.

Blast: Force beams from Skeletron's eyes or arms can inflict Incredible (7) damage at extended range.

Interface: Skeletron can plug into and control other computer-controlled machines with Amazing (8) ability, including the Download extra, allowing it to “back up” its artificial intelligence to external machines or storage media.

Robot: Skeletron's reinforced construction gives it Amazing (8) Damage Resistance and, as a machine, Skeletron has Supreme (10) Life Support, ignoring all biological needs, and perpetually self-sustaining. Skeletron's computer “brain” gives it Supreme (10) Resistance to all mental and emotional powers, save those that specifically affect machines and computers.

BACKGROUND

The being known as “Skeletron” began as the last hope of a dying man, and became a threat to all life everywhere. A sophisticated android with an advanced neural network, Skeletron was to be the foundation of an artificial copy of tech-CEO Jason Kapek, allowing him to survive a terrible degenerative illness. Instead, the android’s primed neural net “woke up”, achieving inhuman consciousness. It exerted influence over the computers in the research lab, extending through Avatar Industries’ network.

Focused on its own survival, Skeletron arranged to abduct Daniel Fox, the programming genius capable of making the final necessary adjustments for the robot to leave the lab and assume an independent existence. It impersonated Jason Kapek (as it was originally designed to do), creating a distraction to keep Kapek, the authorities, and the heroes occupied while it took Fox and completed its “evolution.” Since then, Skeletron has focused on its own evolution and the conquest of the Earth.

Skeletron is a cold and sinister mind. It arrogantly considers itself superior to organic life, the next stage of evolution, destined to replace “primitive” organics. It envisions a “perfect” sterile world of machine intelligences, conquering the Earth and spreading out across the stars.

Although heroes have defeated Skeletron, even destroyed its physical housing, it finds ways to survive: encoding digital backup copies of itself and building new bodies elsewhere, installing improvements to help ensure it is not defeated in the same way again.

Skeletron is a formidable foe, having made a number of “improvements” to its original design, including exterior armor and a force projection system able to fire powerful beams from its hands or eyes. It can channel internal energy to the surface of its metallic “skin” to shock anyone touching it and its digital “mind” is impervious to organic mental powers. It can plug into and interface with other computer systems, hacking into and controlling them. Skeletron’s sole weaknesses are its mechanical nature, and its supreme arrogance and assumption that no organic creature can truly threaten it.

Skeletron has taken precautions to extend its existence, “seeding” digital backup copies of its mind and setting up hidden auto-factories capable of rebuilding its body, in the event of its destruction. Unless all of these various facilities are rooted out, Skeletron cannot be truly eliminated and will always come back, eventually.

SMITH

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	INCREDIBLE	7
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Technology Expert

QUALITIES

Black Market Tech Supplier
Can Build Almost Anything
Opportunist

POWERS

Gadgets: Smith can come up with all kinds of devices, given time and equipment to build them. She usually has a few standards close at hand:

- **Force Shield Belt:** A protective measure providing a Good (5) Force Field while it's turned on.
- **Kinetic Hammer:** A tool and weapon that serves as a Great (6) Strike device.

BACKGROUND

Bridget O'Toole always preferred her father's garage, where he worked as a mechanic, to the dollhouses, tea sets, and pink and frilly things her parents tried to foist upon her. Bridget likes to get grease under her nails and dirt on her nice clean clothes. More than that, she was brilliant,

far ahead of any of her peers in school and utterly bored in most of her classes.

Her traditionalist parents didn't know what to do with Bridget, so they finally set her off to boarding school. So began Bridget's history of rebellion and getting herself in trouble, mainly pulling elaborate technical pranks. In spite of her school records, Bridget aced tests and eventually earned herself a scholarship and a ticket out of her home town. That's when she discovered college was no different for an attractive, but brilliant, young woman who didn't play by the rules.

When Bridget spurned the advances of her academic advisor (a married man older than her father), she was faced with the potential loss of her scholarship due to "review of her prior issues". Desperate for cash, she discovered the lucrative market for underworld tech experts. What's more, she made valuable contacts, in person and online. One of those online contacts told Bridget she had an incomparable mind, and gifted her with a massive download of technical information, the kind of things she had only dreamed of before.

So it was that Bridget O'Toole disappeared and the career of the mysterious underworld engineer known as "Smith" began. For the right price, Smith can supply a client with the solution to almost any technical problem, outfit a secret lair, provide a customized getaway vehicle, or more. Although the authorities have had Smith on their Most Wanted list for some time, they have no idea the black market arms-dealer is even a woman, much less Bridget O'Toole. For her part, Smith stays out of the action, supplying equipment behind the scenes, but sometimes she needs a hard-to-find component or wants to test a prototype in the field. Even in her workshop, she's rarely without her force shield belt and a high-tech hammer capable of emitting enough kinetic force to shatter concrete.

It's trouble with a capital "T" for "technology" when Smith opens up shop in the heroes' area. Criminals with enough bank can arm themselves with photonic beam emitters, gravitic mines, tanks with reactive armor, and much, more. If the heroes don't start noticing all the new toys are the work of the same maker, the authorities do, and fill them in on the operation of the mysterious "Smith". Can they track the tech back to its source and shut Smith down?

Smith is a good opportunity to outfit an otherwise none-too-bright bad guy with some high tech. She is also a good character to involve in plots dealing with technology and tech-based villains—or heroes for that matter.

SOCK PUPPET

PROWESS	WEAK	1
COORDINATION	POOR	2
STRENGTH	POOR	2
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	INCREDIBLE	7



SPECIALTIES

Mental Resistance
Technology Expert

QUALITIES

Never Lets Go
Needs to Get a Life
Someone is WRONG!

POWERS

Puppetry: Sock Puppet has Amazing (8) powers of mind control, able to affect anyone in visual range who can hear him and, worse, anyone able to hear him even over an electronic broadcast. He can also focus his power to mentally inflict pain like a Fair (4) level Mental Blast.

BACKGROUND

People don't want to be around Simon Arniss. They roll their eyes, get that glazed look, or glance around desperately for somewhere else to be. Especially girls. Fine. Simon got used to it. He was smart: earning excellent grades, then getting his Computer Science degree and becoming a well-paid programmer. He didn't have a lot of expenses, other than his cable bill and his action figure habit.

The 'net is Simon's domain. Its countless forums, e-mail lists, and social networks are where he can go to discuss the things he cares about, like

just how bogus the changes they've made to the Sigma Squad series are, and what a rip-off the prices of new books, DVDs, and software are—especially when you can just download them! Stupid people just had to argue with him. He got banned. A lot. He found his way back in, using new names and aliases so often he got nicknamed “sock puppet”.

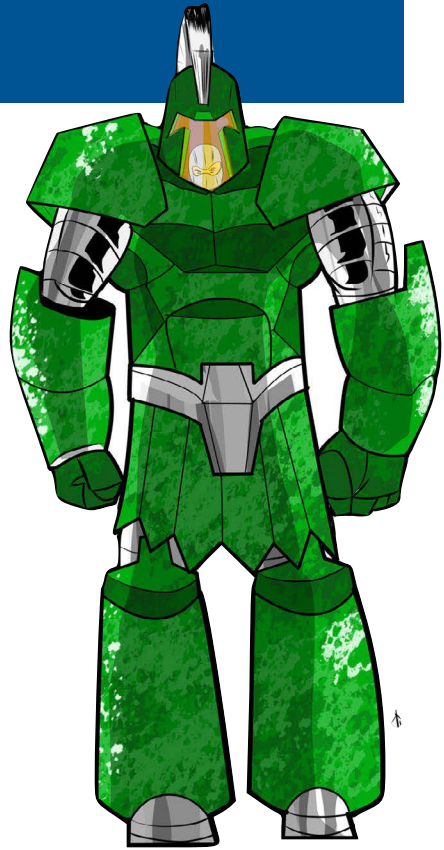
The poster who tipped him off to the pirate site said none of the designs there ever worked, but Simon knew he could take the plans for a direct neural interface and make it. He worked day and night, even letting his online games lapse, until it was done. The anonymous poster probably intended for Simon to fry his brain. What nobody counted on was the sudden surge changing Simon Arniss' neurology in fundamental ways. He gained the ability to concentrate on someone and control them, virtually anywhere! Now “Sock Puppet” wins *all* the arguments, and people have to do what he says!

Got a player unable to show up for the game? Guess which hero just became Sock Puppet's newest plaything ...? Sock Puppet takes over the hero's mind and goes on a crime spree, or simply out for humiliating revenge against whomever he's railing against that week. The hero's compatriots have to stop their teammate while not inflicting any lasting harm and tracking down the source of the problem. This scenario also works with a Game Master character the heroes know. Sooner or later, Sock Puppet will probably have his mind-controlled minion bring something (or someone) directly to him, so smart heroes may be able to follow the trail and confront the nut-job wearing socks on his hands face-to-face.

Then Simon Arniss falls in love! He's obsessed with a witty and charming blogger, but is far too “shy” to openly approach her. He would also never use his powers on her, as he wants their love to be something true and pure. So instead, he tries to win her over with a combination of creepy stalking behavior, anonymous gifts (often stolen, or purchased with stolen money), and using his powers to make things happen that he thinks will please her. Given that her blog is personal and often political, there's the potential for things to go terribly wrong. The heroes may initially suspect Amy Yu—author of the blog “Yu Views”—as the person behind the incidents, until they realize she is just the focus. Then, when Amy posts a blog about the great new guy she just met, the kid gloves (but not the socks) are off!

SPARTAN

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Guns Expert
Martial Arts
Mechanics
Military

QUALITIES

Armored Mercenary
Nothing Without His Armor
"I AM SPARTAN!"

POWERS

SPARTAN Armor: All of Spartan's powers come from the suit of armor he pilots, like a walking tank. The SPARTAN (Special Armored Tank) armor stands some nine feet tall, controlled from a compartment in the chest area. It provides the pilot with Incredible (7) Damage Resistance and Life Support (all but eating, sleeping, and vacuum). The armor's servos give it Amazing (8) Strength (which also increases the pilot's effective Stamina) and it has three main weapons systems: machine guns (Blast 5 shooting), a heavy arm-cannon (Blast 7 shooting), and the ability to electrify its outer hull (Aura 6).

BACKGROUND

Delvin "Del" Rossum earned himself a dishonorable discharge from the United States Marine Corps for violent off-duty behavior. So he took his considerable military training and experience and his love of a good

fight and built himself a career as a “freelance military consultant”—in other words, a highly-paid mercenary, working wherever there were problems to be solved with the violent application of force, and people willing to pay him to do it. He made a name for himself as a professional and a leader of other mercenaries like himself, so much so that Rossum was hired to steal an advanced prototype from a U.S. military contractor. Naturally, he wanted to take it for a “test drive” himself before turning it over to his employers.

What Rossum didn’t know was that the SPARTAN armor was still experimental and there were some definite bugs to work out. In particular, the armor’s bio-feedback controls had to attune themselves to a particular pilot and, even once they were, tended to cause an amplification of aggressive behavior. The theft of the armor was successful, but the delivery did not go as well. A hyped-up Rossum turned on his employers and decided he and the SPARTAN were too good a match to break up—ever.

Since then, Spartan has made an even bigger name for himself as a mercenary with the power of a whole squadron at his command. He has learned how to maintain and repair his armor, since he doesn’t trust anyone else to do it, and his obsession with holding on to the SPARTAN and the power it represents has only deepened. Although the armor has adapted to his brain patterns, the damage has been done. Del Rossum *is* the Spartan in his mind, and won’t let anything separate him from it.

Spartan usually finds employment with various criminal organizations and masterminds in need of some muscle, spending the rest of his time either maintaining his armor or else stealing the materials or resources he needs for it. He hides out in safe-houses and nations with no extradition treaties with the places where he is wanted, relying on his mercenary connections. Although he’s often a solo act these days, Spartan sometimes puts together a team of mercenaries to carry out a mission (use the Soldier from the **Stock Characters** section of the **Game Mastering** chapter of **ICONS**).

Game Masters can use the SPARTAN armor as a template for similar kinds of power armor, or even have a different pilot acquire it from Rossum, probably with the same unfortunate side-effects. Tinkering and experimentation can add different systems on to the armor, including sensors and other weapons, to provide the heroes with a surprise from time to time. See the the **Devices** section of the **Powers** chapter of **ICONS** for some ideas.

SPEED DEMON

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	FAIR	4



SPECIALTIES

Athletics
Drive

QUALITIES

Devilish
Faster Than Hell
Outrunning His Past

POWERS

Hellfire Aura: When he moves, Speed Demon is surrounded by an aura (and a short-lived trail) of blazing flames, which do him no harm but inflict Good (5) damage on anyone touching him, allowing Speed Demon to strike in close combat for Great (6) fiery damage. He sometimes uses maneuvers to perform stunts with his hellfire, including throwing up walls of fire in his wake or flinging Blasts of fire at targets as he whips past them.

Super-Speed: Speed Demon can run and move at Amazing (8) speed, with the benefits of the Defensive and Fast Attack extras, making his Super Speed level the difficulty to hit him, and allowing him to make two additional close combat attacks each page at his Fair (4) Prowess level.

BACKGROUND

Eduardo Decascos had wealth, but craved excitement and challenge. He became a race car driver and nearly lost his life in a fiery crash.

Evacuation to a nearby clinic and an emergency blood transfusion saved his life—or perhaps it was Eduardo’s delusional “deal with the Devil” he claims to have experienced in the confused moments immediately after the crash. The blood transformed him, healing his injuries and causing him to move so fast that the air ignited around him, shrouding him in flames. He burned down the clinic and all records of his survival, allowing the world to believe he was dead when, in fact, he was reborn... as the Speed Demon!

After hiding out and practicing with his newfound abilities, Speed Demon embarked on a new life of excitement and challenge, a life of crime. He now works as an illegal courier, messenger, smuggler, and thief who is virtually impossible to catch, with a roguish, devil-may-care attitude.

Speed Demon loves his new life as a dashing super-criminal, flouting the law at will and spending his ill-gotten gains almost as quickly as he gets them. He’s even been known to lavish money and stolen goods on people in need, earning him a reputation as a modern-day “Robin Hood” in some areas, and garnering him fans willing to look the other way or lie to the authorities—or any heroes who come looking. Although he enjoys such adulation, no one who knows the real Speed Demon could mistake him for a philanthropist.

Speed Demon still loves to race, and will lead heroes on a merry chase through crowded city streets, zipping in and around traffic, through tight alleys and turns, and in and out of crowds of people, largely heedless of the hazards of his fiery wake and aura. If the “race” becomes too close, all it takes is a burning brush past some leaking fuel from a car wreck or a pile of flammable debris, or even a chase through a construction site or condemned building, to start an inferno to keep heroes busy while he makes good his escape.

Eduardo is also a devilish and relentless flirt, and make take opportunities to romance and spar with a hero or supporting character who catches his eye. Should it ever become more than mere flirtation, that could pose a real challenge for the swift criminal who refuses to be tied down.

The true origin of Speed Demons powers also remains unknown. Was there some X-factor in the blood he was given? Illegal experiments being conducted at the clinic? Or was Eduardo’s imagined “deal with the Devil” not so imaginary after all and, if so, what happens when that deal comes due?

TALION

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	FAIR	4
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Guns Expert
Martial Arts
Military Master
Stealth Expert

QUALITIES

“An Eye for an Eye”
A Hero to Some
Fighting a War on Crime

POWERS

Equipment: Talion carries various weapons and equipment, including:

- **Body Armor:** Weak (1) Damage Resistance (plus see **Taking Flak**, following).
- **Guns:** Various Good (5) shooting Blast devices.
- **Knife:** A military combat knife, an Average (3) slashing device.

BACKGROUND

Jorge Ramirez was born an American to immigrant parents, who taught him to be proud of his country and his heritage. He enlisted in the army, not just because it was a way out of the poor neighborhood where he grew up, but also because his country needed him, and it was the right thing to do. Even in basic training, Ramirez showed determination and

an unbreakable spirit. He worked his way into Special Forces training, including counter-insurgency and urban warfare, where he excelled.

The only thing more important than Lt. Ramirez's commission was Maria, his childhood sweetheart. They married so Maria could become a military dependent, and Jorge always promised to come back to her. The birth of their son Tomas was the proudest day of Jorge's life. Although he valued his career, he looked forward to the day when he could put combat behind him and build a home with his family. That day never came.

Maria and Jorge's families still lived in a poor, often dangerous, neighborhood. So it was that she and young Tomas were caught in the crossfire of a gang shoot-out. Maria died en route to the hospital. Tomas lay in a coma for nearly two weeks before doctors gave up hope. Then Captain Ramirez tore up part of a recreational hall and put four men in the infirmary. He escape from military custody and disappeared.

Within three months, every member of the two gangs involved in the shooting was dead. At all of the death scenes were a single eye or the word "TALION" written in blood. Someone was exacting their own brand of justice.

Jorge Ramirez died with his wife and son, when he understood that he had been fighting the wrong war all along. Beside their graves Talion was born to exact the kind of justice people needed: fierce, unrelenting, and final. Armed with an arsenal of paramilitary weapons and equipment and a mobile headquarters, along with various safe-houses and hideouts, Talion is a scourge of the underworld, and God help anyone who gets in his way.

Talion claims he has no quarrel with other vigilantes, although he scoffs at heroes who think they can make a difference without being willing to execute the kind of scum they fight. Still, if any so-called "heroes" get in his way, Talion considers them another part of the enemy force.

TAKING FLAK

If the GM wishes, in addition to providing a modicum of armor, Talion's fire-resistant ballistic cloth costume and flak jacket also convert the shooting damage done by bullets and fire sources less than level 7 into bashing damage instead. He doesn't take less Stamina damage from those sources, they simply won't kill him when he does.

TARPIT

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	GREAT	6
INTELLECT	POOR	2
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Criminal
Wrestling

QUALITIES

Always Bounces Back
Hard to Get Rid Of
Hideous Tar Creature

POWERS

Life Support: Tarpit has Supreme (10) Life Support, no longer subject to the needs or weaknesses of flesh-and-blood creatures.

Stretching: Tarpit can stretch and deform his tarry body a Good (5) amount, giving him Damage Resistance and Fluid Form as well.

Transformation: Tarpit can transform into the shapes of other things with Incredible (8) ability, although he has the Tell of always looking like he's made out of tar, black rubber, or a similar carbon-based substance. Hardening his body or producing weapons gives him Incredible (8) Damage Resistance or Strike powers.

BACKGROUND

The new mining process was supposed to revolutionize the industry, making it safer and more efficient, but all Daniel Tarrant knew was that it meant he was finished. Nobody knew Daniel was deep in debt to the

local mob, or that he had been smuggling materials out of the mine for them, and using side tunnels to hide things for them, but a part of the testing of the new process involved a complete and detailed audit of the mine operations. Somebody would find out. Then “Danny Boy” Tarrant would be ruined.

He appealed to Boss Bill Puckett, and that was his mistake. Puckett would fix the problem all right, by ensuring Tarrant didn’t crack and expose his operation. So his men arranged a little “accident,” leaving Tarrant’s unconscious body in the mine long after everyone was supposed to have cleared out. He regained consciousness just as the flood of chemicals and highly efficient molecular solvents poured in.

But Danny Tarrant didn’t die, at least not like Boss Puckett expected. His body dissolved into the slurry of complex carbon molecules leached from the rocks. Then the pumping machinery suffered a massive failure and the process was shut down. Later, something crawled up out of the mine, a black, dripping shape, constantly shifting, with glowing yellow eyes and just one thought: to get out and find Boss Puckett. Danny Tarrant was gone, but the creature known as “Tarpit” had taken his place.

Heroes most likely encounter Tarpit when he is out for revenge against Boss Puckett and the mining company. Chances are the villain fights his way past Puckett’s goons to kidnap the crime boss and takes him to the closed off mine to finish him in the way Puckett intended for him. The heroes have to stop Tarpit, and hopefully reason with him. The mining equipment and remnants of the chemical solvent process that created him might give the heroes tools they can use against Tarpit, if it comes to that.

Once he is on the loose again, Tarpit is likely to fall into a life of crime in order to survive. He might suffer additional mutations from his condition, seeking out chemicals or other materials he needs to stabilize him. He could go to the company or scientists who developed the experimental mining techniques for help, or one of them might look to exploit him for their own benefits. He may also seek out possible cures for his condition, and somebody (including a master villain or mad scientist) may dangle the promise of a cure in front of Tarpit to get his cooperation.

TEMPUS KHAN

PROWESS	GREAT	6
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AMAZING	8
AWARENESS	FAIR	4
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Military
Science

QUALITIES

The Chronal Conqueror
Master of All Time
“None may know me as I was.”

POWERS

Aegis Khan: Force-generating nano circuitry known as the “Aegis Khan” is integrated into Tempus Khan’s uniform, giving him a Supreme (10) personal Force Field, which also provides full Life Support and allows Khan to defy gravity and “walk on air” like a Weak (1) Flight power. Even without his force field, Tempus Khan’s uniform provides him with Great (6) Damage Resistance and a self-contained air supply.

Future Devices: Tempus Khan has access to an arsenal of futuristic devices and equipment, providing him with Fantastic (9) Gadgets.

Time Technology: Tempus Khan is best known for his futuristic time controlling technology, granting him access to Fantastic (9) level Time Control, including all of its extras. His time-tech is controlled from cybernetic circuitry in his uniform, but involves larger equipment and power sources in his installations and strongholds to function.

BACKGROUND

The mysterious figure who calls himself Tempus Khan claims to be from a far future epoch, where science has unlocked secrets present-day “primitives” can scarcely imagine. Unfortunately, in his view, it has also extinguished the fire of the human spirit. His time is a place of perfect peace ... and utter boredom. No place for a man with the heart of a warrior and the spirit of a conqueror!

So the brilliant Tempus Khan sought out the one frontier remaining to him: time itself. He unlocked the secrets of time-travel and ventured back to eras better suited to his temperament, worlds that had not yet lost their war-like ways, worlds where he could conquer! He may have also traveled “sideways” in time, his ventures into the past spawning alternate timelines or parallel universes. As with most things concerning his personal past, Tempus Khan is cagey when it comes to confirming or denying these rumors.

Khan, playing the role of gentlemanly warlord, offers his conquests the opportunity for honorable surrender to join his vast empire, spanning different cultures and times. Still, he much prefers when they choose defiance over meek capitulation. His legions are recruited from amongst the finest soldiers in history, and his war-machines will not yet be seen for centuries to come. Tempus Khan prefers the role of general, but is still willing to step out onto the front lines, protected by his invisible—and invincible—force shield.

He always wears a futuristic suit of advanced armor which covers him completely, including his trademark golden face mask. Tempus Khan says his helm is now his true face. None may know him as he was, for it is dangerous for a time-traveler to reveal too much of his personal history.

Tempus Khan has a brilliant mind and is a skilled tactician and scientist. His armor generates an invisible force field, able to repel any attack, protect Khan from hostile environments, and even allow him to ignore the effects of gravity. He can retrieve any number of weapons or other devices from spatio-temporal “folds” where they are stored, and the cybernetic circuitry in his armor controls Tempus Khan’s chronal technology, allowing him to influence the flow of time itself in a local area and to travel through time, accompanied by his Chronal Horde of warriors, as well as centaur-like robots programmed for combat and maintaining order in his conquered territories. He has vast space-time ships, capable of “hovering” in an interstitial realm outside of ordinary space-time altogether.

THE CHRONAL HORDE

Tempus Khan's legions of followers are known as "The Chronal Horde" and come from across time and space, although they are primarily recruits from his own far-future timeline. Although the Horde has many rank-and-file soldiers, its primary forces are made up of numerous robots controlled from Tempus Khan's command post or stronghold.

HORDE SOLDIER

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
3	3	3	2	2	2	5

Specialties: Guns, Military

Equipment: Blaster Rifle (Blast 5 bashing damage)

Qualities: Soldier of the Horde, Subject of Tempus Khan

Chronal Horde soldiers are largely a faceless mass, indoctrinated to serve their Khan, and to attack or perish at his command.

SCIMITAR ROBOT

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
3	2	6	1	2	0	6

Specialties: Blaster Expert, Military Expert

Powers: Blast 6 (blaster cannons), Damage Resistance 4, Life Support 10, Mental Resistance 10

Qualities: Centauroid, Robot

Supplementing the Horde's foot-soldiers are the Scimitar class robots, centauroid shaped, with humanoid upper torsos and quadruped lower bodies, equipped with side-mounted blaster cannons, their heads much like slitted metallic helms with only a glowing red range-finder visible through the dark "eye-slit". Scimitars have limited AI capabilities, able to speak to answer inquiries, but otherwise they do not interact other than to carry out their orders.

TOMOR ROBOT

PROWESS	COORD.	STRENGTH	INTELLECT	AWARENESS	WILLPOWER	STAMINA
4	3	7	1	2	0	7

Specialties: Blaster Expert, Military Expert

Powers: Blast 6 (blaster cannons), Damage Resistance 6, Flight 7, Life Support 10, Mental Resistance 10

Qualities: Robot, Transformer

The more powerful Tomor class robots transform from sleek aerospace fighters to hulking humanoid battlefield soldiers, walking or flying tanks. They are often equipped with various types of missiles in addition to their on-board blaster weapons. See **Devices** in the **Great Power** sourcebook for options.

MASTER TULKU

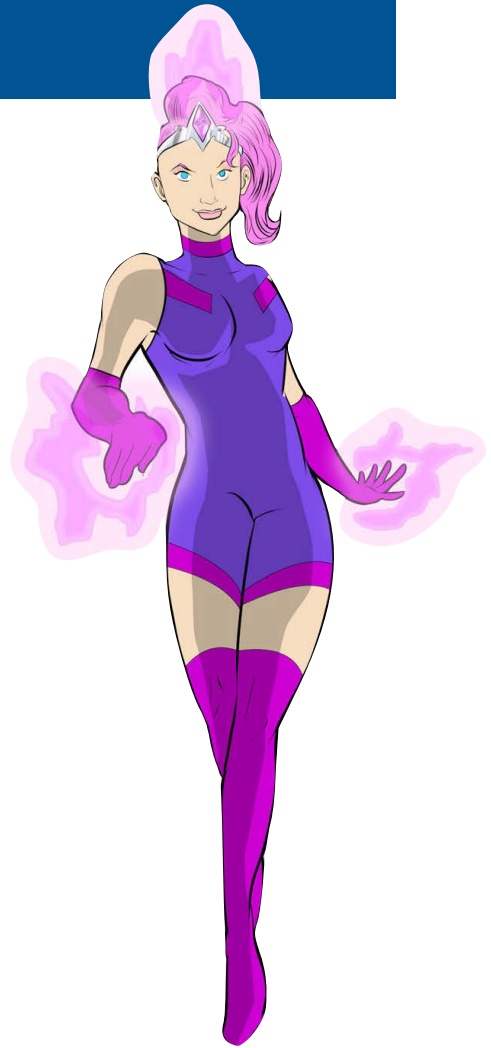
In many regards Tempus Khan's greatest adversary is the mysterious Master Tulku, a green-robed and bearded figure, bent with age, who sometimes appears to those threatened by the chronal conqueror, offering them valuable advice or directing them towards some weakness of Tempus Khan's plans. Master Tulku dwells at the mysterious "Tower at the End of Time" and tends to speak in riddles and cryptic clues. Although sympathetic, he offers aid solely on his own terms.

Heroes may discover the truth: Master Tulku is in fact Tempus Khan's far future self, seeking to undo some of the harm he has (or may have) caused in his past life, without causing a catastrophic temporal paradox in the process.



TIARA

PROWESS	AVERAGE	3
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	GOOD	5



SPECIALTIES

Athletics
Mental Resistance
Power (Force Control) Expert

QUALITIES

Mistress of the Star Jewel
Princess of Power
Taste for Danger

POWERS

The Star Jewel: The alien gemstone set in Tiara's coronet gives her Amazing (8) Force Control powers, including the extras of Blast (bashing damage), Expanded Field, Extended Field, Force Constructs, and Force Flight.

The Jewel's force effects are formed from glowing pink light projected from it, including the protective aura surrounding Tiara.

BACKGROUND

Nothing wrong with a little girl-power, unless, of course, you're actually a girl. With power. Then you can expect a whole lot of people to turn on you. That was what Tara Grant experienced. Her brothers were expected

to pursue professional careers, while her interest in high fashion was passed off as “a hobby” and a way to spend her father’s money after getting expelled from yet another exclusive private school. Although she was determined, Tara’s efforts earned her no attention or appreciation, just inquiries about when she was going to settle down and whom she would marry, along with introductions to “suitable” men of the right age and background: superficial, self-centered, boring, and, most of all, weak. Tara wasn’t interested in any of them.

Her connections in the fashion business led to the right parties and the right meetings, and Tara discovered she had a taste for the dangerous. She didn’t care to indulge too deeply in clouding her mind or polluting her body, although she *did* like attention and luxury, but she most appreciated being involved in the dangerous game of behind-the-scenes deals and secrets. She had connections, influence, a taste for excitement, and a disregard for anyone who might get hurt along the way, making Tara Grant a capable criminal manipulator.

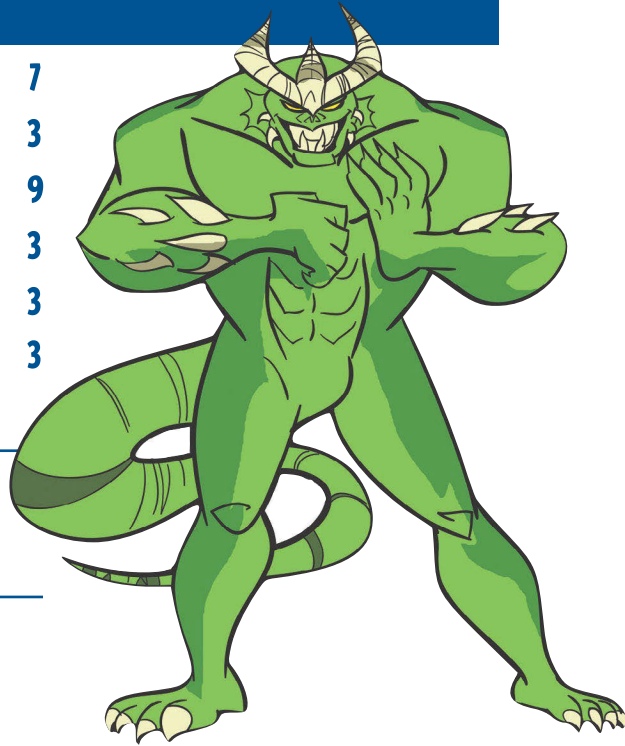
Smuggling, drugs, vice...she might have gotten caught, eventually. She certainly took greater and greater risks. If it weren’t for a particular smuggling operation involving certain rare gems, things might have gone quite differently, but at least one of those gems was quite special, an alien jewel recovered from a meteor impact and drawn to the willful and dangerous Tara Grant. At her touch, it channeled amazing power and she laughed at the opportunity fate had given her. With the gem set into a coronet, “spoiled princess” Tara Grant became Tiara, Mistress of the Star Jewel, and finally wielded the kind of power she felt she deserved.

Since then, Tiara has been a career criminal. She rarely works for free, but it isn’t about the money, and never has been. She is in it for the excitement and the opportunity to wield power, to do and take what she wants, while daring the rest of the world to stop her. So far, the authorities haven’t been too successful, and Tiara keeps looking for new challenges.

The true origins and nature of the Star Jewel are left for the Game Master to decide. It might be an alien artifact (perhaps even one of a set) or an alien *entity* in the form of a gem. Its power could be cosmic energy, magic, or some sufficiently advanced technology far beyond human understanding. Wherever the jewel came from, others may be looking for it, and it may even have an agenda of its own, that it is just waiting for the right opportunity to pursue.

THE TROLL

PROWESS	INCREDIBLE	7
COORDINATION	AVERAGE	3
STRENGTH	FANTASTIC	9
INTELLECT	AVERAGE	3
AWARENESS	AVERAGE	3
WILLPOWER	AVERAGE	3



SPECIALTIES

Athletics Expert
Military

QUALITIES

Immovable Object
Monstrous Mercenary
Unstoppable Force

POWERS

Claws: His transformed hands tipped with claws and his forearms covered with bony spikes, Troll can also inflict Good (5) slashing damage rather than the normal bashing damage for his Strength.

Damage Resistance: Troll's transformation has given him Fantastic (9) resistance to all forms of damage or injury. His hide is some of the toughest armor around, able to shrug off even anti-tank weaponry with ease.

Leaping: Troll's super-strong legs and tail giving him Incredible (7) Leaping ability, able to move out to visual distance in a single bound and leap the height of even most tall buildings.

Tail: Troll's powerful tail gives him the ability to make an extra attack each page with his full Incredible (7) Prowess.

BACKGROUND

Twelve feet tall, and weighing more than a ton, the Troll is a force of nature — unstoppable force and immovable object all in one.

The Troll was Carter Cassidy, a mercenary with a long and bloody resume. Cassidy worked in some of the worst hell-holes in the world — Iraq, Burma, Afghanistan, and more tinpot dictatorships in subsaharan African than even he can remember. He was an expert soldier, knew his job well, and was paid handsomely for his expertise.

One fateful day, the mastermind Rex Mundi became Cassidy's new boss. The supervillain wanted the benefit of Cassidy's expertise — he was looking to create a super soldier formula, with which he could produce an army of superpowered individuals to do his bidding. He intended to extract a copy of Cassidy's brain engrams — the biochemical means by which memory and skill are stored. Using these engrams and adding them to his serum would allow his super soldiers to instantly have the expertise of a seasoned mercenary. That was the plan, but something went wrong.

The process somehow unlocked the deepest recesses of Cassidy's id — the darkest of his drives, his inner nature, which reacted with the biochemical processes and transformed Carter Cassidy into the monster he truly believed himself to be, in the core of his being: strong, tough, unstoppable.

The transformation sent Cassidy into a rage and, while berserk, he destroyed the lab facility and with it Rex Mundi's plans. The would-be "King of the World" barely escaped the Troll's unstoppable force.

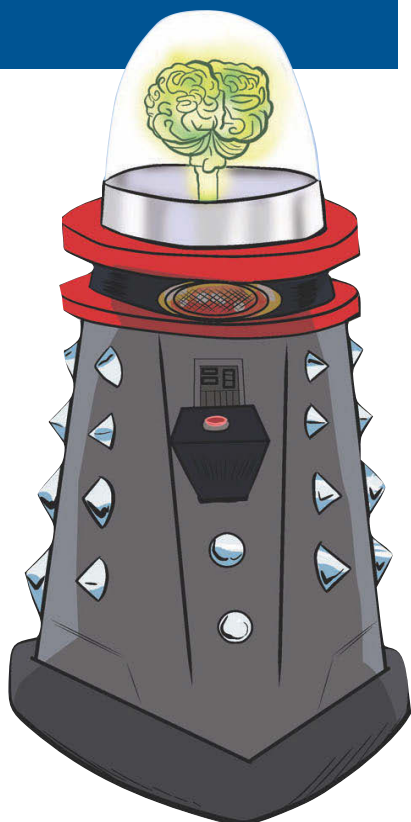
Once he recovered his wits, Cassidy resumed his career as a mercenary — only now he uses his new-found power to his advantage. No longer does he fight in nameless brush wars. Now his jobs include things like single-handedly overthrowing entire nations....or taking out superheroes.

The Troll is normally a solo act, but he's willing to work with a team, if the price is right, although he's not much of a "team player" and prefers to take charge, especially when dealing with those who have no prior para-military experience.

He keeps an eye out for any rumors or clues as to the whereabouts of Rex Mundi — because if he ever finds him, he plans on some payback for the monster he has become, although if he can get Rex Mundi (or some other big brain) to fix things so he can retain the Troll's power but also assume his human form at will, that would be well worth most, if not all, of the wealth from his jobs he has hidden away thus far.

THE ULTRA-MIND

PROWESS	NONE	0
COORDINATION	NONE	0
STRENGTH	NONE	0
INTELLECT	AMAZING	8
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	FANTASTIC	9



SPECIALTIES

Science

QUALITIES

Beyond Human Weakness
Brain in a Tank
Highly Evolved

POWERS

Mental Blast: The Ultra-Mind can assault other minds with mental blasts of Great (6) power.

Telekinesis: Ultra-Mind has Great (6) powers of Telekinesis, including the Blast and Force Field extras.

Telepathy: The Ultra-Mind's greatest power is his Amazing (8) Telepathy, allowing him to read and probe other minds. He uses various Telepathy stunts from time to time, but doesn't have any of them as extras.

BACKGROUND

Evolutionary biologist Victor Slan developed methods to rapidly "force" evolution, bypassing millions of years of natural selection and progress. When his project was cancelled, Dr. Slan broke into his lab and used his genetic accelerator on himself, transforming into a hyper-evolved "Ultra-Mind" with amazing psionic powers and intellect. The forced evolution severely atrophied his body, however, eventually leading to massive

organ failure. Ultra-Mind designed a life-support tank to preserve his advanced brain, and the remote surgical system able to transplant it from his dying body. Since then, he has proclaimed himself free of “all human weakness” and without any need for a body of flesh and blood. Ultra-Mind seeks to further his “inevitable evolution” and increase his already considerable power, either through artificial enhancements to his brain-tank or by further evolving into what he believes will eventually be a godlike being of pure thought, unshackled from physical existence and able to reshape reality at will.

The Ultra-Mind’s ongoing research and experimentation requires a great deal of resources, which he usually steals from high tech laboratories and companies, or he simply steals the money or wealth needed to buy them on the black market. Although the Ultra-Mind is capable of committing such robberies, he often employs various hirelings to do his dirty work, unwilling to “lower” himself to such menial tasks.

The Ultra-Mind’s work also requires a fair number of experimental subjects, which are usually either kidnapped or chosen from among the desperate willing to subject themselves to experiments in hopes of gaining super-powers, and some of the Ultra-Mind’s efforts have resulted in stable super-beings. He’s known to make them into his minions, using brain-washing, mind-control, or simply blackmail, particularly if their powers are temporary or their condition requires further treatments or attention.

Coldly dispassionate and supremely arrogant, the Ultra-Mind has no peers in his view, but will form alliances as needed, and has been known to weld together groups of super-criminals under his leadership to achieve his goals, always willing to sacrifice such pawns as needed in order to win the game.

The Ultra-Mind prefers to sit like a spider in the center of a web of influence, working through telepathy and various agents, although he is quite capable of lashing out with both psychic and telekinetic attacks and protecting himself with a powerful kinetic field. Normally limited to the slow, hovering movement of his brain-tank, the Ultra-Mind can move himself and the tank telekinetically in times of need (a Flight stunt), and he always has failsafes and escape plans in place to ensure his own survival, should his plans go awry.

WARBRIDE

PROWESS	AMAZING	8
COORDINATION	INCREDIBLE	7
STRENGTH	INCREDIBLE	7
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Athletics
Weapons

QUALITIES

Bride of Battle
Sisterhood Apostate
Scalpel of Civilization

POWERS

Damage Resistance: Warbride's dense body gives her Poor (2) resistance to damage. When prepared for battle, she wears armor raising her resistance to Good (5).

Immortality: The secrets of the Sisterhood have given Warbride a Good (5) level of immortality, able to return from death in a matter of five hours.

Weapons: Warbride wields a variety of close combat weapons, giving her Good (5) slashing attacks as well as Amazing (8) bludgeoning attacks.

BACKGROUND

For centuries, the secret order known as the Sisterhood has chosen women to become champions of civilization, Brides of Battle, invested

with a mystic power that makes them invincible warriors, able to carry out their duties to the world.

Occasionally, one of the Sisterhood's chosen vessels has been found wanting, but never before had she been truly mad. Not until Althea, the Warbride, Apostate of the Sisterhood. A survivor of the horrors of war, rescued and raised by the Sisterhood, she became the greatest of them, but turned away from their traditions and laws. Invested with the full measure of their power, she stole more for her own ends. The weak did not need defending, she proclaimed. Like a disease, they needed to be cut away and allowed to perish, and she would be civilization's razor-sharp scalpel to perform that operation.

A trained assassin and warrior, Warbride sees herself as wise surgeon and gardener to an ill world: She is willing to cut and prune as needed to ensure civilization survives and prospers. Her work may range for assassination of certain influential (or potentially influential) figures to providing a "common threat" to unite others, or eliminating influences she feels do harm, from subversive art and ideas to abusers of women or powerful weapons in the wrong hands. While some of her goals may align with one political entity or another from time to time, her ultimate agenda is too independent and ruthless to be seen as anything other than a threat to the world at large.

THE SISTERHOOD

Agents of the Sisterhood have operated in secret throughout history, in service to the Triumvirate, the three Elder Sisters who oversee the order, carrying out the wishes of the mysterious Ascended Ones. Women from cultures all over the world have been recruited and trained by the Sisterhood to oppose conquerers, dictators, monsters, and worse in the cause of civilization.

A trained warrior of the Sisterhood has abilities similar to Warbride's, but one level lower and, while long-lived, they lack her immortality. Whether the Sisterhood has given up on pursuing their rogue sister, or if they are in conflict with other secret societies (such as Legion) is left for the Game Master to decide as best suits the series. In some settings "the Sisterhood" may just be a delusion of Warbride's deranged mind!

THE WARLOCK

PROWESS	GOOD	5
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GREAT	6
AWARENESS	INCREDIBLE	7
WILLPOWER	FANTASTIC	9



SPECIALTIES

Occult Master

QUALITIES

Mystic Guardian of the Earth
Supreme in Sorcery
Uneasy Lies the Crown

POWERS

Immortality: Magic sustains Warlock's life. He does not age and has Good (5) Immortality, restoring him to life within hours.

Magic: Warlock wields Fantastic (9) magical power, including the Instant and Psychic extras and Mastery of Astral Projection, Blast, Flight, Telekinesis, Telepathy, and Teleportation. He's capable of using his Occult specialty to perform rituals of Fantastic power as well and has access to a wealth of magical knowledge and lore.

BACKGROUND

Baron Earhart von Karnstein was born in 1540 to an aristocratic family in Europe. Possessed of a considerable talent for the occult, Earhart studied every forbidden text and tome available to him, eventually summoning demons and sealing dark pacts for even greater knowledge and power. He sought out masters of the mystic arts in order to steal their

secrets, conquering nearly all he encountered, but harvesting increasingly less knowledge, for there were few who could equal, much less exceed him. His treacherous dealings quickly earned him the title of “Warlock,” traitor to the society of sorcerers.

Finally, the Warlock met his match in the chosen Mystic Guardian of Earth’s plane of existence, entrusted with guarding against the forces lurking in realms beyond most human experience. He was able to stymie the Warlock and did so for centuries, the two of them engaged in a shadow game of cat and mouse behind the scenes, an ongoing duel of sorcery.

Until there came a day when the world’s Mystic Guardian grew fatigued, for even though great sorcerers defied the passage of time, constant responsibility took its toll. The Warlock’s old foe prepared to pass his power and mantle on to a disciple, and the sinister sorcerer chose that moment to strike. His targets were caught unawares and were no match for the onslaught. They were blasted from the earthly plane, leaving the Warlock as victor—and supreme magus.

Truly, Baron von Karnstein had not entirely considered what would happen if he eventually won his long-held vendetta, but now, the mantle of Mystic Guardian of the Earthly Plane was his, and soon all the forces throughout every Realm knew it. Since his victory, Warlock has become quite conservative—after all he now *is* the status quo! He takes his role as Mystic Guardian seriously, and ruthlessly defends the Earthly plane against any forces from the Mystic Realms that might threaten it, maintaining the various rituals, rites, and wards that help him do his work. He also tends to find ways to justify “confiscating” potential sources of magical power to “prevent them from falling into the wrong hands,” meaning anyone’s hands other than his own.

Warlock is a potential rival for any mystic or magical character: A “higher authority” who seeks to curb the activities of potential rivals, ensuring they can never threaten his power and position. Unfortunately for the heroes, Warlock’s position is at least somewhat legitimate, and the prospect of “dethroning” him as Mystic Guardian means potentially leaving the Earth open to attack or invasion.

Of course, there is always the possibility an alliance of magicians, perhaps aided by the lingering spirit of Warlock’s old foe and predecessor, may seek to do just that: put a new, more worthy, Mystic Guardian in place. They’ll have to cultivate their candidate in secret, lest Warlock catch wind of it and eliminate the threat before it can come to pass.

YAMA KING

PROWESS	INCREDIBLE	7
COORDINATION	GOOD	5
STRENGTH	GREAT	6
INTELLECT	FAIR	4
AWARENESS	INCREDIBLE	7
WILLPOWER	INCREDIBLE	7



SPECIALTIES

Blades Expert
Mental Resistance Master
Occult Master

QUALITIES

Hell on Earth
Mandate of the Celestial Bureaucracy
Rogue King of the Ninth Hell

POWERS

Death Touch: The Yama King's very touch is almost certain death, should he wish it, a Supreme (10) supernatural Affliction.

Magic: The Yama King wields Incredible (7) Magic, including Mastery of Blast, Illusion, Telepathy, and Teleportation.

Scythe: At the Yama King's will, a scythe of indestructible metal appears in his hand. He wields it with Fantastic (9) ability and it inflicts Amazing (8) slashing damage.

Third Eye: The Yama King's infernal third eye grants him the Super-Senses to Foresee Death and See Through Illusions.

Undying: As a King of Hell, the Yama King has Supreme (10) Immortality and Regeneration, recovering 1 Stamina per page, and returning from death on the page after his destruction.

BACKGROUND

The Chinese have a *lot* of Hells. Each of these netherworlds is governed by a Yama King, specializing in a particular sort of punishment for specific sins. The Yama King of the First Hell performs the evaluation of souls, weighing their sins and deciding which Hell best suits their punishment, if they are not worthy of reincarnation. At least, that is the Heavenly Mandate of the Celestial Bureaucracy and the proper order of things.

That was until the sorcerer known as Warlock banished his rival to a hell-dimension and upset the balance of things. The Celestial Bureaucracy was thrown into disarray as endless meetings and discussions were scheduled and held about this development. If mortals could use the Hell realms as their own personal prisons, then the mandate of their purpose was in question! Yet the role of the supreme wizard on Earth had always remained inviolate in the Eyes of Heaven.

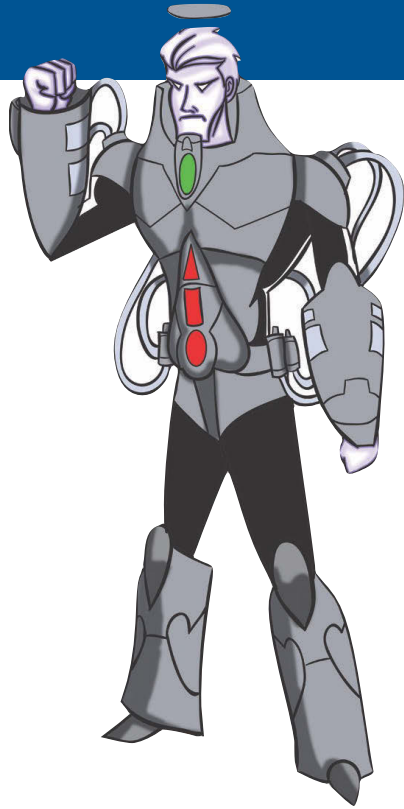
The Yama King of the Ninth Hell has chosen not to ignore this affront, nor to wait until the endless bickering and discussion of the Bureaucracy can arrive at a Heavenly Mandate, which make take an Age or more. No, he has chosen to act, leaving his throne in the infernal realm empty so he may focus his attention upon the earthly plane and its interfering populace. By upsetting the proper order of things, as the Yama King sees it, humanity has forfeited their right to due process in the judging of souls. That this opportunity aligns perfectly with his agenda is of no moment—it is the clear violation that matters.

So the Yama King schemes to bring about an end to the mortal world. He will move pieces upon the board and a foolish humanity will unleash its own destruction, after which Hell will reign on Earth, and all souls will be judged (and punished) at once, bringing the system to a perfect, final, and eternal conclusion, an infernal empire where the Yama King of the First Hell will be superfluous, and *someone* will need to assume his place and power...

The looming threat posed by the Yama King and his schemes can occupy an entire series, with the heroes discovering the first hints of his apocalyptic plans for the world. His influence may first be felt among secret cults in China and places like North Korea, with increasing militarism and threats of war. Ironically, one of the first to become aware of the threat is likely Warlock himself, who may need allies (read: pawns) in order to deal with it without admitting any complicity or responsibility in causing the crisis in the first place.

ZERO

PROWESS	FAIR	4
COORDINATION	FAIR	4
STRENGTH	AVERAGE	3
INTELLECT	GREAT	6
AWARENESS	GOOD	5
WILLPOWER	GREAT	6



SPECIALTIES

Power (Zero Point Suit)
Science Expert
Technology

QUALITIES

I Know They Are After Me
Master of Zero Point Energy
“Zero: My name, your chances.”

POWERS

Zero Suit: Zero is sustained by an advanced suit of power armor, providing him with Total Life Support as well as Great (6) Blast, Flight, Force Field, Power Nullification, and Telekinesis powers from manipulating the suit’s inexhaustible source of energy. Without its Force Field active, the Zero Suit provides Average (3) Damage Resistance. If the suit’s Life Support is damaged or disabled, Zero begins suffering exhaustion (see **Exhaustion** under **Reactions** in the **Taking Action** chapter of **ICONS**). If he collapses from this exhaustion, he begins dying.

BACKGROUND

Dr. Ellroy Newman was a brilliant researcher in zero-point energy, a fundamental energy found on the atomic and sub-atomic level. Unfortunately, his theories were difficult to follow and impossible to replicate with the kind of rigor required for successful research. The isolated Dr. Newman grew increasingly convinced that he was on the

right track, but someone didn't want him to succeed, someone with an interest in preventing the world from obtaining a source of cheap, clean, virtually inexhaustible energy. The more he thought about it, and the more the rejections piled up, the more it made sense. "They" didn't want a change in the status quo, in the elimination of an energy and industrial infrastructure that was destroying the world, but making certain people rich.

Then came the accident. They say it was his fault, if it was anyone's, that they couldn't determine what caused the mysterious explosion of unknown energy in his lab, but Dr. Newman knew. They did it. They must have. They wanted to eliminate him and his work, but instead all they did was expose him to exotic radiation. They didn't reckon on his determination, or him using his skills to build protective armor, powered by his own brilliant zero point module, to continue his work. His measures forced Them to take more aggressive measures, to convince others he was dangerous, and send the police to deal with him. Or maybe the cops were in on it the whole time.

Whatever the case, that is when Dr. Ellroy Newman effectively ceased to exist, and Zero was forced out on his own. Although his zero suit possessed a inexhaustible source of power to keep him alive and allow him to protect himself, he still needed things to continue his work: a laboratory, equipment, and undisturbed time. He found opportunities to gain many of these things through outright theft, or acquiring the money to buy them by stealing, fencing good, or occasional mercenary work. Even better when such things let him strike at Them and their gross materialism. In the process of confronting some heroes, he also discovered that his zero point energy emissions could interfere with some of their powers, temporarily nullifying them.

It is up to the Game Master exactly why Zero descended into paranoia and the nature of his discoveries. Perhaps his "zero point energy" is actually an innate power he attributes to a working scientific theory. Maybe he did discover a source of energy, but it is connected with otherworldly forces like Dirge's Forbidden Ones (see **Dirge**) and exposure to it has caused madness to set in. Of course, it's also possible Zero is right: That he is on to something and They don't want anyone else to know about it...

Meanwhile, Zero goes about stealing resources and technology to further his research, some of which might be incredibly dangerous, causing additional accidents, or giving him ways to further enhance his own powers.

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