

VENTURE CITY STORIES



BRIAN ENGARD

A WORLD OF
ADVENTURE FOR

FATE
CORE SYSTEM

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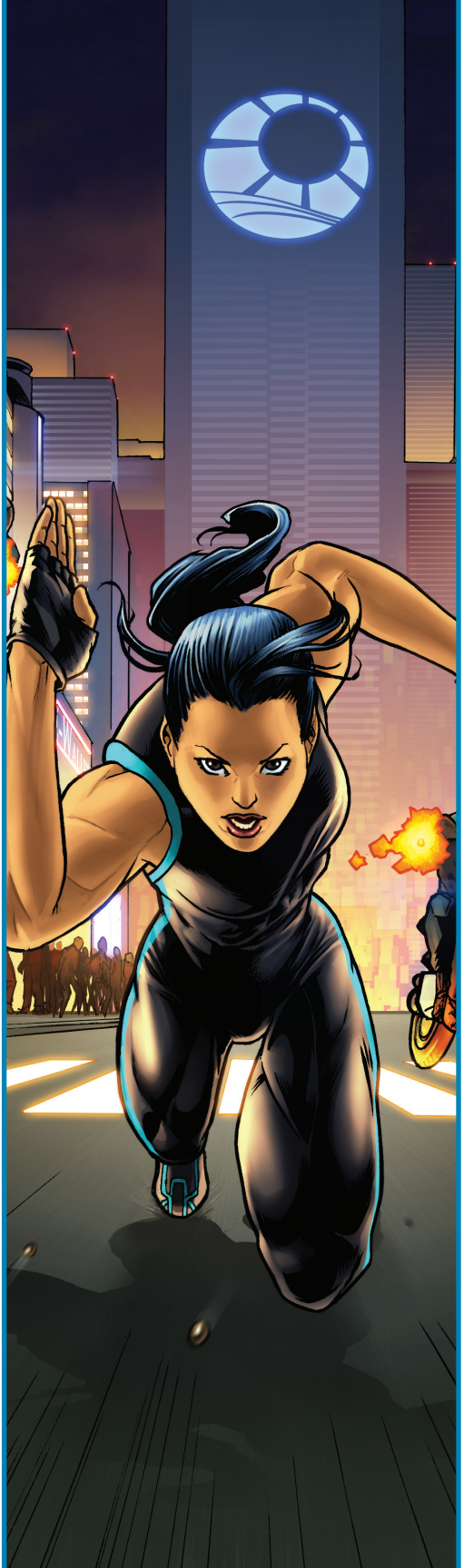
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Venture City Stories
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This is a game where people make up stories about wonderful, terrible,
impossible, glorious things. All the characters and events portrayed in this
work are fictional. Any resemblance to real people, superheroes, corporate
raiders, private security firms, or disgruntled office workers who can shoot
frickin' lazer beams from their eyes is purely coincidental, but kinda hilarious.

CONTENTS

Venture City	2
How It Works.....	4
Issues.....	5
Factions, Places, and People	6
The Block.....	8
Splitstream.....	9
Mitsuhama R&D Complex.....	10
Archard Cole	12
Raina Sanjarian.....	13
Solar Man.....	14
Aegis Towers	15
Henry White	17
Rakaru Heights.....	18
Abby Dynes	20
Shadow.....	21
Character Creation and Powers	23
Sample Characters	26

VENTURE CITY

Welcome to Venture City! It's a city of millions, a sprawling urban metropolis full of crime, corruption, and violence. It's a city where the rich and elite—few as there might be—control nearly everything. It's a city where crime prevention and public safety are privatized, and police forces are owned by corporations. It's a city with a huge, disenfranchised underclass that will do what they must to make ends meet.

Venture City is a place of extremes, a place of deep, concealing shadows and stark, antiseptic light. It's a place of heroes and villains, exemplars of justice and personifications of evil.

Okay, maybe that last bit is a lie.

What Venture City *really is* is gray. Sure, you've got extremes: rich and poor, light and dark, safe and dangerous, hero and villain. But in between are vast expanses of murky morality, people who don't exist as part of the established system. People like you.

Welcome to Venture City. It's a lot like the rest of the world.

Heroes and Villains

You know the heroes and villains. You see them on TV, you know their names, you buy their action figures. Here's the thing, though: anyone the media calls a "hero" is sponsored by one of the big multinationals. Every one. Do they do good things? Sure. But they do it on the company dime, and that makes them beholden to company policy. You see the heroes saving people, stopping disasters, thwarting villains. But who decides who's worth saving, what's really a disaster, who's really a villain?

Villains. Yeah. That's a much murkier area. Some of them are bad, don't get me wrong; some of them do things that would make history's greatest monsters proud, and they do it for personal gain or revenge or for no reason at all. But most people who get painted with that "villain" brush are just supers without a corporate sponsor. They're off-book. Unsanctioned.

So where do they all come from? A while back, maybe sixty years ago, supers started cropping up. You'd find people who could fly or teleport or burn things with their eyes, and nobody knew quite what to make of them. They all had their own spin on the origin story. Aliens, radiation, traumatic injury, super-science, whatever. Some of it had a kernel of truth; some was pure bunk.

Here's what we know now: Supers have a particular gene sequence that enables their powers. The potential for these powers is in every man, woman, and child, but it's only turned on for certain people. Different things can turn it on, but—like getting cancer from smoking or dying from a lightning strike—it doesn't happen to everyone. There's no reliable way to reproduce it.

At least, there wasn't until about five years ago. See, the corporations rounded up a bunch of these supers, shipped them off to R&D, dissected them and studied them and poked and prodded to see what made them tick. And then

one corp, Mitsuhamma Splice Corp, figured it out. They figured out how to turn that gene sequence on and off, how to alter it to get specific effects. How to custom-build superheroes.

Didn't take long for the tech to spread. Some spy stole the research for their corporation, then maybe sold it to a third party for some filthy lucre, and now they've all got it. That's the key, though: the corporations have it. Regular folk? We have to rely on happenstance to get our superpowers, if we get them at all. The corps hold all those cards.

Crime and Punishment

Like the rest of the world, all policing—crime prevention and investigation, public safety, and so forth—is privatized. Each corporation has its own private police force, every one happy to take your cash for the privilege of their protection. If you can't pay, you're on your own.

Crime, as you might expect, is rampant in those places where nobody can afford corporate security. It's an accepted fact of life. In the nice parts of town, most of the crime is white-collar, corporate espionage and embezzling and that kind of thing. Out in the sprawl, anything goes. It's only illegal if it steps on the toes of someone who can actually do something about it.

The heroes help some. When the corps need some good PR, they send their pet supers into the sprawl to stop big, high profile crimes . . . when they're not busy perpetrating crimes on other corporations, at least. Sometimes you also get unsanctioned heroes, non-corp supers who will help a neighborhood out for maybe some free room and board or just a heads-up if the corporate heroes come knocking. They've got to keep a low profile, though. Stop too many crimes and you're stepping on the corporations' toes, cutting into their bottom line. And that, of course, is illegal.

Daily Life

You've got three socioeconomic strata in Venture City. First, there are the rich. Politicians, CEOs, and other bigwigs who are tied to one or more corporations and who can afford luxury and safety. They make up maybe a half a percent of the population, but they hold the lion's share of the power and money.

Then you've got the wageslaves. They work for the corps, so they get protection and security and a place to live and a monthly wage to spend at the company store. But they aren't called "slaves" for nothing. You sign with a corporation, they own you in perpetuity. Hell, they own your corpse when you die—you know, for science. Leaving one corporation for another, or just going your own way, is called "defection" because it's *illegal*. It's a crime punishable by a good long time in prison—also privatized.

Then you've got everyone else. We live out in the sprawl, we work at local stores or out of our homes, we make just enough to scrape by, and we don't get any kind of security or protection from anyone unless we can pay.



HOW IT WORKS

Venture City Stories is an adventure toolkit for *Fate Core*. It's a sandbox environment where you can create your own stories, sort of a mini-setting with situations you can use as springboards to tell the stories you want to tell.

First we'll give you a bunch of example **issues** for your game. We'll talk about the different things your adventure might be about, and we'll provide you with some impending and current issues you can use to steer things in that direction. These start on page 5.

Nothing Ventured

Throughout the Venture City write-up, you'll see boxes like this. If you don't want to put together your own starting adventure, then look at these boxes. They tell you what elements of the city to use and how to use them, so that you can hit the ground running with minimal effort. If all you do is read these sidebars and the specific elements they reference, you'll have a complete adventure called *Nothing Ventured*.

NEXT: PAGE 6

Then we'll go into the various **factions** in the city. These are the corporations, private security forces, heroic and villainous organizations, street gangs, and other groups in Venture City. Each faction has its own aspects and skills, **places** important to them, and some prominent **people** you might run into—the movers and shakers, or otherwise noteworthy individuals. Check them out on page 6. You don't have to use everything we give you; choose what suits your story best.

The end of the book has rules for creating characters (page 23), as well as some partially pregenerated characters (page 26). The character creation rules will tell you how you can make your own superpowers, and the pregens provide some examples. There are some examples in the adventure proper, too. If you're ever confused about what things like special effects and collateral damage mean, flip back to this section.

ISSUES

The issues you choose say a lot about what your game's going to be about. Just like in *Fate Core* (FC 22), you're going to pick or come up with two issues: two current issues, two impending issues, or one of each.

Current issues in *Venture City Stories* are usually big things that the city struggles with. They color every scene set in Venture City, but it's unlikely that your PCs will resolve them over the course of a single adventure. It's good to have goals, though, and if you want your first adventure in Venture City to be the start of a longer campaign, you'll definitely want a current issue.

Impending issues are more immediate. They're threats happening *right now*, and they're great for getting started right away. If you want to direct the action a little and steer the PCs toward a particular problem or bad guy, an impending issue is a great way to do that.

If you want to run *Venture City Stories* in one adventure—often called a “one-shot”—grab two impending issues. Current issues can have their place in a one-shot, but giving the PCs two big, flashy, immediate things to tackle presents them with a hard choice, and hard choices make for great drama.

If you want to run something a little more freeform and allow the PCs to pursue their own goals over the short term while threats await them in the long term, get yourself a couple of current issues. That way the PCs will know what's wrong with the city and what problems need fixing, but also that these issues are long-term things they have to worry about. In the near future, they can decide what's important and exert a lot of authorship over the story.

Taking one of each will let you split the difference, which can be good for both one-shots and campaign play. A one-shot with mixed issues gives the PCs a tangible, immediate goal that they can accomplish, while the current issue sets the tone, making the city feel more like a real, living place as it looms in the background. In campaign play you'll start off with a bang while giving your PCs long-term problems they'll have to deal with some day.

Current Issues

- *“Crime and politics, is there a difference?”*
- *Not Safe After Dark*
- *“There's the rich, and everybody else.”*
- *Are Supers Still Human?*

Impending Issues

- *Gangland Powderkeg*
- *The Superdrug*
- *Terrorist Bombings Rock City*
- *Citywide Blackout*

Nothing Ventured: Issues

Nothing Ventured has a current issue and an impending issue. The current issue *Are Supers Still Human?* is a manifestation of a question that's very much on the public's mind—according to the underground media, at least. Supers—in particular the corporate-sponsored superheroes—are viewed with significant distrust by much of the underclass and even many of the wageslaves. They stop crime, but they also do terrible things for the corporate masters. Do they have free will? Do their powers distance themselves from humanity so much that they can no longer understand or sympathize with their fellow human beings? Are they the next step in evolution, or the next big threat?

The impending issue is *The Superdrug*, a potent pharmacological cocktail that's hit the streets recently. It gives you superpowers, but they only last as long as you keep taking the drug. Also, there are the side effects. Is it safe? Did one of the corporations make it? Did it get leaked to the street deliberately? Is this whole thing some sort of experiment? What are the long-term implications of the drug? What happens when terrorists or violent criminals get their hands on it?

Into this volatile mix come the PCs: unsanctioned supers from the underclass hired by a corporate suit as disavowable assets. Their job: find out who's flooding the streets with the superdrug.

FACTIONS, PLACES, AND PEOPLE

The rest of this adventure is a collection of factions, places, and people you can use to make your own adventure. Throughout you'll also find sidebars detailing the pieces to use in *Nothing Ventured*; follow the guidelines in these sidebars and you'll have a ready-to-play adventure. You'll also find sidebars containing advice and tips for building your own adventure.

Factions are major groups within Venture City. Corporations, gangs, underground super-groups, private security forces, and such—they're all factions.

Factions have two key game statistics: aspects and skills. Each faction has two aspects: a **slogan** and a **secret**. A faction's slogan summarizes its public persona, the face it presents to the rest of the world. A secret represents all the things the faction hides from outside scrutiny. They're both a bit like a high concept and a bit like a trouble.

A faction's skills are the things it's good at. If you need either passive or active opposition, or a rating for a nameless NPC, use the skill that best matches what you want. Not all factions have all faction skills; if a skill is missing from a faction's list, assume it defaults to Average (+1). The faction skills are Bureaucracy, Espionage, Resources, Security, Tech, and Violence.

Faction listings also contain places and people. **Places** each have an issue, while **people** are either supporting or main NPCs.

Nothing Ventured: Setup

In *Nothing Ventured*, the PCs are unsanctioned supers living in the sprawl. Some might be associated with the Neighborhood Watch (page 18), some with Splitstream's Crew (page 7), and some might be independent. Make sure they know each other and have reasons to work together.

Each of the PCs has heard about the superdrug, but nothing specific—just that it's out there and it's maybe not all it's cracked up to be. The drug becomes important, though, when they all get the same anonymous text:

"Need your help. High risk, high reward. Barton's. Midnight."

Barton's is a bar in Rakaru Heights (page 18). The text is from Emily Shah, a resident of the neighborhood. She's not a super and isn't much of a combatant. She *is* affiliated with the Neighborhood Watch (page 18), though, doing legal aid and fundraising; use the Watch's Resources skill for any rolls Emily makes. She's *Loyal to the Watch* but also *Repelled by Violence*. She believes in what the Watch does, but doesn't always approve of their methods.

When the PCs gather at Barton's, Emily approaches them and makes them a proposition. She's concerned with the increase in violence and crime caused by the superdrug, and she wants the PCs to find out how it's getting to the streets and to put a stop to the supply. She promises a big payday in return.

Emily's only lead is that Splitstream's Crew seems to be profiting quite a bit from the sale of the drug, and many of Splitstream's gangbangers are using.

Splitstream's Crew

Venture City is home to more than a dozen gangs. Some of them are very small, a handful of violent people trying to grab what power they can. Others are huge, sprawling organizations that control large sections of the city. Splitstream's Crew falls into the latter category.

On its face, the Crew—as they're often called—is a dangerous organized crime syndicate with a penchant for violent acts and a number of super-powered members. The Crew is more than just a gang, though. Those in the know are aware that the Crew is for hire. Splitstream runs his Crew like a gang, but he makes his money from secret mercenary contracts. What look like acts of random violence are often targeted strikes.

The Crew

Slogan: *We Control the Sprawl*

Secret: *Services Rendered to the Highest Bidder*

Skills: Espionage +2, Resources +2, Security +2,
Violence +3

The Block

Though the Crew controls about half of the sprawl proper, their base of power is a decommissioned prison that everyone just calls “the Block.” Once used to keep violent offenders off the streets, it is now a fortress that Splitstream uses to plan attacks on various organizations and people in Venture City.

Many cells have been converted into barracks, garages, server rooms, armories. At any given time, about half of the remaining cells in the Block are occupied by Splitstream’s enemies or targets, waiting to be interrogated, tortured, killed, or ransomed. The structure’s only real weakness is its age: many of its electrical and security systems are outdated and faulty.

Issue: *Outdated Systems*

PREV: PAGE 7

Nothing Ventured: Splitstream’s Involvement

Splitstream is involved in selling the drug, and he’s not the only one. Many of the gangs in Venture City are profiting from its sale, but Splitstream is making a killing. He’s also distributing it to his non-super subordinates so they can get a quick fix when the fighting starts.

Approaching Splitstream isn’t easy. He’s in the Block. He’s surrounded by his men. The PCs can fight their way in; most of Splitstream’s bangers are nameless NPCs (use the Crew’s Violence rating, page 7). A few of them have superpowers from the drug; throw in four or five nameless NPCs with one of the following stunts. Don’t worry about drawbacks or collateral damage or special effects; they’re just nameless NPCs.

- *Flight:* The gang member can fly. This functions just like running or walking, but with vertical movement.
- *Super Strength:* The gang member gets a +2 bonus on any attacks that rely on brute strength.
- *Pyrokinesis:* The gang member can make ranged fire-based attacks with a +2 bonus.
- *Teleportation:* The gang member can teleport around the battlefield, moving up to 3 zones as an action.

If the PCs choose to approach with violence, Splitstream will fight them, but he’ll concede if he takes a moderate consequence or worse. They could also talk their way in somehow or use trickery. Either approach might or might not involve a fight. Either way, they eventually get Splitstream to spill the following information:

- He gets his supply of the drugs from a man named Henry White. He’s pretty sure Henry works for Mitsuhama Splice.
- Mitsuhama’s R&D facility is known for their thriving smuggling ring.
- A woman named Shadow—the only name he has—has been paying him lots of money to distribute the drug to people in Rakaru Heights.
- He’s pretty sure the drug causes a psychotic break eventually.

NEXT: PAGE 11

Splitstream

Splitstream is a cunning gang leader and mercenary captain. His power over life and death, once he learned to control it, allowed him to shoot up through the ranks of Venture City's largest gang at a young age. Eventually, Splitstream challenged the leader of the Crew, killed him, and had his loyalists kill anyone who had supported his predecessor.

Now he has a reputation as one of the most dangerous men in Venture City. He has a tacit agreement with the Neighborhood Watch: as long as they stay out of his territory, he leaves them alone. He also holds lucrative agreements with the various corporations in Venture City. Many corporate troubleshooters hire him and his Crew as deniable assets in exchange for significant compensation and a blind eye from their security and police forces.

Splitstream

Aspects: *Brilliant Mercenary Gang Captain, Too Many Masters, "Life and death are in my hands.", Attachments Are a Weakness, Brutal and Efficient*

Skills

Superb (+5): Rapport

Great (+4): Fight, Provoke

Good (+3): Contacts, Shoot, Will

Fair (+2): Athletics, Notice, Physique, Burglary

Average (+1): Deceive, Drive, Investigate, Resources, Stealth

Stunts

Armor of Fear (FC 120)

Provoke Violence (FC 120)

Popular (FC 121)

Powers

Life and Death: Splitstream's left hand induces rapid and aggressive cancerous growth within anyone he touches. To use this power, he must touch his enemy's skin, which is a Fight roll if they're resisting. If he succeeds, he deals +4 physical stress. If he touches someone with his right hand, he heals their wounds; make a Will roll at Fair (+2) to clear any physical stress. He can also downgrade consequences instead of clearing stress; the opposition to this roll is the shift value of the consequence he attempts to clear. While he can heal as many people as he wishes, each person can only benefit from it once per scene.

Special Effects: Inflict Condition, Physical Recovery

Drawback: **Can't Turn It Off**

Collateral Damage Clause: If Splitstream doesn't mind killing a lot of people, he can touch his hands together to emanate a wave of sickness from his body that affects everyone in his zone. The wave immediately kills any nameless NPCs, while named NPCs and PCs must make a Physique roll against a Fair (+2) difficulty to avoid taking a moderate physical consequence.

Physical Stress:

Mental Stress:

Mitsuhama Splice Corporation

Mitsuhama is the world's biggest, richest, and most influential biotech corporation. They've also got their hands in electronics, but genetic engineering is their bread and butter. They've found cures for countless diseases, cures available in hospitals the world over—as long as you can pay for them.

They're also the ones who cracked the supergene, figured out how to activate superpowers in just about anyone. That tech has since leaked out to other corporations, and most major corporations have at least one superhero on staff, but Mitsuhama is still at the bleeding edge of supergene research. Other corps may have supers, but Mitsuhama supers are just *better*. Fewer drawbacks and side effects. More control over their powers.

There's a rumor that Mitsuhama also outfits their supers—and even some of their execs and salarymen—with kill switches: genetic code designed to replicate into a system-crippling and lightning-fast cancer when it's activated remotely. But that can't be true, can it?

Mitsuhama Splice Corporation

Slogan: *Unlocking Humanity's Potential*

Secret: *Life: Cheap but Profitable*

Skills: Bureaucracy +3, Resources +3, Security +2,
Tech +3, Violence +2



Mitsuhama R&D Complex

While Venture City isn't the seat of Mitsuhama's power and authority, it *is* where most of the science gets done. The company's primary R&D complex is situated on the edge of the sprawl, and it's the size of a small town on its own. This is where the magic happens. This is where Mitsuhama scientists conduct their experiments, cure diseases, unlock the secrets of the supergene, and create their heroes.

The complex is well guarded 'round the clock, but every fortress has a weakness. In Mitsuhama's case, it's that they don't pay their security force all that well. The corp relies on other methods to inspire loyalty—or obedience—and unfortunately for them this means there are gaps in their defenses. It's a poorly guarded secret that a lot of the designer drugs that make it out to the streets are leaked by Mitsuhama security bulldogs trying to make an extra buck. The company probably knows about it, but tolerates it.

Issue: *Thriving Smuggling Operation*

Nothing Ventured:

Following a Lead at Mitsuhama

The Mitsuhama R&D complex is a good place to start looking for the truth, but the PCs won't find it there. At least, they won't find the *whole* truth there. Different people know different things.

Archard Cole knows about the superdrug. He also knows that Mitsuhama used to manufacture it, but stopped when they found out about its side effects. They had a huge quantity of the stuff, enough for millions of doses, but it was all slated for destruction more than six months ago. Cole's not stupid; he knows that the drug out on the streets is either the same drug supposed to be destroyed or is based on the formula for that drug. Without a sample he can't be sure which, but as far as he's concerned Mitsuhama is absolved of any wrongdoing in this instance. If pressed, Archard might hint that his head of security Raina Sandarian knows more.

Of course, getting in to actually talk to Cole is going to be a trick and a half. He's protected by lawyers, yes-men, bureaucrats, corporate security—the works. Use whatever faction skill seems most appropriate to keep the PCs away from him, but *don't* use it to frustrate their efforts. If they're really intent on talking to Cole and have a good idea for how to do just that, let them succeed—just don't make it easy. When they finally do talk to Cole, he feigns being cooperative but his goal is to keep himself and Mitsuhama covered against liability—in that order.

Raina Sanjarian knows more of the particulars, but doesn't let on that she does. She's easier to get access to than Cole is, but she's better at playing dumb, which she's anything but. Sanjarian knows three very important things. First, she knows that the supply of the drug *was* destroyed more than six months ago. Second, she knows that the formula was smuggled out of the complex around the same time and sold to someone. Third, she knows who Henry White is, but she won't volunteer this information unless the PCs specifically mention him by name; she doesn't understand his involvement until they do so.

If the PCs get Sanjarian talking about Henry White, she can tell them that he's a mid-level exec for Aegis Securities. She knows he's not happy being a salaryman, and she figures that he was probably the buyer for the superdrug formula. If that's the case, then either Aegis is manufacturing and distributing it, or White is doing so on the side. Either way, he should be their next stop.

One more thing: an incursion into the R&D complex, either overt or covert, is a golden opportunity to bring Solar Man into the mix, probably accompanied by a cadre of Bright Sun soldiers (use Mitsuhama's Violence rating, page 10). If the PCs approach using either violence or stealth, that's your cue to get a big superhero fight ready.



Archard Cole

Cole is Mitsuhama's headman in Venture City. His title is Vice President of Research and Development—he's effectively king of the company's R&D machine. He climbed the ranks because he's both brilliant and ruthless; he knows his science and he knows his business, and he's not afraid to get his hands a little dirty.

Being head of R&D has a few perks too. The man has an instant supply of drugs as well as the treatments to make sure those drugs don't hurt him, genetic tweaks to make him live longer and stay hale and hardy into his old age, and he's effectively free from disease. There are rumors that his supergene's active too.

Archard Cole

Aspects: *Mitsuhama R&D Headman, Owned by the Company Store, Secret Super, "Limitations are for other people.", Genetically Perfect*

Skills

Superb (+5): Resources
Great (+4): Lore, Rapport
Good (+3): Contacts, Deceive, Athletics
Fair (+2): Crafts, Empathy, Fight, Physique
Average (+1): Investigate, Notice, Provoke, Shoot, Will

Stunts

Mind Games (FC 104)
Specialist (Genetics) (FC 115)
Best Foot Forward (FC 121)
Savvy Investor (FC 123)

Powers

Wind Control: Cole can use Athletics to fly. He can also summon gusts of wind, and he gets a +2 to Athletics rolls to create advantages from doing so.

Special Effects: Forced Movement, Extra Movement

Drawback: **Hard To Use Indoors**

Collateral Damage Clause: If Cole is willing to deal collateral damage, he can fly directly through solid objects—walls, ceilings, people—without injury. If he flies through a person, treat this as an Athletics attack with a +2 bonus.

Physical Stress: **Mental Stress:**



Raina Sanjarian

Sanjarian is Cole's head of security. She oversees both the security forces for Mitsuhamas's complex in Venture City and Bright Sun Security, the privatized police force that the company owns. Sanjarian is stern and ruthless, but she doesn't control her subordinates through fear. She has a strong sense of justice, which informs her decision-making and managerial style. Bright Sun is quite possibly one of the most disciplined and loyal private security companies in Venture City, due in no small part to Raina Sanjarian's leadership.

This sense of justice is at odds, of course, with the active smuggling ring within the Mitsuhamas campus security force, at least at first glance. Though Sanjarian enforces discipline and order here too, she recognizes the security force's low pay as an injustice, and turns a blind eye on the smuggling ring to help balance the scales. As long as nothing too important gets leaked, there's no problem.

Raina Sanjarian

Aspects: *Mitsuhamas Head of Security, Justice Above All, No Sense of Humor, Tactical Virtuoso, Quietly Menacing Skills*

Great (+4): Shoot, Provoke

Good (+3): Athletics, Fight, Physique

Fair (+2): Contacts, Investigate, Rapport, Will

Average (+1): Drive, Empathy, Notice, Deceit, Resources

Stunts

Lie Whisperer (FC 109)

Backup Weapon (FC 111)

Attention to Detail (FC 113)

Tough as Nails (FC 119)

Physical Stress:

Mental Stress:

Solar Man

Bright Sun's mascot—and Mitsuhamas most popular superhero—is Solar Man. Handsome, charming, and capable of flying and controlling light, Solar Man flies around the city righting wrongs and protecting citizens. Of course, “wrong” are defined by Mitsuhamas Splice Corporation, and “citizens” are people who pay Bright Sun.

There's a darker side to Solar Man, too. His ability to control light makes him an expert infiltrator; he can do things like shroud an area in darkness, spoof security systems, turn invisible, and more. Mitsuhamas often uses Solar Man for clandestine activities against other corporations.

In truth, Solar Man is conflicted about his identity. He *wants* to be a good guy, to help people. He doesn't like refusing help to people who aren't Bright Sun customers, and he doesn't like corporate espionage. But he *does like* his power and fame, and he knows Mitsuhamas can take both away easily. The genetic kill switch he's saddled with is also convincing.

Solar Man

Aspects: *“A bright spot in the darkness!”*, *Genetic Kill Switch*, *Wants To Be a Hero*, *Espionage Expert*, *Bright Sun Mascot*

Skills

Superb (+5): Shoot

Great (+4): Athletics, Stealth

Good (+3): Deceive, Fight, Physique

Fair (+2): Burglary, Empathy, Notice, Rapport

Average (+1): Contacts, Investigate, Provoke, Will

Stunts

Best Foot Forward (FC 121)

Powers

Light Control: Solar Man can fly with Athletics and shoot lasers from his hands with Shoot. He can also wrap himself in darkness or make himself invisible by bending light, granting him a +2 to overcome rolls with Stealth when vision or light is a factor. Finally, he can spoof security systems with his light-based powers, giving him a +2 to create advantages with Burglary when dealing with electronic security systems.

Special Effects: Area Attack, Inflict Condition

Drawback: **Burns Hot**

Collateral Damage Clause: If Solar Man doesn't mind dealing a little collateral damage, he can control a swath of light the size of about a city block, flooding it in blinding light or dousing it in darkness. He can maintain this power for a whole scene.

Physical Stress:

Mental Stress:



Aegis Securities

Aegis is *the* name in private security forces in Venture City. Somewhere in the neighborhood of sixty percent of the private police in the city report to Aegis. Another twenty is Bright Sun (page 13), and the rest is divided amongst a number of minor corps.

Aegis is looking to expand their influence. They're the top dog in security contracts, but they also want to supply the military with weapons and field enhancements—oh, and they're looking to get into biotech too.

Unlike Bright Sun, Aegis pays its soldiers and supers well. They're loyal because they're treated like rock stars and because they know they're the backbone of the company. The salarymen and wageslaves, on the other hand, are a little restless.

Aegis Securities

Slogan: *Keeping You Safe*

Secret: *To the Highest Bidder*

Skills: Resources +2, Security +3, Tech +2, Violence +3

Aegis Towers

The corporation's base of operations, Aegis Towers is an impressive corporate arcology in the center of Venture City. The central of the three towers is the tallest structure in the city, and you can see both helicopters and superheroes taking off from and landing on its three helipads at any time of day.

It's also probably the most well-guarded and secure building in the city. Anybody who's ever tried to break in has been handled with finality. If the facility has a weakness, it's that the rank-and-file wageslaves are unhappy, poorly paid, and not particularly loyal. Get one alone without a security officer nearby, and you could learn all kinds of things.

Issue: *Disloyal Wageslaves*

Nothing Ventured:

Following a Lead with Henry White

Henry White isn't that hard to talk to—unless he doesn't want to talk. If the PCs approach him with a light touch, they can simply go up and talk to him during his off-hours. If they're more heavy-handed, Henry's going to get security involved. This could wind up being a temporary roadblock or it could be a fight.

In a fight, Henry attacks at first, but he runs if he takes any stress or consequences. He's not a brave man, and the adrenaline rush of using his power wears off once he sees the danger he's in.

Another option is to follow Henry into the sprawl when he goes to meet his contacts. If the PCs opt for this approach, skip to “*The Vats*” (page 19).

When the PCs get a chance to question Henry, they can learn quite a bit from him.

- Henry bought the superdrug formula from Mitsuhama with money he got from a woman named Shadow.
- Henry bought the formula from a scientist named Roger Dynes.
- He and Shadow have been selling the superdrug to gangs all around the city, including Splitstream's Crew.
- Henry and Shadow's base of operations is an underground lab beneath Rakaru Heights.
- The superdrug works, but is volatile. The powers it creates are unstable, and it can have extreme psychological side effects.



Henry White

Henry is the quintessential disloyal wageslave. He's worked for Aegis for close to fifteen years, and in that time he's been promoted twice. He makes much less than even a low-ranking security officer, and he knows it. He's unhappy, but he's locked into a lifetime contract and can't get out.

Though he's stuck in a discouraging job, that doesn't mean he can't supplement his income elsewhere. Six months ago Henry bought the formula for the superdrug from someone at Mitsuhama, and he's partnered with some shady people to manufacture and distribute it. He's also not above sampling the wares himself; Henry wants to feel powerful, and the drug does just that.

Henry's family is worried about him. They've noticed a change in his behavior—staying out late, mood swings, coming home smelling of chemicals—and they think something's wrong. They're right.

Henry White

Aspects: *Wageslave–Turned–Drug Baron, Violent Mood Swings, Lifetime Contract, Family Man, Friends in Low Places*

Skills

Great (+4): Deceive

Good (+3): Contacts, Rapport

Fair (+2): Empathy, Lore, Shoot

Average (+1): Athletics, Crafts, Drive, Notice

Stunts

Lies upon Lies (FC 104)

Nose for Trouble (FC 109)

Powers

Laser Eyes: Henry can shoot lasers from his eyes, allowing him to make a Shoot attack at a +2.

Special Effects: Area Attack, Inflict Condition

Drawback: **Uncontrollable Bursts**

Collateral Damage Clause: If Henry doesn't mind inflicting some collateral damage, he can attack everyone in a zone at full strength.

Physical Stress:

Mental Stress:

The Neighborhood Watch

Out in the sprawl, most people can't afford the premiums required to get protection from one of the private police forces. They're scraping by, living day to day, existing in a world that is, in many ways, actively hostile toward them. The police ignore them; whatever happens is what happens, right?

But that doesn't mean they're helpless or without protection. Many of the sprawlers belong to a loose-knit organization that takes care of its own. They watch each other's backs, band together when a threat appears, and make the streets a little safer. There are even some unsanctioned supers in this group; they lend much-needed clout in return for shelter from the corps. People call this group the Neighborhood Watch.

The Watch ain't perfect, though. There's plenty of crime and corruption in it. There's no central authority and no self-regulation other than what people are and aren't willing to do. As such, there are plenty of ways for you to hide your sins. Protection rackets, money laundering, drug sales, prostitution, and more exist within the Watch and sneak under its nose. The Watch needs money, and that money's got to come from somewhere.

The Neighborhood Watch

Slogan: *Safer Streets*

Secret: *Hides All Kinds of Sins*

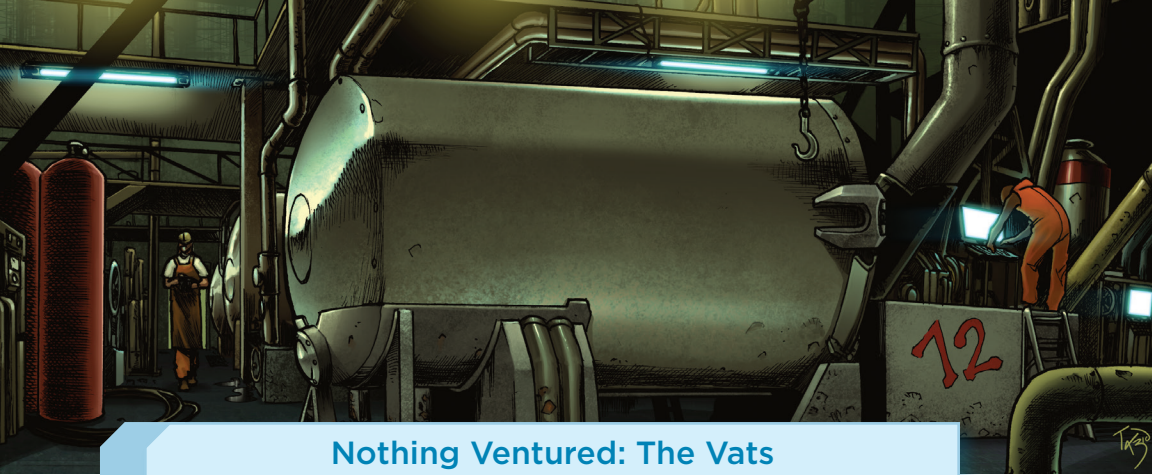
Skills: Violence +2

Rakaru Heights

The people here have a saying: "When they talk about the mean streets, they're talking about Rakaru." Rakaru Heights used to be the most dangerous place in the sprawl. Huge, dilapidated, rife with crime—it was a microcosm of the sprawl as a whole, but even more concentrated. The Neighborhood Watch didn't make the neighborhood safer, really, it just made Rakaru Heights dangerous to different people.

The criminals no longer run Rakaru Heights, though crime still has its place in the neighborhood. The Watch—Abby Dynes, specifically—has made Rakaru a place that predators avoid, though. Rapists, muggers, drug dealers, and others who prey upon the defenseless often steer clear, because there's a price on their heads in Rakaru Heights. Don't be mistaken; it's not really safe to walk the streets at night, you're just more likely to get justice if something happens to you.

Issue: *Violence Is a Way of Life*



PREV: PAGE 16

Nothing Ventured: The Vats

The chain of clues eventually leads to the Vats, an underground lab beneath Rakaru Heights where Henry and Shadow have been manufacturing the superdrug. It's guarded by some of Shadow's most trusted and skilled operatives. There are about a dozen of them in the lab, and they all use the Neighborhood Watch's Violence rating. Worse, they're all dosed with the superdrug, making this a tough fight indeed. Use these powers for the operatives:

- *Flight*: The gang member can fly. This functions just like running or walking, but with vertical movement.
- *Super Strength*: The gang member gets a +2 bonus on any attacks that rely on brute strength.
- *Pyrokinesis*: The gang member can make fire-based attacks at range with a +2 bonus.
- *Teleportation*: The gang member can teleport around the battlefield, moving up to 3 zones as an action.

The huge vats of the superdrug are a major hazard in this fight, as the chemical is highly toxic and explosive in the quantities here. Anyone exposed to the superdrug in the vats immediately takes the severe consequence **Overcharged**. Anyone with this aspect who gets taken out will detonate, creating a Superb (+5) explosion that everyone in the lab must defend against.

If the PCs get the chance to question Shadow, they find out the following info:

- Shadow was acting without Abby Dynes' knowledge.
- Roger Dynes is Abby's brother and works for Mitsuhamas. He sold the formula without Abby's knowledge.
- Shadow was dosing Neighborhood Watch members to give them superpowers. Somewhere around twenty percent of the Watch has been dosed at this point.
- Prolonged exposure to the superdrug causes severe psychological damage. However, very few of the Watch have received enough doses for side effects to be an issue.

NEXT: PAGE 22



Abby Dynes

The Watch doesn't have any kind of centralized leadership, but it does have people who hold authority in specific parts of the city. Abby Dynes is one of those people. The Rakaru Heights neighborhood is big and rough, the poster child for places that need the Watch. Heck, the Watch probably started there. Abby's been living in Rakaru for as long as anyone can remember, and she's both respected and feared.

It's not that she's cruel or unfair. Abby does what she feels is best for Rakaru Heights, and she stands up to people when the neighborhood needs it. People look to her for guidance, counsel, leadership. She's got no patience for fools or predators. She doesn't allow people to exploit each other, and she doesn't allow people to create weaknesses that others can exploit. She'll punish both crimes with the same harsh measures: a beating, followed by expulsion from the community.

Abby Dynes

Aspects: *Vengeful Guardian of Rakaru Heights, Quick to Anger, Quick to Action, Respect of the Community, Ear to the Ground, Fiercely Protective*

Skills

Great (+4): Fight

Good (+3): Contacts, Provoke

Fair (+2): Athletics, Empathy, Will

Average (+1): Investigate, Physique, Rapport, Shoot

Stunts

Ear to the Ground (FC 101)

Heavy Hitter (FC 111)

Powers

Stone Form: Abby can turn herself into a living statue of solid granite. When in this form, she can use Physique to defend against fists, weapons, and guns, and gets a +2 to do so. She also gets a +2 to any Fight attacks made with her bare fists.

Special Effects: Forced Movement, Physical Recovery

Drawback: **Slow and Heavy**

Collateral Damage Clause: If Abby doesn't mind letting the environment take the hit for her, she can completely ignore the effects of one attack against her.

Physical Stress:

Mental Stress:



Shadow

Shadow is Abby Dynes' spymaster. She's got a talent for subterfuge—aided by her ability to change shape—and she knows a lot of people. Shadow is unwaveringly loyal to the Neighborhood Watch, but she feels that Abby's leadership is somewhat lacking.

Shadow wants to empower the Watch so it can be a real force for good in Venture City. To that end, she thinks they need more superpowered allies, so she's concocted a plan to distribute the superdrug to those friendly to the Watch, all the better to bolster their numbers.

Shadow has little in the way of a personal life. Nobody knows her real name, and she doesn't have any family—none that anyone's aware of, at least. The Watch is her whole life.

Shadow

Aspects: *Neighborhood Watch Spymaster, Haunted by the Past, The Watch is Everything, The Ends Justify the Means, No Attachments*

Skills

Superb (+5): Deceive

Great (+4): Contacts

Good (+3): Burglary, Stealth

Fair (+2): Athletics, Fight, Physique

Average (+1): Investigate, Notice, Resources, Will

Stunts

Always a Way Out (FC 99)

Ear to the Ground (FC 101)

Face in the Crowd (FC 126)

Powers

Shapeshifter: Shadow can disguise herself as virtually anyone, changing her features entirely, provided she gets a chance to touch them. This power grants her a +2 to Deceive rolls made to disguise herself.

Special Effects: Mental Recovery, Physical Recovery

Drawback: **Touch-Activated**

Collateral Damage Clause: If Shadow doesn't mind killing someone, she can take a person's identity entirely—appearance, mannerisms, memories, voice, accent, and anything else. Piercing her disguise requires an active attempt to find deception against a Legendary (+8) opposition.

Physical Stress:

Mental Stress:

Nothing Ventured: Wrapping Up

Emily Shah is good to her word: she pays the PCs and thanks them. Abby Dynes is grateful for their involvement, and owes them a favor if they handled things well. Splitstream's likely to start gunning for the PCs for having cut off his supply of the superdrug. Mitsuhama and Aegis continue plotting against each other.

All this assumes the PCs stopped the drug problem. It's entirely possible they just took over the superdrug trade, in which case things wind up pretty different. We'll leave you to figure that out.



CHARACTER CREATION AND POWERS

When you make your character, do so according to the rules in *Fate Core*, but with one exception: you also get powers.

Powers are a lot like stunts, except bigger, flashier, more powerful, and more complex. Each power you build costs a certain number of stunts, but don't worry about not having enough! We're giving you three bonus stunts on top of what you normally get from *Fate Core* to use exclusively for building powers. To add to your powers or build new ones, you can also spend refresh and use your normal allotment of free stunts as you would when building normal stunts. The three free stunts you're getting in this adventure *have* to be used for powers, though.

Most characters have a single power. Some might have two, but that's where it tops off. Powers are big and complex enough that more than two would be a bit unwieldy. What you *can* do, however, is build multiple effects into a single power, creating a power suite that does a bunch of related things. Here's how building a power works.

Concept

Figure out what you want your power to do. What is your character's shtick? What's the big flashy thing you do that other people can't do? Figure this out in general terms. Maybe you're inhumanly fast, or super strong, or you can fly, or you shoot energy blasts from your hands.

You might have a power useful for doing many things. You might be telekinetic, for example, which suggests you can push people around and attack them with force blasts, lift heavy objects with your mind, create a shield of force, and fly by levitating yourself. These are all related abilities, so they're all one power. If you're telekinetic *and* you can heal with a touch, though, those might be two different powers.

Example: Tara decides she wants to be a brick, someone who can take a punch and bring huge amounts of raw physical strength to bear. She's big and tough and strong; that's her shtick.

Break It Into Stunts

Break each power down into its component abilities. What specific things do you want to be able to do with your power? Boil these down into mechanical effects and phrase them like you would stunts. Each stunt-like ability that you create costs you a stunt. You can spend multiple stunts on a single ability, making it extra-powerful. Also, because you're crafting a superpower, you have license to do things that stunt might not otherwise let you do. You could use a stunt to fly using Athletics, or fire eye-beams with Shoot, for example.

Example: Thinking about what specific effects she wants out of her power, Tara breaks it down into components. She wants to be strong, so that's maybe just a bonus to Physique and Fight rolls. She spends two stunts to get a +4 to Physique rolls that rely on brute force, and another stunt to get a +2 to Fight rolls that rely on smashing things in close quarters. She also wants to be super-tough, so she spends two more stunts to get Armor:4 against direct physical attacks, but not energy attacks or mental attacks. In total, her power costs 5 stunts.

Add Special Effects

A **special effect** is an extra-special thing you can pull off when you succeed with style. Whenever you succeed with style on a roll that utilizes one of your powers, you can forgo the normal benefits of succeeding with style to add one of your special effects instead. You can also spend a fate point to add a special effect to any successful roll, even if you've already got a special effect attached to that action. Special effects *always* happen in addition to the normal effects of success.

Your power starts with two special effects. If you want more, you can buy them with a stunt or refresh; each stunt or refresh you spend gets you **two** more special effects. If you need special effects, use the following list. If our suggestions don't suffice, you can create your own special effects using this list as a guideline.

- **Forced Movement:** You move your target up to two zones.
- **Area Attack:** Attack everyone else (foes *and* friends) in the same zone as your target using the attack value **minus two** (so if you hit your target at +6, everyone else would defend against +4). Attacking everyone in a zone at full strength is a collateral damage effect (page 25).
- **Inflict a Condition:** You add an aspect to the target, which you can invoke once for free.
- **Extra Movement:** You can move up to two zones for free.
- **Physical Recovery:** You recover from all physical stress.
- **Mental Recovery:** You recover from all mental stress.
- **Extra Action:** You can remove shifts from your action and apply them to a different, related action as if you'd (performed and) succeeded on both. You can never succeed with style on the second action, and its opposition (*i.e.*, difficulty) can't be higher than that of the original action.

Example: Tara knows she wants to be tough and able to pack a wallop. She takes Physical Recovery and Forced Movement as her special effects. After thinking for a moment, she spends another stunt (for a total of 6 stunts spent) to add Area Attack and Inflict a Condition to her suite of special effects. When using this power, when she succeeds with style, she can add one special effect to her action; if she succeeds at all, she can spend a fate point to add a special effect.

Add a Drawback

All powers come at a cost, and all superheroes have a weakness. Decide what yours is, and phrase it as an aspect. A **drawback** is an aspect like any other, though you should phrase it so it's easier to compel than to invoke. Each power gets a drawback, not each individual stunt within a power.

Example: Tara envisions her character as a brute who's prone to fits of destructive rage. She writes down the aspect **Destructive Rage** as her drawback.

Add a Collateral Damage Effect

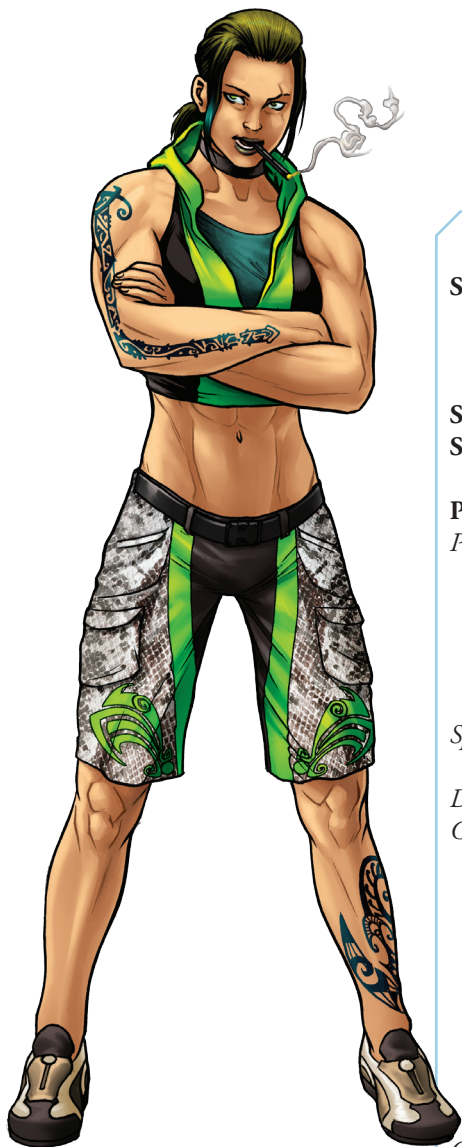
Super-beings throw a lot of power around, power that often has unintended consequences. Sometimes city blocks get leveled; sometimes innocent bystanders get hurt. Your **collateral damage effect** is an extra benefit—something super-potent you can do with your power. The potency of this isn't strictly numerical; pick some powerful narrative thing you can do, like affecting everyone in a scene or ignoring all the damage that comes your way in a round. Use the sample characters to get ideas for what collateral damage can do (page 26).

You can choose to use this effect at any time, but using it comes at a cost: you inflict a situation aspect on the area around you that represents the collateral damage you've caused. The GM gets to determine the exact nature of that aspect each time you use it.

Example: "Obviously," Tara says, "my collateral damage effect involves doing massive damage to my target." She decides that the effect causes her target to automatically take a moderate physical consequence—or, if it's a nameless NPC, it just gets taken out—probably from being thrown through buildings or something equally painful.

SAMPLE CHARACTERS

Use these partial pregens to get a quick start on the adventure, or just make your own characters according to the rules in *Fate Core* and in *Character Creation and Powers* in this book. Each of these characters has some suggested aspects, some suggested skills, and a power or two.



The Brick

The brick is big and tough and strong. She can smash through most barriers, turn enemies into red stains, and soak up huge amounts of punishment with nary a flinch.

The Brick

Suggested Aspects: *Living Engine of Destruction, Giant with a Gentle Soul, Monstrous Appearance, Shrug It Off, "Time to SMASH!"*

Suggested Peak Skill: Fight or Physique
Suggested Other Skills: Athletics, Provoke, Will

Powers

Powerhouse: You're inhumanly strong and tough.

As long as you're using brute strength, you get a +4 to Physique rolls and a +2 to Fight rolls. You also get Armor:4 against physical attacks like punches, stabs, gunshots, and getting thrown through buildings.

Special Effects: Area Attack, Forced Movement, Inflict Condition, Physical Recovery

Drawback: *Destructive Rage*

Collateral Damage Effect: When you choose to inflict collateral damage, you can choose one of the following: take out a nameless NPC (or more than one, if you use Area Attack), inflict a moderate physical consequence on a named NPC, attack all targets in a zone at full strength, or ignore a physical attack entirely. This effect likely occurs because you're smashing things or because the area around you gets damaged as you shrug the attack off.

Costs: 6 stunts

Stunts Left: 0

Refresh Left: 3

The Psychic

The psychic has amazing mental powers, both telepathic and telekinetic. He can control and read minds, move objects, and even fly.

The Psychic

Suggested Aspects: *First Class Telepath, I Know Things, Puppet Master, Can't Shut the Voices Out, Will of Iron, Heart of Stone*

Suggested Peak Skill: Will

Suggested Other Skills: Deceive, Empathy, Investigate, Notice, Rapport

Powers

Telepathy: You can use Empathy, Investigate, or Notice to glean things from peoples' minds. For example, you could use Empathy to find out what someone is feeling, Notice to detect the presence of unfamiliar minds, or Investigate to delve into someone's thoughts. You can also use Will to launch mental attacks. If you take someone out with such an attack, you can either render them comatose or take control of their mind.

Special Effects: Area Attack, Inflict Condition

Drawback: **Psychic Feedback**

Collateral Damage Effect: If you choose to inflict collateral damage, you can lock down everyone else in a scene, effectively freezing them. They can't take physical actions, but they can still invoke aspects and perform mental tasks. They can also attempt to break out with an overcome action with Will, opposed by your Will. On each of your turns, you must concentrate (using your action) to keep them frozen. The psychic brain-lock will definitely have lasting effects on their brains.

Costs: 4 stunts

Telekinesis: You can move physical objects and make attacks with Will as you would with Physique or Fight; you can affect anything within three zones of you. You can also defend against physical attacks with Will by erecting a telekinetic shield. Finally, you can use Will to fly; it works like Athletics, but allows for vertical movement as well as horizontal.

Special Effects: Extra Movement, Forced Movement

Drawback: **Hard to Control**

Collateral Damage Effect: If you're willing to deal collateral damage, you can pretty much punch through any barrier or lift any object within reason, or lash out at every target in a zone with a full strength attack.

Costs: 4 stunts

Stunts Left: 0

Refresh Left: 1

The Speedster

The speedster doesn't just move fast, she practically flies along the ground. She's so fast that she can even move across liquids and up vertical surfaces. You don't want to get into a fistfight with her.



The Speedster

Suggested Aspects: *Live Fast, Leave a Pretty Corpse; Adrenaline Junkie; Now You See Me . . . ; “Hope you can keep up!”; High Risk, High Reward*

Suggested Peak Skill: Athletics

Suggested Other Skills: Fight, Notice, Physique, Provoke

Powers

Super Speed: You can move really fast. You get a +6 bonus to Athletics rolls involving moving quickly, and you can use Athletics to run up walls or across liquids. You also get a +2 to Fight rolls, provided you're up close and personal and you're fighting in a situation where superior speed would help you.

Special Effects: Area Attack, Extra Movement, Lots of Actions (an improved Extra Action: you can split your shifts into up to 3 different actions, adding a +1 to each)

Drawback: **Burn Out**

Collateral Damage Effect: If you're willing to tear up the streets—shattering glass, injuring pedestrians, and such—you can travel pretty much anywhere in the same city in the span of a single exchange.

Costs: 5 stunts

Stunts Left: 1

Refresh Left: 3

The Ghost

The ghost goes unnoticed. He walks through walls, turns invisible, and can even teleport when she needs to. He's the ultimate infiltrator.

The Ghost

Suggested Aspects: *"You won't see me coming."*, *Easily Overlooked*, *Attachments Are Weaknesses*, *Troubled Past*, *Silence Is Golden*

Suggested Peak Skill: Stealth

Suggested Other Skills: Burglary, Contacts, Deceive, Investigate

Powers

Ghost: You can turn invisible, granting you a +6 bonus to Stealth rolls to avoid visual notice. You can also use Burglary to walk through walls; the denser the material, the harder it is to walk through.

Special Effects: Inflict Condition, Physical Recovery

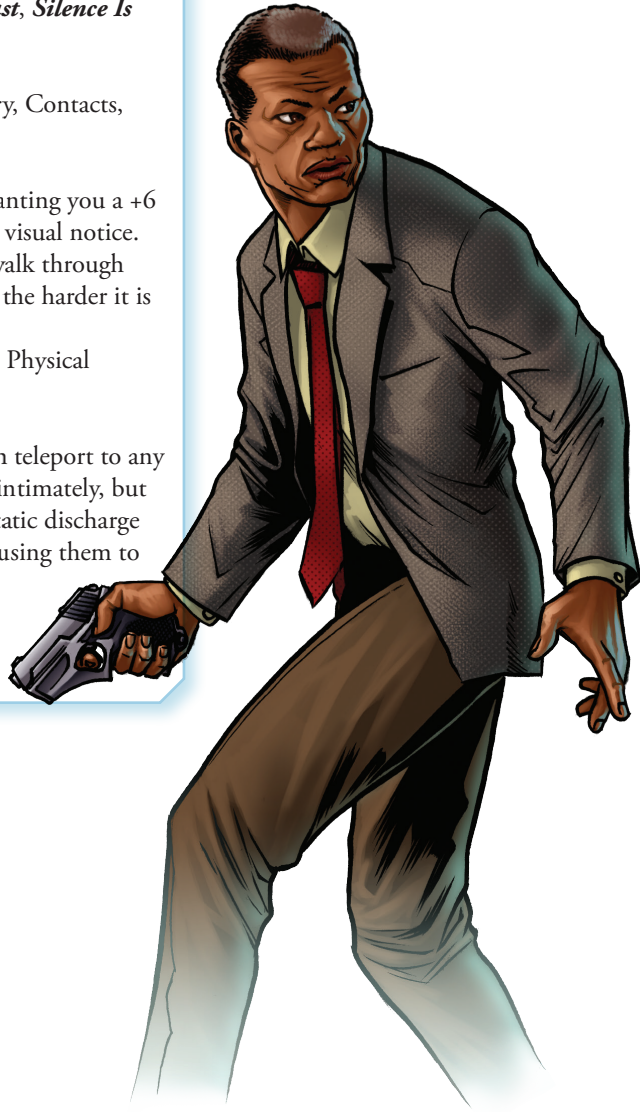
Drawback: *Exhausting*

Collateral Damage Effect: You can teleport to any location you can see or know intimately, but your arrival causes an electrostatic discharge that messes with machines, causing them to go haywire.

Costs: 4 stunts

Stunts Left: 2

Refresh Left: 3





The Flamer

You like fire. You can make it, control it, even wreath your body in it. It's hella fun.

The Flamer

Suggested Aspects: *Burn Burn BURN!, Hardened by Fire, High Body Count, Simmering Rage, Purifying Flames*

Suggested Peak Skill: Shoot

Suggested Other Skills: Athletics, Fight, Provoke

Powers

Pyrokinesis: You can shoot fire from your hands with Shoot up to 3 zones away. You can also control existing fires with Provoke. Finally, you're immune to damage from fire or heat.

Special Effects: Area Attack, Inflict Condition

Drawback: *Uncontrollable*

Collateral Damage Effect: If you're willing to burn everything and everyone you touch, you can wreath yourself in flames for a few minutes. During this time, people who you touch—or touch you—get burned to the tune of a mild physical consequence, and you set things on fire with your mere presence.

Costs: 3 stunts

Stunts Left: 3

Refresh Left: 3