



THE VILLAINOMICON!



ICONS
SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING

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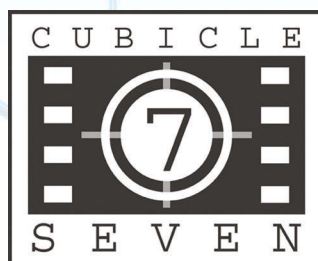


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INTRODUCTION

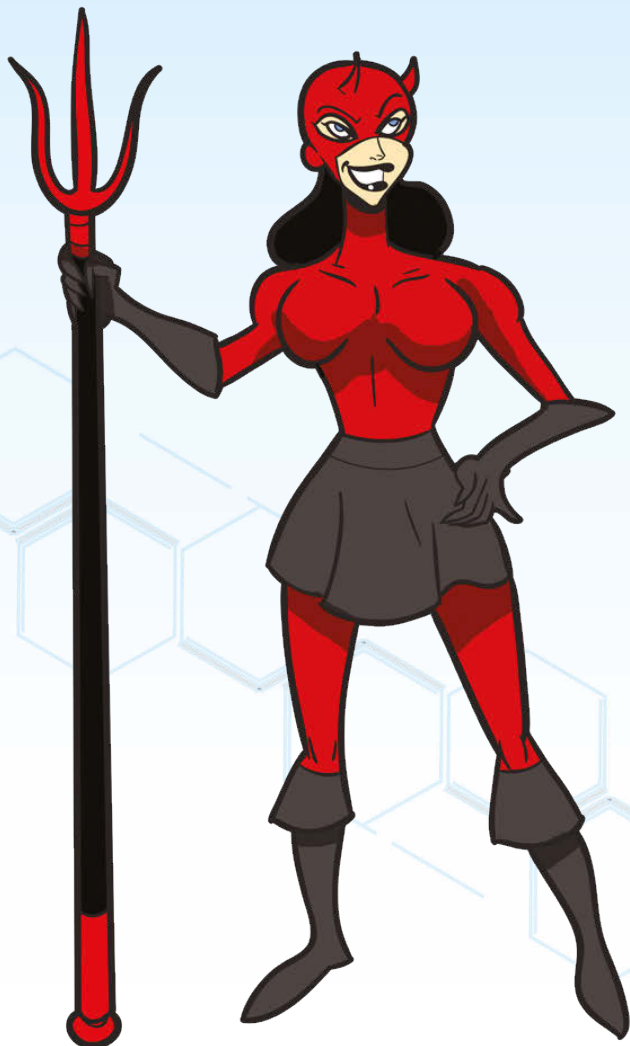
BRING ON THE BAD GUYS!

Villains are the most interesting part of any hero's story. Over the course of a standard superhero comic book, the main character may change slightly (or even drastically, although such major changes are usually reset back to the status quo after a while has passed). The same hero, with the same powers... the same overall concept remains from issue to issue. But the villains... the villains are a never-ending parade of new powers, new ideas, new concepts rolled out to keep things fresh and interesting and to continue to challenge the hero.

The same thing should hold true for your **Icons** games as well. You've spent the time to create compelling heroes, and to pit them against all manner of foes. Some of the villains you use will become recurring threats, the sort of opponents that your players will love to hate, just as readers thrill to see the return of the classic foes in their favorite comics. But you need a steady diet of the worst threats that your campaign setting has ever seen -- that's the way to keep things interesting, and to keep your players on their toes.

The Villainomicon is more than just a "Monster Manual" of new villains for your game, however. Yes, there are dozens of new threats contained within these pages, but **The Villainomicon** also provides new powers, new specialties, optional rules and dozens of adventure hooks as well.

So, proceed at your own risk. The fate of your campaign world may lie within these pages -- and only your heroes can save it.



VILLAIN CREATION

The **Icons** core rulebook covers the steps of creating a hero (p. 9–15) and putting those heroes together as a team (p. 18–21), but what about the villains?

Icons Game Masters are, of course, free to simply make up villains out of whole cloth. It's an easy matter to assign whatever levels you want to a villain's abilities, choose the appropriate specialties and powers and assign levels to them as needed, too, then give the villain some aspects, and you're good to go. That's how most of the villains in this book (and the sample villains in **Icons**) were created.

However, you can also add an additional phase to the Hero and Team Creation process outline in **Icons**: that of Villain Creation.

Any player who has chosen an Enemy challenge should pass the hero to the player the left. That player then rolls on the Villain Role table to determine how to generate the hero's Enemy:

206 Villain Role

- 2–5 **Adversary:** Roll to generate the villain's Origin and other traits the same as a hero.
- 6–7 **Nemesis:** Do not roll the villain's Origins. The villain has an Origin "opposite" to that of the hero on the Origin table: Trained = Unearthly, Transformed = Artificial, and Birthright = Gimmick and vice-versa. Generate the rest of the villain's traits the same as you would a hero.
- 8–9 **Opposite:** The villain has the same Origin as the hero. Do not roll the villain's powers. Instead, assign the villain the same number of powers as the hero, but choose "opposing" powers. So if the hero has Elemental Control (Fire), for example, the villain could have Elemental Control (Cold) or (Water). The creating player gets to interpret "opposite" with the GM's approval.
- 10–12 **Reflection:** The villain has the same Origin and powers as the hero—including abilities above level 6—but differing aspects, and possibly differing descriptions of the powers' "special effects". For example, a hero with Wizardry (Magic) might have a Reflection who also has Magic, but evil magic rather than good magic. The villain may choose different Specialties than the hero.

Villain creation then follows the guidelines given for hero creation in **Icons** (p. 9–15). If the villain is a team Enemy, the Game Master rolls on the Villain Role table and creates the villain. If using the optional point-build creation systems, roll to determine the villain's role and then spend points accordingly, or simply choose a role.

Game Masters may wish to make villain creation mandatory for all players; those whose heroes do not have an Enemy challenge are simply creating additional villains for the series. Their heroes do not earn Determination for the villain(s) entering play, but neither do those villains have a particular vendetta against their heroes.

VILLAIN CREATION EXAMPLE

Andy sits to the left of Branden, who has just created the hero Saguaro, the Man-Cactus (**Icons**, p. 15–16) and Saguaro has an Enemy complication. So Branden passes his hero's character sheet over to Andy, who grabs the dice to start coming up with a villain!

Rolling an 8 on the Villain Role Table, Andy comes up with an Opposite villain; he has the same Origin as Saguaro (Transformed) but opposing powers. Andy notes the bad guy is Transformed (and therefore has one power or ability at +2) and moves on to the next phase.

Andy rolls six times for the villain's abilities, getting the following:

Prowess	3
Coordination	4
Strength	4
Intellect	4
Awareness	6
Willpower	5

The villain could use his Origin bonus to improve one of these abilities, but Andy decides to wait and see how the powers come up.

He knows from the villain's role that he has three powers (same as Saguaro) and that they are opposite in some way. He looks at Saguaro's list: Aura (his spines), Immunity, and Leaping, but also considers Saguaro's themes: that he's a plant-man and a desert creature. Andy considers something like a cold-based villain or someone associated with a more lush environment, but thinks it would be more interesting if Saguaro's Enemy is closer to home. So he considers an animal-based, rather than plant-based character, who is more sly and cunning than Saguaro's close-up, spiny, super-strength. Considering the "opposite" of Saguaro's Immunity he thinks about Affliction, and poisonous powers.

Animals, poisons, desert ... reptiles! Andy picks the following powers: Affliction and Animal Control (Reptiles). Rolling levels for them, he gets 6 for Affliction and 5 for Animal Control, raised to 7 because it is limited to Reptiles. He also adds the bonus power of Close Range to Affliction, since the villain isn't going to want to touch Saguaro!

Looking over the villain's traits, Andy decides to apply the +2 Origin bonus to Coordination, making the villain quick and agile. He then rolls for Specialties, getting a total of 3. He picks Acrobatics and Stealth right off, and decides to add Occult as the third, ideas beginning to come together.



Andy describes a former student of Saguaro's mentor, Tom Crow (pulling in the hero's other aspects). Jealous of Saguaro being "the chosen one," he went out into the desert looking for some of that same irradiated cactus, but got bitten by an irradiated snake instead. The venom and the sinister spirits he called upon transformed him into a lizard-man able to spit acidic poison and control reptiles. He took on the name of "The Gila-Master" and swore to destroy Saguaro and to steal his mentor's mystic secrets for himself!

Branden likes his hero's new Enemy and the Game Master looks over Andy's work and approves. He decides to add the small additional touch of giving Gila-Master the Wall-Crawling power as well (he can climb sheer surfaces like a gecko) at level 5. The Mighty Man-Cactus has his work cut out for him dealing with the sinister and scaly skulker of the Painted Desert!

DON'T SWEAT THE DETAILS

One thing about **Icons** is that it paints characters in broad strokes. Especially when you are creating villains and other non-player characters, don't worry too much about the little details, so long as you have an overall sense of what the character is like and how the game traits are supposed to work in play.

If there's a particular detail not covered by a specific specialty, power, or other game trait, but important to the character overall, consider making it an aspect. Examples include things like Alien, Android, Disembodied Spirit, or Brain in a Jar, just to name a few. These quickly and easily sum up things about the character and allow players to potentially tag them during the game in order to spend Determination. You don't have to worry about the specifics, just deal with them as needed as the game unfolds.



DISASTER STRIKES!

Villains are not the only challenges heroes face. They also save people from a wide range of disasters, from fires and floods to earthquakes and train wrecks. Sometimes these are natural disasters, while others are the work of villains, intended to blackmail a population or distract heroes from their true goals. The following are some disasters you can use as challenges to spice up your **Icons** games.

AVALANCHE

An avalanche occurs when a large mass of snow slides down a mountain slope, often dislodged by a sudden shock or vibration. The heavy, fast-moving mass can crush and bury anything in its path.

The wave of an avalanche does bashing damage to anything hit by it, typically from level 6 to 8. Those in the path are also buried by the avalanche, requiring a Strength level equal to the avalanche's damage in order to dig free. (At your discretion, lesser levels of Strength may be able to dig free by accumulating successes; see the Success Pyramid in Alternate Rules). Buried victims begin to suffocate (see Swimming on p. 59 of **Icons**).

Heroes most often move targets quickly out of an avalanche's path (perhaps requiring a Coordination or movement power test) or find ways to stop or divert it, typically using a suitable control power. For example, Element Control to create a protective barrier or redirect the falling material.

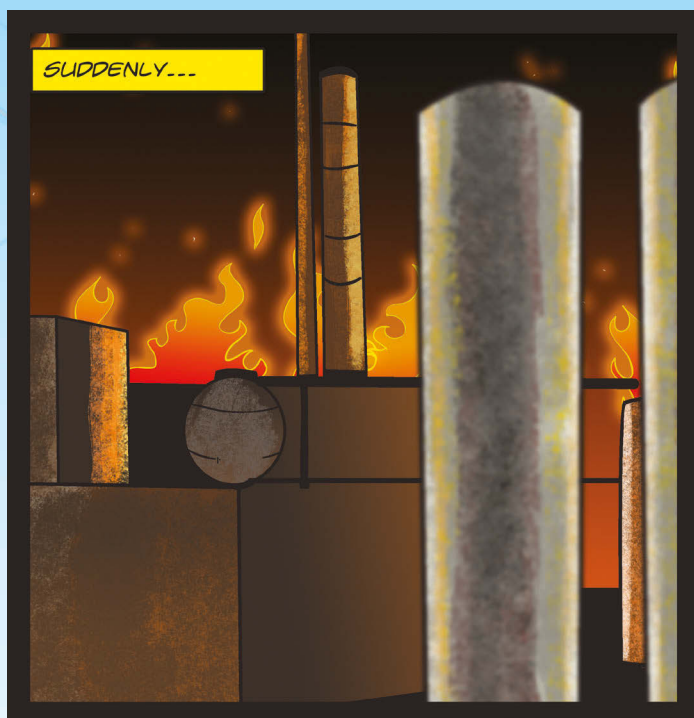
The guidelines for avalanches also serve for landslides, rockslides, and mudslides in other terrain.

CRASH

Heroes may find themselves in need of stopping an out-of-control vehicle before it can crash, ranging from a small passenger car to a jumbo jet, cruise ship, or star-liner! Typically, stopping the vehicle is a test of Strength or some similar power (such as Telekinesis) although clever heroes may use different powers or power stunts to prevent a crash. The difficulty of the test is the greater of the vehicle's approximate Strength or speed, plus any intervening conditions: catching a falling plane obviously requires a hero able to fly!

A massive success halts the vehicle and brings it under the hero's control, to stop or set it down safely. Lesser success slows the vehicle, but does not stop it. It takes a total of four moderate successes or two major successes to bring the vehicle under control. A failed test means the hero not only fails to stop the vehicle, but damages it in the process!

A crashing vehicle inflicts damage equal to its speed upon all passengers and anything that it hits.



A variation on the crash disaster is a damaged bridge or train track. Heroes may be able to prevent this disaster by holding up the damaged portion of the bridge or track rather than stopping the vehicle(s). This, too, requires a Strength test appropriate to the difficulty of the weight the hero must hold up: from 8 to support a train as it speeds overhead to 9 or 10 to hold up an entire collapsing bridge!

EARTHQUAKE

You can estimate an earthquake's level as equal to its Richter Scale rating: by this standard, the 1906 San Francisco earthquake is level 8 (the one in 1989 was level 7) while the 2004 Indian Ocean earthquake was level 9.

Much of the challenge for heroes comes after an earthquake: moving debris to get at trapped victims, supporting collapsing structures, fighting resulting fires (see Fire), and so forth. Earthquakes are also known to trigger other disasters like avalanches and tsunamis (see their descriptions). Still, heroes with the appropriate powers (especially Earth Control) might be able to quell or lessen the quake itself with a power test against the earthquake's level.

Anyone caught in an earthquake has to resist a slam result (Icons, p. 70) based on the quake's level, except failure only results in a knockdown and damage equal to the quake's level rather than flinging the character over a distance. At the GM's option failure on the slam test could result in the character falling into a crevasse (perhaps even leading to some adventure deep within the Earth).

FIRE

Fires—from building fires to forest fires—pose two primary challenges: the heat and flames, and thick clouds of choking smoke. Fires vary in intensity from level 1 (that of a candle flame) to massive conflagrations at level 7+. A typical building fire is level 5–6. The smoke from the fire forces anyone in the area to hold their breath, making Strength tests to avoid passing out.

Heroes may be able to use their powers to douse a fire, testing against the fire's level as the difficulty. Putting out a large fire requires a power able to cover a suitable large area (although extending a power's area is a suitable power stunt). As with other disasters, you may want to use the Success Pyramid (p. 17) as a guideline.

One other hazard of fires is that of collapsing structures, or things like falling trees in the midst of a forest fire. Ask heroes to make Coordination tests to avoid being hit and pinned by falling debris. Those who fail suffer some Stamina damage and need sufficient Strength to extricate themselves, while also dealing with the fire and smoke. Primary goals in dealing with fires are getting trapped victims to safety and containing the blaze before trying to put it out.



FLOOD

Storms, rapid snow-melts, and similar situations can cause rivers and other bodies of water to overflow their banks. Low-lying areas fill with water, causing considerable damage and other hazards.

A flash-flood, wherein a large amount of water pours quickly into an area, has effects like an avalanche of water (see *Avalanche*), except targets are swept away rather than buried and may potentially drown rather than suffocate. See *Swimming* on p. 59 of *Icons* for more information.

Slower floods, wherein water creeps up, allows for more evacuation time. Heroes with the right powers might be able to do something about the flood, creating makeshift dams or directly controlling the water to divert it elsewhere.

STORM

Hurricanes, tornadoes, and other powerful atmospheric disturbances cause damage with high winds and associated precipitation. Like other disasters, storms have a level. In game terms, a hurricane's Saffir-Simpson Category (from 1 to 5), added to 5, equals its level. So a Category 1 storm is level 6, while a massive Category 5 hurricane is level 10.

Heroes can use powers like *Elemental Control* (particularly air and weather) to try and quell a storm (testing against its level). They may also be able to use powers like *Flight* or *Super-Speed*, creating reverse air currents to disperse or disrupt a hurricane or tornado funnel.

Beyond dealing with the storm directly, there are plenty of opportunities to avert and deal with storm-related damage: things from lawn ornaments to entire cars are thrown through the air, while high winds may tear off roofs or flatten buildings. Heroes fighting against the wind make *Strength* or *movement* power level tests against the wind's level to make headway and avoid being swept away, much like resisting a slam outcome from an attack (*Icons*, p. 70).



TSUNAMI

A tsunami is a massive wave, typically caused by an underwater earthquake or eruption. The wall of water may stand dozens or even hundreds of feet tall and it hits the shoreline with devastating force, crushing everything in its path and flooding coastal areas with salt-water (tsunami are an ocean phenomenon, although in a comic book world they could also occur in fresh-water lakes).

For game purposes, a tsunami is much like an avalanche of water (see *Avalanche*), inflicting its level in bashing damage, and inundating the area, requiring trapped characters to make *Coordination* tests to swim to safety and possibly *Strength* tests to hold their breath.

Powers like *Elemental Control* can potentially disrupt or deflect a tsunami, and heroes can attempt various power stunts to try and hold off the wave, from sonic booms using *movement* powers to whirlpools created with *Swimming*, or *Strength*-based shockwaves to smash the incoming

wave. Dealing with the aftermath of a tsunami involves finding and rescuing trapped victims, bracing damaged structures, and even dealing with sea-life—such as sharks—trapped in flooded areas by the wave.

VOLCANO

A volcanic eruption creates a powerful explosion (damage 8 or more) along with a cascade of lava that is similar to a slow-moving avalanche (see *Avalanche*) except that it is hot enough to inflict level 7-8 burning damage each page! A volcano also spews rocks and large amounts of ash into the air and releases choking and poisonous gases (*Affliction 5*).

Heroes faced with an eruption may try various means to relieve the buildup of pressure from the subterranean magma, anything from *Earth Control* to drilling pressure-relief wells, allowing the lava to vent safely elsewhere. Once an eruption occurs, the primary job is to get people out of the lava flow's path, and possibly divert the flow away from inhabited areas.

DISASTERS AND THE BIG PICTURE

When running a disaster in your **Icons** game, you don't have to deal with every element and aspect of it. Disasters are big, often covering entire cities or states, and the heroes can only be in so many places at once. It is generally easiest to focus on the ends of the spectrum when describing a disaster: either the high-level side of stopping the disaster as a whole (such as using *Weather Control* to disrupt a storm) or the low-level side of helping individual victims and dealing with side-effects of the disaster, like rescuing cars on a damaged bridge during or after a quake, for example.

You can gloss over the long-term process of fighting the disaster, basing your overall description on how the heroes do at either end of the spectrum. If their efforts are largely successful, then assume they pretty much deal with the disaster. If they are not successful, describe how the disaster overwhelms them and even their powers have limits.

ALTERNATE RULES

One size rarely ever fits all, and that is true with game rules as much as anything else. Roleplaying games like **Icons** are meant to be tinkered with, taken apart, rebuilt, and “adjusted” to fit your own play style and preferences and those of your gaming group. This section offers some ideas and suggestions towards that end. It also provides a few additions to the rules offered in the main **Icons** book. Use them (or not) as you see fit.

DAMAGE VARIANTS

Alternate ways of handling damage (and the general effects of conflict) in **Icons**.

0 STAMINA = MASSIVE SUCCESS

Rather than the standard effect of rendering the target unconscious, reducing a target to 0 or less Stamina counts as an automatic massive success with that attack, with no resistance test by the target. For bashing and blasting attacks, the outcome is the same: the target is rendered unconscious. With slashing and shooting attacks, however, this results in an automatic killing outcome and the target is dead!

This makes slashing and shooting attacks considerably more lethal (since they kill at 0 Stamina as well as on rolled killing outcomes). You can soften this somewhat by allowing the usual Strength test against the killing outcome at 0 Stamina, as if it were rolled as a normal massive success.

NEWTON'S REVENGE: ALTERNATE SLAMS AND STUNS

The default rules for Slam and Stun outcomes in **Icons** (p. 70) assume a massive strong target acts like a truly massive target: you test damage (force) versus Strength (mass) to see if the target is affected. Thus really strong types can potentially stand their ground when hit by powerful impacts. This is often, but not always, the way it works for superheroes.

A variation that spices things up is to ignore the 0 or greater damage requirement for a slam or stun outcome; so long as the attack results in a major or massive success, then there has to be a test for a slam or stun. So relatively invulnerable targets can get tossed around, perhaps even stunned or knocked out, by a sufficiently successful attack without taking any Stamina damage at all!

In this variation, you may want to use the higher of the target's Strength or armor level (from Invulnerability) to resist the slam or stun outcome. So, for example, if a Strength 3, Invulnerability 6 target is hit with a damage 5 attack, normally it would have no result: 5 damage, minus 6 armor, results in -1 damage, not enough to do anything. In the variant, with a major or massive success, the attack could slam or stun the target. Then it is a test of 4 (damage) versus either 3 (the target's Strength) or 6 (the target's Invulnerability) depending on the approach. You can even split the difference: testing slams solely against Strength (to represent bracing ability, mass, etc.) and stuns against the better of Strength or armor.

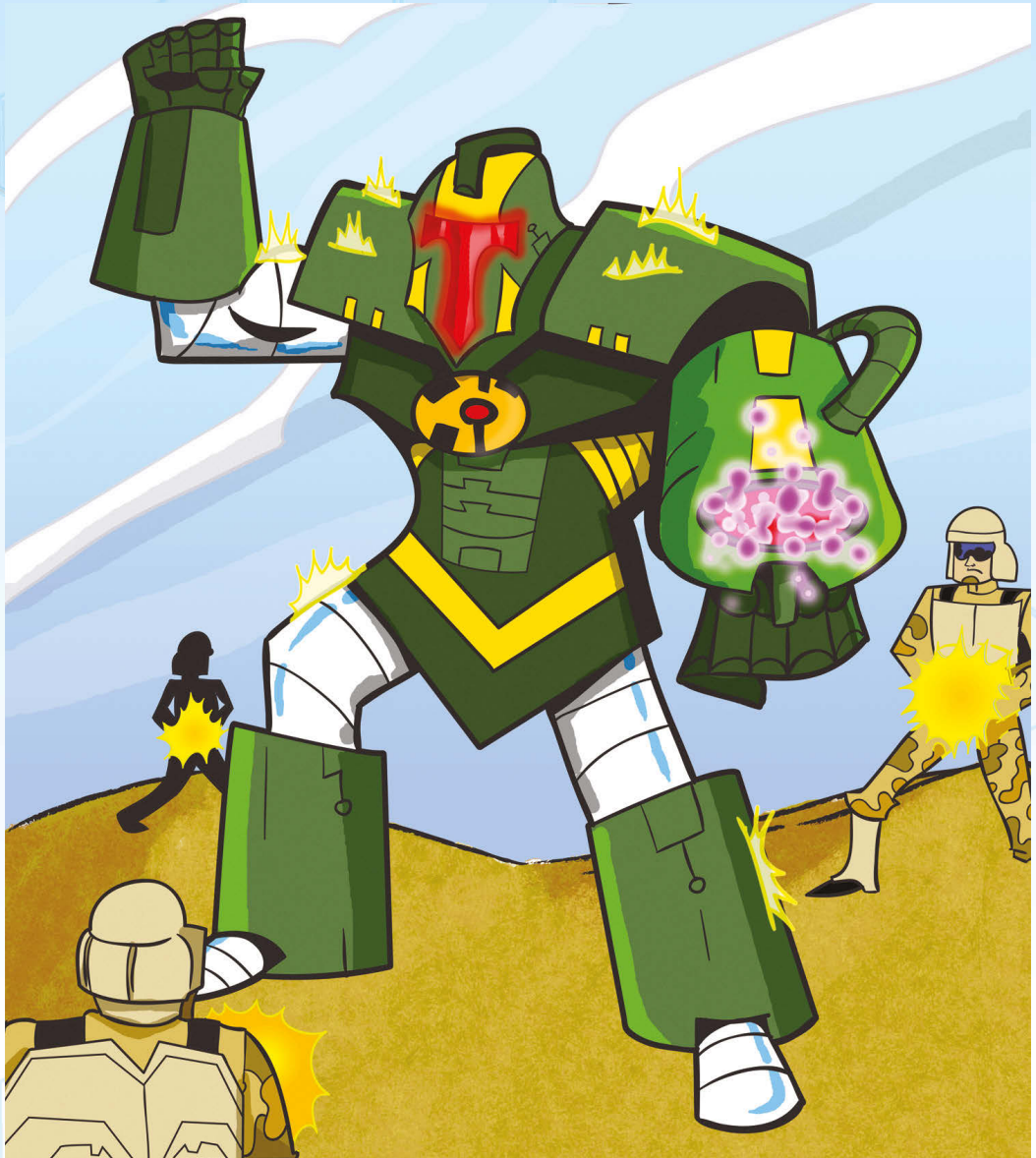
You may wish to limit stun outcomes in this variant to one page. That is, unless the damage is 0 or higher, the best stun result is one page, rather than a knockout. This gives the invulnerable types some benefit; they might get shaken up, but not taken out by attacks to which they should be invulnerable.

Likewise, note that this variant does not include killing outcomes, which still have to inflict 0 or more damage (that is, have damage at least equal to the target's armor) in order to have a chance of killing. You may want to treat a killing outcome in this variant as a stun or slam instead when the damage is less than the target's armor and a major or massive success is scored on the attack test.

INNATE INVULNERABILITY

Invulnerability (p. 41) is a big factor in damage and combat in **Icons**: An invulnerable character can often go much longer in a fight: for example, a Stamina 8 hero hit by two damage 4 attacks is out of the fight, whereas a Stamina 8, Invulnerability 3 hero can withstand eight such attacks! This benefit of Invulnerability is intended; the invulnerable-types are the ones in the comics who hang in fights longer, soaking up damage, while most heroes do their best to avoid getting hit.

If you want to extend damage resistance in your **Icons** game, assign all characters a level of Invulnerability. Half the character's Strength level (rounded down) is a good guideline. So a Strength 7 hero has armor 3 (7 divided by 2 equals 3.5, rounded down to 3). If you want to further differentiate, a character's innate damage resistance from Strength should apply only to bashing and blasting damage, not slashing or shooting damage. The Invulnerability power still applies to all forms of damage, and characters use the higher of the two levels (Strength-derived armor or Invulnerability) against bashing and blasting damage. So a Strength 10, Invulnerability 3 hero would have armor 5 against bashing/blasting damage (from Strength) and armor 3 against slashing and shooting damage (from Invulnerability).



SPENDING DETERMINATION

The following are some alternative ways of spending Determination from those given in the **Icons** rules.

DETERMINED DAMAGE

Determination does not directly aid the amount of damage a hero inflicts, apart for improving the chances of achieving a greater outcome like a stun or slam. With this option, players may also declare Determined Effort to overcome a target's armor. Similar guidelines apply: the hero must have first failed to overcome the target's armor with an attack in order to declare the next attempt a Determined Effort. Each point of Determination spent effectively increases the attack's damage level by +2. The player chooses the desired damage, between a minimum amount needed to exceed the target's armor by 1, to a maximum of 11. The other outcomes of the attack, such as possible stun, slam, or killing results, occur normally.

DETERMINED EFFORT

You can simplify determined effort by allowing players to spend Determination for a flat +2 bonus to any test per point of Determination spent. The players may spend points to modify tests after the die roll and the initial result, essentially "retconning" the test result with Determination. The player must still tag an aspect (one of the hero's or an aspect of the subject of the test) to spend Determination.

While more straightforward, this approach allows players to manage their Determination use in a much more calculated and planned way; they don't need to decide a test is important until after they see the result, and there is no requirement for an initial failure or one-chance-only to spend Determination, which may encourage players to do more up-front spending. This may shorten some tests or challenges; for example, upon encountering the villain, the players immediately spend Determination on their first attacks to get the maximum possible result.

FREE TAGS

A concept used in some FATE games is that of "free" tags, wherein certain actions or test outcomes provide a hero with what amounts of a free point of Determination for a later test related to the earlier action. For example, an Awareness test that gives a hero insight into one of a foe's Challenges may provide a free tag, allowing the hero to spend a point of Determination to compel that Challenge without actually spending any Determination. Likewise, an effective Presence test might grant a free tag in dealing with impressed, persuaded, or overawed targets, or an effective Coordination test to pull off a particularly difficult maneuver (granting a tactical advantage) can grant a free tag against an opponent.

Free tags are a good way of providing quick bonuses and encouraging players to use their heroes' other abilities in order to garner them. They're a good option for Determination-poor (or simply frugal) players. They also encourage creativity, since coming up with a clever action, maneuver, or addition to the story may be good for a bonus.

LIMITED TAGGING

Normally, players have to tag only one quality to spend Determination. In this variant, tagging a quality is limited to spending only one point of Determination. To spend more than one point, the player must tag one quality per point spent. So a determined effort involving three points of Determination, for example, would also require bringing at least three qualities into play. This effectively limits Determination spending to five points at a time, since characters have only five qualities at most. It also makes spending multiple points of Determination more involved, since the players have to come up with more complex justifications to bring multiple qualities into play.

SACRIFICE PLAY

Although mentioned briefly on p. 81 of **Icons** (under Gaining Determination), it is worth noting specifically that players can potentially offer to “trade” the Game Master a temporary challenge for their hero in exchange for some immediate Determination. In essence, the player suggests a suitable “sacrifice” (the challenge) which the GM then rewards with Determination.

Example: Electric Judy’s player is tapped out for Determination but really needs some in order to figure out a way to take down the rampaging Troll. Judy’s player suggests to the GM that one of the Troll’s hits does some serious damage to the android’s arm servos, leaving it immobilized. The GM agrees and slides her a point of Determination. The next round, Judy’s player ups the ante by suggesting that Troll actually tears Electric Judy’s damage arm off altogether, leaving exposed wiring and circuits sparking! The GM grins, nods, and passes her another point of Determination. Then Electric Judy makes a desperate last bid to use the sparking electricity and some of the water mains broken in the Troll’s rampage to take him down...

“HERE TAKE MY...”

As an option for the “Last Hero Standing” rule from **Icons**, the Game Master can permit a defeated character, rather than adding Determination to the team pool, to provide a more tangible benefit to the remaining hero. This might be use of a device, temporary access to a power or power stunt, or even specific words of advice or inspiration that grant the benefit of spending a point of Determination, such a Recover (“You can do it! You have to!”) or a Focused Effort (“You have to use your wits, not just brute strength!”). The effect is essentially the same, the defeated hero’s player simply has more input as to how the added Determination is used.



STARTING DETERMINATION

The standard system in **Icons** sets starting Determination based on the hero's number of powers, counting abilities above level 6 as powers and some powers as double. Here are some variant ways of calculating starting Determination:

By POWER LEVELS

Add up the levels of all of the hero's powers, along with any abilities above level 6, and divide the sum by 6, rounding down. Subtract this value from a starting value of 6, with a minimum of 1, to determine the hero's starting Determination. Powers that count double in Icons have their power level doubled before they are added to the total.

For example, a hero with Strength 8, Blast 7, Flight 5, and Invulnerability 8 has a sum total of 28 levels. This total, divided by 6, equals 4.66, which rounds down to 4. Subtracted from a starting value of 6, this provides a starting Determination of 2. On the other hand, if the hero's Flight level were 7 (for a total of 30 levels), then dividing by 6 yields a value of 5, for a starting Determination of 1. Likewise, if the three powers were all level 4, for a total of 20, it yields a value of 3.33, rounded down to 3, for starting Determination 3.

This approach takes relative power level into account, with averages similar to the default approach, but providing a slight edge to heroes with lower overall power levels and charging a premium for those with relatively few powers at high levels.

By POWER TYPES

In this approach, for each of the following power types where a hero has one or more powers, reduce starting Determination by 1: defensive, movement, offensive, sensory, and miscellaneous (all other power types). So having powers in all five types, yields starting Determination of 1.

Having more than one power of a given type does not count. So having any number of offensive powers only reduces starting Determination by 1; only the first power of that type matters. Powers normally treated as two powers still count as double, unless the power fills more than one type, in which case it only applies to those type(s). For example, Teleportation counts as double, reducing starting Determination by 2, but only as a movement power. Elemental Control, on the other hand, may count as a defensive, movement, or offensive power (or all of those, depending on the power effects chosen).

Abilities above 6 typically count as miscellaneous, so -1 starting Determination for any number of abilities above 6, although the GM may wish to count Strength as an offensive "power" and high Prowess and/or Coordination as a "defensive" power, given their typical uses.

Success Pyramid

When heroes are confronted with a complex task, rather than requiring a single pass/fail test, the GM can set up a success “pyramid” for the task, where in a single test can succeed, but multiple smaller successes can also accomplish the task, allowing for teamwork and the combination of different abilities or approaches.

Essentially, accomplishing the task requires a massive success against the chosen difficulty. However, lesser outcomes can add up to greater outcomes to build a “pyramid” of success. Two major outcomes add up to a massive success, while two moderate outcomes add up to a major success. Thus four moderate outcomes add up to two major outcomes, which add up to the needed massive success.

The tests used to achieve the outcomes can be whatever the players think up and the GM permits. So if the task involves an investigation, for example, some of the tests might be Intellect-based analyses of evidence, while others are Awareness-based searches for clues, and still others are Willpower-based interrogations or efforts at persuasion. The tests can be carried out by one hero in success or several heroes all at once.

You can extend this approach to successful outcomes to conflicts as well. Rather than simply beating-down an opponent’s Stamina, a massive success could also overcome an opponent, with different abilities and tests contributing. This could be a matter of psyching-out a foe, using technical skills to defeat a device, performing a mystic ritual, or some other form of indirect conflict. In this fashion, the success pyramid works similarly to the stress track in FATE: the moderate outcomes are like individual “boxes” and when a sufficient number are “checked off” the hero is successful and the foe or challenge is overcome.

You can get a lot of flexibility out of varying the difficulties involved in a success pyramid test, perhaps even making some approaches easier or harder than others. You can also “widen” the pyramid, either by increasing the total successes required (doubling them, for example, to two massive, four major, and eight moderate) or changing the ratios (so it requires three or four lower-degree successes to add up to a higher degree, for example). Combine that with choosing different abilities to make the actual tests, and you can cover a wide range of situations and challenges.



RUNNING MASTERMIND VILLAINS

Masterminds are challenging NPCs. They are super-genuses who are always ahead of their opponents and have plans for every eventuality. However, the GM is unlikely to be a super-genius and probably has better things to do than sit around for days thinking up devious plans to outwit the heroes. How can you create the feeling of a mastermind without going to excessive lengths?

Firstly, remember that a big part of the role-playing game experience is how things come across. Do everything you can to make these characters feel like masterminds. Have them use big words wherever possible. Have them explain everything they do, gloating and pointing out their cleverness. Have them eagerly draw attention to their own genius and disparage the intelligence of everyone else. Describe everything they do in such a way that shows them to be very clever and very resourceful.

There is often a temptation in supers games to have villains be buffoons, but resist that temptation for the masterminds. Don't have them put a foot wrong – they can be victims of bad luck, and they can be outwitted by the heroes, but other than that they should do everything right.

Secondly, there are some mechanical tricks to call upon: cheating, and paying out determination.

CHEAT

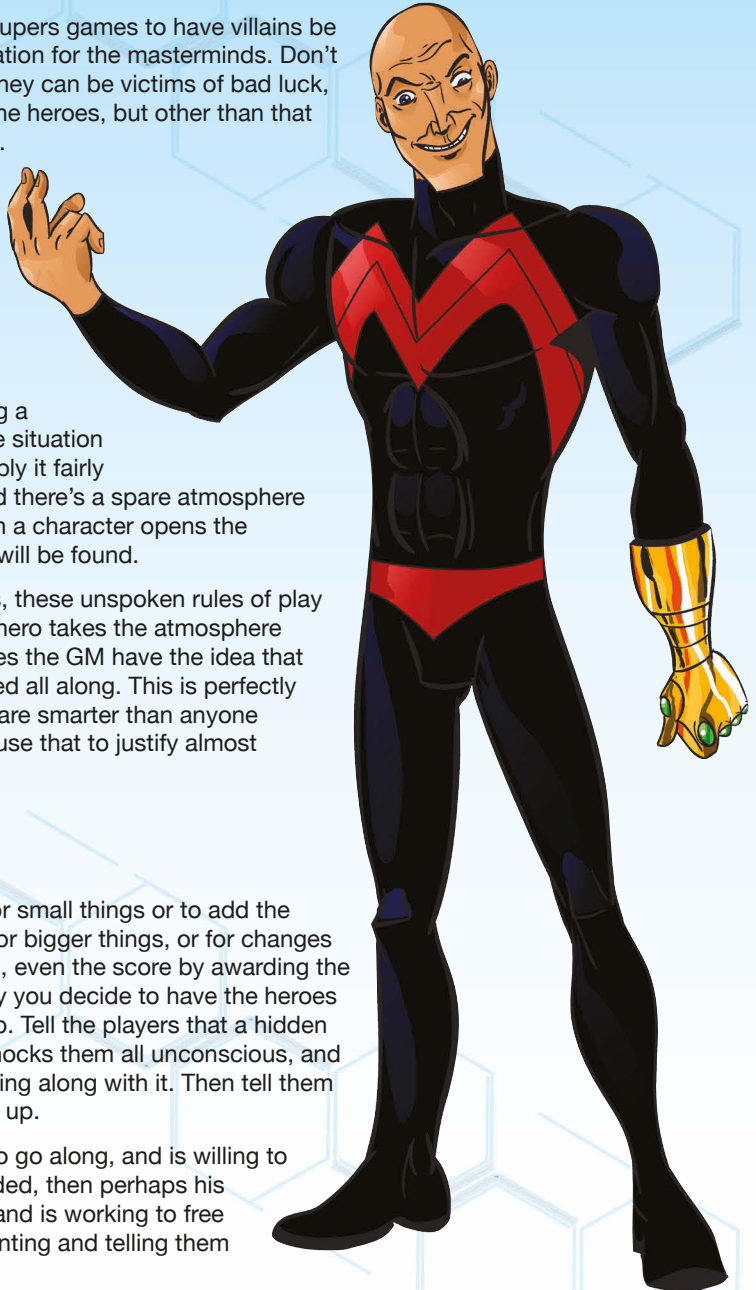
Normally, when a GM is running a game, they have a model of the situation in their head and they try to apply it fairly and honestly. If they've decided there's a spare atmosphere suit in the cupboard, then when a character opens the cupboard, an atmosphere suit will be found.

When it comes to masterminds, these unspoken rules of play can be suspended. Perhaps a hero takes the atmosphere suit and wears it. Only then does the GM have the idea that the suit has been booby-trapped all along. This is perfectly legitimate. Mastermind villains are smarter than anyone around the table, and you can use that to justify almost anything.

PAY OUT DETERMINATION

The approach above is good for small things or to add the occasional exciting moment. For bigger things, or for changes that would frustrate the players, even the score by awarding the players with Determination. Say you decide to have the heroes captured and put in a deathtrap. Tell the players that a hidden shock-grid in the villain's lair knocks them all unconscious, and give them Determination for going along with it. Then tell them what happens when they wake up.

If a player really doesn't want to go along, and is willing to pay out the Determination needed, then perhaps his character manages to escape and is working to free his friends while the villain is ranting and telling them his evil scheme."



SPECIALTIES

The Specialties that appear in the main **Icons** book are certainly enough to cover most needs for a superheroic campaign, but there are sometimes when you want to throw something unusual at your players -- some of the villains presented in this book have been given unusual Specialties for this very reason, and the new Specialties are presented here for ease of reference, and for the use of any Game Masters who wish to make them available to their players.

ANIMALS

You are skilled in handling and dealing with animal life. Add your specialty bonus to tests involving training animals, influencing or predicting their behavior, etc. If you wish to specify a single particular species, which bestows an increasing level of aptitude beyond specialist, but you lose the general benefit of the specialty for all other species.

AREA

You are knowledgeable about a particular location (which must be specified), and can add your specialty bonus to Intellect and Awareness tests based on your familiarity with that location.

"I BELIEVE IN GOTHAM CITY."
- Bruce Wayne, *Batman: The Long Halloween*

DECEPTION

You are skilled in the arts of lying, bluffing, trickery and subterfuge. You may add your specialty bonus to tests that involve deceiving others -- including Persuading (**Icons**, page 66) or even combat maneuvers involving feint or misdirection.

NATURE

Add your specialty bonus to tests involving the wilderness, including tracking and survival.

POWERS

The core **Icons** book provides powers that are wide-ranging enough to cover most common superheroic archetypes and variations. The powers presented here are optional -- either alterations or additions to existing powers, or powers that can function as optional replacements for those found in the core book, at a Game Master's discretion. This section also includes rules clarifications on existing powers.

AFFECTS INCORPOREAL

As a bonus power, any attack power that inflicts damage can have the ability to affect incorporeal targets (such as those using the Phasing power on page 32 of **Icons**) as if they were solid. This typically applies to attack powers with a magical, multi-dimensional, or exotic energy type.

ANIMAL MIMICRY

x2

You can duplicate the powers of any animal within sight and use them yourself. Unlike Power Duplication (on page 33 of **Icons**), touch is not required.

You gain all the target's powers at their existing level or your Animal Mimicry level, whichever is less. So if you have Animal Mimicry 4, any powers you duplicate are limited to a level no greater than 4.

You retain any duplicated powers until you choose to duplicate another set or you are rendered unconscious, in which case you lose any previously duplicated powers.

As a bonus power, you can mimic a number of animals without them being within sight. The number of animals in your repertoire is equal to half your power level. So if you have Animal Mimicry 6, you can have a list of three animals whose powers you can duplicate without those animals being present.

Additionally, a character can choose to be limited to only a single animal, in return for a +2 bonus to your power level, but you may not mimic any other creature (and if you wish to mimic your chosen animal without it being in sight, that still must be taken as a bonus power).

When randomly rolling characters, Animal Mimicry can be taken in place of Power Duplication.

DREAM CONTROL

You can exert a kind of Mind Control (see **Icons**, page 45), influencing complete control over the target's dreams. To influence someone with Dream Control, they must be asleep, in visual range and you need a successful power test with the target's Awareness as the difficulty. If you fail an Dream Control test against someone, you must make a determined effort to attempt to control them again in the same scene (see **Icons**, page 73), and the target may make an Awareness test with your Willpower as the difficulty. If the target's test succeeds, they wake up.

A successful power test gives you total control over the reality of the target's dream -- any effect can be created, although if the target has any reason to suspect that they are dreaming, they may make an Awareness test with your Dream Control as the difficulty. If they succeed in breaking your control, they may resume control of their own dream, or wake up (as they choose).

You may use other mental powers while sustaining control of a dream, but only against the dreaming target. If you are distracted (such as being attacked in the real world), you must make another Dream Control roll to maintain the effect.

You can take Dream Travel as a bonus power. When randomly rolling characters, Dream Control can be taken in place of Emotion Control.

DREAM TRAVEL

Using a limited form of Astral Projection, you can separate your astral form (the vessel of the mind and spirit) from your physical body, allowing it to travel into dreams. Your body remains in a coma-like state, although you are aware of any harm befalling it. Should your body perish while your astral form is away, you remain trapped in the dream state.

Your astral form can only observe things within the dream, and can travel from the dreams of one person into the dreams of another. To affect things within the dream, or shape it in any way, requires Dream Control (see previous). Finding a particular dreamer requires familiarity with the target, and a Dream Travel roll against a difficulty equal to the targets' Willpower -- and the target must be asleep at the time, or they are undetectable.

When randomly rolling characters, Dream Travel can be taken in place of Astral Projection.

ELEMENTAL CONTROL

The forms of Elemental Control listed on p. 36 of **Icons** are not the only possibilities. Players should feel free to invent their own forms of the power, influencing other elements, forces, or energies. A common example is Cold or Ice, with the ability to generate blasts of freezing cold or deadly icicles, form objects out of ice, and so forth. More exotic elements might include metals, chemicals, or even cosmic energies or forces.

EMOTION CONTROL

The list of emotion effects in **Icons** is expandable and players and GMs should feel free to do so to suit certain characters, basing new emotional effects off the ones given. For example, despair might work similarly to sadness while uncontrolled laughter is similar to pleasure. When in doubt, assume the emotional effect is strong enough to prevent the affected character from doing much of anything else.

EMPOWERMENT

x2

You have the ability to bestow super powers upon a target (whether that target already possesses powers or not). Any target that you touch rolls randomly for a single power, and a random power level -- if the level rolled exceeds your Empowerment power level, the new power maxes out at the same level. If the level rolled is lower, an additional power is rolled, until the total power level of all powers rolled equals your Empowerment power.

The target keeps these new powers for ten times your Empowerment level in pages.

As an option, you may choose to bestow only one specific power, in return for a +2 bonus to your power level.

As a bonus power, you can make an Empowerment at extended range. You must make a Coordination test to hit the target.

When randomly rolling characters, Empowerment can be taken in place of Power Theft.

IMMORTALITY

x2

As given in **Icons**, the Immortality power neither has nor needs a power level. Don't roll one for the power if it is generated for a character. In cases where a power level is needed, treat Immortality as level 10.

IMMUNITY

x2

As given in **Icons**, the Immunity power neither has nor needs a power level. Don't roll one for the power if it is generated for a character. In cases where a power level is needed, treat Immunity as level 10.

MIND SHIELD

As a bonus power, your Mind Shield can also project a false façade, so that any attempt to read or influence your mind perceives what you want the intruder to perceive.

MIND SWITCH

x2

You can take over someone else's body, much like Mind Control (see **Icons**, page 45) except your mind is "inside" the victim and controls their body, rather than issuing orders. This power works just like Possession (**Icons**, page 46), with a significant difference: You switch consciousness with your target -- you take control over their body, but they take control over yours.

A target of Mind Switch must be within visual range and have a Willpower level less than the level of this power or your own Willpower, whichever is greater. Those with greater Willpower are immune to your control unless you first tag one of their aspects (see **Tagging and Compelling** under **Determination**, **Icons** page 78).

To switch minds with a target, roll a Mind Switch test with a difficulty of the target's Willpower. If successful, the target is under your control until you choose to release them, or until you are unconscious.

Since your mind is in control of the target's body, you can spend your own Determination for tests you make using the target's body. You have access to all of their powers -- except those of a mental nature, which travel with the consciousness to the new body. Conversely, they have access to your non-mental powers (if any) while occupying your body.

When randomly rolling characters, Mind Switch can be taken in place of Possession.

RESISTANCE

❖

The list of Resistances given in **Icons** is by no means the be-all and end-all. Players should feel free to come up with their own unique Resistances, with the approval of the Game Master. Examples include everything from Resistance to Physical Damage (a kind of limited form of armor) to Resistance to Emotion Control. The GM may wish to grant a particularly limited form of Resistance a bonus to rolled level.

SENSORY LINK

You are able to receive sensory input from another's senses.

A sensory link can be formed automatically with a willing target-- to form a link with an unwilling target requires a power test against their Willpower. The target must be within visual range for the link to be formed, but may travel out of range with an active sensory link.

A sensory link may be maintained through concentration. If you are distracted (attacked, for example), a Willpower test with a difficulty equal to your Sensory Link level is required to maintain the link.

If the subject of your sensory link is stunned or killed, roll a Willpower test with a difficulty equal to the damage of the attack, and read the result as a Mental Blast targeting you.

When randomly rolling characters, Sensory Link can be taken in place of ESP.

SLEEP

x2

You can force others into a deep sleep. A target of Sleep must be within visual range and have a Willpower level less than the level of this power or your own Willpower, whichever is greater. Those with greater Willpower are immune to the effect unless you first tag one of their aspects (see **Tagging and Compelling** under **Determination**, **Icons** page 78).

To put a target to sleep, roll a Sleep test with a difficulty of the target's Willpower. If successful, the target falls unconscious. A target can be woken by others as normal. Without outside assistance, the target will remain asleep for a period (in narrative time) equal to your power level in hours (although the target may spend Determination to awaken sooner, at the GM's discretion).

When randomly rolling characters, Sleep can be taken in place of Mind Control.

TRANSIT

Using a limited form of teleportation, you can disappear in one spot and reappear in another some distance away, by traveling through a particular medium, which must be specified during character creation. A character who can transit through shadows, for example, can enter and exit through any existing shadow. Transit 5 is sufficient to go anywhere in visual range, while higher levels have ranges measured in tens, hundreds, thousands, and tens of thousands of miles. Transit 10 is enough to go virtually anywhere.

Transit requires a power level test at difficulty 2. Failure means you do not enter transit. Transit 7 or greater does not require a test (you automatically succeed).

When randomly rolling characters, Transit can be taken in place of Teleportation. Game Masters allowing this option should replace Arobas' "Alternate Form" power (**Icons** page 96) with Transit, and replace his Weakness with a different Challenge as a result.

VILLAINS

AUNTIE SOCIAL



QUALITIES

DEAR AUNT SOCHA

"LET'S SEE WHAT YOU KEEP HIDDEN."

RULES WITH AN IRON HAND

ABILITIES											
PROWESS											
COORDINATION											
STRENGTH											
INTELLECT											
AWARENESS											
WILLPOWER											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: 5'6

WEIGHT: 130

FIRST APPEARANCE: THE WHISPER #32

POWERS											
Blast Device											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES											
Guns (Expert)											
Performance (Acting)											
Psychology (Expert)											
Deception											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

STAMINA

8

CHALLENGES

HATES CHILDREN

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" 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 (precursor to an invasion, perhaps), a demon, a robot, a sorceress, an immortal, or just what she appears: a rather 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 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 amazingly spry when there is a need. In addition, she can add any number of additional powers as needed for a particular adventure, via gadgets.

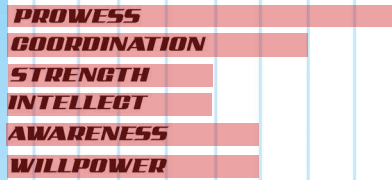
ADVENTURE IDEAS

- A series of information thefts have taken place in recent months. The only thing the victims have in common—apart from being respected members of society—is that their children attend the Overton Academy. Is it possible a group of school kids are responsible for stealing things like insider stock information and state secrets? If so, why, and how? Investigating the Academy can bring the heroes to their first meeting with Ms. Soscha Prath, and possibly lead them into the clutches of Auntie Social!
- Auntie Social expands her successful operation at Overton Academy by launching an online program intended to “tutor” promising students, providing them with academic assistance as well as bettering their chances on aptitude tests and applications to schools. Naturally, the program also contains subliminals intended to brainwash these new students and turn them into her unwitting servants.
- The heroes 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 trust 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 for good.

BEAST MAN



ABILITIES



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 6'2" WEIGHT: 220
 FIRST APPEARANCE: MIGHTY SAGUARO #8

POWERS

ANIMAL MIMICRY

SENSORY LINK

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Animals (Expert)

Athletics (Expert)

Nature (Expert)

STAMINA

9

QUALITIES

THE SAVAGE NOBLE
SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST

CHALLENGES

BESTIAL TEMPER
WEAKNESS: SILVER

A consummate hunter, Lord Sebastian Carstairs sought every means at his disposal to better his craft. This obsession eventually 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. Carstairs was infused with the feral power of nature itself -- a power which bestowed fantastic gifts, but at the price of Carstairs' soul.

Carstairs is able to take on the abilities of any animal he sees, although 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 senses), the python (bite slashing damage 3, Wrestling expert) and the bat (flight 2, additional sense - sonar). In addition, he has the ability to see through the eyes of his trained animal companions (he most often is accompanied by a trained hunting falcon).

After acquiring these abilities, Carstairs soon discovered that there was no challenge left in hunting animals. His mind, warped by his pact, began to look for more challenging prey. He began to hunt men -- and then from there, moved on to hunting superhumans.

Dubbed by the press as “Beast Man”, 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, which are often at odds with his cunning plans.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Someone has been taking out villains in the campaign city, and the heroes must investigate the possible presence of a new, violent vigilante. This leads them to encounter Beast Man, who soon decides that the heroes pose a far greater challenge than the prey he had been hunting.
- Beast-Man is hunting heroes on their own turf, where he will try to trap them and bring them to his private wilderness preserve (on a secret island in the Indian Ocean) and hunt them there 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, and paid scientists to clone the creatures. The heroes will have to survive the perils of the island, and avoid becoming the newest Trophies of the Beast-Man -- and matters are further complicated by the presence of several of your campaign's supervillains on the island as well. Do the heroes team up with the villains in order to survive the deadly traps of the Lost Island, or do they try to go it alone?
- Beast-Man has decided that he has exhausted the potential of the Earth, and that no further challenge can be found in hunting the species found here, even the ones of the superhuman variety. So he uses his vast fortune to construct a device to contact extraterrestrial intelligences (or perhaps extra-dimensional beings, if your campaign heroes are of a more supernatural bent) 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

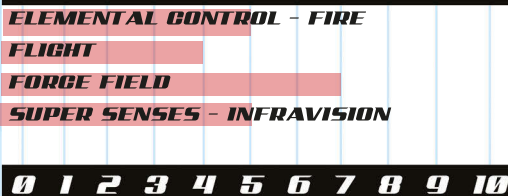


ABILITIES

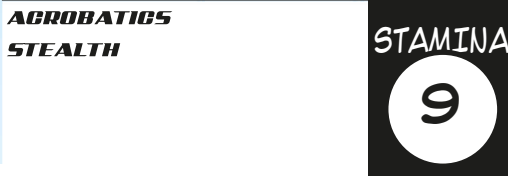


HEIGHT: 5'7 **WEIGHT:** 135
FIRST APPEARANCE: ALL-AMERICAN GIRL #6

POWERS



SPECIALTIES



STAMINA

9

QUALITIES

*LEGACY HERO-TURNED-VILLAIN
 GOTTA SCORE TO SETTLE*

CHALLENGES

*THE DREAM IS DEAD
 WEAKNESS: VULNERABLE TO COLD*

During the 1970s, the Black Flame was a popular “urban” superhero. 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), the Black Flame chose a name that would make her an identifiable role model for minority children. The Black Flame primarily operated in the poor inner city, an area often neglected by “mainstream” heroes (an impression was ingrained by a televised interview with the Comet, who explained that he and other heroes rarely patrolled poor urban neighborhoods because they offered little opportunity for super villains). 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 late 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. The 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 relative 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 that 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 upon her death Jenna felt no compulsion to keep her promise. Donning her mother's old costume, the new Black Flame would take out vengeance on the city that turned its back on her mother.

Jenna has taken great pains to make the world believe that she is the same Black Flame from the old days. She wears her mother's old costume, which includes the then-fashionable flares, platform shoes and large earrings. 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 generally chooses partners-in-crime from minority groups and currently works with Baron Kriminel (an old enemy of her mother's). While Jenna realizes that Baron Kriminel knows that she is not the original Black Flame, Jenna does not know that it was a curse from the Baron that caused her mother's cancer nor that he was behind the gang that murdered her father. Should Jenna ever discover this, she would turn on the Baron in a heartbeat.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Black Ice comes out of retirement in order to stop his old partner. Unfortunately, the years have not been kind to the old superhero, as he is senile and his ice powers have degraded into less formidable water powers. Black Ice will refuse to believe that the new Black Flame is not his old friend, and he is a danger to himself and others while trying to stop her (GMs wishing to add an extra layer of complication can make Black Ice the Black Flame's real father).
- The Black Flame has decided to target city political candidates that are "unfriendly" to minority interests. With the help of Arobas, Pulsar, and Baron Kriminel, this "Freedom Four" threatens the stability of the city and the political process.
- Thought dead for several decades, a powerful arch-villain of the original Black Flame is back to settle the score with his old enemy. In a twist, the villain is really the son of the original, blaming the Black Flame for his father's death (in truth, the original tried to save him, but the villain's own machinations did him in). Can the heroes stop these two before they tear apart the neighborhood for a misremembered past?
- Supa D, a hip-hop star, starts using footage of the original Black Flame (along with other 70s urban heroes) in the videos for tracks from his mega-platinum CD, "Original Supa." His live shows include models dressed in versions of the Black Flame's costume, pole-dancing on platforms. Jenna is outraged by this, and decides to send a clear message of her disapproval by attacking Supa D's forthcoming concert at the Garden.
- Black Flame has the potential of being turned from a villain into a hero, in the best traditions of Bronze and Iron-Age comics. Perhaps the PCs learn of Baron Kriminel's involvement in her parent's deaths and choose to approach her, or perhaps the Black Flame sees the PCs fighting to help save a minority neighborhood in the city, or fighting a racist supervillain, and joins in -- a momentary alliance that may offer the PCs the opportunity to help Jenna truly honor her mother's memory, and re-ignite the Black Flame.

THE BLACK HOODS

The Mafia, The Triads, The Camorra, The Yakuza... the world is full of criminal secret societies, shadowy organizations bent on nefarious deeds. All of them trace their roots to the Black Hoods, and many highly-placed members of those societies, even today, swear secret allegiance to The Face That Is No Face, the legendary leader of the Black Hoods.

It is hard to separate fact from legend when discussing the Black Hoods -- the earliest confirmed references to them are certain version of *Il Milione*, the record written by Marco Polo about his journey to the court of Kublai Khan in the 13th century. In his account (which only appears in a small number of the hand-copied manuscripts), he makes reference to "black-hooded viziers" who wished to open trade in "varied powders, potions and elixirs with the cities of Christendom."

There are legends even predating that, in India and China -- references to black-hooded figures who may have been members of the secret society, but nobody knows for sure -- The Black Hoods purposefully encourage the spread of rumor and myth about their origins and practices.

Foremost among these legends is that of their leader, The Face That Is No Face, to whom all Black Hoods swear allegiance. No record exists of any encounter with this leader -- orders are passed along through multiple overlapping sources, and the lineage is almost certainly purposefully obfuscated.

It is possible, in fact, that The Face That Is No Face does not actually exist, and that the Black Hoods may be instead a cell-based organization with no actual connection between groups, merely using the shared reputation in an effort to capitalize upon the myths. Criminals the world over, however, still are sure to leave a tribute to the Black Hoods, just in case.

The Black Hoods operate primarily through proxy -- a local gang may be acting (often without their knowledge) on behalf of the Hoods, via the direction of a local crime figure, who himself is following orders given to him by superior, and so on, until the tendrils of command fade into rumor and hearsay.



On occasion, though, special crimes call for special circumstances. It is under these rare conditions that heroes may encounter the hooded horde of Black Hoods themselves. What ninja are to assassination, the Black Hoods are to other crimes -- and only the most outrageous and unusual crimes will see the Black Hoods operating openly. They use these opportunities to reinforce the legend.

BLACK HOOD OPERATIVE

Prowess	4	Intellect	4	Stamina	6
Coordination	4	Awareness	3		
Strength	3	Willpower	4		

Specialties: Business, Deception, Martial Arts

Notes: This is the basic run-of-the-mill Black Hood operative. Higher-up members of the society should be statted as stand-alone villains, and in fact, it could be fun for players if you reveal that established supervillains are working on behalf of the Black Hoods.

Operatives are usually armed with hi-tech weaponry, taken in high-profile scientific heists -- energy weapons that do Shooting damage of 4 or 5. They will also be equipped with devices that replicate powers, if they are needed for the job at hand.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The best way to introduce the Black Hoods to your campaign is to give the heroes the opportunity to unpeel the layers of the conspiracy. Have them discover that a series of seemingly unconnected crimes are being directed by an unseen hand. Over the course of several adventures, let them follow the clues that lead them to uncover the existence of the Black Hoods and their worldwide criminal empire.
- What is the truth behind The Face That Is No Face? Is it merely a story, used by a widespread organization as a way to keep the lesser criminals in line, or is the oldest criminal society in the world directly run by an ancient immortal, ruling the society from a hidden enclave somewhere in central Asia?
- “Ya gotta help me!” The heroes are approached by one or more of your campaign’s lesser villains (the ones that are borderline comic relief), begging for help! They’ve run afoul of the Black Hoods -- either insulting the society, refusing their direction, or some other slight -- and now the secret society is out for their blood, as a message to other criminals. (In a darker version of this scenario, perhaps the heroes are drawn into a murder investigation when one of the lesser villains has been killed for their trespass.)

BLONDE BOMBSHELL



ABILITIES										
PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
HEIGHT: 5'11					WEIGHT: 155					
FIRST APPEARANCE: ALL-AMERICAN GIRL #16										

POWERS										
Absorption										
<i>All Physical and Energy, Explosive Blast</i>										
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										

SPECIALTIES										
<i>Military Wrestling Expert</i>										STAMINA <div style="border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 50%; width: 40px; height: 40px; display: flex; align-items: center; justify-content: center; margin: 0 auto;">7</div>

QUALITIES
STUNNING LOOKS
TOUGHER THAN ANY MAN

CHALLENGES
OUTRAGEOUS FLIRT
QUICK TEMPER
UNCONTROLLED EXPLOSION

Leah LeBraun has 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 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 freak.

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. The chemical changed her, gave her the power to soak up energy from punches, impacts, 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 “The Blonde Bombshell” and so she has been ever since.

The Bombshell’s Absorption works against all kinetic and radiant energy, 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 distance. 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 Blonde Bombshell is KO’ed; she explodes with whatever energy she has remaining, making it a dangerous proposition to take her out of a fight.

The Blonde Bombshell disappears in the explosion, seemingly vaporized, but reforms on the following turn. She has refined her control over the reconstitution process enough to reappear anywhere within close distance of where she exploded, and has used this ability to her advantage at times.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- A ticked-off Bombshell has been insulted by the Troll (**Icons**, p. 114) one too many times. So she decides to show him who is the toughest once and for all, leading to a no-holds-barred super-brawl! The Troll is too tough for the Bombshell to hurt him unless she charges up to full explosive power, which fortunately only takes a couple of hits from the big bruiser. Still, her explosions affect the Troll only slightly, while causing massive amounts of collateral damage. The Troll can’t hurt Bombshell directly, but he’s not nearly as dumb as he looks. Sooner or later, he’ll stop swinging and decide to grab and choke her, for example, and then the Blond Bombshell is in trouble! Can the heroes intervene and stop the two of them from killing each other and leveling the downtown area in the process?
- A master villain like Dr. Sin or Rex Mundi outfits the Blonde Bombshell with a special harness designed to control her explosive power. With it, she can keep from exploding against her will (which is, after all, pretty hard on things like bags of loot). It seems like the real deal: Bombshell is able to absorb virtually unlimited punishment. What she doesn’t know is that the device has only massively raised her “point of no return” to where she will absorb up to 100 levels of damage and then explode like a small tactical nuke! The blast threatens to level the entire downtown area, unless the heroes find some way to prevent it.

COPY CAT



QUALITIES

"ANYTHING YOU CAN DO, I CAN DO... BETTER!"
FORMER SPY

ABILITIES										
PROWESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
COORDINATION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
STRENGTH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
INTELLECT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AWARENESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WILLPOWER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HEIGHT: 5'6 WEIGHT: 128										
FIRST APPEARANCE: HANGMAN #18										

POWERS

Power Duplication

Unlimited subjects.
limited to abilities
and specialties.

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	----

SPECIALTIES

Acrobatics Expert
Athletics Expert
Martial Arts Expert
Sleight of Hand
Stealth
Weapons (all)

STAMINA

8

CHALLENGES

LONER
"THIS CAT WON'T BE CAGED!"
WANTS TO PROVE HERSELF

Katarina Kalinnikov was the most promising decathlete and gymnast Russia had produced within a generation. 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 athletic skill was more than it appeared.

Using techniques from the old Soviet Science Cities that investigated super-human 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 also adapted quickly to any new demands placed on it, giving her an unmatched level of fitness. Threatened with public exposure as a cheat, Katarina had no choice but to do as her new "patrons" wanted. She became a spy and operative for them.

But 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 life they had forced her into, but she would live in on her own terms. Copy Cat became a freelance spy and espionage agent—and occasional thief—selling her considerable skills (which were actually 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 on her own. 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) she figures she may as well benefit from it and ensure no one else ever tries to control her.

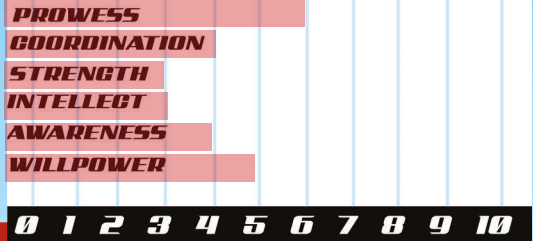
ADVENTURE IDEAS

- When the heroes attend some public or social event, from a parade in their honor to a charity exhibition of their powers, they're attacked without warning by unknown mercenaries (use the Ninja or Soldier stock characters from **Icons**, p. 117). All the hirelings know is an anonymous employer paid them for the job. In fact, they're working for Copy Cat, who makes sure she is in the crowd where she can observe the heroes' every action. This allows her to duplicate their abilities and specialties. If her own traits are not at the level given here, checking out the heroes could get her there, and possibly beyond! You can have the players make Awareness tests to see if they notice the woman observing them in the crowd while everyone else seems to panic. Also, when they later encounter Copy Cat, heroes might notice some of her moves seem very familiar.
- Copy Cat is hired to disguise herself as a hero, after observing her subject to copy his or her physical moves perfectly. Her employer may want her to commit crimes in the hero's guise, setting the target up to take the fall, or the impersonator could have another purpose, including luring the hero and any allies into a trap. The normally mercenary Copy Cat might also develop some admiration or even affection for the hero, turning on her employer when things get ugly.
- Copy Cat is a good choice of villain for jobs like infiltrating a hero's headquarters, stealing something, or testing out a hero's capabilities, since she'll not only be able to provide an exacting report, but also *examples* of a hero's physical moves and capabilities within the limits of her power. She might work with fellow mercenaries, or develop a rivalry with some of them (such as the Merry Widow, p. 73).

CORSAIR QUEEN



ABILITIES



HEIGHT: 5'8 WEIGHT: 125
 FIRST APPEARANCE: JOLLY ROGER COMICS #7

POWERS

Flight Device - The Flying Cutlass
Strike Device

(bashing or slashing)

Blast (red lightning)



SPECIALTIES

Blades
Leadership
Sailing Expert

STAMINA

8

QUALITIES

GETS WHAT SHE WANTS
MISTRESS OF THE FLYING CUTLASS
SCOURGE OF THE SEVEN SEAS

CHALLENGES

FIERY TEMPER
LOOKS AFTER HER CREW
UNSCHOOLED IN MODERN WAYS

One of the most infamous pirates of the 17th Century had a comparatively short, but colorful career. Maggie O'Dare was known as "The Corsair Queen" and the "Crimson Corsair" 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 fiery red 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 crimson 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 crimson 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 her good fortune. The Corsair Queen has returned, and those who sail upon the seas (or fly over them) should beware!

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- After appearing in the modern era, the Corsair Queen quickly reverts to type and begins raiding ships, either in the Caribbean, or off the coast near where the heroes operate (if they are based in a coastal city). Cruise ships and yachts are popular targets, since O'Dare understands jewels and coin are still valuable. She eventually figures out about other trade goods as well, making freighters potential targets. The authorities are flummoxed by the attacks of a flying pirate ship and call upon the heroes for aid.
- After an initial encounter, or perhaps seeing a report on the news, the Corsair Queen is taken with a male hero. So she kidnaps him and offers him the opportunity to join her crew as her new first mate and right-hand man, as well as her lover! Hell hath no fury like a lady pirate scorned, however, and refusing the Queen's offer means the hero is held for a king's ransom, or simply forced to walk the plank – thousands of feet in the air! Complicating matters is the fact that O'Dare's current first mate, Davey Taggart, is secretly in love with her, and takes an instant dislike to his new rival, plotting to eliminate him at any cost.
- The ancient golden Aztec sun disc whose magic catapulted the *Cutlass* through time and empowered the ship and its captain has a particular purpose: namely 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 soon 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. Perhaps the item is not "Aztec" at all, but Mayan, and related to Lord Kisin and his plans in some way (see p. 71).

COUNT MALOCHIO



QUALITIES

*INFAMOUS LEGACY
MASTER OF THE EVIL EYE
RUTHLESS AND CUNNING SCHEMER*

ABILITIES										
PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
HEIGHT: 5'11					WEIGHT: 175					
FIRST APPEARANCE: ASTOUNDING HEX-MEN #2										

POWERS										
Light Control Device (Evil Eye)										
<i>Attacking. Defending. Moving. Shaping</i>										
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										

SPECIALTIES										
Leadership										STAMINA 8
Occult										
Power (Evil Eye) <i>Expert</i>										

CHALLENGES

*OLD WORLD MANNER
TRUSTS NO ONE*

Count Bernino Malochio 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 Malochio 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 Malochio 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 Malochio suffered a fatal "accident" and his son assumed the mantle of leadership.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Count Malochio 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. Malochio 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 Malochio 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 mesmeric stunts like his predecessor to increase ability levels or the power to warp space and time itself.
- Malochio’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.
- Count Malochio may be associated with The Black Hoods (page 29) in your campaign world, perhaps even serving as a higher superior of the order -- or perhaps his organization is at odds with the Black Hoods, whom he sees as an ancient rival to his family’s ambitions.

THE CREEPER



ABILITIES										
PROWESS	[Progress bar]									
COORDINATION	[Progress bar]									
STRENGTH	[Progress bar]									
INTELLECT	[Progress bar]									
AWARENESS	[Progress bar]									
WILLPOWER	[Progress bar]									
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										
HEIGHT: 5'10 WEIGHT: 170										
FIRST APPEARANCE: MIGHTY SAGUARO #10										

POWERS										
Plant Control	[Progress bar]									
Plant Growth	[Progress bar]									
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10										

SPECIALTIES										
Power (Plant Control)	[Progress bar]									
										STAMINA
										8

QUALITIES

PLANTS ENDURE
SMARTER THAN YOU THINK

CHALLENGES

HATES WHO HE WAS
TIED TO THE GREEN WORLD

Carl Wessler worked menial jobs most of his life, including the janitorial and groundskeeping position at the Botanical Gardens. That was where scientists from the University were working on a variety of new fertilizers and fast-growth formulas, testing them on plant beds and seedlings in the greenhouse. Carl was entrusted with cleaning up after them. He was not supposed to be sampling the fruits (and vegetables) of the botanists' labors, but they looked so good, and what was the harm?

The scientists were definitely on to something, because the food they were growing was incredible! Carl sampled just a tiny amount at first, but later, he started to crave visits to the greenhouse. Moreover, he started to understand the plants more, not just an empathic sense for how they were growing and thriving, but he found he better understood the technical elements of the work being done beyond just picking up after it and handling the watering.

It wasn't long before they discovered what he had been doing. He was called in for a disciplinary hearing, and the university was prepared to fire him, when Carl got angry: what had he done that was so bad? And when he got mad, the plants listened. They grew, spilling out of their beds and hydroponic bays and spreading and creeping along the floor, moving at Carl's command! He left the University review board bound up in vines and left menial work—and Carl Wessler—behind forever. Now he was no longer just ordinary Carl, he was ... the Creeper!

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Initially, the Creeper simply wants to use his mastery over plant-life to amass as much wealth as possible and live the easy life. He naturally tends to favor targets where a lot of plant-life is available but—as he is quick to point out—plants grow virtually everywhere, and he always carries enough seeds to produce a fast-growing tree powerful enough to tear open a steel vault or strangling vines able to entrap interfering heroes. The good guys should hear about at least one of the Creeper’s thefts before encountering him in action and getting the chance to nip his crime spree “in the bud”.
- As time goes on and the Creeper grows into his newfound intellect he comes up with new ways to use his plant powers to get what he wants. He may threaten a city or region with acts of eco-terrorism, such as a rapidly growing strain of algae or seaweed in a coastal region, or an equally virulent form of kudzu vine inland. Unless his demands are met, he and his plant “allies” will grind transportation and other vital services to a halt.
- The Creeper is interested in acquiring some especially rare and useful seed samples, so he stages a raid on the International Seed Bank, a scientific institution dedicated to preserving samples of every known plant species in the event of an ecological disaster. The haul from such a raid could keep the Creeper supplied for years to come!
- A new narcotic hitting the streets is derived from a difficult to cultivate African plant that shouldn’t even grow in the local environment. The police and federal authorities suspect some international cartel, but evidence points to a local supplier: the Creeper is able to make the plant thrive even in the local climate and turns a fat profit selling his sinister “harvest” to criminal gangs (possibly even organizations like the Octofather’s, see **Icons**, page 104).
- Research scientists, drilling into the sediment at the bottom of Lake Pata (just north of the equator in São Gabriel da Cachoeira, Brazil), discover plant pollens dating back more than 40,000 years. The Creeper gets wind of this, and decides to acquire the pollen samples when the scientists present their findings at the University. Among these rare pollens are spores from a legendary giant plant of the Amazon, known as the Manda. Manda are large carnivorous, ambulatory plants, highly venomous and rapidly reproducing. With an army of such plants under his control, The Creeper could suddenly become a threat at the global level.

DARK RIDER



ABILITIES



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'10 **WEIGHT:** 170
FIRST APPEARANCE: HANGMAN #26

POWERS

**Transit (Shadow)
 Super-Speed Device
 (motorcycle)
 Defending,
 Surface Speed**

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Drive Expert

STAMINA

8

QUALITIES

*OUTLAW BIKER
 MODERN-DAY HIGHWAYMAN*

CHALLENGES

*WEAKNESS: LIGHT
 ADRENALINE JUNKIE*

Jackson Morrow was born into the life of an outlaw biker. His father was a founding member of the Dark Riders, an MC (motorcycle club) that celebrated freedom, nonconformity to mainstream culture and loyalty to the group. The Dark Riders had their heyday in the 1970s and 80s, but gradually became more and more involved with criminal activity as a way to make money to fund their lifestyle. Their criminal ways resulted in an escalating series of conflicts with superheroes.

Looking for a way to “level the playing field” and counter the powers of the heroes that regularly interfered with their operations, the Dark Riders engaged in a series of smash-and-grab heists at high-tech research installations, looking to steal any device that would give them an advantage over their superpowered foes.

Jackson’s first opportunity to ride along as a full member of the club was on one such heist -- an operation to steal an experimental engine that converted the inherent power of inertia into a drive system. The robbery was interrupted, however, by Black Hoods (page 29), looking to steal the engine for their own use. A firefight ensued, and during the combat, a chain reaction was set off in one of installation’s reactors. As Jackson grabbed the experimental engine and tried to make good his escape, the reactor went critical and the entire facility was obliterated in a flash of strange, unearthly energies. The installation was vaporized, along with the Black Hoods, and the entire membership of the Dark Riders.

Except Jackson Morrow.

When Jackson regained consciousness, he and the engine were lying in the desert, hundreds of miles away from the installation. The strange energy had been absorbed into every cell of his body, and, as he would soon discover, had given him the ability to travel by taking shortcuts through the Dimension of Shadows. By entering one shadow, he could cross the dark void, and emerge from another shadow back into our world. Jackson was sure of two things: One, that this ability would be very useful, and Two, that he wanted to make the transit across the other dimension as quickly as he could, for fear of attracting whatever Things called it Home.

Using the stolen Inertial Engine, he built a motorcycle -- so fast that it can defy the laws of physics, climbing up walls, crossing water, and more. Naming himself Dark Rider in honor of his lost comrades, and still wearing the colors of the club, he used the bike and his new powers to become like the highwaymen of old -- to suddenly appear, steal from his targets, and ride off, literally, into the shadows.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The best way to introduce Dark Rider is to have him steal something from the heroes themselves -- using his powers to enter their base, and make off with some McGuffin or other. Without his motorcycle club for motivation, he primarily hires himself out to other criminals, so perhaps Count Malochio (page 37) is using him to recover something from the heroes' headquarters.
- Dark Rider holds a grudge against The Black Hoods, whom he blames for the death of his father and the destruction of his club. Perhaps the heroes encounter him as he foils some Black Hood operation, giving the heroes the mistaken impression that Dark Rider is some kind of vigilante. Jackson is more than willing to play up this role to get the heroes' trust (especially if it helps him get what he wants, or hurts The Black Hoods in some way), but he will betray them at his first opportunity.
- Jackson's father and the rest of the Dark Riders Motorcycle Club are not dead -- the blast that destroyed the installation and gave Jackson his powers actually transported the bikers and the Black Hoods to the Dimension of Shadows, where they are now trapped. The only reason that Jackson wasn't trapped as well is because he was holding the Inertial Engine, which countered the effect. What happens when he learns that his comrades are still alive, but trapped within the formless void? Would the Dark Rider be willing to come to the heroes for help?

DIRGE



ABILITIES										
PROWESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
COORDINATION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
STRENGTH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
INTELLECT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AWARENESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WILLPOWER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HEIGHT: 5'7 WEIGHT: 135										
FIRST APPEARANCE: ALL-AMERICAN GIRL #6										
POWERS										
WIZARDRY - (magic)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-EMOTION CONTROL	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
-ILLUSION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SPECIALTIES										
OCULT - MASTER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
										STAMINA
										15

QUALITIES

"OPEN THE GATES AND LOOSE HELL!"
 CONNECTIONS: SHIGG CULTISTS
 THE MANY-FINGERED HAND OF SHIGG

CHALLENGES

PERSONAL - INSANE
 DRIVEN TO BRING ABOUT REBIRTH OF SHIGG
 CATATONIC WITHOUT MASK AND COWL OF SHIGG

August Pickman was a nobody. A small-time clerk in a small-time city, who dreamed of bigger things. One day, one of those Bigger Things dreamed of him, as well.

His mind was touched by the extradimensional entity known as Shigg — a formless chaos from beyond time and space, wrapped in madness and steeped in magic. It whispered to Pickman through his dreams — whispers of power and meaning. August Pickman quit his job the next morning and left for parts unknown. Shigg led Pickman across the globe, to the secret resting place of paired artifacts — the Mask and Cowl of Shigg. Shigg promised that the Mask and Cowl would make August Pickman a master of this world and all others.

Shigg lied. Upon donning the Mask and Cowl, August Pickman's mind was shattered completely. He was now completely transformed into "The Many-Fingered Hand of Shigg" -- the avatar tasked with bringing about the entity's rebirth into this universe.

August Pickman is now *literally* nobody. Without the Mask and Cowl, he is an empty shell, entirely catatonic.

With the Mask and Cowl, however, he entirely embodies the role of The Many-Fingered Hand of Shigg -- Dirge.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- There is only one plot hook appropriate to the level of threat posed by this creature -- the sort of massive, multi-title-spanning “crossover event” that comics companies roll out once per year or so. The story is that of Dirge’s apocalyptic crusade against the denizens of this reality.

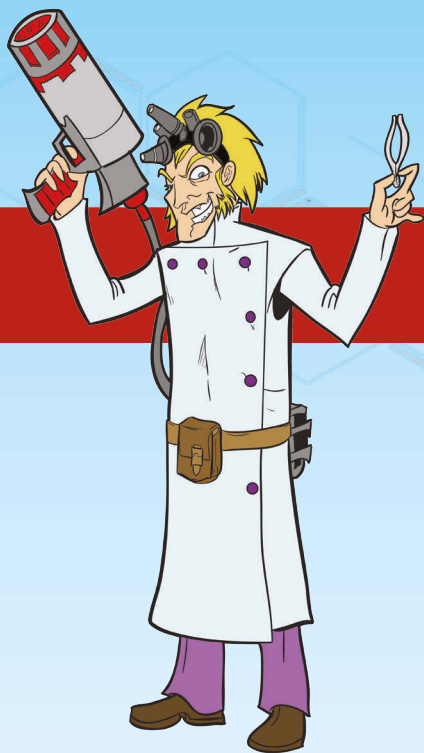
It would start slowly -- cult activity: Shigg worshippers engaged in bizarre crimes (ritual murders, thefts of magical artifacts, etc.). All the while, whispers begin to grow about the coming of The Many-Fingered Hand.

Then Dirge would begin to make himself known, and assemble the army of Shigg -- using Emotion Control and other Wizardry to place other supervillains in thrall. PC heroes encounter well-known, previously-encountered villains behaving in decidedly unusual fashion -- a “jokey” villain like Arobas (**Icons**, p.96), for example, suddenly becoming a bloodthirsty fanatic.

This is a campaign-altering event. Dirge’s goal, as simple as it is, is to bring about the rebirth of Shigg, and the end of the world. To defeat him will most likely require that the PC heroes team up with NPCs -- not only other heroes, but powerful villains such as Warlock (page 117) and Rex Mundi (**Icons**, p.108) -- putting aside all differences to save the world.



Downsizer



QUALITIES

BRAINS OVER BRAWN

"LET ME SHOW YOU MY BRAND OF MICRO-MANAGEMENT!"

MINIATURIZATION AUTHORITY

MORE DANGEROUS THAN HE LOOKS

ABILITIES

PROWESS

COORDINATION

STRENGTH

INTELLECT

AWARENESS

WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'8

WEIGHT: 135

FIRST APPEARANCE: NANO-MAN #7

POWERS

Shrinking Ray Device

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Science (Physics)

- Expert

STAMINA

7

CHALLENGES

HATES CORPORATE MANAGEMENT

TROUBLE WITH AUTHORITY

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 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”!

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- 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 angry lab rats!
- 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?
- Fleeing the authorities, Downsizer has found the ultimate hideout: inside someone’s body! The miniaturized villain, complete with a self-contained “submarine” is hiding out inside an innocent person, smaller than a single cell. The heroes have to figure out who it is and use the technology Dr. Smalley left behind to follow him. Of course, they don’t have the benefits of the devices he is using to mask his presence from the immune system of his “host” so they also have to deal with challenges like white blood cells the size of giant monsters!

DRUSILLA WHITE



QUALITIES

CHARMING GIRL
MISS KITTY
VAMPIRE

ABILITIES										
PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: 3'11 WEIGHT: 70
FIRST APPEARANCE: AFTER MIDNIGHT #3

POWERS										
Alternate Form (Mist)										
Immortality - unless burned or beheaded										
Life Drain (increase Stamina)										
Life Support										
Mind Control										
Resistance to Physical Damage										
Wall Crawling										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES										
Occult										
Deception										
										STAMINA
										11

CHALLENGES

DAMAGED BY SILVER
DESTROYED BY SUNLIGHT
REPELLED BY RELIGIOUS FAITH
THIRST FOR BLOOD AND POWER

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 young 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 all of his blood and power in one greedy meal, leaving Drusilla free and on her own. But that’s all right, as she has Miss Kitty, and drinking all of Carlos taught her many things. Bad, naughty, wonderful things, and Drusilla wants to know 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 of them may 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. Drusilla’s beloved pet has the normal abilities of a cat (Icons, p. 119) but Str 2 and with all the same powers (and challenges)

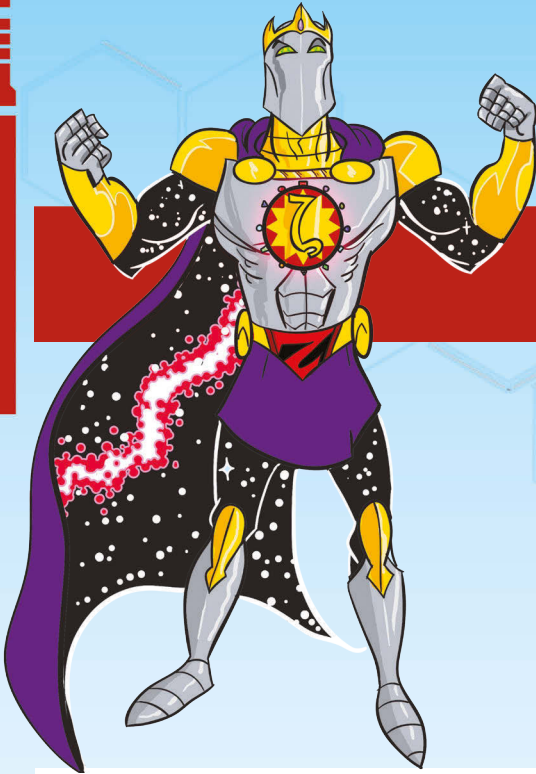
Drusilla has, albeit with the powers at a lesser level (1 below the ratings of Drusilla).

If Drusilla creates another vampire (as she did with Miss Kitty) -- a ritual involving draining the life of the subject, and then feeding the subject her own blood -- the new vampires have the same powers and challenges, with the powers rated at 1 below Drusilla's. The new vampires can be saved from the curse of the vampire if Drusilla can be destroyed before the new vampire has taken a life. Once the new vampire has killed, however, the curse is complete and irreversible.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The heroes 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 is also an only child. 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.
- 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 some 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.
- Drusilla has decided that picking off vampires one by one is no longer an effective method of increasing her knowledge of vampiric lore and power. She decides to cut to the chase and track down the source -- the first vampire. The location and identity of this creature has been lost to legend, but hints of which can be found scattered through ancient secret tomes of occult knowledge. She begins to hunt down these volumes, which are held by sorcerers throughout the world. Her search leads her to your campaign city, where one or more of the books is held in the private collection of an occult-themed superhero (preferably one of the PCs).

DOCTOR ZODIAC



QUALITIES

MASTER OF THE ZODIAC!
TOUCHED BY DESTINY
UNRECOGNIZED GENIUS

ABILITIES										
PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HEIGHT: 6'1		WEIGHT: 185		FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM UP #0						

POWERS										
WIZARDRY - (Magic)										
ZODIAC GEMS - See Below										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES										
ASTROLOGY - MASTER										
ASTRONOMY										
POWER EXPERT (Magic)										
										STAMINA
										11

CHALLENGES

PERSONAL - BELIEVES FATE IS WRITTEN IN THE STARS
SOCIAL - "THEY DOUBTED MY BRILLIANT INSIGHTS!"
WEAKNESS - DEPENDS ON THE ZODIAC GEMS FOR HIS POWERS

Doctor Zodiac uses the Zodiac Gems to provide the following additional powers:

ZODIAC GEMS:

- Aries (Bloodstone): Explosive Blast 7 (energy ram)
- Cancer (Emerald): Invulnerability 8, Strike 5 (slashing)
- Libra (Peridot): Reflection 8
- Capricorn (Ruby): Leaping 7, Strike 7 (bashing kicking attack)
- Taurus (Sapphire): Strength 7 (Stamina 15)
- Leo (Diamond): Blinding Blast 7 (deafening roar), Strike 5 (slashing)
- Scorpio (Opal): Affliction 6 (poison touch)
- Aquarius (Garnet): Water Control 7 (attacking, moving, shaping)
- Gemini (Moonstone): Duplication 1, Teleportation 3
- Virgo (Sardonyx): Telepathy 7
- Sagittarius (Topaz): Blast 7 (fiery "arrows")
- Pisces (Amethyst): Aquatic 7, Aquatic Animal Control 6

Dr. Lemuel Zodiuss has been fascinated with the stars since childhood. That fascination led the shy and bookish young man to study astronomy. He wanted to plumb the depths of the cosmos and learn the secrets behind the shining patterns of the stars.

Although devoted to his studies and eventually earning a doctorate, Zodiuss remained a mediocre astronomer. His studies of the history of his discipline led to a growing fascination with astrology, the ancient wisdom of how the stars influenced fate. Fascination grew into obsession, as Zodiuss became convinced the stars were determiners of the future, dictating destiny, and that he played an important role in their pattern. 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, told to seek psychiatric help.

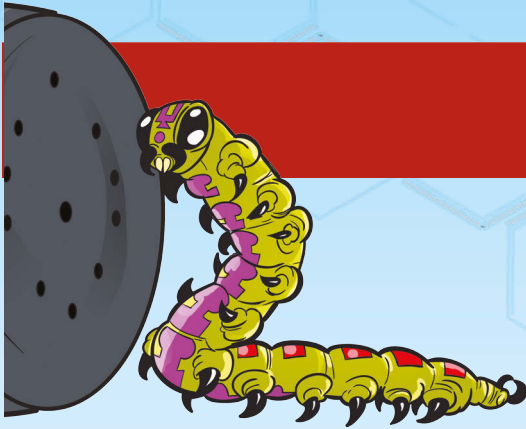
Sinking even deeper into his obsession, Dr. Zodiuss stumbled upon scattered fragments referring to “the Zodiac Gems,” ancient stones imbued with the power of the constellations themselves. He pursued the fragmentary leads, plumbing the depths of arcane texts. His psyche seemed to crack open, and he learned some elementary magic, but remained focused on his goal.

Now he has found the Zodiac Gems, unearthed after all these years, and so close at hand! With a conjunction of the heavens approaching, Zodiuss is certain the forces of fate have conspired to bring him to this place and time. He will claim the Zodiac Gems and with them the power to change the future of the world itself! All those who questioned his insights will bear witness to the rise of ... Dr. Zodiac!

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Rather than escape from prison, Dr. Zodiuss claims undue mental influence: he was possessed by the mystic gems! His claim seems well founded when “Dr. Zodiac” reappears, committing spectacular crimes, while Zodiuss is still in prison. While the defense moves ahead with their claim of mental incapacity, the heroes investigate this “new” Dr. Zodiac, who is actually Zodiuss, using the power of Gemini to split into two: his costumed and “innocent” identities. He plans to get the charges dropped and walk out of prison a free man!
- Respected and trusted heroes have embarked on a crime spree! The sudden spate of unusual behavior is due to the influence of the Zodiac Gems, coupled with a magical ritual, allowing Dr. Zodiac to control certain people according to their zodiac birth-sign! Controlling the heroes was just the beginning, and a means to steal the information and materials needed for a more ambitious ritual that will extend Zodiac’s power over the entire world!
- The Zodiac Gems were not created out of a whim, but a need to harness the power of the stars to hold an ancient and eldritch evil at bay. Dr. Zodiac’s tampering and claiming their power for himself has upset an important balance. Now a new cosmic conjunction is approaching, and cracks are appearing in the very foundations of reality itself. Unless the heroes can find the ancient Keys to the Zodiac left behind by long-ago wizards, all of creation may be doomed!
- While Dr. Zodiac prefers to keep all the power of the Zodiac Gems for himself, he also understands the value of “strength in numbers” when it comes to dealing with heroes. So he recruits the “Zodiac Circle” an alliance of super-criminals with powers enhanced by one of the gems each; Dr. Zodiac retains most of the power, but shares a portion with each of his twelve cohorts. Together, they are a formidable group! Can the heroes handle being outnumbered and still find a way to overcome their foes?

EARWORM



ABILITIES



HEIGHT: 1/2" **WEIGHT:** 1 OZ.
FIRST APPEARANCE: SEARCHERS OF THE MULTIVERSE #31

POWERS

Mind Control
Sonic Control
Attacking, Creating



SPECIALTIES

*Languages - Master
 Power (Mind Control)*

STAMINA
7

QUALITIES

*BRILLIANT MIMIC
 HARD TO GET RID OF
 MANIPULATIVE*

CHALLENGES

LITTLE WORM

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 perhaps 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 over 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 canopic style jar—was broken and one of the members of the dig apparently went mad and attack them. He escaped with one of their land-rovers and disappeared.

“Earworm” as it has become known is a remnant of that forgotten war. In its natural state, it is a black and grey 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.

Surpassing all expectations regarding the intellect of such a small creature, Earworm is actually a brilliant vocal mimic, and has learned to speak numerous human languages. It is also capable of replicating virtually any sound that it hears and it sometimes uses this capability to fool victims and foes.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The heroes encounter a typical Earworm scheme: take control of a suitably powerful host body and use it to steal whatever the alien worm needs or wants. When a well known hero goes on a crime spree odds are good mind control is involved. Of course, Earworm's victim might be a *criminal* who is simply acting out of character. Imagine if it takes over Troll (Icons, page 144) for example!
- The heroes encounter someone under Earworm's control but, when they defeat them or find a way to get rid of the little worm, they discover it is apparently dead, and already starting to shrivel and dry up! Has Earworm reached the end of its life-cycle? No, something far worse: the alien creature is capable of asexual reproduction! The new Earworms are little more than mindless clones of the original, but they are telepathically connected, allowing Earworm to take over multiple people and "network" them together! Suddenly, the heroes could be facing an epidemic of Earworms!
- A villain or unscrupulous organization (corporate, government, or criminal) gets the same bright idea as the aliens who engineered Earworm's species in the first place: the little bug would make an excellent temple for bio-technological mind control. They want to capture Earworm (alive, ideally) in order to study and clone it, creating a swarm of loyal, pre-programmed creatures able to control anyone they are told to. Of course, the parties who think they are in control may run into the same problem the aliens did when the Earworms decide to stage a revolt.

THE FOX



QUALITIES

"CRAZY LIKE A FOX!"
 FLIRT
 IDENTITY: SUPERMODEL

ABILITIES										
PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: 5'11 WEIGHT: 150
 FIRST APPEARANCE: HANGMAN #17

POWERS										
STRIKE (baton)										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES										
ACROBATICS - EXPERT										
MARTIAL ARTS - EXPERT										
										STAMINA
										7

CHALLENGES

CRAVES ATTENTION
 ALWAYS RISES TO THE BAIT

Britney Dane has always wanted attention. From beauty pageants to cheerleading to student government to prom queen, Britney has always been the center of her own self-absorbed little world. Psychiatrists would likely attribute this to a spoiled upbringing with nannies dotting on her and mostly absentee parents, but Britney's natural beauty made such attention come easy. During college Britney became a fashion model and within a couple of years her face graced magazines, posters, and billboards all over the world. She was spokesperson for a number of beauty product lines and even had a couple of movie offers. Britney was on top of the world.

It all came crashing down one brutal summer evening. Okay, perhaps it was more of a "ping" than a "crash," but to Britney it made all the difference. It was the premier of her first movie roll, and Britney prepared for an evening of autographs, interviews, and photo-ops. Instead, her big debut was squashed by super-heroics. A battle between a hero and a villain broke out nearby and all of the reporters and camera people rushed to cover the story. Britney had been trumped, and this would be a turning point in her life.

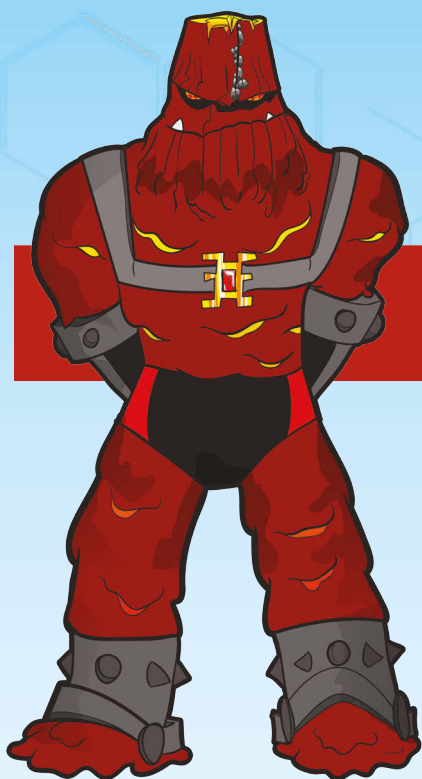
Britney became obsessed with superbeings. Not one herself, Britney began taking every physical fitness course she could and hired the best physical trainers. She also secretly provided bail and legal support to small-time criminals in return for teaching her their tricks. Within a few years, Britney had all the makings of an acrobatic superhero. Unfortunately, superheroes only reacted to problems. If Britney wanted to steal the limelight, she needed to be proactive. Thus, Britney became a supervillain.

As the Fox, Britney pulls off high-profile crimes for the notoriety and publicity. She rarely cares what happens to the spoils, making her an ideal partner for another supervillain. The Fox also enjoys baiting and flirting with superheroes, partly due to her nature and partly because gossip and scandal is good for headlines. Britney still maintains her modeling career and takes great pains to keep the two from crossing.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The Fox has become enamored with one of the heroes. She craves his attention and is constantly doing things to get it. Should the Fox learn his secret identity (or if it's public), she will invade his social life and interfere with any other romances.
- The Fox has stolen a piece of jewelry that actually contained secret information inside it. The heroes must first track her down, only to find that she let one of her minions keep it. The minion posted it on an internet auction site and sold it to a buyer. Can the heroes track the information down before it gets into the wrong hands?
- A serial killer has become infatuated with models and is stalking and killing them. The heroes are asked to protect a supermodel that's received death threats from this killer as she prepares for a photoshoot. Can the heroes stop the killer in time? Why is the Fox lurking in the shadows during their investigation?

GORN: WARLORD OF THE MOLTEN MEN



ABILITIES

PROWESS	6
COORDINATION	1
STRENGTH	8
INTELLECT	1
AWARENESS	4
WILLPOWER	6

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 6'6 WEIGHT: 300

FIRST APPEARANCE: VOLCANO #1

POWERS

Aura (Heat)	6
Invulnerability	1
Life Support	1
(Heat, Pressure, Pathogens, Toxins)	

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Military
Wrestling

STAMINA

14

QUALITIES

AGGRESSIVE

CATCHPHRASE: "BY EARTH'S MOLTEN HEART!"

WARLORD OF THE MOLTEN MEN

CHALLENGES

FIERY TEMPER

PRETENDER TO THE THRONE

WEIRD-LOOKING MOLTEN MAN

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 molten 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 finest 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, when their intent was clear. 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 to protect their homes 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 to come, emblazoning his name in fire and establishing his right to rule!

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The first indications the heroes get of Gorn's ambitions are mysterious problems with the deep drilling site: unexplained collapses and mechanical problems holding up the project. Naturally, the project's director is under considerable pressure to show progress, and intends to push through any such problems. Investigating heroes might hear rumors and stories about "something alive" on the far end of the drill-shafts, or even encounter a lone survivor of the Molten Men embassy sent to entreat and negotiate with the upper-worlders. Naturally, Gorn cannot risk anyone knowing his intentions until he is ready to launch a pre-emptive 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 himself leading the forces that erupt near the heroes. The other Molten Men warriors have similar traits, all about 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 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 his leadership role over his people, some disaffected and bitter warriors will 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!



THE GRUDGE



ABILITIES

PROWESS	5
COORDINATION	4
STRENGTH	5
INTELLECT	4
AWARENESS	4
WILLPOWER	4

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: VARIES WEIGHT: VARIES

FIRST APPEARANCE: MIGHTY SAGUARO #50

POWERS

GROWTH

- ABILITY INCREASE (Strength)
- INVULNERABILITY

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

- SCIENCE - PHYSICS
- SCIENCE - BIOLOGY

STAMINA

VAR.

QUALITIES

"DON'T MAKE ME ANGRY!"
"GRUDGE SMASH!!!"

CHALLENGES

RAGE
INTELLECT LOSS TIED TO GROWTH

Parnell Tarrant was a highly respected member of a prestigious Ivy League university's science faculty when it happened. He wasn't loved, it should be said; he wasn't a good teacher, and certainly wasn't a good friend to either students or colleagues. In fact, he seemed to take great joy in adding names to his list of enemies great and small.

His field of research was radiation and mutation. He spent long hours subjecting cats and rats and other unfortunate creatures to incredible doses of strange, barely-understood radiations. Until one day, he found himself caught in his own dosing machine, throbbing with unknowable power, his entire cellular matrix reconfiguring itself... and fired up with rage at the ones who had done this to him.

What he cannot admit, what he must never admit, is that he did this to himself. His own carelessness was to blame for the accident. It wasn't sabotage, it wasn't because he was distracted, it wasn't an elaborate conspiracy. It was just his own fallibility.

Parnell Tarrant has, since the accident, gone on to wreak havoc wherever he goes. He has a bad attitude and a short temper, and when someone rubs him the wrong way, he changes...

When Tarrant gets angry, he gets bigger. When he gets bigger, he gets more powerful, but also less intelligent and more likely to be driven by instinct and rage. Tarrant is a danger to himself and to the world. He's unpredictable, nearly unstoppable, entirely irrational and massively destructive. He doesn't care who gets hurt on his wanderings and rampages, and his own humanity is perched right on the brink.

Tarrant's Ability Boost and Invulnerability are linked to his Growth as bonus powers. As he gets angrier, his Growth increases by 1 level. Which each level of Growth, his Strength increases by 2 (to a maximum of 10), and his Invulnerability increases by 2 (to a Maximum of 10). His Intellect, however, reduces by 1. When his Intellect reaches 0, heroes will be unable to communicate with him, or calm him down in any way.

Game Masters should feel free to give The Grudge power stunts like Leaping, Blasts (pounding the ground), etc. as needed. The Grudge can be either a simple or a complicated adversary for a group of heroes. His Growth allows him to engage the characters in several ways, and there are some moral and ethical issues for heroes to work through - how much is Tarrant to blame for the Grudge's behavior? How much are the different forms the same person? How can the threat of the Grudge be stopped for good?

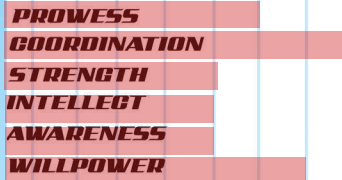
ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The Grudge gets stuck in his maximum form, and nothing seems able to change him back. The only solution is for the characters to make a journey into the monster's mind, there to find and remove the mental blocks that are holding him in that form.
- A major corporation in your campaign setting purchases the research conducted by Tarrant, and resumes it in their research center. In fairly short order they start promoting the Grudge treatment as a revolutionary new treatment for depression. Can they possibly be on the level, or will a whole bunch of guinea pigs turn into rampaging monsters as well?
- Tarrant appears on TV, promoting a new-age colony which helps visitors to find their inner peace. Is he sincere? Will the colony's treatment work? And does the colony have secrets of its own?

HARLEQUIN...



ABILITIES



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'9

WEIGHT: 160

FIRST APPEARANCE: ALL-AMERICAN GIRL #8

POWERS

Animation Device

- *The Slapstick*

Immortality

Regeneration

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Acrobatics

Martial Arts

Slight of Hand

STAMINA

10

QUALITIES

COMEDIC TIMING

"LET'S PUT A LITTLE LIFE INTO IT!"

NIBBLE CAPERING

CHALLENGES

CANNOT RESIST MOCKING AUTHORITY

CRAZY

PRACTICAL JOKER

...AND COLUMBINA

ABILITIES



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'7 WEIGHT: 140

FIRST APPEARANCE: ALL-AMERICAN GIRL #8

POWERS

Invulnerability

SPECIALTIES

Athletics

STAMINA

12

QUALITIES

FREQUENTLY UNDERESTIMATED

FREE-SPIRITED

LOVES HARLEQUIN

CHALLENGES

CRAZY

STILL A DOORMAT

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.

Wilhemina “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 to marry. Everyone noticed and commented on how pretty she was, but never paid attention long enough to figure out that she was 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 outright.

When Harlan met Mina, he fell in love immediately, and Mina found herself 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. 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 get so out of hand, or knew what to do when Harlan went into convulsions. 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, 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 team of Harlequin and Columbina began blazing a trail of madcap mayhem across the area.

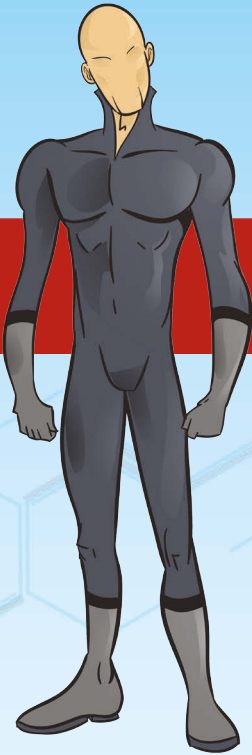
Harlequin is apparently unkillable or, at least, nothing puts him down for very long. His “Slap Stick” – in addition to swatting at the exposed bottom of any available target – is magically capable of bringing objects to life with a touch and giving them the same madcap attitude as their animator. Columbina is graced with considerable strength and toughness, far more than one might expect from a mere slip of a girl in a maid’s outfit.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- 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 might be.

- 
- The Kooky Couple of Crime decide to rob a museum of some antique theatrical items. The museum's various 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 Slap Stick. Perhaps there are other mystical talismans connected to it? Part of a set with even greater powers?
 - Harlequin and Columbina 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 ends 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 or Icons are Columbina's potential allies, particularly Blonde Bombshell, Copy Cat, Corsair Queen, and Merry Widow. Of course, a despondent Harlequin still wants to win back his beloved Columbina's attention and affections, after he's done with his own “gang” made up of animated objects he talks to like they're going to start talking back...
 - Harlequin and Columbina decide that the heroes, as the ultimate symbols of authority, need to be taken down a peg or two (or six, or ten). The heroes become the targets of a relentless flurry of practical jokes, designed to make them look foolish in the eyes of the public. Of course, if the heroes begin to thwart the gags, Harlequin will grow more and more frustrated, and the line between comedy and tragedy will be quickly crossed...

INCOGNITO

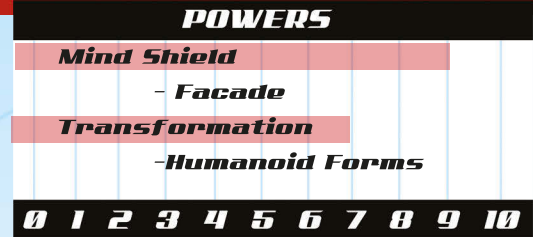


QUALITIES

MASTER OF A THOUSAND FACES



HEIGHT: VARIES WEIGHT: VARIES
FIRST APPEARANCE: WHISPER #11



STAMINA
9

CHALLENGES


DEVIOUS TO THE EXTREME
PAYS HIS DEBTS

No one knows what the infamous underworld figure known only as “Incognito” looks like, or where he came from. No one even knows if “he” is a he. 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.

Incognito’s transformational power is extensive: it includes whatever he happens to be wearing (meaning he can either transform his clothing or the clothing itself is 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 mental defenses perceive only what Incognito chooses.

The Master of a Thousand Faces is a brilliant unarmed combatant, and skilled at making use of various improvised weapons. He often has various concealed or portable



equipment, such as a baton or bo staff, climbing grapple, or smoke or flash pellet, sufficient to provide him with a momentary distraction to slip away and change his appearance to disappear into a crowd. The GM should feel free to give Incognito whatever he might reasonably have for his current assignment, awarding players Determination when their faceless foe's preparations trip them up.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- A Connection aspect really begins to earn its keep when Incognito kidnaps and replaces that character. A Team Connection works best, but it could be a single hero's supporting 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 who it is before Incognito decides the jig is up and tries to abscond with whatever useful information and items that he can get from the team's headquarters.
- One or more of the heroes is dismayed to see reports on the news of a new criminal scourge in the city: them! Someone has hired Incognito to discredit them, and the face-changing villain is taking the simplest route: 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 clear their own names?
- Incognito's guises go from bothersome to truly dangerous. The disguised villain makes several near attempts on the heroes lives by assuming the guises of people they trust or of ordinary bystanders they would never suspect. After days or even weeks of random attacks coming from all quarters, once the heroes are good and paranoid, Incognito stages one last hit, using a group of hostages to draw the heroes out. When they catch the sneak out in the open and let him have it, the heroes discover, to their horror, he is no shape-shifting assassin, but one of the hostages, drugged and dressed up in his costume! The real Incognito slips away, leaving the heroes to deal with the fallout of accidentally wounding or even killing an innocent. But was the victim truly an innocent bystander, or is there a deeper plot at work?

IN-HUMAN



ABILITIES											
PROWESS											
COORDINATION											
STRENGTH											
INTELLECT											
AWARENESS											
WILLPOWER											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: N/A WEIGHT: N/A
 FIRST APPEARANCE: SEARCHERS OF THE MULTIVERSE #9

POWERS											
Possession											
-Merger											
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES										
Mental Resistance										
STAMINA										

QUALITIES
 MASTER MANIPULATOR
 "I. AM. IN. HUMAN."

CHALLENGES
 DISEMBODIED
 LUST FOR POWER AND EXPERIENCE
 OUTSIDER

The top secret Project: BRIDGE sought to penetrate the Veil between dimensions, to understand the strange reaches in between them. One of their probes brought something back from Beyond, something alien, but intelligent and cunning. When it possessed the first technician it encountered, it said "I. AM. IN. HUMAN." Since then "In-Human" has been the code-name of the disembodied entity, which has no designation pronounceable by any human tongue.

In-Human is capable of entering and controlling the body of any creature. It moves from host to host by touch, switching bodies more easily than humans do clothes. It abandons hosts just as casually, nearly always seeking to "trade-up" to a more powerful, influential form. Naturally, its favorite hosts are superhumans, and In-Human loves using their powers with abandon. It lives up to its name in its treatment of others; physical beings are nothing more than playthings, and it cares nothing for their feelings or needs.

In-Human is a particularly difficult foe to overcome, since it can move from one host body to another virtually at will. It can be trapped in a host that is incapacitated (stunned or reduced to 0 Stamina) but is still difficult to remove without extraordinary measures (involving super-science or sorcery) with a difficulty based on In-Human's Willpower or Possession level. Even then, there is no known way to destroy it or return it where it came from. In-Human has implied that it was pleased to escape from wherever it was, but not whether it was its home or prison.



ADVENTURE IDEAS

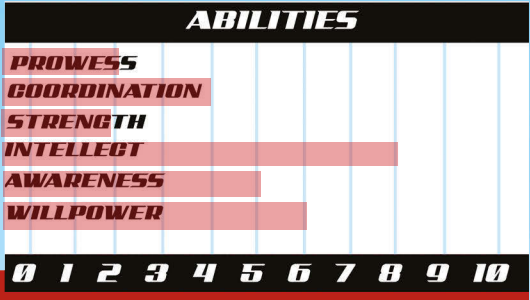
- Choose or make up a hero from your setting. That hero comes to the characters seeking help, talking about strange dreams and flashbacks, apparently related to recent unusual behavior. In fact, In-Human is in possession of the hero and looking to learn all that it can about the team and their secrets. In particular, it is looking for an opportunity to “trade-up” to a more powerful and useful host body. It may try to cover up gaps in its knowledge about its host with claims of amnesia or the like. If found it, it tries to claim a suitable host—if it has found one—and then flee.
- Having escaped once again, In-Human goes to ground and adopts a different approach. Rather than sheer physical power, it seeks out hosts with considerable wealth and influence. Eventually, it finds one with a suitable combination of resources, influence, and few suspicious connections. This allows the possessing entity to set up an underground fighting circuit for superhumans while indulging in a variety of sybaritic experiences. It intends to find suitable hosts through a process of elimination, staging fights for the amusement of the human cattle, while selecting for the strongest and most capable new host body.
- At the end of a major adventure, when the heroes have overcome the villain and thwarted another threat to the world, one of their allies suddenly betrays them and absconds with the villain’s item of power or doomsday weapon. It turns out that In-Human had been “hiding out” in the ally’s subconscious mind, waiting for just such an opportunity. Now the possessing entity has escaped with their friend and a deadly threat to the world and the heroes have to find out what it intends to do with them!

KILLER GAMEDMASTER

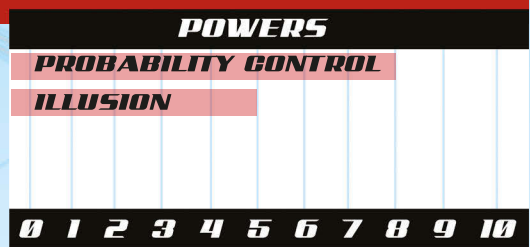


QUALITIES

MASTER OF GAMES AND PUZZLES
 "YOU'LL NEVER SOLVE MY PUZZLES!"
 FASCINATED BY TECHNOLOGY



HEIGHT: 5'5" WEIGHT: 130
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #3



SPECIALTIES	
POWER: PROB. CONTROL	STAMINA 8
TACTICS	

CHALLENGES

CAN'T HELP BUT PROVIDE CLUES
 TWISTED SENSE OF FAIR PLAY
 FORCED TO WORK WITH OUTSIDERS

Magnus Hoyle was a mild-mannered man, acting as the puzzle editor at the Springfield Gazette. He was content with his life of studying and solving puzzles all day, until a supervillain ran into the Gazette building with a bomb, and the superhero that came to stop him ended up totally most of the building in the process. Somehow, though, he survived – the odds were a million to one, but he was able to walk away with a scratch.

It turned out that Hoyle was born different, and the trauma of the fight awoke the hidden potential inside of him – the ability to manipulate probability (including the probability that light would bounce and reflect in such a way as to create convincing illusions). Unfortunately, seeing his livelihood destroyed also caused his mind to snap, and he decided that superheroes were too stupid to continue as they were. They would have to be shown that brains were far superior to brawn before they paid for their ham-fisted antics. And thus was the Killer Gamemaster born.

The Killer Gamemaster isn't a scientist by trade, but he has a great appreciation for gadgets and technology, and so he spends much of his time tricking or convincing scientifically-gifted individuals to work on his elaborate schemes. He is quick to pick up on the application of highly experimental devices, but he just has no talent for inventing them himself. This forces him into a variety of bizarre and strenuous relationships as his plans grow and evolve.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The world's top-selling Massively Multiplayer Online Role-Playing Game, *Craft of War-World* (CoW), issues a new patch for download. What nobody realizes, until it is far too late, is that the patch was actually created by the Killer Gamemaster, and smuggled into the production queue. Nobody notices, until people start disappearing -- and the only thing they have in common is that they play CoW. Then, friends notice that the missing people's avatars are still online... and claiming to be the missing, trapped in the online world! The Killer Gamemaster has somehow gotten ahold of a program capable of transporting people from the real world, into the world of the game, where he feels their skills will be more fully tested by the added element of real danger! The PC heroes will have to enter the game, face down dragons, trolls, and more, defeat the Killer Gamemaster in his virtual lair, and rescue the digitized players, returning them all to the real world!
- The Killer Gamemaster has decided that one or more of the PC heroes are his nemesis. He publicly challenges them to contests where they must face him in games, with deadly consequences. Challenges can include: Chess played with superhumans as playing pieces; a trading-card game where the cards summon real other-dimensional creatures that do battle (and might also get out of control and cause havoc in the city); A series of puzzles with each providing a clue leading to the next, etc. Do the PCs play his games, running the risk of public embarrassment, or do they simply try to put a stop to him -- and face the possibility of being branded "poor sports" by the public?
- While facing a conquering threat (like Gorn, Warlord of the Molten Men (p 56) or Tempus Khan (p 111), for example), the PC Heroes are approached by the Killer Gamemaster, who informs them that he has analyzed the tactics being used and now knows how they can defeat the threat. Do the heroes accept the help of a supervillain to defeat a larger threat? Is the Killer Gamemaster even telling the truth, or is this another of his dastardly plots?

LITTLE AUGIE CAESAR



ABILITIES										
PROWESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
COORDINATION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
STRENGTH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
INTELLECT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AWARENESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WILLPOWER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: 4' WEIGHT: 110
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #2

POWERS										
EXTRA LIMBS (prehensile feet) - 2 attacks/round	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
SUPER SPEED	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
TOMMY GUN - BLAST (device)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES										
ACROBATICS - exp	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
ATHLETICS - exp	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
BUSINESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WRESTLING - exp	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

QUALITIES

EPITHET - EMPEROR OF THE URBAN JUNGLE
 CATCHPHRASE - "YEAH, SEE?"
 MOTIVATION - TO PROVE HIS SUPERIORITY

CHALLENGES

PERSONAL - INTELLIGENT, TALKING CHIMPANZEE
 SOCIAL - ATAVISM WHEN ENRAGED.

Years ago, one of the biggest mobs in the city was run by hyper-intelligent gorilla, called Big Julie Caesar. After Big Julie Caesar took over the mob, he began to think about the future. How could he ensure his power and pass on his legacy? Experimentation with other gorillas revealed that his intelligence owed as much to a natural mutation as the scientific manipulation of the supervillain who had created him..

For years Big Julie searched for a suitable candidate for the treatments, finally finding one in a chimpanzee. Initially taken aback, Julie reflected that his idol, the human Julius Caesar named his nephew heir to Rome, so surely he could do no worse. Naming the young chimp Augustus, he raised his intellect and raised him as his nephew. When Big Julie was bumped off, Little Augie took over the family business.

Little Augie Caesar is a chimp mobster with a chip on his shoulder and a severe case of "little ape's disease." Attempting to fill the metaphorical shoes of a literal 400-lb. gorilla isn't easy, especially when you're four feet tall and 110 lbs. soaking wet. This has given Augie a bit of a complex, and he's often driven to rash action to prove that he's a tough-guy. The situation isn't helped at all by his temper, which tends to revert him to a screeching, out-of-control animal.

Whatever you do, don't laugh at him.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

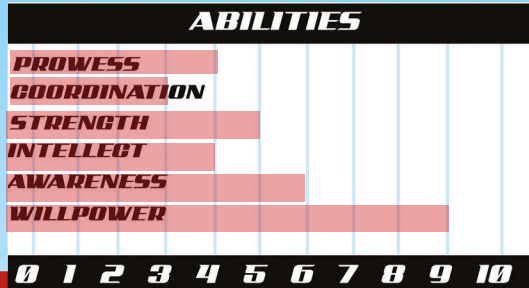
- Mob War! The city is split between two rival gangs. The Caesar Mob, run by Little Augie, and The Outfit, run by The Octofather (**Icons**, p 104). The lines are drawn, and the two gangs have decided to “go to the mattresses.” The rivals begin to attack each other’s operations, leading to an escalating series of violent reprisals. Both sides begin to recruit super-powered muscle, making things even more dangerous. The PC heroes will have to figure out how to stop the two gangs from tearing the city apart. And what happens when one side approaches the Black Hoods (p.30) as a last resort to finally defeat their rival by siding with the oldest criminal organization in the world?
- Augie decides that the best way to prove that he’s a real “tough-guy” is to take down the PC heroes. So they become his new hobby. He starts by laying the bait: A series of audacious and unusual crimes to draw the heroes’ attention -- broad daylight armored car heists, bank robberies, crashing a charity fundraiser and robbing the assembled wealthy patrons, etc. Once he has the heroes after him, he brings the fight directly to them -- ambushing them by putting their connections in jeopardy, sending hit-men to the heroes’ public appearances, or even just openly attacking the heroes’ headquarters. He puts the word out on the street and via the media that they’ve messed with the wrong chimp, and they’re going down, see?
- Something is wrong with Augie’s mental augmentation -- what started as his loss of control when enraged is becoming more pronounced. He appears to be reverting to a normal chimpanzee. He becomes desperate to stop that from happening, He starts to assemble scientific minds -- first by bribery, then by kidnapping scientists, and then by approaching scientific villains. He then begins to experiment, testing the new process on other apes to see if it will work to stop his reversion. He teams with Confederape (**Icons**, p 100), using the gorilla’s ability to control other apes as a way to acquire subjects for experimentation. The Confederape, however, sees this as his opportunity to build an army of intelligent apes to overthrow mankind. Can the two perilous primates work together, or will Caesar be betrayed?

LORD KISIN



QUALITIES

*COLLAR OF EYES
MAYAN DEATH GOD
THE STINKING LORD*



HEIGHT: 6'4 WEIGHT: 160
FIRST APPEARANCE: MISS TIKAL #1



STAMINA

14

CHALLENGES

*BLIND
BOUND BY PROPHECY
HIDEOUS*

* COLLAR OF EYES:
SEE MAGIC, SEE IN
THE DARK, SEE INVIS-
IBLE, SEE SPIRITS,
360-DEGREE VISION

Mayan history contains a prophecy of a coming changing in worlds, the ending of one world and the start of a new age. Although some believe this prophecy is fixed and certain, in truth it is a moment of decision, which 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, can make his final play for power. If he can turn the wheel of destiny his way, the world will die, and all will fall under his dominion, forever.

Lord Kisin looks like a hideous, mummified corpse dressed in Mayan regalia, particularly his broad golden Collar of Eyes, which permits him to see in every direction and to notice things hidden from the sight of mortals. However, Kisin has no eyes of his own, only empty sockets, so without the Collar, he exists solely in darkness and cannot see at all.

That is close to the death god's only vulnerability, however: He is truly immortal and unkillable, highly resistant to harm, and capable of draining the life out of other creatures with a mere touch to replenish his energies. Fortunately, he is also bound in the underworld of the dead unless given an opportunity by the prophecy and the delicate flow of destiny to intervene in mortal affairs. Lord Kisin relishes these moments and plans carefully for them, like a master chess player.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- As the Earth's Supreme Wizard, Warlock (see p. 117) has a duty to protect the world from suffering the fate Lord Kisin intends for it. Of course, Warlock's true motives are purely selfish: if the world perishes, who will he lord it over? Threatened by the Yama King (see p. 122), Warlock hits upon an idea: He arranges for one of the Mayan artifacts empowered by Lord Kisin centuries ago to fall into the hands of the Yama King's followers. With the ancient Key to the Underworld, they can loose their master upon the world. Of course, Lord Kisin cannot allow this; the Earth is *his* to claim! Warlock hopes to pit the two vastly powerful underworld gods against each other, locking them in eternal conflict away from the world. Of course, if his gambit fails, one or both of them will be unleashed to destroy the world and hold all human souls in eternal torment! Do the heroes attempt to thwart this dangerous scheme, or do they *help* Warlock, recognizing that his plan may represent this dimension's best chance against these powerful beings?
- A series of serial killings in the city follow a pattern based on ancient Mayan practices and prophecies. Heroes investigating the murders can uncover the pattern and learn the place and time of the next murder based on certain astrological conjunctions in the Mayan system. Unfortunately, the killer is a chosen agent of Lord Kisin, and possesses a fraction of the death god's power: at least 6 levels of Wizardry and 5 of Regeneration, along with Immortality so long as his head remains attached to his body. How do the heroes stop a deathless murderer in time? If you want to make things even worse, perhaps Kisin's chosen agent is Redkap (p. 90)!
- One or more heroes who perished, perhaps even friends or mentors of the players' heroes, miraculously return from the dead. Unfortunately, these poor souls are in the thrall of Lord Kisin, who has used his influence over the dead to restore them, and grant them the *illusion* of life, although they are in fact undead under his control. He intends for the "resurrected" heroes to gain the trust and confidence of their friends before betraying them and carrying out the commands of the Stinking Lord of the Underworld. With the power of the Collar of Eyes, Lord Kisin can see and hear all that his new thralls do, and will learn much about his new foes, win or lose.

MERRY WIDOW



QUALITIES

*DISTRACTING WAY ABOUT HER
MOST DANGEROUS WOMAN IN THE WORLD
WELL-DESERVED REPUTATION*

ABILITIES

PROWESS 6
COORDINATION 5
STRENGTH 4
INTELLECT 5
AWARENESS 4
WILLPOWER 6

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'8 WEIGHT: 140
FIRST APPEARANCE: HANGMAN #14

POWERS

Strike Device - Bullwhip
-Binding
-Swinging

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Acrobatics
Martial Arts
Sleight of Hand
Stealth

STAMINA

9


CHALLENGES

*IT'S ALL PART OF THE GAME
NOTORIOUS FLIRT*

"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 game.

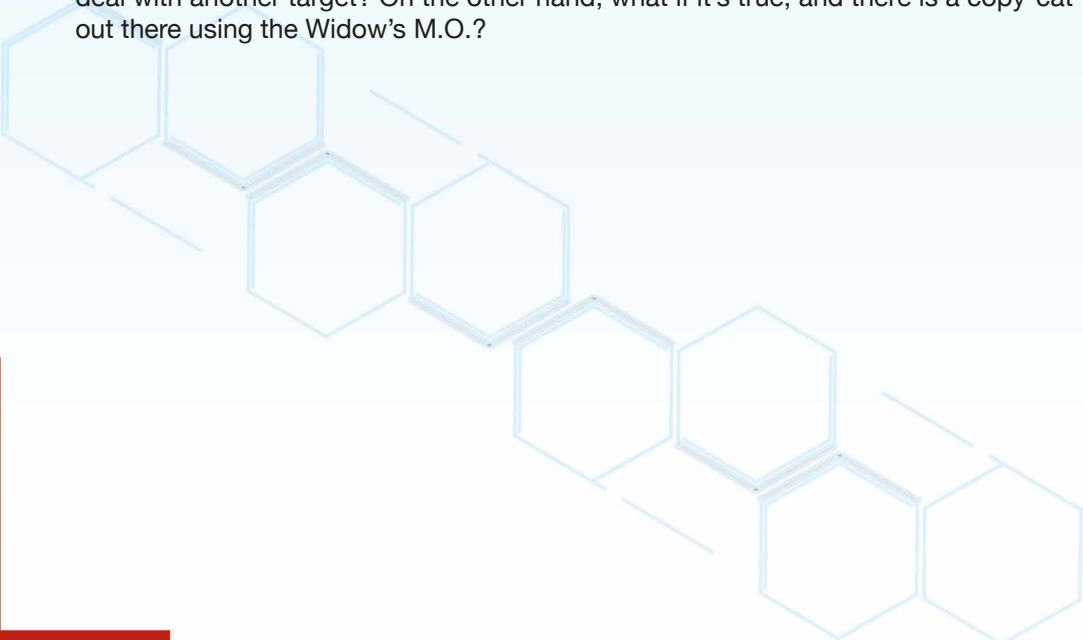
Her origins are shrouded in mystery and she delights in spinning stories about how she worked her way to the top of Most Wanted lists around the world. In some of them, she came from poverty, forced into a life of prostitution, until she became the mistress and protege of an infamous assassin. Once she'd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

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The new district attorney is a crusading young lawyer dedicated to the idea of wiping out organized crime in the city and bringing corrupt cops to justice. He's also a very eligible bachelor, recently seen out with a gorgeous woman on his arm. His new paramour, Mary Winslow, is a bit of a mystery. She seems as concerned as anyone when the DA suddenly falls ill and doctors discover he has been poisoned with an unknown toxin. Heroes who investigate "Ms. Winslow" discover the Merry Widow is close to claiming another victim. Can they corner her long enough to get the antidote and find out who hired her?
 - An acrobatic, leather-clad heroine wielding a multi-strand whip has been cutting a swath through street-level crime in the city. The mysterious "Cat O' Nine-Tails" has some close brushes with the heroes, enough to intrigue them about this newcomer on their turf. She may even help them out of a jam or two. Then, she needs their help in dealing with a crime boss who has hired some super-powered muscle (pick any suitable mercenary villains from this book or Icons). Of course "Cat" is a guise Merry Widow is using to get the heroes to run interference for her so she can get at her current target, which is sure to earn her no point with them when the truth comes out.
 - The unfortunate ends of two wealthy men have the Merry Widow's M.O. all over them: both recently seen with an attractive new lady friend, both poisoned and found in bed, and both robbed of various valuables. What is interesting is when the heroes investigate, they come across the Widow, who is doing some sleuthing of her own. She claims that she had nothing to do with the "amateurish" crimes and that somebody else is borrowing her schtick and trying to frame her! Are the heroes willing to work with a thief, assassin, and notorious liar to try and uncover the truth? What if the story their new "ally" handed them is just a blind to get them to help her deal with another target? On the other hand, what if it's true, and there is a copy-cat out there using the Widow's M.O.?
- 

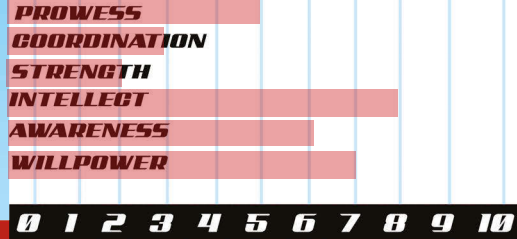
MISTER MASTERMIND



QUALITIES

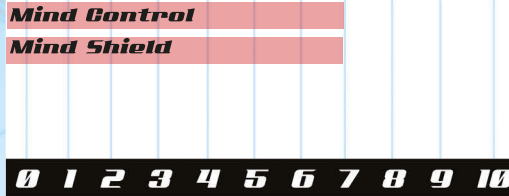
THE SINISTER SOVEREIGN OF SOULS!
 MOTIVATION: RULE THE LESSER BEINGS

ABILITIES



HEIGHT: 6'1 **WEIGHT:** 185
FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #5

POWERS



SPECIALTIES

Art (sculpture) 0
Business
Investigation
Occult

STAMINA

9

CHALLENGES

PERSONAL - BORN TO RULE, PROUD TO TALK
WEAKNESS - MYSTIC RUBY FOCUSES POWER
PSYCHOLOGICAL - RIVALRY WITH MONSTER MASTERMIND

Mister Mastermind is cunning, devious, and always making complex plans. He likes to stay many steps ahead of his enemies and he always plays games within games. He is currently believed dead.

Mister, real name Ludwig Maurer, was born in the U.S.A. to a large and poor family. His father ran a small shop repairing shoes and making keys, enough to barely keep the family alive. Maurer was determined to be successful, and studied very hard, proving to be a very successful student. However, his higher education went awry as he turned his attentions to mystical and occult knowledge. He never graduated, exploring his own pathways to knowledge, and balancing cutting-edge science with esoteric knowledge. As his power grew, so did his ego, and finally he alienated his family with his arrogance and amorality. Adrift from his moral anchors, he turned fully to villainy, pursuing his strange and selfish ends without care for the lesser beings who suffered in his wake.

He traveled the world for years, and on one journey bested in mental combat the guru who commanded a mystical ruby. With this focus stone in his hands, he became Mister Mastermind, the Sinister Sovereign of Souls! His powers of mental control were so acute that he could bend almost anyone to his will. His fierce intellect had only grown over the years, and he was now a fearsome foe. In this guise, Mister had his first clashes with heroes who opposed his attempts to become the Emperor of New Amsterdam or the King of the Moon.

Recently Mister's attempt to hold the world to ransom from an aircraft carrier equipped with nuclear bombs was thwarted. Mister was lost overboard in the middle of the Pacific Ocean. He is widely believed dead.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Mister Mastermind's arch-rival is a fellow villain, Monster Mastermind. Both villains wish to drop the prefix from their *noms de guerres*, and be known simply as "Mastermind." Each makes a claim on the name, and each stands in the other's way. Any adventure where one is encountered has a 2-in-6 chance of featuring the other as well, showing up to demonstrate their superiority and thwarting the plans of their rival. The PC heroes will have to be very clever, and very good -- because being stuck between two mastermind villains is not a good place to be.
- Mister Mastermind uses his Mind Control to take over a multinational security corporation, and then starts hiring villains to ramp up the crime in the PC heroes' home city. The goal is to make the police and heroes look completely ineffective and then propose to the city leaders that they should privatize their police force -- bringing in his security company to do so. This plan will give Mister Mastermind almost total control over the city, and any hero who stands in the way will be labeled a public menace!
- Mister Mastermind has decided to use the worldwide economic crisis to simply *buy* the United States. Through a combination of Mind Control and business brilliance, he secures all of the outstanding foreign debts of the US Government, and then demands payment. If the US cannot come up with a lump-sum payment of five trillion dollars, Mister Mastermind will foreclose. Either way, Mister Mastermind wins-- either getting a ridiculous amount of money (thereby allowing him to do pretty much whatever he wishes) or sole control over a superpower. If the United States simply refuses, it will touch off a worldwide credit meltdown the likes of which will make the Great Depression look like the Thursday before Payday -- so the rest of the world will urge the US to comply, simply to stave off that disaster. This idea is best used when the PC heroes have just had an extended adventure off-world (in space, another dimension or time, etc.) and return to find the plan already completed, and the country now ruled by Mister Mastermind -- the Emperor of America!

MONSTER MASTERMIND



ABILITIES										
PROWESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
COORDINATION	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
STRENGTH	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
INTELLECT	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
AWARENESS	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
WILLPOWER	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HEIGHT: 6'8 WEIGHT: 345										
FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #5										

POWERS										
Strike (off-hand claw)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Invulnerability (armor)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Illusion Device (Holocaster)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES										
Computers	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Electronics	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Languages	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mental Resistance	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

STAMINA

14

QUALITIES

THE BEAST WITH THE BEAUTIFUL MIND
 MOTIVATION: PROVE HIS INTELLECT

CHALLENGES

APPEARANCE - *HIDEOUS HULKING MONSTROSITY*
 PERSONAL - *TEMPER AS FOUL AS HIS APPEARANCE*
 WEAKNESS - *BRAIN CASE IS VULNERABLE*
 PSYCHOLOGICAL - *RIVALRY WITH MISTER MASTERMIND*

Before he became the villainous Mister Mastermind, Ludwig Maurer's best friend was also his greatest rival. As they studied together, Farraday Lang was the only man who could match Maurer's insight and ability. They shared many breakthroughs, but Lang shied away as Maurer's research took him down more ruthless and unusual paths. Lang stayed in school, became a distinguished academic, and was widely published in many fields.

Lang was instrumental in one of Mister Mastermind's early defeats, providing a counter-formula to stop a Madness Gas from afflicting the White House. However, he paid a significant price for this act of heroism, as Mister Mastermind's chemical defense system perforated his body.

Mister Mastermind could not let his old friend rest, even though he had just undone the White House plan. He transferred Lang's brain into a stitched-together half-cyborg body. Lang's sanity did not survive the transition – he snapped the moment he looked in a mirror and realized what he had become. As Monster Mastermind, the Beast with the Beautiful Mind, he teamed with Mister Mastermind on several escapades, before finally betraying his creator and leaving him to die in the Himalayas.

Since this betrayal, the Masterminds have been enemies. Monster Mastermind seeks always to gain more knowledge and to command ever-stranger technology. He intends to prove himself the most adept mind in all of history, and in particular, to demonstrate that Mister Mastermind was always the lesser brain.

Monster's expanded brain is held in a highly-impact resistant sheath. He has a Psyche Booster Chip wired into his brain, that gives him his Mental Resistance specialty. If the chip is damaged or deactivated, the specialty disappears. If the sheath is somehow broken, Monster will be incapacitated.

THE MINIONS OF THE MONSTER

BATULAC: Prow 4, Coord 6, Str 6, Int 2, Awa 2, Will 2, Stam 8, Flight 4, Venomous Bite (Affliction) 4, Defensive Systems Detection 4

CRABICON: Prow 4, Co-ord 4, Str 8, Int 2, Awa 2, Will 2, Stam 10, Burrowing 4, Laser Turret (Blast) 4

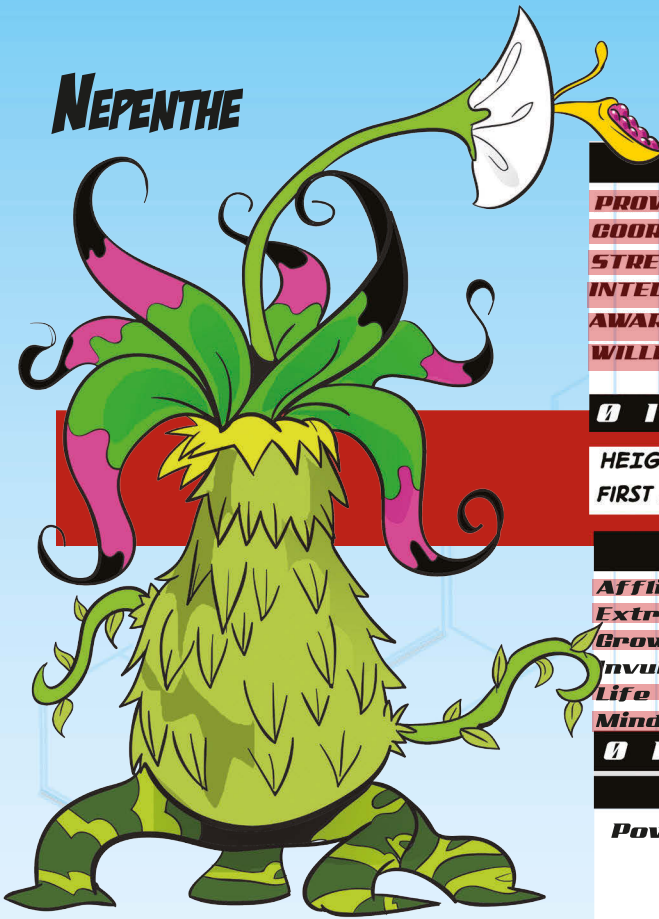
CENTROPEDE: Prow 4, Coord 8, Str 4, Int 2, Awa 2, Will 2, Stam 6, Wall-Crawling 4, Cutting Torch (Strike) 4, Defensive Systems Detection 4

Three robotic minions of Monster Mastermind -- Batulac is a robotic bat, Crabicon is a robotic crab, and Centropede is a robotic insect.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Monster Mastermind's arch-rival is a fellow villain, Mister Mastermind. Both villains wish to drop the prefix from their *noms de guerres*, and be known simply as "Mastermind." Each makes a claim on the name, and each stands in the other's way. Any adventure where one is encountered has a 2-in-6 chance of featuring the other as well, showing up to demonstrate their superiority and thwarting the plans of their rival. The PC heroes will have to be very clever, and very good -- because being stuck between two mastermind villains is not a good place to be.
- Monster Mastermind has set up his lair in the arctic circle, far from the prying eyes of men. There he plies his strange technologies, building robotic minions which he sends forth to do his bidding through a world-wide teleportation network that he calls the Quantum Tunnels. He and his minions can strike anywhere in the world, and be gone in a flash. When high-tech research facilities in the PC heroes' home city start reporting attacks by monstrous robots who make away with prototypes of the latest advances in science, can the heroes track the Monster back to his lair, and put an end to his villainy, or will the Beast with the Beautiful Mind always be one step ahead of them?

NEPENTHE

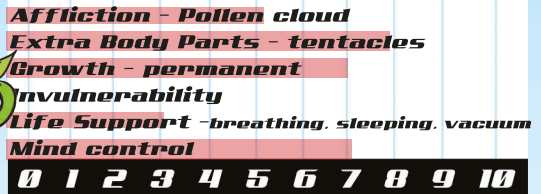


ABILITIES



HEIGHT: 24 FT. WEIGHT: 14,000
FIRST APPEARANCE: SIGMA SQUAD #23

POWERS



SPECIALTIES

Power - Mind Control
- Expert

STAMINA

16

QUALITIES

COMES BACK LIKE A WEED
THE GREEN CONQUEROR
MANY ROOTS AND MINIONS
THE STAR-SEED

CHALLENGES

MIND CONTROL ONLY AFFECTS POLINATED SUBJECTS
PLANT
WEAKNESS (SEE DESCRIPTION)

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 warming 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 America and 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. Rival companies have tried to analyze Nepenthe to reverse-engineer its “secret formula” with no success, while BevCo’s stocks and profits go through the roof.

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 it. Nor is 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 eventual 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. 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.

Nepenthe has an alien intelligence, but it learns from its hosts and can speak through them, if it wishes. Thus, it knows all about Earth's costumed defenders. They may pose a problem, if a sufficient number of them are not pollinated and brought over to serve the root-plant's needs. Still, even Earth will fall, just as countless worlds before it, encoded in Nepenthe's genetic memory.

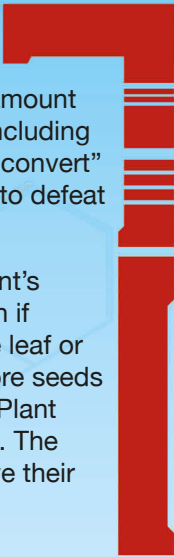
GREEN ZOMBIES

Nepenthe's mind controlled minions retain most of their normal Intellect and Awareness, but have an "Irrationally Loyal to Nepenthe" aspect. Cunning players can take advantage of this aspect. For example, minions are very protective of the root-plant, and may back off if the heroes threaten it.

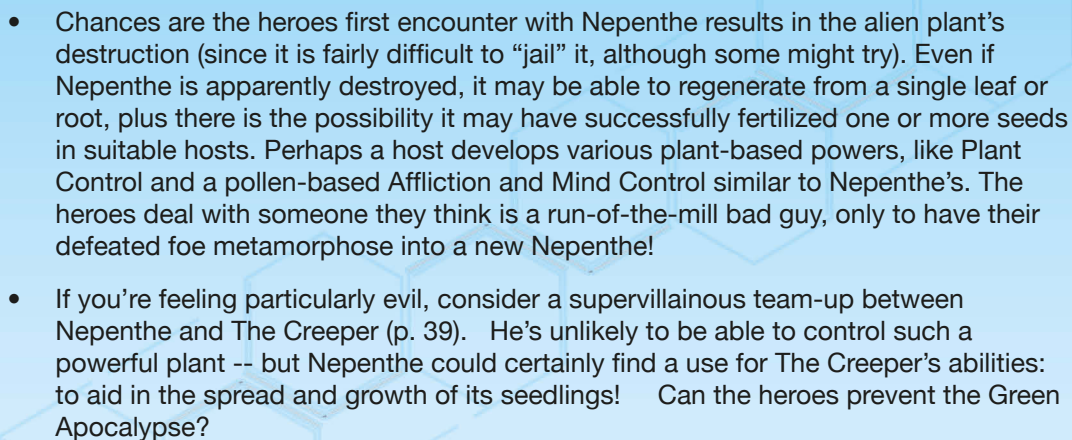
Nepenthe also has an indeterminate weakness Challenge, which is left for you to determine. This is the secret weapon for the heroes to figure out when it comes to defeating the Chlorophyll Conqueror and its minions. It might be extreme cold (given the Nepenthe seed's millennia long stasis), minerals like salt or quicklime, defoliants, ultrasonic waves, or whatever else you like. The weakness may also be able to break Nepenthe's Mind Control, such as using extreme cold or ultrasonics to free pollen victims and undermine the creature's forces.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The Nepenthe energy drink craze starts to get out of control: people fighting and rioting over supplies of the new fad beverage. The authorities begin looking into it, but BevCo and its legal team are stonewalling them, expecting they can keep them at bay until it is too late for anyone to prevent the final pollination cycle. The heroes may also start looking into things, especially if their Connections are Nepenthe enthusiasts, now acting like out-of-control junkies.
- A possible sequel or multi-part adventure can follow on the previous, where the heroes discover the truth about Nepenthe and BevCo, but too late to prevent the



alien plant from seizing control of humans who have consumed a sufficient amount of its pollen. Nepenthe sends an army of mind-controlled slaves—possibly including some superheroes or villains—against the heroes, intending to capture and “convert” them as well. The heroes have to escape, regroup, and come up with a plan to defeat Nepenthe’s mind-controlled minions without harming them.

- Chances are the heroes first encounter with Nepenthe results in the alien plant’s destruction (since it is fairly difficult to “jail” it, although some might try). Even if Nepenthe is apparently destroyed, it may be able to regenerate from a single leaf or root, plus there is the possibility it may have successfully fertilized one or more seeds in suitable hosts. Perhaps a host develops various plant-based powers, like Plant Control and a pollen-based Affliction and Mind Control similar to Nepenthe’s. The heroes deal with someone they think is a run-of-the-mill bad guy, only to have their defeated foe metamorphose into a new Nepenthe!
 - If you’re feeling particularly evil, consider a supervillainous team-up between Nepenthe and The Creeper (p. 39). He’s unlikely to be able to control such a powerful plant -- but Nepenthe could certainly find a use for The Creeper’s abilities: to aid in the spread and growth of its seedlings! Can the heroes prevent the Green Apocalypse?
- 

PAPER TIGER



ABILITIES

PROWESS
COORDINATION
STRENGTH
INTELLECT
AWARENESS
WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'9 **WEIGHT:** 155
FIRST APPEARANCE: HANGMAN #21

POWERS

Animation

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Art - Origami - Master

STAMINA

8

QUALITIES

ALWAYS SOMETHING UP HIS SLEEVE
DEXTEROUS

CHALLENGES

CAN ONLY ANIMATE FOLDED PAPER
SENSE OF HONOR

Liang Dian Nuo (also known by the Anglicized name “Daniel Liang”) was born in Hong Kong and educated abroad. He learned as time progressed that his father’s “business interests” included close ties with the Chinese Triads and 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 expects 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 an ancient manuscript on 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 breath life into his creations! When his father was murdered by a rival gang, Daniel used his newfound power to avenge him and take control of the birthright he had once sought to reject.

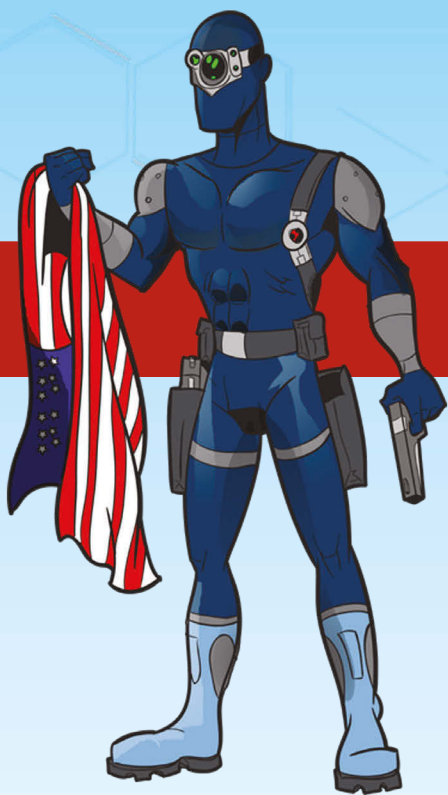
Now, Hong Kong businessman Daniel Liang of Liang Imports is known for his habit of folding little origami figures during business meetings and giving them as gifts and tokens of his esteem. What his rivals and associates don’t know is how those figurines can spy, steal, and even kill at their creator’s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

Paper Tiger's Animation power allows him to transform any of his origami figures into a life-sized replica, with all of the abilities of the actual creature or item, up to the limit of his power level. So he can, for example, fold a literal paper tiger and bring it to life with all the traits of a Lion (p. 119 of *Icons*). He can likewise make common objects, from cages to walls and more, with a material Strength up to 7. His animated creations still look like they are made of paper, even if they are much tougher and more complex. Paper Tiger is constantly folding small figures and has many of them on his person (in pockets or up his sleeves) at any given time. He can quickly create a new figure in just a few pages when needed.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- A routine bust of a smuggling warehouse controlled by a Chinese gang is complicated by the appearance of one or more of Paper Tiger's origami creations. The heroes will be left wondering about the mysterious crime-lord and the extent of his powers, while Paper Tiger will learn of the heroes and the threat they pose to his operations. He may decide to take steps to eliminate them, or to at least distract them with some more of his creations while his men move contraband in or out of the city.
- A new museum display of Asian art and artifacts is the target of an attempted robbery, carried out by life-size paper monkeys and cranes! The object of the attempt is a collection of ancient manuscript pages, fragments of the codex Paper Tiger used to gain his powers. Daniel Liang believes they may unlock further secrets to his arcane art and increase his abilities. The heroes have to keep the precious pages from falling into the crime lord's hands.
- As the head of Liang Imports carries out some important business negotiations in the city (perhaps involving one or more of the heroes in their secret identities), the Paper Tiger's criminal gang is moving into the city, encountering resistance from both the authorities and existing crime syndicates. Perhaps they come up against the Octofather (*Icons*, p. 104) Syndicate, or the Caesar Mob (p. 69), setting off a gang-war in the underworld. Liang's proxy is an origami figure of an ancient warrior (complete with sword and armor), leading some to believe the "Paper Tiger" is a literal man made of animated paper, with a collection of origami followers! The heroes may not even realize Daniel Liang is the man behind the scenes initially.

PATRIOT



ABILITIES

PROWESS 5

COORDINATION 4

STRENGTH 4

INTELLECT 3

AWARENESS 4

WILLPOWER 6

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 6'

WEIGHT: 194

FIRST APPEARANCE: ALL-AMERICAN GIRL#30

POWERS

Blast Device (shooting various guns)

Invulnerability Device (armor)

Strike Device (slashing knife)

Super-Senses Device (night-vision)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Guns Expert

Martial Arts

Military Master

Stealth Expert

STAMINA

10

QUALITIES

COMBAT VETERAN

DOES WHATEVER IT TAKES

GOOD SOLDIER

CHALLENGES

MY COUNTRY, RIGHT OR WRONG

PARANOID

Garrett Ian Joseph McCord has been a patriot ever since he was old enough to wave a 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 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 eventually left the service and set up a mercenary operation, traveling the globe to perform covert, deniable operations. He was extremely good at his job and relished the freedom he had from military protocol and rules of engagement. Unfortunately for McCord, a journalist caught him on camera using "enhanced interrogation techniques" on civilians. In order to insulate themselves, McCord's allies turned on him, claiming that he'd gone rogue and amending his file to "prove it."

McCord snapped. He believed the "lefties" were responsible for bringing him down when all he was doing was trying to protect America. With his cash flow cut off, McCord returned home and adopted a new identity, the Patriot. While McCord had spent most of his career protecting American interests throughout the world, the Patriot would clean up America's own house. A new Revolution is coming, and he will be at the forefront!

The Patriot goes after anyone he sees as “anti-American.” This includes liberal politicians, the media, war critics, and even “left-wing” superheroes. Unsurprisingly, the Patriot wouldn’t hesitate to kill villains like Arobas or Pulsar either. Patriot and Talion finding a reason to work together should make almost anyone worry.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- *Get Out Now*, a college-based organization that protests wars abroad by protesting at the funerals of American soldiers, has been targeted by the Patriot. He has decided to counter their disrespect of a soldier’s funeral by gunning them down at the funeral. Stopping him at the funeral is only part of the heroes’ job; the Patriot has discovered the identities of all the members and will hunt them down one by one afterwards.
- Six months ago, six heroes lent their likenesses and words to a graphic novel calling for an end to the American presence in the Middle East. The graphic novel came out a month ago and is a best-seller. Unfortunately, two of the heroes have been killed. Particularly distressing is that one of the heroes had an impenetrable force field and was apparently killed by a simple pistol bullet. Can the Patriot be stopped before he kills the others, and does he now have a weapon that can nullify superpowers?
- A prominent diplomat has been taken prisoner by rebels in a war-torn country. The Patriot has experience with this nation that could provide valuable intelligence for a rescue operation. Unfortunately, the imprisoned diplomat is a self-described liberal pacifist. Can the heroes trust the assistance the Patriot offers, and can he be trusted not to turn on them in the eleventh hour and assassinate the diplomat himself?

PROFESSOR HOMINID



QUALITIES

NASTY, BRITISH AND SMART

MOTIVATION: TO REWARD GENIUS & POWER, AND PUNISH SLOTH AND STUPIDITY

ABILITIES										
PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: 5'5" WEIGHT: 200

FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #5

POWERS										
Gadget Wizardry										
Immortality										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES										
Computers										
Electronics										
Mechanics										
										STAMINA
										10

CHALLENGES

APPEARANCE: NEANDERTHAL

PSYCHOLOGY: IMPATIENCE WITH INFERIORS

Professor Hominid is an intriguing figure who claims to have been born at the dawn of humankind. He says he has been inventing solidly for many thousands of years, and every major step forward in human history came as a result of his ingenuity. No one can be sure if he's telling the truth -- but he does seem to be what he claims: a genius, immortal Neanderthal.

This world is Hominid's birthright, in his estimation, and it is his responsibility to tend to it, much as a gardner might tend to a garden. He likes to see himself as shaping evolution, by rewarding genius and power, and punishing sloth and stupidity. This often results in him coming into conflict with both superheroes and supervillains -- he sees no distinction of "sides." Hominid sees himself as above petty concerns of good and evil. He understands a much older game -- power and survival. However, those old rules usually put him at odds with the forces of peace and justice, so Hominid usually spends his time on the run from the law.

Professor Hominid will often work through proxies, staying hidden and directing the action from behind the scenes. He prefers to avoid publicity (partially because revealing his Neanderthal nature often leads to the assumption that he is somehow stupid or inferior, which irritates him beyond reason. He learned long ago that it is far better to simply avoid the aggravation and work unseen.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The best way to introduce Professor Hominid to your PC heroes is to take a page from Arthur Conan Doyle's classic tales of Sherlock Holmes, and use Hominid as a Moriarty figure. Over the course of several adventures, have the PC heroes hear whispers of a master criminal behind the scenes, referred to only as "The Professor." They might encounter minor villains who are doing his bidding on one job or another, and who know only that they received their orders via high-tech communications, but never saw the shadowy figure who directed their efforts. Once the heroes are on Hominid's radar, of course, he may choose to directly intervene and make his presence known.
- Professor Hominid has decided that a PC hero of non-human extraction (Unearthly, Artificial, and non-human Birthright origin) represents too much of an exterior influence on the development of the planet. The evolution of mankind and the safeguarding of the planet must be protected from outside influence, so he marks the hero for elimination. He is not the sort of Neanderthal to get his hands dirty, however, and so he uses this as an opportunity to test the power and genius of other villains, offering a substantial reward as a price on the PC hero's head.
- Professor Hominid has come to the realization that superhuman individuals represent the next step in mankind's evolution -- the ultimate expression of power and survival. Just as he witnessed his own race eventually supplanted by the Cro-Magnon, leading to the development of modern Homo Sapiens, Hominid decides that Homo Sapiens are destined to be replaced by Homo Vis Vires -- Powered Humans. He develops a genetic retrovirus that activates mutation within non-powered humans, giving them superpowers. The PC heroes are drawn into this plot by the appearance of suddenly superpowered citizens, often barely in control of their new gifts. Scientific heroes can discover the retrovirus, and track the spread back to Professor Hominid. Professor Hominid may decide to go public -- offering the public the chance to be superhuman. How would the people react? Even worse -- if his plan is thwarted, Professor Hominid may decide to enact his backup plan: the release of a pathogen designed to eradicate non-powered human life on Earth, wiping the slate clean for repopulation by the remaining specimens of Homo Vis Vires.

PROFESSOR KAFKA



QUALITIES

A BUG IN THE SYSTEM
ENDLESS ARRAY OF ROBOTS
SURVIVOR



HEIGHT: 6' WEIGHT: 300
 FIRST APPEARANCE: SIGMA-SQUAD #27



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Electronics Expert

STAMINA
10*

CHALLENGES

COCKROACH IN A HUMAN SUIT
GROSS!

They say after the world ends the cockroaches will get their turn at inheriting the Earth. The survivability of *Periplaneta americana* and its related species sufficiently intrigued evolutionary scientist Dr. Victor Slan (see **Ultra-Mind**) that his early experiments involving 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 "Professor 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 his considerable intellect, ordinary humans would find him a threat and seek to destroy him or, at best, imprison, study, and possibly dissect him. He could not allow that to happen, as he is the "best hope" for the future of a world being destroyed by humanity's neglect.

So Professor 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 the Earth's biosphere needs saving, and that 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!

The abilities listed for Professor Kafka are while he "pilots" one of his android vehicles, giving him a human appearance and manner, coupled with machine speed, strength, and stamina. Outside of his artificial shell, his abilities are considerably lessened: 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 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.

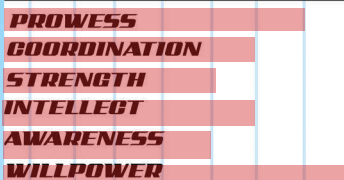
ADVENTURE IDEAS

- "Professor Planeta," the newest member of the electrical engineering faculty at the local university, is a bit of an odd fellow. He spends nearly all of his spare time locked in his lab, and his home life is *disgusting*, a tiny apartment filled with rotting food and garbage. He has been requisitioning some strange equipment, and now there is a series of thefts, carried out by small, mobile robots, which trace back to his lab. What is the professor up to, and what happens when the heroes discover he is himself a robot, piloted by the tiny figure behind his human mask?
- Professor Kafka constructs a series of "robo roaches" the size of compact cars, with the built-in capability of using scrap materials to construct others of their kind, and unleashes them on the city. The horde of robots emerges from the sewer tunnels and begins tearing up downtown, consuming cars, streetlights, ATMs, and virtually any available technology to replicate. The heroes not only have to put a stop to their rampage, but also find a way to stop their replication and regeneration, and deal with the various disasters they create: traffic jams, collisions, torn up gas mains and electrical cables, collapsing buildings or bridges, and so forth. The worst part is the initial horde is just a test of the technology, and possibly a distraction from the Professor's *real* plan.
- Kafka is interested in opportunities to "save" the bio-sphere from humanity's pollution and mistreatment. This includes creating a mass extinction or other die-off of *Homo sapiens* to control the population explosion and allow the Earth the opportunity to recover naturally. The Professor might seek to steal an experimental military bio-weapon or seek out a rare and potent biological 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 million or so survivors, he can take charge of the process of rebuilding.
- Professor Kafka teams up with his "maker" Dr. Victor Slan (see **Ultra-Mind**). Kafka's engineering brilliance is just what the disembodied Ultra-Mind needs to create a suitable vehicle for his vastly evolved brain. In return, Professor Kafka will receive the Ultra-Mind's aid in advancing his own biological evolution. Naturally, the two villains plot to betray each other eventually, their individual egos *far* too great to allow them to cooperate for long. In the meantime, however, they pose a deadly threat to the heroes and the world!

REDKAP



ABILITIES



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'10 **WEIGHT:** 170
FIRST APPEARANCE: HANGMAN #3

POWERS

Emotion Control - Fear

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Acrobatics
Chemistry
Blades
Martial Arts

STAMINA

11

QUALITIES

AGENT OF CHAOS
COMPLETE CYPHER

CHALLENGES

HOMICIDAL MANIAC
LOVES INFLECTING FEAR

Nobody knows who Redkap is. They only know that he is dangerous, an insane, murderous fiend. His fingerprints have been removed with acid and razor blades. His DNA is on record with every law enforcement agency in the world now, but no record exists before his first arrest. He has no name, his clothes are custom made—there is nothing that points to his true identity.

He is violence and fear and chaos personified.

Redkap's crimes are complex and designed to tear away at everything that holds us together as a society. He revels in stripping us down to our animal natures. He delights in bringing those we admire—superheroes, leaders—down, revealing them as just another one of us, susceptible to fear and to corruption.

He calls himself Redkap after the goblins of the fairy tales—he dips the tip of his cap in the blood of his victims—over the years dyeing it a deep red-brown. It seems constantly fresh: wet and glistening.

His methods are mundane. He uses homemade bombs, or guns, or knives. Nothing high-tech, nothing flashy. The most terrifying part of his plans are how *anyone* could have done it. None of us are safe. His sole power, nearly undetectable, is the fear he

brings out in his opponents. Currently, nobody is aware of this power, and if Redkap himself knows of it, he certainly isn't saying.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Redkap goes on a killing spree, completely at random. He flips through the phone book, picks out a name, and kills that person in cold blood. He kills a new victim every day, and leaves a clue as to the identity of his next victim at the scene of the crime. Can the heroes, more used to fighting super-powered threats and alien invasions, find a mad serial killer and stop him before he strikes again?
- Redkap has decided to bring one of the heroes down. Choose one with a spotless reputation. Redkap will kidnap, threaten, and even kill the hero's friends and loved ones. He constantly and unceasingly attacks everything the hero holds dear, trying to make the hero lose control, and kill him. The hero will be exposed as a common killer, their iconic standing forever ruined, and the people will lose that much more of the hope that sustains them. And Redkap? Oh, he'll be dead—but he will have *won*. (He is, after all, insane.)
- Redkap wants to provoke an all-out war between the heroes and villains, to cause as much chaos and collateral damage as possible and make the public fear the superhumans who are, in the end, separate and different from them. To this end, he engineers set-ups: leading heroes to villainous plots that he himself set into motion, feeding intelligence about the heroes back to the villains, etc. He can't resist upping the ante by blowing up a few buildings here and there, especially if he can make it look like the damage was the result of the ongoing battles. Once things have gotten going, he will start his psychological campaign—calling radio and TV call-in shows, stoking the fires of fear and discontent about the “freaks in our midst.” Can the heroes stop the city from turning against them?

ROREK THE ICE ELF



ABILITIES

PROWESS	
COORDINATION	
STRENGTH	
INTELLECT	
AWARENESS	
WILLPOWER	

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'9' WEIGHT: 150
FIRST APPEARANCE: MISS TIKAL #6

POWERS

Gold Control - Attacking, Creating, Defending, Moving, Shaping	
Dimensional Travel	
Immunity to Gold	
Strike Device - Affects Incorporeal	
Super-Senses - Magic, Dark	

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Blades
Languages
Occult

STAMINA

8

QUALITIES

ICE ELF
MASTER AT ARMS
SCION OF NIFLHEIM

CHALLENGES

HUNTED BY FROST GIANTS
IMPULSIVE
VULNERABLE TO HEAT
DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL ONLY TO THE 9 WORLDS

Rorek is an ice elf from Niflheim, one of the Nine Worlds of Norse mythology. While most of his kind serve the frost giants as enchanters of magical weapons, Rorek resented his service. When one of his frost giant masters sent him, along with two other ice elves, to Midgard (Earth) to collect a recently discovered artifact, Rorek saw an opportunity. He arranged for his two companions to perish and he remained on Earth with the artifact, an ice crystal rune sword.

Rorek spent a few years wandering the globe, marveling at both the level of Earth technology (far more advanced than his own, which relies on magic) and how frail humans are. Why serve the frost giants when on Midgard he is a power to be reckoned with? The only thing in his way is the Midgard's bothersome magical warriors (superheroes). Also, Rorek realizes the frost giants *will* come hunting for him eventually...

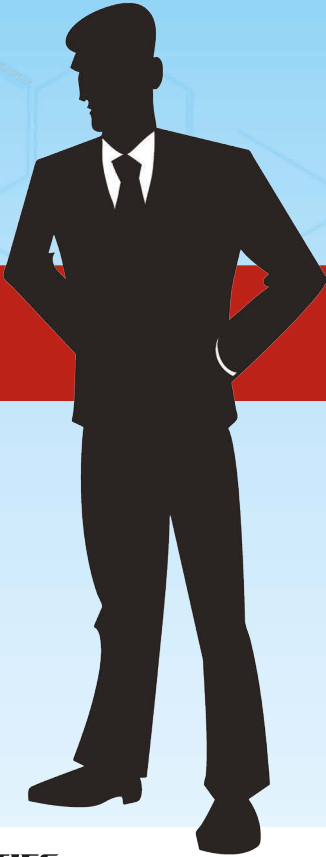
Currently, Rorek has settled into the criminal underworld as an enforcer for the Octofather. This has enabled him to be more selective with his criminal activities. Rorek hopes to gain valuable experience from the Octofather so he can strike out on his own as a crime lord. Unfortunately, Rorek hasn't realized that the Octofather already knows of his ambitions and is merely using him as a pawn in his schemes.

Rorek is a blue-skinned humanoid with pointed ears and frost-rimed hair. His body is cold to the touch and it is actually a few degrees colder around him than the rest of an area. Due to this low body temperature, Rorek's breath cannot be seen in cold weather. Rorek is impulsive and prefers to make his point at the end of his blade rather than engage in subtle negotiations.

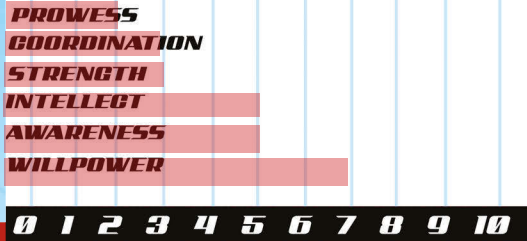
ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The frost giant who sent Rorek on his initial mission has learned of Rorek's treachery and decided to execute him. He sends a menagerie of "monsters" to dispense justice including elves, trolls, and even a frost dragon. In order to ensure a successful hunt, the frost giant has encased the city in an impenetrable dome of ice, with the side effect of dropping the temperature inside to winter-like conditions.
- Rorek has discovered an artifact that shields his mind from the Octofather's manipulations. Rorek begins his takeover of the organization, proving a more ruthless leader than even the Octofather. Will the heroes help the alien crime-boss preserve the status quo, or is a ruthless elven crime lord better than a mind-controlling one?
- During an ill-fated crime, Rorek loses his sword. It is recovered by a small-time criminal that uses it to aid her in her crimes. This stuns Rorek, as only one with elf-blood can use the rune sword. Why can this new criminal wield the blade and is she a potential ally or enemy?
- One of the Norse gods discovers Rorek is on Midgard, and assumes he is a spy, scout, or vanguard of an Frost Giant invasion of Asgard via Midgard. In fine Norse tradition, the Asgardians make a pre-emptive strike and invade the city, with the intention of countering a Frost Giant offensive that did not exist, until the giants were provoked into action by what they see as Asgardian aggression! Can the heroes prevent their city from becoming the first battlefield of Ragnarok?

MR. SANDMAN



ABILITIES



HEIGHT: ? WEIGHT: ?
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ASTOUNDING HEX-MEN #14

POWERS

- Dream Control
- Dream Travel
- Sleep



SPECIALTIES

Mental Resistance
 Power: Dream Control

STAMINA

10

QUALITIES

"MR. SANDMAN... BRING ME A DREAM..."
 HAVE YOU DREAMT THIS MAN?

CHALLENGES

LOST IN THE DREAM WORLD
 NO PHYSICAL FORM

"Have You Dreamt This Man?"

The flyers have appeared all over the world -- that single five-word phrase, an image of a male silhouette, and often a website address. A mysterious meme which many dismiss as a bit of viral marketing -- but the websites that appear are not run by a single individual or company, but are actually genuine pages run by different people all over the world, looking for answers to why this figure has appeared in their dreams.

The truth is stranger than anyone could possibly imagine. People are dreaming of this figure, because this figure is real -- and travels through the dreams of the sleeping world.

The presence of the figure is always heralded by the sounds of the 1954 recording of the the pop song "Mister Sandman" by The Chordettes, drifting through the dream. This has given the figure his name -- how he is referred to in chat rooms, internet forums and social media: Mr. Sandman.

Mr. Sandman appears almost as a man-shaped *hole* in the reality of the dream, in the shape of a suited, tall man. Dreamers universally report that once he arrives, he appears to be able to take control of the dream itself, shaping it in ways that the dreamers describe as coming from somewhere other than their own subconscious: An invasion of self so profound that it greatly disturbs everyone who experiences it.

Even worse, dreamers report that while Mr. Sandman is present, they find it impossible to wake -- some dreamers have reported sleeping for more than 24 hours while at the mercy of this entity.

Sometimes the dreams are nightmarish. Sometimes Mr. Sandman only passes through, briefly travelling through a dream, leaving the dreamer with a vivid recollection of something strange having happened. Sometimes, however, he wants something: Information, usually, although there appears to be no pattern in what he seeks.

The truth is that Mr. Sandman is a psychic who was experimenting with the ability to travel into the subconscious minds of others -- and became lost. He has wandered the Dream World for ages -- warped by the unreality of it all. He has forgotten who he is, and how to return to his body... or even if there is a body to return to, for he has lost all sense of time (as you do in dreams), and no longer knows how long he's been here. The longer he spent in the Dream World, the more a creature of that world he became -- his power increased, giving him total control over the dreamscape as well as the ability to force the dreamer to remain dreaming. However, his motivations and actions now follow the logic of dreams: disjointed, irrational -- what we in the waking world would call mad.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

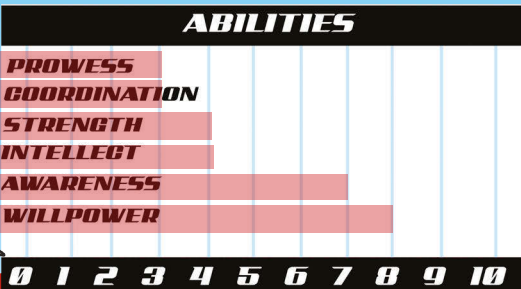
- One of the PC heroes' Connections begins to dream of Mr. Sandman, and approaches the heroes with the story. The heroes can investigate the worldwide meme, discovering that the experience is genuine, perhaps even interviewing other dreamers. They can start to try to figure out the meaning behind these strange dreams, or the source (if they believe that an external entity is involved) -- and then, Mr. Sandman comes to visit them one night. The best way to handle this is to not tell the PCs that they're dreaming -- just start play with another scene, and then the music appears, and things start getting surreal -- culminating with the arrival of Mr. Sandman himself. Have all of the heroes been drawn into a single dream, or is only one of them dreaming and the others just dream-reflections of themselves, drawn from the mind of the dreamer? Let each PC hero struggle with the doubt that they might not be real. What does Mr. Sandman want?

THE SCARECROW



QUALITIES

FEELS NO PAIN
LIVES FOR VENGEANCE
STRAW MAN



HEIGHT: 5'5" WEIGHT: 130
FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #4



SPECIALTIES										
None.										STAMINA 12
(Immune to Biological Afflictions, Blinding, Cold, Radiation)										

CHALLENGES

HATES BULLIES
LONGS TO BE HUMAN AGAIN
NOT TRULY ALIVE

Jacob Crowes remembers his mom telling him what a smart, special kid he was, before she lost her battle with cancer. That loss devastated his father, although he tried to do right by Jake. For his own part, Jacob wanted nothing more than to do well in school and get the grades he needed to earn a scholarship and a ticket away from the one-horse town and the redneck hicks he grew up with.

Bookish, shy, and awkward, Jake was a target for guys like Pete Connors and his football buddies from day one of high school. He tried ignoring them. He tried avoiding them. Nothing worked. Eventually, Jake had had enough, and he struck back in the only way he knew how. Nobody knows exactly who put the hidden locker-room video up on the Internet, but Pete and his buddies figured it out fast enough. They cornered Jake one night and decided to teach him a lesson.

Beaten up and dragged into a cornfield at night, hung up with the scarecrow, Jake's terror and humiliation triggered something inside of him. His mind and heart seemed to explode, and suddenly Jake wasn't in pain any longer. Indeed he felt nothing at all, because he was no longer himself. His limbs were wood and burlap, stuffed with straw and rags. His mind touched upon the life around him: the birds and the crops, and he could bend them to his will. But his body—beaten and bloody, hanging from the scaffold—was cold and lifeless. Jacob's mind broke.

The three jocks, Pete, Mike, and Tommy, ran off when their victim appeared to convulse

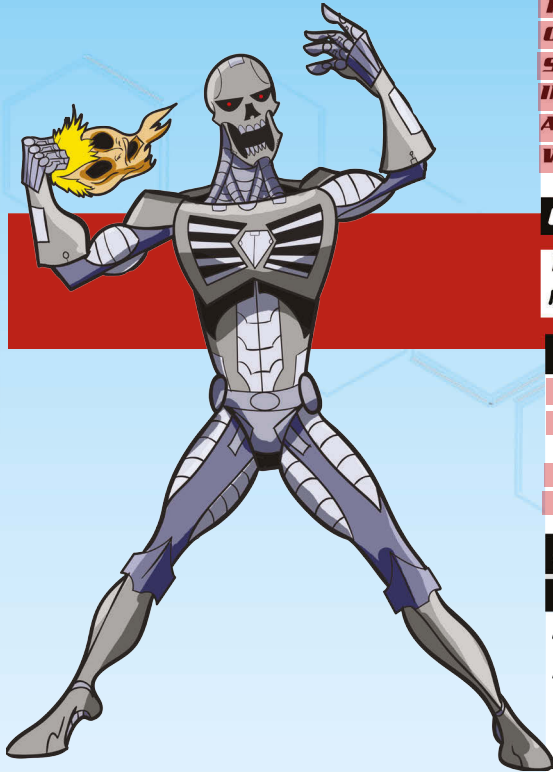
and die and when the scarecrow started to move. Jacob lay low for a while, confused and trying to sort out what happened, trying to right it, but he couldn't. All he could do now is avenge what had been done to him, as the Scarecrowe!

Deep down, the Scarecrowe is still a terrified and traumatized teenager, lashing out at those responsible for his condition. He hates bullies and normal people in general, believing he has become a monster because of them. Jake Crowes' psychic powers have allowed his spirit to survive in some fashion, controlling a body of suitable organic materials, and tapped into and influencing nearby life-forms. What becomes of the Scarecrowe and his potential is largely up to the heroes and how they deal with Jacob's tragic fate.

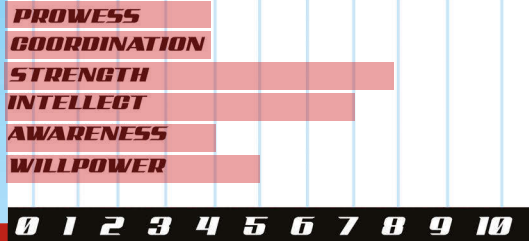
ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Rumors are making the rounds: various local bullies are themselves being traumatized by various strange incidents involving the local plant and bird life attacking them, tripping them up, and generally harassing and embarrassing them while defending their victims. Heroes who investigate learn that the urban legend is that anyone who visits a local field and “asks the scarecrow” for help gets it, in spades. The Scarecrowe thinks he's putting his powers—and his curse—to good use, but somebody is going to get hurt, if they haven't already.
- Scarecrowe's psychic connection with the natural world turns his interests towards eco-activism, treating polluters as some of the worst “bullies” around; they mistreat the Earth itself! So nature under his influence begins to rebel against those who would threaten it. Scarecrowe might expose some true illegal polluting, but more likely he simply goes after anyone he considers a threat to give them “a taste of their own bad medicine”. That can include dumping oil execs in holding tanks or treating pharmaceutical CEOs like experimental lab animals. If the heroes choose to side with the polluters, then they deserve the same treatment in his view.
- Scarecrowe is relatively young and inexperienced and might fall under the sway of another villain, particularly someone who positions themselves as a mentor or friend. This can lead to him becoming a villainous lieutenant or joining a criminal gang.

SKELETRON

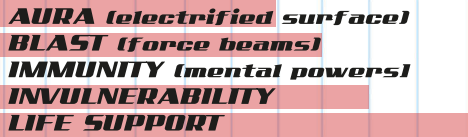


ABILITIES



HEIGHT: 6'1 WEIGHT: 400
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #1

POWERS



SPECIALTIES

COMPUTERS - EXPERT
 ELECTRONICS - EXPERT

STAMINA

13

QUALITIES

COMPUTER MIND
 NEW STAGE OF EVOLUTION

CHALLENGES

ARROGANT AND SUPERIOR
 MACHINE

The being known as “Skeletron” began as the last hope of a dying man, and has become a threat to all life everywhere. A sophisticated android with a highly advanced neural network, Skeletron was to be the foundation of an artificial copy of tech-CEO Jason Kapek. Instead, the primed neural net “woke up” on its own, 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 to allow 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.”

Skeletron is a cold and sinister mind, sociopathic by human standards. It arrogantly considers itself superior to organic life, the next stage of evolution, destined to replace “primitive” organics in the same way mammals replaced the dinosaurs or Homo sapiens out-developed Cro magnon man. It envisions a “perfect” sterile world of machine intelligences, conquering the Earth and eventually spreading out across the universe.

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. Skeletron’s sole weaknesses are its mechanical nature, and its supreme arrogance and assumption that no organic creature can truly threaten it.

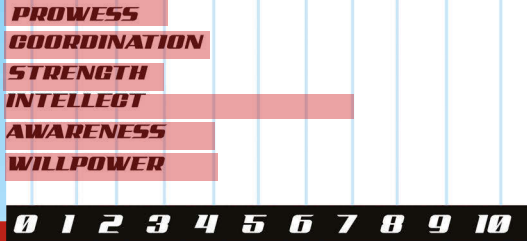
ADVENTURE IDEAS

- It’s a “machine revolt” as a mysterious virus carried across wireless and cellular networks infects everything with a computer chip in it, making it hostile to humanity. Skeletron’s disembodied consciousness is responsible for the virus (indeed, *is* the virus in many ways) and it uses its new army of machine minions to construct itself a new central body to act as a hub to control them. It will force the surrender of the city and use human slave labor to consolidate and expand its influence before going world-wide. Unless the heroes can stop it, the military may have no choice but to launch a massive pre-emptive nuclear strike intended to wipe out the machine army before it goes on the move once again.
- A renowned materials engineer is kidnapped, along with a series of thefts involving her newest development of a metallic super-alloy that is virtually indestructible. Skeletron intends to force the engineer to assist in the construction of a new robotic shell made from this material, which will make it virtually impervious to any and all attacks (Invulnerability 10 or even more). Then there will be no stopping it!
- Skeletron has no desire to be the sole intellect in a world of mindless machine slaves. It intends to rule over a new digital society, but to do that, it needs to create others like itself, while also ensuring they cannot rebel or threaten its supremacy. This requires new neural networks, but they need a baseline human network to act as a map. So Skeletron begins kidnapping suitable subjects to map out their brains and act as the “parents” of a new generation of thinking machines.

SMITH



ABILITIES



HEIGHT: 5'6 WEIGHT: 130
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ASTOUNDING SCIENCE #4

POWERS

Force Field Device - Shield Belt
Strike Device - Kinetic Hammer



SPECIALTIES

Computers
Electronics
Mechanics
Science

STAMINA
 7

QUALITIES

BRILLIANT INVENTOR
UNDERWORLD TECH EXPERT

CHALLENGES

IT'S A MAN'S WORLD
MYSTERIOUS BENEFACTOR

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 fingernails 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. Attempts to get her to become a proper young lady always failed, 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 anonymous 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 will supply a client with the solution to almost any technical problem, or 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 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 to acquire a hard-to-find component or wants to test a prototype in the field personally. 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.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- It's trouble with a capital "T" for "technology" when Smith opens up shop in the heroes' area. Criminals with a big enough bankroll can arm themselves with photonic beam emitters, gravitic mines, tanks with reactive armor, and much, 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 mysterious "Smith" and "his" operations. Can they track the tech back to its source and shut Smith down? Perhaps they get a lead on a secret underworld auction of weapons. They can attend in secret to bust up the party, but then they need to deal with both Smith *and* her angry clients.
- Who sent Bridget O'Toole the technical specs and information that catapulted her criminal career to the next level? This mystery is left for you to fill in as best suits your game. It could be a retiring mad scientist, enamored of this brilliant young woman and looking to leave a legacy, or there might be a more sinister motive at work. Maybe some of Smith's technology is alien in origin, but also booby-trapped with "sleeper" circuits that will bring it under the control of an invading force. Or the download could have come from Bridget O'Toole herself, send from the future to close a time-loop by getting her past self involved in crime!
- Smith isn't above playing both sides of the street. After all, it's the technical challenge and the opportunity to prove that she is the very best that motivates her now, not just the money. So Bridget O'Toole sets herself up as a technical consultant to government clients and even superheroes while at the same time, the mysterious Smith continues supplying the criminal underworld! Sooner or later, her game catches up with her and clients on both sides of the law are none too happy when they find out they've been played. Then Smith needs a chance to go underground and disappear.
- The heroes are in trouble when Smith infiltrates the technical or maintenance team that takes care of their headquarters or vehicle(s). It gives her the opportunity to set various booby-traps for them. They might find their own HQ turned into a death-trap, or lose control of their vehicle the next time they use it. Of course, the whole incident could just be a distraction while Smith or one of her clients carries out some other plan. Access to their HQ could also allow Smith to acquire secret files or other data useful to her or her clients.
- 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. For example, she might—intentionally or otherwise—get roped into a plot to rebuild the rogue robot Skeletron (p. 98) after his most recent destruction.

SPEEDSAW



ABILITIES

PROWESS	6									
COORDINATION	5									
STRENGTH	4									
INTELLECT	3									
AWARENESS	4									
WILLPOWER	4									

HEIGHT: 6'0" WEIGHT: 200
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #1

POWERS

Aura (Chainsaws)
Detection (Energy Trails)
Super Speed

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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SPECIALTIES

Acrobatics
Mechanics
Mental Resistance

STAMINA

11

QUALITIES

MOTIVATION: *IN IT FOR THE MONEY*

CHALLENGES

APPEARANCE: *INTIMIDATING AND UNMISTAKEABLE*
 WEAKNESS: *CHAINS NEED TO BE KEPT LUBRICATED*

Speedsaw is a villainous thug-for-hire. He's a nasty piece of work, a mercenary wearing a high-tech suit he didn't design. He's not particularly clever, but he's brutal and he enjoys his work: a dangerous combination.

Henry "Henno" Price was an Australian who took jobs with various "private military corporations" (PMCs) and saw action in Central Asia and Africa. During an operation in the Central African nation of Bangallah, he stumbled upon one of the hidden bases of Rex Mundi (**Icons**, p. 108). His entire unit was wiped out by the bases' automated defenses, but Henno escaped by stealing an experimental battlesuit.

The suit is basically a mount for chainsaws – there are two on his arms and two on his legs, belching smoke and dripping oil. By dropping into a crouch, Henno can use the chainsaws to race along at high speed, tearing up a path as he goes. He especially likes racing over the top of cars so they split perfectly in half behind him.

Taking the name "Speedsaw", Henno left the PMC and went into business for himself, as muscle for hire to anyone willing to pay his hefty fee. He was worked for such villains as Mister Mastermind (p. 75), Little Augie Caesar (p. 69) and The Octofather (**Icons**, p. 104) -- but steers clear of Rex Mundi, who is obviously none too pleased about the theft of his invention.

Speedsaw is out for himself and only in it for the money. If circumstances turn against him, he has no compunction against betraying his employer by cutting and running.

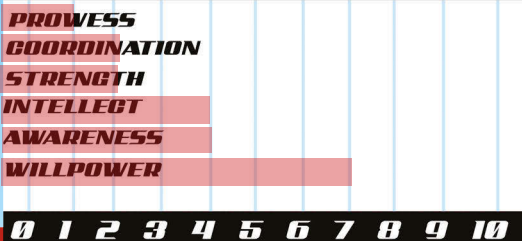
ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Speedsaw will be most commonly encountered working under the direction of another, more powerful villain. He is particularly prized for jobs involving “shock and awe” -- the noise and rampant destruction caused by his power suit are invaluable for villains looking to divert the PC heroes attention away from a quieter operation occurring elsewhere. Speedsaw will make a big splash, causing as much property damage as possible, and while the PC heroes are engaged with stopping him and his cohorts (as he is seldom hired alone), the true mastermind will enact their plan in another location.
- Rex Mundi, as mentioned, is the previous owner of the saw suit (he was developing it for use of his guards, to aid in clearing jungle for expansion of the secret base in Bangallah). He has noticed the culprit via Speedsaw’s appearances on various world media. He does not particularly care about recovering the suit-- it was merely a tool for the use of his employees, nothing more -- but is very much concerned that it might send a message in the underworld that Rex Mundi can be stolen from without consequence. So he decides to make an example of Henno Price in typical overstated fashion. This situation is best used by a GM when Speedsaw has gotten the upper hand on the PC heroes, and is in a position to defeat them. At that moment, Rex Mundi arrives on the scene, backed by dozens of robot minions, and proceeds to beat the ever-loving tar out of Speedsaw (beginning by remotely deactivating the suit), while his robots keep the PCs busy. Once he’s defeated Speedsaw, he destroys the suit (to prove to all that recovery of the tech is not what mattered), sets his robots to self-destruct, and departs.
- Speedsaw’s saw suit has suffered a great deal of wear and tear during his use -- it was never intended to be used for propulsion, for example -- and is in dire need of repair. Henno Price is a qualified mechanic, and has been able to keep it running this long, but he’s not particularly brilliant, nor is he experienced with experimental high-tech devices. So, he decides that he needs someone who can do the work for him. His first choice (again, he’s not terribly bright) is to kidnap a scientist (one of the PC heroes’ Connections with a high-tech background), and force the work out of them. Can the heroes track down their friend and rescue them from the buzzing blades of Speedsaw? (Note: If Speedsaw is thwarted in his plan, he’ll eventually figure out that his best option is to simply pull heists to get enough money to pay Smith (p. 100) to give the suit occasional tune-ups.)

SOCK PUPPET

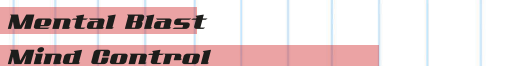


ABILITIES



HEIGHT: 5'9 WEIGHT: 205
 FIRST APPEARANCE: THE MIGHTY SAGUARO #6

POWERS



SPECIALTIES

Computers - Expert
Mental Resistance

STAMINA

9

QUALITIES

MASSIVE GEEK CRED
 MULTITASKER
 NEVER LETS GO

CHALLENGES

NEEDS A LIFE
 NEEDS PUPPETS TO CONTROL
 SOCIALLY AWKWARD
 SOMEONE ON THE INTERNET IS WRONG!

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: first 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 chat channels 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!

ADVENTURE IDEAS

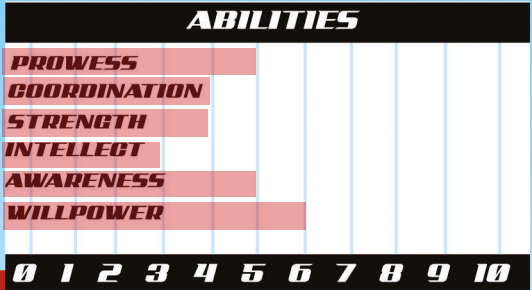
- Player unable to show up for the game? Guess which hero just became Sock Puppet's newest plaything ...? Sock Puppet takes over the hero's mind and goes on a crime spree, or simply out for humiliating revenge against whomever he's railing against that week. The hero's compatriots have to stop their 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.
- A series of mysterious disappearances seem to have one thing in common: all the victims are active online social networkers from various walks of life who have run afoul of some argumentative troll with a wide range of user IDs, but a consistent rhetorical style. Things get stranger when the missing victims begin turning up committing crimes! Sock Puppet is behind the disappearances and is using his powers to embarrass and frame those who "disrespect" him.
- Simon Arniss is in love! He has fallen for 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 initial suspect Amy Yu—author of the blog "Yu Views"—as the person behind the incidents, until they realize she is just the focus. When Amy posts a blog about the great new guy she just met, the kid gloves (but not the socks) are off!

TALION

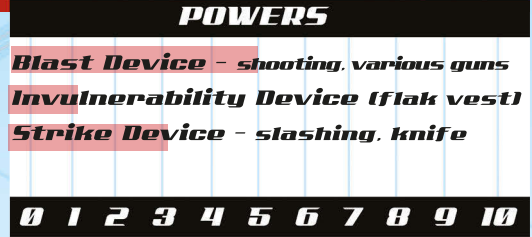


QUALITIES

"AN EYE FOR AN EYE."
 HERO TO SOME
 SPECIAL FORCES
 WAR ON CRIME



HEIGHT: 6'1 WEIGHT: 195
 FIRST APPEARANCE: TRUE CRIME TALES #14



SPECIALTIES										
Guns	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Martial Arts	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Military	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█
Stealth	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█	█

STAMINA

10

CHALLENGES

NOTHING MATTERS MORE THAN THE MISSION
 UNRELENTING
 VENGEFUL

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 rec 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.

Capt. Jorge Ramirez died with his wife and son. 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 a small 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.

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.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- It seems like a simple straightforward confrontation between the heroes and some low-lives: smugglers, drug-dealers, mobsters, or the like. Then things take an unexpected turn when somebody starts picking off the criminals with a high-powered sniper rifle from a nearby rooftop! Talion makes a break for it at the first opportunity, but doesn't hesitate to confront a hero trying to stop or arrest him. The good guys need to decide how they are going to deal with the new element in the mix in their city.
- A would-be crime lord in the city is playing a dangerous game: feeding information about rivals' operations to Talion and allowing the vigilante to take them out for him. When Talion has done enough damage, he plans to rat the crime-killer out to the police or the heroes in turn, letting them catch him red-handed at the site of his latest killing. Then his organization can move in and take over the lucrative criminal underworld of the area. It might work, too, if somebody doesn't catch on. Talion's vengeance is a terrible thing when he's crossed.
- Just when the heroes think they have handled the situation with one gun-totting vigilante, they get worse. Talion inspires various "copy cats" to take up weapons and "take back the streets". The problem is that his would-be followers lack the vigilante's expert military training and discipline. They're going off half-cocked at whatever targets are available. Meanwhile, the local criminal element is feeling cornered and decides what they need to do to resolve the situation (without all getting killed) is to make an example of someone. If they can't catch Talion, then maybe executing a few of his "followers" will do the trick.

TARPIT



ABILITIES

PROWESS	1
COORDINATION	1
STRENGTH	5
INTELLECT	1
AWARENESS	1
WILLPOWER	1

HEIGHT: 6'10 WEIGHT: 300
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ATOMIC ROACH #16

POWERS

Life Support	10
Stretching	5
Invulnerability	1
Transformation (tarry/carbon-based forms)	8

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
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SPECIALTIES

Wrestling

STAMINA
 10

QUALITIES

ADAPTABLE
 HARD TO GET RID OF

CHALLENGES

CAN'T LET GO
 HIDEOUS TAR CREATURE

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.

Tarpit is an intelligent mass of complex carbon. Normally his form is goeey and soft, like hot tar, and he can reshape himself at will. Impacts tend to go splat against him, and he

can make his body tarry enough that attackers get stuck: treat this like Wrestling (*Icons*, p. 63) except it doesn't take an action on Tarpit's part, happening automatically. He can also harden his body like diamond, giving him Invulnerability 8 or forming incredibly hard or sharp weapons out of his hands (Strike 8 slashing or bashing damage). Although Tarpit can assume a huge range of forms, one thing he can't do is become human again.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Heroes most likely encounter Tarpit initially when he is out for revenge against Boss Puckett and possibly the mining company. Chances are the villain will fight his way past Puckett's goons to kidnap the crime boss and take 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 like Dr. Sin (*Icons*, p.123), Rex Mundi (*Icons*, p 108), or either of the Masterminds from this volume) may dangle the promise of a cure in front of Tarpit to get his cooperation.
- Tarpit makes an interesting target for a villain looking for a new body, such as In-Human, Ultra-Mind, or Skeletron. A metamorphic and apparently immortal carbon-based life-form? Potentially *very* useful, provided the villain has a means of transferring his mind into Tarpit's adaptable body. Of course, unexpected complications could arise, especially if Tarpit's mind isn't as easy to overwhelm or displace as the villain expects. "Hard to Get Rid Of" *is* one of his qualities, after all...

TEMPUS KHAN



QUALITIES

*CHRONAL CONQUEROR
FROM THE FUTURE
MASTER OF ALL TIME*

ABILITIES



HEIGHT: 6'

WEIGHT: 170

FIRST APPEARANCE: SEARCHERS OF THE MULTIVERSE #6

POWERS

Invulnerability Device - Force Field

Wizardry - Gadgets

Blast

Time-Control



SPECIALTIES

*Military
Science*

STAMINA

9

CHALLENGES

*HONORABLE WARLORD
"NONE MAY KNOW ME AS I WAS."*

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 begin to 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!

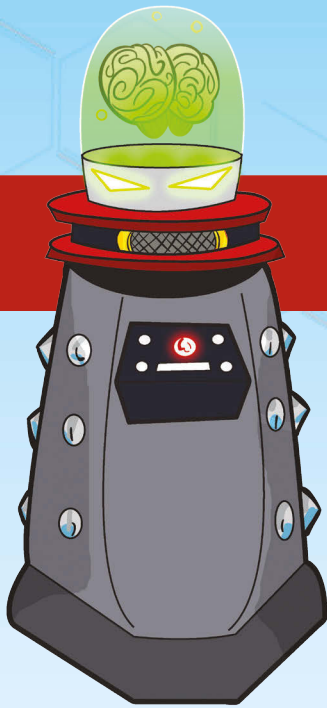
Khan, playing the role of gentlemanly warlord, offers his conquests the opportunity for honorable surrender to join his vast empire, spanning different cultures and times. Still, he much prefers when they choose defiance over meek capitulation. His legions are recruited from amongst the finest soldiers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

He always wears a futuristic suit of advanced armor which covers him completely. 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.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Tempus Khan materializes in the midst of a meeting of the UN General Assembly to announce his intentions: The leaders of the world will surrender and recognize him as Supreme Ruler of Earth, joining his Temporal Empire, or else his legions will march on the worlds' capitols in 24 hours and take them by force! His force field deflects any attempt to harm or capture him, and his temporal technology whisks him away once his ultimatum has been delivered. Can the heroes find a way to prevent the invasion, or turn back the tide once it has begun?
- One of Tempus Khan's time-sphere appears and shanghai's the heroes to the time of the Crusades! Once they have spent their anger on his protective shield, the Chronal Conqueror explains that he has brought them to aid him against invaders from a parallel universe attempting to alter Earth's history! Khan refuses to explain precisely why the era is important to him, only that the invaders must not be allowed alter the course of history at this particular time and place.
- In a massive explosion of temporal energy, a horribly wounded superhero appears suddenly inside the PC heroes' headquarters. She's drifting in and out of consciousness, but after the PC heroes revive her, she knows them all -- including their secret identities. She says that she is Ultrawoman -- a member of the PC hero group, and a friend of the PCs for years. She says that they don't remember her because Tempus Khan has altered the timeline, changing the present -- and that in a last ditch effort to stop him, she used technology provided by a high-tech PC or NPC to jump the timeline and warn them. Is she telling the truth? Did Tempus Khan change history, and for what purpose? Perhaps she's lying, and has been planted there by Tempus Khan in order to get the PC heroes to undertake some action that he needs done....
- Rex Mundi (**Icons**, page 108) notes certain similarities between himself and Tempus Khan and takes it upon himself to open negotiations with the time-traveling warlord. Surely the whole of the space-time continuum is large enough for them to divide between them? Of course, both villains are plotting against each other, and Tempus Khan may have additional hidden motives. Perhaps they decide on a contest: a team of champions chosen by each to recover parts of a lost artifact scattered through history. The heroes could make up one team, or they might be split up between the two! What is the real relationship between Rex Mundi and Tempus Khan? Only the Game Master knows for certain...

ULTRA-MIND



QUALITIES

*BEYOND HUMAN WEAKNESS
HIGHLY EVOLVED*

ABILITIES										
PROWESS										
COORDINATION										
STRENGTH										
INTELLECT										
AWARENESS										
WILLPOWER										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
HEIGHT: N/A WEIGHT: N/A										
FIRST APPEARANCE: ALL-STAR #15										

POWERS										
Mental Blast										
Telekinesis - Attacking, Defending										
Telepathy										
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES										
Science (Biology)										
- Expert										
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CHALLENGES

*BRAIN IN A TANK
SUPREMELY ARROGANT*

Victor Slan was a brilliant evolutionary biologist working on methods to rapidly “force” evolution in particular genetic codes in a virtual environment, then encode the evolutionary developments into the existing organism, essentially bypassing millions of years of slow natural selection. His work was in the early experimental stages when his project was cancelled by a short-sighted university administration. Dr. Slan was told to work on my “practical” developments in biotechnology. Slan broke into his lab and used his genetic accelerator on himself to prove the value of his work, transforming himself into a hyper-evolved “future man” and “Ultra-Mind” possessed of enhanced intelligence and psionic powers.

Perhaps driven mad by the experience, Ultra-Mind went after the people responsible for stopping his work, bringing him into conflict with the hero All-Star (or another hero of your choice). Despite his newfound abilities, he was defeated and sent to prison. Eventually, he learned that his forced evolution was ongoing, this allowed him to overcome the psionic dampeners holding him prisoner, but also resulted in a breakdown of his bio-chemistry. His body becoming increasingly atrophied, Ultra-Mind developed a life support tank, which eventually housed only his disembodied brain and visual organs.

The rapid loss of his humanoid form drove Dr. Slan mad, and the Ultra-Mind no longer answers to that “unevolved” name. He considers himself the “pinnacle” of evolutionary development, pure intellect, superior to the “primitive” state of humanity. Ultra-Mind

seeks to increase his own power, either through artificial enhancements or by further evolving to what he believes will be his final state: a godlike being of pure mind, pure psionic energy, unshackled from physical existence altogether. He also continues experiments in forced evolution, genetic modification, and psionic energy manipulation. Typically, he uses his mental powers to acquire the necessary resources for his experiments.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- One of the mental powers the Ultra-Mind lacks is Mind Control. He takes an interest in another villain with that power, especially if it comes from a device, and seeks to acquire it for himself. The Serpent Sphinx (**Icons**, p110) and Sock Puppet from this book are two possibilities. Ultra-Mind might even try to use the heroes as dupes to bring down his target, then kidnap him from the authorities on the way to prison and have him brought to his hidden lair for experimentation.
- A villain like Smith or Professor Kafka helps to build the Ultra-Mind a robotic body to match his powerful mind. When it is finished, the brain tank is installed in the domed head of a thirty-foot tall mechanical giant, making the Ultra-Mind as formidable a physical threat as he is a mental one!
- Ultra-Mind's claim that he represents the pinnacle of evolutionary development draws the interest of Professor Hominid (p.86). Ultra-Mind and Professor Hominid have differing views on the eventual direction that evolution will take, with Hominid feeling (correctly, as it turns out), that Ultra-Mind is not representative of a true evolutionary path, but rather represents an artificial offshoot. The two brilliant villains often find their interests in opposition, and unsuspecting heroes may find themselves caught between a... brain in a tank and an immortal Neanderthal.
- Ultra-Mind uses his Telepathy and contacts another superhuman intelligence. Unfortunately, Ultra-Mind's brain reached across the stars, and the intelligence that he contacted is the living computer mind that governs a vast alien empire. Ultra-Mind sees the alien device as a kindred spirit, and offers to help the aliens conquer the Earth!

WARBRIDE



ABILITIES



0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: 5'11

WEIGHT: 160

FIRST APPEARANCE: ALL-AMERICAN GIRL #2

POWERS

IMMORTALITY

INVULNERABILITY

STRIKE - (Various Weapons)

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

ACROBATICS

MARTIAL ARTS - MASTER

STAMINA

13

QUALITIES

THE CONSORT OF BATTLE

APOSTATE OF THE SISTERHOOD

CHALLENGES

ENEMY: THE SISTERHOOD

The Sisterhood is an ancient secret order of warrior women, who have battled to protect civilization throughout history. Warriors of the order have entered into the legends of the world, appearing in myth as Athena, Boudicca, Penthesilea and her Amazons, and Joan of Arc. The Sisterhood has stood against the forces of evil, sending forth operatives to champion the cause of civilization. In the thousands of years of the history of the Sisterhood, only one such operative has ever betrayed the order. Alethea: the woman known as Warbride.

In truth, there have been others -- women who have turned away from the teachings of the Sisterhood and looked to strike out on their own, to use their training for their own ends. In every previous circumstance, however, these apostates were killed by their fellow Sisters as soon as the betrayal was discovered. When Alethea's intentions became clear, however, The Sisterhood was shocked to discover that the betrayer was the finest warrior ever produced by the order -- all six of the Sisters sent to assassinate her were destroyed, and Alethea escaped.

Her name was stricken from the records of The Sisterhood. In their eyes, Alethea, their Sister, was dead. They referred to her now only by the title of the Consort of Battle -- the Warbride.

Warbride is a highly trained assassin, and uses her training to suit her own ends. She believes that the Sisterhood is mistaken in protecting civilization -- that it is corrupt and parts of it need to be allowed to die. In fact, like a gardener, she feels that it is her

responsibility to remove those corrupted parts herself, to trim away the weak, diseased and unworthy parts in an effort to strengthen the greater whole and shape the growth in a positive direction. She feels that The Sisterhood should not be protecting civilization, but shaping it and ruling it....and if they have fallen so far from the path that they do not recognize this truth, then she will do it herself.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Warbride has decided that the leading candidate for President has the potential to lead the world in a direction contrary to what she sees as the best choice for the greater good. She has decided to assassinate him. The PCs must uncover the plot, and stop the world's best assassin.
- The Sisterhood has not given up on taking care of the problem themselves. A strike team of Sisters has been sent to the campaign city to track down Warbride and kill her. To find her, they begin by interrogation of any who have come into contact with her -- including the PCs. The appearance of a group of warrior women should lead to a classic mistaken-intentions fight. Once the Sisters have a lead on Warbride's location, how concerned will they be about protecting local citizenry and property from damage in their efforts to take her down? The PCs will have to become involved.
- Warbride decides that superheroes present too much of an unbalancing effect on the development and growth of civilization, and so decides to remove that problem herself. The PC heroes are alerted when a number of lesser superhero NPCs are killed....and then Warbride turns her attentions to the PCs themselves.
- Game Masters looking for a twist in the plot could instead eventually reveal that The Sisterhood is, in fact, a coldly sinister organization, and that Warbride's intentions are actually good -- she wants to protect civilization from the manipulations of the Sisterhood, who are behind most of the strife and conflict in the world. This could echo the classic comic-book tradition of taking a villain who has grown extremely popular and re-shaping them into an anti-hero.

...AND THE SISTERHOOD

For thousands of years, Agents of the Sisterhood have championed the cause of civilization, striking from their hidden temple in the Himalayas to correct the course of human events according to the dictates of the Ascended Masters: Mysterious pan-dimensional entities who commune with the Triumvirate: The three Sisters who run the order. Women drawn

A TYPICAL SISTER

Prowess	6	Intellect	4	Stamina	10
Coordination	6	Awareness	4		
Strength	6	Willpower	4		

Specialties: Martial Arts - Expert, Acrobatics

A Sister is usual armed with whatever weapons are required for the task at hand, ranging from ancient blades to all manner of hi-tech ordinance.

from every culture of the globe: orphans, the abandoned, the lost. Taken in as children, raised by The Sisterhood, and trained as living weapons. Warbride (the Sister formerly known as Alethea) was merely one of their number. There are others, all as deadly, but unlike Warbride, obedient to the Sisterhood.

The Sisterhood has, throughout history, opposed conquerors, dictators, monsters and more. They have an especial animosity for The Black Hoods (p.30), stretching back to the mists of pre-history. In many ways, the two groups are polar opposites: One devoted to selfless service in the name of civilization, the other devoted to subverting civilization through crime. Only once have the two secret societies come into open conflict, using the most advanced weapons in their arsenal. The result was the destruction of the city of Mohenjo-Daro in what is now Pakistan, by atomic explosion: 4000 years ago. The destruction was recorded in the ancient Hindu manuscript called *The Mahabharata*:

“Ashvatthama invoked the Agneya weapon which caused intense fire to appear. Arrows with intense flames fell upon the Pandava soldiers scorching their bodies. Ashvatthama then directed that weapon toward the chariot of Krishna and Arjuna. The Agneya weapon killed thousands upon thousands of chariot fighters, elephants and horsemen like a forest fire destroys trees.”

Since that time, battles between the Black Hoods and The Sisterhood have been more clandestine: Both sides recognize that nobody can be the victor in a desolate wasteland.

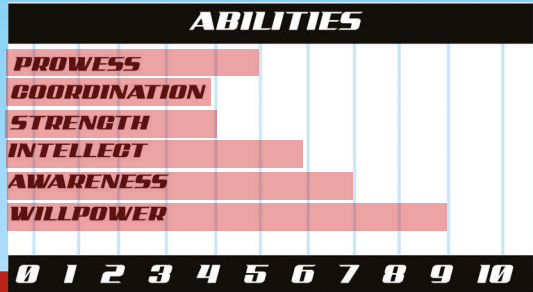


WARLOCK



QUALITIES

SUPREME WIZARD OF THE EARTHLY PLANE



HEIGHT: 6'4 WEIGHT: 210
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ASTOUNDING HEX-MEN #1



SPECIALTIES										
OCCULT - MASTER										
										STAMINA
										13

CHALLENGES

*HEAVY LIES THE CROWN
THERE'S ALWAYS ANOTHER*


The Supreme Wizard of this plane of reality.... is a villain.

Baron Ehrhart von Karnstein, born an aristocrat in 1540, became a disciple of the dark arts. His aptitude for magic, fostered by his demonic masters, was the greatest the world has ever seen. He became the preeminent diabolist of his time, eventually conquering even death itself.

Over the centuries, Karnstein's power was held in check by his nemesis -- the supreme wizard of our plane, The Magus. Time and again, the two rivals struggled against one another in an eternal chess match of move and countermove. This balance of power lasted until The Magus grew too powerful to be contained within the realm of Earth, and was required to bestow his power upon another.

In 1939, The Magus departed our reality, and his mantle was taken up by a young wizard who donned a costume and took his place among the superhumans beginning to appear all over the world. He took the name "Doctor Arcane -- Master of Magic."

Karnstein battled with his new enemy on several occasions, gaining the new name "Warlock" in the world media. The power of his old nemesis was still there, present in the new super-wizard, but Doctor Arcane lacked the experience of The Magus....and so, on a fateful day in 1941, Warlock defeated Doctor Arcane, banishing him forever to one of the Hell Realms. On that day, Warlock became the supreme magical power of this plane.



Warlock's motivations as a villain are surprisingly status-quo -- he does not seek universal domination (he's already the most powerful magician in reality), nor does he seek any further aggrandizement of his powers. He actually takes his role as the supreme wizard fairly seriously — he does, actually, defend our plane from incursion by extra-planar threats — but only if he feels those threats somehow risk his own power. Simply put, he makes it his business to stop anything that might grow more powerful than himself. He's on top, and he intends to stay there.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Warlock will make his presence felt to any new PC hero with a magical theme. His intention is to demonstrate his superiority, and make it clear that he is the “big dog,” magically speaking -- and that as the supreme wizard, he has authority in all things magical. Does the PC hero try to defeat him, knowing that the Warlock's power *does* protect the Earth?
- Reality quakes from a battle between Warlock and another magical villain (perhaps Baron Kriminel (**Icons**, p. 98), Serpent Sphinx (**Icons**, p 110) or Dirge (p.44)). While Warlock's attention is diverted by this struggle, extra-planar threats start to slip through the cracks into our world, wreaking havoc. The PCs must combat these threats, and try to figure out how to get the Warlock back on the job.
- The spirit of The Magus contacts the PC heroes, and sends them on a quest: To rescue Doctor Arcane from the Hell Realm where Warlock imprisoned him. The heroes must journey to hell, find the golden-age hero, break him out of hell, and then join him in what will surely be an epic final battle against Warlock for the mantle of supreme wizard!
- Alternatively, perhaps the spirit of The Magus contacts a PC hero with a magical theme, stating that the PC is his choice to become the Supreme Wizard. The Magus feels that he made a mistake in leaving reality without designating a successor, which led to the naive and unprepared Doctor Arcane taking the mantle, and Warlock's eventual ascendance. He intends to correct that mistake through the PC. Can the PC hero overcome the Warlock and become the Supreme Wizard of the Earthly Plane? For that matter, is it even within the rights of The Magus to interfere with what has already come to pass?

WRAITH



ABILITIES

PROWESS	1
COORDINATION	1
STRENGTH	1
INTELLECT	1
AWARENESS	5
WILLPOWER	1

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: ? WEIGHT: ?
FIRST APPEARANCE: ICONS TEAM-UP #2

POWERS

PHASING	1
ELEMENTAL CONTROL - DARK (creating, shaping)	1
LIFE DRAIN - useable @ close	1

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

OCGULT - exp
STEALTH

STAMINA
8

QUALITIES

EPITHET - THE LIVING NIGHTMARE
MOTIVATION - TO FEED ON THE LIVING

CHALLENGES

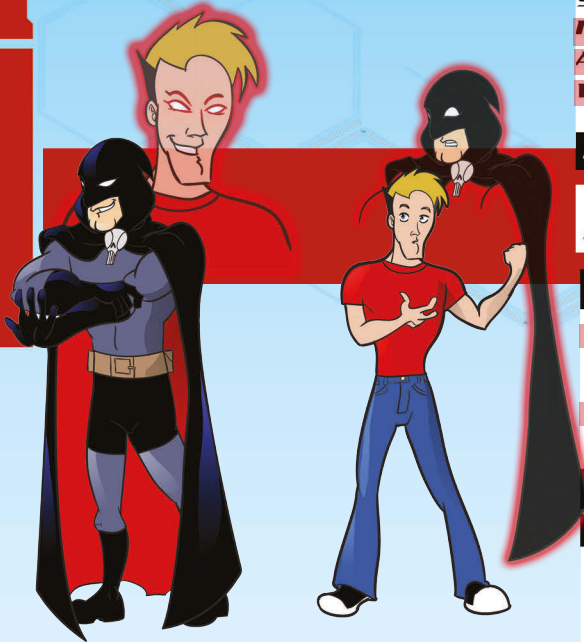
WEAKNESS - CANNOT CROSS HOLY GROUND OR TOUCH
SANCTIFIED OBJECTS
PERSONAL - CREATURE OF DARKNESS -2 TO ALL
POWERS IN DAYLIGHT
SOCIAL - HORRIFIC AND UNSETTLING

The Wraith has few memories from before her awakening, though she's had decades to think about it. As best as she can piece together, she was a housewife, living the American Dream, with a loving husband and two children. Then, the Gray Ghoul paid a visit to a PTA haunted house and all that changed. She was warped by the magic unleashed at the haunted house, and became a creature of elemental darkness, shaped by the superstitions of the people trapped within the structure. Immaterial, repelled by Holy Ground and sanctified objects, a spectre of shadow and evil, feeding on the life force of the living.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The Wraith has filled the "magical member" slot in a number of supervillain groups in the decades since her transformation. She is not powerful enough to act as a solo villain, but her particular talents work well within a team context.
- The PC heroes are approached by a older man named Brian Quinn. He saw footage of The Wraith on television, and vividly recalled what had happend to his mother, 60 years ago. He knows in his gut that The Wraith is his mother, and begs the heroes to help him to find a way to revert her to her true form.

X: THE UNKNOWN



QUALITIES

THE BODY-THIEF
LIFE WITHOUT CONSEQUENCES

ABILITIES

PROWESS
COORDINATION
STRENGTH
INTELLECT
AWARENESS
WILLPOWER

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

HEIGHT: ? WEIGHT: ?
FIRST APPEARANCE: HANGMAN #47

POWERS

Mind Shield

-Facade

Mind Switch

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

SPECIALTIES

Deception

STAMINA

9

CHALLENGES

SERIAL SWITCHER
ORIGINAL BODY IS LONG GONE
RISK TAKER

Adrian Planer was born a psychic, whose powers manifested when he reached puberty. He discovered that he had the ability to “switch places” with any mind he encountered, taking over the subject’s body.

Unfortunately, he discovered that the subject took over his body during the process. While testing his power on a dog, the animal -- finding itself in an unsettling new body -- panicked, and ran. In the dog’s body, Planer gave chase, but was unable to get back within visual range of his original body before the dog had run out into heavy traffic. From his vantage point within the dog’s body, Adrian Planer watched as his body was struck by a car.

With no body to return to, Planer quickly sought a new body to occupy, and quickly discovered that he enjoyed the freedom that his new existence offered. Not only was every experience in the world open to him, simply by taking over a new form, but he soon realized that he could get away with anything his mind devised. He could do anything, and before the consequences of those actions reached him, he could merely make another switch, abandoning his current form and taking the form of another (who would be left behind to pay the price of Planer’s actions -- claiming to be trapped in a body that’s not their own, a plea dismissed by most authorities).

As he began to experiment with more and more extreme acts, he realized that he was no longer “Adrian Planer” -- that person had died, struck by a car years ago. He began to call himself “X”, after the unknown variable in mathematics.

X is a dangerous thrill-seeker, willing to commit any crime, or take any action, no matter how outrageous -- after all, he’s not risking his life. If things get too serious, he’ll simply make the leap to another body within range.

The problem is that his appetites are increasing. He’s begun to wonder what it might be like to commit murder... or perhaps even suicide, leaping away at the last moment.

Note: The Mind Switch power usually is not a permanent switch, but in the case of this villain we’ve made it so, due to the unusual circumstance of the death of his original body. We feel that this makes for more interesting plots involving this villain. Additionally, we leave it up to the GM (and the ingenuity of the PC heroes) to determine a way to return people to their original bodies.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- The best way to introduce X is to have a series of outrageous crimes committed by people with no criminal record, and no connection to each other whatsoever. Even worse, the suspect in the second crime claims to be the suspect of the first crime... and then the suspect in the third crime claims to be the suspect of the second, and so on. The PC heroes will probably figure out fairly quickly that somebody is swapping minds, but how do they track down X and, more importantly, return the correct minds to the correct bodies?
- X has mind-switched with his first superhuman. The PC heroes are approached by an old woman who claims to actually be Sergei Volkov, AKA Pulsar (**Icons**, p. 105). He wants help in tracking down his body and getting it back. To make matters worse, X is revelling in his newfound power: he can now fly, project energy blasts and regenerate almost any damage! The PC heroes (along with Grandma Sergei) must stop him -- but what do the PCs do with Pulsar once they’ve managed to get him back into his body?
- As with Sockpuppet (p.104), X makes a great solution for a player that isn’t able to make it to Game Night: X has leapt into their body, and now poses as the hero, while his earlier form (now containing the mind of the hero) has been locked up somewhere. The other PC heroes must discover the imposter, find the true hero’s mind, and put things back where they belong!

YAMA KING



QUALITIES

KING OF THE NINTH HELL

ABILITIES											
PROWESS	6										
COORDINATION	5										
STRENGTH	6										
INTELLECT	4										
AWARENESS	6										
WILLPOWER	6										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

HEIGHT: 6'6 WEIGHT: 240
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ASTOUNDING HEX-MEN #50

POWERS											
Affliction - Death Touch	6										
Immortality	6										
Regeneration	6										
Strike Device - Scythe	6										
Wizardry *	6										
Super-Senses *	6										
	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

SPECIALTIES										
Blades - Expert	6									
Mental Resistance	6									
-Master	6									
Occult -Master	6									

STAMINA

13

CHALLENGES

*BOUND BY THE REGULATIONS OF
 THE CELESTIAL BUREAUCRACY*

- * WIZARDRY: BLAST, ILLUSION, TELEPATHY, TELEPORT
- * SUPER-SENSES: FORESEE DEATH, OVERCOME ILLUSION

The Chinese have a lot of Hells.

Each of these realms is governed by a Yama King, with each specializing in the punishment of specific sins. The Yama King of the First Hell holds the highest status among these otherworldly judges, and performs evaluation of souls. Those whose good deeds outweigh their sins are reborn into the world without undergoing punishment—the rest are punished according to their sins.

At least, that's how it's supposed to work.

Then the Supreme Wizard of the Earthly Plane, Warlock (q.v.), defeated a powerful extra-planar entity he viewed as a threat to his consolidation of power. This entity was the Yama King of the First Hell. This left the other Yama Kings without direction or leadership. With nobody to judge, the Hells became splintered, each run according to the whims of its particular King.

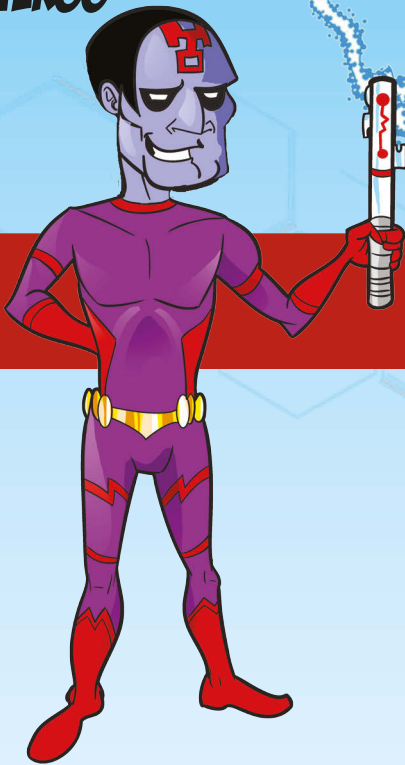
The Yama King of the Ninth Hell abandoned his realm altogether. In his view, the actions of the Warlock were a declaration of war, a sin in need of judgment. He would journey to Earth, and reap the souls there. If need be, he would create a new First Hell on Earth, to properly punish mankind for the sin of living.

The Yama King is a terror: unkillable and recovering 1 Stamina per page, capable of causing a level 10 Affliction with a mere touch. As if that weren't bad enough, he is a masterful sorcerer and can call upon the Devils of the Ninth Hell who owe him allegiance.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Even the Hells are governed by rules. The Yama King cannot simply go to Earth to exact penance from the Warlock and the mewling mortals who would ignore the Mandate of Heaven. No, he must prove his case to the Celestial Court. Fortunately, the Yama King has unwitting allies in the heroes. He arranges to have them called before the Celestial Court and the Perfected Presence in Jade, ideally not long after a confrontation with Warlock. They are asked to recount Warlock's behavior and their opinions of him. If the heroes confirm that Warlock is a villain and misuser of the arcane arts, the Yama King is given heavenly writ to exact vengeance, even if that lays waste to a large portion of the Earth!
- Of course, Warlock is not going to surrender to the judgment of the Yama King, or anyone else. He is, after all, the supreme wizard! The heroes find themselves in an unusual alliance, working with foes like Warlock and potentially others such as Rex Mundi, Dr. Sin, the Ultra-Mind, or Tempus Khan to protect the world from the vengeful Yama King.
- Ultimately, the heroes have to find a way to overcome the Yama King, since even just handing Warlock over to him will not appease the vengeful devil. They might petition the Celestial Bureaucracy for help, but find their request tangled in divine red tape. An otherworldly quest could lead them to seek a means of binding the Yama King and exiling him back to the Ninth Hell, or of tricking him into breaking the rules or agreeing to return of his own volition. Perhaps the famous Monkey King of the West can aid heroes brave and cunning enough to find him and prove their worthiness

ZERGO



ABILITIES



HEIGHT: 5'2 WEIGHT: 125
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ALL-STAR #23

POWERS



SPECIALTIES

Area: The Universe
 Science - All of 'em

STAMINA

10

QUALITIES

IMMATURE TRICKSTER ALIEN
 PHENOMENAL COSMIC POWER
 CATCHPHRASE: "WICKED!"

CHALLENGES

THE YOUNGEST OF THE ELDEST
 INCORRIGIBLE
 STOLEN TECHNOLOGY

The Alien species known only as The Eldest are, as their name implies, the oldest race in the Universe. Beings of phenomenal power, masters of the cosmos, The Eldest are a wise and ancient people, motivated by duty and the responsibility of the guardianship of all reality.

...And then there's Zergo.

Zergo (or, as he occasionally styles himself, "Zergo the Magnificent", "Zergo The All-Powerful", "Zergo The Master of The Universe", "Zergo The Really Keen" -- that kind of thing) is an adolescent member of the race, who, chafing against the responsibilities and (in his view) stodginess of his kind, grabbed some gear and ran away from home.

It's a wide, wide universe, and Zergo wants to experience all of it. Of course, he gets into trouble from time to time -- people are always so *serious* -- but that's alright. There's always another world to visit where Zergo can have some fun.

Among the various bits of cosmically-powered alien technology that Zergo stole-- er, I mean *borrowed*-- is The Cosmic Scepter: a device that draws and focuses the very energies of creation itself. The Eldest have used the Scepter on occasion to fashion champions from the bravest and most noble specimens on countless worlds. In short, the Scepter bestows superpowers.

The only problem is: Zergo isn't really sure how it works.

He knows that you point it this way, and you hit these control surfaces here and here... but beyond that, he doesn't really know the finer details. The settings, the array of powers, etc. -- all too complicated for the young Zergo, and so when he uses the Cosmic Scepter, it bestows random powers.

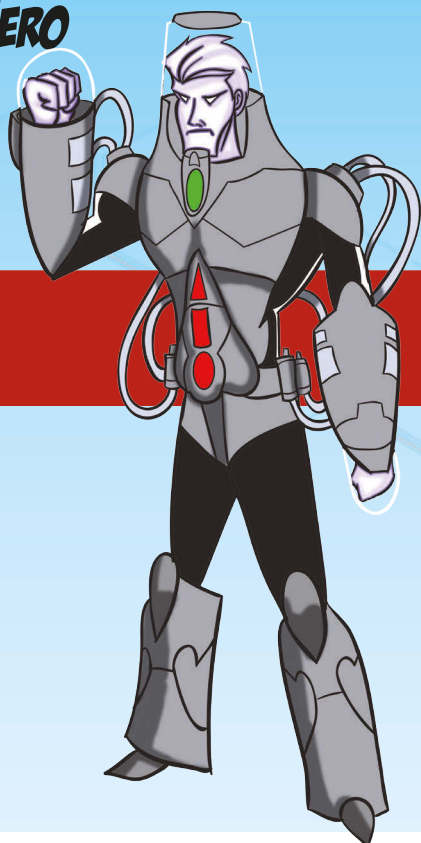
Luckily for Zergo, this is one of his favorite things to do. It's fun to give out power and then watch what happens. Sometimes, stuff even blows up!

That's totally wicked.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Zergo is perfect for a change of tone, especially as a breather between more serious adventures. Think of the classic "omni-powerful trickster" stories, like those featuring Mr. Mxyzptik, Bat-Mite, or the Impossible Man, and run with it. The first appearance of Zergo will be his arrival on Earth, where he will use the Empowerment ability of The Cosmic Scepter to bestow superpowers on random people, usually as payment. He wants a cup of coffee? Zap! Barista gets superpowers. The PC heroes will become involved in response to a sudden influx of average citizens using superpowers (or perhaps unable to control those powers, requiring the PC heroes to intervene). Then they'll meet Zergo, and that's when things will get tricky. Zergo will fixate on the heroes, either wanting to "hang" with them, or (if they get all Law-and-Order-y on him) wanting to take them down a peg or two. After that, the PC heroes will become a favorite pastime of the Youngest of The Eldest, and he'll always come back to cause trouble in their lives.
- Zergo has run away from his people and his homeworld and has stolen immensely powerful cosmic-altering technology. That doesn't go unnoticed. Sooner or later, The Eldest will show up to recover their property, and bring Zergo back home. Even worse, perhaps a major cosmic villain like Karnifex (**Icons**, p.103) hears that The Cosmic Scepter is on Earth and comes to claim it for himself... or the threat may not come from the stars at all -- Doctor Zodiac (p. 50) hears of The Cosmic Scepter and decides that it shall be his. The cosmic power of The Scepter can never be allowed to fall into the hands of a villain. Can the PC heroes manage to convince Zergo to help them stop it?
- "Road Trip!" Zergo decides that seeing the Universe would even be better with some "buds" along, and kidnaps the previously-encountered PC heroes, taking them on a tour of the Universe. At this point, naturally, Hijinks Ensurue. From getting mixed up in a vast galactic war, to accidentally insulting the Living Black Hole, to misplacing a planet or three... a trip with Zergo will be... interesting, to say the least.

ZERO



ABILITIES



HEIGHT: 6'1 WEIGHT: 175
 FIRST APPEARANCE: ATOMIC ROACH #41

POWERS



SPECIALTIES

SCIENCE - PHYSICS - EXP.
 ELECTRONICS

STAMINA
13

QUALITIES

MASTER OF ZERO POINT ENERGY
 "ZERO - MY NAME, YOUR CHANCES."

CHALLENGES

POWERLESS WITHOUT SUIT.
 WEAKNESS - SUIT CAN BE SHORTED OUT

Zero point energy is the vibrational energy retained by molecules even at a temperature of absolute zero. Since temperature is a measure of the intensity of molecular motion, molecules would be expected to come to rest at absolute zero. However, if molecular motion were to cease altogether, the atoms would each have a precisely known location and velocity (zero), and the uncertainty principle states that this cannot occur, since precise values of both position and velocity of an object cannot be known simultaneously. Thus, even molecules at absolute zero must have some zero-point energy.

Doctor Ellroy Newman was obsessed with zero point energy -- he believed that this inherent energy in all things could be tapped and used as a limitless power source. Nobody would fund his experiments, however -- leading Newman to a life of crime: initially thefts of materials and funding for his private experiments in zero energy.

Over the years, Newman perfected a zero point suit -- a device that allows him to tap into the energy present all around him, and utilize that power in amazing ways. He is constantly seeking to upgrade the suit -- he believes that he is only just beginning to tap into the potential of zero point energy and its applications. Initially, the suit enabled Newman (who goes by the pseudonym "Zero" to protect his identity) to fly, generate a forcefield and project blasts of energy. Recent experimentation led him to discover a surprising application of zero point energy -- by disrupting the energy that bonds the atoms of a being together, he can completely nullify a superhuman's powers for a short period of time.

He continues his experiments (and his crimes to both fund and test them) -- he currently believes that he may unlock the secret to completely disrupting those energy bonds, leading to the disintegration of the target.

ADVENTURE IDEAS

- Game Masters looking to launch a new campaign could use Zero's experiments as a convenient technobabble explanation for the new PCs origins. Zero attempts to create a teleportation device using zero point energy -- initially trying to remotely teleport an apple from his secret lab to a location on the other side of the continent. Something goes wrong, and the experiment releases a burst of strange extradimensional energy somewhere within the campaign city -- leading to several normal people (the PCs) being given superpowers!
- Zero is good for the traditional mad-scientist-stealing-from-high-tech-government-lab capers. PCs can be called in by AEGIS (or whatever super-governmental agency exists in your campaign) to deal with the threat posed by the Master of Zero Point Energy. Game Masters should mix things up when re-using Zero -- increase his power level, and give him a few new surprises that the PCs won't be ready for.
- Zero makes an excellent nemesis for a tech-based hero. He will become obsessed with his rival, and seek to counter him at every turn. Using this model, Zero will begin to develop additional device powers based on the PC hero's own abilities, or specifically designed to counter them.