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SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING
COMPATIBLE



FAINTING GOAT GAMES

&

STARK CITY GAMES

PRESENTS



STARK CITY

PLATINUM COAST

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Platinum Coast

Theme

Upscale Neighborhood, Home to the Elite

Scale

A long winding neighborhood that runs the length of Stark Lake's coast (about 4.3 miles)

Aspects

Undesirables Need Not Apply
Heightened Police Presence
At Any Moment — Paparazzi

Description: During the War of 1812, Colonel Samuel Heerman issued orders for his engineers to build a lighthouse on the cliffs that run alongside Stark Lake. Spies and guerrilla fighters against the British came to know the lighthouse as a beacon and messaging station. Upon the conclusion of the war, Heerman had a plaque made and set upon the side of the building. It read, "Upon this rock shone a Light of Freedom leading us to the preservation of a nation based on Truth, Justice, and Liberty. Let all men regard these virtues as sacred as we build our future upon them."

The northeast coastline of Stark City was undeveloped until 1865 when teams of loggers were sent into the cliffs and hills to harvest the lumber found there. Just shy of the center of operations for his lumber company, Martin Lowell built a modest home for himself and his family. This allowed him to keep tabs on things at the yard while spending most of his time with his family. Two generations lived in that home, overseeing the company until 1931, when the Lowell family decided to move the operation to another state.

The Lowell estate sat vacant until Commander James Lowell, Martin's great-grandson, moved back into the estate after World War 2 in 1945. Commander Lowell used his inheritance to restore the mansion to its former glory. Using the scenic cliffs and limited road access to keep the area private, he invited his fellow military officers, weary from war, to savor the quiet of the estate. Upon suggestions from his friends, Lowell turned the estate into a resort.

Advertising to the rich and famous as well as those among the officer corps, Lowell Overlook Estate was open for business by 1946.

Alongside the opening of the resort, Lowell took an interest in Nikolai Tesla and the goings-on at Tesla Invention Park. Amazed by the fantastic work being accomplished there, Lowell wanted to be a part of the process. To that end, Lowell used his contacts in the Navy to help secure resources for various Tesla Park inventors. Notably, he helped obtain large shipments of platinum for the Tesla Group. Although platinum is not as good a conductor as some other metals, its high melting point and ability to conduct heat enabled some of the early experiments to succeed in spite of prior failures using other materials.

Capitalizing on his Navy contacts, Lowell built Lowell United, a shipping firm with the connections to move materials all over the world. Using the capital earned through these ventures, Lowell developed the area around the cliffs. He hoped that bringing the wealthy and influential into Stark City would benefit the city's current and future development.

By the time he died in 1974, James Lowell had created a shipping empire. At the same time he had crafted a retreat for the rich and powerful of the area so that they could rub shoulders with the tech-elite, catapulting Stark City into a model of tomorrow for the world to follow.

The area once known as Lowell Estates was officially annexed by Stark City in 1950 in return for massive tax breaks on development, incentives that benefited the Lowell family. The area is characterized by high cliffs and winding roads overlooking Stark Lake. Mansions and estates belonging to the Stark City elite dot the landscape. The presence of the Stark City Police Headquarters and increased security for Carrington International Airport ensure that undesirables and troublemakers are few and far between. The Platinum Coast boasts some of the world's finest shopping along Lakeview Drive. High-end shops, restaurants, and clubs cater to the city's elite.

The area is often referred to as the "Platinum Coast" due to its expensive nature as well as the Lowell family's connection to the precious metal. The ability to conduct "heat," a property often ascribed to the metal, also applies to the neighborhood metaphorically, as the local paparazzi seem almost supernaturally capable of catching Stark City's finest at their worst.

Platinum Alliance Hotel

Aspects

Swanky
Secluded and Private

Description: The Platinum Alliance Hotel began as the estate of James Lowell. Lowell used the secluded nature of his land and his family's palatial mansion as a retreat for the wealthy. Upon seeing the area grow, Lowell knocked down the estate and replaced it with the Alliance. The hotel's name tips its hat to a nickname Lowell would use for the group that founded Tesla Industry Park (which Lowell supported). The mansion was replaced with a 65-floor tower that sits atop Lowell's Overlook, one of the city's tallest cliffs. The top five floors contain penthouse suites that are reserved most of the year. The very top floors also boast a ballroom and a swimming pool that rains water over the cliff into the lake (a catch recycles the chlorinated water and keeps it out of the lake below). The structure is visible from most places in Stark City.

Staying at the Alliance is very expensive, as the minimum room rates range upwards of hundreds of dollars per night. Penthouse rentals, often booked months in advance, cost thousands of dollars per night. The concierge service at the hotel is second to none. Delicacies and recipes of any type and description can be prepared by the master chefs on duty. The rooms have big-screen entertainment centers with access to the latest programming. All manner of finery can be bought through room service, and anything not available immediately on the premises can be delivered overnight.

The hotel's courtyard surrounds the lighthouse Heerman built during the War of 1812, now

Home Away From Home

The Platinum Alliance Hotel has served as the base of operations for more than one discreet criminal or supervillain. Malcolm Fredericci is the Manager of the Alliance and is willing to do whatever it takes to keep his clients happy (as long as he is well compensated). He has, in the past, hidden evidence from the police and even give false testimony under oath. Malcolm has no loyalty, except to money, and would provide information to the police or heroes. It's just that they haven't been smart enough to try to bribe him yet.

Contact: Malcolm Fredericci

Aspects

At Your Beck and Call
Generous Tips Open Doors
Code of Silence
Well-Connected

restored. In addition, the Alliance has clubs, pools, sport and gym facilities, fine dining, gambling venues, and shops. To accommodate Stark City's more mobile citizens, the hotel also offers complete car and helicopter service to and from almost anywhere in the city. For a refined stay high above the rabble that is Stark City, the Platinum Alliance is the premiere facility in this or any city.

Lakeview Drive

Aspects

Homes of the Rich and Famous (and Infamous)
Rapid Police Response (When Called)
Keeping the Weirdness Under Wraps.

Description: Lakeview is perhaps the most prestigious neighborhood in Stark City, with houses on the eponymous street being the most highly sought. Its residents include the city's most famous entertainers and socialites, Mayor Ullman, and several retired superheroes and supervillains.

The high-profile residents desire discretion above all else and have formed a Home Owners Association with its own emergency response team that can address most medical and security issues (while also keeping the paparazzi at bay—for the most part).

The members of the Lakeview HOA have a unique problem. They want to maintain the escalating property values of their posh houses in a city that's famous for mad scientists, supervillains, and the occasional interdimensional invasion. Their less-than-totally-effective solution is to try to keep any problems (especially superhuman-related problems) that occur in their area tightly under wraps. This results in an odd sort of social contract where residents simply don't mention or turn a blind eye to very strange things in their neighborhood.

Contact: Roger Fentress

Aspects

Justice Is Top Priority (after Property Values)
Former SWAT Commander
Morally Flexible

Background: Roger Fentress retired from his first career as a Stark City PD SWAT commander (use the stock character Police Officer from *Icons* for Fentress) to head up the security team for the Lakeview Drive Homeowners Association. He manages a private response team that can handle most of the security and medical emergencies that arise, without generating the attention and paper trail that come with calling 911.

In general, Fentress likes to work quietly with vigilantes in those rare situations that require capabilities beyond his team's. He will reach out to carefully selected heroes who he thinks might be able to operate with a degree of discretion in such situations. His top priority is to maintain the status quo, keep his residents' lives private, and maintain the property values of the Platinum Coast. This does not always line up with the goals of law enforcement (or heroes).

The Rich and Infamous

Some of the well-known residents of Lakeview include:

- **Mayor Harrison Ullman:** Current leader of Stark City's government.
- **Paul Flaherty:** CEO of Sammy the Squid's, a chain of video arcades/fried fish restaurants. (Flaherty is really Randall Thornton, leader of the terrorist group MAKO. Sammy the Squid's is MAKO's major revenue stream.)
- **Paul Krevitz:** Reformed supervillain Wrathmaster who now runs the Crepes of Wrath restaurant chain.
- **Bill Jefferson:** Retired WW2-era superhero Torch of Liberty. Attended around the clock by a staff of nurses and orderlies, Jefferson has a bad case of dementia and occasionally has to be restrained before he can rampage through the neighborhood.
- **Harry Giardelli:** Beloved sportcaster who's been "the voice of the Stark City Frontiersmen" since the late 1970s.
- **Mary DePerot:** Owner of DePerot Motors, the largest used car dealership in the Stark City area.
- **Jason DeMarkos:** Assistant Curator of the Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History.
- **Josephine Miller:** Daughter and heiress of the Miller Pickle empire.

Using Fentress

- Fentress calls in the heroes to subdue the Torch of Liberty, who's on one of his periodic rampages. He needs to be stopped and restrained with a minimum of fuss and attention (and preferably with as little property damage as possible).

Fentress is worried that one of his residents might be under mind control. Mary DePerot (owner of a large car dealership and one of the wealthiest women in Stark City) has been acting very out-of-character, and displayed an almost robotic personality at a recent HOA meeting. He has also noticed that she's been neglecting her business, and coming and going at odd hours. Fentress doesn't have the resources to investigate, but he wants to make sure that DePerot is okay and not being controlled somehow by a supervillain. (His concern is partly because DePerot is the largest contributor to the HOA.) He asks the heroes to discreetly investigate.

Stark City Police HQ

Aspects

Bastion of Right and Order
Power-Dampening Field
Supervillain Holding Cells
Every Conversation is Recorded

Description: Built in the 1950s (with classically inspired architecture based on the Mausoleum at Halicarnassus), the Stark City Police Headquarters has been renovated several times. Most recently, the HQ has been outfitted with metahuman power-dampening fields (effectively Power Nullification 6). The Stark City Police Dirigible Squadron has a hangar located just south of the main headquarters building.



The HQ has a large subterranean cell block where superhuman criminals are held while awaiting trial or transfer to prison. A tactical response team is on guard in the cell block at all times.

Security is even higher than you'd expect at the Police HQ. This is in response to the brazen Black Friday attack that left much of the senior leadership and one-third of the police force dead or disabled. Although the attack occurred away from the HQ (at the Platinum Coast Events Center), security for all Stark City PD facilities has been tightened up considerably. (To the Stark City PD's great shame, no arrests have been made in this attack. Investigations are ongoing.)

The HQ is staffed 24 hours a day and contains the offices and armories for the city's conventional SWAT teams and metacriminal response units. Police chief Jesus Ramirez has his personal offices on the top floor and often works late into the night.

The police HQ has a secret. The previous (less-than-ethical) administrations had almost every room where a conversation happened between prisoners, or between prisoners and their attorneys, wired for sound. Although this is illegal, the current chief has been slow to pull out the recording devices, as the intel they yield is substantial.

Contact: Police Chief Jesus Ramirez

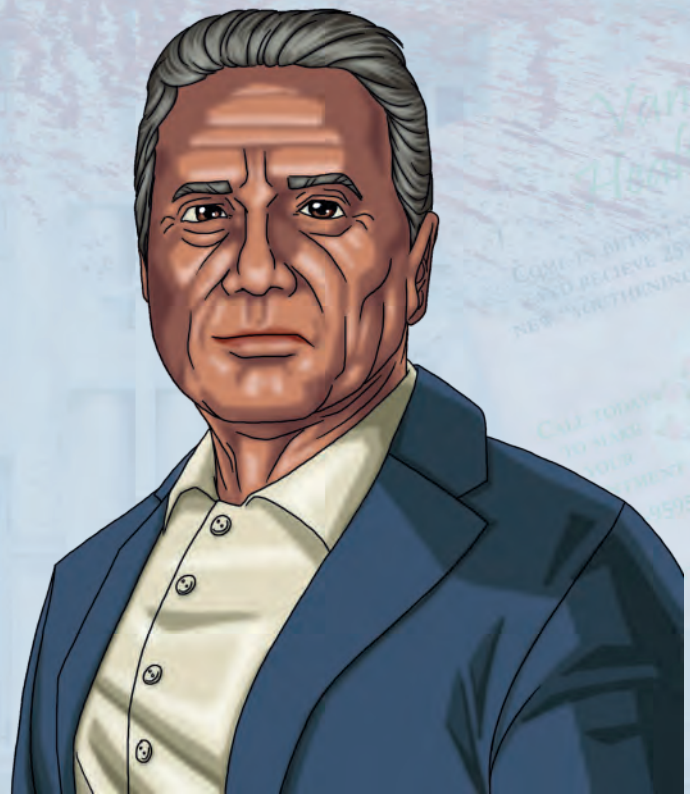
Aspects

Embattled

By Any Means Necessary

Background: Jesus Ramirez is that mythical rarity in large American cities: a high ranking public official who owes no one any favors, keeps his hands clean (for the most part) and is dedicated solely to the public welfare. (Use the Police Officer Stock Character in **ICONS** for Chief Ramirez).

Ramirez was just a homicide detective at the time of the Black Friday attack. After the attack,



he was the most senior police officer in Stark City. Consequently, he was appointed as acting chief, and later transitioned to the position permanently at Mayor Ullman's behest.

He has sworn to avenge his fallen colleagues. His biggest regret is that he has yet to bring any charges in that case.

Just a few months into rebuilding his police department, Ramirez engages and works with the city's burgeoning population of metahuman vigilantes—not due to any deep love for the spandex-and-mask crowd, but because he needs them to help keep his city safe. However, his willingness to work with the city's heroes does not mean he suffers fools gladly. Repeated disrespect will be met with a harsh eviction from his office and a cessation of all police intel.

Ramirez is a good source for off-the-record intel in the city and has a generous open-door policy with Stark City's vigilantes. Between the aerial surveillance of the Stark City Police Dirigible Squadron and the illegal wiretaps in the city's jails and holding cells, Ramirez is one of the best-informed people in Stark City.

Using Ramierez

• Ramirez is ideally suited to be a “quest-giver,” to borrow some MMO parlance. He needs the heroes to help his understaffed force keep the city from imploding amid the schemes of a dozen villains, mad scientists, and general crazies. With his information network and warm relations with vigilantes, Ramierez often passes intel along to the city’s heroes. Sometimes he just needs a lead tracked down; other times he needs costumed heroes to investigate and neutralize a threat that might be too much for his police force to handle while they’re rebuilding.

If the GM decides to use the Black Friday plotline, Ramirez is a good entry point. Frustrated with his department’s lack of progress, he approaches the heroes about starting their own investigation.

Odyssey Residences Halfway House

Aspects

Supervillain Halfway House
Viewed with Suspicion.
More Than Meets The Eye

Location: Overlooking Stark Lake in full view of the Sampson Bridge.

Description: The 1970s gasoline crisis resulted in a surge of violent assaults in Stark City. As the crisis spawned what came to be known as the “Station Riots,” Stark City nearly came under martial law.

The Odyssey House was started in 1971 in order to curb a rapidly growing prison population. With parole officers overworked and the jail system swollen, the Odyssey House provided a way to reintegrate certain offenders who had been deemed worthy of early release.

This also meant they could be monitored and supervised until they were considered capable of living out their lives as productive members of the community. In 1997, the first supervillain parolee was released from the Striker Federal Super-Max Penitentiary, and he had cited his

home of record as Stark City. Arriving home, he was sent to Odyssey House in order to finish out the term of his parole.

Mr. Mayhem, aka Reginald Coakley, was in his fifties, and was not at all pleased with the accommodations that he found. The staff was underfunded, the house was a dump, and the people that were being funneled in and out of the place had no business being members of society. Reginald decided he had to do something.

He hired a construction crew (who may or may not have been out-of-work minions for local supervillains) and renovations began. Out of his own pocket, he hired a staff including more parole officers, a security staff, and a deluxe chef.

When the city found out about the sweeping renovations, they demanded to know where the money for all this was coming from. The former Mr. Mayhem (now avidly insisting that he be called Mr. Coakley) claimed that he had paid for his crimes and was entitled to spend the money he made in legitimate business however he pleased. Coakley asserted that he had made huge gains during the dot-com boom (while in prison) and wanted to use a portion of his fortune to help the city rehabilitate convicts into citizens.

With the renovations complete, Coakley asked that the old house be named Horizon House. This would be the place that convicts could return to society and become productive citizens again. Coakley wouldn’t stop there. Leaving the Silver District behind, he had set his sights on the more upscale Platinum Coast. Filling the mayor in on his plans (and teaching him the proper technique for supervillain maniacal laughter during a photo opportunity), Coakley soon broke ground in the Platinum Coast for the new Odyssey Residences. Not content with just rejoining society, Coakley crafted a compound that would cater to a unique clientele. This new Odyssey Residence would be a rehabilitation facility for convicted supervillains.

Hiring Dr. Avery Clark as the head administrator, Coakley constructed a secure living facility with the best of everything. Dr. Clark took Coakley's vision and spun it into reality. Called a pioneer of superhuman psychology, Clark was the man for the job. Odyssey Residences is comprised of a secure, walled compound with incredible security. The staff works around the clock in rotating shifts to see to the clients' needs. Top psychologists work hand-in-hand with Federal Marshals acting as Special Parole Agents. Each residence offers condominium-style living protected by former government agents who understand the need for privacy and security. A counselor is on call, ready at a moment's notice to help Odyssey's clients.

In 2004, Coakley left Odyssey Residences in Dr. Clark's capable hands and went back to running his legitimate business as its CEO. He ensured that he would still be involved in rehabilitation efforts as he moved his business operations into Tesla Industrial Park. Maniacal Inc., one of the fastest-growing sunglasses and action apparel companies, has distinguished itself as one of the few companies that goes out of its way to hire ex-convicts. The employees are hired through both Horizon House and Odyssey Residences. Although no longer an active member of the process, Coakley stops in to both houses from time to time to see how his money is being spent.

Dr. Avery Clark

Abilities

Prowess 3
Coordination 2
Strength 3
Intellect 5
Awareness 4
Willpower 6

Stamina 9
Determination *

Specialties

Criminology
Deception
Mental Resistance
Power (Mind Control)
Psychiatry Master
Science (Pharmacology) Expert
Science (Psychology)

Powers

Mind Control 7
Telepathy 5 [Extra: Mind Probe]

Qualities

Leader in His Field

Challenges

Dirty Little Secret
Haunted by Violence

Background: Dr. Clark is an FBI psychiatrist who assists with profiling and also works with agents dealing with post-traumatic stress disorder. Dr. Clark also has mutant psychic abilities. These emerged a few years ago during a traumatic event, and he keeps them secret from almost everyone.

Shortly after his powers manifested, he was brought into consult on a case where a superhuman was stalking and killing costumed heroes. Using his special gifts, Dr. Clark, under the guise of insightful medical knowledge, not only fed information to the FBI that led to the monster's capture, but also to properly diagnosing the criminal with schizophrenia. Seeing that this new gift could be a boon to his career, he went into private practice. He made sure to give himself room to allow for



Clark's Greatest Failure: The Reclaimer

Real Name: David Jordan

Abilities

Prowess 6
Coordination 4
Strength 7
Intellect 3
Awareness 5
Willpower 2

Stamina 9
Determination *

Specialties

Acrobatics
Military
Powers (Stretching) Expert
Stealth

Powers

Absorption (Kinetic Energy) 4 [Blast]
Solid Form 4 [Extra: Instant]
Stretching 4

Qualities

Judge, Jury, Executioner

Challenges

Tortured by his Past
Easily Manipulated



Background: One of Clark's biggest failures is the Reclaimer. Originally the masked criminal known as the Ravager, the Reclaimer was sent to prison and ended up in the psychiatric ward at Striker Federal Penitentiary. Ravager had volunteered for a government experiment to produce super-soldiers. The process gave him superhuman abilities, but fractured his mind. Ravager lashed out due to feelings of persecution, forcing the government to send out Major Victory, a successful member of the same super-soldier program, to bring him in. In 2005, the Ravager escaped and made his way to Stark City. He began preying on the police and vigilantes there. It was then that he

encountered Clark, who seized his mind and took control. Clark managed to control and use the Ravager successfully for months. As a side effect of Clark's constant mind control, the Ravager's fractured mind had slowly been healed. He not only came to recognize his past crimes, but also to realize that he was under Clark's influence. He broke away and suffered under the weight of his own guilt. It was not long before he decided that guilt had a purpose. He confronted Clark and told him his control was broken. Still claiming to believe in Clark's cause, he began to patrol the streets as the Reclaimer.

Using the Reclaimer

- This vigilante is a menace to criminals and heroes alike. Since being freed of Dr. Clark's control, he has been on a one-man crusade to make up for what he did when he was broken. He has also proclaimed himself Stark City's protector. Reclaimer will attack anyone in the news that has been branded a menace or troublemaker. If a hero fails to capture a villain or an innocent is hurt as collateral damage due to a hero's action or inaction, this could set the Reclaimer on that hero's trail.

- Due to a fragile psyche and overwhelming guilt, Reclaimer can easily be swayed by arguing with him (as long as you duck during one of his swings). He can often be talked out of attacking heroes, if they can get him to see their point of view. The downside is that this also works for the villains he attacks. Many a villain has gotten Reclaimer to attack heroes by painting himself or herself as a victim.

consultation with state and federal law enforcement. It wasn't long before Dr. Clark's work had him inextricably linked to costumed heroes and villains.

While working on a case for the state police, he came across Mr. Mayhem in prison. Mr. Mayhem was not cooperative with the police in the matter of one of his former associates' crimes, and Clark was brought in to consult. During a private consultation, Mayhem disclosed that he knew Clark was psychic. Assuring the good doctor that it would be their little secret, Mayhem gave Clark the information that he needed to solve the case.

Upon release from prison, Mr. Mayhem called upon Clark with a lucrative business opportunity that would cement his career as the lead psychiatrist to the costumed psyche. Fearing that Mr. Mayhem would expose his secret if he declined, Clark took the position and has been Odyssey Residence's Chief Administrator ever since.

Using Dr. Clark

- Dr. Clark can be called into consult with any number of local and federal law enforcement agencies. He has been known to work with superteams in other countries (Great Britain's MI-0, the Superhuman Threat Division, particularly admires his work) and would be a valuable asset to the Stark City Sentinels in reading the motivations of many of the city's criminal elements.

- Dr. Clark has a secret. No one knows that he is psychic. He will go to great lengths to protect this secret, and if there is a psychic in a group he is assisting, he will not use his powers around that individual. Although on some level he believes that he would still be valuable in his field if people found out, he fears that no one would open up to him if they knew he could read their thoughts.

Trinity Tower

Aspects

Opulent Conference Center
Home to Prestigious Think Tank
Secret Base of Hostile Interdimensional Refugees

Description: Built in 1996 as a home for the emerging Sevren Group, the Trinity Tower sits across the lake from the Platinum Alliance Hotel. The tower has 25 floors and dominates the skyline often referred to as "Platinum Heights." The building's name comes from a large engraving on the marble causeway leading inside. The inscription reads:

"Innovation, Perseverance, Fortitude. On this trinity we build toward a better tomorrow."

The Sevren Group was founded as a think tank at the service of major corporations and political players. For a substantial consulting fee, the group will plot strategy, create marketing plans or political campaigns, and generally indulge the whims and fancies of their clients. They will hire out some of their employees to business clients who need talents and qualities that do not often surface from the usual candidate pool. For example, the group has twice been cited by the city for supplying personnel that were able



to negotiate the release of hostages. The first incident was during a bank robbery gone awry where the police chief's daughter was being held. The other was during the early 2000s, when the infamous techno-pirate Slash Code botched a raid on a technology firm.

The building is often used by those outside of the Sevren Group for its many qualities. Its restricted access, tight security, and proximity to the lake make it a secluded and desirable meeting place. The tower has several large meeting rooms that are available for rent. Conducting business within the tower also grants the clients immediate access to the army of lawyers, researchers, and technical specialists the firm keeps on staff.

Currently headed by Erika Hasegawa, the Sevren Group exists to build a better tomorrow by providing the best personnel to those who can afford it today. Ms. Hasegawa is a capable leader and conducts the day-to-day operations. The true expert in all matters of the group,

Michael Sevren, quietly meets behind closed doors with his most trusted clients. Numerous times tabloids like The Scout have linked rumors of insider trading, political tampering, and criminal activity to Sevren. Stark City's "legitimate" media outlets are often quick to dismiss the allegations. No charges have ever been filed and Mr. Sevren is never available to comment on such issues.

Sever

Vapor Shade Commander

Real Name: Blade Commander Michael Sevren
(known to the public without the military title)

Abilities

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

Stamina 10
Determination *

Specialties

Business Master
Martial Arts Master
Politics
Power (Transformation)
Stealth
Weapons (Vapor Shade Sword)

Powers

Gaseous Form 5 [Extra: Instant]
Blast (Shooting) Device 4 - Pistol
Strike (Slashing) Device 4 - Sword
Teleport 5
Transform (People) 3

Qualities

Aristocratic
Personal Code of Honor

Challenges

Over-Analyzes Everything

"We are the Kemuri-Kage, the shadow from the smoke of a cleansing fire. We are the first hint that your end is near."

Background: Michael Sevren was a robust young man working for the Stark City Fire Department. Without any regard for self, he came to the aid of several costumed heroes during their final battle with the Gloriana Empire in 1972.

Sevren was given a citation for bravery and a menial job in City Hall. Taking the the measly wage he earned, Sevren put it to good use. Using a sharp mind and quick wit, he started to play the stock market. Clever investing resulted in Sevren becoming wealthy beyond his wildest dreams.

During the late 1980s, Michael invested his fortune in a fresh-faced city councilman, Arthur Knightley. As Sevren rose in power, he ensured that Knightley followed suit. Following a short stint in the Senate, Knightley returned to Stark City to seek the mayoral office, and won with Sevren's help. Pulling strings behind the scenes, Sevren was credited by many of pundits as the decisive factor in campaign.

In 1996, Michael capitalized on the fame he gained from Knightley's mayoral bid to create the Sevren Group, a think tank and public relations consulting firm. With ties to the stock market, political figures, and high-ranking business clients, the Sevren Group has become a sought-after commodity among the elite in Stark City and across the country. Now in his mid-60s, Michael is content to sit back and let the majority of the group run through Erika Hasegawa, his personal assistant. Rumors have circulated through high society that Lady H (as she is known) could be poised to inherit the group after Sevren steps down.

Away from prying eyes, Sevren is a much different figure. Michael Sevren is actually Blade Commander Sevren of the Vapor Shades, a clandestine organization that served the Empress of Gloriana. Originally sent through to our dimension to set the stage for the invasion, Sevren infiltrated the Stark City Fire Department before the assault. This allowed him an insider's view of the city's response to the invasion, and he could relay all that he heard to his masters. When Stark City's heroes rallied and began a counter-attack,

Sevren and the Vapor Shades abandoned their disguises to fight the heroes openly. As the battle was won by Stark City's defenders and the portal slammed shut, the Gloriana invasion army had retreated. In the chaos, Sevren was left behind, unsure whether he was alone.

The empire's humiliation was almost too much for Sevren to bear. He resolved to lay the ground work to ready things for the Gloriana Empire's conquest of this backward dimension. Citing a back injury and using a menial government job as a front, Sevren began to formulate a plan to prepare for the return of the Albion-Nippon Empire.

On the surface, the Sevren Group is nothing more than a think tank servicing the wealthy and powerful. To those in the know, it is an organization that can plot election strategy, write policy statements, and even subtly affect change through back channels. The group also employs coercion, sabotage, bribery, and murder when more discreet methods won't get the job done.

Sevren's primary goal is to create a shadow army, loyal to him, that will be ready to take up the banner when the Gloriana Empire returns. He has dubbed them the Kemuri-Kage, the Smoke's Shadow. The Sevren Group simply gives him the cash flow to recruit thugs and foot soldiers, and to accrue secrets enabling him to blackmail the rich and influential into serving as his spies in the halls of power. He recruits the Vapor Shades foot soldiers from the ranks of Stark City's homeless, and his spies from the ranks of his corporate and political clients. None of Sevren's minions suspect his true agenda.

Also, he is tragically unaware of the presence of other Gloriana refugees in Stark City.

Using Sever and the Kemuri-Kage

- The PCs' first encounter with the Vapor Shades can be as a result of an attempt on someone (assassination, kidnapping, extortion, etc.). If the players come to the victim's aid, they can encounter 1–3 Shades. If they are working in daylight (racketeering, extortion, etc.), they will most likely be dressed as businessmen. Covert strikes will see them in

their uniforms.

- Heroes can face off against Lady H or Sever in the event they prevent the Shades from accomplishing their mission. Lady H will be dispatched with a group of 5–10 Shades, while Sever will only come with 1–4.

- Heroes with big business interests in the city can come into contact with Mr. Sevren or Ms. Hasegawa as a result of any number of transactions. If the city's elite have issues with the PCs' goals, they might ask the Sevren Group to persuade the PCs to "go another way." This intervention could take the form of meetings, subterfuge (such as the Sevren Group trying to buy whatever the PCs are after), or an attack by a squad of Vapor Shades.

- The Sevren Group and, by extension, the Vapor Shades prefer illusion and misdirection to direct conflict. While assassination is their stock-in-trade, they prefer subtle means if possible. Accidents and allergies (poison) are always preferable to bullets and blades. In the last decades they have also come into considerable corporate and political influence. If bankrupting a target and depriving him or her of treasured possessions will take the target out of the fight, then the Sevren Group will make it happen. They firmly believe in military strategy, and the number one rule of warfare is that deception is king.

- If pressed into combat, Sever is a ruthless foe who will attempt to take the fight into the shadows. He will shift into gaseous form, filling the area with smoke and fumes. He will then blink in and out of combat, shooting and stabbing, until he can find a way to remove himself from a direct fight.

Lady H

Real Name: Erika Hasegawa

Abilities

Prowess 4
Coordination 4
Strength 8
Intellect 5
Awareness 3
Willpower 3

Stamina 11
Determination *

Specialties

Business Expert
Martial Arts Expert
Pilot
Politics
Stealth
Weapons (Vapor Shade Blades)

Powers

Aquatic 5
Blast (Blasting) Device 5 [Extra: Burst] - Coral Weapons (Thrown)
Strike (Slashing) Device 5 - Coral Weapons (Blades)

Qualities

Powerful Mind and Body
Safe and Secure Near Water

Challenges

Unknown Origins
Living in Sevren's Shadow
Uncomfortable Around Fire and Heat

Background: Erika grew up on the mean streets of Geartown, constantly hungry and desperate for a safe place to sleep at night. She would often sleep in drainage pipes and spillways, despite the sometimes-intense cold. As long as she was close to the water she felt strong and safe. When she was about twelve years old, several boys tried to assault her. She flew into a rage. When all was quiet she opened her eyes to find that her assailants were all dead and she was holding what looked like a knife made of some mysterious gray material. She ran for the water to try to wash it off. She

stared at her scarlet reflection in the water and noticed a second set of eyes looking back. Lashing out again, she formed a spear as the unknown man vanished into flaming blue smoke, only to reappear several feet from her.

The mysterious figure was Michael Sevren. He began by telling her he meant no harm, and that he knew of a place where she would be safe. He wrapped his coat around her as he walked her around the building into a waiting limousine.

Erika had been orphaned in a mysterious accident, and had been on the run ever since.

Sevren claimed that he knew what it was like to be alone in a city of strangers. Mr. Sevren adopted the young girl in short order, sensing she had some larger role to play.

With his support, Erika graduated from college and earned a master's degree in business and finance. All the while she trained her mind, Sevren helped her train her body, teaching her to use her strength and her gifts for combat. Over the years, Sevren has attempted to help her find her mother, even acting on a hunch that she might have some common ancestry with the



Atlanteans who recently relocated to Stark Lake and Geartown. The meeting was disastrous.

Erika is now Chief Operations Officer of the Sevren Group. Although she has a senior management position, she has, on occasion, led many a strike team to “work out” problems for a client. Sevren thinks of her as a daughter and trusts her more than anyone. Erika trusts Sevren completely. Even she does not know of his secret agenda.

Vapor Shades

The Kage

Abilities

- Prowess 4
- Coordination 4
- Strength 3
- Intellect 3
- Awareness 3
- Willpower 3

- Stamina 6
- Determination *

Specialties

- Martial Arts
- Stealth
- Weapons (Vapor Shade Sword)

Powers

- Blast (Shooting) Device 4 - Pistol
- Strike (Slashing) Device 4 - Vapor Shade Sword

Qualities

- Code of Honor
- No Job Left Undone
- Hide a Sword Within My Smile (Deception)

Challenges

- Blindly Loyal to Sevren

The *Nimbus*

Aspects

- Bird's-Eye View of the City
- Refurbished Police Dirigible
- Restaurant in the Sky
- Secret Hero Base

Description: In 2001, an SC-7 dirigible used by the Stark City Police Department was retired from service. Needing a massive retrofit and crippled by several mechanical problems, the SC-7 was put in “High Dock” until the city could get around to dismantling it.

An enterprising young entrepreneur named Lacy Kinkade secured funds to buy the old relic. Saving it from the scrap pile, Lacy brought in a crew to upgrade the structure and repair anything that needed tender loving care. As the repairs were made and new floor plans took shape, everyone seemed to notice one section of the ship that was being specially reinforced.

This special room was dubbed the “Cloud Kitchen,” and rumors of a flying restaurant circulated around the city.

Building buzz at the same time she built her airship, Lacy soon had reservations months in advance. When the first flight left from Nimbus Terrace, the only civilian dirigible dock in the city, the clients boarding shone almost as brightly as the paparazzi’s flashbulbs.

The *Nimbus* has three decks. It boasts an elegant dining room with a full kitchen and bar occupying the middle deck. The upper deck is called the Olympus Room and can be used for a variety of functions. Built using recent innovations in smart-glass technology, the walls and floor are actually high-resolution video screens displaying feeds from cameras on the outside of the ship’s superstructure. When activated, they give the illusion of floating in the clouds over the city below. The control station and engineering occupy the last floor and keep the *Nimbus* in the sky.

The staff is top-notch and includes some of the best chefs in the country. As the *Nimbus* is the only civilian dirigible in use in Stark City, the

route it takes is strictly controlled. Each dinner cruise or special event takes a route along the perimeter of Great Stark Lake before returning to Nimbus Terrace. There is a security detail on board every cruise, as well as several undercover police officers keeping watch.

Freefall

Real Name: Lacy Kinkade

Abilities

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

Stamina 9
Determination *

Specialties

Aerial Combat
Business
Computers Master
Electronics Expert
Pilot
Stealth
Weapons (Guns)

Powers

Binding Device 3 - Strap Pistol (3 mags/5 shots each)
Damage Resistance Device 2 - Freefall Suit
Flight Device 3 (Gliding Only) - Freefall Suit

Qualities

Master Chef
Well-Connected
Wealthy

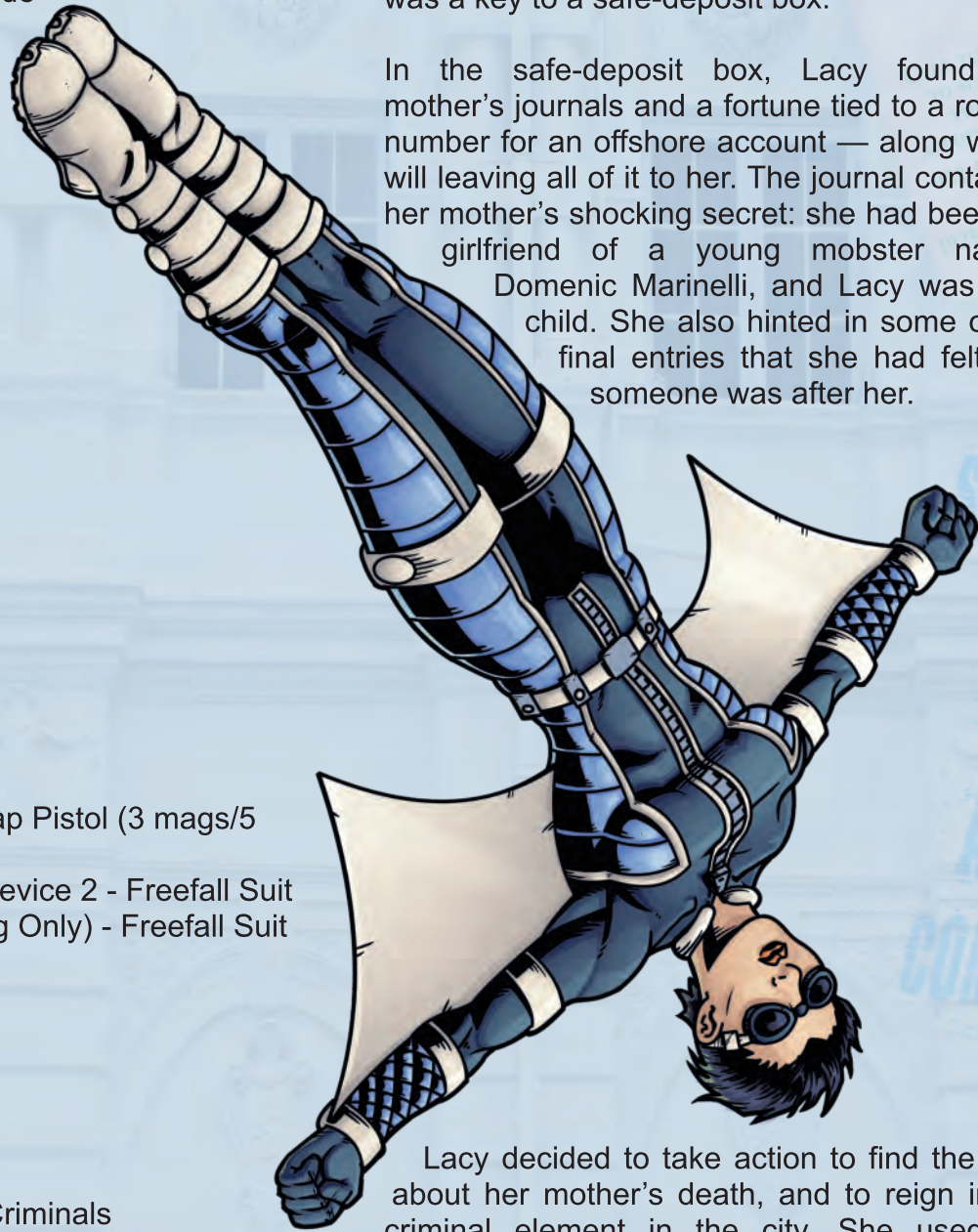
Challenges

Hunted by Stark City Criminals
Secret ID
Dependent on Gear

Background: Lacy spent her youth surrounded by intense experiences. Her mother was ever the thrill-seeker, and was willing to take Lacy on all of her adventures.

Lacy returned to Stark City after studying business and food in Italy after her mother was in a severe car accident that left her in a coma. In a brief moment of consciousness, Lacy's mother said, "They came for me! You could be next! Freefall." Searching her mother's home after the older woman succumbed to her injuries, Lacy came upon a picture of herself and her mother skydiving. Behind the frame was a key to a safe-deposit box.

In the safe-deposit box, Lacy found her mother's journals and a fortune tied to a routing number for an offshore account — along with a will leaving all of it to her. The journal contained her mother's shocking secret: she had been the girlfriend of a young mobster named Domenic Marinelli, and Lacy was their child. She also hinted in some of the final entries that she had felt that someone was after her.



Lacy decided to take action to find the truth about her mother's death, and to reign in the criminal element in the city. She used the money to purchase the *Nimbus* and refit it to her needs. Calling on old friends from the culinary school in Italy, she brought together a team of renowned chefs to work in the airborne kitchen. She also used her mother's fortune to recruit a team of hackers and security experts to help her with her true mission for the *Nimbus*.

Whenever the *Nimbus* takes flight, Lacy's security team retires to a secret control room in the belly of the *Nimbus*. They use the ship's surveillance equipment as well as some of the most advanced wireless technology money can buy to hack Stark City and spy on the criminal element. Calling themselves "Freefall," they spy on those that would harm the innocent and play guardian angel to the police and heroes of Stark City.

Using Freefall

- Lacy and her team are expert hackers and love to get eyes and ears everywhere criminals don't want anyone snooping. They host Freefall's Folly, a blog dedicated to rooting out corruption in the city. In recent months, the blog has resulted in a city councilman's dismissal, led police to a gun-running operation, and toppled a CEO from Tesla Industrial Park. GMs can use the Freefall's Folly blog to post tips, hints, or straight-out evidence that heroes can use in their missions. When the Folly posts a video, it is always Lacy, but blacked out and using a voice changer to disguise herself. They have been known to hijack broadcast, cable, and internet channels to get their message out.
- Lacy prefers to stay in the shadows and help other heroes. She considers her mission support rather than direct personal action. The only time the Freefall team would engage an enemy directly is if the *Nimbus* was boarded. If confronted onboard, Lacy and her team can "blank" the *Nimbus* computers and jump overboard, using their Freefall suits to glide to safety.
- Freefall can and will aid heroes "on mission." Lacy has hacked into personal communications and cell phones to talk directly to working heroes. She can feed them on-the-spot intelligence and help heroes break into secured areas.
- Lacy doesn't know whether to believe that she is Marinelli's daughter or whether he had anything to do with her mother's death. To root out the truth, she will go out of her way to aid in investigations of Marinelli (who now resides in the Catacombs).

The *Nimbus*

Abilities

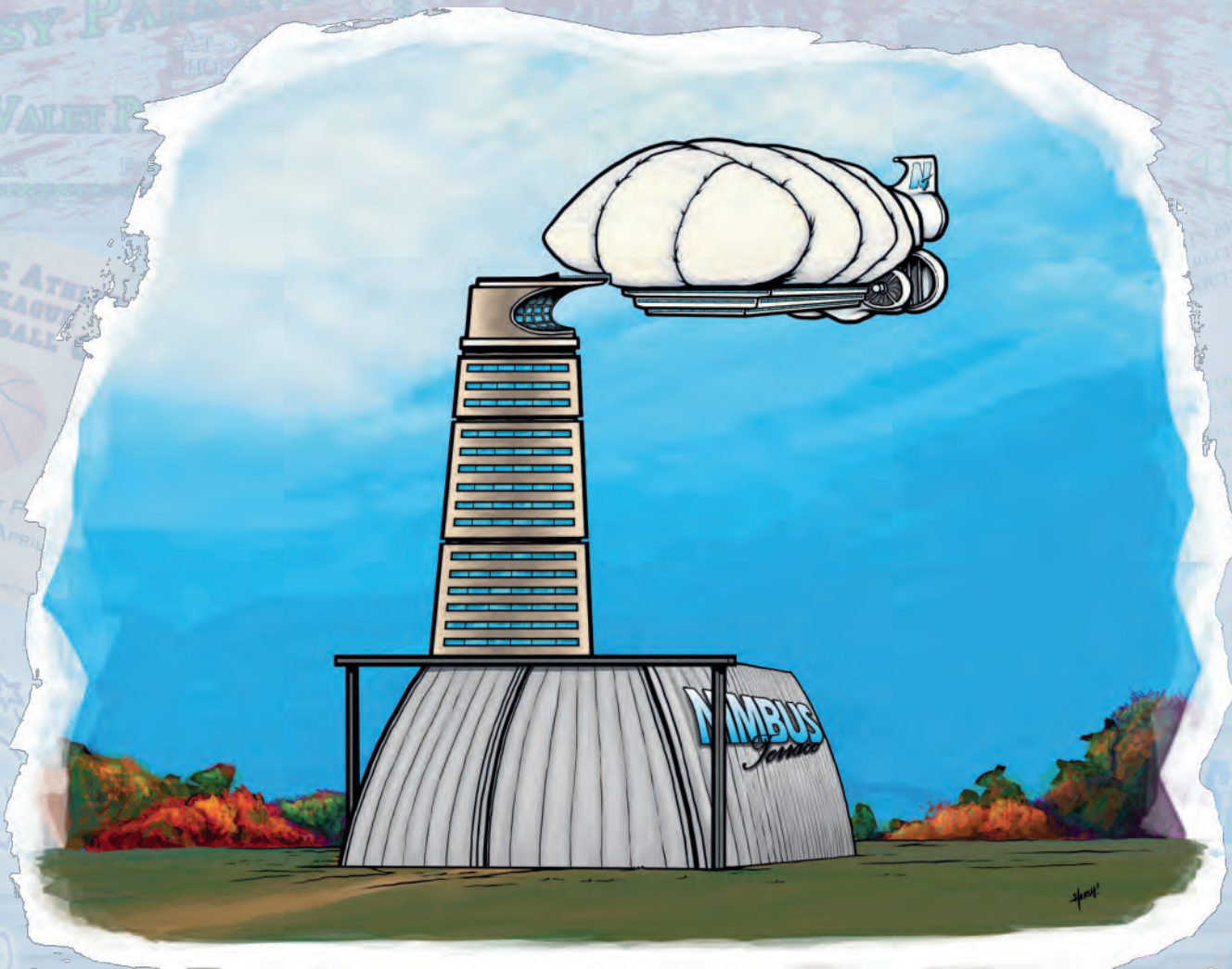
- Handling 2 (Vertical Take-Off and Landing)
- Speed 3 (effectively Flight 3)
- Structure 10

Powers

- Damage Resistance 3
- Danger Sense 6
- Extra-Sensory Perception 8
- Illusion 6 (Olympus Room Only)
- Interface 8
- Super-Senses 5 [Infravision (Thermal Imaging), Extended (Telescopic) Sight +2, Extended (Parabolic) Hearing +2]

Using the *Nimbus*

- The *Nimbus* is a flying restaurant. The *Nimbus* is not only a vehicle but a set piece. Any number of adventures can be had on board.
- A flying restaurant offers a captive audience for whatever the GM has planned. If a criminal event does occur, gaining entry for the heroes will present a major challenge to any groups without flight capability. The other side of the coin is that heroes on board have limited options for a way out should something occur.
- Lacy, as Freefall, has made a lot of enemies. The criminal underbelly knows that Freefall is responsible for making a lot of trouble, and actively hunts "him." Having criminals track Freefall to the *Nimbus* could present many adventure possibilities à la the "murder on the train" motif or any number of hostage scenarios. This could also lead to heroes confronting villains as they search for Freefall.
- Heroes and villains with hacking skills and knowledge of the *Nimbus* can try to hack into the ship's surveillance cameras, thus attracting Freefall's attention.
- Sabotage to the *Nimbus* itself (whether heroes are on board or not) could endanger the restaurant's patrons and present an excellent rescue scenario.



- The *Nimbus* is a fabulous restaurant. It is a nice place for cut scenes if the heroes can afford to eat there.

Carrington International Airport

Aspects

- Gateway to the World
- Center for Business and Commerce
- Noise Hassle
- Heightened Security

Description: Situated in the north end of the Platinum Coast, Carrington International Airport is a major hub for Stark City, uniting the worlds of business, entertainment, and travel. Named for famous baseball player turned adventurer, Charles “Chip” Carrington, the complex honors its namesake by standing as a gateway to Stark City and the world.

Carrington International Airport has four large runways (two running north to south and two east to west) that can accommodate most civilian and military aircraft. Miles of taxiways accommodate planes in various stages of arrival, departure, and storage. Hangars for the many airlines as well as those for private citizens dot the landscape. Planes of all types and descriptions can be seen in and around the hangars.

With the recent resurgence of Tesla Industrial Park as a technological dynamo, Carrington Airport expanded by adding a helipad business (with satellite pads throughout Stark City), making it possible for the captains of industry to move quickly around town. The airport also boasts a massive center for retail commerce dubbed the Promenade. The Promenade has become a major shopping center that rivals those of Lakeview Drive or Sycamore Plaza and features restaurants, delivery services, spas, business cafés, and a host of other businesses.

The Vanities Health Spa

Aspects

Exclusive and Secluded
The Fountain of Youth
Garden of Evil

Description: The Vanities Health Spa is the newest luxury service provider on the Platinum Coast, and caters exclusively to Stark City's rich and famous. Housed in a secluded old mansion that was recently renovated, the Vanities provides a full range of spa and health-club services and a supporting line of cosmetics and health-care products. The spa grounds are peaceful and pristine, and feature what has become Stark City's most acclaimed botanical garden. Most clients spend at least a weekend at the facility, although day packages are also available. The wealthiest patrons will splurge on a full month's stay to thoroughly enjoy all the treatments, programs, and facilities the Vanities has to offer.

The Vanities was created by Dr. Rose Thorne, a brilliant botanist and biochemist whose advanced years are mitigated by her classic beauty and youthful countenance. She is an effective motivational speaker, and her very appearance inspires her clientele to place their trust and loyalty in her hands (and money soon follows from their wallets and pocketbooks). She has developed her own line of exclusive cosmetics and health-care products, and her loyal customers—both women and men—swear by their anti-aging, weight-loss, and rejuvenating properties that seem to miraculously peel away the years and the pounds. Because the products live up to their guarantee, few balk at their expensive pricing.

The staff of the Vanities is made up entirely of women, each selected personally by Dr. Thorne for their adherence to the feminine ideals of beauty, strength, and intelligence. Helga Grundstrom, a gifted masseuse and former Olympic bodybuilder, is Dr. Thorne's second-in-command and serves as the facility's chief of security. All spa employees are highly trained in the martial arts and double as security officers.

Services include a full gym, saunas, indoor and

outdoor swimming pools, underground natural mineral water and mud baths, a weight-loss clinic, message therapy, beauty treatments, yoga classes, macrobiotic dietary services, daily seminars on a variety of health, beauty and fitness-related topics, and private, luxurious guestrooms.

Botanika

Real Name: Dr. Rose Thorne, Ph.D.

Abilities

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

Stamina 9
Determination *

Specialties

Deception
Mental Resistance Expert
Science (Biochemistry) Master
Science (Botany) Master

Powers

Immortality Device [Suspension] - Fountain of Youth Potion
Mind Control Device 6 [Addiction, Mindlink, Mindwipe, Rangeless; Limit: Situational (Affects Product Users Only)] - Botanical Cosmetics and Health Products
Plant Control 6 [Binding, Plant Growth]

Qualities

Timeless, Classic Beauty
Seeks Wealth, Power, and Eternal Life

Challenges

Vanity
Fears Aging and Death
Despises Madame Twilight

Background: The timelessly beautiful woman now presenting herself to Stark City as Dr. Rose Thorne, leading beauty consultant and health expert, harbors a dark and secret past that goes back centuries. Born Princess Ankhnesmery in



ancient Egypt, she dedicated her early life to the study of horticulture and herbalism in her father's royal gardens along the Nile. As the Pharaoh's daughter watched those around her grow older and weaken before their inevitable deaths, she became fearful of her own mortality. Obsessed with the idea of eternal life, she turned her attention to the plants in her gardens, whose flowers were reborn with each coming spring. After several years of painstaking research and experimentation, she was able to concoct a potion from the extracts of a rare Egyptian lotus flower that gave her the youthful immortality she so desired.

With all the time in the world to study and explore, Ankhnesmery learned to control plants to do her bidding and protect her. As the centuries rolled by, she traveled the world and changed identities, taking in all the knowledge she could. Her knowledge of biochemistry today, especially how it pertains to plants, comes from centuries of study—from early Egyptian elementalism through Greek atomism, medieval alchemy, and finally modern-day chemistry. To maintain the wealthy lifestyle she was accustomed to throughout the ages, she began to use her knowledge and powers illicitly and deceitfully for personal gain.

The immortal Egyptian princess has currently assumed the identity of the plant-controlling supervillain Botanika and is only concerned with her own immortality and staying young forever. She is entirely dependent on her Fountain of Youth potion to maintain her immortality, and carefully guards her most prized possession,

the sole remaining specimen of the now-extinct Egyptian lotus flower used in its formula. She uses the alias of Dr. Rose Thorne and the Vanities Health Spa as a front, and all of the women on her staff are her loyal henchmen (use the Ninja and Soldier stock character stats from the **ICONS** core rulebook).

Botanika's knowledge has allowed her to develop a mind-control formula that she uses in her cosmetic and health products to manipulate her unsuspecting clientele. Her customers become addicted to the mind-controlling products because they actually work—she includes a derivative of her Fountain of Youth potion to make the customers look younger, grow thinner, and feel healthier. Eventually, the effects wear off until reapplied to the skin. Once she has clients under her mental control, Botanika compels them to commit crimes on her behalf and then erases their knowledge of the events that transpired. And they keep coming back for more, eagerly paying her for the privilege.

Using Botanika

- Heroes with Immortality or the ability to travel through time might recognize Botanika from another age. For example, in the Victorian era, she was known as Lady Foxglove, and in 16th-century Florence as the Countess Belladonna Del Rosario.
- After a wealthy matron of Stark City society is detained for attempting to rob a Platinum Coast jewelry store at gunpoint, Roger Fentress of the Lakeview Drive Homeowners Association has called the heroes in to investigate, hoping to avoid Stark City Police involvement and a media scandal. When interviewed, the distraught woman claims she has no recollection of the incident, despite the dozens of witnesses who place her at the scene of the crime. Heroes familiar with the woman will notice that she appears much younger than she did at their prior meetings. If the heroes press Fentress, they will learn this is not the first time in recent weeks that a prominent socialite has committed a crime completely out of character. If the heroes investigate the other suspects, they will learn that they all have one fact in

common: each recently patronized the Vanities Health Spa where they seem to have found the Fountain of Youth.

The Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History

Description: The Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History was founded in 1896. Built by the Malone family after the World Columbian Exposition, the museum was originally called the Stark City House of Curiosities, and was intended to keep track of the strange occurrences and objects that seemed to gravitate to the city. As interest and opportunity grew in Stark City, the museum soon began to take in any and all objects relating to the area. After a major fire swept through the city in 1905 (the third fire of this size since 1872), many of the artifacts in private collections and sideshows were gathered and moved to the museum. An expansion was funded during the 1920s to bring the museum up to “modern” specifications, as well as to ensure that there was enough room for all of the artifacts being acquired. Renamed the Stark City Historical House, the museum opened its doors to any who wanted to learn about the city's rich and sometimes bizarre heritage.

When a local fisherman discovered a massive fossil bed underneath Stark Lake in the 1940s, many members of the academic community came out to assist in excavating the remains. It wasn't long before the museum needed another expansion to house its ever-growing natural history wing. Rebranding itself as the Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History, the museum swung its doors wide open to provide a glimpse of the city's past as well as a peek at its future.

The museum currently sits in the Platinum Coast District of the city on a large lot. The massive building has one main hall and four wings as well as the newly constructed Tesla Technology Center. Each section contains a wealth of historical artifacts and interactive

exhibits, with guided tours led by those well versed in the area's history. Although local history dominates the floor, the museum has hosted many exhibits from around the world. The staff carefully researches and communicates how these foreign treasures link Stark City to the world (and vice versa). Curator Jason DeMarkos ensures that all the displays are meticulously crafted for maximum effect.

As Stark City continues to grow into the City of Tomorrow, the Museum of Science and Natural History will stand as a testament to what has come before and how that heritage shapes the future.

The Sword

Real Name: Damocles (Jason DeMarkos)

Abilities

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

Stamina: 12
Determination *

Specialties

Athletics
Occult
Science (Archeology)
Weapons (Blades)

Powers

Immortality [Extra: Suspension]
Magic 6 [Extras: Unique Spell - Detection (Power), Mastery; Limits: Ability-Linked (Willpower), Spell-Focus]*

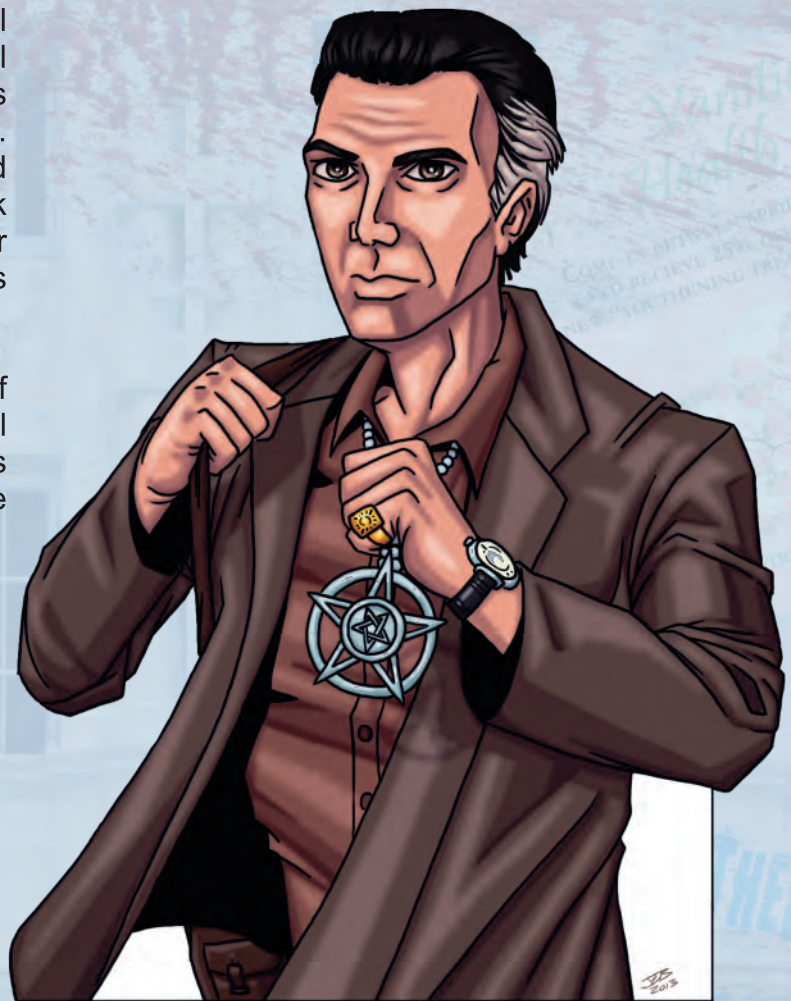
*Signature Magic Spells: Detection (Magic, Power) and Power Nullification

Qualities

Well-Connected

Challenges

Burdened by Time (Remains Aloof, Failure to Form Friendships)



Background: Jason DeMarkos did not start life in the prestige that he knows today. He started as a house worker serving King Dionysius of Syracuse in the fourth century BC. He had approached his king and let slip that he wished he had the king's prestige and power. The king allowed him to sit in the throne for a day. As he sat, he had a sword poised over his head, kept aloft by a horsehair thread. The king used this to demonstrate that all power comes with a price. When the day was complete, the king saw the positive choices he had made and decided to give the man a position in his court. He would become a court adviser.

He traveled to foreign lands in service to his king. During one such expedition, he that he learned of a plot against King Dionysius. He intercepted an assassin who wielded a magical rod that called down lightning bolts. The king ordered that should he find such things in the future, they should be kept out of mortal hands.

Person of Interest: Powerman

Real Name: Vral Vrezz'er

Abilities

Prowess 5
Coordination 4
Strength 8
Intellect 4
Awareness 7
Willpower 4

Stamina 12
Determination *

Specialties

Occult Expert
Science (Archeology) Expert

Powers

Cosmic Power 7 [Ability Boost - Amulet of Might; Extras: Damage Resistance - Bracer of Resistance, Flight - Boots of Levitation; Limit: Ability-Linked (Awareness)]

Qualities

Refugee from Alternate Earth
Master Artifact Crafter
Always Looking for Other Exiles from His Dimension
Mysterious Champion of Law and Order
Part of the Power Family

Challenges

Misses His Hometown
Driven by Duty
Clashes with Doctor Tanutamun

Background: Vral Vrezz'er came from an alternate Earth where magic reigned supreme and was never supplanted by technology. In this world, he and his family were royal artificers at the court of Pharaoh Cheops XXII.

The strength of magic in Vral's world attracted the attention of the Teslacracy, who considered that magic-rich dimension too great a threat to ignore.

Teslacracy forces fought a pitched battle to conquer Vral's Earth. The defenders made them pay dearly for every inch, but with the resources of a hundred worlds at its disposal, the Teslacracy was formidable. Before the final battle, Vral scanned the multiverse and found one Earth that was shielded from the Teslacracy's predations—ours. Thanks to the shield erected by "our" Tesla, our Earth was relatively safe. Vral did a powerful teleportation ritual that sent him and his family to our world.



Powerman (Continued)

Vral and his family found themselves in Stark City, near Tesla's old lab. In order to blend in, Vral decided his family would hide in plain sight as a supergroup. They adopted the moniker "Power Family," with Vral becoming the superhero Powerman, his wife Powerwoman, and his son and daughter Powerboy and Powergirl. They all have similar powers from artifacts they created to grant them flight, resistance to damage, and super-strength.

Upon learning of the Damocles Group's existence, Vral contacted them and offered to share his knowledge of the process of artifact creation on his world, and also to assist the Group on field missions. The partnership is still in its early stages, but is going well so far.

Powerman is always searching for other refugees from his homeworld. Unfortunately, the only one he has found so far is Doctor Tanutamun, a criminal and master magician. Tanutamun has powers very similar to those wielded by Vral and his family, but he lacks their moral compass. He used his powers to establish himself as a minor crime lord in Stark City. His stock-in-trade is crafting and selling powerful artifacts on the black market. Powerman and Damocles have clashed with Tanutamun on multiple occasions, but he has eluded capture so far.

DeMarkos's true identity as the mythic character Damocles (as well as how he came by his powers and immortality) is a closely guarded secret. DeMarkos considers keeping important and dangerous objects out of human reach his personal crusade. In service to this mission, he has made many enemies on both sides of justice. Although the Damocles Group and DeMarkos can be valuable allies in any fight against occult powers, they can be ruthless in their pursuit and recovery of dangerous objects. In certain circles, some speculation links the Sentinel's disappearance to the emergence of Damocles in Stark City.

Damocles Group

The museum's restorations floor has a secret space set aside for the clandestine Damocles Group. Jason DeMarkos leads the group, which is dedicated to recovering objects that they believe should not be in human hands — objects ranging from mystical artifacts to super-science inventions. Throughout history, the Damocles Group has tracked down objects that can corrupt good people and make evil people more dangerous, and has removed those objects from the world stage.

Damocles has sought out capable men and women to recover these items and store them away from unsuspecting hands. Twelve Damocles Group agents currently operate in Stark City. Using the museum as a base of operations, they conduct recovery actions throughout the world. All recovered items are brought to the museum and placed in the ARC (Artifact Research and Containment), a special vault with a dispersion field that suppresses the energy of the collected items. The governments of thirteen countries have agreements with Damocles, and allow the group's agents to operate with absolute freedom within their borders.

The Damocles Group is highly secretive. The Chief of Police learned of their existence after an incident involving an assassin who tried to use a cursed pen to kill the mayor. The Damocles Group swiftly recovered the item and saved the day, with only the Chief of Police being clued into their existence. DeMarkos usually sends out agents in pairs. Normally, only one team will work in any given city at a time. DeMarkos will provide tactical support using the Group's resources and his magic. DeMarkos is a powerful sorcerer, but he has not done field work in years. Although he tries to minimize his personal involvement in recovery operations, he may venture out of the ARC to assist his field agents when they desperately need help. Recently, Damocles has forged an alliance with the superhero Powerman, and the success of this partnership has encouraged Damocles to contract with other heroes on occasion.

The Damocles teams are usually two normal humans (use the stats for soldiers, **ICONS**, pg. 117), armed to the teeth with both mundane and ARC weaponry. Once a psychically charged artifact has been recovered, it is fitted with a small metallic tag with a rune on it. Once the tag is placed somewhere on the object, it acts immediately to nullify its power. Super-science weapons and magical artifacts are placed in secure lockers inside of the Damocles Group's HQ at the museum.

The Nullifier Tag

Power Nullification 10

Limit: Only works against mystically or psychically powered objects.

Stunt: power is nullified as long as tag is connected

Using the Damocles Group

- A powerful villain with a magic weapon has designs on Stark City. The Group contacts the heroes and invites them to help bring the villain down. The Group offers a substantial reward for the heroes' service, with the caveat that the Group gets to keep the villain's weapon when he or she is defeated.

- An overzealous (possibly rogue) Damocles retrieval team has targeted a device in the possession of one of the PCs. The agents initially try to buy the object from the PC, but their methods will become more vigorous if their demands aren't met.



Vari-e-Tea

Aspects

Service to All, Special Service to Some

Why Won't This Gizmo Work?

Good Vibrations

Hidden Among the Leaves

Wild Artifacts

Damocles secures super-science weapons and magical artifacts crafted by supervillains and evil wizards. Additionally, one of their primary goals is collecting "wild artifacts." "Wild artifacts" are mundane items that gain supernatural capabilities via a mysterious process. Experts theorize that these artifacts take on a psychic resonance from their owner during periods of great emotion. Some maintain that they might also draw their power from the psychic power of collective human consciousness.

Some examples of the "wild artifacts" in Damocles's collection include:

- John Dillinger's fake gun (Mind Control 6), used to orchestrate a prison break in Michigan City, Indiana (Mind Control 6)
- Napoleon's hat (Emotion Control (Respect) 8)
- Benjamin Franklin's kite (Electrical Control 5)
- J. Edgar Hoover's tiara (Mind Reading 5)
- Tex Avery's paintbrush (Animation 9)

Location: Lakeview Drive

Description: When the Vari-e-Tea and Scone Shop opened in 1987, it was a curious oddity that was quickly adopted by the trendy residents of the Platinum Coast. Serving tea and tea blends from around the world alongside brilliantly crafted pastries, the shop was an overnight success. As its popularity skyrocketed, the shop expanded to include a full line of custom-crafted coffees, a full kitchen staffed by chefs looking to break free of the mainstream, and triple its prior floor space.

The rich and famous that live in and visit the city love the outdoor patio. For some reason, the paparazzi avoid the place. Due to the master tea crafters, coffee blends, and interesting takes on comfortable food, Vari-e-Tea is a great place for Stark City's elite to enjoy a quiet diversion

from their day-to-day lives.

Sethunya Bwose moved to America from Africa in the late 1980s. After she graduated from Brown University, she took some of the tea from her first home and began to grow it in her new one. Experimenting with blending the different teas, she crafted several that she sold to a major tea maker. Using the money to start her tea shop, she never expected it to become as popular as it is. A friend to the community, she spends a great deal of time helping the community outside the Platinum Coast when she is not at her tea shop.

Madame Twilight

Real Name: Sethunya Bwose

Abilities

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

Stamina 8
Determination *

Specialties

Medicine
Occult Expert
Science (Botany) Expert

Powers

Astral Projection 6
Detection (Spirit) 4
Precognition 4 [Limit: Sleeping]

Qualities

Sucker for a Hard-Luck Case
Supernaturally Well-Connected to Others Who Fight the Occult

Challenges

Lost in Two Worlds (Exists Simultaneously in the Astral and Physical Planes)
Affected by Supernatural Challenges that Affect Ghosts and Demons
Botanika's Bane



Background: Sethunya arrived in America with her parents as a teenager from Nigeria. She worked hard and eventually received a full academic scholarship to Brown University. She had always loved the tea that her mother made for her, and she sought to share her gifts in her new homeland.

Teaming up with her best friend from college, Sethunya moved to Stark City and opened her tea shop. After they saw tremendous success, Sethunya expanded her business and was soon on the speed dial of Stark City's elite. Hand-crafting personal teas for some of her clients for everything from curing headaches to soothing the nerves of prominent executives, Sethunya became the elite's best kept secret.

Sethunya has a soft side for the less fortunate. She volunteers at several halfway houses and soup kitchens. In addition to her very robust life both in high society and among the city's poorer citizens, Sethunya is known to Stark City's metahuman population as Madame Twilight. As a young girl, Sethunya learned that she could see into the spirit realm. She was quickly given over to the "seer" in her city so that she could receive proper training. Shortly after arriving in the USA, she was visited by her seer, who taught her how to world walk. By stepping into the astral realm, she could travel great distances and observe things without being noticed. While on one such world walk, she encountered someone draining the blood from several students. The woman assaulting the students was using plants to restrain them, and when the woman turned, she could see Sethunya in her ghost form. She fled and called the police. She had saved the students, but had become the target of the beast that tried to kill them.

Now in Stark City, Madame Twilight serves the common people. She uses Vari-e-Tea to fund her many activities. She is a spiritual

leader for many in her community, as well an herbalist who gives natural remedies at no charge to the down-and-out. Aside from these contributions, she also acts as an advisor to those trying to hold the forces of darkness at bay in Stark City. Careful to hide her involvement in the fight, she only investigates away from the shop, and only in astral form. To be safe, she also issues help against the supernatural in the same way. She knows that Botanika is hunting for her. Luckily, her appearance in astral form differs greatly from the face she wears in public.

Sethunya arranged for a protective spell to keep evil supernatural presences away from Vari-e-Tea. As a side effect, photography and video-recording devices don't work within 100 yards of the shop.

Using Madame Twilight

- Madame Twilight was deeply affected by her first encounter with Botanika. It drove her to become the person she is today. She wants to create a world where a positive community can foster enough positive power to drive away the darkness.
- If Madame Twilight learns of heroes fighting occult forces, she will often investigate them in astral form. When she is sure that they are what they appear to be, she can manifest herself to them directly (always in astral form). Once she bonds with a hero or team, she is quick to assist those who need her help. This includes crafting potions, contributing medical supplies, and giving advice on how to proceed against supernatural foes.
- Madame Twilight's visions come to her only in the form of dreams. If the dream is about a hero that she hasn't met yet, she will use her astral projection and the network of friends she has around the city to try to find that hero and give him or her the information she has.



Broadcast Bar and Grille

Aspects

Always a Camera Around
Best Food in Platinum Coast
Gossip Central

Location: Lakeview Drive

Description: Overlooking Lakeview Drive, the Broadcast is an upscale bar and grill that tries to play at a relaxed atmosphere. Mike Batista, a retired reporter previously employed by one of the biggest cable television news outlets, runs the restaurant. Mike traveled the globe for two decades to cover important world events. His most popular pieces were about the Grim Truth, a vigilante-style hero who tackled some of the worst criminals throughout the world. From terrorists to high-powered bank robbers, Grim tackled evil where he found it, with Mike following to report it.

After a close call in Afghanistan, Mike decided to retire. He turned his passion for the news toward his other love: food. He studied under some of the greatest culinary masters and he once again came into the spotlight, hosting cooking shows and catering exclusive parties. With the life of a celebrity once again creeping up on him, Mike decided to move to Stark City.

He opened the Broadcast, a bar and grill with a neighborhood atmosphere and three master chefs on duty. Set in the trendy Lakewood Drive section of Stark City, the Broadcast offers top-notch food and drink, and caters to all walks of life (much to the chagrin of the social elites who frequent the neighborhood). Photos of major world events dot the walls, and there is even a working photo booth where folks can have their pictures taken.

The Grim Truth

Mike and Marcus Batista together were the vigilante known as the Grim Truth. The two brothers set out to be a bastion of truth after an unscrupulous reporter accused their mother, a senator, of accepting a bribe to vote for harmful legislation. An angry citizen, outraged at the story, pushed their mother in front of a bus, killing her. The incident pushed Mike into journalism as well as prompting him to adopt an alter ego as a vigilante. While Mike pursued truth on two fronts, his brother Marcus became a genius with a computer. The two worked in tandem. While Mike and his alter ego would cover the stories and punish the corrupt, Marcus would provide research and logistical support. If Mike's work ever required a physical confrontation, Marcus had the martial arts training to fill in as the Grim Truth when needed. It was perfect until Mike was grievously wounded while covering a story in Afghanistan, and decided to hang up his notepad and cowl.

Settling into Stark City, Mike and Marcus stayed active in the fight for truth. Mike created the Broadcast Bar and Grill. As it drew reporters and paparazzi from across the city, Mike used his position as owner to chat up the patrons and learn all the latest gossip and rumors. After hours, Mike and Marcus run the Underground, a secret meeting place beneath the bar. With several access points hidden around the city, those "in the know" can make their way to the Underground to meet with Mike, Marcus, and other heroes working in Stark City. Only the heroes that Mike and Marcus know of (and have investigated) will be allowed to enter. All others will find dead ends and misdirection. Those that find the Underground can tap into the resources of two master crimefighters trying to establish a network for heroes striving toward a better Stark City.

Mike Batista has cultivated certain types of regulars, and the Broadcast has become a favorite after-hours hangout (and gossip clearinghouse) for reporters, lawyers, cops, and public officials.

The Underground

Aspects

Only the Initiated

Secret Vigilante Meeting Place

Description: In the Underground, the Batista Brothers have set up a comfortable meeting place where heroes can collaborate on difficult cases. In addition to the central conference table, Marcus has a large computer workstation with holography capabilities, set up so that anyone in the room can see the display. Mike keeps the Underground stocked with first-aid supplies, food, water, and coffee. A back room holds several cots, allowing heroes on the run to use the Underground as a safe house.

Mike has not only become adept in the kitchen, but also in dressing wounds and administering first aid, thanks to his time in the field. He has patched up many of Stark City's heroes. As more heroes pass through the Underground, word of its existence has spread. Mike has amassed a large amount of medical gear, and has the knowledge to apply it should a hero come in needing assistance.

Heroes looking for a fresh pair of eyes on a case can try their luck at the Underground. The brothers can give their opinions on a case, or ask heroes they have helped in the past for information. Marcus can scour databases, tap into law enforcement resources, and in some cases hack his way into much-needed information. Mike is both a certified EMT and a skilled investigator. He is also an expert photographer, researcher, and criminologist who can help heroes by consulting on crimes or even by conducting firsthand surveillance.

Lowell's Overlook Estates

Aspects

Ancestral Estate
Dark Hidden Secret
Privacy and Privilege

Description: Built in 1865 as an overseer's house for the logging operations along the lakefront, the property now known as the Lowell Estate was Martin Lowell's family home. The estate has remained in the family ever since. The house sat vacant when the majority of the family moved west to follow logging interests just after World War 1. After serving in World War 2, James Lowell returned to Stark City, renovated the estate, and christened it Lowell's Overlook.

After the war, the property saw major construction to accommodate family and friends vacationing in the area. After some persuasion by his old Navy buddies, James built several houses on the property. Calling the property Lowell's Overlook Estates, he began to rent out the homes to war-weary friends looking for solitude.

Over time, Lowell's Overlook drifted back into the Lowell family's hands. Rosewood Manor is the most important of the four houses on Lowell's Estates. Named for the famous rose gardens first planted by Martin Lowell's wife, Rosewood Manor is the most understated of the compound, having only eight bedrooms, three bathrooms, a kitchen, a dining hall, a study, a pool, and a measly two-car garage. Rosewood Manor is considered the Lowell family's ancestral home in Stark City, and six generations of Lowells have lived under its roof, including Madison Lowell, the current head of the Lowell empire.

Lady Sovereign

Real Name: Madison Lowell

Abilities

Prowess 3
Coordination 3
Strength 3
Intellect 4
Awareness 5
Willpower 7

Stamina 10
Determination *



Specialties

Business Expert
Leadership
Occult Expert

Powers

Magic 7 [Extra: Mastery; Limits: Ritualistic, Spell-Focus]
Prowess Boost 5 [Limit: Preparation]

Qualities

Hungry for Power
Rich and Infamous
Loyal to the Slithering Gods

Challenges

Weakness to Silver (+2 on Attacks)

Background: Madison Lowell took control of the family business, Lowell United, a few years ago after the death of her older brother Jacob. In the years since she has taken control, Madison has diversified Lowell United into more than just a shipping concern. With new divisions in energy, defense, and even private space travel, Lowell United has gone from a failing shipping firm to a thriving conglomerate. If she had any doubters among the board, they have gone silent in light of the massive profits she has brought to the company.

This success affords Madison a degree of privacy and privilege in the city that few enjoy, enabling her to hide the fact that she serves the Slithering Gods. An ancient force that has long slumbered, the Slithering Gods were most likely the basis for legendary creatures such as Tiamat, the kraken, and the old gods as depicted in horror novels of the 1920s.

As her magical powers have grown, Madison has begun to gather a small following among those she feels are key in Lowell United and the city.

The Sovereign Circle, an organization Madison founded, has become the subject of rumor and admiration in Stark City boardrooms. Outsiders think of it as a prestigious club or fraternal organization for the corporate elite. In fact, the Circle is a cult serving the Slithering Gods (called the Sehrune in the Circle's secret



tongue). The Circle has an abiding interest in Stark City because of the area's reputation for weak dimensional barriers.

Madison's goal (and the purpose of the Sovereign Circle) is to eventually gain enough magical power to break down the barriers between worlds and bring the Slithering Gods to Earth. To do this, the barriers must be weakened over a period of years through ritual, sacrifice, and dark magic. Madison has performed one such ritual since taking command of Lowell United. It is only a matter of time before she is strong enough to conduct another.

Using the Sovereign Circle

- The Circle seeks to weaken the dimensional barriers that keep the Slithering Gods restrained and unable to enter "our" world. Smaller rituals, conducted secretly throughout the city, build up power to fuel larger ones. These rituals might include sacrifice (which could entail murder, or a kidnapping for a single drop of blood), torture, divination, or theft. The heroes likely become aware of the Sovereign Circle's activities by following up on tips about a rash of kidnappings

near the Platinum Coast. Mystical heroes might sense the Circle's rituals as the barriers between worlds weaken

Vile

Real Name: Turiq Faris Azwari

Abilities

Prowess 7
Coordination 7
Strength 5
Intellect 3
Awareness 3
Willpower 5
Stamina 10
Determination *

Specialties

Athletics
Computers
Drive
Martial Arts
Stealth
Weapons (Blades)
Weapons (Bludgeons)
Weapons (Guns)

Powers

Blast (Shooting) Device 4 - Semi-Auto Pistol
Darkness Control 5 [Extras: Super-Senses (Infravision), Shadow Shaping]
Strike (Slashing) Device 4 - Combat Knife
Teleport 5 [Extra: Flurry]

Qualities

Cold and Calculating
Efficiently Evil

Challenges

Vulnerable to Silver and Cold Iron Weapons
(+2 to Attacks)

Background: Vile (aka Turiq Faris Azwari) is Madison's personal facilitator and a devoted servant of the Slithering Gods. He has a cadre of men who act as his personal staff. When Madison wants events to move in a desired direction, she sends Turiq and his minions to manipulate things as needed.



The Red Vipers are Vile's personal security force. He has used them for kidnappings, theft, and torture. He has even sacrificed them in his own defense (and sometimes to power rituals). They believe they are the fist of the Slithering Gods, and are willing to die in their service. Vile usually has a compliment of five Red Vipers with him at all times. When in public, the Vipers wear business suits and red glasses. When on an operation, they wear tactical uniforms with red body armor. (Use the Cultist and Soldier stock characters from *Icons* to represent the Red Vipers.)

Sycamore Park Complex

Aspects

"If you have to ask, you can't afford it."
Always Crowded
Conspicuous Consumption

Description: The Sycamore Park Complex is a popular indoor mall in the Platinum Coast area,



featuring more than 150 high-end shops, art galleries, and restaurants. The surrounding area is sometimes called the “Velvet Rope Ghetto” because a number of the city’s high-end bars and clubs ring Sycamore Park. Additionally, the galleries in Sycamore Park often host exhibits by nationally renowned artists. Five-star hotels and high-rent condominium buildings dot the nearby area. As one would expect, the Stark City Police have a substation within the mall, and the area is patrolled day and night by private security as well.

Attached to the Sycamore Park Complex is the Platinum Coast Events Center, where a series of mysterious explosions wiped out a third of the Stark City Police Department (including almost all senior leadership) on October 12 of last year. Dubbed the “Black Friday attack,” the incident is still under investigation. While the event center is being rebuilt, an impromptu memorial to the fallen police officers has sprung up along a section of sidewalk that is still blackened from the attack.

Midnight Moth

Real Name: Tonia Glover

Abilities

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

Stamina 7
 Determination *

Specialties

Criminology
 Deception
 Investigation
 Stealth
 Martial Arts Expert

Powers

Invisibility 7 [Limit: Chameleon]
 Phasing 7

Qualities

Famous (Reformed) Villain
 Security Expert
 Finger on the Pulse of the Underworld

Challenges

Suspect in Black Friday Attack

Background: The merchants of the Sycamore Plaza had a conundrum. They ran the most popular high-end shopping center in the state,

but a constant stream of attacks and thefts by supervillains were cutting into revenue. Their solution was to hire a super-thief to keep the other super-thieves out.

Midnight Moth (aka Tonia Glover) was a flamboyant, mutant cat burglar with phasing and camouflage powers. She was arrested during a heist at the the Stark City Museum of Science and Natural History. After doing a stint in Strkyer Federal Penitentiary and going through the Odysseys House rehab program, she emerged as a reformed villain and was promptly hired by Sycamore Plaza as their head of security. During the first six months of her term at Sycamore, thefts and successful supervillain attacks dropped considerably as the security measures she implemented proved effective.

Building on her success at Sycamore, Glover has parlayed her former notoriety into a career, and has consulted on security for most of the museums and banks in Stark City. Her very public redemption has given rise to rumors that she is the Midnight Angel, a vigilante pirate DJ who broadcasts tips and information about the operations and schemes of various supervillains and criminal operations in Stark City. While admitting that her familiarity with the Stark City underworld is an advantage in her current position as a security consultant, Glover has emphatically denied the rumors linking her to the Midnight Angel.

In the wake of the Black Friday attack, Glover has been facing a different kind of suspicion. Her defense that she had designed the complex's security protocols to guard against meta-powered thieves and stick-up artists—not a full-fledged assault—have fallen on deaf ears, and the *Scout* tabloid has even suggested that she be investigated as a possible collaborator.

Using Midnight Moth

- Glover has a vested interest in clearing her name in the Black Friday attack, and her underworld contacts give her a pretty good idea about where to start. She reaches out to the heroes to help her investigate and bring the real perpetrator to justice.



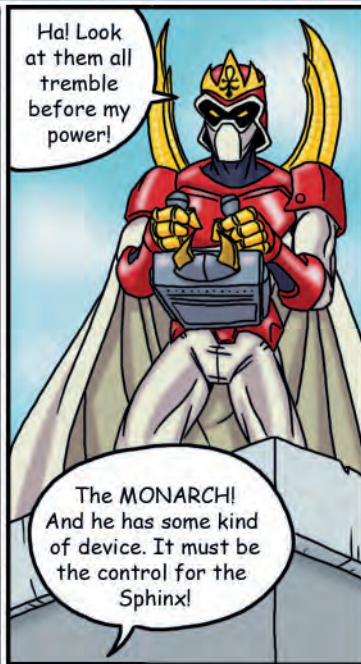
- Glover challenges the PCs to break into a museum or bank she has recently hardened with a variety of force fields, security robots, and other gadgets. It's a televised event that will draw publicity for her and her customer as well as raising money for charity (she's promised to pay \$10,000 to the charity of the heroes' choice if they succeed).



**MIDNIGHT
MOTH**
vs. THE SPHINX
of the MONARCH

Holy cow!
A giant robotic SPHINX
is destroying the city!
All those innocent people...
I have to do something!

MROWR!



Ha! Look
at them all
tremble
before my
power!

The MONARCH!
And he has some kind
of device. It must be
the control for the
Sphinx!



Stop right there,
Monarch! You'll drop
that control
if you know what's good
for you!

Not one step closer,
Midnight Moth, or I'll have my
Sphinx destroy even more of
Stark City's streets!
Nothing can make me drop
this control device!



Not even the sweet,
sweet goodness of
this Fainting Goat
Snack Cake?



A golden cake
with a creamy
filling? This
is delicious!



Now who's in control,
sucka? This giant
kitty is getting
collared!



I can tell you for a fact:
crime doesn't pay.
But these snack cakes
will always make the day
a little tastier!

Mrowr?

No one can
resist the
flavor of
Fainting Goat.
Why should you?



Char...
Champa...
Bru...
TO BEAT
SUPERHERO
IN THE D...
OF ST...
To Be...
No Repe...
Restaurant
February 19

PRICE

STARK CITY
FAIR
MAY 29
10-5
SPONSORED
BY:
STERLING
SILVER
JEWELRY
BAG
INDUSTRIES
Y MO...
VINT...
COM...
ANKIN...
VY SOUND UV...
LECS
STARK CITY'S #1 SNA BAND
LIVE AT DE FUNKEE FRESH

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