

VIGILANCE PRESS COMICS GROUP PROUDLY PRESENTS



THE FIELD GUIDE TO SUPERHEROES!

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ICONS
SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING
COMPATIBLE

VOLUME 2: FROM THE DESCENDANT TO THE JUNGLE HERO

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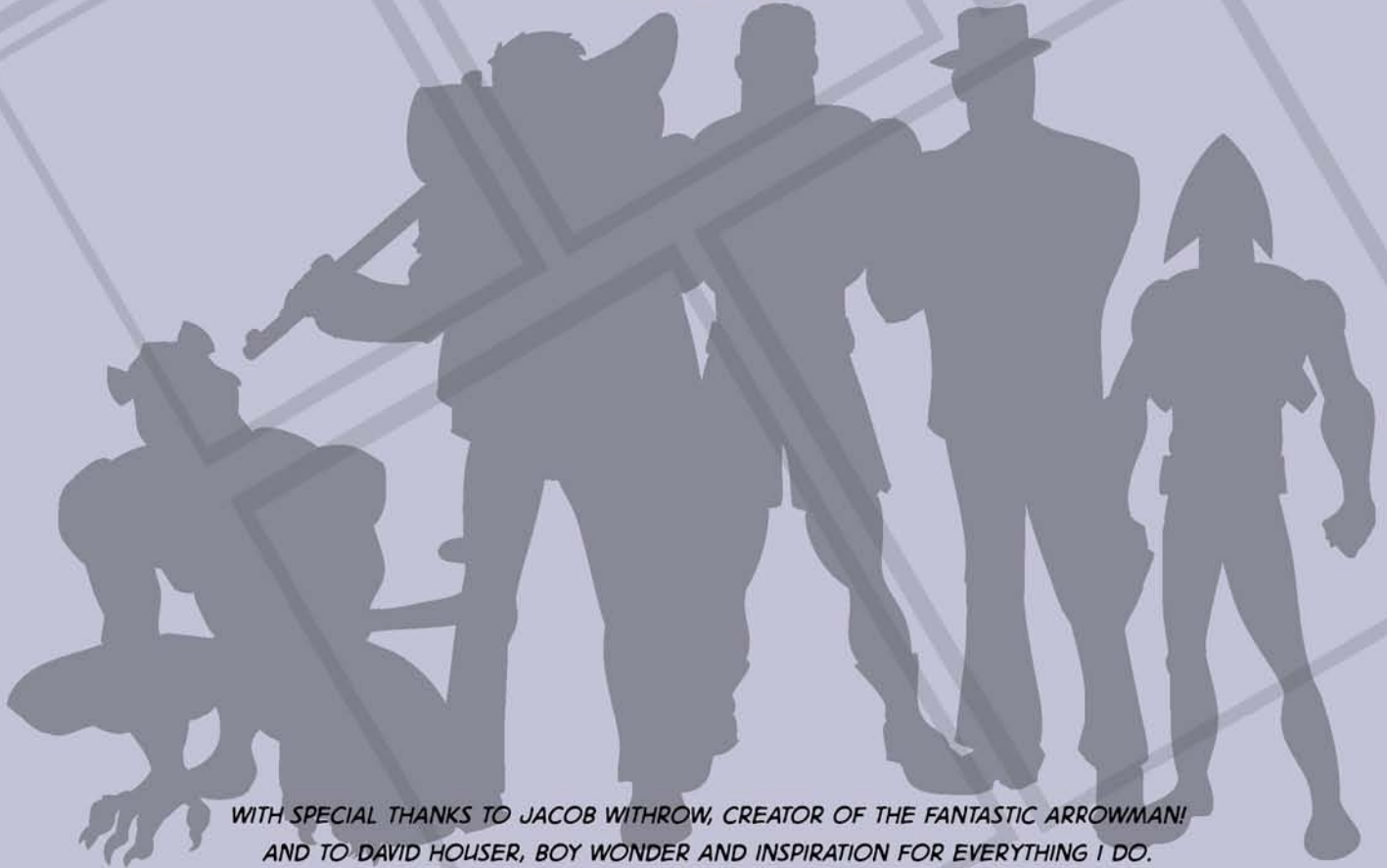
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*WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO JACOB WITHROW, CREATOR OF THE FANTASTIC ARROWMAN!
AND TO DAVID HOUSER, BOY WONDER AND INSPIRATION FOR EVERYTHING I DO.*

INTRODUCTION



O, WONDERFUL, WONDERFUL, AND MOST WONDERFUL WONDERFUL! AND YET AGAIN WONDERFUL, AND AFTER THAT OUT OF ALL HOOPING.

-- SHAKESPEARE, AS YOU LIKE IT, ACT III SCENE II

WELCOME BACK TO THE **FIELD GUIDE TO SUPERHEROES** AND TO THE **WORLDS OF WONDER** SETTING. THIS BOOK CONTINUES WHERE THE FIRST VOLUME LEFT OFF: TEN MORE SUPERHERO ARCHETYPES THAT HAVE BEEN PRESENT IN COMICS FROM THE GOLDEN AGE, OR EVEN BEFORE! EACH OF THE ARCHETYPES IS EXPLAINED IN DETAIL:

- FIRST, A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE ARCHETYPE TOUCHING ON SOME OF ITS MOST RECOGNIZABLE CHARACTERISTICS.
- WE GIVE SOME EXAMPLES FROM COMICS TO HELP YOU IDENTIFY THE SORT OF CHARACTERS THAT ARCHETYPE INCLUDES.
- ARCHETYPES ARE NOT HARD AND FAST CATEGORIES; MANY HEROES DRIFT IN AND OUT OF THEIR ARCHETYPE. RELATED ARCHETYPES ARE GIVEN NEXT.
- THE REST OF THE ARCHETYPE DISCUSSION IS HERE TO HELP WITH CHARACTER CREATION. MAYBE THE IDEA OF A HERO WHO IS AN EX-CON APPEALS TO YOU, BUT YOU'RE NOT REALLY SURE HOW TO PUT THAT INTO PRACTICE. WHAT DO EX-CONS IN ICONS HAVE IN COMMON? **QUALITIES & CHALLENGES** IS THE MOST IMPORTANT PART OF THIS. THIS SECTION WILL GIVE YOU SPECIFIC IDEAS FOR THINGS LIKE **CONNECTIONS**, **MOTIVATION**, OR EVEN **CATCHPHRASES**. LIKELY **ENEMIES**, **PERSONAL** AND **SOCIAL** PROBLEMS, AND **WEAKNESSES** OF THESE KINDS OF HEROES ARE EXPLAINED. ALL OF THIS WILL HELP YOU FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO BE ABLE TO TAG IN PLAY, AND WHAT THE GM WILL BE ABLE TO COMPEL!

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

- ARCHETYPE OFTEN HAS INFLUENCE OVER A CHARACTER'S **ABILITIES**, ESPECIALLY SCORES THAT ARE ACTUALLY SUPER-POWERS OF THEIR OWN. THAT COMES NEXT.
- OF COURSE, NO DISCUSSION OF ARCHETYPE WOULD BE COMPLETE UNLESS IT INCLUDES A DISCUSSION OF **POWERS**. THAT BEING SAID, THE EMPHASIS IN THIS BOOK REMAINS ON THE CHARACTER'S ORIGIN AND MOTIVATION RATHER THAN HIS OR HER SPECIFIC POWERS. A CHARACTER LIKE THE DESCENDANT IS RECOGNIZED BECAUSE HE OR SHE IS INHERITING THE NAME OF ANOTHER SUPERHERO WHO HAS DIED OR RETIRED; THAT SAME CHARACTER COULD HAVE ANY **POWER** IMAGINABLE, FROM LIGHT CONTROL TO SUPER-SPEED OR ARCHERY.
- **SPECIALTIES** ARE OFTEN THE FINAL SECTION IN THE ARCHETYPE DISCUSSION. IT TOUCHES ON ALL THE **SKILLS** AND **TALENTS** THAT A GIVEN ARCHETYPE IS LIKELY TO DISPLAY.
- OTHER SUBJECTS, SUCH AS STUNTS* OR THE CHARACTER'S ROLE IN A TEAM OF HEROES, MAY FOLLOW.

* - STUNTS ARE DESCRIBED IN VOLUME 1 OF THE *FIELD GUIDE TO SUPERHEROES*.

USING THIS BOOK

ONCE THE ARCHETYPE IS DISCUSSED, YOU GET A FULLY DEVELOPED SAMPLE HERO WHO FILLS THAT ROLE. THESE CHARACTERS ARE ALL PART OF THE WORLDS OF WONDER SETTING WHICH WAS INTRODUCED IN THE FIRST VOLUME. YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE THESE INTO PLAYER CHARACTERS TO GET A USE OUT OF THEM; EACH CHARACTER COMES WITH MULTIPLE STORIES THAT BRING A GROUP OF ORIGINAL PCS INTO THAT CHARACTER'S UNIQUE STORY.

AFTER ALL TEN ARCHETYPES ARE COVERED, THERE IS SOME ADDITIONAL MATERIAL ON THE **WORLDS OF WONDER** SETTING, DWELLING ESPECIALLY ON ASPECTS OF LIFE THAT ARE LIKELY TO IMPACT PLAYER CHARACTERS. A **WONDER'S** RIGHT TO WEAR A MASK AND KEEP HIS IDENTITY A SECRET IS PROTECTED BY A LONG TRADITION OF SO-CALLED "MASKING LAWS," BUT THE UNITED STATES ALSO HAS A VOLUNTARY PROGRAM OF **WONDER** REGISTRATION KNOWN AS **NARWAL**.

THIS PROGRAM ENCOURAGES HEROES TO REGISTER THROUGH THE USE OF HEALTH CARE, FINANCIAL SUBSIDIES, AND OTHER INCENTIVES, WHILE CRIMINALS ARE AUTOMATICALLY REGISTERED. ALIEN HEROES AND THOSE WHO ADVENTURE IN THE DEPTHS OF SPACE WILL KNOW OF THE **PARLIAMENT OF STARS**, THE DOMINANT POLITICAL ENTITY IN THE MILKY WAY GALAXY.

MEANWHILE, BACK ON EARTH, HEROES AND VILLAINS ALIKE WONDER ABOUT THE EXISTENCE OF THE MYTHICAL "TOMORROW MAN" AND ORDER THEIR UNIFORMS, UTILITY BELTS, AND CREDIT CARDS THROUGH THE **WONDERWEAR** WEBSITE.

WE HOPE YOU CONTINUE TO ENJOY THIS SECOND VOLUME OF THE *FIELD GUIDE TO SUPERHEROES*. AS ALWAYS, YOU SHOULD CONSIDER THE ARCHETYPES, HEROES, VILLAINS AND CAMPAIGN ELEMENTS PRESENTED HERE AS A TOOLBOX FOR YOUR OWN CAMPAIGN, A TOOLBOX WHICH YOU CAN DIP INTO AND MODIFY AS YOU THINK BEST.

YOUR COMMENTS, QUESTIONS, AND FEEDBACK ARE ALWAYS WELCOME! YOU CAN VISIT CHARLES RICE AT RPGDESIGN.BLOGSPOT.COM, MIKE LAFFERTY, DAN HOUSER AND THE VIGILANCE PRESS PODCAST AT MIKELAFFPODBEAN.COM, AND JASON TONDRO AT DOCTORCOMICS.BLOGSPOT.COM.

ARCHETYPES

THE TEN ARCHETYPES COVERED IN THIS, THE SECOND VOLUME OF *THE FIELD GUIDE TO SUPERHEROES*, ARE:

THE **DESCENDANT** IS A HERO WHO HAS INHERITED HIS TITLE FROM AN OLDER HERO WHO HAS DIED, LOST HIS POWERS, TURNED TO EVIL OR RETIRED. THIS GIVES THE NEW VERSION A HISTORY, BUT ALSO BIG SHOES TO FILL. HE MAY HAVE STARTED OFF AS A SIDEKICK.

THE **DIVINE HERO** IS A CHARACTER WHOSE POWERS STEM DIRECTLY FROM A LIVING RELIGION LIKE CHRISTIANITY, ISLAM, OR JUDAISM.

AN **EMBODIMENT** PERSONIFIES A UNIVERSAL FORCE, SUCH AS JUSTICE, THE EARTH, OR SPEED. HE OR SHE IS VERY POWERFUL BUT ALSO HAS TO ANSWER TO AN EVEN MORE POWERFUL BOSS.

THE **EX-CON** IS A FORMER VILLAIN OR PETTY CRIMINAL WHO NOW FIGHTS CRIME. HE MAY BE A GOOD GUY WHO GOT MIXED UP WITH THE WRONG CROWD OR A REAL SCOUNDREL WHO IS WORKING FOR JUSTICE ONLY UNDER DURESS.

THE **FEMME FELINE** IS AN ESPECIALLY POPULAR SORT OF ANIMAL HERO. A WOMAN WITH A CAT MOTIF, SHE IS MORALLY AMBIGUOUS AND FLIRTY.

THE **FERAL HERO** IS A JECKYLL & HYDE CHARACTER THAT TRIES TO DO GOOD BUT STRUGGLES WITH A DARK, ANIMAL NATURE, WHICH LEADS HIM TO KILL.

THE **FOCUSED HERO** IS A NORMAL PERSON WITH ONE SUPER-POWER SUCH AS FLIGHT, INVISIBILITY OR GREAT STRENGTH -- WHICH HE HAS LEARNED TO MASTER.

A **GADGET GUY** OR **GADGET GIRL** IS USUALLY A SCIENTIST WITH A COLLECTION OF WEAPONS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT, INCLUDING A VEHICLE.

THE **HANDICAPPED HERO** OVERCOMES A SERIOUS DISABILITY THROUGH ADVANCED TRAINING, SUPERPOWERS, OR JUST RAW GUTS.

THE **JUNGLE HERO** IS A CARETAKER OF A HIDDEN LAND AND WHO OFTEN HAS ANIMAL-RELATED POWERS.

DESCENDANT

WHEN AN AGING HERO DIES OR RETIRES, THEY PASS THEIR NAME, WEAPONS, OR POWERS ON TO A WORTHY YOUNG HEIR. THE CHILD OF A FORMER HERO, NATURAL OR ADOPTED, THE DESCENDANT HAS TO QUICKLY LEARN THE TRICKS OF HIS TRADE OR PERISH-- BECAUSE HE'S ALSO INHERITED A LONG LIST OF ENEMIES.

EXAMPLES: WALLY WEST, THE FLASH; KYLE RAYNER, THE GREEN LANTERN; RICK TYLER, HOURMAN; DAN DRIEBERG, NITE OWL; THE PHANTOM; JACK KNIGHT, STARMAN

RELATED ARCHETYPES: SIDEKICK, YOUNG HERO

QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES:

THE DESCENDANT HAS BIG SHOES TO FILL; LIVING UP TO THE REPUTATION OF THE MAN WHO CAME BEFORE IS THE FIRST OBSTACLE THAT ANY DESCENDANT MUST OVERCOME. HE INHERITS THE RESPONSIBILITY ASSOCIATED WITH HIS NAME, WHICH INCLUDES A PARTICULAR TURF TO DEFEND AND PATROL. A FAMOUS NAME MEANS QUICK RECOGNITION BY THE PUBLIC, AUTHORITY FIGURES, AND OTHER HEROES, WHO WILL BE SKEPTICAL UNTIL HE PROVES HIMSELF.

SOMETIMES A DESCENDANT HAD A FORMER COSTUMED IDENTITY OF HIS OWN, WHICH HE HAS NOW ABANDONED. IT CAN BE HARD FOR A DESCENDANT TO BALANCE THESE TWO WORLDS: THE OLDER GENERATION OF HIS NEW NAME AND THE YOUNG GENERATION HE GREW UP WITH.

HE CAN TAKE A SEAT ON A TEAM MADE UP OF FELLOW DESCENDANTS (*THE JUNIOR VARSITY*), OR ELSE FILL HIS PREDECESSOR'S SEAT ON A MORE PROMINENT TEAM (*THE VARSITY*). THE DESCENDANT MAY INHERIT A TROPHY ROOM OR LAIR, INCLUDING CRYPTIC NOTES OR JOURNALS, WHICH MAKE NO SENSE UNTIL IT IS ALMOST TOO LATE.

ABILITIES:

THE DESCENDANT WILL HAVE THE SAME HIGH ABILITIES AS HIS PREDECESSOR, BUT WILL USUALLY BE EITHER CLEARLY SUPERIOR OR OBVIOUSLY INFERIOR. IN THE FIRST CASE, HE REPRESENTS A NEWER, BETTER, STRONGER GENERATION OF HEROES, BUT IN THE SECOND CASE HE IS A ROOKIE PLAYING CATCH-UP.

POWERS:

AGAIN, THE DESCENDANT WILL USUALLY HAVE THE SAME POWERS AS HIS PREDECESSOR, BUT HE MIGHT CHANGE THEM FOR MORE EFFECTIVE OR MODERN VERSIONS. A DESCENDANT IS ONE OF THE BEST CASES FOR A HERO WHO GROWS RAPIDLY IN POWER AND ABILITY, UNLIKE OTHER HEROES WHO TEND TO STAY MORE OR LESS THE SAME.



METRO II

DESCENDANT

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5)

THE DESCENDANT MAY NOT START OFF AS GOOD AS HIS NAMESAKE, BUT OVER THE COURSE OF HIS FIRST FEW ADVENTURES HE TRADES HIS **DETERMINATION** IN FOR MORE **POWERS**, BETTER **ABILITIES**, AND **STUNTS** WHICH ALLOW HIM TO FINALLY LIVE UP TO THE LEGEND THAT IS HIS NAME.

SPECIALTIES: MODERN DESCENDANTS SHOW THEIR AGE BY EXCHANGING OLD-FASHIONED CRIME FIGHTING SKILLS FOR HIGH TECH SCIENCE AND CRIMINOLOGY. THEY INCREASE TO *EXPERT* AND *MASTER* LEVEL WITH SIGNATURE **SPECIALTIES** THAT THEIR NAMESAKE POSSESSED.

WHAT'S DIFFERENT? :

ONE HELPFUL APPROACH WHEN MAKING A DESCENDANT IS TO ASK YOURSELF, "WHAT'S DIFFERENT?" DESCENDANTS HAVE MANY CHARACTERISTICS IN COMMON WITH THEIR PREDECESSORS --SUCH AS POWERS, ENEMIES, OR COSTUME--BUT IT IS THE DIFFERENCES IN THE TWO HEROES THAT WILL SET THEM APART. IN ADDITION TO BEING YOUNGER THAN HIS NAMESAKE, THE DESCENDANT IS OFTEN FROM A MORE MODEST SOCIAL CLASS, GROWING UP ON THE STREETS OR STRUGGLING TO MAKE ENDS MEET INSTEAD OF LANGUISHING IN SOME RICH PENTHOUSE.

YOUR HERO MAY BE A DIFFERENT RACE OR ETHNICITY, AND THERE WAS A TREND IN COMICS FOR A WHILE OF MAKING ALL DESCENDANTS WOMEN IN CONTRAST TO A MALE NAMESAKE. ALL THESE CHANGES --RACE, SOCIAL CLASS AND GENDER--ARE BASICALLY DUE TO THE FACT THAT THE ORIGINAL VERSIONS OF OUR FAVORITE HEROES WERE ALMOST ALL RICH WHITE MEN. CURRENT CREATORS ARE LOOKING FOR MORE DIVERSITY BUT THEY WANT TO USE RECOGNIZABLE NAMES. YOU CAN MAKE THIS TREND WORK FOR YOU; KEEP QUALITIES FROM THE ORIGINAL HERO THAT YOU LIKE AND CHANGE THE ONES YOU DON'T IN ORDER TO MAKE A HERO WHOSE STORY YOU WANT TO TELL.



THE BRONZE STAR II

FIRST APPEARANCE: PROJECT ATLAS #212
ARCHETYPES: DESCENDANT, MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS, MINORITY HERO
QUALITIES: LEGENDARY NAME, DOESN'T FOLLOW TRADITION
CHALLENGES: LOSER, MYSTERIOUS ORIGIN, THREAT OF CANCER

PROWESS	3
COORDINATION	3
STRENGTH	3
INTELLECT	4
AWARENESS	4
WILLPOWER	5
DETERMINATION	1
STAMINA	8



POWERS:
 BLAST 8, FLIGHT 9,
 FORCE FIELD 7, LIFE SUPPORT 8, TELEKINESIS 8

SPECIALTIES:
 BUSINESS, LAW, POWER EXPERT (BLAST OR TELEKINESIS)

STUNTS:
FORCE CAGE (TELEKINESIS): THE BRONZE STAR CAN IMPRISON A FOE IN A CAGE OF PURE FORCE. IF HE HITS WITH THE ATTACK, THE TARGET IS RESTRICTED TO A CLOSE AREA. THE CAGE IS AN OBJECT WITH STRENGTH 8; BREAKING A HOLE IN IT CAUSES IT TO VANISH.

ORIGIN

"YES, I'M SURE MY NAMESAKE WOULD HAVE DONE THINGS THE OLD FASHIONED WAY. UNFORTUNATELY HE'S DEAD, SO WE'RE DOING IT MY WAY."

THE ORIGINAL BRONZE STAR WAS CHUCK DOUGLASS, A BLACK LABORER IN CHICAGO'S SOUTH SIDE NEIGHBORHOOD OF BRONZEVILLE. AFTER HE WAS STRUCK BY A FALLING STAR, DOUGLASS FOUND THAT HE COULD FLY AND PROJECT "THE FOCUSED LIGHT OF A THOUSAND SUNS". HE FOUGHT RACISM AND CRIME IN CHICAGO BEFORE BECOMING THE ONLY BLACK MEMBER OF THE **SEVEN WONDERS**.

THE BRONZE STAR II

WHEN ROOSEVELT AUTHORIZED THE CREATION OF A NEW MEDAL FOR THE ARMY IN 1943, IT WAS WIDELY BELIEVED THAT HIS CHOICE--THE "BRONZE STAR"--WAS IN HONOR OF DOUGLASS.

AFTER THE WAR, THE BRONZE STAR RETIRED TO RAISE A FAMILY. HE BECAME A PROMINENT FIGURE IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT BUT WAS NEVER COMFORTABLE AS A PUBLIC SPEAKER, INSTEAD LENDING HIS SUPPORT TO OTHER LEADERS LIKE MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND MALCOLM X. HE PARTICIPATED IN PUBLIC PROTESTS AGAINST VIETNAM, BUT IN 1969 IT WAS DISCOVERED THAT HIS "FALLING STAR" POWERS HAD GIVEN HIM CANCER, WHICH HAD ALREADY ADVANCED TO A TERMINAL STAGE. HE DIED A YEAR LATER, LEAVING BEHIND A LARGE FAMILY.

IN 2009, HOWEVER, THE "FALLING STAR" EVENT REPEATED ITSELF AT A LARGE RALLY WHERE PROMINENT BUSINESSMAN TERENCE GRUMMAN WAS ANNOUNCING HIS CANDIDACY FOR MAYOR. A BRILLIANT BRONZE LIGHT ENVELOPED GRUMMAN WHEN HE WAS AT THE PODIUM, AND HIS POLITICAL CAMPAIGN WAS INSTANTLY UPSTAGED BY HIS STATUS AS CHICAGO'S NEWEST WONDER. BLACK ADVOCACY GROUPS PRESSURED GRUMMAN TO "LIVE UP TO THE STANDARD OF THIS GREAT NAME" BUT HE WANTED NOTHING TO DO WITH IT. HIS REJECTION OF ANY PRETENSE TO WONDER STATUS WAS SEEN AS A REJECTION OF HIS RACE, AND HE WAS ACCUSED OF WANTING POLITICAL POWER NOT OUT OF A DESIRE TO HELP HIS FELLOW MAN, BUT OUT OF GREED. FOR HIS PART, TERENCE KNEW HE WAS IN A NO-WIN SITUATION: NO CRIME FIGHTER WOULD WIN AN ELECTION, BUT IF HE REFUSED TO USE HIS POWERS HE WAS SEEN AS SOME KIND OF TRAITOR. ELECTION NIGHT TURNED OUT TO BE VERY LONELY FOR TERENCE GRUMMAN.

IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED, TERENCE FOUND THAT HE HAD BECOME A SOCIAL PARIAS. BY REFUSING TO USE HIS POWERS, HE BECAME HATED EVEN MORE THAN MANY CRIMINALS. HIS WIFE ASKED FOR A SEPARATION AND MOVED TO BOSTON. OTHER WONDERS CAME TO HIM AND SUGGESTED HE TAKE UP THE MANTLE OF THE BRONZE STAR, CLAIMING IT WAS HIS OBLIGATION AND RESPONSIBILITY, ALBEIT ONE HE HAD NEVER ASKED FOR. TERENCE DID NOT WANT TO BE A WONDER, HE HAD NEVER WANTED TO BE ONE, BUT HE EVENTUALLY DONNED A UNIFORM JUST SO THAT HE COULD WALK DOWN THE STREET WITHOUT BEING SPIT UPON.

TERENCE IS NOT A BAD GUY, BUT HE RESENTS THE FACT THAT HE HAS LOST CONTROL OF HIS OWN LIFE AND IS FORCED TO DRESS UP IN A COSTUME TO FIGHT CRIME AND SAVE THE WORLD. HE'S VERY INTELLIGENT, WELL EDUCATED, DETERMINED AND HE HAS A DIGNITY ABOUT HIM THAT IS ONLY TAINTED BY HIS ALL-TOO-COMMON SENSE OF FRUSTRATION. AS BRONZE STAR II HE CONTINUES TO WORK ALONGSIDE HIS FELLOW WONDERS AS PART OF PROJECT ATLAS, THOUGH HE HAS A REPUTATION FOR ARGUING A LOT AND SECOND-GUESSING THE CHAMP, WHO IS MOST COMMONLY ACTING AS LEADER. HIS FINANCIAL EMPIRE IS ALL BUT GONE, SINCE MUCH OF HIS RESOURCES WERE SPENT FUNDING HIS DISASTROUS CAMPAIGN FOR MAYOR, AND NOW HE DOESN'T HAVE ENOUGH FREE TIME TO REBUILD. HE IS CONSTANTLY COMPARED TO THE FIRST BRONZE STAR BY BOTH ALLIES AND FOES, AND NEVER IN A FLATTERING WAY.

ABILITIES

THE TRUE NATURE OF THE BRONZE STAR'S POWERS ARE LINKNOWN, BUT THEY ALLOW TERENCE GRUMMAN TO FLY AT INCREDIBLE SPEED AND PROJECT BEAMS OF LIGHT WHICH HE MAY FORM INTO SIMPLE SHAPES. HE TYPICALLY USES THIS ABILITY TO PROTECT INNOCENT PEOPLE OR TRAP ENEMIES WITHIN DOMES AND CAGES, THOUGH HE IS PARTICULARLY GOOD AT RESCUE WORK AND FIGHTING OFF NATURAL DISASTERS. AS LONG AS HE CONCENTRATES, HIS BODY IS SURROUNDED WITH A GLOWING FIELD OF BRONZE LIGHT, WHICH PROTECTS HIM FROM HARM AND HOSTILE ENVIRONMENTS. WHEN USED AS A DIRECT WEAPON, HIS "FALLING STAR ENERGY" CAN BE MORE DESTRUCTIVE THAN A TANK SHELL.

THE BRONZE STAR II

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8)

HIS ONLY REAL OUTLET IS EXPLORING HIS "FALLING STAR" POWERS, WHICH SEEM TO HIM STUBBORN AND UNRESPONSIVE.

ALL THINGS CONSIDERED, TERENCE GRUMMAN IS WISHING HE HAD FINISHED THAT CANDIDACY SPEECH JUST THIRTY SECONDS SOONER. LIFE WOULD BE SO MUCH SIMPLER.

APPEARANCE:

TERENCE GRUMMAN IS A GOOD-LOOKING BLACK MAN IN HIS MID-THIRTIES. HE'S FIT, BUT BY NO MEANS SUPER-HEROIC IN HIS PHYSIQUE. HE PREFERS EXPENSIVE TAILORED CLOTHES, BUT SELDOM GETS TO WEAR THEM ANYMORE, SINCE HE SPENDS ALMOST ALL HIS TIME IN UNIFORM. THE SECOND BRONZE STAR WEARS A COSTUME SIMPLER AND MORE STREAMLINED THAN THE FIRST: ESSENTIALLY AN ALL-BLACK BODYSUIT WITH THE BRONZE STAR THAT IS HIS NAMESAKE DISPLAYED PROMINENTLY ON THE CHEST. BRONZE BOOTS AND GAUNTLETS COMPLETE THE OUTFIT. TERENCE REFUSES TO WEAR A MASK.



STORIES

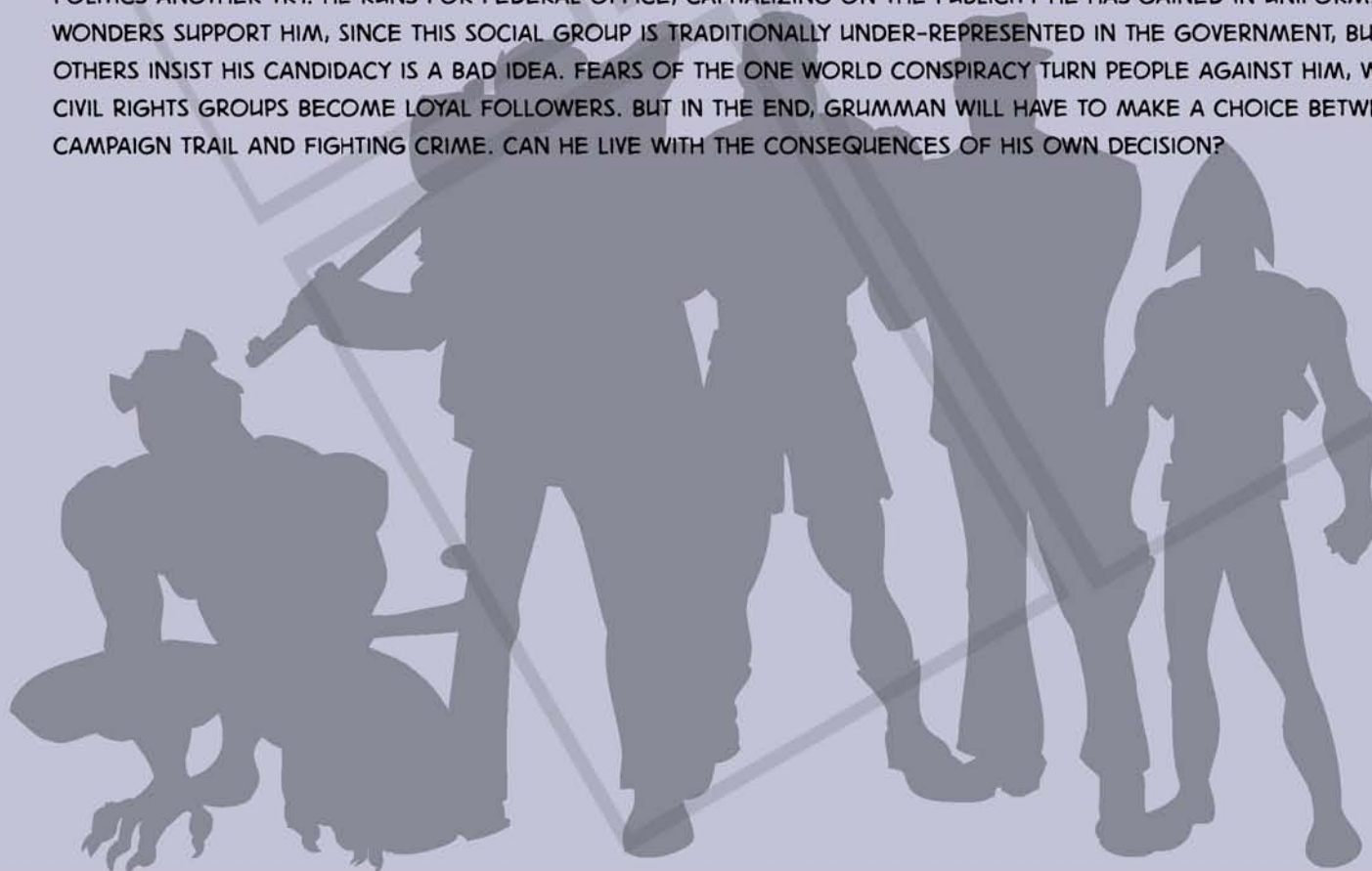
THE BRONZE STAR II

THE BRONZE STAR IS A MAN IN TRANSITION: HE HAS NOT YET ACCEPTED THE HEROIC PATH, AND MIGHT ULTIMATELY REJECT IT. AT THE SAME TIME, EXPLORING HIS LEGACY IS A MAJOR SOURCE OF STORIES FOR HIM.

THE REALITY SHOW "**WHO WANTS TO BE A WONDER**" APPROACHES TERENCE AND OFFERS HIM A LUCRATIVE CONTRACT. FOR ONE SEASON (ROUGHLY THREE MONTHS) HE WILL SUPERVISE A SERIES OF TESTS DELIVERED TO A DOZEN WOULD-BE WONDERS. EACH WEEK HE WILL ELIMINATE ONE CONTESTANT, UNTIL ONLY ONE REMAINS. THROUGH THE USE OF HIGH-TECH SCIENCE ACQUIRED BY THE SHOW'S PRODUCERS, THE POWERS OF THE BRONZE STAR WILL THEN BE TRANSFERRED PERMANENTLY TO THE WINNING CONTESTANT. DOES HE ACCEPT AND, IF HE DOES, WHAT KIND OF TROUBLE WILL HAPPEN ON THE SET?

AN AMBASSADOR FROM THE **PARLIAMENT OF STARS** ARRIVES ON EARTH AND OFFERS TO LEAD THE BRONZE STAR TO THE SOURCE OF HIS POWER, AT LAST EXPLAINING THE "FALLING STAR" AND ITS EFFECTS ON THE HUMAN BODY. PRESUMING HE GOES, WILL TERENCE TAKE ANYONE WITH HIM ON THIS MISSION OF DISCOVERY? WHAT IF THE "AMBASSADOR" IS A FAKE, ACTUALLY LEADING THE STAR INTO A TRAP DESIGNED TO STRIP HIM OF HIS POWERS FOREVER? THE ACTUAL EXPLANATION OF THE "FALLING STAR" COULD BE ANYTHING: THE POWERS MAY BE THE WEAPON OF A COSMIC POLICE FORCE, OR A PARTICULAR HERO TASKED WITH LIBERATING A REMOTE WORLD FROM ITS OPPRESSORS. THESE MYSTERIOUS POWERS MIGHT EVEN BE A BADGE OF AUTHORITY, GIVING TERENCE THE RIGHT TO COMMAND THE POPULATION OF AN ENTIRE PLANET.

IT'S AN ELECTION YEAR, AND AFTER SEVERAL MONTHS OF SERVICE AS A PUBLIC WONDER, TERENCE DECIDES TO GIVE POLITICS ANOTHER TRY. HE RUNS FOR FEDERAL OFFICE, CAPITALIZING ON THE PUBLICITY HE HAS GAINED IN UNIFORM. SOME WONDERS SUPPORT HIM, SINCE THIS SOCIAL GROUP IS TRADITIONALLY UNDER-REPRESENTED IN THE GOVERNMENT, BUT OTHERS INSIST HIS CANDIDACY IS A BAD IDEA. FEARS OF THE ONE WORLD CONSPIRACY TURN PEOPLE AGAINST HIM, WHILE CIVIL RIGHTS GROUPS BECOME LOYAL FOLLOWERS. BUT IN THE END, GRUMMAN WILL HAVE TO MAKE A CHOICE BETWEEN THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL AND FIGHTING CRIME. CAN HE LIVE WITH THE CONSEQUENCES OF HIS OWN DECISION?



DIVINE

THE DIVINE HERO IS, OR BELIEVES HE IS, A SERVANT OF GOD OR ANOTHER DEITY WORSHIPPED IN THE REAL WORLD. THIS SORT OF CHARACTER IS VERY POWERFUL, BUT AT THE SAME TIME HE RISKS OFFENDING THE WORLD AT LARGE. THOSE HE RESCUES MAY NOT BELIEVE HIS CLAIMS OR THEY MAY WORSHIP RIVAL FAITHS. THE DIVINE HERO SURVIVES THIS CONFLICT BY ADHERING TO AN IMPECABLE MORAL AND ETHICAL CODE, WHICH TRANSCENDS HIS PERSONAL CULTURE AND EARNS RESPECT FROM EVERYONE.

EXAMPLES: ANGELA, AZRAEL, FIREBIRD, SUPERGIRL, ZAURIEL
RELATED ARCHETYPES: AVATAR, MYTHIC HERO

QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES: MOST DIVINE HEROES FALL INTO TWO VERY BROAD CATEGORIES: SUPERNATURAL BEINGS WHO COME FROM HEAVEN AND ARE DIRECT SERVITORS OF GOD, OR ORDINARY MORTALS WHO ARE INSPIRED BY EITHER GOD OR ONE OF HIS MESSENGERS. REGARDLESS OF ORIGIN, THE HERO IS SOMEHOW "CHOSEN" TO PARTICIPATE IN SUPERHEROIC ACTIVITY, USUALLY OVER HIS OWN PROTESTS.

SOMETIMES A NEW WRITER WILL TAKE A PERFECTLY MUNDANE HERO, WHO HAS NEVER BEEN ESPECIALLY RELIGIOUS IN A "BOLD NEW DIRECTION", LEADING TO A RELIGIOUS MOMENT AND NEW LIFE AS A DIVINE HERO.

NO ONE LIKES A KNOW-IT-ALL AND IF A DIVINE HERO WALKS THE EARTH IMMUNE TO ALL FAILURE OR TEMPTATION THEN HIS STORIES GET BORING QUICKLY. FOR THESE REASONS, THE DIVINE HERO USUALLY HAS TO GUESS ABOUT GOD'S PLAN AND HIS PARTICULAR ROLE IN IT.

PERIODICALLY, SUPERNATURAL MESSENGERS SHOW UP TO MAKE SURE THE DIVINE HERO KNOWS HIS INSTRUCTIONS; WHILE SOMETIMES THIS IS A CONVENIENT "THE ADVENTURE IS THAT WAY" SORT OF COMMAND, MORE DRAMATIC SITUATIONS INVOLVE DIRECTIONS WHICH RUN COUNTER TO THE DIVINE HERO'S PERSONAL DESIRE, MISSION, MORALITY OR ETHICS.

THIS IS JUST ONE KIND OF TEST WHICH THE DIVINE HERO IS OFTEN FORCED TO ENDURE, SOMETIMES TO PROVE HIS FAITH OR MORAL CHARACTER, SOMETIMES TO SHOW HIS WILLINGNESS TO DISOBEY AUTHORITY IN ORDER TO DO WHAT'S RIGHT.

THESE TALES MIRROR THE "FORTUNATE FALL" FROM EDEN, IN WHICH MAN ATE OF THE TREE OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOOD AND EVIL AND WAS EXILED BUT IN SO DOING DEMONSTRATED THE EXISTENCE OF FREE WILL. SOMETIMES THE TESTS ARE FAR EASIER TO UNDERSTAND; THE DIVINE HERO IS LIKELY TO HAVE DEMONIC OR HELLISH ADVERSARIES THAT APPEAR IN SUCH GREAT NUMBER THAT ONLY A TEAM OF HEROES COULD HOPE TO DEFEAT THEM.



GABRIEL

DIVINE

ALTHOUGH THE HERO TRACES HIS POWER TO THE ULTIMATE COSMIC AUTHORITY, HE IS ALMOST NEVER LEADER OF A SUPERHERO TEAM. THIS IS TO KEEP THE DIVINE HERO FROM LOOKING LIKE A BULLY, FORCING HIS RELIGION ON OTHERS. INSTEAD, THE DIVINE HERO ACTS AS A BACK-UP OR SUPPORT CHARACTER ON THE TEAM, A COUNSELOR WHO HELPS OTHER HEROES IN NEED AND GETS INTO WONDERFUL DEBATES WITH THE TEAM AVATAR OVER THE NATURE OF FAITH, WORSHIP, AND GODHOOD. THE DIVINE HERO'S RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER MEMBERS OF HIS OWN FAITH, AS WELL AS TO OTHER FAITHS, ATHEISTS AND AGNOSTICS, IS KEY TO HIS CHARACTER. WHAT DO THESE PEOPLE THINK OF HIM? HOW DOES HE VIEW THEM IN RETURN?

ABILITIES:

DIVINE HEROES DON'T NEED INTELLECT, BUT THEY USUALLY HAVE PRETTY GOOD PROWESS, AWARENESS AND WILLPOWER.

SPECIALTIES: OCCULT IS SO COMMON THAT, IF A DIVINE HERO DOES NOT HAVE IT, THIS BECOMES A STORY ISSUE AND THE HERO MUST BE EDUCATED ON HIS NEW WORLD. ANGELIC HEROES WILL HAVE WEAPONS OR AERIAL COMBAT. EVEN THOUGH THE DIVINE HERO IS NOT THE LEADER OF THE TEAM, HE OR SHE MAY HAVE LEADERSHIP JUST FOR ITS DETERMINATION FUNCTION.

POWERS: A DIVINE HERO'S POWERS DEPEND ON THE RELIGION HE IS BASED ON. ANGELIC HEROES, COMMON TO JUDAISM, CHRISTIANITY OR ISLAM, WILL HAVE AN ELEMENTAL CONTROL BASED ON FIRE OR LIGHT, POSSIBLY INCLUDING AN AURA, AND MAY BE ABLE TO WORK "MIRACLES" USING HEALING. (IN A WORLD WHERE CHARACTERS COME BACK FROM THE DEAD AFTER A YEAR, IS ANYTHING REALLY MIRACULOUS ANYMORE?) THEY CAN ALMOST CERTAINLY FLY. A STAFF, SWORD, OR OTHER SIMPLE WEAPON COMMONLY SERVES AS A FOCUS FOR THEIR POWER.

MINOR POWERS MAY INCLUDE THE ABILITY TO DISCERN TRUTH FROM LIES (A TELEPATHY STUNT) OR INSTILL FAITH IN OTHERS BY SPENDING DETERMINATION ON THEIR BEHALF. DIVINE HEROES CAN TRAVEL FROM HEAVEN OR THEIR PERSONAL EQUIVALENT TO EARTH AND BACK USING DIMENSION TRAVEL. A CONNECTION TO THE DIVINE MAY SUPPLY THE HERO WITH KNOWLEDGE NOT AVAILABLE TO OTHERS.

NEW POWER!

INSPIRATION

YOU JUST KNOW THINGS! THIS POWER MAY REPRESENT ACTUAL DIVINE INSPIRATION FROM ON HIGH, BUT IT COULD ALSO BE USED TO REPRESENT "COSMIC AWARENESS", ACCESS TO COMPUTERIZED DATABANKS BUILT INTO YOUR SUPER-WEAPON, SUBCONSCIOUS PROGRAMMING BY AN ORDER OF MONKS, SUPERNATURAL SIXTH SENSES, OR JUST THE KIND OF OMNI-COMPETENCE DISPLAYED BY SCIENTISTS LIKE REED RICHARDS. THIS POWER HAS TWO USES.

- ONCE PER SESSION, YOU MAY SUBSTITUTE YOUR **INSPIRATION** FOR ANY TEST IN WHICH A **SPECIALTY** MIGHT APPLY. YOU DON'T NEED TO HAVE THE SPECIALTY TO DO THIS; IF YOUR JET AIRLINER IS CRASHING AND YOU SUDDENLY NEED TO BE ABLE TO PILOT IT, INSPIRATION MEANS YOU KNOW HOW.
 - ALSO ONCE PER SESSION, YOU MAY ASK THE GM ONE QUESTION CONCERNING EVENTS HAPPENING IN THE PRESENT MOMENT OF THE GAME WORLD. THE GM MUST ANSWER TRUTHFULLY, BUT CAN BE MORE SPECIFIC AND LENGTHY IN HIS ANSWER DEPENDING ON YOUR LEVEL OF INSPIRATION. IT'S CONSIDERED POOR SPORTSMANSHIP TO USE THIS POWER TO SOLVE MYSTERIES, ESPECIALLY IF SOLVING THE MYSTERY IS THE FOCUS OF THE ADVENTURE, BUT QUESTIONS LIKE "WHERE IS PROFESSOR PERIL'S SECRET BASE?" OR "IS THIS GUY TELLING THE TRUTH?" ARE PERFECTLY FAIR.
- A HERO CAN SPEND **DETERMINATION** TO USE EACH INSPIRATION FUNCTION ADDITIONAL TIMES DURING A SESSION.

THE GRAIL

FIRST APPEARANCE: *YOUNG WONDERS #1*

ARCHETYPES: DIVINE HERO, YOUNG HERO, MYTHIC HERO

QUALITIES: SECRET ALLIES, YOUNG WONDER, UNTAPPED POTENTIAL

CHALLENGES: OBJECT OF THE TEMPLAR PLAN, ORPHAN, WWJD?

PROWESS 3

COORDINATION 4

STRENGTH 2

INTELLECT 4

AWARENESS 6

WILLPOWER 5

DETERMINATION 1

STAMINA 7

POWERS:

BLAST 6, HEALING 5, INSPIRATION 7,
INVISIBILITY 3, TELEPORTATION 8

SPECIALTIES:

INVESTIGATION, LEADERSHIP,
OCCULT

STUNTS:

SEEN AND UNSEEN (INVISIBILITY): THE GRAIL CAN CHOOSE TO BE INVISIBLE TO SOME PEOPLE BUT VISIBLE TO OTHERS AT THE SAME TIME.

ORIGIN

"YOU THINK YOUR FAMILY IS A LOT TO LIVE UP TO. TRY WALKING ON WATER SOMETIME."

SOPHIE FISHER NEVER THOUGHT HER LIFE WAS ALL THAT MUCH TO TALK ABOUT. SHE GREW UP IN A MIDDLE-CLASS, SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA SUBURBAN HOME. HER FATHER WAS A REAL ESTATE AGENT, HER MOTHER A TEACHER. BUT AROUND THE TIME OF THE MILLENNIUM, THINGS STARTED TO GET WEIRD AT THE FISHER HOUSEHOLD. HER PARENTS STARTED TO GET STRANGE PHONE CALLS IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, HER FATHER WENT AWAY ON EXTENDED VACATIONS TO FRANCE, AND HER MOTHER STARTED TAKING SOPHIE TO CHURCH EVERY SUNDAY. SOPHIE, WHO WAS IN JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL AT THE TIME, THOUGHT THAT MAYBE HER PARENTS WERE GETTING A DIVORCE. IF ONLY IT HAD BEEN THAT SIMPLE.



THE GRAIL

IN LATE 2007, THE FISHERS WERE ON A VACATION IN UPSTATE WISCONSIN WHEN A RIFLE SHOT TOOK OUT THE FRONT WHEEL OF THE FAMILY CAR, SENDING IT PLUNGING INTO A LAKE. TOM AND ANNE FISHER STRUGGLED TO REACH THE SURFACE, BUT WERE SHOT IN TURN BY A MYSTERIOUS ASSASSIN. SOPHIE, TOO TERRIFIED TO RISE FOR AIR, STAYED UNDER SO LONG THAT SHE LOST CONSCIOUSNESS. MIRACULOUSLY, SHE AWOKE ON THE LAKESHORE TO THE SOUND OF SOMEONE COMING HER WAY THROUGH THE TREES. PICKING HERSELF UP, SHE RAN FOR HER LIFE.

AT FIRST, SOPHIE HAD NOWHERE TO GO. SHE DISCOVERED QUICKLY THAT WHOEVER IT WAS THAT HAD KILLED HER PARENTS WAS AFTER HER AS WELL, AND HAD CONNECTIONS EVERYWHERE. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS WERE NO HELP, AND AFTER BARELY ESCAPING ONE WELL-LAID TRAP SHE RESOLVED NEVER TO CALL UPON THEM AGAIN. STRANGE THINGS BEGAN TO HAPPEN AROUND HER: A WOMAN SHE SHOOK HANDS WITH SUDDENLY ROSE FROM HER WHEELCHAIR, PEOPLE WOULD LOOK RIGHT AT SOPHIE AND YET NOT SEE HER. WHEN SHE WAS RUNNING, SHE WOULD SUDDENLY FIND HERSELF ACROSS TOWN, OR ACROSS THE STATE. SHE HAD NO EXPLANATION FOR WHAT WAS HAPPENING TO HER, BUT THE MEN WHO WERE ON HER TAIL WERE RELENTLESS, AND SHE COULD SOMEHOW SENSE THAT THEY MEANT HER DEATH.

FOR SOPHIE, THE VEIL OF CONFUSION THAT SURROUNDED HER LIFE PARTED FOR THE FIRST TIME WHEN SHE WAS CONTACTED BY THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN KNOWN AS MONA LISA, WHO SAT SOPHIE DOWN AND -- IN BETWEEN ASSASSINATION ATTEMPTS AND OCCULT RITUALS -- EXPLAINED THAT TOM AND ANNE FISHER HAD NOT BEEN SIMPLE SUBURBANITES. RATHER, THEY WERE DESCENDANTS OF A FAMILY THAT TRACED ITS LINEAGE BACK THROUGH THE FRENCH NOBILITY TO NO LESS A FIGURE THAN MARY MAGDALENE AND JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF. THIS FAMILY, THE DESCENDANTS OF CHRIST, HAD BEEN PLANNING A MYSTICAL REVOLUTION FOR THE MILLENNIUM, BUT THEIR SWORN ENEMIES THE KNIGHTS TEMPLAR HAD MANAGED TO FOIL THE PLAN, KILLING EVERY MEMBER OF THE BLOODLINE EXCEPT FOR SOPHIE HERSELF. ORIGINALLY, ANOTHER MEMBER OF THE FAMILY HAD BEEN TAPPED TO LEAD MANKIND INTO A NEW AGE OF PEACE AND PROSPERITY, BUT WITH THAT PERSON'S DEATH THE POWERS OF THE HOLY BLOODLINE HAD PASSED TO SOPHIE. THE LINEAGE OF CHRIST, WHICH HAD SERVED AS THE INSPIRATION FOR MYTHS OF THE HOLY GRAIL, HAD ONLY ONE SURVIVING HEIR, AND SOPHIE FISHER WAS IT.

NOW AWARE OF HER TRUE NATURE, SOPHIE WAS BETTER ABLE TO MARSHAL HER ABILITIES. FORCED TO STAY ONE STEP AHEAD OF HER TEMPLAR ENEMIES, SHE BEGAN TO RESEARCH THE OCCULT MYTH OF THE GRAIL. IN FRANCE, SHE TRIED TO PICK UP THE PIECES OF HER FAMILY, THEIR SERVANTS AND ALLIES, BUT SHE FOUND THE TEMPLAR PLAN HAD BEEN CONSPICUOUSLY THOROUGH. NO EVIDENCE OF THE "GRAIL FAMILY" COULD BE FOUND, AND SOPHIE BEGAN TO WONDER IF MONA'S STORY HAD BEEN A COMPLETE FABRICATION, SERVING SOME HIDDEN PURPOSE. BUT SHE KNEW THAT THE TEMPLARS WERE STILL AFTER HER, AND COMING CLOSER BY THE DAY.

RECENTLY SOPHIE SET HER SIGHTS ON THE ENGLISH CITY OF HAWKSMOOR, WHERE SHE HOPES TO FIND MONA OR SOME OTHER OCCULT EXPERT WHO CAN HELP FILL IN THE BLANKS AND GUIDE SOPHIE IN THE USE OF HER POWERS. BUT SHE REMAINS EXTREMELY CAUTIOUS, UNABLE TO TRUST ANYONE WHO SEEMS TO KNOW ANYTHING ABOUT THE TEMPLARS, THE GRAIL, OR THE PLAN. INDEED, HER BEST COMPANIONS ARE THOSE WHO KNOW NOTHING AT ALL ABOUT SUCH MATTERS, FOR IT IS ONLY IN THE COMPANY OF THE IGNORANT THAT SOPHIE CAN LET DOWN HER GUARD.

ABILITIES

THE POWER OF THE GRAIL IS PRIMARILY THAT OF HEALING, AND SOPHIE CAN CURE INJURIES WITH A TOUCH. HOWEVER, THIS CAN TAKE A LOT OUT OF HER, AND WHEN CURING ILLNESS, POISON, OR OTHER UNUSUAL CONDITIONS SHE MUST USUALLY SPEND DETERMINATION ON A STUNT. THIS MAKES HER HEALING POWER PRIMARILY USEFUL OUT OF COMBAT, WHEN SHE HAS A CHANCE TO RECUPERATE FROM ITS USE. SOPHIE CAN TAP THE POWER OF THE GRAIL FOR A NUMBER OF OTHER FEATS, INCLUDING TELEPORTATION TO ANY SPOT ON EARTH. SHE CAN PASS UNSEEN AND UNDETECTED, RECEIVE DIVINE INSPIRATION WHICH WARNS HER OF EVIL, SEE INSIDE THE HEARTS OF MEN, AND EVEN STRIKE BACK AT THOSE WHO OPPOSE HER WITH A BLAST OF OVERPOWERING LIGHT. OFFENSIVE ACTION IS NOT, HOWEVER, SOPHIE'S SPECIALTY; SHE'S FAR BETTER AT RUNNING AND HIDING THAN SHE IS AT FIGHTING. WHEN SHE USES HEALING OR INVISIBILITY, SHE CANNOT USE ANY OTHER POWER THAT PAGE.

THE GRAIL

APPEARANCE: SOPHIE IS A BEAUTIFUL REDHEAD IN HER LATE TEENS. ONCE SHE HAD A VERY CASUAL AND EVEN RECKLESS WARDROBE, BUT NOW THAT SHE HAS LEARNED OF HER DESTINY AS THE GRAIL SHE FINDS HERSELF IN DRAB, CONCEALING OUTFITS THAT HELP TO HIDE HER IDENTITY FROM THE SHADY AGENTS SHE KNOWS ARE FOLLOWING HER. A LONG TRENCH COAT, HEAVY SUNGLASSES, AND A BANDANNA OVER HER HAIR DO HER WELL ENOUGH IN THE DAMP STREETS OF HAWKSMOOR.

WHEN SOPHIE ALLOWS THE POWERS OF THE GRAIL TO SURFACE, SHE TAKES ON A MUCH MORE RADIANT APPEARANCE, GARBED IN A TEARDROP SHAPED GOLDEN CLOAK WITH HOOD. SHE GIVES OFF AN AURA OF ROSE-COLORED LIGHT, AND THE HOOD SEEMS TO CONCEAL HER FACIAL FEATURES FROM ANY INQUISITIVE SPECTATORS.



STORIES

THE GRAIL

THE GRAIL IS HUNTED BY FORCES FAR MORE POWERFUL THAN SHE CAN FIGHT OFF ALONE. THIS FORCES HER TO CONTACT OTHERS, WHO THEN HAVE TO DECIDE WHETHER OR NOT TO BELIEVE HER CLAIMS. HER MANY POWERS MAKE HER ESPECIALLY USEFUL TO ANY SUPER-TEAM, AND SHE'S LIKELY TO END UP WITH A GROUP OF OCCULTISTS OR FELLOW YOUNG HEROES.

SOPHIE'S POWERS, WHILE IMPRESSIVE, BARELY SCRATCH THE SURFACE OF WHAT THE GRAIL IS CAPABLE OF. TO TAP THOSE GREATER POWERS, SOPHIE SEEKS OUT AN INSTRUCTOR. THIS MIGHT REQUIRE HER TO MEET WITH SEVERAL POTENTIAL MENTORS. THE IDEAL CANDIDATE WILL HAVE OCCULT KNOWLEDGE, POWERS OF HIS OWN, AND A SECURE BASE WHERE SOPHIE WILL BE SAFE FROM THE TEMPLARS. (POTENTIAL CANDIDATES INCLUDE MISTER Y AND BARBAROSSA WHO, WHILE UNDENIABLY EVIL, HAS NO LOVE FOR THE TEMPLARS AND PLENTY OF INTEREST IN THE HOLY GRAIL.) AT THE SAME TIME, ANY LIKELY CANDIDATE COULD BE A TEMPLAR SPY, OR BE WATCHED BY THE TEMPLARS, WHICH MEANS SOPHIE WILL HAVE TO EXPOSE HERSELF TO HER FOES TO GET THE HELP SHE SEEKS.

SOPHIE DECIDES THAT THE TRUE DESTINY OF THE GRAIL IS TO LEAD MANKIND INTO A NEW ERA OF PEACE AND LOVE. SHE MUST CARRY OUT THE PLAN THAT HER FAMILY HAS BEEN WORKING ON FOR TWO THOUSAND YEARS. BUT THERE'S NO WAY SHE CAN DO THAT AND WATCH HER BACK AT THE SAME TIME, SO SHE ASSEMBLES SEVERAL POWERFUL BUT INEXPERIENCED HEROES INTO A SUPER-TEAM, OSTENSIBLY FOR THE PURPOSE OF FIGHTING CRIME AND INJUSTICE. HOW WILL SHE KEEP HER AGENDA FROM HER ALLIES? AND HOW LONG WILL THEY LET HER GO BEFORE ASKING POINTED QUESTIONS?

WORD OF THE GRAIL'S APPEARANCE BEGINS TO SPREAD AND ORDINARY PEOPLE BECOME FIXATED ON SOPHIE, BOTH AS A HERALD OF THE END OF THE WORLD AND AS A MYSTIC OMEN TO BE PURSUED. A COMPUTER SALESMAN QUILTS HIS JOB, CHANGES HIS NAME TO PERCIVAL, AND DEDICATES HIS LIFE TO GAINING AN AUDIENCE WITH HER. EVANGELICAL CHURCHES START BLAMING NATURAL DISASTERS ON HER. WANNA-BE OCCULTISTS SEEK HER OUT FOR ENLIGHTENMENT. WONDERS WHO BASE THEIR POWERS ON PAGAN GODS OR RIVAL FAITHS CONFRONT HER IN AN EFFORT TO FIND OUT WHICH RELIGION IS STRONGEST. ALL OF THIS MAKES IT A LOT EASIER FOR THE TEMPLARS TO GET CLOSER.



EMBODIMENT

THE EMBODIMENT IS MORE THAN JUST THE MASTER OF A PARTICULAR ELEMENTAL FORCE. HE IS THAT ELEMENTAL FORCE. HE'S NOT JUST FAST, HE IS SPEED. HE'S NOT JUST ABLE TO CONTROL PLANTS, HE IS NATURE. BUT WITH SUCH GREAT POWER COMES EVEN GREATER RESPONSIBILITY: THE EMBODIMENT ANSWERS TO OTHER BEINGS EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN HE, AND IS REALLY JUST A COG IN A COSMIC MACHINE BEYOND MANKIND'S PERCEPTION.

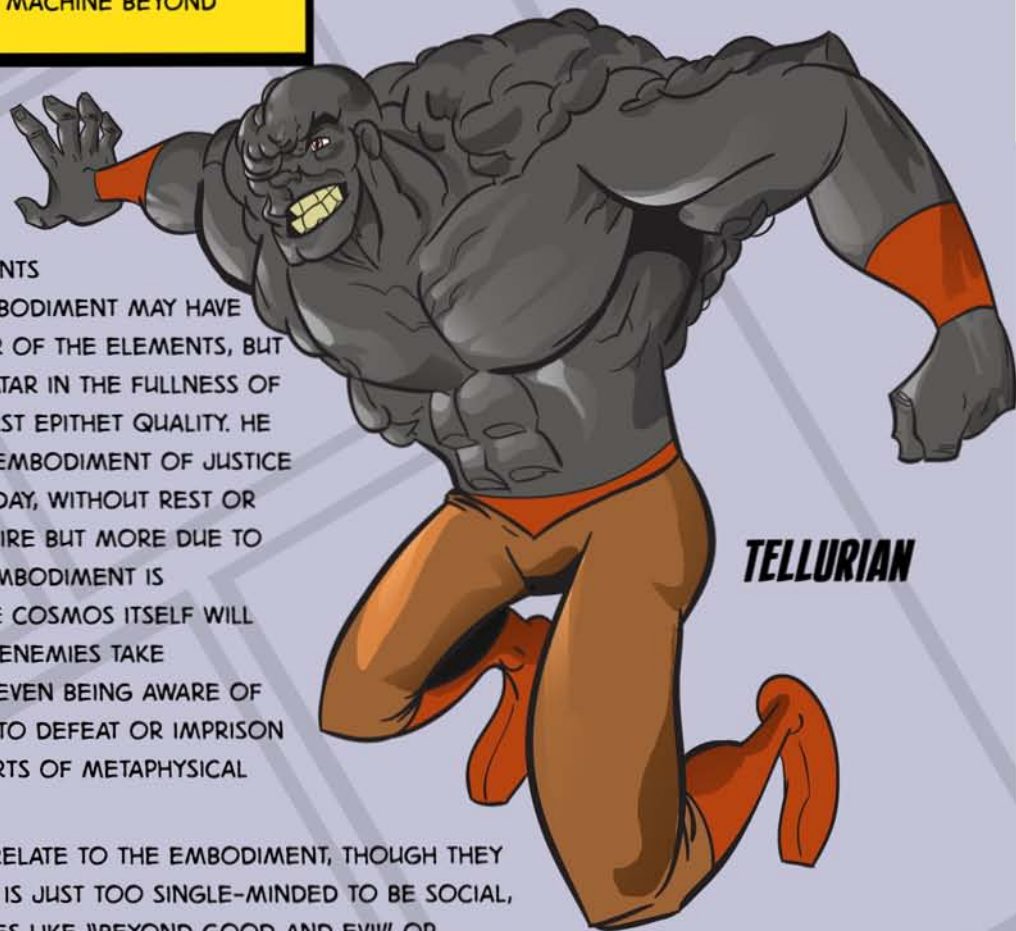
EXAMPLES: THE BEYONDER, CAPTAIN UNIVERSE, ETERNITY, GALACTUS, THE SPECTRE, SWAMP THING, SANDMAN

RELATED ARCHETYPES: AVATAR, FOCUSED HERO, MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS

QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES: THE EMBODIMENT MAY HAVE BEGUN AS A FOCUSED HERO OR MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS, BUT HE GREW INTO AN EMBODIMENT OR AVATAR IN THE FULLNESS OF TIME. WHATEVER HE EMBODIES IS HIS FIRST EPITHET QUALITY. HE TENDS TO BE VERY SINGLE MINDED; AN EMBODIMENT OF JUSTICE WILL DEAL OUT JUSTICE ALL DAY, EVERY DAY, WITHOUT REST OR DISTRACTION. THIS IS PARTLY OUT OF DESIRE BUT MORE DUE TO OBLIGATION; IT IS IMPLIED THAT IF THE EMBODIMENT IS PREVENTED FROM DOING HIS WORK, THE COSMOS ITSELF WILL BEGIN TO BREAK DOWN. INEVITABLY HIS ENEMIES TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THIS. PERHAPS WITHOUT EVEN BEING AWARE OF WHAT THEY ARE DOING, THEY ARRANGE TO DEFEAT OR IMPRISON THE EMBODIMENT, RESULTING IN ALL SORTS OF METAPHYSICAL MAYHEM.

IT IS DIFFICULT FOR OTHER HEROES TO RELATE TO THE EMBODIMENT, THOUGH THEY MAY RESPECT AND WISELY FEAR HIM. HE IS JUST TOO SINGLE-MINDED TO BE SOCIAL, AND THIS IS REPRESENTED BY CHALLENGES LIKE "BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL" OR "CONSUMED BY THE NEED FOR JUSTICE". BECAUSE OF THIS, AND THE FACT THAT HE CAN USUALLY HANDLE ANY SUPER-VILLAIN BY HIMSELF WITHOUT BREAKING A SWEAT, HE IS SEEN IN SOLO STORIES AND SELDOM REMAINS IN A TEAM FOR VERY LONG. THE EXCEPTION IS A TEAM MADE UP SOLELY OF EMBODIMENTS.

TO MAINTAIN SOME LINK TO HUMANITY, THE EMBODIMENT HAS EITHER A HUMAN HOST OR A SIGNIFICANT OTHER WHOM HE LOVES OR PROTECTS (AN IDENTITY QUALITY, ALTER-EGO COMPLICATION, OR CONNECTION). THIS HUMAN LINK GROUNDS THE EMBODIMENT AND PERIODICALLY CREATES STORIES IN WHICH MUNDANE CRIMINALS TRY TO KIDNAP THE POOR SCHMUCK. IT'S NEVER IN QUESTION IF THE EMBODIMENT WILL RESCUE HIS HUMAN TOUCHSTONE, IT IS ONLY A QUESTION OF HOW CRUEL AND WHIMSICAL HIS REVENGE WILL BE. THIS REVENGE CREATES NEW PROBLEMS FAR IN EXCESS OF THE ORIGINAL.



TELLURIAN

EMBODIMENT

(QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES CONT.)

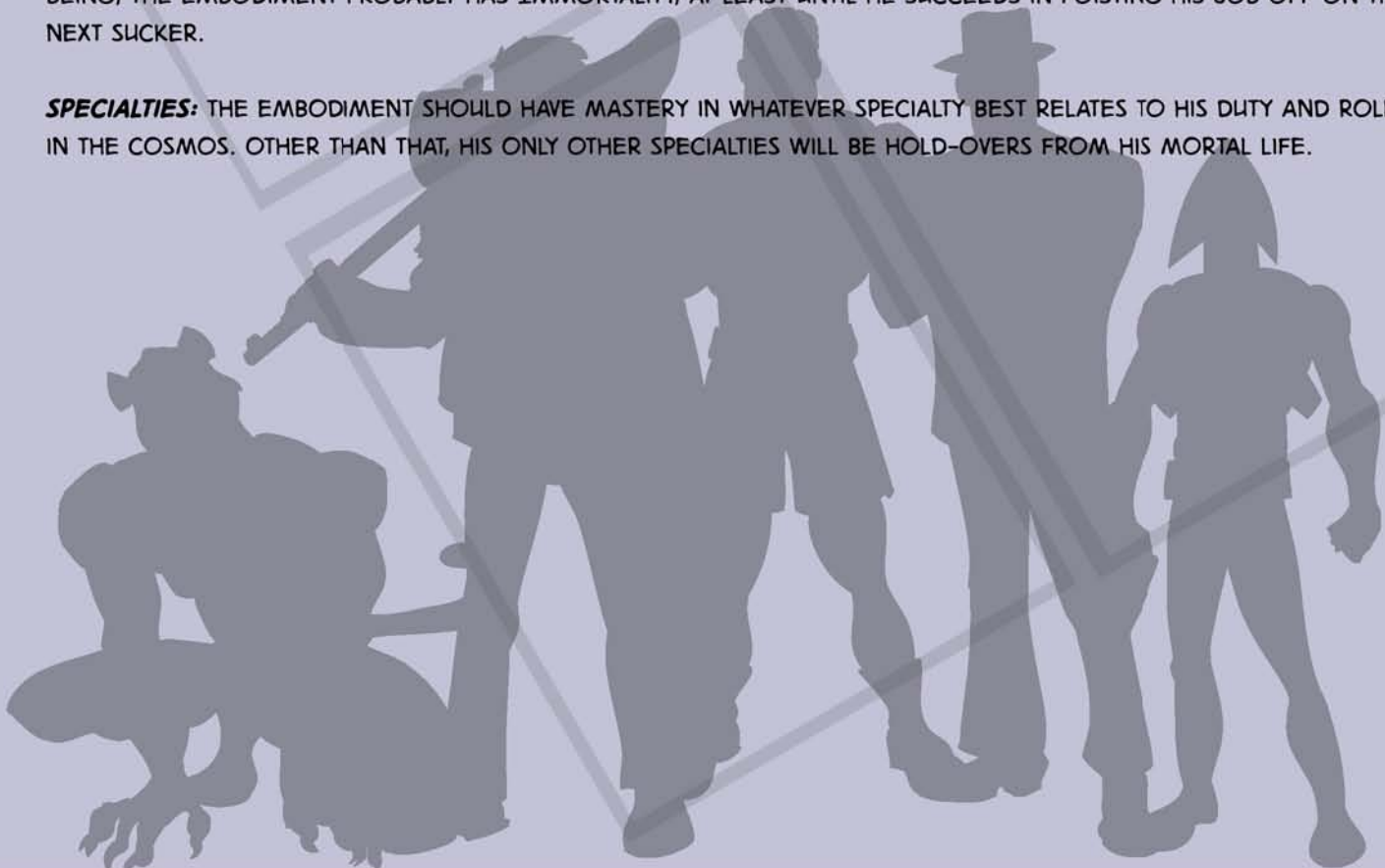
IF THE EMBODIMENT HAS A HUMAN HOST, THAT HOST MIGHT CHANGE EVERY GAME SESSION. OTHERWISE, THE EMBODIMENT TENDS TO BE VERY SCHIZOPHRENIC WITH HIMSELF, TORN BETWEEN IDENTIFYING WITH THE SHORT-LIVED MORTALS WHO SURROUND HIM OR THE LARGER CAUSE TO WHICH HE IS OBLIGED. USUALLY THE CAUSE WINS, WITH TRAGIC RESULTS FOR THE EMBODIMENT, WHO IS SELDOM A VERY HAPPY INDIVIDUAL. INDEED, IT USUALLY TURNS OUT THAT THE EMBODIMENT WOULD BE MUCH HAPPIER AND BETTER OFF IF HE WERE JUST AN ORDINARY GUY WORKING AT A DELI.

TO ALL THIS CAN BE ADDED THE FACT THAT THE EMBODIMENT IS OCCASIONALLY CALLED ON THE CARPET BY VAST COSMIC ENTITIES WHOSE TRUE MOTIVES ARE INSCRUTABLE OR SIMPLY MISGUIDED. THESE COSMIC MASTERS, WHO CARE NOTHING FOR INDIVIDUAL HUMAN BEINGS, PREVENT THE EMBODIMENT FROM BEING A TRUE EXERCISE IN WISH-FULFILLMENT. WHEN HE REFUSES THEIR WRONG-HEADED COMMANDS, THEY PUNISH HIM IN SHORT-SIGHTED AND WHIMSICAL WAYS; WHEN HE DOES WELL, THEY "REWARD" HIM BY INTENSIFYING OR BROADENING HIS QUEST SO THAT HE HAS EVEN LESS TIME TO SPEND AMONG MORTAL FOLK.

ABILITIES: THE EMBODIMENT DOESN'T USUALLY NEED HIGH PROWESS, COORDINATION, OR STRENGTH (THOUGH HE MAY HAVE THESE) BECAUSE HIS POWERS ARE SO VAST AS TO BE IRRESISTIBLE. HIS INTELLECT, WILLPOWER, AND ESPECIALLY AWARENESS ARE ALL HIGH, HOWEVER.

POWERS: AT FIRST GLANCE THE EMBODIMENT'S POWERS MAY SEEM VERY NARROW, BUT IN FACT THIS SINGLE POWER HAS BEEN MASTERED TO SUCH A DEGREE THAT IT CAN BE USED FOR AN AMAZING DIVERSITY OF ENDS. WIZARDRY, INCLUDING COSMIC POWER AS MUCH AS ACTUAL MAGIC, IS TAILOR-MADE FOR CHARACTERS OF THIS TYPE, BUT OTHER CONTROL POWERS SUCH AS ELEMENTAL, PROBABILITY, PLANT OR TIME CONTROL SUFFICE IN A PINCH. AS A HALF-COSMIC BEING, THE EMBODIMENT PROBABLY HAS IMMORTALITY, AT LEAST UNTIL HE SUCCEEDS IN FOISTING HIS JOB OFF ON THE NEXT SUCKER.

SPECIALTIES: THE EMBODIMENT SHOULD HAVE MASTERY IN WHATEVER SPECIALTY BEST RELATES TO HIS DUTY AND ROLE IN THE COSMOS. OTHER THAN THAT, HIS ONLY OTHER SPECIALTIES WILL BE HOLD-OVERS FROM HIS MORTAL LIFE.



MISTER Y

FIRST APPEARANCE: CITY OF WHISPERS #12

ARCHETYPES: EMBODIMENT, MAGICIAN, DEFENDER

QUALITIES: TERRIBLY MYSTERIOUS, EARTH'S MASTER MAGICIAN, THE STRANGER THE BETTER

CHALLENGES: WHY? ANSWERS TO THE EX-GODS, GUARDIAN OF HAWKSMOOR

PROWESS 3

COORDINATION 4

STRENGTH 3

INTELLECT 7

AWARENESS 6

WILLPOWER 6

DETERMINATION 1

STAMINA 9

POWERS:

ASTRAL PROJECTION 6, DETECTION 8 (MAGIC), TELEPATHY 7, WIZARDRY 8 (MAGIC, BLAST & BINDING)

SPECIALTIES:

INVESTIGATION, OCCULT MASTERY, POWER MASTERY (MAGIC), WRITING

STUNTS:

ARCANE (WIZARDRY): MISTER Y IS INVISIBLE TO MAGICAL DETECTION UNTIL HE USES HIS POWERS OR CHOOSES TO LOWER HIS DEFENSES. ANYONE ATTEMPTING TO USE MAGICAL SENSORY POWERS ON HIM MUST BEAT HIS WIZARDRY IN A TEST; **DISPEL** (WIZARDRY): MISTER Y CAN USE HIS WIZARDRY TO REPLICATE POWER NULLIFICATION WITHOUT WORRYING ABOUT FEEDBACK, BUT THIS ONLY WORKS AGAINST OTHER MAGICAL POWERS.

MASTER OF SHAPES (WIZARDRY): MISTER Y CAN ADOPT THE FORM OF ANY ANIMAL AS IF HE HAD THE TRANSFORMATION POWER.

PASS UNSEEN (WIZARDRY): MISTER Y CAN MAKE HIMSELF AND UP TO 8 COLLEAGUES INVISIBLE TO ANYONE WITH AN AWARENESS OF 4 OR LESS, AND HE CAN SUSTAIN THIS AS LONG AS HE USES NO OTHER POWERS. **CIRCLE OF TELEPORTATION** (WIZARDRY): MISTER Y CAN TELEPORT HIMSELF AND UP TO 8 COLLEAGUES ANYWHERE ON EARTH. **TELL ME YOUR TALE** (TELEPATHY): MISTER Y CAN, THROUGH HIS MAGIC, COMMUNICATE WITH ANY LIVING THING ON EARTH, EVEN ANIMALS OR PLANTS.



MISTER Y

ORIGIN

"COME WITH ME, GENTLEMEN, AND I'LL SHOW YOU A TALE THAT WILL MAKE YOU QUESTION EVERYTHING YOU EVER THOUGHT YOU KNEW."

AS A CHILD, WILLIAM SPENSER WAS ALWAYS ASKING QUESTIONS. HE WANTED TO KNOW WHY THE SKY WAS BLUE, WHY THE GRASS WAS GREEN. AS HE AGED, HE BEGAN TO WRITE. IT WAS NOT UNTIL HE WAS IN COLLEGE THAT HE CAME TO REALIZE WRITING, TOO, WAS AN ATTEMPT TO ANSWER THE SAME QUESTION. WHY DO PEOPLE DO THE THINGS THEY DO? WHY DO THEY HURT ONE ANOTHER? WHY DO THEY SACRIFICE? WHY DO THEY FALL IN LOVE? WHY ARE WE HERE? WILL'S WRITING DIDN'T REALLY TAKE OFF, HOWEVER. HE TRIED TO PLEASE HIS PROFESSORS BY STICKING TO MUNDANE REALITY STORIES ABOUT ORDINARY PEOPLE LIVING ORDINARY LIVES, BUT HIS WORK DIDN'T STAND OUT FROM THAT OF OTHERS.

IT WAS ONLY AFTER HE TURNED TO THE STRANGE WORLD OF UNEXPLAINED PHENOMENA THAT WILL'S WRITING STARTED TO ATTRACT ATTENTION. ON APRIL 14TH, 1968 NEWSPAPERS REPORTED THAT CARP FELL FROM THE SKY IN WIESBADEN, GERMANY. WHY? ON THE SAME DAY, SPIDERS IN OKLAHOMA COVERED A FARMER'S BARN WITH SILK. WHY? WORKERS AT A MINE BLASTED A BOULDER IN HALF TO REVEAL A TREE FROG THAT HAD BEEN SEALED INSIDE THE STONE AND WAS STILL ALIVE. WHY? FROM BIZARRE FACTS LIKE THESE, WILL SPENSER BEGAN TO WEAVE STORIES. HE NEVER REALLY FOUND ANSWERS TO THE QUESTIONS HE POSED, BUT HE KEPT ASKING THEM.

YEARS PASSED, AND WILLIAM WAS ABLE TO EKE OUT A MODEST LIVING AS A PROFESSIONAL AUTHOR. HE TOURED THE COUNTRY, LOOKING ALWAYS FOR NEW MATERIAL THAT MIGHT HELP HIM ANSWER THE QUESTION THAT PLAGUED HIM SINCE BIRTH. WHY? FINALLY, MONTHS BEHIND ON DEADLINE AND RUNNING SHORT OF CASH, HE TOOK ANOTHER ADVANCE AND WENT TO ENGLAND, TO A SLEEPY LITTLE TOWN KNOWN FOR ITS PECULIAR ARCHITECTURE AND LITERARY HISTORY. WHEN IT CAME TO HAWKSMOOR, A LOT OF PEOPLE WANTED TO KNOW WHY. PERHAPS, HE THOUGHT, HE WOULD FIND ANSWERS HERE.

BUT FROM THE MOMENT HE ARRIVED IN THE CITY IT UNNERVED HIM. HE FOUND IT HARD TO CONCENTRATE, AS IF HE WAS BEING ALWAYS WATCHED OR FOLLOWED. THE TALL VICTORIAN STEEPLES FILLED HIM WITH INEXPLICABLE DREAD. HE RETREATED INDOORS, TO THE LIBRARIES, AND BEGAN POURING OVER TOWN RECORDS. HIS ADVANCE RAN OUT. HIS DEADLINES RETREATED INTO THE GRAY DISTANCE. WHEN THE LAST OF THE MONEY WAS GONE, SOMETIME AFTER HIS FORTIETH BIRTHDAY, HE BEGAN SLEEPING IN CHURCHES AND SHELTERS. TIME LOST ITS MEANING. WILL WAS STILL ASKING QUESTIONS: SOMETIMES HE ASKED THE OLD MEN STAGGERING HOME FROM THE PUBS AFTER MIDNIGHT, SOMETIMES HE ASKED THE LOATHLY TWO-LEGGED CREATURES THAT STALKED THE STREETS AND LURKED IN THE SEWERS OF THE TOWN. SOMETIMES HE GOT ANSWERS, THOUGH HE DIDN'T CLAIM TO UNDERSTAND THEM.

ABILITIES

MISTER Y IS MORE THAN SIMPLY A MAGICIAN; HE IS THE LIVING PERSONIFICATION OF MAGIC ITSELF. HE IS POWERFUL, BUT MORE IMPORTANT IS HIS SENSE OF MYSTERY. (TO QUOTE THE BLUE RAJA, MISTER Y IS "TERRIBLY MYSTERIOUS.") HIS RISE TO THE POSITION OF MAGICAL EMBODIMENT CAME AT THE HANDS OF A MULTITUDE OF EARTHLY GODS, ALL OF WHOM WERE NO LONGER WORSHIPPED BY EVEN THE MOST DEDICATED PAGAN. INDEED, MOST OF THEM HAD BEEN ENTIRELY FORGOTTEN, BUT THEY NOW FORM A MAGICAL ADVISORY BODY WHICH COUNSELS Y AND GUIDES HIM IN HIS ROLE AS WATCHER OF HAWKSMOOR AND, BY EXTENSION, THE REST OF THE MYSTICAL COSMOS. HE WILL NOT LIGHTLY DISREGARD THEIR ADVICE. WHILE THEY DO NOT HAVE THE POWER TO STRIP HIM OF HIS ABILITIES, THEY COULD GIVE THE SAME ABILITIES TO SOMEONE ELSE, SHOULD HE FAIL TO SHOW THEM THE PROPER DEFERENCE.

Y'S MAGICAL CAPABILITIES ARE VAST. AMONG HIS SIGNATURE ABILITIES IS THE POWER OF MAGICAL INVISIBILITY: HE IS GENERALLY UNDETECTABLE BY MAGICAL SENSES UNTIL HE USES MAGIC HIMSELF OR TAKES SOME OTHER AGGRESSIVE ACTION. HE CAN TRAVEL TO MYSTICAL DIMENSIONS, EITHER IN PERSON OR THROUGH HIS ASTRAL FORM. THE REST OF HIS MAGIC FALLS INTO TWO GROUPS: HIS "GREATER MAGICS" ARE GENERALLY ATTACK EFFECTS THAT BURN, BIND, OR OTHERWISE HARM HIS FOES.

Y'S "LESSER MAGICS" ARE MORE UTILITARIAN, AND INCLUDE THE ABILITY TO MAKE LARGE GROUPS OF PEOPLE UNAWARE OF HIS PRESENCE, THE ABILITY TO SPEAK TO ANY PERSON, ANIMAL, OR PLANT, AND THE POWER TO VANISH AND REAPPEAR ANYWHERE ON EARTH. IN ADDITION TO HIS LISTED POWERS, MISTER Y CAN SPEND DETERMINATION TO USE MANY OTHER POWERS AS WIZARDRY STUNTS; Y CANNOT ALTER HIS BODY (WITH THE SOLE EXCEPTION OF ADOPTING ANIMAL FORMS, AN OLD MAGICIAN'S TRICK), HE CANNOT FLY (THOUGH HE CAN WALK ON AIR), AND HE CANNOT HEAL OTHERS.

COMPLETELY ASIDE FROM HIS MAGICAL POWERS, Y IS PROBABLY THE SINGLE MOST KNOWLEDGEABLE EXPERT ON THE ARCANES ALIVE TODAY. HE CAN CAST POTENT MAGICAL RITUALS, BUT IS NOT AN EXPERT IN EVERY FIELD OF HUMAN ENDEAVOR AS OTHER SUPER-GENIUSES OFTEN ARE. HE IS SUPREME AT WHAT HE DOES, BUT HIS FOCUS REMAINS A RELATIVELY NARROW ONE.

MISTER Y

IT WAS IN THE SEWERS THAT HE FIRST BEGAN TO SEE GODS: BIZARRE, OTHERWORLDLY BEINGS WHO APPEARED TO HIM IN LIGHT AND GLORY. THEY TOOK ALL MANNER OF SHAPES TO HIS EYES, BUT HE HEARD THEIR VOICES CLEARLY. THERE WERE ANCIENT KINGS AND PAGAN GODS, SNAKES, GYPSIES WITH THE HEADS OF CATS, AND SWARMS OF BEES. THEY STARED AT HIM IN SILENCE WHEN HE ASKED THEM "WHY ARE WE HERE?" AT LAST ONE, A TURTLE WHOSE SHELL WAS THE SHAPE OF THE MOON, TOLD HIM "THAT IS THE WRONG QUESTION." FOR A YEAR WILLIAM WAS SILENT, MOVING AMONG THE GODS BY NIGHT AND STUMBLING FITFUL AND HOMELESS BY DAY, UNTIL HE ASKED THE TURTLE, "WHY AM I HERE?"

"THAT," SAID THE TURTLE, "IS THE RIGHT QUESTION."

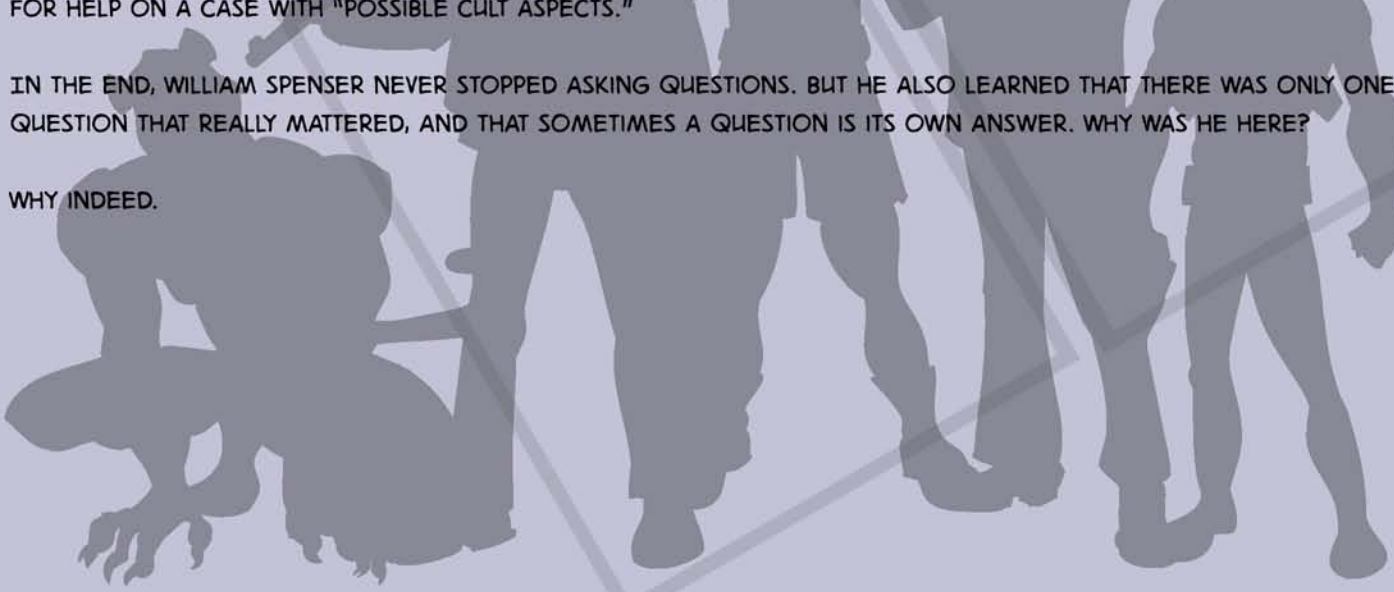
FROM THE MOUTHS OF THESE VISIONARY ORACLES WILL BEGAN TO LEARN THE FIRST BITS OF MAGIC: THE WORDS WHICH, WHEN SPOKEN IN THE RIGHT STATE OF MIND, COULD MAKE WONDERS HAPPEN. ONE GOD, A BULL AROUND WHOSE HORNS A CATERPILAR COILED, SHOWED HIM JADE TABLETS ENGRAVED WITH ARCAINE MYSTERIES. FOR A WEEK HE NEITHER ATE NOR SLEPT, THE TABLETS SO CAPTIVATED HIM. WHEN HE AWOKE AT LAST, AFTER EXHAUSTION FINALLY TOOK ITS TOLL, THE TABLETS HAD VANISHED AND A NEW CLARITY FILLED WILLIAM SPENSER'S MIND.

HE EMERGED FROM THE SUBTERRANEAN TUNNELS AND FELT THE HEAT OF THE SUN ON HIS FACE ONCE MORE, AND WILLIAM LEFT HIS OLD IDENTITY BEHIND FOREVER. FROM THE FIRST PERSON HE MET, HE RECEIVED NEW CLOTHES TO WEAR. THE FIRST BUILDING HE APPROACHED, HE FOUND THE DOOR UNLOCKED. THE FIRST OF THE SUPERNATURAL DENIZENS OF HAWKSMOOR ARRIVED THE NEXT DAY, TO PAY RESPECTS TO MISTER Y. WILLIAM HAD NOT KNOWN WHAT HIS NEW NAME WOULD BE UNTIL THAT MOMENT, BUT HE WELCOMED HIS GUEST, AND SOON OTHERS FOLLOWED.

THAT WAS EIGHT YEARS AGO. MISTER Y IS STILL LIVING IN THAT HOUSE IN HAWKSMOOR, A TOWN HE NOW RECOGNIZES AS THE CENTER OF EARTH'S MYSTICAL COSMOLOGY. HE HAS BECOME THE UNOFFICIAL LEADER OF THE TOWN'S MAGICAL COMMUNITY, THOUGH THE MONSTROUS INHABITANTS TEND TO AVOID HIM, LEST THEY AROUSE HIS ANGER. AS THE WORLD'S MOST POTENT MAGICIAN, Y IS OFTEN CALLED UPON TO DEFEND THE INNOCENT AND BLISSFULLY NAIVE FROM THINGS WHICH CREEP AND SHUDDER THROUGH THE BLACKNESS OF THE NIGHT. HE HAS BATTLED VAMPIRES AND GARGOYLES, DEMONS APLENTY, AND INVADERS FROM BEYOND TIME. HE HAS WALKED HELL'S CURSING COBBLESTONES AND HUNG HIS GRAY FEDORA IN THE HALL OF GUILT AND SHAME. SOMETIMES HIS FOES ARE PERFECTLY MUNDANE, BUT NO LESS HORRIBLE: SERIAL MURDERERS AND PSYCHOPATHS WHO PREY ON THE WEAK. IT WAS CRIMES LIKE THIS THAT FIRST BROUGHT THE HAWKSMOOR POLICE TO HIS DOOR, ASKING FOR HELP ON A CASE WITH "POSSIBLE CULT ASPECTS."

IN THE END, WILLIAM SPENSER NEVER STOPPED ASKING QUESTIONS. BUT HE ALSO LEARNED THAT THERE WAS ONLY ONE QUESTION THAT REALLY MATTERED, AND THAT SOMETIMES A QUESTION IS ITS OWN ANSWER. WHY WAS HE HERE?

WHY INDEED.



APPEARANCE:

MISTER Y IS A CLEAN-SHAVEN MAN IN HIS EARLY FIFTIES, BUT HIS AGE IS DIFFICULT TO DETERMINE AT A GLANCE. HIS HAIR IS WHITE AND KEPT QUITE SHORT; HE PREFERENCES SUITS OF BLACK, WHITE, OR GRAY, AND IS SELDOM SEEN OUTSIDE WITHOUT HIS TRADEMARK GRAY FEDORA. SHADOWS PERPETUALLY SHROUD HIS FACE, BUT THIS SEEMS TO BE TRICK OF THE LIGHT.

MISTER Y**STORIES**

MISTER Y SEES PLAY AS GUARDIAN OF THE MYSTICAL CITY OF HAWKSMOOR OR AS AN AGENT OF THE MYSTERIOUS GODS WHOM HE SEEMS TO SERVE. OTHER MAGICAL CHARACTERS ARE BOUND TO INTERACT WITH HIM SOONER OR LATER, AND SUCH ENCOUNTERS SHOULD ALWAYS BE MEMORABLE. HE IS ALSO AN EXCELLENT WAY TO BRING DIVERSE HEROES TOGETHER FOR A PARTICULAR ADVENTURE IN TRUE PHANTOM STRANGER FASHION.

HEROES ON THE TRAIL OF A SUPERNATURAL MENACE FOLLOW THEIR PREY TO HAWKSMOOR. WHEN THEY DISCOVER THE NEST OF MYSTICAL CREATURES THAT LIVE THERE, THEY NATURALLY FIGHT BACK, STIRRING UP A HORNET'S NEST OF TROUBLE. THIS IS WHEN Y INTERVENES, INSTRUCTING THE HEROES ON THE SPECIAL NATURE OF THE CITY. THE EARLY ACTIONS OF THE HEROES HAVE MADE THEM MANY ENEMIES IN TOWN, AND Y WILL HAVE TO DEFUSE THAT ANGER, LEAVING THE PLAYERS TO TRACK DOWN THEIR ORIGINAL PREY (WHO MAY NOT BE SUPERNATURAL AT ALL, AND HAVE MERELY BEEN LEADING THE HEROES INTO A TRAP).

Y DECIDES TO TAKE AN APPRENTICE. (MISTER Z? MISTER Y2?) ONCE THE WORD GETS OUT, EVERY WOULD-BE MAGICIAN ON EARTH TRIES TO LAND THE POSITION, WHICH VIRTUALLY ENSURES VAST MAGICAL POWER AND A CUSHY SET-UP IN HAWKSMOOR. Y WILL NEED TO SEPARATE THE TRULY DESERVING FROM THE MERELY POWER-HUNGRY, WHO MAY NOT BE TOO HAPPY AT BEING REJECTED. OTHER POTENTIAL APPRENTICES MAY TRY TO IMPRESS Y WITH MAGICAL STUNTS ELSEWHERE IN THE WORLD, DRAWING THE ATTENTION OF HEROES AND VILLAINS ALIKE.

ONE OF THE HEROES DIES, PERHAPS AMBUSHED BY HIS NEMESIS WHOSE PLAN FOR WORLD DOMINATION IS NEARLY COMPLETE. AT THE MOMENT OF GREATEST NEED, MISTER Y APPEARS AND EXTENDS A SLIVER OF HOPE: THE PLAYERS CAN RETRIEVE THE DEAD HERO'S SOUL FROM THE UNDERWORLD! OF COURSE, THE TASK WON'T BE EASY. THERE'S AN ARMY OF DEMONS WHO WANT TO MAKE SURE THE NOBLE SOUL STAYS IN PRISON, AND JUST FINDING THE HERO'S SOUL IN THE CHAOTIC LANDSCAPE OF HELL WILL BE A CHALLENGE. WHY IS A HERO'S SOUL IN HELL, YOU ASK? WELL, IT TURNS OUT THE NEMESIS MADE A SPECIAL DEAL WITH A LORD OF DEMONS, PROMISING TO DELIVER THE HERO'S SOUL IN EXCHANGE FOR A BIT MORE POWER. IF THE HEROES CAN SOMEHOW FREE THE TRAPPED SPIRIT, THEY MIGHT BE ABLE TO CONVINCE THE DEMON LORD THAT THE VILLAIN HAS RENEGED ON HIS DEAL, AND THEREBY FORFEITED HIS OWN SOUL!

EX-CON

THE EX-CON USED TO BE A CRIMINAL, A MERCENARY, AN AGENT OF A HOSTILE GOVERNMENT, A SUPER-VILLAIN, OR ALL OF THE ABOVE. FOR WHATEVER REASON, HE IS NOW WORKING AS A HERO; PERHAPS HE HAS SEEN THE ERROR OF HIS WAYS, IT WAS ALL A MISUNDERSTANDING, OR THE GOOD GUYS ARE JUST OFFERING MORE MONEY. REGARDLESS, THE EX-CON IS MISTRUSTED BY HIS FELLOW HEROES AND BY THE PUBLIC AT LARGE, BUT HE'S WILLING TO GET HIS HANDS DIRTY AND BRINGS A DOWN-AND-DIRTY APPROACH TO CRIME FIGHTING THAT HIGH-FLYING HEROES LACK.

EXAMPLES: BLACK WIDOW; HAWKEYE; LUKE CAGE, POWER MAN; SONGBIRD; STEELJACK

RELATED ARCHETYPES: FOCUSED HERO, SUPER-COP, WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING

QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES:

EX-CON HEROES COME IN A FEW RECOGNIZABLE TYPES. THE SUPER-THUG USED TO WORK FOR A CRIMINAL MASTERMIND, THOUGH HE MAY NOT HAVE HAD POWERS AT THAT TIME AND MAY INSTEAD HAVE ACQUIRED THEM IN PRISON. THE SPY USED TO WORK FOR THE SOVIETS (OR SOME MORE RECENT POLITICAL OR MILITARY RIVAL) BUT NOW TAKES A PAYCHECK FROM UNCLE SAM. FINALLY, THE ROGUE IS A GOOD-HEARTED PERSON WHO WOUND UP ON THE WRONG SIDE OF THE TRACKS THROUGH MISFORTUNE OR MISUNDERSTANDING; OFTEN HIS FIRST ENCOUNTER WITH A HERO RESULTED IN A BATTLE, AND HE IS CONSIDERED A CRIMINAL FOR A FEW ISSUES UNTIL HE PROVES HIS TRUE NATURE BY SAVING THE LIVES OF INNOCENT PEOPLE (SUCH AS THE HERO WHO FIRST CALLED HIM A BAD GUY). ALL OF THESE GROUPS BENEFIT FROM QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES LIKE "HUNTED BY FORMER BOSS", "MISTAKEN FOR A BAD GUY" AND "CAN'T CATCH A BREAK." FRIENDS OR ACQUAINTANCES FROM PRISON CAN PROVIDE USEFUL TIPS AND INFORMATION BUT CAN NEVER BE FULLY TRUSTED; OFTEN THE OLD GANG ALLY THE EX-CON TRUSTS THE MOST IS THE ONE WHO STABS HIM IN THE BACK, DEMONSTRATING "THERE IS NO HONOR AMONG THIEVES."

THE EX-CON IS AN ORDINARY GUY, A HERO WHO HAS NO INTEREST IN, AND PERHAPS OPENLY MOCKS, THE GRANDSTANDING AND FANCY POWERS OF MORE TRADITIONAL HEROES. HE IS AN ANTI-HERO WHO IS WILLING TO DO THINGS HIS MORE FORTUNATE AND POPULAR ALLIES WILL NOT. OFTEN THIS CAN BE TRACED BACK TO THE CRIME THAT PUT HIM IN PRISON IN THE FIRST PLACE; WHILE MANY TRADITIONAL HEROES ARE PROUD THEY HAVE NEVER TAKEN A LIFE, THE EX-CON IS PROUD THAT HE HAS. HE MAY HAVE DONE IT IN SELF-DEFENSE, AND HE MAY BE INNOCENT OF THE CRIME THAT GOT HIM IN PRISON, BUT AT LEAST HE KNOWS HOW TO SOLVE A PROBLEM PERMANENTLY. WHEN SUPER-PATRIOTS AND SUPER-COPS INSIST THE VILLAIN MUST BE GIVEN A FAIR TRIAL, THE EX-CON POINTS OUT THE FOOLISHNESS OF THIS PLAN. FEW HEROES UNDERSTAND THE REVOLVING DOOR OF THE SUPERVILLAIN CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM LIKE THE EX-CON.



REAPER

EX-CON

SOMETIMES THE EX-CON IS CONCEALING HIS PREVIOUS IDENTITY (SEE KURT BUSIEK'S ORIGINAL THUNDERBOLTS FOR A RICH EXPLORATION OF THIS IDEA). INITIALLY, HE ONLY PRETENDS TO BE A HERO; THIS IS THE WOLF IN SHEEP'S CLOTHING VILLAINOUS ARCHETYPE. BUT OVER TIME THE HEROIC LIFE BEGINS TO AFFECT HIM; HE SEES GRATITUDE AND ADMIRATION IN THE EYES OF THOSE HE HAS HELPED, AND HE BEGINS TO RECONSIDER THE NEXT BIG SCORE. INEVITABLY, JUST AS THE EX-CON DECIDES THAT HE REALLY DOES WANT TO BE A HERO FOR THE REST OF HIS LIFE, HIS SECRET IS DISCOVERED AND ALL HIS FORMER ALLIES BRAND HIM A TRAITOR AND SPY. HE MUST STAY ONE STEP AHEAD OF THEM AND, AT THE SAME TIME, CONVINCING THEM OF HIS CHANGE OF HEART.

ABILITIES:

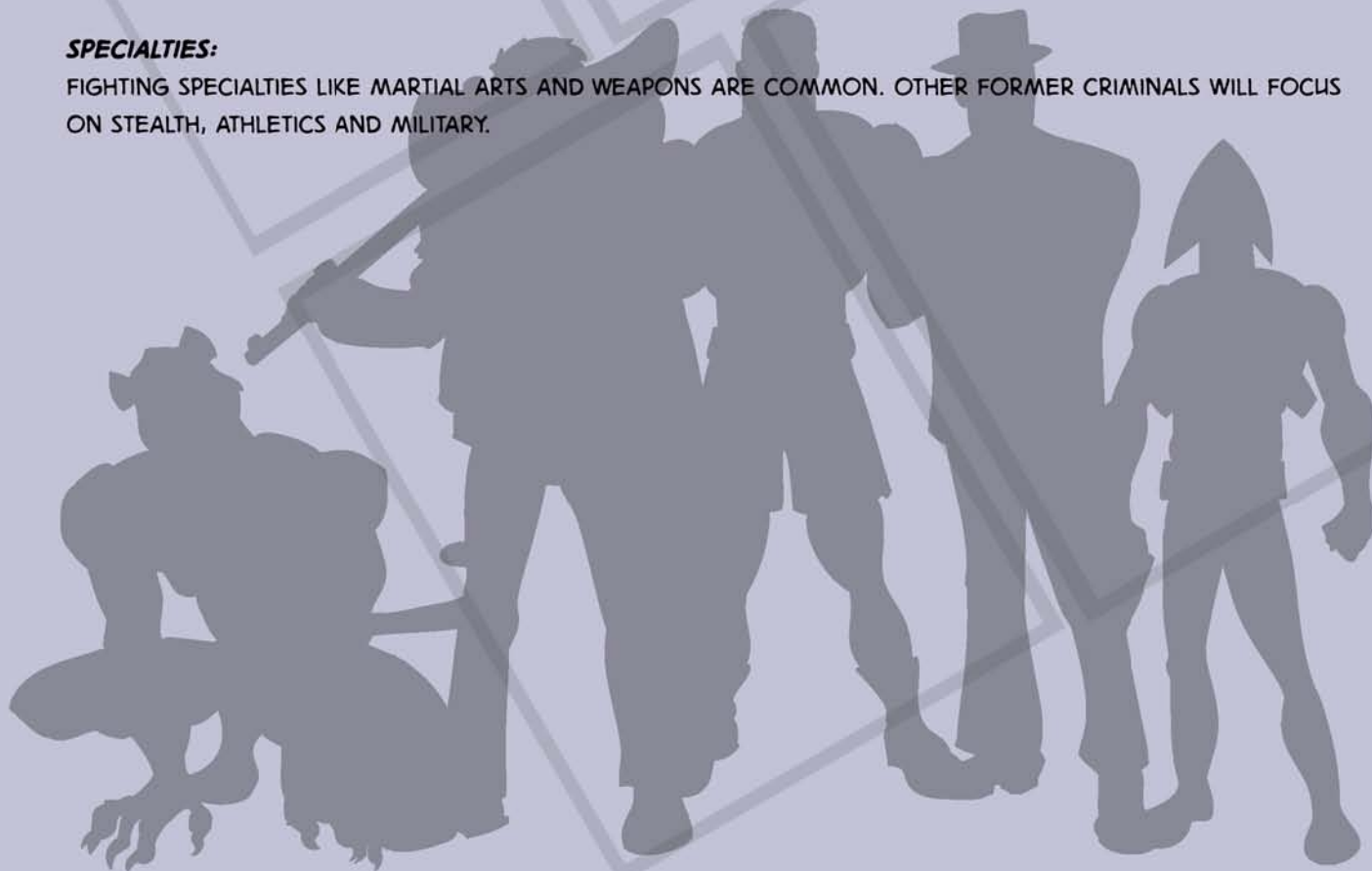
SUPER-THUGS ARE STRONG BUT STUPID, AND HEROES WHO USED TO BE MUSCLE FOR VILLAINOUS MASTERMINDS HAVE AN AVERAGE OR LOW INTELLECT AND AWARENESS, BUT ROGUES AND SPIES WILL BE THE EXCEPTION TO THIS RULE. A LIFE OF CRIME MEANS A GOOD PROWESS AND USUALLY A SURPRISINGLY HIGH WILLPOWER; EX-CONS ARE USED TO BEING UNDERESTIMATED.

POWERS:

CHARACTERS WHO ACTUALLY STARTED OFF AS SUPER-VILLAINS IN THE PAGES OF ACTUAL COMICS TEND TO HAVE SIMPLE POWERS, USUALLY JUST ONE POWER WHICH THEY USED AS PART OF A TEAM OF VILLAINS. THIS RELIANCE ON A SINGLE SUPER-POWER HELPS EXPLAIN WHY THE EX-CON ALWAYS LOST. WHEN THE EX-CON BECOMES A HERO, HE DEVELOPS NEW POWERS WHICH ARE BASED ON OR EXTRAPOLATED FROM HIS OLD ONES. THE SUPER-THUG IS USUALLY JUST VERY STRONG, AND WILL NEED INVULNERABILITY AND LIFE SUPPORT. ROGUES AND SPIES ARE MORE DIVERSE AND RELY ON GADGETS AND WEAPONRY.

SPECIALTIES:

FIGHTING SPECIALTIES LIKE MARTIAL ARTS AND WEAPONS ARE COMMON. OTHER FORMER CRIMINALS WILL FOCUS ON STEALTH, ATHLETICS AND MILITARY.



RUSHMORE

FIRST APPEARANCE: THE CHAMP #24 (AS STONE), NINE ONE WONDERS: A 9/11 COMMEMORATIVE COMIC (AS RUSHMORE)
ARCHETYPES: SUPER-PATRIOT, EX-CON, MONSTROUS HERO
QUALITIES: THE LIVING MONUMENT, KNOWS ALL THE WRONG PEOPLE, FACE ON A WHEATIES BOX, ALL-AMERICAN, HAYMAKER PUNCH
CHALLENGES: SECRET PAST, FEELS LIKE A FRAUD, DOES WHAT HE'S TOLD

PROWESS	5
COORDINATION	3
STRENGTH	8
INTELLECT	3
AWARENESS	3
WILLPOWER	4
DETERMINATION	3
STAMINA	12



POWERS:
 INVULNERABILITY 5, LIFE SUPPORT 10

SPECIALTIES:
 ATHLETICS, INTIMIDATION, WRESTLING

STUNTS:
IMMOVABLE OBJECT (STRENGTH): RUSHMORE CAN RESIST BEING KNOCKED AROUND OR PUSHED BY ANY POWER OF LEVEL 7 OR LESS.

ORIGIN

"LET ME INTRODUCE YOU TO MY KNUCKLES. THIS ONE HERE'S WASHINGTON; THIS ONE'S LINCOLN ..."

EVERY SUPER-CRIMINAL NEEDS SUPER-FLUNKIES, AND FOR YEARS CLARENCE MONDAY WAS ONE OF THEM. ONCE A SIMPLE CONSTRUCTION WORKER, HE WAS DRAFTED BY LORD MAGMA AND TRANSFORMED INTO A BEING OF SOLID ROCK. PARTNERED WITH ANOTHER OF MAGMA'S MINIONS TO BECOME THE TAG-TEAM "STICKS AND STONE," CLARENCE WAS OUT OF A JOB AFTER MAGMA'S EVENTUAL CAPTURE. AS STONE, HE WAS WANTED BY THE POLICE, BUT CLARENCE COULDN'T JUST DITCH HIS SUPERHUMAN LIFE AND BLEND BACK INTO SOCIETY NO MATTER HOW MUCH HE WANTED TO. HIS GRANITE BODY WASN'T SOMETHING HE COULD JUST "TURN OFF."

RUSHMORE

CLARENCE HOPED HE COULD AVOID RECAPTURE BY ADOPTING A NEW AND MORE HEROIC IDENTITY, BUT THINGS DIDN'T WORK OUT SO WELL. AFTER A LITTLE RECONSTRUCTIVE SCULPTING, NO ONE ASSOCIATED "CAPTAIN GRANITE" WITH STONE, BUT THEN FEW ASSOCIATED CAPTAIN GRANITE WITH MUCH OF ANYTHING. HIS APPEARANCE AS A MAN OF LIVING ROCK FRIGHTENED MANY PEOPLE AND HE COULD NOT SEEM TO GAIN THE MEDIA ATTENTION THAT THE GREAT SUPERHEROES HAD. PERHAPS HIS CHOICE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE AS A STOMPING GROUND HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH IT.

ALL THIS CHANGED AFTER 9/11. THE GROUNDSWELL OF PATRIOTIC FERVOR IN AMERICA GAVE CLARENCE AN IDEA. SURE, TO MOST PEOPLE, A GUY WHO WAS MADE OF SOLID ROCK WAS A FREAK AND A MONSTER, BUT IF HE WORE RED WHITE AND BLUE, HE BECAME A PATRIOT! FASHIONING A NEW UNIFORM FOR HIMSELF BASED ON THE AMERICAN FLAG, CLARENCE BECAME RUSHMORE, THE LIVING MONUMENT. HE WAS AN INSTANT HIT, NOT JUST WITH THE PRESS BUT WITH KIDS AND PATRIOTIC PARENTS ALL OVER THE NATION. PRETTY SOON THERE WERE RUSHMORE COLLECTIBLE STATUES AND HE APPEARED ON A BOX OF WHEATIES. HE EVEN RECEIVED THE ULTIMATE HONOR: AN INVITATION TO JOIN PROJECT ATLAS. WHILE HE HAS ADMITTED TO BEING CAPTAIN GRANITE, PLAYING OFF HIS SUBSEQUENT NAME CHANGE AS REAL PATRIOTISM, THERE IS NO SIGN THAT ANYONE HAS CONNECTED CLARENCE WITH STONE.

THE TROUBLE IS THAT CLARENCE IS STILL THE SAME OLD GUY ON THE INSIDE: JUST AN AVERAGE JOE TRYING TO GET ALONG IN A COMPLICATED WORLD. JUST AS HE NEVER REALLY FELT LIKE MUCH OF A SUPER-CRIMINAL, SO HE DOESN'T FEEL LIKE MUCH OF A SUPER-HERO. BEING RUSHMORE HAS MADE THIS FORMER CONSTRUCTION WORKER AWARE OF THE PRESSURES AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF WEARING A NATIONAL SYMBOL, AND HE DOESN'T FEEL HE'S DOING A VERY GOOD JOB OF IT. HE REJECTED THE OFFER TO JOIN ATLAS AND INSTEAD HIT THE BOOKS, GIVING HIMSELF A CRASH COURSE ON AMERICAN HISTORY AND THE CONSTITUTION. WHEN THE NEXT OFFER CAME, FROM THE ALL-AMERICANS, RUSHMORE AGREED. STILL, WHEN THE CAMERAS ARE ROLLING AND THE KIDS ARE ASKING FOR HIS AUTOGRAPH, CLARENCE CAN'T ESCAPE THE FACT THAT HE FEELS LIKE A MONUMENTAL FAKE.

APPEARANCE:

CLARENCE HAS A CLASSIC MOUNT RUSHMORE-LIKE LOOK ABOUT HIS FACE, WHICH IS NOW A STONE HEADSHOT OF JFK. HIS UNIFORM IS RED, WHITE, AND BLUE, REMINISCENT OF AN OLYMPIC ATHLETE OR GRECO-ROMAN WRESTLER. HIS STONE IS WHITISH-GRAY AND HE HAS NO PUPILS.

ABILITIES

RUSHMORE IS MADE OF SOLID ROCK, ANIMATED IN SOME STRANGE SCIENTIFIC PROCESS HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND. THIS MAKES HIM STRONG, RESISTANT TO HARM, AND ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO MOVE. CLARENCE'S TRANSFORMATION CANNOT BE NEGATED OR DRAINED AWAY; IT IS AN INDELIBLE PART OF HIM FOR ALL TIME. HIS ADDITIONAL TALENTS COME FROM HIS PAST AS A BRAWLER AND SUPER-THUG, AND FROM HIS NEW IDENTITY AS A FLAG-WEARING PATRIOT. THE RED, WHITE AND BLUE UNIFORM OF RUSHMORE GETS PEOPLE'S ATTENTION AND MAKES CLARENCE FAR MORE PERSUASIVE THAN HE NORMALLY WOULD BE; THIS IS NOT A SUPERHUMAN POWER OF THE UNIFORM, IT'S JUST HUMAN PSYCHOLOGY AT WORK. IN BATTLE, CLARENCE USUALLY ASSUMES HE CAN ABSORB ENOUGH PUNISHMENT TO GET TO HAND-TO-HAND RANGE, THEN END THE FIGHT WITH HIS PATENTED "HAYMAKER". WHEN THIS FAILS, HOWEVER, OR WHEN FACING OPPONENTS THAT MIGHT BE KILLED BY THE HAYMAKER, RUSHMORE USES HIS GREAT WEIGHT TO GOOD EFFECT BY GRAPPLING.

RUSHMORE

STORIES

RUSHMORE GETS INTO ALL THE USUAL STORIES OF THE EX-CON, COMPLICATED BY THE FACT THAT HE IS HIDING HIS OWN PAST. AS A MEMBER OF THE ALL-AMERICANS, HE PROVIDES A WAY FOR HEROES TO INTERACT WITH THAT SUPER-GROUP IN BOTH SOCIAL AND ACTION SITUATIONS.

THE SCULPTOR WHO REDESIGNED CLARENCE'S FACE IS NOW BLACKMAILING HIM, FORCING RUSHMORE TO KEEP THE POLICE AND MEDIA AWAY FROM A SERIES OF PROFITABLE ROBBERIES. THE PLAYERS COME INTO THIS WHEN THEY ARE INVITED BY RUSHMORE TO A CHARITY EVENT AND, WHILE THEY ARE THERE, ONE OF THESE ROBBERIES TAKES PLACE. INVESTIGATION REVEALS THAT RUSHMORE HAS BEEN TRAVELING THE COUNTRY ON A GOODWILL TOUR AND A HIGH-PROFILE THEFT HAS TAKEN PLACE IN EACH CITY ALONG HIS ROUTE. CLARENCE WANTS TO COME CLEAN; HE'S LIVING HIS WORST NIGHTMARE, BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW TO ESCAPE THE TRAP HE IS IN. IF THE HEROES ARE CAUTIOUS AND FORGIVING, THIS STORY CAN END WELL, BUT IF THEY GO IN GUNS BLAZING AND EXPOSE CLARENCE PUBLICLY, IT ENDS TRAGICALLY, WITH RUSHMORE DISGRACED AND GOING TO PRISON, HIS SECRET PAST REVEALED.

PLANET X IS INVADING AGAIN AND THE RESULT IS A WORLDWIDE EMERGENCY. THE ALL-AMERICANS ARE PUT IN CHARGE OF A UNITED HEROIC DEFENSE EFFORT, AND THE PLAYER CHARACTERS ARE ASSIGNED TO WORK FOR RUSHMORE. THE TROUBLE IS THAT CLARENCE IS LOUSY AT A JOB LIKE THIS, BUT THE MILITARY BRASS ISN'T INTERESTED IN HIS PROTESTS. WHEN HIS ORDERS GET THE HEROES IN TROUBLE, WHAT DO THEY DO ABOUT IT?

A YOUNGSTER KNOWN TO THE PCS (A SON, NEPHEW, OR COUSIN) DECIDES THAT RUSHMORE IS THE COOLEST AND THERE'S ONLY ONE THING THIS SUPER-PATRIOT IS MISSING: A SIDEKICK. YES, IT'S TIME FOR KID RUSHMORE!



FEMME FELINE

THE FEMME FELINE IS A CAT IN THE SHAPE OF A WOMAN. SHE MAY BE A BEAUTIFUL GIRL WHO DRESSES UP LIKE A CAT, SHE MAY ACTUALLY CHANGE INTO ONE, OR SHE MIGHT BE SOME PERMANENT MIXTURE OF CAT AND WOMAN. EITHER WAY, SHE CAN BE COUNTED UPON TO CONFUSE AND BEWILDER THE MEN AROUND HER, AND SHE'S MORE INTERESTED IN SELF-GRATIFICATION THAN FITTING INTO TRADITIONAL DEFINITIONS OF "HERO" OR "VILLAIN."

EXAMPLES: BLACK CAT, CATWOMAN, HELLCAT

RELATED ARCHETYPES: ANIMAL HERO, FERAL HERO, TEMPTRESS

QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES:

WHILE THE CATGIRL MIGHT SEEM LIKE AN OVERLY NARROW EXAMPLE OF THE ANIMAL HERO ARCHETYPE, THE FEMME FELINE HAS CARVED OUT SUCH A PROMINENT ROLE FOR HERSELF IN COMICS, FILM, AND VIDEO GAMES THAT SHE DEMANDS HER OWN ENTRY. INDEED, THE FIRST BLACK CAT CHARACTER, PUBLISHED BY HARVEY COMICS IN 1941, PRE-DATES WONDER WOMAN BY SEVERAL MONTHS, MAKING HER ONE OF THE FIRST, IF NOT THE FIRST, FEMALE SUPER HERO EVER.

THERE ARE TWO KINDS OF FEMME FELINE, DIFFERING LARGELY IN PHYSIOGNOMY. THE ORIGINAL SORT IS A WOMAN WHO DRESSES UP LIKE A CAT; SHE HAS NO POWERS, OR ONLY VERY MINOR ONES, AND INSTEAD RELIES ON GADGETS, WEAPONS, AND HER OWN CLEVERNESS TO KEEP ONE STEP AHEAD OF BOTH THE LAW AND HER RIVAL CRIMINALS. THE OTHER SORT IS THE "CATGIRL" WHO IS A BLEND OF FEMALE AND CAT CHARACTERISTICS. SHE MAY TRANSFORM LIKE A WERE-WOLF OR HAVE A PERMANENT CAT-LIKE FORM. IN EITHER CASE, SHE DOESN'T NEED A COSTUME. SHE'S ALWAYS WEARING FUR AND IS MORE LIKELY TO HAVE ACTUAL POWERS.

REGARDLESS OF TYPE, THE FEMME FELINE IS WHIMSICAL, FINICKY, AND DIFFICULT FOR MALE HEROES TO UNDERSTAND. THEY PURSUE HER FOR COMPLEX REASONS: ON THE ONE HAND SHE IS A CRIMINAL AND A THIEF, BUT ON THE OTHER HAND SHE IS PHYSICALLY ALLURING AND OFTEN COOPERATES WITH THE HERO IN HIS WAR AGAINST MORE DANGEROUS, LETHAL, VILLAINS. THE FEMME FELINE WANTS TO BE CHASED, AND WHEN A HERO OBLIGES HER, SHE RETURNS THE FAVOR BY SHOWING ROMANTIC INTEREST. THE MORE CAPABLE THE HERO IS, THE MORE INTERESTED THE FEMME FELINE BECOMES. IN THE CLASSIC VERSION OF THIS STORY, THE HERO THWARTS THE FEMME FELINE'S SCHEME BUT LETS HER GO SO THEY CAN CONTINUE THEIR DANCE ALONG THE CITY'S ROOFTOPS.



CHESHIRE

FEMME FELINE

TO KEEP ON THE HERO'S GOOD SIDE, THE FEMME FELINE LENDS ASSISTANCE, CREEPING IN WHERE THE HERO CANNOT GO, GATHERING INFORMATION FROM CONTACTS THE HERO CANNOT ASSOCIATE WITH, AND EVEN DOING CRIMINAL ACTS WHICH THE HERO CANNOT PERFORM. THE OBJECT OF THE FEMME FELINE'S ROMANTIC INTEREST MAKES AN EXCELLENT QUALITY. CONVERSELY, RIVALS FOR THE HERO'S AFFECTION BECOME CHALLENGES.

THE FEMME FELINE STAYS ON THE "HERO" END OF THE MORAL COMPASS BY AVOIDING MURDER OR OTHER REPREHENSIBLE CRIMES. WHEN SHE STEALS, WHICH SHE DOES OFTEN, SHE PREFERENCES TO GO COMPLETELY UNSEEN AND AVOID VIOLENCE. HER VICTIMS ARE THE STUPID, THE CRUEL, AND THOSE WHO DO NOT DESERVE THE EYE-POPPING WEALTH WHICH THEY HAVE ACQUIRED OFF THE BACKS OF THE INNOCENT AND POOR. IN THIS, THE FEMME FELINE IS SOMETHING OF A ROBIN HOOD, THE NOBLE THIEF. ALTHOUGH SHE ALWAYS CLAIMS TO BE STEALING FOR THE THRILL, OR TO INDULGE HERSELF, SHE SOMEHOW ALWAYS LEAVES A TRAIL OF SOCIAL AND POETIC JUSTICE. THE RUBES GET WHAT THEY DESERVE AND WE LOVE HER FOR IT.

THE FEMME FELINE WILL HAVE THE AFFECTATIONS OF A CAT: SHE WILL PURR, LICK HER CLAWS, KEEP MANY CATS AS PETS, AND DRINK HER MILK AND CREAM FROM A BOWL. SHE MAY HAVE PURR-FECT PRONUNCIATION.

ABILITIES:

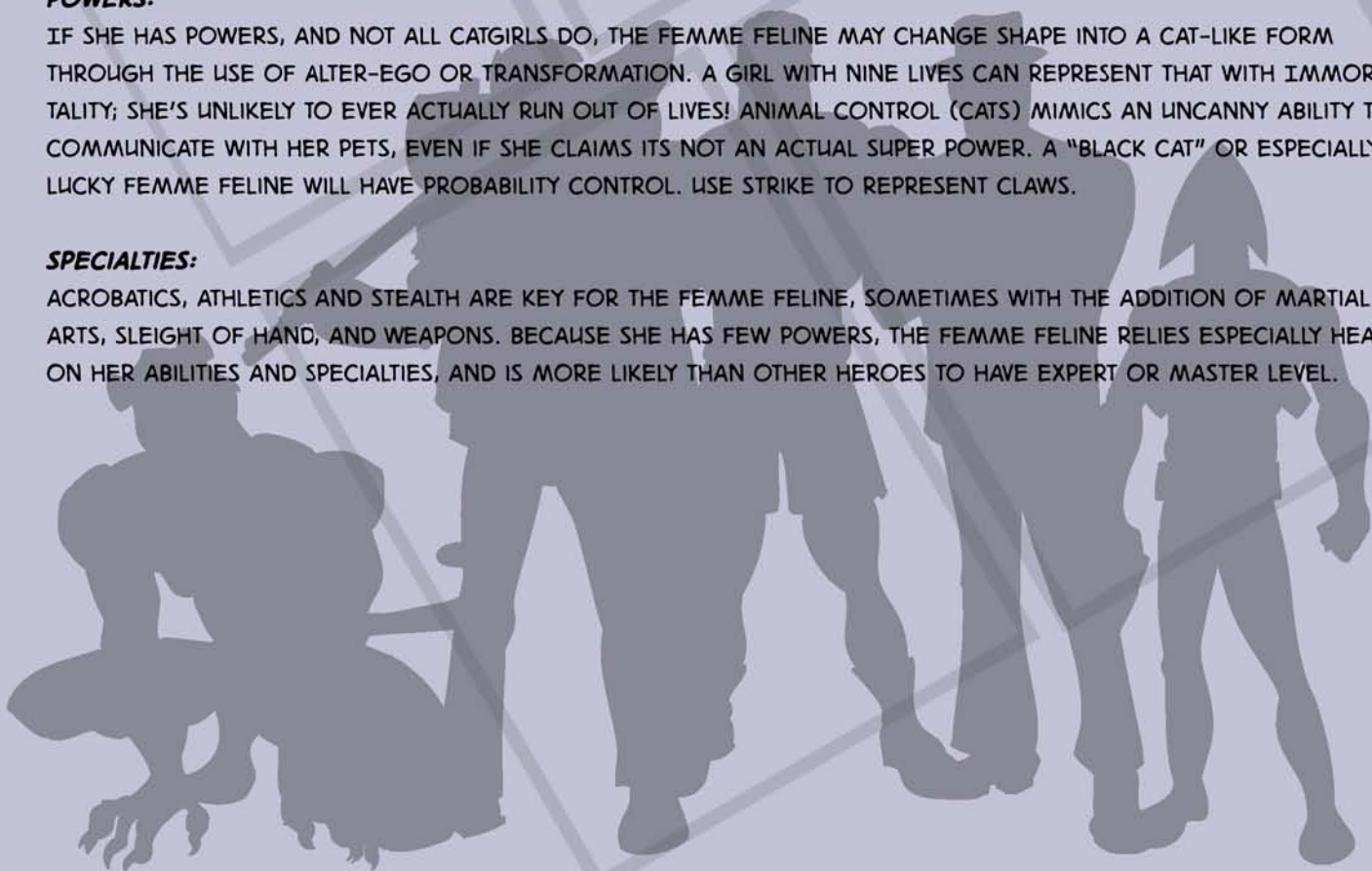
COORDINATION, PROWESS, AND AWARENESS ARE HIGH, THOUGH ONLY COORDINATION WILL BE HIGH ENOUGH TO QUALIFY AS AN ACTUAL POWER. IF THE FEMME FELINE IS SOME KIND OF WERE-CAT, STRENGTH WILL ALSO BE IN THE 5-6 RANGE.

POWERS:

IF SHE HAS POWERS, AND NOT ALL CATGIRLS DO, THE FEMME FELINE MAY CHANGE SHAPE INTO A CAT-LIKE FORM THROUGH THE USE OF ALTER-EGO OR TRANSFORMATION. A GIRL WITH NINE LIVES CAN REPRESENT THAT WITH IMMORTALITY; SHE'S UNLIKELY TO EVER ACTUALLY RUN OUT OF LIVES! ANIMAL CONTROL (CATS) MIMICS AN UNCANNY ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH HER PETS, EVEN IF SHE CLAIMS ITS NOT AN ACTUAL SUPER POWER. A "BLACK CAT" OR ESPECIALLY LUCKY FEMME FELINE WILL HAVE PROBABILITY CONTROL. USE STRIKE TO REPRESENT CLAWS.

SPECIALTIES:

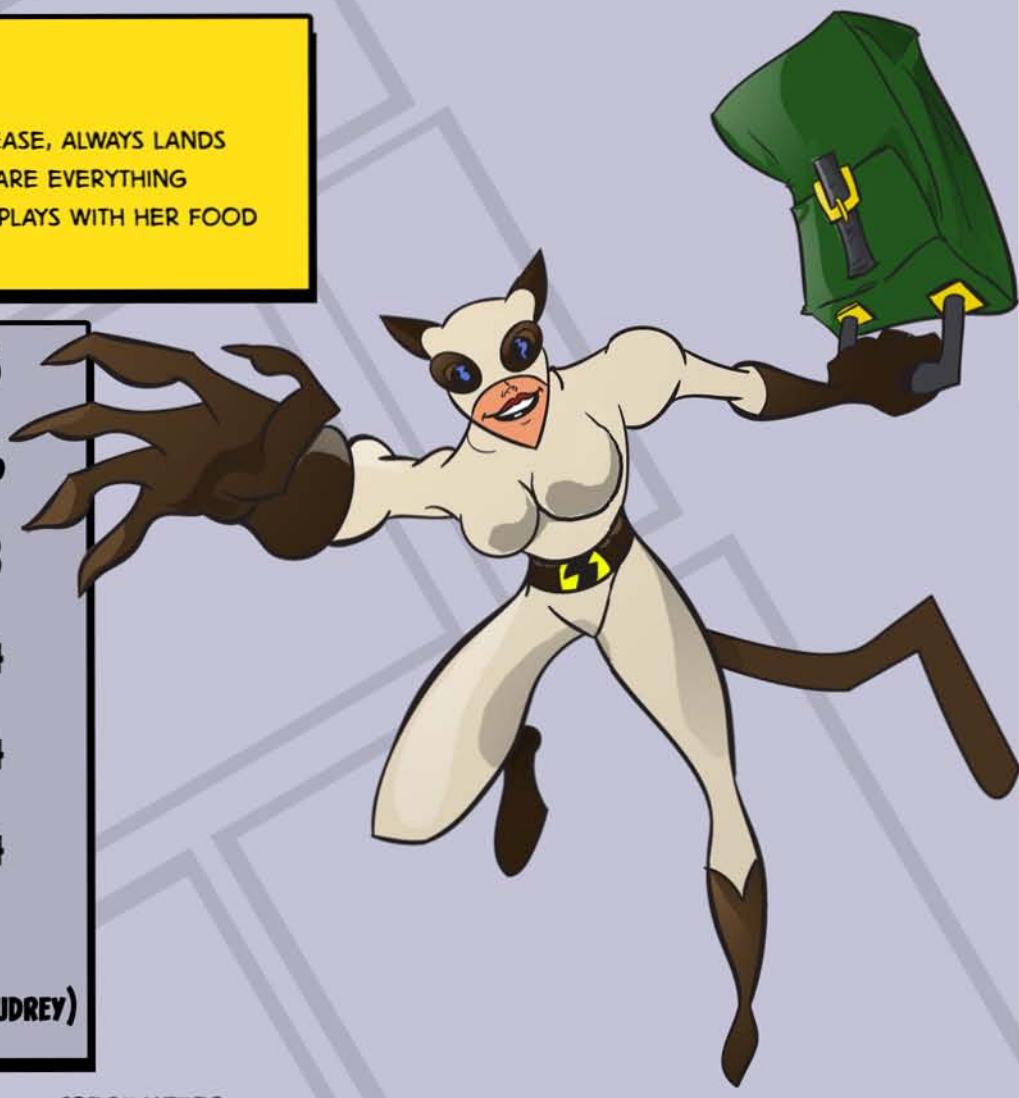
ACROBATICS, ATHLETICS AND STEALTH ARE KEY FOR THE FEMME FELINE, SOMETIMES WITH THE ADDITION OF MARTIAL ARTS, SLEIGHT OF HAND, AND WEAPONS. BECAUSE SHE HAS FEW POWERS, THE FEMME FELINE RELIES ESPECIALLY HEAVILY ON HER ABILITIES AND SPECIALTIES, AND IS MORE LIKELY THAN OTHER HEROES TO HAVE EXPERT OR MASTER LEVEL.



SIAM

FIRST APPEARANCE: THE VEIL #4
ARCHETYPES: FEMME FELINE, EVIL TWIN
QUALITIES: WE ARE SIAMESE IF YOU PLEASE, ALWAYS LANDS ON HER FEET, REFINED TASTE, SISTERS SHARE EVERYTHING
CHALLENGES: FINICKY, GROWING APART, PLAYS WITH HER FOOD

PROWESS	5
COORDINATION	6
STRENGTH	3
INTELLECT	4
AWARENESS	4
WILLPOWER	4
DETERMINATION	2
STAMINA	7 (NATALIE) OR 8 (AUDREY)



POWERS:

EQUIPMENT 7 (GAS MASK, BLINDING GRENADES 2, ACID GRENADES 2, SMOKE GRENADES 2), SUPER-SENSES 4 (DARKVISION, TRACKING SIGHT, EXTENDED SIGHT, ENHANCED SIGHT), STRIKE 5, SWINGING 4

STUNTS:

DUPLICITY (STEALTH): SIAM HAS SPENT MOST OF HER LIFE PRETENDING TO BE ONE PERSON. WHENEVER SHE NEEDS A LEVEL TO REPRESENT THIS EFFECT, SHE CAN USE HER STEALTH MASTERY ADDED TO THE APPROPRIATE ABILITY, USUALLY COORDINATION, INTELLECT OR WILLPOWER.

AUDREY SULLIVAN: STRENGTH 4, INTIMIDATE

NATALIE SULLIVAN: INTELLECT 5, PERSUADE

SPECIALTIES:

ACROBATICS EXPERT, ANIMALS, ATHLETICS, COMPUTERS, ELECTRONICS, INVESTIGATION, SLEIGHT OF HAND, STEALTH MASTER

SIAM

ORIGIN

"THERE ARE NO FINER CATS THAN WE AM."

IDENTICAL TWINS NATALIE AND AUDREY SULLIVAN WERE NEVER SATISFIED, EVEN AS CHILDREN. THEY NEVER KNEW THEIR MOTHER AND DESPISED THEIR FATHER AS A WORTHLESS DRUNK. NEVERTHELESS, THE FAMILY HAD ENOUGH MONEY TO KEEP THE GIRLS IN PUBLIC SCHOOL, WHERE THEY FIRST BEGAN TO "PINCH HIT" FOR ONE ANOTHER, ONE SISTER FILLING IN FOR HER SIBLING. AUDREY GREW INTO A "BAD GIRL," SNEAKING OFF FOR RENDEZVOUS WITH BOYS, SMOKING, AND FIGHTING WITH OTHER GIRLS. NATALIE STAYED THE "GOOD GIRL," ADORED BY PARENTS EVEN THOUGH SHE HAD A HABIT OF BREAKING HEARTS ALL OVER SCHOOL.

THE FIRST THING THE SISTERS WANTED TO DO WAS GET AS FAR AWAY FROM THEIR HOME TOWN AS THEY COULD; THEY WERE GONE THE MORNING AFTER GRADUATION AND THEY HAVEN'T SEEN THEIR FATHER SINCE. AT FIRST THEY SURVIVED AS GRIFTERS, CONNING DINNERS AND EXPENSIVE GIFTS OUT OF PLIABLE MEN. THEY FOUND THE CRIMINAL UNDERWORLD AND PROVED QUICK STUDIES, LEARNING HOW TO STAY BELOW THE RADAR OF ANY COPS SKILLED ENOUGH TO CATCH THEM.

THE GIRLS HATCHED THE SIAM GIMMICK ON THEIR OWN, LATE ONE NIGHT AFTER A SUCCESSFUL SECOND-STORY JOB. EVEN FOR TWINS, THEY WERE REMARKABLY SIMILAR IN MANNERISMS AND APPEARANCE, AND THEY REALIZED THAT, IF THE WORLD DID NOT KNOW THERE WERE TWO SULLIVAN SISTERS, THEY COULD PROVIDE A PERFECT ALIBI FOR EACH OTHER. THEIR FIRST OUTFIT WAS STRAIGHT FROM A COSTUME SHOP, BUT WITH THE MONEY THEY MADE THEY BEGAN TO MOVE IN HIGHER SOCIAL CIRCLES, AND THEIR GRIFTER CONS NETTED THEM EVEN MORE WEALTH. THE SULLIVANS BECAME HIGH SOCIETY GIRLS, SHARING A SINGLE IDENTITY. THEY NEVER ALLOWED THEMSELVES TO BOTH BE IN PUBLIC AT THE SAME TIME; WHEN ONE WAS OUT ESTABLISHING HER ALIBI, THE OTHER WAS EITHER IN HIDING OR OUTFITTED AS SIAM. THE RUSE RECEIVED ITS FINAL TOUCH WHEN, AFTER A LUCRATIVE WALL STREET SCAM, THEY HAD ENOUGH CASH TO PAY A COMPUTER HACKER TO ERASE EVERY RECORD OF THEIR ORIGINAL SULLIVAN IDENTITY. AN INVESTIGATOR WHO WENT SEARCHING WOULD NOW FIND NO ELECTRONIC TRACE OF THE SULLIVANS. (THE PHYSICAL EVIDENCE, LIKE HIGH SCHOOL YEARBOOKS, IS STILL OUT THERE.)

SINCE THEN, SIAM HAS CONTINUED TO PLY HER TRADE IN THE WORLD'S WEALTHIEST CITIES. SHE USES A SUCCESSION OF EASILY-GENERATED COVER IDENTITIES, USUALLY A WEALTHY HEIRESS WHOSE BACKGROUND IS JUST DEEP ENOUGH TO PASS CASUAL SCRUTINY. THE GIRLS TRADE OFF TIME IN THE PUBLIC EYE WITH RECONNAISSANCE MISSIONS OR ACTUAL THEFT. SIAM IS WELL KNOWN IN FBI CIRCLES, BUT BECAUSE SHE IS NOT A VIOLENT CRIMINAL SHE HAS NEVER BECOME A TOP PRIORITY.

LIKewise, SHE HAS ACTUALLY COOPERATED WITH HEROIC WONDERS, ESPECIALLY THOSE SHE FINDS ATTRACTIVE AND NOT TOO POWERFUL. (SHE FINDS COSTUMED ADVENTURERS MORE TO HER TASTE THAN HIGH-FLYING SUPER-HEROES.) WITH HER ALMOST UNPARALLELED INFILTRATION SKILLS, SHE HAS PROVEN HERSELF ABLE (AND EVEN OCCASIONALLY WILLING) TO PENETRATE DANGEROUS MASTERMIND STRONGHOLDS IN ORDER TO SAVE THE WORLD. AFTER ALL, SHE NOTES, THOSE ARMORED TYRANTS ARE JUST NO FUN AT ALL.

ABILITIES

NATALIE AND AUDREY ARE CLEVER, AGILE, AND BEAUTIFUL WOMEN WELL TRAINED IN THE ARTS OF CRIMINALITY. THEIR EARLY EMPHASIS ON ACROBATICS AND PHYSICAL DISCIPLINE HAS BEEN BROADENED AS THEIR CAREER LENGTHENED TO INCLUDE THE TECHNICAL ASPECTS OF MODERN SECURITY SYSTEMS. WITH YEARS OF EXPERIENCE, THEY KNOW HOW TO HANDLE THEMSELVES IN THE CRIMINAL UNDERWORLD AND AVOID COMING TO THE NOTICE OF AUTHORITIES.

AS SIAM, THE GIRLS USE AN ARRAY OF SPECIALIZED EQUIPMENT THAT MAKES THEIR JOB EASIER. SIAM'S GOGGLES ARE ACTUALLY SOPHISTICATED SENSORS THAT GIVE THE WEARER A LIGHT-ENHANCED READOUT OF HER SURROUNDINGS. SHE CAN SEE WITH ENOUGH MAGNIFICATION TO FIND THE SMALLEST SURVEILLANCE DEVICES, AND EVEN TRACK INDIVIDUALS BY THE HEAT OF THEIR FOOTPRINTS. OF COURSE, SIAM WEARS CLAWS, WHICH ARE MORE FOR SHOW THAN VIOLENCE, SINCE THEY INFLECT MINIMAL HARM. WHEN IN UNIFORM, THE SULLIVANS CARRY A TOOL BELT OF USEFUL ITEMS, INCLUDING SWING LINES, SMOKE GRENADES FOR QUICK DISAPPEARANCES, FLASH GRENADES TO DISSUADE SECURITY PERSONNEL, AND ACID DROPLETS FOR WEAKENING SAFES AND OTHERWISE IMPERVIOUS BARRIERS. EITHER GIRL MAY HAVE ANY COMMON PIECE OF EQUIPMENT, HOWEVER, STOWED IN A TOOL POUCH OR EVEN IN A HANDBAG CARRIED ABOUT TOWN.

NATALIE IS A BIT SMARTER THAN HER TWIN, AND DOES MORE READING. SHE'S MORE FAMILIAR WITH LIKELY TARGETS AND HAS SOME EMERGENCY MEDICAL TRAINING. SHE'S ALSO MORE GENUINELY FRIENDLY, MAKING HER MORE AT EASE IN SOCIAL SITUATIONS AND MORE LIKELY TO RESOLVE A PROBLEM WITHOUT RESORTING TO A QUICK FLASH OF THE CLAWS. AUDREY, IN CONTRAST, LIKES TO SPEND HER TIME AT THE GYM, AND HER QUICK FLASHES OF ANGER MAKE HER A MORE DEADLY FOE THAN HER SISTER. BOTH THE TWINS KEEP A CONSTANT EYE ON EACH OTHER IN ORDER TO ENSURE THEIR DOUBLE IDENTITY REMAINS PLAUSIBLE: THEY HAVE PRACTICED TALKING, WALKING, AND ACTING LIKE EACH OTHER FOR SO LONG THAT SUCH BEHAVIOR HAS BECOME SECOND NATURE TO THEM.

SIAM

BECAUSE OF THESE ACTIVITIES, SIAM REMAINS A WANTED CRIMINAL, BUT ONE THAT FEW LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES SEEM ESPECIALLY EAGER TO PURSUE. BECAUSE HER VICTIMS ARE THE WEALTHY AND POWERFUL, SHE HAS ACTUALLY COME TO BE SEEN AS SOMETHING OF A HERO BY THE PEOPLE OF THE INNER CITY. HER STAR WOULD SEEM TO BE ON THE RISE, BUT EVEN AS SHE GAINS IN FAME AND REPUTATION, THE "SIAMESE TWIN" GAG IS STARTING TO WEAR THIN. NATALIE AND AUDREY ARE STARTING TO BECOME JEALOUS OF EACH OTHER'S TIME OUT OF THE UNIFORM, MOVING IN THE PUBLIC WORLD. EACH IS FEELING THE PINCH OF A LIFE SPENT MIMICKING ANOTHER, AND THE GIRLS ARE CHAFING FOR MORE INDIVIDUALITY AND INDEPENDENCE. IF NATALIE WANTS TO LEARN ITALIAN, OR AUDREY WANTS TO GAIN SOME MUSCLE MASS, THE OTHER SISTER MUST DO THE SAME LEST THE RISK BECOME TOO GREAT. AS A RESULT, THE RUSE HAS BECOME A SOURCE OF FREQUENT ARGUMENTS BETWEEN THE SIBLINGS.

APPEARANCE:

THE SULLIVANS ARE STUNNING WOMEN WITH SHORT BROWN HAIR, BUT THEIR COOL AND REMOTE DEMEANOR CREATES A DISTANCE BETWEEN THEM AND OTHER PEOPLE. THEY ARE SLENDER OF BUILD AND SLIGHT OF STATURE, WITH FAIR SKIN AND COLD GRAY EYES. BOTH GIRLS ARE TALKATIVE IN THE EXTREME, EVEN WHEN TOGETHER (AND THEREFORE ALONE), OFTEN COMPLETING SENTENCES FOR ONE ANOTHER OR SPEAKING IN UNISON.

SIAM WEARS A SKINTIGHT UNIFORM COLORED CREAM AND CHOCOLATE BROWN WITH CAT EARS AND A TAIL, COMPLETE WITH THE TRADEMARK SIAMESE "KINK." GOGGLES COVER HER EYES WHILE A TIGHT TOOL BELT ENCIRCLES HER WAIST.



SIAM

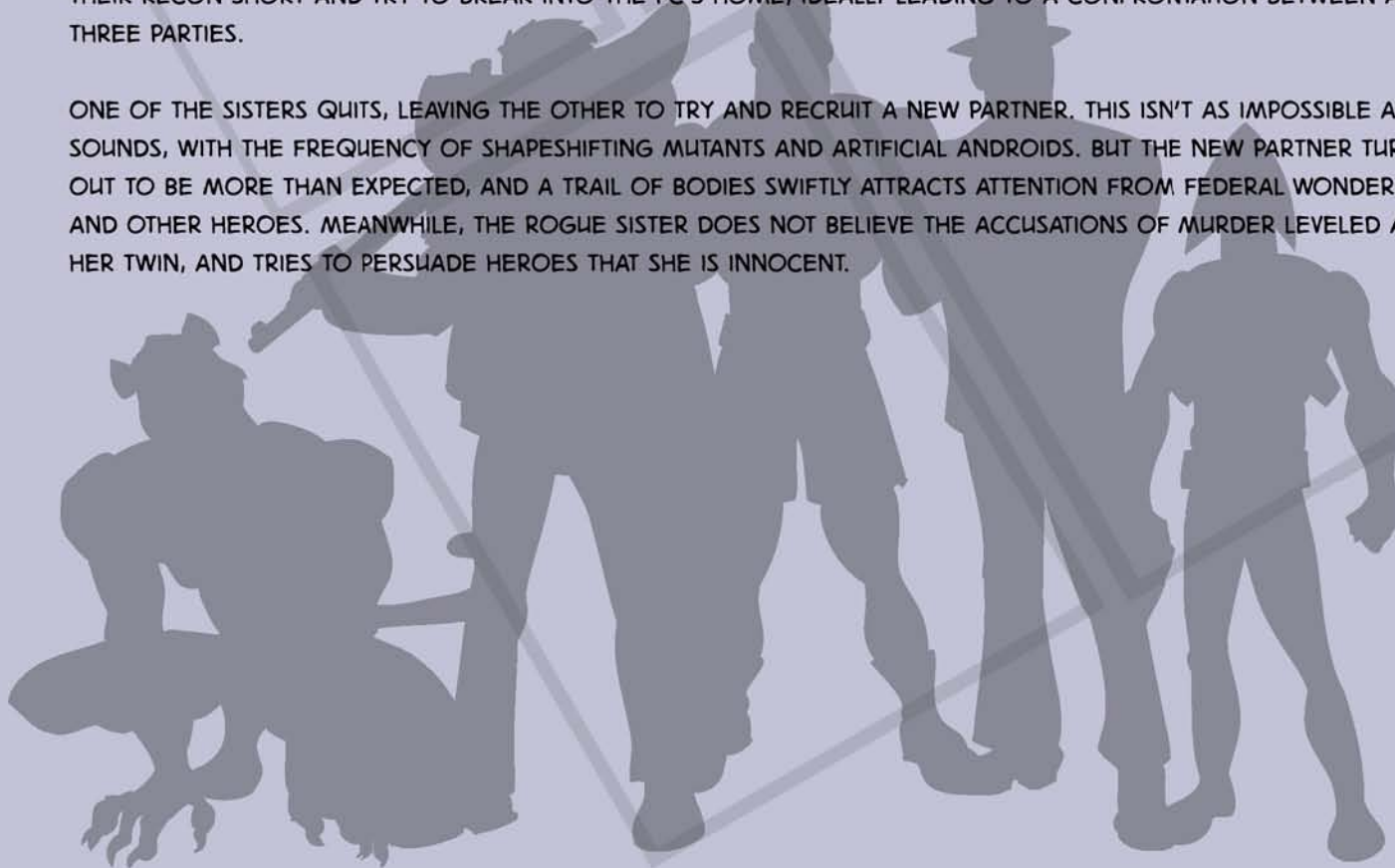
STORIES

SIAM LENDS HERSELF TO PLOTS INVOLVING THE MYSTERY OF HER DOUBLE IDENTITY OR THE AMBIGUOUS NATURE OF HER CRIMINAL LIFE. SHE ALSO MAKES A GOOD ROMANTIC INTEREST FOR VIGILANTE HEROES OR OTHER RELATIVELY LOW-POWERED WONDERS.

A CRIMINAL MASTERMIND HAS CONSTRUCTED A DEVICE WHICH ENABLES HIM TO BLACKMAIL THE CIVILIZED WORLD. HE EXPECTS AN ASSAULT BY SUPERHUMAN WONDERS, BUT IF SOMEONE COULD GET INSIDE TO SABOTAGE THE MACHINE, AN ASSAULT TEAM COULD SLIP PAST HIS DEFENSES. THE HEROES HAVE TO FIGURE OUT HOW TO WORK WITH SIAM, AND THEY'LL NEED TO BARGAIN WITH HER FOR SOME KIND OF PAYMENT IN RETURN. THEN THE PLAYERS WILL STILL NEED TO CREATE A DISTRACTION FOR HER INFILTRATION, PROBABLY BY ATTACKING THE MASTERMIND'S HQ TO PROVIDE SIAM WITH COVER. OF COURSE, SOMETHING UNEXPECTED WILL OCCUR ONCE SHE GETS INSIDE, AND THE HEROES MAY HAVE TO SWOOP IN TO HER RESCUE.

THE SULLIVANS SELECT THE "SECRET IDENTITY" OF ONE OF THE HEROES AS THEIR NEXT VICTIM. HE OR SHE SHOULD BE RICH AND PREFERABLY GOOD LOOKING. WHILE ONE OF THE SISTERS CHARMS THE TARGET, THE OTHER IS CASING THE STately MANOR FOR EVENTUAL BURGLARY. MAKE SURE BOTH SISTERS ARE SEEN AT THE SAME TIME, ONE IN UNIFORM AND THE OTHER OUT, TO ESTABLISH THE ALIBI. THE SISTERS WILL ALSO TRADE OFF WITH THE VICTIM, AND IT IS DURING THESE TIMES THAT CLUES WILL SURFACE, WHEN TENSION BETWEEN THE TWO SULLIVANS LEADS THEM TO STRAY FROM THEIR MUTUAL HABITS. PERHAPS AUDREY ATTENDS A BOXING MATCH WITH THE HERO, BUT LATER NATALIE DECRIES THE SPORT AS "BARBARIC." WHEN THE RUSE IS THREATENED TO THE POINT OF BREAKAGE, THE GIRLS WILL HAVE TO CUT THEIR RECON SHORT AND TRY TO BREAK INTO THE PC'S HOME, IDEALLY LEADING TO A CONFRONTATION BETWEEN ALL THREE PARTIES.

ONE OF THE SISTERS QUILTS, LEAVING THE OTHER TO TRY AND RECRUIT A NEW PARTNER. THIS ISN'T AS IMPOSSIBLE AS IT SOUNDS, WITH THE FREQUENCY OF SHAPESHIFTING MUTANTS AND ARTIFICIAL ANDROIDS. BUT THE NEW PARTNER TURNS OUT TO BE MORE THAN EXPECTED, AND A TRAIL OF BODIES SWIFTLY ATTRACTS ATTENTION FROM FEDERAL WONDERS AND OTHER HEROES. MEANWHILE, THE ROGUE SISTER DOES NOT BELIEVE THE ACCUSATIONS OF MURDER LEVELLED AT HER TWIN, AND TRIES TO PERSUADE HEROES THAT SHE IS INNOCENT.



FERAL HERO

A NATURAL BORN KILLER, THE FERAL HERO STRUGGLES TO RETAIN HIS HUMANITY IN THE FACE OF BLOODTHIRSTY URGES. HE IS BRUTALLY EFFICIENT AT WHAT HE DOES, BUT IS FEARED AND EVEN REVILED BY HIS PEERS IN THE SUPERHUMAN COMMUNITY.

EXAMPLES: TIGRA, TIMBER WOLF, WEREWOLF BY NIGHT, WOLFSBANE, WOLVERINE

RELATED ARCHETYPES: ANIMAL HERO, FEMME FELINE, MONSTROUS HERO, OCCULT HERO

QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES:

LIKE JECKYLL AND HYDE, THE FERAL HERO IS A GOOD MAN WHO IS POSSESSED BY AN INNER, ANIMALISTIC, DEMON. THE HERO RESTRAINS THIS MONSTER BECAUSE HE KNOWS THAT IT IS VIOLENT AND CRUEL, BUT SOMETIMES BEING VIOLENT AND CRUEL IS THE ONLY WAY OUT OF A SITUATION AND THE MONSTER MUST BE SET FREE. IN THESE SITUATIONS THE FERAL HERO BECOMES A TERRIFYING KILLER WHOSE BLOODTHIRSTY RAGE ENDANGERS FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE. THIS CHANGE SOMETIMES INCLUDES AN ACTUAL PHYSICAL METAMORPHOSIS, TURNING THE MAN INTO A MONSTER; RATHER THAN THE ALTER-EGO POWER, THIS IS REPRESENTED ON THE CHARACTER SHEET WITH A CHALLENGE. THE FERAL HERO WILL HAVE CHALLENGES LIKE "THE BEAST WITHIN" OR "ALWAYS HURTS THE ONES HE LOVES", WHICH EXPRESS THE DIFFICULTY OF RETAINING SELF-CONTROL AND THE TRAGIC RAMIFICATIONS OF HIS RAGE.

HEROES TRADITIONALLY OBEY A CODE OF PRESERVING LIFE, BUT THE FERAL HERO WILL EXPRESS HIS LETHALITY THROUGH CHALLENGES LIKE "EYE FOR AN EYE" OR "HUNTER IN THE URBAN JUNGLE". THIS TRAIL OF BODIES MAKES THE FERAL HERO UNWELCOME IN TEAMS UNLESS HE IS TRYING TO CHANGE HIS WAYS. POLICE WILL TAKE A DIM VIEW OF HIS ACTIVITIES, AS WILL MOST CIVILIANS, WHO WILL BE FRIGHTENED BY HIM. THE DARK ASPECTS OF SOCIETY, HOWEVER, ADMIRE AND EVEN EMULATE HIM, LEADING TO SOCIAL QUALITIES LIKE "ON GOOD TERMS WITH BAD PEOPLE" AND "I MARRIED A SUPER-VILLAIN".

THE FERAL HERO MAY HAVE "ANIMAL MAGNETISM" OR A "NOBLE SAVAGERY" WHICH MAKES HIM OR HER HIGHLY ATTRACTIVE TO THE OPPOSITE SEX. IN THESE STORIES, THE FERAL HERO'S SIMPLE PRECEPTS, WHILE EXTREMELY LETHAL AND DANGEROUS, ALSO BRING A STARK CLARITY TO HIGHLY COMPLEX MORAL OR ETHICAL ISSUES. WHILE OTHER HEROES ENDLESSLY DEBATE THESE MORAL QUANDARIES, THE FERAL HERO ENDS THE DISCUSSION WITH A QUICK AND, IN HIS EYES, MERCIFUL KILL.



FERAL HERO

THE SOURCE OF THE FERAL HERO'S DOUBLE NATURE IS OFTEN SUPERNATURAL; HE MAY BE A WEREWOLF OR HAVE BEEN TRANSFORMED THROUGH SOME KIND OF CURSE OR POTION. OTHERS ARE VICTIMS OF SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENTATION. IN EITHER CASE, ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE FERAL HERO'S CONDITION ALWAYS RESTS WITH HE HIMSELF; HE AGREED TO THE EXPERIMENT, HE DRANK THE POTION, OR HE PERFORMED SOME ACT WHICH RESULTED IN THE CURSE. THIS ILLUSTRATES THE WAY IN WHICH THE FERAL HERO IS STRUGGLING WITH HIS OWN DARK HALF; IF HE IS INNOCENT OF THE MANY CRIMES AND MORAL TRANSGRESSIONS WHICH HIS DARK HALF PERFORMS, HE BECOMES MUCH LESS INTERESTING AS A CHARACTER.

ABILITIES: PROWESS IS KEY TO THE FERAL HERO, AND AWARENESS, COORDINATION AND STRENGTH MAY ALSO BE HIGH. INTELLECT IS HIS LOWEST SCORE.

POWERS: THE FERAL HERO WILL HAVE CLAWS, REPRESENTED BY THE STRIKE POWER, AND MAY HAVE SUPER-SENSES OR DANGER SENSE. FAST ATTACK IS AN EASY WAY TO MAKE THE FERAL HERO MORE DANGEROUS, AND REGENERATION ALLOWS HIM TO HEAL QUICKLY FROM THE MANY WOUNDS HE SUFFERS. USE ABILITY BOOST, KEYED TO PROWESS, STRENGTH OR WILLPOWER, FOR THE FERAL HERO'S BESTIAL RAGE. SOMETIMES A FERAL HERO WILL HAVE ANIMAL CONTROL, OR AT LEAST COMMUNICATION, WITH OTHER WILD ANIMALS SUCH AS WOLVES.

SPECIALTIES: THE FERAL HERO WILL BE AN EXCELLENT FIGHTER, USUALLY REPRESENTED BY THE MARTIAL ARTS SPECIALTY. OTHER LIKELY SPECIALTIES INCLUDE STEALTH, ATHLETICS AND MENTAL RESISTANCE. TRACKING AND OTHER HUNTING SKILLS MAY MERIT INVESTIGATION.



THE BRUIN

FIRST APPEARANCE: YOUNG WONDERS #1

ARCHETYPES: FERAL HERO, YOUNG HERO, AVATAR

QUALITIES: GIMME A HUG, YOUNG WONDER, FRIENDS WITH THE FRONTIERSMAN, FOOTBALL HERO, NOT A SNITCH

CHALLENGES: ALWAYS THE WINGMAN, BEAR BY NECESSITY, IN OVER HIS HEAD, LIVING PRISON FOR YONVA

PROWESS 5

COORDINATION 4

STRENGTH 7

INTELLECT 3

AWARENESS 4

WILLPOWER 4

DETERMINATION 2

STAMINA 11



POWERS:

ABILITY BOOST (STRENGTH) 8, INVULNERABILITY 3, SUPER-SENSES 2 (LOW-LIGHT VISION, SCENT)

SPECIALTIES: ATHLETICS, INTIMIDATION, NATURE, WRESTLING

ORIGIN

"SUSIE, I WANT YOU TO STAY IN THE BOATHOUSE WHILE I GET HELP. AND ... IF SOMETHING CRAZY SHOWS UP -- LIKE A WILD ANIMAL OR SOMETHING -- DON'T FREAK OUT, OKAY?"

KYLE WALLACE WAS ALWAYS A TEAM PLAYER. HE LOOKED OUT FOR HIS YOUNGER BROTHER IN SCHOOL, HE HELPED HIS MA CARRY THE GROCERIES, HE WAS ALWAYS THE GUY BLOCKING WHILE HIS TEAMMATE DAN BARIMAN RAN THE BALL IN FOR A TOUCHDOWN.

WHEN DAN GOT CAUGHT STEALING A CAR AND TAKING IT FOR A JOYRIDE, KYLE KEPT HIS MOUTH SHUT ABOUT IT AND, AS A RESULT, TOOK SOME OF THE FALL. THE WHOLE TEAM WAS FORCED TO SPEND THE SUMMER DOING VOLUNTEER WORK IN NORTHERN ALABAMA; THIS WAS COACH'S VERSION OF "COMMUNITY SERVICE."

THE BRUIN

UNFORTUNATELY FOR KYLE, THAT WAS THE SUMMER OF YONVA, IN WHICH AN ALABAMA HUNTER WHO DIDN'T KNOW ANY BETTER SLEW WITH HIS RIFLE THE LAST OF THE ANI-TSA-GU-HI, A CHEROKEE TRIBE WHO, CENTURIES AGO, LEFT A LIFE OF STARVATION ON THE RESERVATION TO JOIN WITH THE WILDERNESS AND BECOME A FAMILY OF BEARS. WHEN THE LAST MEMBER OF THIS TRIBE WAS EXTINCT WITH A WHITE MAN'S BULLET, YONVA, THE PRIMORDIAL SPIRIT OF THE BEAR, MANIFESTED AND BEGAN A THREE-WEEK KILLING SPREE THAT TERRIFIED THE LOCAL COMMUNITY AND EVENTUALLY EARNED THE ATTENTION OF THE GREAT FRONTIERSMAN. DAN BARIMAN WAS ONE OF THE FIRST KILLED, SO KYLE WAS ONE OF MANY WHO AGREED TO HELP THE FRONTIERSMAN IN ANY WAY HE COULD. SURE, HE FELT PRETTY INSIGNIFICANT NEXT TO A TWELVE-FOOT GHOST BEAR WHO COULD KNOCK YOUR HEAD OFF WITH ONE SWIPE OF A PAW, BUT HE HAD ALWAYS BEEN A TEAM PLAYER.

IT WAS KYLE'S STUBBORN LOYALTY AND HIS WILLINGNESS TO FACE DANGER WITHOUT FEAR THAT MADE HIM THE LAST MAN STANDING NEXT TO THE FRONTIERSMAN WHEN YONVA WAS FINALLY CORNERED IN HIS DEN. KYLE HAD EXPECTED THE HERO OF THE AMERICAN WEST TO WRESTLE THE BEAR SPIRIT TO THE GROUND, BUT INSTEAD, HE TALKED TO IT. YONVA TOLD OF HIS ANGER, AND THE BREAKING OF THE SACRED COVENANT HE HAD MADE WITH THE CHEROKEE PEOPLE. SPEAKING PATIENTLY WITH THE OLD BEAR, THE FRONTIERSMAN ASKED IF THERE WAS ANY WAY YONVA'S KILLING SPREE COULD BE HALTED. WHAT DID THE WHITE MAN HAVE TO DO TO APPEASE HIM? TO PROVE TO HIM THAT THEY RESPECTED THE TRADITIONS THAT HAD COME BEFORE? YONVA LAUGHED WICKEDLY AND DARED THE WHITE MAN TO GIVE HIMSELF OVER TO THE OLD WAYS, TO THE WAY OF THE ANI-TSA-GU-HI. YONVA CHALLENGED THE FRONTIERSMAN TO PROVE HIS RESPECT WITH DEEDS, NOT WORDS. IF EVEN A SINGLE WHITE MAN WOULD GIVE HIMSELF TO THE ANI-TSA-GU-HI, THEN YONVA WOULD RELENT AND THE KILLING WOULD END.

KYLE VOLUNTEERED. IT SEEMED A BIT RASH TO THE FRONTIERSMAN, BUT EVEN THE SEASONED HERO HAD TO ADMIT THAT THE BOY HAD GUTS, AND IF IT WOULD END THE KILLING, THEN IT WAS A DECISION TO BE COMMENDED. WHEN YONVA HEARD KYLE'S OFFER, THE BEAR SPIRIT REGRETTED THE PROMISE IT HAD MADE, BUT THE VOW COULD NOT NOW BE REFUSED. SO KYLE'S MIND OPENED TO THE SPIRIT OF THE ANI-TSA-GU-HI, AND HE WAS MADE A BEING OF TWO NATURES: A MAN WHO WALKED ON TWO LEGS, AND A WILD CREATURE WHO WALKED ON FOUR. THE BRUTAL MURDERS ENDED, THE ALABAMA TOWN RETURNED TO PEACE AND QUIET, AND KYLE EVENTUALLY RETURNED TO SCHOOL. ONLY NOW, WHEN HE WANTED TO, HE COULD TRANSFORM INTO A 12 FOOT, TWELVE HUNDRED POUND GRIZZLY BEAR. IT'S TAKEN SOME GETTING USED TO.

SO FAR, KYLE HAS BEEN ABLE TO CONTINUE WITH A MORE OR LESS NORMAL LIFE. HE'S BEEN ACCEPTED TO A PROMINENT UNIVERSITY ON A FOOTBALL SCHOLARSHIP, AND HE STUDIES, PRACTICES, AND GOES TO PARTIES (NOT NECESSARILY IN THAT ORDER) PRETTY MUCH LIKE EVERY OTHER COLLEGE STUDENT. BUT THE BEAR SPIRIT RUMBLES ALWAYS INSIDE HIM, AND KYLE NOW WONDERS IF THIS MIGHT JUST BE HIS CHANCE TO REALLY MAKE SOMETHING OF HIMSELF. NO MORE SECOND FIDDLE, HE FIGURES. NO MORE PLAYING THE SIDEKICK TO SOMEBODY BIGGER, STRONGER, BETTER LOOKING.

ABILITIES

KYLE CAN TRANSFORM INTO A GRIZZLY BEAR, ACQUIRING GREAT STRENGTH, STAMINA, SPEED, AND KEEN SENSES. REGARDLESS OF FORM, HE IS AN EXCELLENT HAND-TO-HAND FIGHTER, SPECIALIZING IN WRESTLING TO QUICKLY AND EFFICIENTLY DEFEAT A FOE WITHOUT INJURY. HE HAS A NEW KINSHIP WITH ANIMALS, WHICH HAS HELPED WITH THE OCCASIONAL GUARD DOG OR CROCODILE DEATH-TRAP. HIS MUNDANE SKILLS REFLECT HIS ATHLETIC TALENT AND HIS STATUS AS A UNIVERSITY STUDENT. (HIS MAJOR: UNDECLARED).

ALL OF KYLE'S POWERS, INCLUDING HIS STRENGTH, ARE ONLY PRESENT WHILE HE IS IN BEAR-FORM. WHILE IN THIS FORM, KYLE CANNOT SPEAK OR MANIPULATE OBJECTS VERY EFFECTIVELY WITH HIS PAWS. HE ALSO HAS A VERY SHORT TEMPER IN BEAR FORM, AND HAS SOMETIMES STRUGGLED TO KEEP HIS STRENGTH IN CHECK, ALMOST KILLING MORE THAN ONE PERSON. IT IS THIS PART OF YONVA'S LEGACY THAT MOST WORRIES HIM.

THE BRUIN

SURE, THE SPIRIT OF YONVA IS AN ANGRY CREATURE, AND SOMETIMES KYLE HAS DIFFICULTY CONTROLLING HIMSELF ONCE HE'S "GONE WILD." MOST PEOPLE ARE STILL PRETTY FREAKED OUT WHEN THEY HAVE THEIR LIFE SAVED BY A GIANT BEAR. THE MEDIA HAVEN'T QUITE FIGURED OUT WHAT TO MAKE OF HIM YET. (IT DOESN'T HELP THAT A BEAR CAN'T TALK.) HE'S BEEN SHOT AT BY POLICE MORE THAN ONCE. BECAUSE OF ALL THESE THINGS, HE'S KEEPING HIS POWERS A SECRET FROM HIS FRIENDS AND FAMILY. BUT IF HE CAN LEARN TO USE HIS POWERS, AND PERHAPS JOIN UP WITH OTHER PEOPLE HIS OWN AGE, HE MIGHT JUST BE ONE OF THE NEXT SEVEN WONDERS.

APPEARANCE:

ORDINARILY, KYLE WALLACE IS A HANDSOME YOUNG MAN IN HIS LATE TEENS. HE'S OFTEN WEARING A JACKET WITH THE COLORS AND SYMBOL OF HIS UNIVERSITY FOOTBALL TEAM (WHICH IS, NATURALLY, A BEAR). HE'S GOT BROWN HAIR AND EYES, AND HIS FREQUENT PHYSICAL TRAINING HAS GIVEN HIM A GREAT BUILD. AS THE BRUIN, OF COURSE, HE IS A GIANT GRIZZLY BEAR, WITH SHAGGY GOLDEN-BROWN HAIR, ENORMOUS PAWS, A GIANT MOUTH, AND LOTS OF VERY SHARP TEETH.



STORIES

THE BRUIN

THE BRUIN'S PLOTS WILL OFTEN DEPEND ON HIS STATUS AS A COLLEGE STUDENT, THE UNCONTROLLABLE NATURE OF HIS ANIMAL SIDE, OR THE NATIVE AMERICAN NATURE OF HIS POWERS.

KYLE NEEDS TO FIND A WAY TO CONTROL THE BRUIN'S RAGE BEFORE HE CLAIMS THE LIFE OF A VILLAIN OR, WORSE, AN INNOCENT CIVILIAN. BUT HE'S NOT REALLY SURE HOW TO DO THAT; IT'S NOT SOMETHING YOU CAN BUY A BOOK ON. SO HE BEGINS TO EXPERIMENT, VISITING PSYCHIATRISTS, TRYING MARTIAL ARTS GURUS, AND NEW AGE PHILOSOPHIES LIKE NEO-WICCA AND CRYSTALS. NONE OF THIS IS LIKELY TO WORK, BUT IT DOES GET HIM NOTICED BY CERTAIN COVERT GROUPS SEEKING TO RECRUIT YOUNG AND NAIVE WONDERS FOR THEIR OWN AGENDA. KYLE'S FATE HINGES ON WHICH GROUP GETS TO HIM FIRST AND CAN PERSUADE HIM TO JOIN; IF PLAYER CHARACTERS TRY TO CONVINCE HIM TO JOIN THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS, THEY WILL FACE COMPETITION FROM EQUALLY TENACIOUS RIVALS WHO ARE TUGGING HIM INTO THE DARKNESS.

A GROUP OF NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENTS ATTENDING KYLE'S UNIVERSITY RECOGNIZE THE BRUIN AS AN INCARNATION OF YONVA AND BEGIN TO HONOR HIM AS A RETURNED SPIRIT OF THE WILDERNESS. THIS PUTS KYLE IN A VERY DIFFICULT POSITION; THESE INDIANS MAY BE ABLE TO HELP HIM CONTROL THE BEAST WITHIN, BUT AT THE SAME TIME, BEING WORSHIPPED AS A GOD MAKES HIM KINDA NERVOUS. LOCAL CHRISTIAN GROUPS ARE STARTING TO PROTEST THE "PAGAN CULTS" ACTIVE AT THE UNIVERSITY, AND THE STUDENTS ARE TAKING SIDES. THE BRUIN IS BECOMING A SYMBOL OF DIVISION AND A CAUSE FOR VIOLENCE, RATHER THAN AN INSTRUMENT OF JUSTICE.

IN A DESPERATE BATTLE AGAINST A POWERFUL FOE, KYLE AND HIS ALLIES ARE DEFEATED WHEN THE SPIRIT OF YONVA SPEAKS TO HIM, OFFERING TO SAVE THE DAY AND PREVENT THE DEATH OF INNOCENTS IF KYLE WILL JUST GRANT "MORE OF HIS SPIRIT" TO THE GHOST BEAR. KYLE, SUSPECTING THE WORST BUT COMPELLED TO DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO CLUTCH VICTORY FROM THE JAWS OF DEFEAT, AGREES. STRENGTH AND VITALITY FILLS HIS URSINE FORM AND HE SINGLE HANDEDLY DEFEATS THE VILLAIN, BUT IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOW HE BEGINS TO FEEL STRANGELY. HE EXPERIENCES LONG BLACKOUT PERIODS, IS ALWAYS TIRED, AND OCCASIONALLY HEARS REPORTS OF THE BRUIN'S APPEARANCE WHEN HE KNOWS HE WAS AT HOME, ASLEEP. HAS YONVA TAKEN OVER? AND WHAT IS HE DOING WITH KYLE'S BODY IN THE "OFF HOURS"?



FOCUSED HERO

THE FOCUSED HERO HAS A SINGLE GIMMICK, AND HE DOES IT VERY WELL. HE MAY BE THE STRONG GUY, THE FAST GUY, THE GUY THAT GOES INVISIBLE, OR THE GUY WHO SHOOTS AN ENERGY BEAM. ANY POWER IS POSSIBLE, BUT WITHOUT IT THE FOCUSED HERO IS RATHER ORDINARY.

EXAMPLES:

ANGEL, CYCLOPS, DOUG RAMSEY, GIANT-MAN, INVISIBLE GIRL, KITTY PRYDE, MATTER-EATER LAD, QUICKSILVER

RELATED ARCHETYPES:

MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS

QUALITIES & CHALLENGES:

THIS IS ONE OF THE OLDEST ARCHETYPES IN COMICS, AND A GOOD PLACE TO START FOR PLAYERS MAKING THEIR FIRST CHARACTER. ALTHOUGH HE SEEMS LIMITED AT FIRST, THE FOCUSED HERO IS USUALLY FOUND ON A TEAM. HE HAS A CLEARLY DEFINED ROLE THERE, AND HIS COMRADES COVER FOR HIS WEAKNESSES, MAKING THE WHOLE GREATER THAN THE SUM OF ITS PARTS. LOOK FOR QUALITIES LIKE "GETS BY WITH A LITTLE HELP FROM HIS FRIENDS" OR "THERE IS NO I IN TEAM".

BECAUSE HIS POWERS ARE SO SIMPLE, THIS ARCHETYPE PROVIDES A CHANCE FOR THE PLAYER TO EMPHASIZE THE MAN INSIDE THE UNIFORM, BUILDING A COMPLEX AND WELL-DEVELOPED PERSONALITY. OTHER HEROES SPEND A LOT OF TIME AGONIZING OVER THEIR TRAGIC ORIGIN OR TRYING TO CONTROL THEIR POWERS, BUT THE FOCUSED HERO IS RELATIVELY WELL-ADJUSTED AND USUALLY HAS GOALS, ASPIRATIONS, AND STORIES OUTSIDE OF THE SUPERHERO REALM. BECAUSE HIS POWERS ARE GOOD FOR ONLY ONE THING, HE HAS LEARNED TO DO EVERYTHING ELSE HIMSELF, MAKING HIM SURPRISINGLY SELF-RELIANT AND COMPETENT.

OVER TIME, AS THE HERO BECOMES MORE EXPERIENCED, HE CHANGES. THIS USUALLY MEANS GETTING NEW POWERS, BEING TAKEN IN A BOLD NEW DIRECTION, ACQUIRING A LARGE SUPPORTING CAST, ROMANCE SUBPLOTS, A LEADERSHIP ROLE, OR ALL OF THE ABOVE.

ABILITIES:

IF THE FOCUSED HERO HAS AN ABILITY OF 7 OR HIGHER, IT IS HIS ONLY POWER. HE MAY BE SUPER-SMART, SUPER-STRONG, OR DEADLY WITH ANY WEAPON, BUT OTHERWISE HIS ABILITIES SHOULD BE IN THE ACCEPTED RANGE FOR ORDINARY HUMAN BEINGS.

FLASHOVER



FOCUSED HERO

POWERS:

A TRUE FOCUSED HERO ONLY HAS ONE POWER, THOUGH BONUS POWERS WHICH ARE REALLY JUST ALTERNATE WAYS OF USING HIS ONE ABILITY ARE CERTAINLY WELCOME AND ACCEPTED. COMMON CHOICES INCLUDE BLAST, STRIKE, FLIGHT, SUPER-SPEED, TELEPATHY, MIND OR EMOTION CONTROL, ILLUSION, INVISIBILITY, INVULNERABILITY, IMMORTALITY, GROWTH, DENSITY, PHASING, OR JUST ABOUT ANY OF THE CONTROL POWERS.

SPECIALTIES:

A FOCUSED HERO OFTEN HAS THE POWER SPECIALTY TO REFLECT INTENSIVE TRAINING IN THE USE OF HIS ONE ABILITY. OTHER SPECIALTIES COMPENSATE FOR A LACK OF OTHER POWERS: MARTIAL ARTS, MILITARY, ATHLETICS, WEAPONRY AND STEALTH ARE ALL COMMON.

STUNTS:

THE HALLMARK OF THE FOCUSED HERO IS A COLLECTION OF STUNTS THAT REPRESENT SPECIALIZED TRICKS HE HAS DEVELOPED OVER YEARS OF PRACTICE. THESE STUNTS MAY NOT ALL BE ON HIS CHARACTER SHEET; THEY MAY BE USED INFREQUENTLY ENOUGH THAT HE CAN JUST USE HIS SIZABLE DETERMINATION POOL TO PERFORM THEM WHENEVER NECESSARY.



THE CHAMP

FIRST APPEARANCE: THE CHAMP #1

ARCHETYPES: FOCUSED HERO, MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS, MINORITY HERO

QUALITIES: PLAYED BY WILL SMITH, EYE OF THE TIGER, GOOD WITH KIDS, FLOAT LIKE A BUTTERFLY, STING LIKE A BEE

CHALLENGES: HAUNTED BY DOUBT, CAN'T HOLD DOWN A RELATIONSHIP, CONSTANT CHALLENGERS, THE RACE CARD

PROWESS 6

COORDINATION 4

STRENGTH 8

INTELLECT 3

AWARENESS 4

WILLPOWER 5

DETERMINATION 5

STAMINA 13

POWERS:

NONE

SPECIALTIES:

ATHLETICS, LEADERSHIP, MARTIAL ARTS EXPERT

STUNTS:

LEFT HOOK (STRENGTH): THE CHAMP CAN STUN A FOE EVEN IF HIS ATTACK INFLECTS LESS THAN 0 DAMAGE. **SHOCKWAVE** (STRENGTH): BY STRIKING THE GROUND WITH A POWERFUL FIST, THE CHAMP CAN FORCE EVERYONE AROUND HIM TO MAKE A COORDINATION TEST AGAINST HIS OWN STRENGTH OR FALL PRONE. **THUNDERCLAP** (STRENGTH): THE CHAMP CAN SNUFF OUT FIRES OR STUN FOES IN CLOSE RANGE BY CLAPPING HIS HANDS TOGETHER. THIS DOES NO DAMAGE, BUT CAN STUN.



ORIGIN

"YOU THINK THIS HERE 'CHAMP' STANDS FOR 'CHUMP'? LOOK HOW MANY EYES YOU GOT. AND THEY'RE BIG AS PANCAKES TOO! I MEAN, HOW CAN YOU NOT SEE RIGHT WITH EYES LIKE THAT. AND WHOO! DO YOU SMELL. HOW MANY CHICKS YOU GET? IN A MONTH. BE STRAIGHT WITH ME."

MARTIN LUTHER WILLIAMS WAS BORN IN TITAN CITY IN 1967; HIS FATHER WAS KILLED IN A RACE RIOT AND HIS MOTHER, DETERMINED TO PAY THE FAMILY'S WAY, CHANGED SHEETS AT A DOWNTOWN HOTEL. THE BOY WAS RAISED BY HIS GRANDFATHER, WHO SHOWERED MARTIN WITH BOXING STORIES, RECOUNTING FOR HIM THE GREATEST FIGHTS IN HISTORY, BLOW BY BLOW, ROUND BY ROUND.

THE CHAMP

ABILITIES

ABILITIES: WHEN HE FIRST BECAME A WONDER IN THE EARLY 90S, MARTIN WAS ONE OF THE STRONGEST MEN ALIVE. IN THE YEARS SINCE, OTHER POWERHOUSES HAVE COME TO SUPPLANT THAT TITLE, BUT THE CHAMP REMAINS PHENOMENALLY STRONG, VIRTUALLY TIRELESS, AND ABLE TO ABSORB TREMENDOUS AMOUNTS OF PUNISHMENT. HE IS NOT BULLET-PROOF, BUT IT WOULD TAKE ALL THE BULLETS IN AN ARMORED BATTALION TO TAKE HIM DOWN, AND EVEN THEN THE CHAMP WOULD HAVE 2-1 ODDS. AT LEAST AS IMPORTANT AS HIS PHYSICAL POWER IS THE CHAMP'S MASTERY OF UNARMED FIGHTING SKILLS. HIS LEFT HOOK AND LIGHTNING FAST RIGHT HAVE ALLOWED HIM TO SNATCH VICTORY FROM FOES STRONGER THAN HE BUT FAR LESS SAVVY. HE IS A MASTER OF THE FAKE, USING FOOTWORK TO UNBALANCE EVEN THE MOST NIMBLE OPPONENT. HE HAS FACED DOWN FORCES BEYOND THE KEN OF ORDINARY MORTALS AND, WHILE HE HAS OFTEN ADMITTED SURPRISE, HE HAS NEVER LOST HIS GOOD SPIRITS. HE DOESN'T LIKE TO HIT WOMEN, BUT HAS REGRETFULLY DONE SO AS A NECESSARY EVIL.

AS HE GREW, MARTIN BEGAN TO SEE BOXING AS A WAY TO ESCAPE THE GRIP OF POVERTY AND RACIAL REPRESSION. HE WANTED RESPECT, AND HE DESPERATELY WANTED TO NOT BE POOR. UNDER HIS GRANDFATHER'S GUIDANCE, HE FOUND A LOCAL GYM AND BEGAN TO LEARN THE SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SURVIVAL IN THE RING. HIS PERFORMANCE IN SCHOOL WAS UNSPECTACULAR, BUT OUT OF LOYALTY TO HIS MOTHER HE CONTINUED TO ATTEND AND MANAGED TO SUCCESSFULLY GRADUATE, THE PROUDEST DAY OF HIS MOTHER'S LIFE.

WITHIN THE YEAR, HOWEVER, HE WAS WORKING MORNINGS AND AFTERNOONS IN A BUTCHER SHOP AND SWEATING THE EVENINGS WITH HIS TRAINER, "WALLEYE" WOOD. SOON AFTER HIS 21ST BIRTHDAY, HE HAD HIS FIRST AMATEUR BOUT, A MATCH WON BY KNOCKOUT IN THE THIRD ROUND. A SERIES OF FIGHTS FOLLOWED, WITH WOOD SKILLFULLY WORKING WILLIAMS AROUND THE CIRCUIT, GAINING EXPERIENCE, EVEN AS THE YOUNG HEAVYWEIGHT GAINED INCREASING POWER AND RECOGNITION. BY THIS POINT A MODEST FINANCIAL SUCCESS, WILLIAMS'S FIRST PRIORITY WAS MAKING SURE HIS MOTHER NEVER HAD TO WORK AGAIN; HE HIRED HER A MAID TO CHANGE THE SHEETS.

IN THE PROFESSIONAL BOXING WORLD THAT WILLIAMS GREW TO BE A PART OF, HEAVYWEIGHT CONTENDERS WERE REPROBATE AND BRUTAL THUGS AS LIKELY TO BITE AN OPPONENT AS HIT THEM. IN THIS CROWD, MARTIN WILLIAMS STOOD APART. ON CAMERA HE HAD A CLEVER WAY WITH WORDS, A PENCHANT FOR PUNS AND LIMERICKS, AND A ROGUEISH SMILE. WHEN OUT OF THE PUBLIC SPOTLIGHT, HE WAS MODEST, EVEN HUMBLE, AND WAS ESPECIALLY PROTECTIVE OF CHILDREN. ALTHOUGH HE HAD OCCASIONAL GIRLFRIENDS, THE PUBLIC PRESSURE THAT CAME WITH THE RELATIONSHIP PROVED TOO MUCH FOR ANYONE TO BEAR. HIS GRANDFATHER WAS, BY THIS TIME, VERY ILL, AND WILLIAMS PRESSURED HIS MANAGER FOR A SHOT AT THE TITLE. WOOD WAS RELUCTANT, BUT SCHEDULED THE BOUT FOR THE FOLLOWING MONTH.

THE FIGHT WOULD NEVER OCCUR. WHILE MARTIN WAS HOSTING THE PRESS CONFERENCE IN WHICH HIS SHOT AT THE TITLE WAS ANNOUNCED, THE ALIEN CIVILIZATION KNOWN AS THE UTBEK PANKRATOCRACY DISCOVERED EARTH. HAVING SURVIVED FOR CENTURIES ON A CULTURE OF RAIDING OTHER PLANETS FOR ALL THEIR RESOURCES AND WEALTH, THE UTBEK POSSESSED OVERWHELMING NUMBERS AND A TECHNOLOGICAL EDGE, BUT THEIR RIGID SOCIAL CODE PROHIBITED THE DESTRUCTION OF SO-CALLED "HONORABLE FOES." IN ORDER TO PROVE THE HONOR OF THE HUMAN SPECIES, ONE EXAMPLE OF MANKIND WOULD HAVE TO ENGAGE IN A DUEL TO THE DEATH WITH THE CHAMPION OF THE UTBEK KHAN. TESTY AT THE DISRUPTION OF HIS PRESS CONFERENCE, WILLIAMS GRABBED A MICROPHONE AND GLIBLY PRONOUNCED THAT HE WOULD "KICK YOUR GREEN BUTTS BACK TO UTBEK-I-STAN." THIS, APPARENTLY, WAS ENOUGH FOR THE KHAN, WHO ACCEPTED MARTIN'S CHALLENGE.

WILLIAMS DISCOVERED THAT THE KHAN'S CHAMPION WAS A MONSTROUS ROBOT POSSESSED OF AN INVULNERABLE BODY, UNTIRING LIMBS, AND A HELL OF A RIGHT HOOK. HE MANAGED TO SURVIVE THE FIRST COUPLE OF ROUNDS ON SHEER STUBBORNNESS, BUT IT WAS CLEAR TO EVERYONE WATCHING THAT BLOOD, BONE, AND MUSCLE WERE SIMPLY NO MATCH FOR A RELENTLESS MACHINE. IT WAS THEN THAT CODEX THE RENAISSANCE MAN, WHO HAD CALLED THE ACADEMY OF LYNXES TOGETHER FOR AN EMERGENCY SESSION, LED HIS RESEARCH TEAM TO A PROCESS WHICH TEMPORARILY GRANTED MARTIN SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH AND ENDURANCE. THE DEVICE WAS ACTIVATED, BEAMING POWER TO WILLIAMS, WHOSE BATTLE WAS BEING TELEVISED AROUND THE PLANET BY THE GLOATING UTBEK. SUDDENLY REVITALIZED, WILLIAMS TURNED THE FIGHT AROUND, AND WHAT HAD SEEMED A ONE-SIDED CONTEST TURNED INTO A GRUELING ENDURANCE TEST THAT LASTED ROUND UPON ROUND. FINALLY, IN THE LAST SECONDS OF THE FIGHT, MARTIN LUTHER WILLIAMS DESTROYED THE UTBEK CHAMPION, PUNCHING IT TO SCRAP. HUMANS AND UTBEK ALIKE--IMPRESSED BY MARTIN'S FIGHTING SPIRIT--PROCLAIMED HIM "CHAMP" OVER AND OVER AGAIN.

THE CHAMP

EARTH HAD WON THE RIGHT TO EXIST, AND WILLIAMS WAS HERALDED AS A HERO. BUT THE POWERS THAT HAD BEEN LENT TO HIM DURING THE FIGHT NEVER WENT AWAY, AND IT PROVED IMPOSSIBLE FOR HIM TO RETURN TO THE BOXING RING. HIS GRANDFATHER DIED A FEW MONTHS LATER, SO PROUD OF THE BOY THAT HAD SAVED HUMANITY. BUT WILLIAMS WAS ALWAYS HAUNTED BY HIS VICTORY, WHICH SEEMED TO HIM HOLLOW SINCE IT HAD COME ONLY WITH HELP. WOOD RETIRED TO A LIFE OF QUIET EASE IN SEASIDE, FLORIDA. WILLIAMS, KNOWN NOW THE WORLD OVER AS THE CHAMP, ADJUSTED TO THE LIFE OF A MODERN WONDER. IN THE YEARS SINCE, HE HAS BECOME ONE OF AMERICA'S BEST KNOWN AND MOST RESPECTED HEROES; HE GIVES GENEROUSLY TO CHARITY AND LENDS HIS NAME AND FACE TO REPUTABLE CAUSES THAT BENEFIT YOUNGSTERS, THE POOR, AND THE ELDERLY. HE IS A ROLE MODEL FOR CHILDREN, AND A MAN WHOSE CHARACTER IS UNQUESTIONED.

BUT HE STILL WATCHES EVERY PRIZE-FIGHT THAT HIS SATELLITE DISH CAN FIND. AND IN THE MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT, WHEN HE'S ALONE WITH HIS MILLIONS IN A HOUSE SO BIG HE CAN HEAR IT ECHO, HE WONDERS: IF HE HADN'T OPENED HIS MOUTH, IF HE HAD STUCK TO HIS PRIZE FIGHT, AND IF HE HAD GOTTEN TO THAT HEAVYWEIGHT TITLE BOUT ... WOULD HE HAVE MADE IT? WOULD HE HAVE REALLY BECOME THE CHAMP?

MARTIN LUTHER WILLIAMS WILL NEVER KNOW.

APPEARANCE:

MARTIN WILLIAMS IS A BIG, MUSCULAR, AFRICAN-AMERICAN IN HIS EARLY FORTIES WITH SHORT BLACK HAIR AND BROWN EYES. HE STILL WORKS OUT REGULARLY, THOUGH NOT WITH THE INTENSITY OF HIS YOUTH SINCE IT APPEARS HIS PHENOMENAL STRENGTH ISN'T GOING AWAY. HE IS NOTABLE FOR HIS CHARMING SMILE, AND HE HAS THE LOOK OF A MAN WHO, WHILE UNEDUCATED, IS IN NO WAY STUPID. HE HAS WORN A VARIETY OF UNIFORMS OVER THE YEARS, BUT MOST BOIL DOWN TO SOME FORM OF WHITE SHORTS, SHOES, AND WIDE BELT WITH THE WORD CHAMP BLAZONED CLEARLY IN GOLD. IN PUBLIC, WHEN A PAIR OF SHORTS WOULD BE INAPPROPRIATE, HE IS OFTEN SEEN IN A WHITE ROBE WITH A HOOD TRIMMED IN RED.



THE CHAMP

STORIES

THE CHAMP CREATES STORIES ABOUT COMPETITION AND ABOUT THE RAMIFICATIONS OF UNWANTED, BUT WELL-DESERVED, POWER.

WILLIAMS WITNESSES A CRIME AND IS ABOUT TO GET INVOLVED WHEN ANOTHER HERO SHOWS UP AND HANDLES THE MATTER. MARTIN SEES POTENTIAL IN THE YOUNGER HERO AND OFFERS TO TRAIN HIM, TAKING HIM UNDER HIS WING AS A PROTEGE . ACCEPTANCE DOES NOT COME WITHOUT PERIL: THERE ARE PLENTY OF OTHER YOUNG, STRUGGLING WONDERS WHO WANT TO BE IN THE HERO'S SHOES, AND SOME OF THEM ARE WILLING TO DO ANYTHING TO GET THERE. THE HERO FINDS HIMSELF BEING FRAMED FOR CRIMES, OR EVEN JUST IMMORAL ACTIVITY, HE DID NOT DO, AND HIS RIVALS BEGIN SUBTLE CAMPAIGNS TO ATTRACT THE CHAMP'S ATTENTION TO THEMSELVES. MEANWHILE, MARTIN IS HAVING TROUBLE ADJUSTING TO HIS MENTOR ROLE AND PERSONALITY CONFLICTS BETWEEN TEACHER AND STUDENT BECOME COMMON. THE CRISIS POINT COMES WHEN THE HERO LEARNS OF A WAY TO INCREASE HIS OWN POWER, BUT THE CHAMP REFUSES TO LET HIM TAKE IT. IS WILLIAMS LIVING OUT HIS UNFULFILLED DREAMS THROUGH THE BODY OF HIS APPRENTICE?

THE CHAMP DECIDES THE WORLD HAS ENOUGH WONDERS IN IT AND, IF HE FINDS A WAY TO RETIRE NOW, HE MIGHT STILL HAVE A SHOT AT THE TITLE. HE GOES SEARCHING FOR A WAY TO STRIP HIMSELF OF HIS POWERS. PERHAPS THE ONLY PERSON WHO CAN DO THIS IS A KNOWN CRIMINAL, A MAD SCIENTIST WHO WILLIAMS MUST BRING HIMSELF TO TRUST. ALTERNATELY, THE POWER MAY HAVE TO BE "PASSED ON" TO A CHOSEN SUCCESSOR, IN WHICH CASE WILLIAMS IS LOOKING FOR A RIGHTFUL HEIR WHO WILL USE HIS POWERS WELL. IN EITHER CASE, THE POWER LOSS GOES AWRY AND THE WORLD FINDS ITSELF IN NEED OF A CHAMP WHO HAS NOW GIVEN UP HIS POWERS. PERHAPS THE HEIR USES THE POWERS IN A BAD WAY, OR GETS KILLED THROUGH INEXPERIENCE. PERHAPS THAT MAD SCIENTIST KNOWS OF A THREAT FACING THE WORLD AND THAT'S WHY HE'S ALL TOO EAGER TO HELP WILLIAMS OUT.

IT HAS TAKEN A FEW YEARS FOR MARTIN'S DEFEAT OF THE UTBEK TO BECOME COMMON KNOWLEDGE THROUGHOUT THE GALAXY. ALIEN REFEREES DETERMINE THAT THE SUDDEN INFUSION OF SUPERHUMAN POWER MARTIN RECEIVED DURING THE FIGHT EFFECTIVELY INVALIDATES HIS TITLE AS HEAVYWEIGHT CHAMPION OF THE UNIVERSE. AS A RESULT, THERE IS NO CHAMP AT THE MOMENT AND SCORES OF ASPIRING ALIEN PUGILISTS DESCEND ON EARTH TO TEST THEIR SKILLS AGAINST HUMAN WONDERS IN A SERIES OF SINGLE ELIMINATION BOUTS WITH RULES WHICH HUMANS ARE IGNORANT OF BUT THE ALIENS ADHERE TO RIGOROUSLY. WILLIAMS IS BUT ONE VICTIM AMONG MANY IN THIS SUDDEN TOURNAMENT, WHICH GIVES STRONG-MEN AND MARTIAL ARTISTS A CHANCE TO PIT THEIR SKILLS AGAINST NOT ONLY A HOST OF BIZARRE ALIENS BUT ALSO EACH OTHER.

GADGET GUY

A SCIENCE FICTION HERO, THE GADGET GUY MAY HAVE MINOR POWERS, BUT HIS TRUE CONTRIBUTION IS HIS REMARKABLE MIND. WHETHER HE IS IN THE LAB FIGURING OUT HOW TO STOP A VIRUS FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION, OR IN THE FIELD BUILDING A QUANTUM GUN OUT OF A TOASTER AND POCKETFUL OF LOOSE CHANGE, THE GADGET GUY ALWAYS HAS JUST THE RIGHT TOOL FOR THE JOB AT HAND.

EXAMPLES: TED KORD, BLUE BEETLE; BRAINIAC 5; HANK PYM; MR. FANTASTIC; MICHAEL HOLT, MR. TERRIFIC

RELATED ARCHETYPES: ARMORED WONDER, ASTRONAUT, FOCUSED HERO

QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES:

THE GADGET GUY POSSESSES GREAT COURAGE AND BOUNDLESS CURIOSITY. HE MAY BE A PRODUCT OF THE BEST UNIVERSITY OR, IN THE AMERICAN TRADITION, BE A SELF-EDUCATED GARAGE TINKERER. AT FIRST, HE DID NOT WANT TO BE A SUPER-HERO; INSTEAD, HE HOPED TO IMPROVE SOCIETY THROUGH SCIENTIFIC ADVANCEMENTS AND MIRACULOUS INVENTIONS. BUT ONE OF HIS INVENTIONS WENT AWRY AND TURNED TO EVIL, LEADING THE HERO INTO A LIFE OF CRIME-FIGHTING AND ALTRUISM TO ATONE FOR HIS OWN HUBRIS. ALTERNATELY, THE GADGET GUY HAS A WAREHOUSE FULL OF INCREDIBLE INVENTIONS AND BECOMES A HERO JUST SO HE CAN BLOW THE DUST OFF AND PUT HIS THEORIES INTO PRACTICE.

THE GADGET GUY IS OFTEN SOMETHING OF A SECOND-STRINGER WHEN IT COMES TO FIGHTING THE VILLAINS, BUT HE IS A VITAL MEMBER OF HIS TEAM BECAUSE HE IS THE PERSON EVERYONE GOES TO FOR ANSWERS. HE IS THE ONE WHO DEFUSES DESTRUCTIVE BOMBS, ANALYZES CAPTURED WEAPONS, AND PILOTS ALIEN STARSHIPS. WHEN A MEMBER OF THE TEAM IS TURNED TO STONE OR HAS HIS POWERS TAKEN AWAY, EVERYONE LOOKS TO THE GADGET GUY.

GADGET GUYS ALSO SPEND A LOT OF TIME REPAIRING ANDROID HEROES AND COMING UP WITH IMPROVEMENTS FOR THE ARMORED WONDER. HE'S LIKELY TO HAVE COMPLICATIONS LIKE "WORKAHOLIC" OR "ABSENT-MINDED". HE MAY EVEN BE THE TEAM LEADER, USING HIS INCREDIBLE MIND TO ANTICIPATE THE SCHEMES OF VILLAINOUS MASTERMINDS.

BUT GADGET GUYS HAVE A HABIT OF KEEPING THEIR SECRETS; THEY SELDOM REVEAL THEIR PLANS UNTIL THAT PLAN IS PUT INTO MOTION. THIS EARNS THEM RESENTMENT AND MISTRUST FROM THEIR TEAM-MATES, WHO DON'T LIKE BEING KEPT OUT OF THE LOOP.



GADGET GUY

THE GADGET GUY'S RECLUSIVE HABITS AND OCCASIONAL HUBRIS LEAD HIM TO EXPERIMENTS WHICH ARE UNSAFE OR EVEN UNETHICAL. THIS RESULTS IN THE CREATION OF NEW DANGERS, SUCH AS EVIL AIS OR GENOCIDAL ROBOTS, OR IN ACCIDENTS WHICH THREATEN THE LIVES OF FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES. SOMETIMES THESE ACCIDENTS TRIGGER MUTATIONS OR NEW POWERS, ALMOST ALWAYS WITH UNATTRACTIVE OR SHOCKING PHYSICAL SIDE EFFECTS. THIS LEADS THE GADGET GUY TO BOUTS OF SELF-RECRIMINATION AND MORE EFFORTS TO ATONE. HE WILL SPEND MONTHS WORKING IN THE LAB IN A VAIN EFFORT TO "CURE" HIS TEAMMATE OF HER CONDITION WHILE RESENTMENT BUILDS AND HIS FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS DETERIORATE.

ABILITIES:

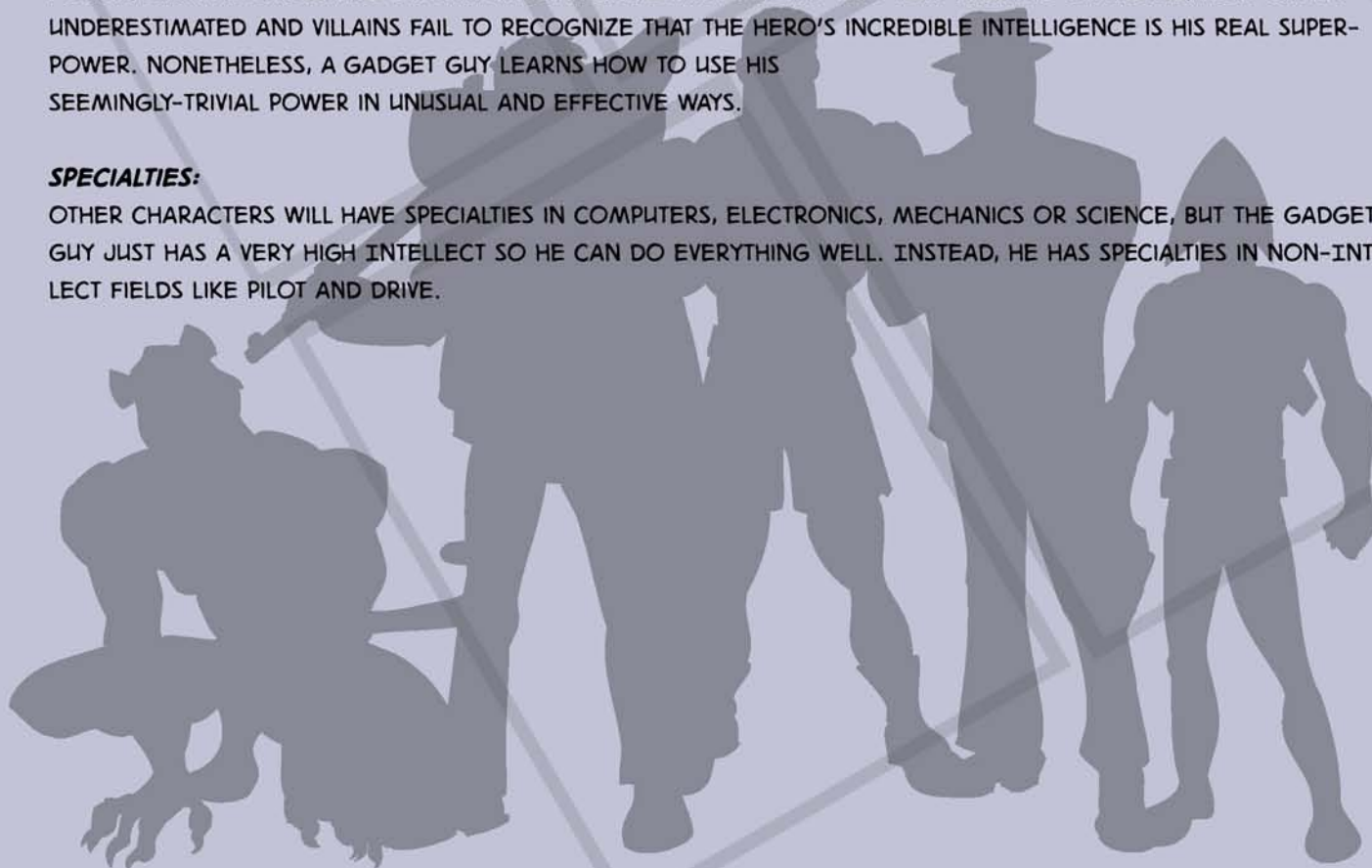
INTELLECT IS USUALLY 7 OR HIGHER, BUT OTHER ABILITIES CAN BE AVERAGE OR LOW.

POWERS:

TECHNICALLY, THE GADGET GUY HAS NO POWERS AT ALL, BUT HIS HIGH INTELLECT IS COMPLEMENTED BY WEAPONS AND OTHER DEVICES WHICH FUNCTION JUST LIKE POWERS. UNLIKE THE ARMORED WONDER, WHOSE POWERS ARE ALL EMBODIED IN A SINGLE DEVICE, THE GADGET GUY CARRIES A BACKPACK (OR MINIATURIZED TOOL BELT) FULL OF SUCH ITEMS, EACH OF WHICH HAS ONLY A SINGLE POWER. HE CAN ALSO MAKE ITEMS AS NEEDED, REPRESENTED BY THE WIZARDRY POWER. WHEN THE VILLAIN HAS ONLY A SINGLE WEAKNESS, THE GADGET GUY IS THE ONE RESPONSIBLE FOR INVENTING A WEAPON WHICH CAN EXPLOIT THAT WEAKNESS. SOMETIMES THE GADGET GUY DOES HAVE A MINOR POWER, SUCH AS STRETCHING OR SHRINKING. BECAUSE HIS POWER IS NOT VERY EXCITING OR USEFUL, HE IS OFTEN UNDERESTIMATED AND VILLAINS FAIL TO RECOGNIZE THAT THE HERO'S INCREDIBLE INTELLIGENCE IS HIS REAL SUPER-POWER. NONETHELESS, A GADGET GUY LEARNS HOW TO USE HIS SEEMINGLY-TRIVIAL POWER IN UNUSUAL AND EFFECTIVE WAYS.

SPECIALTIES:

OTHER CHARACTERS WILL HAVE SPECIALTIES IN COMPUTERS, ELECTRONICS, MECHANICS OR SCIENCE, BUT THE GADGET GUY JUST HAS A VERY HIGH INTELLECT SO HE CAN DO EVERYTHING WELL. INSTEAD, HE HAS SPECIALTIES IN NON-INTELLECT FIELDS LIKE PILOT AND DRIVE.



NEW POWER!!

GADGET GUY

SUPER-VEHICLE

YOU HAVE A PEAK PERFORMANCE CAR, MOTORCYCLE, AIRCRAFT, SUB OR OTHER VEHICLE WHICH ALSO BOASTS ADDITIONAL SPECIAL FEATURES SUCH AS WEAPONRY OR SENSORS. YOUR SUPERCHARGED AUTOMOBILE HAS SUPER-SPEED, FLIGHT OR AQUATIC 5 AND TOUGHNESS 6. IT CAN ACCOMMODATE UP TO HALF A DOZEN PEOPLE, INCLUDING YOURSELF. SELECT ONE ADDITIONAL VEHICLE POWER FROM THE LIST BELOW; ITS LEVEL IS EQUAL TO YOUR LEVEL IN SUPER-VEHICLE.

IN ADDITION, YOU MAY ALTER THE SIZE, TOUGHNESS, OR SPEED OF THE VEHICLE WITH ANY OF THE FOLLOWING OPTIONS. YOU CAN TAKE MORE THAN ONE OF THESE OPTIONS, BUT EACH OPTION CAN BE TAKEN ONLY ONCE.

BIGGER OR SMALLER: IF YOU WANT A LARGER VEHICLE, YOU CAN DOUBLE ITS PASSENGER CAPACITY BUT YOU MUST REDUCE EITHER SPEED OR TOUGHNESS BY ONE. ALTERNATELY, YOU CAN CHOOSE TO CUT PASSENGER SPACE IN HALF AND INCREASE EITHER SPEED OR TOUGHNESS BY ONE.

STRONGER OR LIGHTER: IF YOU WANT A MORE DURABLE VEHICLE, YOU CAN INCREASE ITS TOUGHNESS BY ONE BUT YOU MUST EITHER LOWER SPEED BY ONE OR CUT PASSENGER SPACE IN HALF. OR, YOU CAN CHOOSE TO REDUCE TOUGHNESS BY ONE AND INSTEAD INCREASE SPEED BY ONE OR DOUBLE PASSENGER SPACE.

FASTER OR SLOWER: IF YOU WANT YOUR VEHICLE TO BE ESPECIALLY FAST, YOU CAN INCREASE ITS SPEED BY ONE BUT YOU MUST REDUCE TOUGHNESS BY ONE OR CUT PASSENGER SPACE IN HALF. IF YOU ARE WILLING TO REDUCE SPEED BY ONE, YOU CAN RAISE TOUGHNESS BY ONE OR DOUBLE PASSENGER SPACE.

VEHICLE POWERS: IN ADDITION TO THE FREE POWER YOU SELECT FOR YOUR VEHICLE, YOU CAN USE A BONUS POWER TO SELECT TWO ADDITIONAL VEHICLE POWERS. THEY ALL HAVE A LEVEL EQUAL TO YOUR LEVEL OF SUPER-VEHICLE. CHOOSE FROM ALTERATION RAY, AURA, BINDING, BLAST, BLINDING, BURROWING, CHAMELEON, DETECTION, DIMENSION TRAVEL, INTERFACE, INVISIBILITY, INVULNERABILITY, LIFE SUPPORT, PHASING, STRIKE, SUPER-SENSES, TELEPORTATION OR WALL-CRAWLING

MULTIPLE MOVEMENT MODES: YOU CAN USE ONE OF YOUR VEHICLE POWER CHOICES TO GIVE YOUR VEHICLE THE POWER TO FLY, GO UNDERWATER, OR DRIVE ON THE GROUND. THE VEHICLE GAINS AQUATIC, FLIGHT, OR SUPER-SPEED AT THE SAME LEVEL AS YOUR FIRST MOVEMENT MODE.

MOTORCYCLES AND CONVERTIBLES: SUPER-VEHICLE ASSUMES YOUR VEHICLE IS ENCLOSED, WHICH MEANS ATTACKS DIRECTED AT YOU INSTEAD HIT (AND DAMAGE) THE VEHICLE. AT LEAST UNTIL IT BREAKS! HOWEVER, YOU CANNOT USE YOUR OWN POWERS ON ENEMIES OUTSIDE THE VEHICLE. YOU CAN CHOOSE TO MAKE YOUR VEHICLE "EXPOSED," LIKE A MOTORCYCLE OR SKYCYCLE. YOU NO LONGER BENEFIT FROM THE VEHICLE'S TOUGHNESS, BUT YOU CAN USE YOUR OWN POWERS ON ENEMIES OUTSIDE THE VEHICLE. IF YOU WANT YOUR VEHICLE TO SWITCH BETWEEN ENCLOSED AND EXPOSED MODES, TAKE "CONVERTIBLE" AS A STUNT.

THE ROAD SCHOLAR

FIRST APPEARANCE: SATURDAY MORNING WONDER HOUR (ANIMATED SERIES, 1967-1968)
ARCHETYPES: GADGET GUY, FOCUSED HERO, MAN WITH THE MACHINE, MINORITY HERO
QUALITIES: MECHANIC TO THE STARS, DEMON ON WHEELS, SEEN EVERYTHING. GO GO GO!
CHALLENGES: CAN'T ESCAPE HIS WIFE'S MEMORY, ADVENTURE'S WAITING JUST AHEAD, FAMILY ABOVE EVERYTHING

PROWESS	5
COORDINATION	5
STRENGTH	4
INTELLECT	7
AWARENESS	5
WILLPOWER	6
DETERMINATION	2
STAMINA	10



POWERS:
 SUPER-VEHICLE 6 (COUNTS AS THREE POWERS)

SPECIALTIES:
 DRIVE MASTER, ELECTRONICS EXPERT, INVESTIGATION, MARTIAL ARTS, MECHANICS MASTER, STEALTH

STUNTS:
CONVERTIBLE (SUPER-VEHICLE): THE METEOR IS USUALLY AN OPEN-TOP CAR, BUT IT CAN ENCLOSE ITSELF TO PROVIDE FULL PROTECTION TO ITS OCCUPANTS. **HOMING PIGEON** (SUPER-VEHICLE): THE METEOR IS EQUIPPED WITH A BIRD-SIZED MESSENGER ROBOT WHICH CAN BE LAUNCHED WITH THE PRESS OF A BUTTON AND WHICH WILL HOME IN ON THE FAMILY GARAGE OR ANY OTHER PRE-PROGRAMMED DESTINATION. IT CAN ALSO BE CONTROLLED BY REMOTE. **POWER JACKS** (SUPER-VEHICLE): THE METEOR'S FOUR JACKS ARE NORMALLY USED TO RAISE THE CAR FOR MAINTENANCE WORK, BUT WHEN THE CAR IS RUNNING AT HIGH SPEED THEY CAN BE USED TO LAUNCH THE CAR INTO THE AIR, JUMPING HUNDREDS OF FEET.
THE METEOR: SUPER-SPEED 6, TOUGHNESS 6, ROOM FOR THREE PASSENGERS (OR TWO PEOPLE, ONE CHILD AND A MONKEY), AQUATIC 6, INVULNERABILITY 6, LIFE SUPPORT 6 (COLD, HEAT, BREATHING, PATHOGENS, PRESSURE, TOXINS), WALL-CRAWLING 6, SUPER-SENSES 6 (DARKVISION, SONAR, INFRAVISION, EXTENDED SIGHT, ENHANCED SIGHT 2)

THE ROAD SCHOLAR

ORIGIN

"SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO PROVE YOU'RE STILL A DEMON ON WHEELS."

ALLEGRO CORREDOR WAS BORN INTO A MEXICO RACING FAMILY. HIS FATHER, AN AUTOMOTIVE GENIUS, WAS DISMISSED BY A BIGOTED PROFESSIONAL RACING INDUSTRY, SO POPS BUILT AN AMAZING NEW RACE CAR USING HIS OWN MONEY. THE CAR CRASHED, HOWEVER, WHEN IT WAS BEING TEST DRIVEN BY ALLEGRO'S OLDER BROTHER, AND THIS LED TO AN ESTRANGEMENT BETWEEN FATHER AND ELDEST SON THAT LASTED EVEN AFTER THE BROTHER LEFT THE FAMILY IN SELF-EXILE. ALLEGRO GREW UP IN HIS BROTHER'S FOOTSTEPS, TAKING UPON HIMSELF THE TASK OF DRIVING HIS FATHER'S DESIGNS TO THE WINNER'S CIRCLE.

IN THE LATE '60S AND '70S ALLEGRO CORREDOR'S GLOBE-TROTTING ADVENTURES EARNED HIM INTERNATIONAL FAME. HE PARTICIPATED IN COUNTLESS DANGEROUS RACES, SOMETIMES BEING FORCED TO DRIVE IN THE MOST DIFFICULT CIRCUMSTANCES (SUCH AS WITHOUT BRAKES, OR WHILE BLIND). HIS RACES FREQUENTLY LED TO ESPIONAGE AND INTRIGUE, INCLUDING MORE THAN A FEW MURDER INVESTIGATIONS, AND HE WAS COURTED BY FOREIGN PRINCESSES AND STARLETS (MUCH TO THE ANNOYANCE OF HIS STEADY GIRLFRIEND). EVENTUALLY ALLEGRO EVEN LEARNED THE WHEREABOUTS OF HIS MISSING BROTHER, WHO HAD GIVEN UP RACING IN FAVOR OF THE MURKY WORLD OF COVERT OPERATIONS.

ALLEGRO WON A LOT OF RACES, BUT IN THE END HE COULD NOT OUT-PACE TRAGEDY. HIS LONG-TIME GIRLFRIEND PERISHED ON THEIR WEDDING NIGHT IN A FREAK HELICOPTER ACCIDENT. THE DISASTER SHOOK THE ENTIRE FAMILY, AND ALLEGRO STOPPED RACING ON THE EXCUSE THAT HE HAD TO TAKE CARE OF HIS SUDDENLY-AGING FATHER. THE NEXT YEAR WAS THE MOST MISERABLE IN ALLEGRO'S LIFE, BUT SHORTLY AFTER THE ANNIVERSARY OF HIS WIFE'S DEATH, HIS FATHER CONFIDED TO ALLEGRO THAT HE NEEDED HELP WITH A NEW AUTOMOTIVE DESIGN. A PROMINENT VIGILANTE WONDER OPERATING IN TITAN CITY REQUIRED A CAR TO ASSIST IN HIS CRIMEFIGHTING CAREER; POPS WAS TOO OLD AND HIS HEART TOO WEAK TO ALLOW HIM TO PUT IN THE KIND OF HOURS THE JOB REQUIRED. AT FIRST, ALLEGRO WAS RELUCTANT TO STEP IN, BUT HIS FATHER'S EASY CAJOLING SLOWLY TURNED THE SON AROUND, AND HE BEGAN WORK ON THE PROJECT.

IN THE WORKSHOP ALLEGRO FOUND A WAY TO HEAL FROM HIS SPIRITUAL WOUNDS, AND THE LUCRATIVE ENGINEERING CONTRACT HELPED SAVE THE CORREDOR FAMILY FROM BANKRUPTCY. SOON ANOTHER WONDER CAME TO ALLEGRO WITH A REQUEST FOR A FLYING SUBMERSIBLE. ALLEGRO FOUND HE HAD CORNERED A NICHE MARKET: HE WAS THE MECHANIC TO THE SUPER-HEROES.

ABILITIES

ALLEGRO CORREDOR IS THE BEST RACE-CAR DRIVER IN THE WORLD. WHEN HE LOSES A RACE, IT IS BECAUSE HE LABORS UNDER HANDICAPS THAT WOULD PARALYZE ANY LESSER DRIVER. HE WOULD RATHER LOSE THAN CHEAT, BUT IF A COMPETITOR RESORTS TO DIRTY TRICKS ALLEGRO WILL RETURN THE FAVOR IN CAREFULLY MEASURED EQUALITY. HE HAS ALSO OCCASIONALLY LOST IN ORDER TO DO A GOOD SERVICE FOR ANOTHER PERSON. HE'S THAT KIND OF GUY.

WITH DECADES OF EXPERIENCE IN A FAST-PACED WORLD OF INTRIGUE AND ADVENTURE, ALLEGRO HAS A HOST OF SKILLS AT HIS COMMAND, MOST OF THEM BASED AROUND HIS TALENT FOR DESIGNING AND OPERATING MACHINES. HE'S A TOUGH HAND TO HAND FIGHTER, BUT NO MATCH FOR A SUPERHUMAN. ALLEGRO'S MOST POWERFUL WEAPON IS HIS FAMILY CAR, A TWO-DOOR, LOW-SLUNG SPORTS CAR MADE OF BULLETPROOF POLYMERS, COMPLETE WITH AN OPEN TOP WHICH SEALS UP WITH THE PRESS OF A BUTTON. OTHER BUTTONS ON THE STEERING WHEEL ACTIVE A RADAR AND AUDIO-INVISIBLE STEALTH MODE, A "POWER JACK" SYSTEM THAT ALLOWS THE CAR TO JUMP UP TO 100 FEET OFF A FLAT SURFACE, SEALED SYSTEMS THAT ALLOW IT TO DRIVE ON THE OCEAN FLOOR OR OTHER DEADLY ENVIRONMENTS, AN INFRARED SYSTEM FOR NIGHT NAVIGATION, AND SPECIAL TRACTION PLATES THAT CAN BE WRAPPED AROUND THE TIRES TO PROVIDE VERTICAL CLIMB ABILITY. THE CAR IS ALSO EQUIPPED WITH A ROBOTIC FLYING DRONE WHICH CAN CARRY MESSAGES OR OBJECTS; LIKE THE CAR ITSELF, THIS DRONE CAN BE CONTROLLED BY REMOTE, BUT IT CAN ALSO BE PROGRAMMED TO SEEK A SPECIFIC PLACE OR PERSON BEFORE RETURNING TO THE CAR. THE TRUNK IS LARGE ENOUGH TO HOLD ONE SMALL BOY AND HIS PET MONKEY.

ALLEGRO'S GARAGE IS LOCATED IN BAJA CALIFORNIA; HE ONLY USES IT WHEN HE HAS A PAYING CLIENT OR WHEN HE FEELS LIKE TINKERING WITH THE LATEST IMPROVEMENT FOR HIS RACING MACHINE. OTHERWISE, SHEETS COVER ALL THE FURNITURE AND AN OLD COUPLE THAT LIVE IN A SMALL ADJOINING HOUSE TAKE CARE OF THE LAND.

THE ROAD SCHOLAR

OVER THE NEXT SEVERAL YEARS HE DESIGNED AND BUILT A SUCCESSION OF WONDER-MOBILES, WONDER-JETS, AND WONDER-SUBS TO EXACTING SPECIFICATIONS. HE REVERSE-ENGINEERED A FLYING SAUCER AND DID SOME CONSULTING WORK FOR TIME MANAGEMENT INCORPORATED. NOT ALL THE WORK WAS VEHICLE RELATED; HIS SKILLS WERE WELL SUITED TO ANY ENGINEERING TASK THAT REQUIRED OIL AND GREASE AS WELL AS MICROPROCESSORS. HE READ VORACIOUSLY TO KEEP UP WITH THE LATEST TECHNOLOGY, AND DREW UP INNOVATIVE DESIGNS THAT TOOK THE SCIENCE COMMUNITY BY STORM. IT WAS AT ABOUT THIS TIME THAT ALLEGRO'S CLIENTS STARTED TO CALL HIM BY A NEW NICKNAME, ONE MORE IN KEEPING WITH THE SEASONED AND MATURE MAN WHOM THE YOUNG RACER HAD BECOME. THEY CALLED HIM THE ROAD SCHOLAR.

ABOUT TEN YEARS AGO POPS' BAD HEART FINALLY CAUGHT UP TO HIM AND THE OLD MAN DIED AT HOME, SURROUNDED BY HIS LOVING FAMILY. ALLEGRO WAS ELEVATED TO THE STATUS OF FAMILY PATRIARCH, AND HE AT LAST GAVE IN TO HIS LONG-SUPPRESSED URGE TO RETURN TO RACING. THE WONDER-WORK HAD MADE THE CORREDORS WEALTHY ONCE AGAIN, AND ALLEGRO BROKE THE FAMILY CAR OUT OF STORAGE TO COMPETE IN THE NEW UNLIMITED CLASS RACING LEAGUE, A LOOSE CONFEDERATION OF ECCENTRIC AND WELL-FUNDED RACERS THAT TAKE THEIR MACHINES TO THE FARTHEST REACHES OF THE GLOBE. AMONG THE TEAMS WHO COMPETE IN THE LEAGUE ARE THE MYSTERIOUS ZEN TEAM, DETROIT'S OWN POWER TEAM, AND THE FABULOUSLY RICH, FABULOUSLY BEAUTIFUL, CHASE MANHATTAN (KNOWN TO HER LEGION OF MALE FANS AS 'THE BOD WITH THE ROD').

AS A SURVIVOR OF GREAT FAMILY TRAGEDY, ALLEGRO HAS GAINED A SEASONED WISDOM THAT HAS MADE HIM A LEGENDARY FIGURE IN THE WONDER COMMUNITY. DESPITE HIS COMPLETE LACK OF POWERS, HE HAS LIVED A LIFE OF CONSTANT INTRIGUE AND ADVENTURE, NEVER WAVERING IN HIS MORAL INTEGRITY OR HIS COMMITMENT TO DOING WHAT IS RIGHT OVER WHAT IS EASY. BECAUSE OF HIS CONSTANT TRAVELS, HE IS ABLE TO KEEP TABS ON SUPERHUMANS AROUND THE WORLD, ALLOWING HIM TO SPOT YOUNG UP-AND-COMERS AND THE OCCASIONAL "BAD SEED" BEFORE THEY GARNER MEDIA ATTENTION. HE IS OFTEN SOUGHT OUT BY INTELLIGENCE SERVICES AND WONDERS ALIKE FOR HIS OPINIONS ON VARIOUS CASES AND INDIVIDUALS, AND HE CONTINUES TO TAKE DESIGN CONTRACTS WHENEVER HIS RACING CAREER PERMITS. IT'S TRUE, HE'S NOT THE YOUNG, HANDSOME, ADVENTURER HE WAS IN HIS YOUTH, BUT AS HE'D BE THE FIRST TO TELL YOU, THE ALLEGRO CORREDOR OF TODAY WOULD BEAT THE ALLEGRO OF YESTERDAY IN ANY RACE YOU'D CARE TO NAME.

APPEARANCE:

ALLEGRO CORREDOR IS A RUGGEDLY HANDSOME MEXICAN IN HIS MIDDLE AGE. HE HAS A FULL BEARD AND MUSTACHE NOW, BUT HE WORKS OUT A LOT TO KEEP HIS BUILD FROM SPREADING OUT THE WAY POPS DID. HIS RACING UNIFORM IS DECORATED WITH THE INSIGNIA OF ALL THE WONDERS FOR WHOM HE HAS COMPLETED WORK; THESE "ENDORSEMENTS" ARE WRITTEN INTO ALL HIS CONTRACTS. HE OFTEN WEARS A BALL CAP, BUT EXCHANGES IT FOR A HELMET WHENEVER HE IS RACING. WHEN FOUND OFF THE TRACK, ALLEGRO'S USUALLY GOT GREASE OR OIL STAINS MARKING HIS HANDS OR TROUSERS, AND HIS BOOTS HAVE SEEN A LOT OF WEAR, BUT HE SEEMS TO CARRY HIMSELF WITH A QUIET DIGNITY THAT BELIES HIS WORKADAY TRAPPINGS.

THE ROAD SCHOLAR

STORIES

ALLEGRO IS USEFUL AS A RESOURCE FOR HEROES WHO REQUIRE DEVICES OR EQUIPMENT THEY CANNOT CONSTRUCT THEMSELVES, AND ALSO AS A POTENTIAL MENTOR OR CONTACT FOR YOUNGER HEROES TRYING TO BREAK INTO THE BUSINESS. HE LENDS HIMSELF WELL TO STORIES THAT TAKE PLACE IN EXOTIC LOCALES AND WHICH INVOLVE THE UNLIMITED CLASS RACING LEAGUE.

A SUPERVILLAIN IN SEARCH OF NEW WEAPONRY IMPERSONATES ONE OF THE PCS AND GOES TO ALLEGRO IN THIS GUISE, HIRING THE ENGINEER TO DEVELOP AN ARSENAL. THE RUSE IS DISCOVERED ONLY MONTHS LATER WHEN THE WEAPONS ARE USED FOR CRIME. THIS LEADS TO AN ALLIANCE BETWEEN ALLEGRO AND THE HERO INVOLVED, WHO BOTH HAVE A STAKE IN RECOVERING THE WEAPONS AND CLEARING THEIR REPUTATIONS.

ON THE NIGHT BEFORE THE RACE TO THE END OF TIME (TEMPORAL ENGINES HAVE BEEN INSTALLED IN ALL THE COMPETING VEHICLES), DISGUISED MEMBERS OF THE DETROIT POWER TEAM ASSAULT ALLEGRO AND BEAT HIM TO WITHIN AN INCH OF HIS LIFE. BUT HE REFUSES TO BOW TO CHEATING. INSTEAD, HE ASKS ONE OF THE HEROES TO TAKE HIS PLACE BEHIND THE WHEEL OF THE FAMILY CAR. CAN A HERO WHO FIGHTS CRIME AND SAVES THE UNIVERSE HOLD HIS OWN AGAINST A FIELD OF PROFESSIONAL RACERS WITH A LIFETIME OF TRICKS UP THEIR SLEEVE? CAN THE HEROES STOP THE POWER TEAM FROM SABOTAGING THE CAR AND ARRANGING FOR THE "ACCIDENTAL" DEATH OF THE NEW DRIVER? AND WHAT MYSTERIES AWAIT IN THE WINNER'S CIRCLE AT THE END OF TIME?

WHILE INVESTIGATING A SEEMINGLY-UNRELATED CRIME, THE HEROES COME ACROSS EVIDENCE RELATED TO THE DEATH OF ALLEGRO'S WIFE TWENTY YEARS AGO. IT SEEMS THAT THIS EVIDENCE, WHICH IMPLICATES A WELL-KNOWN CRIMINAL MASTERMIND, HAS BEEN CONCEALED BY A HIGHLY PLACED AGENT IN THE INTELLIGENCE COMMUNITY: ALLEGRO'S OWN OLDER BROTHER! WHAT IS THE ROOT BEHIND THIS CONSPIRACY? WHY WOULD ALLEGRO'S BROTHER HIDE FROM HIS OWN KIN THE IDENTITY OF HIS WIFE'S MURDERER? WHAT WILL ALLEGRO DO WHEN HE FINDS OUT? CAN HE BE RESTRAINED FROM A MAD QUEST FOR REVENGE ON A VILLAIN PROTECTED BY A VAST ARMY OF LOYAL FOLLOWERS?

THE MAN WITH THE MACHINE

THIS ARCHETYPE HAS ITS ORIGINS IN THE VICTORIAN PERIOD AND IS TYPIFIED BY CHARACTERS LIKE CAPTAIN NEMO AND ROBUR THE CONQUEROR, OWNERS OF THE NAUTILUS AND ALBATROSS RESPECTIVELY. THE MAN WITH THE MACHINE --OR MWTM -- IS A GENIUS INVENTOR WHOSE BIG MACHINE (USUALLY A VEHICLE) WOULD REVOLUTIONIZE THE WORLD IF IT COULD BE REPRODUCED. THE MWTM IS OFTEN A WORLD TRAVELER WITH GREAT WEALTH AND RESOURCES, WHICH HE NEEDS TO KEEP HIS MACHINE IN WORKING ORDER. IN COMICS, THE MWTM HAS BEEN LARGELY REPLACED BY THE ARMORED WONDER ARCHETYPE, BUT EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE A MECHA HERO, A KID WITH A PET GIANT ROBOT, OR A POWERLESS HERO WITH A MOTORCYCLE/CAR/FLYING MACHINE SHOWS UP, PROVING THAT THE MWTM IS STILL ALIVE.

FOR A MORE IN-DEPTH DISCUSSION OF THE MAN WITH THE MACHINE AND ITS CLASSIC INCARNATION, CAPTAIN NEMO, SEE JESS NEVIN'S BOOK GODS AND MONSTERS, INCLUDING ANNOTATIONS AND ANALYSIS OF ALAN MOORE'S COMIC SERIES LEAGUE OF EXTRAORDINARY GENTLEMEN.

HANDICAPPED HERO

THE ENTROPIC MAN

THIS SORT OF CHARACTER PROVES HIS HEROISM BY OVERCOMING A CRIPPLING HANDICAP OF SOME KIND, WAGING WAR AGAINST EVIL AND INJUSTICE WITHOUT EVEN THE BASIC ADVANTAGES OF AN ORDINARY MAN. THIS GIVES HIM A NOBILITY AND STRENGTH OF PURPOSE OTHER HEROES LACK.

EXAMPLES: DAREDEVIL, DOCTOR MIDNITE, JERICHO, MANTIS, ORACLE, PROFESSOR X

RELATED ARCHETYPES: ARMORED WONDER, GADGET GUY, MINORITY HERO

QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES:

THE FIRST DECISION TO MAKE IS THE NATURE OF THE HERO'S HANDICAP. BLINDNESS AND PARALYSIS ARE MOST COMMON, BUT EVERYTHING FROM AIDS TO DEAFNESS OR MISSING LIMBS IS POSSIBLE. THE HERO STRUGGLES WITH SOCIAL DISCRIMINATION BASED ON HIS HANDICAP; HE MAY BE FAWNED OVER WHEREVER HE GOES, TREATED LIKE A CHILD, OR SIMPLY IGNORED.

GENERALLY THE HANDICAPPED HERO IS AN OBJECT OF PITY AND CALLOUS NEGLECT IN HIS NORMAL LIFE; HE RESENTS THESE REACTIONS, AND THIS MAY EVEN LEAD TO HIS HEROIC IDENTITY, BUT BECAUSE HE MUST KEEP HIS SUPERHEROIC NATURE A SECRET, HE MUST CONTINUE TO ENDURE THE PITY OF OTHERS BY DAY EVEN AS HE TRANSCENDS IT BY NIGHT. OF OTHERS BY DAY EVEN AS HE TRANSCENDS IT BY NIGHT.

AT THE SAME TIME, THE HANDICAPPED HERO IS PRONE TO INTENSE BOUTS OF SELF-PITY WHERE HE CALLS HIMSELF A "CRIPPLE". THESE EPISODES END WHEN AN EMERGENCY LURES THE HERO INTO UNIFORM AND INTO BATTLE, SAVING INNOCENT PEOPLE WHO APPRECIATE THE HERO'S ACTIONS AND HAVE NO IDEA HE IS BLIND, DEAF, OR MISSING HIS LEGS.

ALL OF THIS MEANS THAT THE HANDICAPPED HERO IS A PRIVATE PERSON WITH A VERY SMALL CIRCLE OF FRIENDS AND FAMILY WHO SUPPORT HIM AND SERVE AS HIS ASSISTANTS IN HIS WAR ON CRIME.

SOMETIMES HIS BEST FRIEND OR CONFIDANT IS AN ANIMAL COMPANION. TRADITIONALLY HIS ROMANTIC ASPIRATIONS HAVE COME TO NAUGHT BECAUSE HIS SELF-PITY GETS IN THE WAY, BUT OVER THE YEARS A MORE ENLIGHTENED PRESENTATION OF HANDICAPPED HEROES HAS LED TO SUCCESSFUL AND REWARDING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE HERO AND HIS NON-HANDICAPPED PARTNER.



HANDICAPPED HERO

THE SOURCE OF THE HANDICAP IS ALSO AN EXCELLENT HOOK FOR QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES. USUALLY THE HERO GOT HIS INJURY WHILE SAVING THE LIFE OF AN INNOCENT PERSON, BUT IT MAY HAVE BEEN AN ACCIDENT OR EVEN BROUGHT ON BY SOME ERROR OF JUDGMENT ON THE PART OF THE HERO HIMSELF. IN THESE DAYS OF MODERN WARFARE, IT IS VERY LIKELY THAT THE NEXT HANDICAPPED HERO WILL BE A VETERAN OF IRAQ OR AFGHANISTAN, MISSING A LEG OR AN ARM FROM AN IUD. HIS ORIGIN GIVES THE HANDICAPPED HERO A PARTICULAR CAUSE OR SOCIAL GROUP WHOM HE IDENTIFIES WITH, SO THAT A HERO DEALT A CRIPPLING INJURY BY A VILLAIN WILL FOCUS ON THAT VILLAIN AND HIS VICTIMS, WHILE A HERO WHO WAS THE VICTIM OF HIS OWN HUBRIS AND RASH BEHAVIOR WILL CARRY A BURDEN OF GUILT AND SEEK TO MAKE UP FOR HIS OWN MISTAKES.

ABILITIES:

BECAUSE THE HANDICAPPED HERO USES HIS MIND TO OVERCOME HIS PHYSICAL LIMITATIONS, HIS INTELLECT, AWARENESS AND WILLPOWER ARE STRONG (THOUGH STILL WITHIN HUMAN RANGE). RIGOROUS TRAINING KEEPS HIS PROWESS, COORDINATION AND STRENGTH UP, THOUGH HIS SPECIFIC HANDICAP MAY KEEP ONE OF THESE NUMBERS BELOW 3. BECAUSE THE HANDICAPPED HERO HAS AN INDOMITABLE WILL AND A DETERMINATION TO OVERCOME ALL OBSTACLES, HIS WILLPOWER MAY BE 7 OR HIGHER.

POWERS:

HANDICAPPED HEROES DON'T USUALLY HAVE A LOT OF POWERS, NOR ARE THEY HIGH IN LEVEL, BECAUSE THE WHOLE POINT OF THE HANDICAPPED HERO IS THAT HE ACCOMPLISHES MORE WITH LESS. IF HE HAS INCREDIBLE POWER, IT MAKES HIS HANDICAP MEANINGLESS.

IF THE HANDICAPPED HERO IS PARALYZED, INFIRM, OR HAS SOME OTHER CONDITION WHICH KEEPS HIS ABILITIES LOW, HE PROBABLY USES A DEVICE WITH ABILITY BOOST OR ABILITY INCREASE TO MAKE UP FOR IT. DANGER SENSE OR SUPER-SENSES COMPENSATE FOR BLINDNESS. MANY HANDICAPPED HEROES HAVE POWERS WHICH "LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD" BY HANDICAPPING THEIR ENEMIES: BLINDING, PARALYSIS, OR SMOKE GRENADES WHICH OBSCURE SIGHT FOR EVERYONE IN CLOSE RANGE ARE GOOD EXAMPLES.

BECAUSE THE HANDICAPPED HERO EMPHASIZES HIS MIND OVER HIS BODY, MENTAL POWERS ARE SOMETIMES SEEN AND CAN OFTEN BE QUITE POWERFUL. BUT THE HIGHER IN LEVEL THESE POWERS ARE, THE MORE SERIOUS IS THE HANDICAP WHICH THE HERO MUST STRUGGLE UNDER.

SPECIALTIES:

HANDICAPPED HEROES ARE OFTEN INVENTORS WHO USE GADGETS AND OTHER TECHNOLOGY TO OVERCOME THEIR HANDICAP. FOR THIS REASON, MECHANICS, ELECTRONICS, COMPUTERS AND SCIENCE ARE COMMON SPECIALTIES. INVESTIGATION, MARTIAL ARTS, WEAPONRY, ATHLETICS AND ACROBATICS ROUND OUT THE HANDICAPPED HEROES MANY TALENTS.

STUNTS:

THE HANDICAPPED HERO WILL HAVE STUNTS WHICH CAPITALIZE ON HIS HANDICAP, TURNING IT INTO A STRENGTH. BLIND HEROES WILL BE ESPECIALLY DANGEROUS WHEN THEIR ENEMIES ARE IN THE DARK OR OTHERWISE BLINDED. WHEELCHAIR-BOUND HEROES WILL HAVE STUNTS WHICH ALLOW THEM TO USE THE BUILDING ITSELF AS A WEAPON AGAINST ENEMIES.

CODEX

FIRST APPEARANCE: CODEX #1
ARCHETYPES: GADGET GUY, MYTHIC HERO, HANDICAPPED HERO
QUALITIES: RENAISSANCE MAN, ACADEMY OF LYNXES, OLD GUARD, PROLIFIC
CHALLENGES: PROJECTS LEFT UNFINISHED, OVER-APPRECIATIVE OF BEAUTY, BELIEVES HE IS LEONARDO RETURNED, FEELING HIS AGE

PROWESS	3
COORDINATION	3
STRENGTH	4
INTELLECT	10
AWARENESS	6
WILLPOWER	6
DETERMINATION	3
STAMINA	10



POWERS:
 FORCE FIELD 8, INTERFACE 10

SPECIALTIES:
 ART (DRAWING EXPERT, PAINTING MASTER, SCULPTURE), CRYPTOGRAPHY MASTER, MECHANICS, MEDICINE, PERFORMANCE (MUSIC EXPERT), SCIENCE (PHYSICS MASTER)

STUNTS:
FEATS OF STRENGTH (STRENGTH): CODEX HAS STRENGTH 5 FOR PURPOSES OF PERFORMING SHOWY BUT ESSENTIALLY USELESS FEATS OF STRENGTH, SUCH AS BENDING A HORSESHOE STRAIGHT OR TEARING A PHONEBOOK IN HALF.
INCREDIBLE RANGE (INTERFACE): CODEX'S "REMOTE UNIT" INTERFACE DEVICE CAN BE USED TO INTERACT WITH ANY COMPUTER SYSTEM ON EARTH OR THE MOON.
NERVE STRIKE (STRENGTH): CODEX CAN STUN FOES EVEN IF HE DOES NO DAMAGE TO THEM..

ORIGIN

"IT HAS LONG SINCE COME TO MY ATTENTION THAT PEOPLE OF ACCOMPLISHMENT RARELY SAT BACK AND LET THINGS HAPPEN TO THEM. THEY WENT OUT AND HAPPENED TO THINGS."

ROBERT NAIMAN, KNOWN TO THE WORLD AS CODEX "THE RENAISSANCE MAN", WAS ONE OF THE SECOND GENERATION OF WONDERS WHICH TOOK THE WORLD BY STORM IN THE EARLY 1960S. FRESH-FACED AND HANDSOME, HE DISPLAYED EXPERTISE IN EVERY SCIENTIFIC FIELD FROM MEDICINE TO ENGINEERING, AND HE USED HIS AMAZING INVENTIONS TO FIGHT CRIME AND BATTLE INJUSTICE NOT JUST IN AMERICA, BUT IN REMOTE LOCALES LIKE ATLANTIS, SHANGRI-LA, THE MOON, AND EVEN OTHER STAR SYSTEMS. TAKING AS HIS MODEL THE INCREDIBLE GENIUS OF LEONARDO DA VINCI, NAIMAN MASTERED THE INTRICACIES OF PAINTING AND OF MUSIC, AND HE EXPLORED THE LINK BETWEEN PHILOSOPHY, NATURE, AND SCIENCE. IN HIS QUEST TO BECOME THE MODERN LEONARDO, HE DID NOT FORGET THE TRAINING OF HIS BODY AS WELL AS HIS MIND: IN TIME HE COULD EVEN DUPLICATE THE MASTER'S FAMOUS TRICK OF BENDING A HORSESHOE IN HIS BARE HANDS.

BY THE '70S, CODEX HAD BECOME ONE OF THE MOST RECOGNIZABLE WONDERS. HIS LACK OF SUPERHUMAN GIFTS MADE HIM A HERO TO THE COMMON MAN, AND HIS INFAMOUS ROMANTIC ADVENTURES EARNED HIM A SCANDALOUS REPUTATION. (IT WAS SAID HE HAD TAKEN COUNTLESS LOVERS OF VIRTUALLY EVERY KIND AND CREED.) AS A SCIENTIST WITHOUT PEER, HE WAS FREQUENTLY CONSULTED BY SOLO WONDERS AND TEAMS WHO NEEDED EXPERT ADVICE ON THE LATEST ALIEN ARTIFACT, DOOMSDAY SATELLITE, OR TEMPORAL NEXUS. ROBERT WAS ALWAYS GENEROUS WITH HIS HELP, AND WHEN HE WAS NOT BEING SOUGHT OUT BY ALLIES IN NEED OR ADVENTURING ON HIS OWN, HE WAS BUSY IN THE LABORATORY OR THE STUDIO, WORKING TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF HIS FELLOW MAN. LATE IN THE DECADE HE JOINED THE ACADEMY OF LYNXES, A SECRET SOCIETY OF SUPER-SCIENTISTS DEDICATED TO PROBING THE LIMITS OF WHAT WAS KNOWN AND UNKNOWN.

BUT TIME ROLLED ON, AND BEING A WONDER IS A YOUNG MAN'S GAME. BY THE 1980S NEWER, YOUNGER, MEN HAD BEGUN TO SUPPLANT CODEX IN THE PUBLIC EYE. THEY WERE CLEVER, ROBERT ADMITTED THAT, BUT BY NO MEANS HIS INTELLECTUAL SUPERIOR. NO ONE SEEMED TO CARE. HE BEGAN TO GO ON FEWER ADVENTURES AND SPEND MORE TIME IN HIS REMOTE WORKSHOP IN THE ITALIAN ALPS. THOSE MEMBERS OF THE OLD GUARD WHO CONTINUED TO VISIT HIM FOUND HIM INCREASINGLY ECCENTRIC. ROBERT'S FASCINATION WITH LEONARDO HAD ALWAYS BEEN A BIT EXTREME, BUT NOW HE CLAIMED TO ACTUALLY BE THE RENAISSANCE GENIUS, AND FATE (OR DESTINY) HAD CONSPIRED IN THIS OBSESSION: AS CODEX GREW OLDER, HE BEGAN TO LOOK MORE AND MORE LIKE THE ARCHETYPAL PORTRAITS OF THE MASTER.

NOW IN HIS LATE-60S, CODEX IS AS BRILLIANT AS EVER, AND HE CONTINUES HIS PRIVATE INVESTIGATIONS INTO THE UNIVERSE AND MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO IT. HIS STATURE AMONG SCIENTISTS IS UNDIMMED AND HE IS NOW THE CONSUL OF THE ACADEMY OF LYNXES, GUIDING THAT ORGANIZATION'S AGENDA AND LEADING ITS ANNUAL MEETINGS AND FREQUENT SYMPOSIA.

CODEX

ABILITIES

CODEX MAY BE THE SMARTEST MAN ON EARTH. CERTAINLY, HE'S IN THE TOP THREE. HIS TRAINING IS REMARKABLY DIVERSE, INCLUDING ART, SCIENCE, ENGINEERING, MEDICINE, LANGUAGE, AND MUSIC. WITH THE PROPER TOOLS HE CAN DESIGN A MACHINE FOR VIRTUALLY ANY PURPOSE, OFTEN USING THEORIES SO ADVANCED THAT EVEN PRIZEWINNING SCIENTISTS CANNOT UNDERSTAND HIM. STILL PHYSICALLY STRONG AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, HE CAN USE HIS KNOWLEDGE OF HUMAN BIOLOGY TO GAIN AN EDGE IN HAND TO HAND COMBAT, THOUGH HE LOATHES SUCH CRUDE FISTICUFFS. HE CARRIES TWO PRIMARY TOOLS AT ALL TIMES: THE FIRST IS AN INVISIBLE AND HIGHLY-CUSTOMIZABLE PERSONAL FORCE FIELD SEWN INTO HIS LAB COAT. IT EVEN RETAINS AIR AND PRESSURE SHOULD HE FIND HIMSELF IN AN UNHEALTHY ENVIRONMENT. SECOND, HE KEEPS HIS "REMOTE UNIT" IN A POCKET; WITH IT, HE CAN INTERFACE WITH ANY COMPUTER ON THE EARTH OR MOON. THE MOUNTAIN FORTRESS WHERE CODEX LIVES AND WORKS IS A MIRACLE OF AUTOMATION, A CURIOUS MIX OF OLD WORLD CHARM AND ULTRA-TECH SOPHISTICATION. WITH EQUIPMENT THERE, HE CAN "PIGGYBACK" SIGNALS ON ANY OF THE WORLD'S MANY SURVEILLANCE SATELLITES, ALLOWING HIM TO OBSERVE JUST ABOUT ANYWHERE ON EARTH.

THE SIGNATURE TALENT OF CODEX IS HIS MASTERY OF SECRET CODES. NOT ONLY IS HE CAPABLE OF DECIPHERING VIRTUALLY ANY LANGUAGE AS QUICKLY AS A MAN MIGHT READ, HE HAS ALSO DEVELOPED A PERSONAL CODE WHICH HAS, TO DATE, NEVER BEEN BROKEN. NAIMAN USES THIS CODE FOR ALL HIS WRITTEN JOURNALS AND CAN EVEN THINK IN IT WHEN HE WISHES.

BECAUSE OF THE HIGH LEVEL OF SECRECY CODEX GUARANTEES, HIS JOURNALS HAVE BECOME THE FINAL REPOSITORY FOR MORE THAN ONE GREAT SECRET ENTRUSTED TO HIM BY WONDERS WHO KNOW TOO MUCH.

DESPITE HIS GENIUS AND MANY RESOURCES, CODEX DOESN'T DO MUCH "HERO WORK" ANY LONGER. HE'S GOTTEN A BIT TOO SLOW AND FRAGILE FOR SUPERHUMAN BRAWLS, AND HE'S LOST HIS AGGRESSIVE EDGE. (TRUTH TO TELL, HE WAS NEVER A MAN OF

VIOLENCE.) BY NO MEANS IS HE TRAPPED WITHIN HIS ALPS WORKSHOP, HOWEVER.

HE TRAVELS EXTENSIVELY AND KEEPS IN TOUCH WITH MANY FRIENDS AND THE OCCASIONAL LOVER, AND HAS BEEN INVOLVED IN EVERY CRISIS-LEVEL EVENT SINCE THE 1960S, USUALLY AS THE CHIEF TECHNICAL ADVISOR. AS CONSUL OF THE ACADEMY, HE IS FREQUENTLY IN CONTACT WITH OTHER SCIENTISTS AROUND THE WORLD, MONITORING THEIR RESEARCH, ORGANIZING GROUP PROJECTS, AND GUIDING EXPERIMENTS AWAY FROM MORALLY GRAY AREAS TOWARDS THE LIGHT. IN THIS WAY, HE MAY DO MORE GOOD THAN ANY SINGLE WONDER ON EARTH.

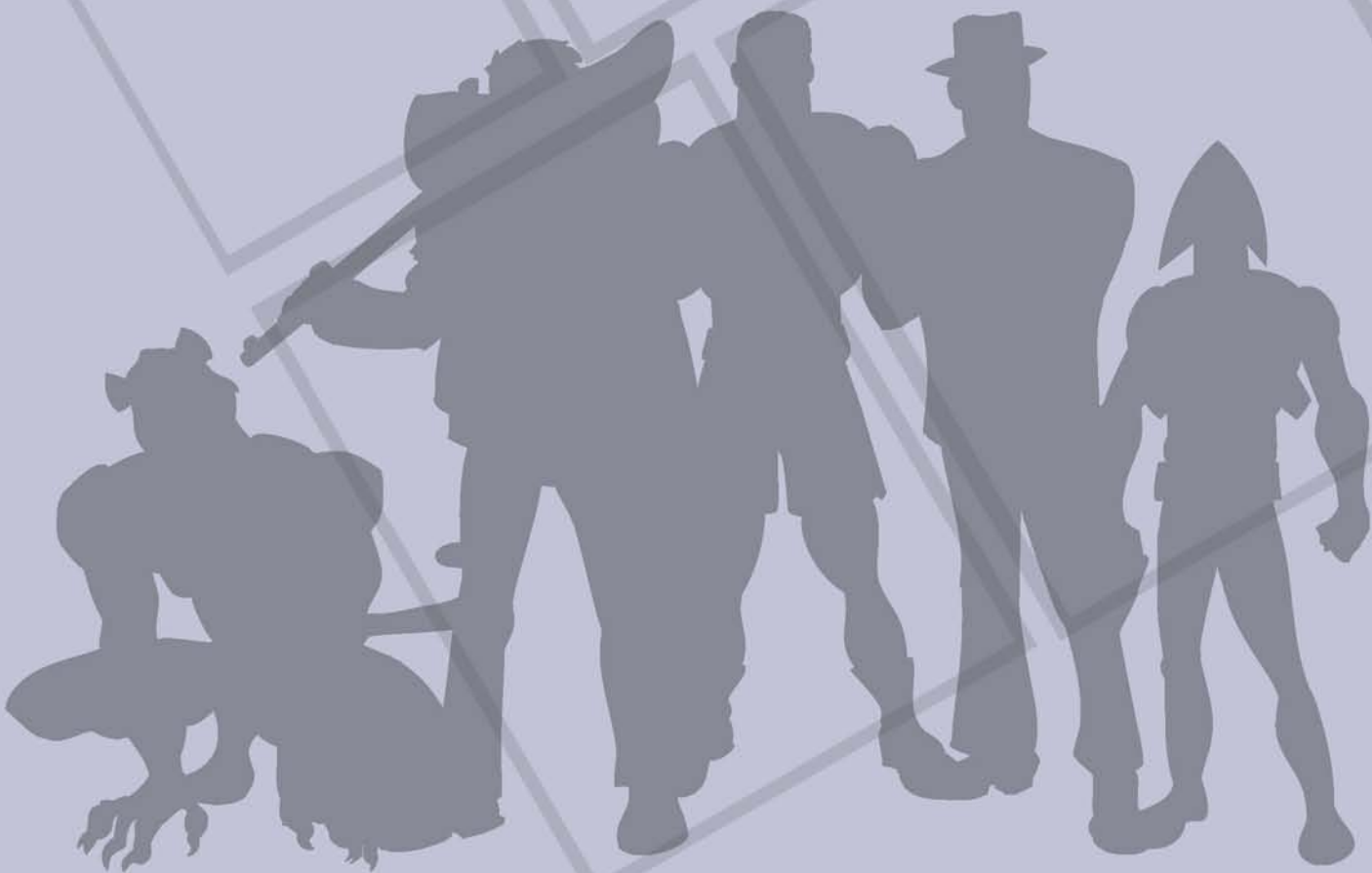
CODEX

ALTHOUGH THE ACADEMY COUNTS MANY CRIMINAL WONDERS AMONG ITS RANKS, CODEX BELIEVES THAT IT ACTS AS A TEMPERING INFLUENCE ON THEM, PROVIDING A FORUM FOR HEALTHY DEBATE AND HELPING TO LIMIT UNETHICAL RESEARCH. NEVERTHELESS, THERE HAS NEVER BEEN ANY EFFORT TO TAKE THE ACADEMY PUBLIC SINCE IT WENT UNDERGROUND NEARLY 400 YEARS AGO. HE CONTINUES TO HOST VISITING WONDERS AND OTHER OLD ACQUAINTANCES AT HIS MOUNTAIN RETREAT, AN ENORMOUS CASTLE-FORTRESS EQUIPPED WITH AMAZING TECHNOLOGICAL WONDERS.

NAIMAN SELDOM SPEAKS OF HIS NATURE AS LEONARDO RETURNED, BECAUSE HE CANNOT HIMSELF EXPLAIN IT. PERHAPS HE'S A GHOST, PERHAPS HIS SOUL CONTAINS A FRAGMENT OF DA VINCI'S, PERHAPS HE IS A TEMPORAL ECHO OR A CROSS-DIMENSIONAL VAGRANT. ALL THESE THEORIES HAVE BEEN TESTED TO THE LIMIT OF HIS ABILITY, AND NO CONCLUSION HAS EVER BEEN PROVEN TO HIS CRITICAL AND ANALYTICAL MIND. BUT THIS GAP IN HIS KNOWLEDGE DOES NOT SLOW HIM, NOR DETER HIM FROM HIS WORK, FOR HE IS DETERMINED TO CONTINUE HIS RESEARCH SO LONG AS BREATH IS IN HIM. THE CLOSE COMPANIONSHIP OF FRIENDS WILL WARM HIS OLD AGE, AND HISTORY WILL RECOGNIZE HIS GENIUS.

APPEARANCE:

CODEX IS A TALL AND WELL-PROPORTIONED MAN WHOSE PHYSICAL FRAME SEEMS UNDAUNTED BY AGE. BUT HIS BEARD IS LONG AND FULL, AND TIME HAS LINED HIS FACE. HIS EYES REMAIN BRIGHT AND KNOWLEDGEABLE, AND HIS HANDS ARE STRONG. WHEN HE SPEAKS, IT IS WITH A GENTLE BUT INARGUABLE VOICE.



CODEX

STORIES

CODEX FACILITATES STORIES THAT REQUIRE HIS EXPERTISE AS A SCIENTIST, THAT HAVE A LINK TO HIS HISTORICAL PAST OR HIS AGE, WHICH INVOLVE CONSPIRACIES LIKE THE ACADEMY OF LYNXES, OR WHICH HINGE ON A SECRET AND UNBREAKABLE CODE. AN ASPIRING HERO SEEKS OUT CODEX AND ASKS THE GREAT INVENTOR TO MAKE HIM WEAPONS WITH WHICH TO FIGHT CRIME AND INJUSTICE. CAN ROBERT SIMPLY TURN HIM AWAY? WHAT TESTS MIGHT HE DEVELOP TO ENSURE THAT THE YOUNG APPLICANT MEANS WHAT HE SAYS AND ISN'T GOING TO JUST GET HIMSELF KILLED? AND WHAT MIGHT BE REALLY GOING ON? COULD THE YOUNG HERO BE A TROJAN HORSE, UNWITTINGLY ALLOWING ONE OF CODEX'S OLD RIVALS ACCESS TO HIS MOUNTAIN STRONGHOLD? HOW DOES NAIMAN FEEL ABOUT BEING ARMS SUPPLIER TO THE STARS?

THE ACADEMY DOES NOT ENDORSE ANY UNETHICAL RESEARCH, BUT THERE IS NO WAY FOR IT TO PREVENT INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS FROM CONDUCTING SUCH RESEARCH PRIVATELY, OUTSIDE OF THE ACADEMY'S WATCHFUL EYE. IN HIS COMMUNICATION WITH CERTAIN MAD GENIUSES, CODEX COMES TO BELIEVE THAT ONE OF HIS FELLOW LYNXES MIGHT BE CONDUCTING JUST SUCH EXPERIMENTS. HE ASKS THE HEROES TO INFILTRATE THE LAB AND DESTROY THE RESEARCH WITHOUT ALLOWING HIS INVOLVEMENT TO BE DETECTED, THUS PRESERVING THE COLLEGIALLY OF THE ACADEMY ITSELF.

WHEN A YOUNG AND EXCITING NEW WONDER (PROBABLY A PC) DISPLAYS A MASTERY OF SCIENCE ON THE LEVEL OF THE OLD MASTER, HIS HOME CITY DECIDES TO HOLD A COMPETITION TO SETTLE, ONCE AND FOR ALL, WHO IS THE BETTER INVENTOR. CODEX AND THE NEW KID ARE BOTH INVITED TO DOWNTOWN AND, IN FRONT OF A SELLOUT CROWD, ARE GIVEN A TRUCK FULL OF RANDOM PARTS. WHOEVER CAN BUILD THE BETTER INVENTION WINS. THERE ARE INFINITE POSSIBLE COMPLICATIONS: THE "RANDOM PARTS" MAY INCLUDE BIZARRE ARTIFACTS OR WEAPONS SALVAGED FROM VARIOUS SUPER-VILLAINS, CORPORATE INTERESTS MAY TRY TO CHEAT ON BEHALF OF ONE COMPETITOR OR THE OTHER FOR THEIR OWN PURPOSES AND WITHOUT THE KNOWLEDGE OF EITHER HERO, TERRORIST GROUPS MIGHT TRY TO SEIZE THE NEWLY DEVELOPED GADGET FOR THEMSELVES, OR AN OLD ENEMY OF CODEX'S MIGHT SHOW UP TO EVEN A SCORE. FOR A WHOLE NIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT: ALL THESE THINGS HAPPEN AT ONCE.

CODEX SOMEHOW DEVELOPS A WAY TO REGAIN HIS YOUTH. (TIME REGRESSION, CLONING, MIND TRANSPLANT, WHATEVER.) THIS PLOT IS ABOUT THE FUTILITY OF ESCAPING YOUR DESTINY; AS WITH EVERY OTHER HANDICAPPED HERO WHO FINDS A WAY TO CURE HIMSELF, THE EFFORT IS DOOMED TO FAILURE. FOR A TIME CODEX BECOMES ONCE AGAIN THE HERO OF THE CENTURY, DASHING AROUND THE PLANET, SAVING THE WORLD, DAZZLING FRIEND AND FOE ALIKE WITH HIS GENIUS (AND RETURNING TO HIS SCANDALOUS WAYS). BUT WITH HIS YOUTH COMES HUBRIS, AN AWESOME LEVEL OF OVERCONFIDENCE THAT LEADS HIM TO MAKE A CATASTROPHIC DECISION THAT ENDS IN TRAGEDY. ULTIMATELY, CODEX MUST FACE THE FACT THAT HE CANNOT HAVE EVERYTHING, THAT HE IS, IN THE END, A MORTAL MAN.

JUNGLE HERO

THE JUNGLE HERO, OR HIS DISTAFF COUSIN THE JUNGLE PRINCESS, IS A NOBLE SAVAGE AND MASTER OF ANIMALS ON THE TARZAN MODEL. ALTHOUGH SELDOM GIFTED WITH GREAT POWER, COURAGE, FIGHTING SKILL, AND OUTRIGHT FEROCITY MAKE HIM OR HER A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH EVEN OUTSIDE THE JUNGLE.

EXAMPLES: BLACK PANTHER, KA-ZAR, SHANNA THE SHE-DEVIL, TARZAN

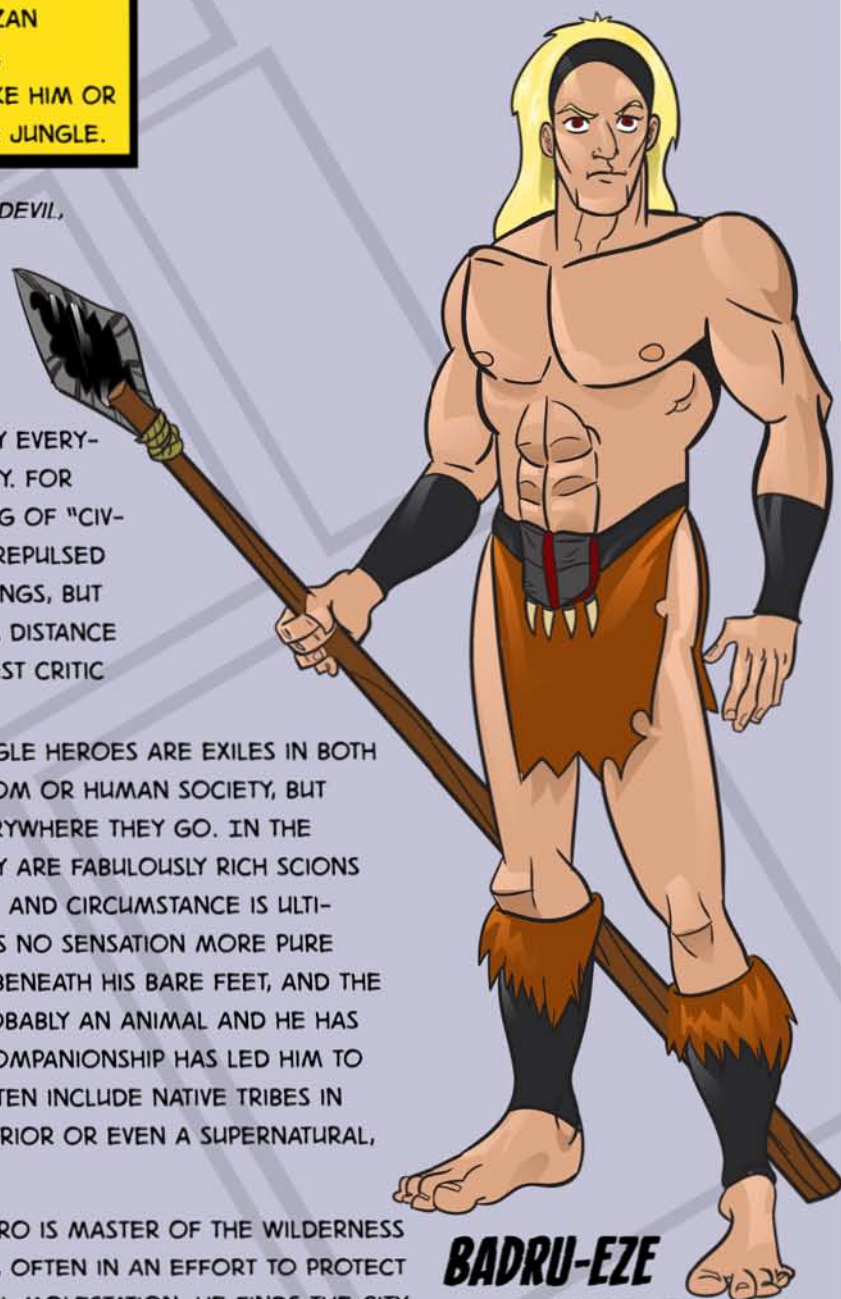
RELATED ARCHETYPES: ANIMAL HERO, FERAL HERO

QUALITIES AND CHALLENGES:

THE JUNGLE HERO IS AN IDEALIZED MAN, UNTOUCHED BY EVERYTHING THAT IS CORRUPTING AND EVIL IN MODERN SOCIETY. FOR MOST OF HIS LIFE HE WAS ILLITERATE AND KNEW NOTHING OF "CIVILIZED" SOCIETY, BUT NOW HE IS BOTH FASCINATED AND REPULSED BY IT. HE LONGS FOR ACCEPTANCE BY OTHER HUMAN BEINGS, BUT HE IS ALSO SENSITIVE TO HUMAN FAILINGS AND HE HAS A DISTANCE FROM OTHER PEOPLE THAT ALLOWS HIM TO BE AN HONEST CRITIC OF SOCIETY AND HUMAN CRUELTY.

HE QUITE LITERALLY WALKS IN TWO WORLDS; SOME JUNGLE HEROES ARE EXILES IN BOTH LANDS, NEVER ACCEPTED BY EITHER THE ANIMAL KINGDOM OR HUMAN SOCIETY, BUT OTHERS ARE MORE FORTUNATE AND ARE LIONIZED EVERYWHERE THEY GO. IN THE JUNGLE THEY ARE KINGS AND QUEENS; IN THE CITY THEY ARE FABULOUSLY RICH SCIONS OF ARISTOCRATIC FAMILIES. BUT ALL THIS WEALTH, POMP, AND CIRCUMSTANCE IS ULTIMATELY EPHEMERAL TO THE JUNGLE HERO, WHO KNOWS NO SENSATION MORE PURE AND HONEST THAN THE WIND ON HIS FACE, THE EARTH BENEATH HIS BARE FEET, AND THE SCENT OF PREY IN HIS NOSTRILS. HIS BEST FRIEND IS PROBABLY AN ANIMAL AND HE HAS AN ANIMAL FOSTER FAMILY, BUT THE LURE OF HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP HAS LED HIM TO FALL IN LOVE WITH HIS OWN KIND. SOCIAL QUALITIES OFTEN INCLUDE NATIVE TRIBES IN THE JUNGLE, WHO REVERE THE HERO AS A MIGHTY WARRIOR OR EVEN A SUPERNATURAL, GODLIKE BEING.

RAISED BY ANIMALS OR A PRIMITIVE TRIBE, THE JUNGLE HERO IS MASTER OF THE WILDERNESS AND OPERATES IN THE CITY ONLY WITH GREAT RELUCTANCE, OFTEN IN AN EFFORT TO PROTECT HIS JUNGLE HOME FROM TRESPASSERS OR ENVIRONMENTAL MOLESTATION. HE FINDS THE CITY TO HAVE MANY CHARACTERISTICS OF THE JUNGLE, INCLUDING A "SURVIVAL OF THE FITTEST" MENTALITY. BUT THE INJUSTICES WHICH HUMAN BEINGS INFLICT ON ONE ANOTHER CAUSE THE JUNGLE HERO TO MISS THE "LAW OF THE JUNGLE", IN WHICH EVERY ANIMAL STICKS TO HIS ASSIGNED ROLE AND NATURE PROCEEDS IN PERFECT AND INFINITELY HARMONIOUS BALANCE. HIS HUMAN FAMILY OFTEN SEEKS TO BETRAY OR CHEAT HIM. THE JUNGLE HERO HAS AN UNIMPEACHABLE MORAL CODE AND IS HONORABLE AND TRUSTWORTHY, ALWAYS SPEAKING HIS MIND, BUT HE LACKS SOCIAL GRACES AND TENDS TO SOLVE PROBLEMS WITH A BLOODTHIRSTY FINALITY.



BADRU-EZE
THE MOON KING

JUNGLE HERO

THE JUNGLE HERO HAS A POOR TRACK RECORD ON TEAMS. USUALLY HE DOES NOT HAVE THE RAW POWER TO HOLD HIS OWN ON A TEAM MADE UP OF AVATARS, ARMORED WONDERS, AND SUPER-PATRIOTS. HE IS MORE SUCCESSFUL AS A SOLO HERO, SURROUNDED BY HIS ANIMAL COMPANIONS, TRIBAL ALLIES, AND ROMANTIC INTEREST. BUT FOR A PICK-UP GAME, THE JUNGLE HERO WORKS VERY WELL, ESPECIALLY IF HE CAN FIND WAYS TO USE HIS UNIQUE TALENTS IN THE ADVENTURE, CAPITALIZING ON THE ENVIRONMENT TO DEMONSTRATE HIS NATURAL SKILL.

IT'S WORTH NOTING THAT THE ORIGINAL JUNGLE HEROES WERE BASED ON SOME PRETTY AWFUL CONCEPTS OF RACE AND PURITY; THE WHITE MAN WAS NATURALLY SUPERIOR TO THE BLACK MAN, AND AFRICANS WERE ONLY marginally smarter than the animals that surrounded them. Fortunately, as the decades have passed, comic writers have broken out of these stereotypes and now some of the greatest jungle heroes ever are not only black, but smarter, tougher and simply cooler than their white colleagues. An ever-shrinking world and a growing awareness of Africa and India have brought more first-worlders into the jungle, and now a jungle hero can have a Berkeley education and tribal contacts in Harlem or the South Side of Chicago. For players making jungle hero characters, consider a global awareness for your hero, an emphasis on environmentalism, developing nations, human trafficking, poaching, and climate change. The jungle hero is now one of the most socially aware and progressive heroes in comics.

ABILITIES:

THE JUNGLE HERO IS STRONG AS THE WATER BUFFALO, SWIFT AS THE LEOPARD, AND DEADLY AS THE VIPER, WHICH MEANS HIS PROWESS, COORDINATION AND STRENGTH ARE ALL AT OR SLIGHTLY BEYOND HUMAN LIMITS. INDEED, BECAUSE HE IS AN IDEALIZED MAN, ALL HIS ABILITIES ARE PROBABLY GOOD. HE KNOWS NO FEAR, HAS SENSES KEEN ENOUGH TO TRACK ENEMIES THROUGH THE MOST DIFFICULT PATHS, AND ALTHOUGH HE HAS NO FORMAL EDUCATION HIS NATURAL INTELLIGENCE SHINES THROUGH IN HIS ABILITY TO MASTER ENGLISH IN A FEW PAGES AND OUT-THINK ALL OF HIS MORE "SAVAGE" ENEMIES, EVEN THE WHITE ONES.

POWERS:

THE TRADITIONAL JUNGLE HERO HAS THE POWER TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE ANIMALS OF HIS HOMETOWN, THOUGH HE THINKS OF THIS AS A SKILL HE HAS DEVELOPED OVER A LIFETIME RATHER THAN A SUPER-POWER. THIS IS PROBABLY REPRESENTED BY ANIMAL CONTROL (MAMMALS) BUT A BIRD-HERO OR SNAKE-HERO WOULD MAKE AN ENTERTAINING TWIST ON THE USUAL JUNGLE TYPES. JUNGLE HEROES ARE LIKELY TO HAVE ANIMAL COMPANIONS, OR SUPER-PETS, RANGING FROM SABER-TOOTH TIGERS TO GORILLAS; USE THE CREATURES IN THE BACK OF THE ICONS BOOK TO DETERMINE THE GAME STATISTICS FOR THESE ANIMALS, BUT THEY ARE MOST USEFUL FOR MENACING THUGS AND MINIONS WHILE THE JUNGLE HERO TAKES ON THE VILLAIN BY HIMSELF. THE JUNGLE HERO SOMETIMES DEMONSTRATES A "ONE-NESS" WITH HIS JUNGLE HOME THAT CLUES HIM IN TO DANGERS WHICH THREATEN IT, ESPECIALLY INTRUDERS OR MYSTIC THREATS. TO REPLICATE THIS, CONSIDER DANGER SENSE, ESP, OR THE INSPIRATION POWER PRESENTED IN THIS BOOK. THIS POWER IS FOCUSED ON THE HERO'S HOME, BUT COULD ACTIVATE AT ANY TIME. FOR EXAMPLE, THE JUNGLE HERO MAY BE IN LONDON OR NEW YORK WINING AND DINING WITH HIS LONG-LOST RELATIVES WHEN HE SUDDENLY GETS THE FEELING THAT SOMETHING TERRIBLE IS HAPPENING BACK HOME. IF YOU ARE WILLING TO LET THE GM GIVE YOU THESE HINTS AND CLUES, THEN JUST GIVE YOURSELF A QUALITY LIKE "SUPERNATURAL LINK TO HOMETOWN" AND LET THE GM TAG IT, BUT IF YOU WANT SOME LEVEL OF CONTROL OVER HOW OFTEN AND WHEN YOU GET THESE FLASHES OF INSIGHT, A POWER MIGHT BE BEST.

SPECIALTIES:

THE JUNGLE HERO IS A MASTER OF PRIMITIVE SKILLS, INCLUDING WEAPONRY (ESPECIALLY KNIVES, SPEARS AND BOWS), WRESTLING, STEALTH AND ATHLETICS. HIS OCCULT KNOWLEDGE OF HIS OWN HOME, ITS MANY MYTHS, LEGENDS, SECRETS AND CURSES, CLUES HIM IN TO THE HIDDEN PLACES OF THE JUNGLE, LOST TREASURES, AND OTHER THINGS MAN WAS NOT MEANT TO KNOW.

STUNTS:

VINE-SWINGING IS THE ARCHETYPAL JUNGLE HERO STUNT.

THE FRONTIERSMAN

FIRST APPEARANCE: JOURNEY INTO WONDER #17
ARCHETYPES: JUNGLE HERO, SUPER-PATRIOT
QUALITIES: HERO OF A THOUSAND TALL TALES, HERO OF THE AMERICAN WEST, CLEAN LIVING
CHALLENGES: EXILED FROM THE CITY OF LIGHTS, JUST A MAN, OLD "FRIENDS"

PROWESS	6
COORDINATION	5
STRENGTH	6
INTELLECT	4
AWARENESS	5
WILLPOWER	4
DETERMINATION	6
STAMINA	10



POWERS:
 NONE

SPECIALTIES:
 ATHLETICS, INVESTIGATION, LANGUAGES,
 STEALTH, WEAPONRY (GUNS EXPERT, LARIAT),
 WRESTLING EXPERT, NATURE

STUNTS:

BORN TO THE SADDLE (COORDINATION): TREAT THE FRONTIERSMAN'S COORDINATION AS 6 WHILE RIDING (FOR A TOTAL OF 7 AFTER HIS ATHLETICS BONUS IS ADDED). **RIGHT TO BEAR ARMS** (AWARENESS): THE FRONTIERSMAN DOES NOT CARRY A GUN, BUT HE SEEMS TO BE ABLE TO FIND ONE WHENEVER HE NEEDS ONE. HE CAN SPEND A POINT OF DETERMINATION TO FIND A PISTOL OR RIFLE WITHIN RUNNING DISTANCE. **KINDRED SPIRITS** (WILLPOWER): FRONTIERSMAN CAN USE HIS WILLPOWER TO INTIMIDATE AND PERSUADE ANIMALS.

ORIGIN

"NOW ARE YOU GONNA BACK AWAY FROM THE LADY, OR AM I GONNA PUT THIS GLOVE SO FAR DOWN YOUR THROAT YOU'RE GONNA \$#!* COWHIDE?"

DAVE SCHILLING LED A LIFE MANY WOULD ENVY. HE HAD MADE MILLIONS OFF HIS FORTUNE 500 COMPANY. HE BOUGHT A NEW CAR EVERY FEW MONTHS (AND A NEW GIRLFRIEND ONLY SLIGHTLY MORE OFTEN). HIS PENTHOUSE APARTMENT IN RADIANT CITY BOASTED THE LATEST IN CUTTING EDGE TECHNOLOGY AND HIS MANY BUSINESS PARTNERS THREW NIGHTLY PARTIES TO WHICH HE ALWAYS RECEIVED SPECIAL INVITATIONS. HE WAS ON THE COVER OF NEWSWEEK. HE WAS CONSULTED BY CONGRESS. WHEN HE WORE A DOUBLE-BREADED BLAZER TO A FUNERAL, MEN ACROSS THE COUNTRY WORE DOUBLE-BREADED BLAZERS FOR TWO YEARS. THUS IT CAME AS A TOTAL SURPRISE TO DAVE WHEN HE REALIZED--WHILE DRIVING TO THE OFFICE ONE DAY--THAT HE HAD NOT BEEN HAPPY SINCE ... 1997? 96? SURELY HE MUST HAVE BEEN HAPPY AT SOME POINT IN 1996...

THE LACK OF MEANING IN DAVE'S LIFE WAS SO OVERWHELMING THAT HE DIDN'T EVEN TURN THE CAR AROUND. HE PULLED OVER AND WALKED AWAY FROM EVERYTHING HE HAD VALUED: HIS JOB, HIS RITZY APARTMENT, HIS SO-CALLED FRIENDS AND "LOVED ONES." HE WENT IN SEARCH OF SOMETHING MORE, SOMETHING THAT SPOKE TO HIM. SOMETHING GREATER THAN ANY ONE MAN, SOMETHING OLD. WITH HIS BACK TO THE SUNRISE, HE WANDERED ROOTLESS AND ALONE, BUT OPTIMISTIC. THE EMPTINESS IN HIS SOUL HAD BEEN PROFOUND, BUT NOW THAT HE KNEW IT FOR WHAT IT WAS, HE FELT HE HAD DODGED A BULLET. HE WAS HALFWAY HOME, ALREADY. THE REST WOULD TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.

IT TOOK DAVE FOUR YEARS TO CROSS AMERICA, AND HE DIDN'T GO THE SHORT WAY. HE PADDLED A BOAT UP THE MISSISSIPPI, SWAM IN THE GREAT LAKES, HUNTED ARMADILLOS IN TEXAS, COACHED COLLEGE BASKETBALL IN IDAHO, AND CROSSED THE ROCKIES ON FOOT. WHEN TIMES WERE TOUGH, HE TOLD STORIES IN RUN-DOWN BARS, SHOVELED MANURE FOR RANCHERS, AND DID ODD JOBS REPAIRING FENCES TO KEEP HIS BELLY FULL. HE LEARNED THE LANGUAGES OF THE RESERVATIONS AND HIS RACQUETBALL PHYSIQUE GREW TALLER, LEANER, AND TAN. AMONG THE TALL TALES OF THE ROAD, THE CANYONS AND THE MESAS, DAVE SCHILLING FOUND WHAT HE NEVER KNEW HE WAS LOOKING FOR: HE FOUND A FRONTIER, A NATURAL AND UNSPOILED WILDERNESS THAT SANG TO HIM. HE VOWED TO PROTECT AND PRESERVE THIS WILDERNESS, THE AMERICAN WEST, AND THE PEOPLE THAT DWELT THERE.

THE FRONTIERSMAN'S INITIAL ADVENTURES WERE HUMBLE, BUT HIS REPUTATION SPREAD BY WORD OF MOUTH AND IN LOCAL PAPERS FROM BILLINGS TO BARSTOW TO TULSA. WITH EACH STORY HIS LEGEND GREW A LITTLE BIGGER, UNTIL IT WAS RUMORED HE WRESTLED BEARS, STARED DOWN MOUNTAIN LIONS, CAUGHT RATTLESNAKES WITH ONE HAND, AND PLAYED HIDE AND SEEK WITH EAGLES. IT'S SAID BY SOME THAT HE TAUGHT THE THUNDERBIRD HOW TO PLAY POKER, THAT HE CARRIES THE BADGE OF THE FIRST TEXAS RANGER, THAT HE TALKS TO HORSES, AND, IN THE SUMMER OF 2007, HAD BIGFOOT AS A SIDEKICK. HE'S WALKED THROUGH DEATH VALLEY TO DELIVER CHRISTMAS PRESENTS, MARRIED A TATTOOED WOMAN, TALKED TO THE SPIRIT OF GENERAL CUSTER, AND USED INDIAN MEDICINES TO VISIT MARS VIA ASTRAL PROJECTION. ALL BUT ONE OF THESE STORIES ARE TRUE.

WHEN QUESTIONED ABOUT HIS PHENOMENAL STRENGTH, SPEED, AND AGILITY, THE FRONTIERSMAN INSISTS "IT'S JUST CLEAN LIVIN'," AND IT JUST MIGHT BE TRUE. WITH A GLEAM IN HIS EYE AND A GRIN ON HIS FACE, DAVE IS ALMOST UNIVERSALLY TRUSTED WHEREVER HE GOES, AND HE HAS BECOME A ROLE MODEL FOR COUNTLESS AMERICANS WHO LIVE IN SMALL RURAL TOWNS THROUGHOUT THE WEST. HE ENTERS LARGE CITIES ONLY WITH CAUTION, FOR SUCH PLACES ARE OFTEN HOME TO TERRITORIAL WONDERS WHOM DAVE DOES NOT WANT TO OFFEND. HE IS CAREFUL TO PLAY A SUPPORTING ROLE IN ANY URBAN INVESTIGATIONS, OUT OF RESPECT FOR ANOTHER HERO'S "TURF." HE HAS SERVED ON ONE OR TWO HERO TEAMS, BUT ONLY FELT COMFORTABLE WITH THOSE WHO FOCUS THEIR EFFORTS ON THE AMERICAN WEST. MANY MORE GRITTY HEROES CONSIDER HIM LAUGHABLE, A RIDICULOUS JOKE, BUT DAVE IS ABSOLUTELY EARNEST ABOUT WHAT HE DOES, AND IGNORES SUCH CRITICISM.

THE FRONTIERSMAN

ABILITIES

THE FRONTIERSMAN IS JUST ABOUT AS STRONG, FAST, AND TOUGH AS IT IS POSSIBLE FOR A MAN TO BE WITHOUT GETTING SWEEPED UP BY A RADIOACTIVE TORNADO. HIS NEW CAREER AS A PROTECTOR OF THE WEST HAS ALLOWED HIM TO LEARN A HOST OF NEW SKILLS, FROM OUTDOOR SURVIVAL TO ANIMAL HANDLING OR THE LANGUAGES OF THE NATIVE AMERICAN PEOPLES. HE'S SNEAKY, HE'S A GOOD JUDGE OF CHARACTER, AND HE'S GOT FISTS LIKE A FREIGHT TRAIN. IF HE HAS A SPECIALTY, IT'S IN WRESTLING, BUT HE'S ALSO A PRETTY GOOD SHOT WITH A RIFLE AND NOT BAD WITH A LARIAT.

IT'S WORTH POINTING OUT THAT DAVE IS A JUNGLE HERO IN WESTERN GARB. INSTEAD OF AFRICAN NATIVES, HE HAS INDIANS. INSTEAD OF TIGERS, APES, AND ANACONDAS, HE HAS MOUNTAIN LIONS, BEARS, AND RATTLESNAKES. HE HAS THE SAME BRUSHES WITH THE SUPERNATURAL THAT THE JUNGLE HERO HAS, AND THE SAME PRIORITIES WHEN IT COMES TO PROTECTING NATURE FROM EXPLOITATION. HIS LOVE FOR AMERICA ALSO GIVES HIM QUALITIES OF A SUPER-PATRIOT, DESPITE THE FACT THAT HE DOESN'T WEAR A STAR-SPANGLED UNIFORM.

THE FRONTIERSMAN

NEW SPECIALTY!!

NATURE:

YOU ARE A SKILLED OUTDOORSMAN AND HAVE A WAY WITH ANIMALS. YOU CAN TRACK PEOPLE AND ANIMALS BY THE TRAIL THEY LEAVE BEHIND, FIND FOOD IN THE WILDERNESS, AND SURVIVE IN HAZARDOUS ENVIRONMENTS LIKE THE DESERT, ARCTIC, OR JUNGLE. ADD YOUR SPECIALTY BONUS WHENEVER YOU WANT TO PACIFY A WILD ANIMAL, IDENTIFY SAFE DRINKING WATER OR TOXIC PLANTS, OR FIND A PATH IN A NATURAL SETTING.

APPEARANCE: DAVE SCHILLING IS A TALL, LEAN, HANDSOME MAN WITH SANDY BLONDE HAIR, A PUCKISH SMILE, AND A TEN-YEAR-OLD TAN. IN THE WINTER HE GROWS A BEARD, BUT USUALLY HE IS ROUGHLY SHAVEN. HIS TRADEMARK IS HIS FRINGED BUCKSKIN JACKET AND PANTS, WHICH HE WEARS EVEN INTO THE CITY, WHERE HE IS USUALLY LADEN DOWN WITH A FRAME BACKPACK. ALTHOUGH THE FRONTIERSMAN DOESN'T CARRY A GUN, HE CAN USUALLY GET ONE IF HE NEEDS ONE VIA DETERMINATION EXPENDITURES.

STORIES

THE FRONTIERSMAN BRINGS WITH HIM STORIES ABOUT THE AMERICAN WEST AND STORIES WHICH HIGHLIGHT THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CIVILIZATION AND WILDERNESS.

THE FRONTIERSMAN HAS DONE SOMETHING HE MUST REPENT FOR (MAYBE KILLED THE WRONG MAN) AND THAT MEANS SPENDING A LONG TIME IN THE WILD, COMMUNING WITH NATURE AND TRYING TO COME TO GRIPS WITH HIS GUILT. BUT BEFORE HE RETREATS FROM THE WORLD, HE HAS TO MAKE SURE EVERYTHING IS GOING TO BE ALL RIGHT IN HIS ABSENCE, AND THAT MEANS RECRUITING SEVEN MAGNIFICENT WONDERS TO TAKE CARE OF THE WEST WHILE HE'S GONE. THIS IS A GOOD WAY TO TEST OUT A NEW HERO TEAM AND THROW THEM INTO A SETTING WHERE THEY DON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT TOO MUCH INTERFERENCE FROM OTHER GROUPS. THEY'LL HAVE TO DEAL WITH RURAL PROBLEMS FOR A FEW MONTHS (NO DOUBT FINDING IT NOT AS EASY AS THEY THOUGHT IT WOULD BE) AND THEN FACE A CHOICE WHEN THE FRONTIERSMAN RETURNS: DO THEY CONTINUE DOING THEIR JOB, OR DO THEY BREAK UP, EACH GOING THEIR OWN WAY ONCE MORE?

DAVE IS ON THE TRAIL OF AN AZTEC PRIEST WHO FLEES TO THE ONE PLACE THE FRONTIERSMAN IS MOST UNWILLING TO FOLLOW: RADIANT CITY. AS A HORRIFYING BLOOD CULT BEGINS TO FORM INSIDE THE GLASS TOWERS AND BENEATH THE VERDANT PARKS OF RADIANT, DAVE ARRIVES, THE ULTIMATE FISH OUT OF WATER. ALL HIS OLD GHOSTS SHOW UP TO HAUNT HIM: FORMER BUSINESS PARTNERS WHO WANT TO LURE HIM BACK IN, A LUXURIOUS LIFE OF PRIVILEGE, AN EX-WIFE WITH THE SON HE NEVER HAD. HE'LL NEVER ROOT OUT THE CULT ON HIS OWN; HE'LL NEED HELP FROM THE LOCAL HEROES, BUT WILL THEY WANT TO HELP HIM WHEN THE CITY IS LAVISHING PRAISE ON ITS PRODIGAL SON?

A POWERFUL NATIVE AMERICAN SORCERER DECIDES HIS PEOPLE HAVE TURNED TRAITOR AND ABANDONED THE "OLD WAYS" IN FAVOR OF CASINOS AND CHRISTIANITY. HE WORKS A POWERFUL DANCE WHICH TURNS THE WEST BACK INTO AN UNTAMED WILDERNESS. CITIES ARE REPLACED BY COWBOY TOWNS, TRUCKS TURN INTO COVERED WAGONS, AND BUFFALO ROAM THE LAND ONCE MORE. MORE IMPORTANT: ALL THE HEROES HAVE BEEN TURNED INTO WILD WEST VERSIONS OF THEMSELVES. THE SORCERER RULES THE INDIAN NATIONS, ENFORCING HIS WILL OVER THE WHITE MAN WITH MALICIOUS SPIRITS AND THOSE WONDERS WHO HAVE BEEN BROUGHT TO HIS CAUSE THROUGH PERSUASION OR ENCHANTMENT. IN THIS STORY, THE FRONTIERSMAN SERVES AS A VECTOR FOR ORGANIZING THE RESISTANCE: MAYBE HE SNAPS THE PC HEROES OUT OF THEIR ENCHANTMENT, OR THEY ARE ORDERED TO CAPTURE HIM BY THE SORCERER THEY SERVE.

WORLDS OF WONDER: WONDER CULTURE

"YOU HAVE THE RIGHT TO REMAIN MASKED": AN INTRODUCTION TO WONDER-LAW

WHEN WONDERS FIRST BECAME A GLOBAL PHENOMENON IN THE WORLD WAR II PERIOD, THEIR IDENTITIES REMAINED SECRET; WHEN THE WAR ENDED THE GREAT MAJORITY OF THESE CITIZEN VIGILANTES RETIRED OR FORGED LONG-TERM COMMITMENTS WITH AUTHORITIES. MANY OF THESE RELATIONSHIPS WERE UNOFFICIAL, BUT NO LESS SACRED. THE SILVER SHIELD, FOR EXAMPLE, KEPT HIS IDENTITY PRIVATE TO ALMOST EVERYONE, BUT HE REVEALED IT TO NEW YORK CITY'S CHIEF OF POLICE, WHO THEN VOUCHERED FOR THE SHIELD AND ALLOWED HIM TO REMAIN ACTIVE.

BUT DURING THE 1960S, AS WONDERS BECAME INVOLVED IN THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND PROTESTS AGAINST THE WAR IN VIETNAM, THEIR SECRET IDENTITIES CAME UNDER SIEGE. THE SITUATION CAME TO A HEAD WHEN POLICE IN BIRMINGHAM, ALABAMA USED EXTREME FORCE TO BREAK UP A PEACEFUL DEMONSTRATION OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE, IN THE PROCESS ASSAULTING AND ARRESTING THE BLACK TORNADO, A PROMINENT HERO OF THE TIME. THE TORNADO WAS WIDELY CONSIDERED TO BE A "NEGRO WONDER", BUT WHEN HIS MASK WAS PULLED OFF BY POLICE HE WAS REVEALED TO BE A PROMINENT WHITE MEMBER OF THE BIRMINGHAM RELIGIOUS COMMUNITY. THE OUTRAGE DIRECTED AGAINST THE TORNADO AND HIS FAMILY WAS INTENSE, AND DEMONSTRATIONS BEGAN BEFORE HE HAD EVEN BEEN RELEASED FROM PRISON.

AT THE SAME TIME, SINCE THE AFRICAN-AMERICAN COMMUNITY HAD ALSO PRESUMED THE TORNADO WAS BLACK, HE WAS OSTRACIZED FROM THAT GROUP AS WELL AND MILITANT GROUPS THREATENED BOTH HE AND HIS WIFE ON LIVE TELEVISION. BY THE END OF THE YEAR, BLACK TORNADO SUED THE CITY OF BIRMINGHAM FOR VIOLATING HIS RIGHT TO PRIVACY. PUBLIC SENTIMENT SLOWLY TURNED TO HIS SIDE AND THE COURTS EVENTUALLY SIDED WITH HIM, ASSERTING THAT MASKED WONDERS HAD A RIGHT TO KEEP THEIR IDENTITY PRIVATE SO LONG AS THEY OBEYED THE LAW. OVER THE DECADES, THIS INTERPRETATION OF THE RIGHT TO PRIVACY HAS MORE OR LESS ENDURED, THOUGH THERE ARE MANY EXCEPTIONS AND THE RIGHT IS CONSIDERED TO BE MUCH WEAKER NOW THAN IT WAS WHEN FIRST SET DOWN.

THESE LEGAL PRECEDENTS WHICH PROTECT A PERSON'S RIGHT TO A SECRET IDENTITY HAVE BEEN KNOWN AS "MASKING LAWS" SINCE THE 1970S. IN ORDER TO REMOVE THE MASK FROM A COSTUMED WONDER, A LEGAL WARRANT IS USUALLY REQUIRED. LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS WHO ARE INVESTIGATING WONDER-RELATED CRIMES GET THESE WARRANTS FROM LOCAL JUDGES, USUALLY AT THE SAME TIME THAT SEARCH WARRANTS ARE SOUGHT.

THE AGENCY SEEKING THE WARRANT IS OBLIGED TO PROVIDE REASONABLE EVIDENCE THAT SUGGESTS THE MASKED INDIVIDUAL IN QUESTION IS ENGAGING IN ILLEGAL ACTIVITY, THUS WAIVING THAT INDIVIDUAL'S RIGHT TO PRIVACY. SINCE THE PATRIOT ACT AND THE TRANSFORMATION OF AMERICAN LEGAL AUTHORITY IN THE "WAR ON TERROR", FEDERAL AGENCIES LIKE THE FBI AND HOMELAND SECURITY HAVE USED THEIR EMERGENCY AUTHORITY TO UNMASK, OR THREATEN TO UNMASK, SOME INDIVIDUALS WITHOUT BOTHERING WITH A WARRANT. ALTHOUGH THESE ACTIONS ARE ALWAYS INVESTIGATED AND REPORTS ARE FILED FOR REVIEW, THIS DOES LITTLE GOOD TO THE WONDER WHOSE FACE AND NAME ARE NOW PUBLIC RECORD.

THE AMERICAN CIVIL LIBERTIES UNION HAS FILED SUIT TO STOP ABUSIVE UNMASKING, BUT HAS LARGELY BEEN IGNORED BY A CONSERVATIVE SUPREME COURT.

WORLDS OF WONDER: WONDER CULTURE

(WONDER-LAW CONT.)

COSTUMED CRIMINALS MAY BE HELD IN CUSTODY UP TO 24 HOURS WITH THEIR MASKS ON WHILE THE AUTHORITIES SEEK A WARRANT; DURING THIS TIME THE SUSPECT IS NOT FINGERPRINTED AND HIS IDENTITY REMAINS OFFICIALLY SECRET, THOUGH POLICE DEPARTMENTS ROUTINELY USE THIS TIME TO QUESTION THE SUSPECT AND OFFER PLEA DEALS. MANY SUSPECTS HAVE PROVEN WILLING TO INFORM ON THEIR FORMER COLLEAGUES IF, IN ADDITION TO STAYING OUT OF JAIL, THEIR IDENTITIES CAN REMAIN SECRET. EVEN IN THE CASE OF SUCH DEALS, HOWEVER, AT LEAST SOME OFFICERS END UP LEARNING THE SUSPECT'S TRUE IDENTITY. SOMETIMES THE WARRANT TO UNMASK IS DENIED BECAUSE THE AGENCY IN QUESTION HAS FAILED TO CONVINCE THE JUDGE OF LIKELY WRONGDOING. IN THIS CASE, SINCE THE WONDER'S IDENTITY CANNOT BE VERIFIED, HE MUST BE RELEASED. REMOVING A WONDER'S MASK WITHOUT A WARRANT --KNOWN AS "RAISING THE HOOD"--IS A CRIME APPROXIMATELY EQUAL IN SEVERITY TO IDENTITY THEFT, THOUGH IT IS FAR LESS COMMON. MOST OF THE PEOPLE IMPRISONED FOR UNMASKING A WONDER ARE POOR, UNDER-EDUCATED, CAREER CRIMINALS WHO GOT LUCKY IN A FIGHT. WHITE-COLLAR CRIMINAL "MASTERMINDS" WITH THE BENEFIT OF EXPENSIVE LEGAL COUNSEL CAN USUALLY AVOID PRISON TIME FOR THE SAME CRIME.

ONE SIDE EFFECT OF THE MASKING LAWS IS THAT POLICE MUST PRESUME THAT ANYONE WEARING A MASK IS A WONDER, EITHER SUPER-HUMAN OR WILLING TO PUT HIMSELF AT SUPER-HUMAN RISK. LAW ENFORCEMENT AGENTS ARE ENTITLED TO USE A HIGHER LEVEL OF PHYSICAL FORCE TO RESTRAIN OR DETAIN ANYONE WHO IS MASKED. FOR THIS REASON, OUT OF CONCERN FOR PUBLIC SAFETY, IT IS ACTUALLY A FEDERAL CRIME FOR AN ORDINARY PERSON TO PRETEND TO BE A WONDER--THAT IS, TO WEAR A COSTUME OR MASK--WHEN THEY ARE NOT ONE. ORDINARY CITIZENS CAN EASILY BE MISTAKEN FOR SUPERHUMAN HEROES OR CRIMINALS, LEADING TO TRAGEDY. BY THE SAME TOKEN, IT IS ILLEGAL TO PRODUCE OR OWN A COSTUME DUPLICATING THAT OF AN ESTABLISHED WONDER UNLESS THAT COSTUME IS INTENDED TO BE USED BY THE WONDER IN QUESTION.

EVERY ONCE IN A WHILE, AN ORDINARY PERSON DRESSES UP AS A WONDER AND GETS MISTAKEN FOR ONE BY LOCAL POLICE. IN THE BEST CASES, THERE'S NO HARM BEYOND A LITTLE PUBLIC EMBARRASSMENT, A FEW HOURS DOWN AT THE STATION, AND A FINE. BUT SOMETIMES SHOTS ARE FIRED, WITH AWFUL RESULTS. NEEDLESS TO SAY, WHILE CHILDREN MAY DRESS UP LIKE WITCHES, GHOSTS, AND VAMPIRES ON HALLOWEEN, THEY DO NOT DRESS UP AS WONDERS.

NARWAL: WONDER REGISTRATION IN THE UNITED STATES

THE NATIONAL ACTIVE REGISTERED WONDER AUTHENTICATION LIST, OR NARWAL, IS THE RESULT OF DECADES OF DEBATE OVER THE ISSUE OF WONDER REGISTRATION. THE EFFORT TO REQUIRE ALL WONDERS TO REGISTER THEIR ABILITIES AND IDENTITIES WITH THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT PEAKED IN THE 1980S, AND WHILE IT NEVER PROVED WHOLLY SUCCESSFUL, IT ALSO WAS NEVER WHOLLY DEFEATED. NARWAL, A REGISTRATION PROGRAM DESIGNED TO ENCOURAGE PARTICIPATION THROUGH FINANCIAL AND SOCIAL BENEFITS, WAS INSTITUTED IN THE '90S UNDER THE CLINTON ADMINISTRATION.

NARWAL IS A VOLUNTARY PROGRAM WHICH ENCOURAGES WONDERS TO REGISTER IN EXCHANGE FOR CERTAIN BENEFITS. THE WONDER'S IDENTITY IS CLASSIFIED, AND ACCESSIBLE ONLY TO FEDERAL AUTHORITIES. HIS COSTUMED IDENTITY IS GIVEN LEGAL STATUS, WHICH MEANS THE WONDER CAN HOLD A JOB, CASH CHECKS, TESTIFY IN COURT, AND EVEN FILE SUIT UNDER HIS "CODENAME." TO ENSURE PROPER IDENTIFICATION, THE WONDER IS SUBJECTED TO A GENETIC SCAN, CREATING A "BIOLOGICAL FINGERPRINT." THIS SCAN CAN BE CHECKED USING RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE HANDHELD SCANNING DEVICES.

WORLDS OF WONDER: WONDER CULTURE

(NARWAL CONT.)

NARWAL PARTICIPANTS ARE AUTOMATICALLY ENROLLED IN WONDERCARE™, A MEDICAL INSURANCE AND LIFE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM. THEY ARE ELIGIBLE FOR MONTHLY CHECKS (PEGGED TO SOCIAL SECURITY) WHICH PERMIT SUBSISTENCE-LEVEL LIVING. WONDERCARE COVERS ALL NON-ELECTIVE SURGERY AS WELL AS MEDICAL CARE RELATED TO THE PATIENT'S SUPERHUMAN STATUS. WONDERCARE RECIPIENTS CAN CHOOSE TO HAVE THEIR BODIES DONATED TO SCIENCE UPON DEATH, BUT THIS IS NOT MANDATORY.

WONDERS WHO ARE FOUND GUILTY OF A FELONY ARE AUTOMATICALLY REGISTERED IN NARWAL. WHILE IMPRISONED, THEIR MONTHLY WONDERCARE CHECKS ARE PAID TO THEIR PRISON FACILITY AS PARTIAL COMPENSATION FOR THE COST OF INCARCERATION; THIS HAS LED TO OCCASIONAL INSTANCES OF GRAFT AND FRAUD WHEN A RURAL PRISON KEEPS INMATES BEYOND THEIR SENTENCE IN ORDER TO CONTINUE DRAWING THE INMATE'S PAY. IF A FELON EARNS PAROLE, HE MAY AGAIN DRAW ON WONDERCARE.

THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT MAKES USE OF NARWAL AS A RECRUITMENT TOOL, TRACKING WONDERS WHO MAY BE OF USE TO THE NATION AND OFFERING THEM OCCASIONAL EMPLOYMENT. ONLY AMERICAN CITIZENS MAY REGISTER WITH NARWAL. SINCE THE PASSING OF THE PATRIOT ACT, FOREIGN WONDERS ARE OBLIGATED TO REGISTER THEIR IDENTITIES AND SUBMIT TO A GENETIC SCAN UPON ENTERING THE COUNTRY. THIS IS A DRAMATIC CONTRAST TO THE AMERICAN TRADITION OF MASKING LAWS, WHICH TRADITIONALLY ALLOWS WONDERS TO KEEP THEIR IDENTITY A SECRET AS LONG AS THEY OBEY THE LAW, BUT THIS CONFLICT IN AMERICAN LAW AND ETHICS HAS YET TO BE FULLY WORKED OUT IN THE COURTS. IN THE MEANTIME, FOREIGN WONDERS EITHER AVOID AUTHORITIES, REVEAL THEIR IDENTITIES, OR RELY ON DIPLOMATIC PRESSURE FROM THEIR HOME NATIONS TO AVOID REGISTRATION.

THE PARLIAMENT OF STARS: OUR GALACTIC NEIGHBORS

THE PARLIAMENT OF STARS IS THE DOMINANT INTERSTELLAR CIVILIZATION IN THE MILKY WAY GALAXY; WHILE ANYONE ON EARTH WITH AN INTERNET CONNECTION CAN LEARN OF THE PARLIAMENT'S EXISTENCE, MOST OF THE HUMAN POPULATION REMAINS IGNORANT OF IT AND ONLY SPECIALISTS ARE LIKELY TO HAVE ACCURATE INFORMATION. BECAUSE THE PARLIAMENT HAS VERY LITTLE CONTACT OR OFFICIAL PRESENCE ON EARTH, THOSE EARTHLINGS WHO DO PUBLICIZE ITS EXISTENCE ARE USUALLY DOING SO FOR POLITICAL OR IDEOLOGICAL REASONS, MISCHARACTERIZING IT AS MANKIND'S SALVATION OR DESTRUCTION. IN TRUTH, THE PARLIAMENT'S ATTITUDE TOWARDS EARTH IS PERHAPS BEST CHARACTERIZED AS "BENIGN NEGLECT."

THE PARLIAMENT SERVES AS A GOVERNMENTAL BODY REPRESENTING HUNDREDS OF ALIEN RACES, THOUSANDS OF STAR SYSTEMS, AND OVER TEN THOUSAND INHABITED WORLDS. IT IS MADE UP OF TWO HOUSES, OR CHAMBERS. THE CHAMBER OF WORLDS, OR "LOW CHAMBER," INCLUDES ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH PLANET IN THE PARLIAMENT, ELECTED BY POPULAR VOTE. THE SMALLER CHAMBER OF STARS ("STAR CHAMBER" OR "HIGH CHAMBER") INCLUDES ONE REPRESENTATIVE FROM EACH SOLAR SYSTEM; THESE ARE USUALLY HEREDITARY NOBLES OR WEALTHY MERCHANT PRINCES. OVER THE PARLIAMENT'S TEN THOUSAND YEAR HISTORY, POWER HAS OFTEN DRIFTED FROM ONE CHAMBER TO THE OTHER; RECENTLY, THE STAR CHAMBER HAS GAINED TEMPORARY ASCENDANCE BASED ON A POLICY OF MILITARY EXPANSIONISM.

WORLDS OF WONDER: WONDER CULTURE

(PARLIAMENT OF STARS CONT.)

IN ITS EARLY CENTURIES, THE PARLIAMENT WORKED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH A MONARCH, BUT THIS HEREDITARY POST WAS DISSOLVED IN AN INTENSE CIVIL WAR AND NO SUN KING HAS REIGNED FOR FOUR THOUSAND YEARS. AS A GENERAL RULE, PARLIAMENT DOES NOT INTERFERE WITH POLICY AT THE PLANETARY LEVEL; IT IS ONLY WHEN ECONOMICS OR SECURITY BETWEEN STAR SYSTEMS IS THREATENED THAT THE PARLIAMENT INTERVENES. THE BEST WAY TO PROVOKE A PARLIAMENTARY ACTION IS TO INTERRUPT THE FLOW OF TRADE AND TAXES BETWEEN TWO STAR SYSTEMS OR TO THREATEN THE PARLIAMENT WITH MILITARY FORCE. WARS BETWEEN MEMBER STATES ARE NOT UNCOMMON AND ALLOWED TO CONTINUE SO LONG AS THE ECONOMIC DISTURBANCE IS KEPT TO A MINIMUM.

EARTH'S FIRST CONTACT WITH THE PARLIAMENT WAS ROUGHLY A THOUSAND YEARS AGO WHEN A SCOUTING VESSEL LANDED IN ICELAND AND ESTABLISHED FRIENDLY RELATIONS WITH LOCAL SETTLERS WHO HAD ARRIVED THERE FROM NORWAY, BRITAIN, AND IRELAND. WHEN THE VIKING LEADER AND EXPLORER ERIC THE RED VISITED PARLIAMENT IN 980 AD, HE BECAME THE FIRST REPRESENTATIVE THERE FROM EARTH, WHICH WAS (SOMEWHAT PREDICTABLY) CONSIDERED A "HARMLESS" BARBARIAN WORLD OF NO GREAT IMPORT. SPORADIC CONTACT CONTINUED OVER THE CENTURIES, WITH PARLIAMENTARY DIPLOMATS GENERALLY CHOOSING TO COMMUNICATE WITH ELECTED GOVERNMENTS WHICH MOST RESEMBLED THE PARLIAMENT ITSELF, ESPECIALLY GREAT BRITAIN AND, LATER, GERMANY AND JAPAN. THERE HAS ALSO BEEN CONSIDERABLE ACCIDENTAL CONTACT BETWEEN INDIVIDUAL PARLIAMENT STATES AND EARTH, AS WELL AS COVERT MISSIONS ON EARTH CONDUCTED BY PARLIAMENT AGENTS INVESTIGATING THE PREVALENCE OF WONDERS, WHICH ARE RARE BEYOND EARTH'S SOLAR SYSTEM.

RELATIONS BETWEEN EARTH AND THE PARLIAMENT CAN BEST BE DESCRIBED AS "MUTUALLY AMBIVALENT." MOST HUMANS EITHER DON'T KNOW THE PARLIAMENT EXIST OR CLAIM NOT TO CARE; MOST CONTACT BETWEEN THE TWO GOVERNMENTS HAVE BEEN THROUGH THE MEDIUM OF EARTH WONDERS. PARLIAMENT LEADERS HAVE TRADITIONALLY TAKEN A VERY ALOOF STANCE TOWARDS EARTH, EVEN WHEN THE ACTIONS OF EARTH WONDERS HAVE HAD PROFOUND INFLUENCE ON PARLIAMENT AFFAIRS. DESPITE OCCASIONALLY BEING THE CENTER OF INTENSE PARLIAMENT DEBATE, EARTH HAS NOT JOINED THE PARLIAMENT AND DOES NOT HAVE SEATS IN EITHER CHAMBER. HOWEVER, THE PARLIAMENT HAS PROTOCOL FOR MANY SUCH FOREIGN DOMAINS, WHICH ARE ENTITLED TO SEND UNOFFICIAL REPRESENTATIVES TO PARLIAMENT WHEN IT IS IN SESSION. THESE "AMBASSADORS WITHOUT PORTFOLIO" SERVE AS KEY SOURCES OF INTELLIGENCE ON INTERGALACTIC POLITICS FOR THEIR HOME WORLDS. MOONSHOT IS THE CURRENT EARTH AMBASSADOR, THOUGH SHE HAS BEEN ASSISTED BY MANY OTHERS. THE ALIEN WONDER KNOWN ON EARTH AS MATRIX IS THE PRIMARY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE PARLIAMENT ON EARTH.

TOMORROW MAN: EVERY WONDER'S GUARDIAN ANGEL

TOMORROW MAN MAY BE NOTHING BUT A SUPERHERO MYTH. IT IS VERY POSSIBLE HE ISN'T EVEN REAL. BUT TO SOME HEROES, ESPECIALLY THE SO-CALLED "OLD GUARD," HIS EXISTENCE IS NOT DOUBTED. YOUNGER HEROES LAUGH HIM OFF AS A FABLE, A BIT OF FOLKLORE, THE SUPERHEROIC EQUIVALENT OF THE TOOTH FAIRY. KIDS RAISED IN SUPERHERO FAMILIES CAN USUALLY REMEMBER WHEN THEY STOPPED BELIEVING IN TOMORROW MAN, THOUGH THE TOPIC STILL COMES UP WHENEVER SUPERHEROES GATHER FOR SOCIAL OCCASIONS. "WHAT DO YOU THINK OF TOMORROW MAN?" IS ALWAYS A POPULAR QUESTION ON SUPERHERO FIRST-DATES.

WORLDS OF WONDER: WONDER CULTURE

(TOMORROW MAN CONT.)

HIS NAME MAY HAVE BEEN DYLAN, OR DAVE, OR POSSIBLY WAYNE. IN SOME VERSIONS OF THE STORY, HE WAS A DOCTOR, IN OTHERS A LIFE INSURANCE SALESMAN, OR MAYBE AN INVESTMENT BANKER WITH INCOME IN THE MILLIONS BUT A LIFE WITHOUT PURPOSE. HE IS USUALLY PORTRAYED AS WHITE, WITH BLACK HAIR, BUT SOMETIMES IT IS BROWN AND SOME HAVE VIGOROUSLY ARGUED THAT HE WAS AFRICAN, LATINO, ARAB, ASIAN, OR A MIX OF EACH. HE MAY HAVE BEEN CATHOLIC. OR A DEMOCRAT. IT ALL DEPENDS ON WHO YOU ASK.

WHAT EVERYONE AGREES UPON IS WHAT HAPPENED NEXT. OCCASIONALLY OUR UNIVERSE IS THREATENED BY A FORCE SO POWERFUL, SO VAST, THAT IT ENDANGERS NOT JUST THE WORLD OR THE GALAXY, BUT ALL OF SPACE/TIME. THESE EVENTS ARE CALLED "CRISES", AND ONLY A HANDFUL OF THEM ARE KNOWN TO HAVE OCCURRED. BUT WHILE SUPERHEROES HAVE ALWAYS BEEN ABLE TO EVENTUALLY DEFUSE THE CRISIS AND RETURN SPACE/TIME TO ITS USUAL SHAPE, IN EACH INSTANCE THERE ARE LITTLE DIFFERENCES THAT TESTIFY TO THE IMPERFECTION OF THE "FIX." MANY OF THESE LITTLE CHANGES AFFECT THE SUPERHEROES THEMSELVES: AN INDIVIDUAL MAY FIND HERSELF YOUNGER THAN SHE WAS BEFORE THE CRISIS, WITH DIFFERENT POWERS, OR WITH A NEW SECRET IDENTITY. SOMETIMES A PERSON'S PAST IS REWRITTEN; SOMETIMES A PERSON SIMPLY CEASES TO EXIST.

SO IT WAS WITH TOMORROW MAN. WHATEVER THE SPECIFICS OF HIS ORDINARY LIFE, SOMEHOW IN ONE OF THESE CRISES HE WAS ERASED FROM HISTORY. IT WASN'T INTENTIONAL. IT WASN'T PERSONAL. HE WAS JUST A MINOR CHARACTER IN THE LARGER DRAMA WITH NO GREAT ROLE TO PLAY. WHEN THE HEROES PUT THE UNIVERSE BACK TOGETHER AGAIN, THEY DID THE BEST THEY COULD, BUT IT WAS A COMPLICATED TASK. TOMORROW MAN FELL THROUGH THE CRACKS. HE DIDN'T MAKE IT. HE NO LONGER HAD A PLACE IN THE RECONSTRUCTED WORLD.

WITHOUT A PLACE IN THE PRESENT, HE WAS EXILED TO THE FUTURE. HE FOUND HIMSELF STUCK EXACTLY ONE DAY AHEAD OF REGULAR TIME. WHILE EVERYONE ELSE WAS PARTYING ON NEW YEAR'S EVE, TOMORROW MAN WAS LIVING IN JANUARY 1ST. ALTHOUGH STUCK FOREVER IN TOMORROW, HE SAW THE WORLD AROUND HIM NOT AS HARD FACTS BUT AS AN INFINITE NUMBER OF POSSIBLE OUTCOMES BASED ON CHOICES WE HAD NOT YET MADE AND RANDOM FACTORS WE HAD NOT YET EXPERIENCED. HIS UNIQUE PERCEPTION OF TIME ALLOWED HIM TO INTERFERE IN THESE EVENTS, AND EVEN STEER THINGS A LITTLE THIS WAY OR THAT, ALLOWING HIM TO INFLUENCE OUR PRESENT ... ONE DAY AT A TIME. THE DOCTOR, THE SALESMAN, THE INVESTMENT BANKER, HAD BECOME TOMORROW MAN.

TOMORROW MAN CANNOT BE SEEN, DETECTED, OR EXPERIENCED BY ANYONE IN PRESENT TIME. TIME TRAVELERS DENY EVER HAVING MET HIM. THE RESEARCH DIVISION AT TIME MANAGEMENT INC. HAS PUBLISHED TEMPORAL THEOREMS THAT PROVE NOT ONLY THE EXISTENCE OF TOMORROW MAN, BUT THAT WHENEVER SOMEONE FROM OUR PRESENT TRAVELS TO THE FUTURE, TOMORROW MAN IS TEMPORARILY "BUMPED" THE SAME DISTANCE FARTHER AHEAD IN TIME. NO ONE CAN TELL IF THESE THEOREMS ARE IMPOSSIBLY COMPLEX OR SIMPLY WRONG, BUT MANY BELIEVE THAT TOMORROW MAN IS THERE, NONETHELESS.

WORLDS OF WONDER: WONDER CULTURE

(TOMORROW MAN CONT.)

WHEN A KIDNAPPER'S GUN JAMS THE INSTANT BEFORE HE SHOOTS A HOSTAGE, WHEN A DAMAGED PLANE MAKES A SUCCESSFUL LANDING DESPITE THE ODDS, WHEN A MURDERER SLIPS UP AND LEAVES BEHIND A CLUE THAT LEADS TO HIS ESCAPE, WHEN A SUPERHERO FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN A 9-TO-5 JOB AND DOING GOOD WINS MILLIONS IN THE LOTTERY IN THESE MINUTIA ARE THE FOOTPRINTS OF TOMORROW MAN TO BE FOUND. IT WAS HE WHO JAMMED THE GUN, WHO FIXED THE PLANE, WHO LEFT THE CLUE, WHO RIGGED THE LOTTERY. HE CAN'T SOLVE EVERY PROBLEM, SINCE HE DOES NOT HAVE INFINITE TIME. AFTER ALL, THERE'S A NEW TOMORROW EVERY 24 HOURS! ALL HE CAN DO IS HELP US AVOID THE WORST DISASTERS. BUT SOMETIMES HE SEES A CHANCE TO MAKE SOMETHING GOOD HAPPEN, AND HE TAKES IT. HE IS EVERY SUPERHERO'S GUARDIAN ANGEL.

EVERYONE AGREES THAT TOMORROW MAN MUST KNOW THE CURRENT DEBATE ABOUT HIS EXISTENCE, AND THAT HE COULD LEAVE A MESSAGE BEHIND. NO PROOF OF SUCH A MESSAGE HAS BEEN ACCEPTED BY THE PUBLIC. FOR NOW, AT LEAST, THE EXISTENCE OF TOMORROW MAN MUST REMAIN A MATTER OF FAITH.

"WHAT ARE YOU WEARING UNDER THERE?": WONDERWEAR

WONDERWEAR IS THE INDUSTRY LEADER IN THE FIELD OF SPECIALIZED WONDER PRODUCTS. THE COMPANY GOT ITS START IN THE MID-80S WHEN ENTREPRENEUR BILLY MAGNOLIA TEAMED WITH FASHION DESIGNER HAUTE PINK TO CREATE A LINE OF COSTUMES FOR WONDERS. MAGNOLIA HIRED A TEAM OF SCIENTISTS AND TASKED THEM WITH MAKING PINK'S RUNWAY DESIGNS INTO WORKABLE UNIFORMS THAT COULD RESIST EVERYTHING FROM COSMIC RAYS TO A RAMPAGING TYRANNOSAUR. PRODUCT DEVELOPERS COMBED THE SPECIALTY ELECTRONICS MARKET SEARCHING FOR ITEMS WHICH CRIMEFIGHTERS MIGHT FIND ATTRACTIVE. ADVERTISING WAS INSTANT AND AGGRESSIVE, BEGINNING WITH A BILLBOARD CAMPAIGN WHICH MADE THE COMPANY FAMOUS. IN THESE ADS, AN ATHLETIC, SEXY UNDERWEAR MODEL WAS DEPICTED PULLING OFF OUTER, CIVILIAN CLOTHES TO REVEAL A COSTUME UNDERNEATH. THE SLOGAN, "WHAT ARE YOU WEARING UNDER THERE?" CAUGHT ON QUICKLY. SEVERAL WONDERWEAR MODELS HAVE SINCE BECOME STARS, GOING ON TO SUCCESSFUL CAREERS IN THE FILM OR MUSIC INDUSTRIES.

THE BUSINESS PLAN FOR WONDERWEAR, HOWEVER, NEVER RELIED ON THE WONDER MARKET FOR SUCCESS. THE CUSTOM-MADE UNIFORMS WERE, AS EXPECTED, EXTREMELY EXPENSIVE, AND THE NUMBER OF CLIENTS WAS, RELATIVELY SPEAKING, SMALL. BUT WONDERWEAR STORES SPRUNG UP IN EXCLUSIVE SHOPPING VENUES AND THEN ONLINE, ALLOWING ORDINARY CONSUMERS TO PURCHASE THE SAME UTILITY BELTS, MINIATURIZED CAMERAS, AND GRAPPLE GUNS THAT WERE SOLD TO SUPER HEROES. OF COURSE, MASKING LAWS PROHIBITED THE OVER-THE-COUNTER SALE OF COSTUMES, BUT THE MATERIALS THAT WENT INTO THOSE UNIFORMS WERE SOON USED FOR A MYRIAD OF PRODUCTS INCLUDING BABY CLOTHES, SLEEPING BAGS, AND CAR-SEAT COVERS.

TWENTY FIVE YEARS LATER, THE COMPANY REMAINS A NICHE POWERHOUSE. AFTER GOING PUBLIC IN THE EARLY 1990S, WONDERWEAR'S BOARD HIRED A RECENTLY-RETIRED WONDER (AND MEDIA STAR) NAMED THE BLONDE BOMBSHELL TO BE THE COMPANY'S PUBLIC FACE. MARSHA PARKS REMAINS THE CEO TO THIS DAY. ALTHOUGH SHE CAN WIELD CONSIDERABLE INFORMAL PRESSURE, ESPECIALLY IN THE ARENA OF PUBLIC RELATIONS, PARKS HAS LIMITED INFLUENCE OVER THE DAY-TO-DAY OPERATIONS OF THE COMPANY, WHICH VESTS MOST POWER IN THE CONSENSUS OF THE BOARD. WONDERWEAR COOPERATES IN A CLOSE MARKETING PARTNERSHIP WITH THE PRODUCERS OF THE HIT SHOW, "WHO WANTS TO BE A WONDER?" WONDERS WHO ARE REGISTERED WITH NARWAL CAN PURCHASE WONDERWEAR USING CREDIT OR CHECK; ANONYMOUS WONDERS PAY CASH.

WORLDS OF WONDER: WONDER CULTURE

(WONDERWEAR CONT.)

COSTUMES:

TRADITIONALLY, WONDERWEAR SELLS ITS TRADEMARK UNIFORMS AT A LOSS. THIS PRESUMES THAT THE COMPANY CAN USE THE PURCHASER'S NAME AND IMAGE IN ADVERTISING. IN CASES WHERE THE COMPANY HAS NO SUCH DESIRE (BECAUSE THE CLIENT HAS A REPUTATION AS A CRIMINAL), OR IF THE PURCHASER REFUSES TO GIVE SUCH RIGHTS, THE PRICE OF THE COSTUME RISES SIGNIFICANTLY.

GAME MECHANICS:

WONDERWEAR IS DESIGNED TO SUIT THE POWERS OF THE WEARER. FIERY HEROES WILL HAVE CLOTHES THAT DO NOT BURN, INVISIBLE HEROES WILL FIND THEIR COSTUME ALSO TURNS INVISIBLE, AND SO ON. EACH UNIFORM IS CUSTOM-MADE AND WILL NOT MIMIC OTHER POWERS, BUT IF SOMEONE ELSE WITH POWERS SIMILAR TO THE ORIGINAL WEARER PUT ON THE COSTUME, IT WILL BEHAVE NORMALLY. (THAT IS, A SUIT MADE TO STRETCH WILL STILL STRETCH WHOEVER WEARS IT, BUT IF THE NEW WEARER CAN TURN TO LIQUID, THE NEW SUIT WILL NOT DO SO.) THE SUITS ARE DURABLE, MACHINE WASHABLE, AND SURPRISINGLY COMFORTABLE. WONDERWEAR SUITS DO NOT COME WITH ANY OTHER STANDARD FEATURES, BUT THE ADDITION OF ARMOR PLATES OR KEVLAR UNDERLINING IS COMMON, AND OTHER EXCEPTIONS ARE POSSIBLE.

IF YOU WANT TO REPRESENT YOUR WONDERWEAR UNIFORM IN GAME TERMS, TAKE THE "WHAT ARE YOU WEARING UNDER THERE?" QUALITY. YOU'D BE SURPRISED HOW USEFUL IT IS.

PERSONAL GEAR:

WONDERWEAR DOES NOT SELL GUNS OR EXPLOSIVES. OTHER THAN THIS, VIRTUALLY ANY OTHER PIECE OF EQUIPMENT IS AVAILABLE FROM THE COMPANY. THE MOST WELL-KNOWN ITEM IS THE WONDERWEAR UTILITY BELT, WHICH EMPHASIZES SURVEILLANCE AND SURVIVAL GEAR OVER WEAPONRY. IT INCLUDES A CUTTING TORCH, PEPPER SPRAY, SMOKE PELLETS, A MINI FIRE EXTINGUISHER, A REBREATHING APPARATUS FOR UNDERWATER OR TOXIC ENVIRONMENTS, A MULTI-TOOL, SOME MINI-TRACERS, TINY BINOCULARS, HANDCUFFS, A COMMLINK AND DIGITAL CAMERA. COMPARED TO THE HIGH COST OF THE CUSTOM-MADE CLOTHING, WONDERWEAR'S UTILITY BELTS AND OTHER OFFERINGS ARE RELATIVELY INEXPENSIVE; MOST ARE ACTUALLY PRODUCED BY OTHER COMMERCIAL FIRMS AND BOUGHT BY WONDERWEAR FOR RESALE. TAKE THE UTILITY BELT AS A QUALITY; IF YOU HAVE ONLY A FEW ITEMS FROM WONDERWEAR YOU MIGHT BE ABLE TO REPLICATE THAT WITH THE EQUIPMENT POWER (SEE THE FIRST VOLUME OF THE FIELD GUIDE TO SUPERHEROES)

OTHER EQUIPMENT:

WONDERWEAR DOES NOT BUILD HEADQUARTERS OR SELL CONSTRUCTS. THEY CAN PERFORM LIMITED CUSTOMIZATION OF A VEHICLE, INCLUDING THE INSTALLATION OF NON-WEAPON "MUNDANE" ITEMS, BUT REFER DEMANDING CUSTOMERS TO THE ROAD SCHOLAR.

SERVICES:

WONDERWEAR DOES A SMALL TRADE IN SERVICES CATERING TO THE WONDER MARKET. THESE INCLUDE THE WONDER-CARD (VISA, ACTUALLY, AND ALSO AVAILABLE TO CIVILIAN CUSTOMERS), LIABILITY INSURANCE, MARKETING CONSULTATION, AND MORE. ALL CLIENTS USING WONDERWEAR SERVICES MUST BE REGISTERED THROUGH NARWAL.

DESIGNATION OF OPEN GAME CONTENT

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