

VIGILANCE PRESS COMICS GROUP PROUDLY PRESENTS



THE FIELD GUIDE TO

SUPERHEROES!

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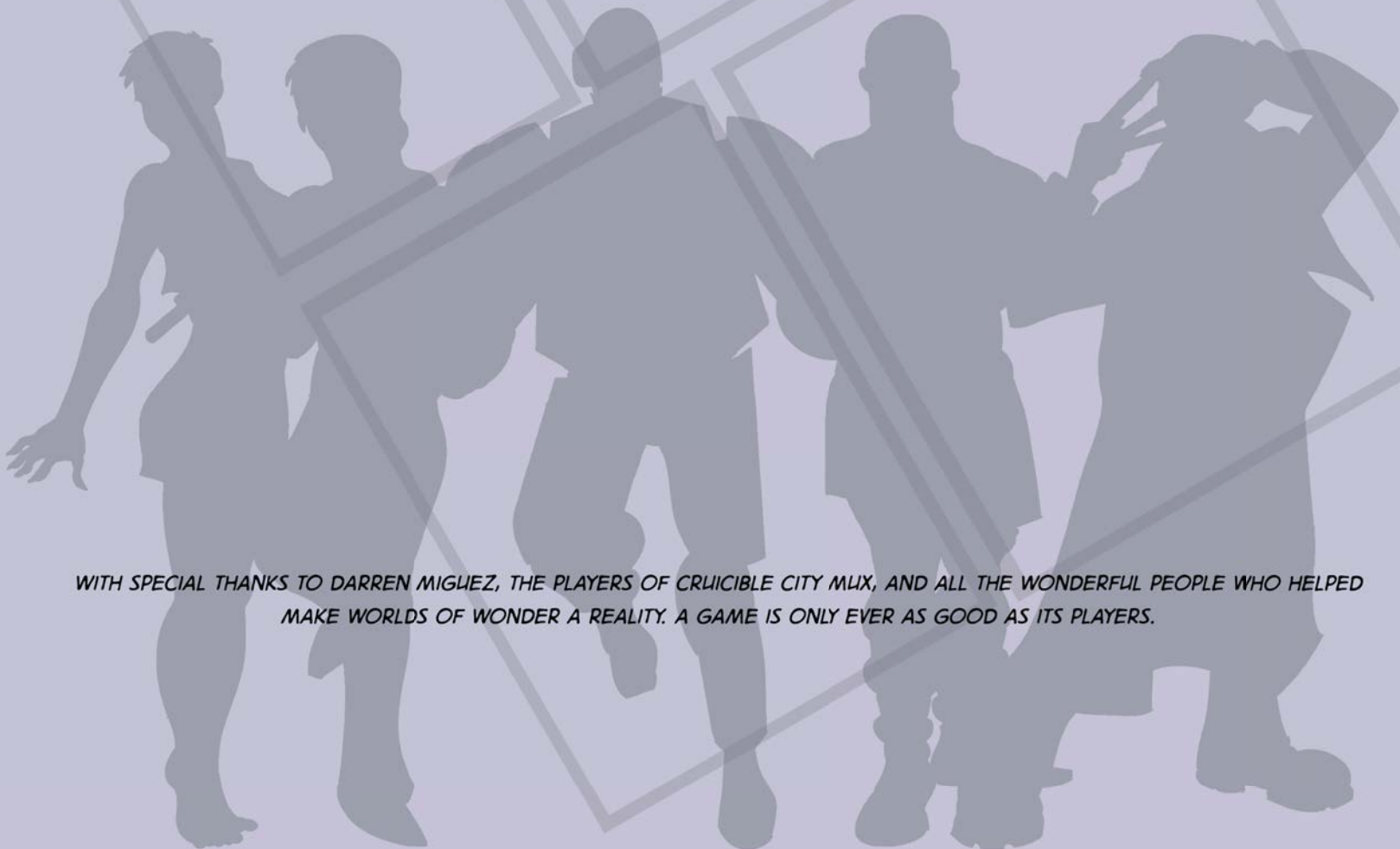


ICONS
SUPERPOWERED ROLEPLAYING
COMPATIBLE

VOLUME 3: FROM THE MAGICIAN TO THE PSYCHIC HERO

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WITH SPECIAL THANKS TO DARREN MIGUEZ, THE PLAYERS OF CRUCIBLE CITY MUX, AND ALL THE WONDERFUL PEOPLE WHO HELPED MAKE WORLDS OF WONDER A REALITY. A GAME IS ONLY EVER AS GOOD AS ITS PLAYERS.

INTRODUCTION



HORATIO: THIS IS WONDROUS STRANGE.
HAMLET: AND THEREFORE AS A STRANGER GIVE IT WELCOME.
 THERE ARE MORE THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH,
 HORATIO,
 THAN ARE DREAMT OF IN YOUR PHILOSOPHY.

HAMLET, ACT I SCENE V

WELCOME TO THE THIRD VOLUME OF THE FIELD GUIDE TO SUPERHEROES AND THE WORLDS OF WONDER SETTING. HERE WE PICK UP WHERE VOLUME TWO LEFT OFF, WITH TEN MORE SUPERHERO ARCHETYPES THAT HAVE BEEN PRESENT IN COMICS SINCE THE GOLDEN AGE. 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 YOU LIKE THE IDEA OF A PSYCHIC HERO, BUT YOU'RE NOT REALLY SURE HOW TO PUT THAT INTO PRACTICE. BESIDES THE FACT THAT THEY'RE PSYCHIC, WHAT DO PSYCHIC HEROES 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!

- 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 MONSTROUS HERO IS IDENTIFIABLE BECAUSE OF HIS MONSTROUS NATURE; THAT SAME CHARACTER COULD HAVE ALMOST ANY POWER, FROM FIRE BREATH TO POWER NULLIFICATION.
- SPECIALTIES IS OFTEN THE FINAL SECTION IN THE ARCHETYPE DISCUSSION. IT TOUCHES ON ALL THE SKILLS AND TALENTS WHICH A GIVEN ARCHETYPE IS LIKELY TO DISPLAY.
- NOT EVERY CHARACTER HAS STUNTS, BUT IF THE HERO DOES HAVE THEM, THEY ARE LISTED LAST. STUNTS ARE USUALLY SPECIALIZED APPLICATIONS OF A CHARACTER'S POWERS OR SKILLS. IN PLAY, MOST HEROES ACQUIRE STUNTS BY SPENDING A POINT OF DETERMINATION, BUT IF THE STUNT IS LISTED ON THE CHARACTER SHEET IT USUALLY DOESN'T REQUIRE DETERMINATION TO USE. THE HERO HAS USED THAT TRICK OFTEN ENOUGH THAT HE CAN RELY ON IT ALL THE TIME. FOR MORE ON STUNTS, SEE **PAGE 80** OF *ICONS*.

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 AND EXPANDED IN THE SECOND. YOU DON'T HAVE TO MAKE THESE INTO PLAYER CHARACTERS TO GET A USE OUT OF THEM; EACH CHARACTER COMES WITH MULTIPLE STORIES WHICH 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, THIS TIME FOCUSING ON SUPER-GROUPS. MANY OF THE HEROES IN THE FIELD GUIDE BELONG TO A SUPER-GROUP OF SOME KIND, SO THOSE GROUPS ARE DESCRIBED AND PRESENTED IN SUCH A WAY THAT YOU CAN USE THEM IN YOUR SETTING EVEN IF YOU DON'T USE THE REST OF WORLDS OF WONDER. IF YOU WANT YOUR HEROES TO JOIN A SUPER-GROUP WHICH ALREADY EXISTS, THESE MAKE SOLID CANDIDATES. ONE EASY WAY TO USE THESE GROUPS IS TO START YOUR SESSION OF *ICONS* AS ALL THE FAMOUS HEROES IN THE SUPER-GROUP QUIT! (THIS HAPPENS ALL THE TIME IN COMICS.) NATURALLY THE VILLAINS CHOOSE THIS MOMENT TO SPRING THEIR PLOT FOR TOTAL GLOBAL DOMINATION. THE SUPER-GROUP NEEDS AN ALL-NEW ROSTER, AND THAT'S WHERE THE PLAYERS COME IN.

WE HOPE YOU CONTINUE TO ENJOY 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 AND THE VIGILANCE PRESS PODCAST AT MIKELAFF.PODBEAN.COM, AND JASON TONDRO AT DOCTORCOMICS.BLOGSPOT.COM.

THE ARCHETYPES

THE MAGICIAN WIELDS VAST, AND OFTEN UNPREDICTABLE OR DANGEROUS, MAGICAL POWERS. HE IS CARETAKER OF SECRETS MAN WAS NOT MEANT TO KNOW.

THE MAN OF TOMORROW IS EITHER FROM THE FUTURE OR IS A HYPER-EVOLVED EXAMPLE OF WHAT MAN WILL BECOME THOUSANDS OF YEARS FROM NOW.

THE MASTER OF THE ATOM IS A WIELDER OF GREAT NUCLEAR-BASED POWER, WHICH MAKES HIM VERY DANGEROUS AND FEARED BY OTHERS.

A **MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS** MAY CONTROL ANY SIMPLE FORM OF ENERGY OR MATTER, SUCH AS FIRE, WEATHER, OR SOUND.

THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS HAS MADE HIMSELF INTO A LIVING WEAPON, USUALLY BY TRAVELING THE WORLD. HE MIGHT SPECIALIZE IN ONE HIDDEN ART FORM OR BE A MASTER OF MANY.

A **MINORITY HERO** IS A CHARACTER WHO, FIRST AND FOREMOST, REPRESENTS HIS SOCIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP. OTHERWISE, HE COULD BE ANY OTHER ARCHETYPE.

THE MONSTROUS HERO IS A FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER WHO IS HIDEOUS IN APPEARANCE BUT WANTS TO DO GOOD (OR AT LEAST BE LEFT ALONE).

THE MYTHIC HERO IS A CHARACTER FROM LEGEND WHO HAS EITHER SURVIVED TO THE MODERN DAY OR ELSE HAS BEEN REINCARNATED.

THE OCCULT HERO DRAWS HIS POWER FROM SUPERNATURAL FORCES, OFTEN DIABOLICAL IN NATURE. HE MAY EVEN BE A VAMPIRE, WEREWOLF, OR DEMON.

THE PSYCHIC HERO CAN TAP THE VAST POWERS OF THE HUMAN BRAIN, ALLOWING HIM TO READ MINDS, MOVE OBJECTS WITH A THOUGHT, OR ACCESS OTHER, MORE OBVIOUSLY DANGEROUS, ABILITIES.



MAGICIAN

THE MAGICIAN IS A SORCERER AND CARETAKER OF TERRIBLE KNOWLEDGE. TO PROTECT MANKIND FROM THREATS BOTH OF THIS WORLD AND OF OTHER DIMENSIONS, HE WIELDS VAST POWERS. AN ALTERNATE FORM IS THE STAGE MAGICIAN, WHO PROBES MYSTERIES AND MURDER WITH ONLY HIS MATCHLESS INTELLECT AND KNOWLEDGE OF STAGE ILLUSIONS.

EXAMPLES: DOCTOR FATE, DOCTOR STRANGE, IBIS THE INVINCIBLE, JOHN CONSTANTINE, SCARLET WITCH, ZATANNA

RELATED ARCHETYPES: DARK AVENGER, EMBODIMENT, OCCULT HERO

QUALITIES & CHALLENGES: THE MAGICIAN IS A FIGURE OF MYSTERY, SLIDING IN AND OUT OF PEOPLE'S LIVES WITH LITTLE EXPLANATION, DOING HIS WORK AND DEPARTING. HE IS TASKED WITH KEEPING EARTH, HUMANITY, AND THE UNIVERSE ITSELF SAFE FROM MIND-BENDING FORCES OF EVIL AND CHAOS WHICH ARE USUALLY HOUSED IN OTHER DIMENSIONS BUT SOMETIMES LOCKED UP UNDER THE EARTH, IN VOLCANOES, OR UNDERSEA. BUT HE NEVER REVEALS THIS INFORMATION TO ORDINARY MORTALS, WHO ARE NOT READY FOR THE TRUTH. OFTEN THE MAGICIAN KEEPS SECRETS EVEN FROM HIS OWN TEAMMATES; IF HE IS THE LEADER, HE WILL GIVE INSTRUCTIONS WITHOUT INFORMING HIS ALLIES OF THE OVERALL PLAN. HE MAY EVEN USE HIS POWERS IN WAYS WHICH ARE OF DUBIOUS ETHICS; HE MIGHT WIPE THE MEMORY OF BYSTANDERS, VILLAINS, OR EVEN OTHER HEROES TO REMOVE "DANGEROUS" KNOWLEDGE. THE SIDE EFFECTS OF THESE ALTERATIONS CAN RANGE FROM TRIVIAL AND HUMOROUS TO TRAGIC AND CATASTROPHIC.

SOMETIMES THE MAGICIAN IS ONLY AN AGENT OF GREATER COSMIC POWERS, A TRAIT HE SHARES WITH THE EMBODIMENT. THIS CAN MANIFEST AS CHALLENGES LIKE "PAWN OF THE LORDS OF ORDER" OR "DUTY-BOUND TO PROTECT EARTH". IF HE DOES HAVE SOME SPECIFIC TITLE OR ROLE IN THE MYSTICAL UNIVERSE, HE MAY HAVE TO PERIODICALLY COMPETE FOR OR RENEW THAT OBLIGATION, LEADING TO STORIES IN WHICH HE MUST BATTLE OTHER GOOD-HEARTED MYSTICS FOR THE RIGHT TO BE THE WORLD'S PROTECTOR, OR STORIES IN WHICH HE FAILS IN THESE TESTS AND IS TEMPORARILY REPLACED BY ANOTHER, LESS PREPARED OR LESS VIRTUOUS, CANDIDATE. THE MAGICIAN OFTEN WIELDS MAGICAL TOOLS OR WEAPONS WHICH SUPPLEMENT HIS PRIMARY POWER, WHICH IS A LEARNED SKILL AND NOT DEPENDENT ON ANY DEVICE. HE WILL HAVE A HIDDEN SANCTUM WHERE HE CAN RETREAT TO MEDITATE, MONITOR HIS MANY ENEMIES USING FAR-SEEING SPELLS, AND KEEP DANGEROUS ARTIFACTS AND RELICS UNDER TIGHT LOCK AND KEY.

MANY OF THE MAGICIAN'S ENEMIES WILL BE EXTRA-DIMENSIONAL INVADERS AND BEINGS WHO ARE JUST PLAIN WEIRD. THOSE HUMAN BEINGS WHOM HE FIGHTS WILL TYPICALLY BE RIVAL MAGICIANS OR SORCERERS FROM THE DARK PATH; OCCULT MONSTERS SUCH AS THE UBIQUITOUS VAMPIRE MENACE ARE ALSO COMMON FOES. BECAUSE THE MAGICIAN STANDS ALOOF FROM HEAVEN OR HELL, HE CAN ATTRACT THE ANGER OF SUPPOSEDLY "GOOD" FORCES LIKE ANGELS, WHO USUALLY END UP MORE INTERESTED IN THEIR PERSONAL OBSESSION THAN IN DOING GOOD WORK ON EARTH.

AN APPRENTICE IS A TRADITIONAL SUPPORTING CAST MEMBER FOR THE MAGICIAN, AND THE APPRENTICE CAN FULFILL MANY OF THE DUTIES OF A SIDEKICK. THE CHALLENGE IS MAKING THE APPRENTICE SUITABLY DIFFERENT THAN THE MAGICIAN HIMSELF, SO THAT THE SIDEKICK IS NOT MERELY A WEAKER VERSION OF THE HERO BUT, INSTEAD, SOMEONE WITH HIS OR HER OWN TALENTS AND SPECIALTIES. THE APPRENTICE MAY BE A VISITOR FROM ANOTHER, MYSTIC, DIMENSION, OR A MORTAL WHOSE PRACTICAL SKILLS NICELY COMPLEMENT THE MAGICIAN'S LOFTIER, MORE THEORETICAL, APPROACH.

MAGICIAN

FINALLY, THINK ABOUT YOUR MAGICIAN'S STYLE. THAT IS, WHAT SORT OF MAGIC DOES YOUR MAGICIAN PRACTICE? MOST COMIC BOOK MAGICIANS CAN IDENTIFY REAL-WORLD MAGICAL STYLES LIKE VODOO OR RITUAL THAUMATURGY WHEN NECESSARY, BUT THEY ACTUALLY PRACTICE A FAR FLASHIER KIND OF MAGIC, VAGUELY EASTERN IN ORIGIN AND DISTINGUISHED BY BOTH ALLITERATIVE INCANTATIONS AND WILD SPECIAL EFFECTS. ELEMENTAL AND "CHAOS MAGIC" ARE ALSO COMMON THEMES. THE STYLE OF YOUR MAGIC WILL DETERMINE THE LIMITS OF YOUR MAGIC; WHAT CAN'T YOU DO? THIS IS TERRIBLY IMPORTANT NOT ONLY FOR YOU BUT FOR THE NARRATOR AND OTHER PLAYERS. A PLAYER MAGICIAN WHO CAN DUPLICATE EVERY POWER IN THE BOOK RISKS OVERSHADOWING THE OTHER PLAYER CHARACTERS WHO ARE STUCK WITH A LIMITED ARSENAL. GIVING YOURSELF "BLIND SPOTS" CREATES OPENINGS FOR YOUR TEAMMATES TO SHINE. AND THE AWESOME POWER OF THE MAGICIAN IS ALWAYS BALANCED BY THE FACT THAT HE IS VULNERABLE TO A SIMPLE BONK ON THE HEAD.

POWERS:

WIZARDRY IS THE OBVIOUS CHOICE, BUT MOST POWERS CAN BE EXPLAINED BY MAGIC. COMIC BOOK WIZARDS CANNOT USUALLY HEAL OTHERS, AND ASIDE FROM CHANGING INTO THE OCCASIONAL ANIMAL THEY ALSO AVOID POWERS WHICH ALTER THEIR OWN BODY (GROWTH, STRETCHING, ALTERNATE FORM). USE ASTRAL PROJECTION INSTEAD OF PHASING OR INVISIBILITY. CONTROL, MENTAL, SENSORY AND ATTACK POWERS ARE YOUR SPECIALTY, BUT YOU WON'T BE ABLE TO SELECT AS MANY AS YOU WANT, SO WILL NEED TO RELY ON STUNTS INSTEAD. YOU PROBABLY FLY OR TELEPORT. STAGE MAGICIANS USUALLY HAVE NO POWERS AT ALL.

SPECIALTIES:

OCCULT IS A MUST. IF YOUR INTELLECT IS NOT ESPECIALLY HIGH, CONSIDER BECOMING AN EXPERT OR MASTER TO ENSURE YOU ARE THE BEST IN THE TEAM WHEN IT COMES TO MATTERS ARCAINE. NOTHING IS MORE EMBARRASSING THAN WHEN THE TEAM GADGET GUY BEATS YOUR OCCULT ROLL. OTHERWISE, MARTIAL ARTS, INVESTIGATION, LANGUAGES, MENTAL RESISTANCE AND POWER (WIZARDRY) ARE ALL LIKELY CHOICES. STAGE MAGICIANS WILL ADD PERFORMANCE, SLEIGHT OF HAND AND STEALTH.

STUNTS:

MAGICIANS ARE FAMOUS FOR INVENTING NEW SPELLS ALL THE TIME AND YOU WILL REPLICATE THIS WHEN YOU CREATE NEW ATTACK, SENSORY OR CONTROL POWERS DESIGNED TO EXPLOIT THE VILLAIN'S WEAKNESS. EACH NEW SPELL HAS A CLEVER AND ALLITERATIVE NAME. KEEP CAREFUL RECORD OF THESE SPELLS, HOWEVER, AND BRING THEM BACK OUT IN LATER STORIES. THIS WILL SLOWLY CREATE A MAGICAL COSMOLOGY PEOPLED WITH ENTITIES, PLACES, AND FORCES WHICH YOU HAVE NAMED IN YOUR SPELLS AND WHICH YOU - OR THE NARRATOR - NOW NEED TO EXPLAIN.

BECAUSE YOU RELY SO HEAVILY ON STUNTS YOU WILL NEED A LOT OF DETERMINATION. UNLESS YOU FEEL LIKE STEALING ALL THE DETERMINATION IN THE TEAM POOL, YOU ARE PROBABLY GOING TO BE OFFERING UP A LOT OF CHALLENGES TO THE NARRATOR. TRY TO OFFER UP CHALLENGES WHICH DO NOT DERAIL THE NARRATOR'S CURRENT PLOT AND WHICH, INSTEAD, SET UP FUTURE STORIES OR WHICH HAVE SERIOUS SIDE-EFFECTS RIGHT NOW IN THE CURRENT FIGHT. FOR EXAMPLE, RATHER THAN INTERRUPTING THE CURRENT FIGHT WITH THE SUDDEN ARRIVAL OF YOUR ARCH-ENEMY, PERHAPS INSTEAD YOU CALL UPON THE POWER OF AN ARTIFACT YOU HAVE HIDDEN IN THE FOLDS OF YOUR CLOAK, AND IF YOU FAIL WITH THE SPELL, THE DEMON BOUND INTO THE ARTIFACT ESCAPES INTO SOME REMOTE PART OF THE WORLD. YOU CAN'T CHASE HIM RIGHT NOW, BUT YOU CAN PROBABLY DO IT NEXT SESSION.

ABILITIES

IF YOU ARE USING THE TRADITIONAL VERSION OF WIZARDRY, YOUR MAGICIAN WILL HAVE A SUPERHUMAN WILLPOWER. BUT THIS CAN RESULT IN HEROES WHO ARE FAR MORE RESILIENT AND TOUGH THAN THEIR COMIC BOOK INSPIRATIONS. INSTEAD, CONSIDER LINKING YOUR WIZARDRY TO AWARENESS OR INTELLECT. THE FORMER WILL ALSO MAKE YOU AN EXPERT INVESTIGATOR, ABLE TO NOTICE CLUES AND FOLLOW LEADS; THIS IS A GOOD FIT FOR THE STAGE MAGICIAN HERO. A HIGH INTELLECT WILL MAKE YOU A MASTER OF ALL KINDS OF LORE; YOU WILL ALSO BE A GOOD SCIENTIST, WHICH WILL SEEM OUT OF CHARACTER, BUT THERE ARE PLENTY OF DOCTORS AND FORMER-MEN-OF-SCIENCE WHO HAVE BECOME MAGICIANS, SO YOU SHOULD BE FINE. PROWESS CAN BE SURPRISINGLY HIGH, SINCE YOU WERE PROBABLY INSTRUCTED IN SECRET MARTIAL ARTS TECHNIQUES BY YOUR TIBETAN MASTERS. BUT WHEN WE SAY "HIGH" WE MEAN 4 OR 5, STILL WITHIN HUMAN LEVELS. STRENGTH IS ALMOST CERTAINLY YOUR LOWEST ABILITY.

MONA LISA

FIRST APPEARANCE: CITY OF WHISPERS #1

ARCHETYPES: MAGICIAN, OCCULT HERO

QUALITIES: RITUAL MAGICIAN, HAUNTING BEAUTY, EX-FRIENDS IN EVERY CITY

CHALLENGES: "DON'T I KNOW YOU?", LEAVES TRAGEDY IN HER WAKE, TRAPPED IN THE MARGINS

PROWESS 4

COORDINATION 4

STRENGTH 3

INTELLECT 5

AWARENESS 9

WILLPOWER 9

DETERMINATION 3

STAMINA 12



POWERS:

BLAST 4

SPECIALTIES:

ART (PAINTING, SCULPTURE), INVESTIGATION EXPERT, LANGUAGES MASTER, LEADERSHIP, OCCULT MASTER, STEALTH EXPERT

ORIGIN

"I GUESS YOU COULD SAY I AM *SFUMATO*, LIVING IN SMOKE."

TO THOSE WHO HAVE MET HER, SHE IS UNFORGETTABLE, BUT EVEN THOSE WHO HAVE LOVED HER FOR YEARS KNOW ALMOST NOTHING ABOUT HER. MONA LISA - EVERYONE PRESUMES IT IS NOT HER REAL NAME, BUT NO PREVIOUS IDENTITY CAN BE DISCOVERED - IS AN OCCULT DETECTIVE, RITUAL MAGICIAN, AND WORLD TRAVELER. AN ART CONNOISSEUR AND BON VIVANT, SHE SEEMS TO HAVE CONTACTS EVERYWHERE; MANY OF THESE CONTACTS ARE FORMER FRIENDS OR LOVERS WHO HAVE BEEN BETRAYED OR ABANDONED BY HER AFTER BEING DRAWN INTO HER OCCULT LIFE. BUT MONA'S WORK IS TOO IMPORTANT TO LET OLD GRUDGES, MISTREATMENT, AND NEGLECT GET IN THE WAY. WHEN SHE COMES TO YOU ASKING FOR HELP BECAUSE A NEED DEMON HAS GOTTEN LOOSE AND IS BEING SPREAD THROUGH THE CITY BY A CLEVER JINGLE, BECAUSE TRENCHCOAT-CLAD SOLDIERS OF THE WORLD SERPENT ARE TURNING THE RESERVOIR TO POISON, OR BECAUSE THE SEALS ARE BEING BROKEN AND ARMAGEDDON IS RIGHT AROUND THE CORNER, LITTLE THINGS LIKE

MONA LISA

BROKEN PROMISES AND THE FACT SHE "FORGOT" TO CALL FOR THE LAST SIX MONTHS MUST BE SET ASIDE. EVEN THE THREAT OF ATTRACTING THE ATTENTION OF THINGS MAN WAS NOT MEANT TO KNOW CAN BE IGNORED FOR A WHILE ... BUT WHEN THOSE THINGS COME CALLING, SOMEHOW MONA IS ALWAYS SOMEWHERE ELSE AND THOSE CLOSEST TO HER ARE LEFT BEHIND TO PAY THE BILL.

IN HER CONSTANT TRAVELS AROUND THE WORLD, MONA HAS PICKED UP COUNTLESS TRICKS OF RITUAL MAGIC FROM TEACHERS, OLD TOMES, AND INTUITIVE GUESSWORK. SHE SPEAKS OVER A DOZEN LANGUAGES AND CAN WORK MAGIC IN ALMOST EVERY HUMAN TRADITION, THOUGH HER WORKINGS ALWAYS REQUIRE LABORIOUS RITUALS, HIGHLY SPECIFIC COMPONENTS, AND OFTEN A PRECISE COMBINATION OF TIMING, OCCULT LOCALE, AND UNDISTURBED CONCENTRATION. WHILE CERTAINLY ONE OF THE WORLD'S EXPERTS IN SUCH CEREMONIAL MATTERS, SHE IS THE FIRST TO ADMIT THAT SUCH MAGIC IS EXTREMELY DANGEROUS AND HAS UNEXPECTED AND OFTEN TRAGIC CONSEQUENCES. MONA HONESTLY TRIES NOT TO INVOLVE OTHERS IN HER WORK, BUT THE FOES SHE FACES CANNOT BE FACED ALONE AND NO ONE PERSON COULD POSSIBLY MASTER ALL THE SKILLS REQUIRED, ESPECIALLY WHEN MYSTIC ENEMIES ARE BEST THWARTED BY NON-MYSTIC MEANS. IN THE PURSUIT OF HER CASES, MONA INEVITABLY REQUIRES THE HELP OF HACKERS, THIEVES, CONMEN, FENCES AND, YES, EVEN THE OCCASIONAL POLICE OFFICER. WHEN THESE INNOCENTS ARE DRAWN INTO HER WEB OF OCCULT MYSTERY AND FAUSTIAN BARGAINS, THEY PAY THE PRICE. FOR HER PART, MONA ALWAYS MANAGES TO FIND THE EXIT IN TIME.

MONA'S SOUL HAS BEEN SCORCHED BY ALL THE FRIENDS AND LOVERS WHO HAVE BEEN BURNED HELPING HER SAVE THE WORLD, BUT HER INSCRUTABLE SMILE AND CASUALLY MYSTERIOUS AIR MAKES IT IMPOSSIBLE FOR OTHERS TO RECOGNIZE THE MELANCHOLY WHICH HAUNTS HER. SHE TRIES NOT TO CONFESS THE TRUTH BECAUSE, WHEN SHE DOES, HER NEW CONFIDANT IS INEVITABLY DRAWN INTO HER TRAGIC WRECK OF A LIFE AND PAYS THE PRICE.

APPEARANCE:

MONA IS NOT A SUPERHERO IN THE TRADITIONAL SENSE. RATHER, SHE IS A FIRM MEMBER OF THE TRENCHCOAT BRIGADE, ONE OF THOSE SUPER-COOL INVESTIGATORS WHO WALKS ALWAYS IN THE SHADOWS, SURROUNDED BY A CIRCLE OF SMOKE. SHE HAS AN UNCANNY RESEMBLANCE TO THE FAMOUS PAINTING BUT IS, IF ANYTHING, MORE SENSUAL AND BEAUTIFUL. SHE LIKES WIDE-BRIMMED HATS, LONG FULL SKIRTS, AND EUROPEAN CIGARETTES.

ABILITIES

MONA IS A RITUAL MAGICIAN. SHE CANNOT THROW FIREBALLS, TURN INVISIBLE, OR TELEPORT ACROSS SPACE AND TIME. BUT, GIVEN ENOUGH TIME AND THE RIGHT ENVIRONMENT, SHE COULD SUMMON A DEMON, HAUNT AN ENEMY'S SLEEP WITH VIVID NIGHTMARES, OR DRAW IN A THUNDERSTORM WHICH MIGHT OTHERWISE MISS THE CITY. THE LIMITS OF HER MAGIC ARE REALLY UP TO THE NARRATOR AND THE PLAYER TO DETERMINE, BUT EACH WORKING OF RITUAL MAGIC SHOULD REQUIRE A POINT OF DETERMINATION. IF THE STORY REQUIRES CASTING A CERTAIN RITUAL OUT OF A DUSTY OLD TOME, MONA CAN DO CERTAINLY DO IT.

OTHERWISE, MONA IS INCREDIBLY OBSERVANT AND STRONG-WILLED, A CONSEQUENCE OF MANY BATTLES WITH INCARNATE EVIL AND A FEW STARE-DOWNS WITH THE DEVIL HIMSELF. FEW THINGS ESCAPE HER NOTICE, AND SHE IS SO BEAUTIFUL, SO IMPOSSIBLY CHARISMATIC, THAT FEW CAN RESIST HER ALLURE. SHE CARRIES A GUN, FOR EMERGENCIES, BUT IT'S REALLY JUST A TOKEN AND SHE USES IT TO THREATEN ORDINARY PEOPLE, NOT TO FIGHT MONSTERS.

MONA LISA

STORIES

WHEN MONA LISA ENTERS A STORY, IT MEANS TWO THINGS. FIRST, THE STORY IS ABOUT THE OCCULT. AND SECOND, THE HEROES ARE ABOUT TO BE REALLY SORRY THEY MET HER.

ONE OF THE HEROES MEETS MONA IN HIS SECRET IDENTITY, PERHAPS AT AN ART EXHIBIT OR SOME OTHER SOCIAL OCCASION. THOSE CHARITY EVENTS THROWN BY MAYORS OR WEALTHY PHILANTHROPISTS MAKE GOOD CANDIDATES. THERE'S SOMETHING STRANGE ABOUT HER, AND THE HERO NATURALLY INVESTIGATES, PERHAPS TAILING HER TO AN ABANDONED WAREHOUSE OR SPOTTING THE CULTISTS WHICH HANG OUT AROUND HER APARTMENT IN PREPARATION FOR AMBUSH. DRAW THIS OUT LONG ENOUGH FOR AN EMOTIONAL ATTACHMENT TO BE ESTABLISHED BEFORE THE HEROES STUMBLE ACROSS SOME OTHER SEEMINGLY-UNRELATED EVENT IN WHICH MONA HAS ALWAYS BEEN INVOLVED WITHOUT THEIR KNOWLEDGE. MONA THUS SERVES TO BRING TWO DIFFERENT PLOTS TOGETHER AND, ONCE EVERYONE IS IN THE SAME ROOM, SHE REVEALS WHAT IS REALLY GOING ON: SOMETHING FAR WORSE THAN WHAT THE PLAYERS EXPECTED. TO PREVENT OCCULT DISASTER, ONE OF THE HEROES MUST BE POSSESSED BY A DEMON, OR SOME INNOCENT VICTIM IS GOING TO GET PASTED, OR SOME OTHER AWFUL THING WILL HAPPEN. NATURALLY MONA DOES NOT REVEAL THIS, AND WHEN THE DUST SETTLES SHE JUSTIFIABLY IS BLAMED FOR DECEIT AND MANIPULATION. BUT FOR MONA, THE ENDS JUSTIFY THE MEANS, AND THERE WAS NO OTHER WAY. SHE TRIED TO KEEP HIM OUT OF IT.

MONA'S PAST HAS BEEN LEFT DELIBERATELY BLANK, BUT YOU CAN THREATEN HER WITH IT REGARDLESS. PERHAPS SICILIANS SHOW UP AND SEEM TO RECOGNIZE HER; RATHER THAN MAINTAINING HER USUAL COOL FACADE, SHE FREAKS OUT AND RUNS FOR IT. THE TRICK TO A MENACE OF THIS SORT IS TO KEEP IT MUNDANE AND FAR AWAY FROM MYSTICAL MATTERS. THERE AREN'T MANY OCCULT PROBLEMS THAT MONA CAN'T CON HER WAY OUT OF, BUT THE SIMPLE EXPEDIENT OF AN ABUSIVE HUSBAND, BLOOD-THIRSTY EX-LOVER, OR DEMANDING PARENT CAN TURN OUT TO BE MORE THAN SHE CAN HANDLE. THAT, OF COURSE, IS WHERE THE PLAYER CHARACTERS COME IN.

MONA IS A GREAT CHARACTER TO USE WHEN THE NARRATOR NEEDS TO REVEAL OCCULT INFORMATION TO A PLAYER, SUCH AS HIS OR HER SECRET ORIGIN OR THE FACT THAT YOUR HERO'S DEMONIC FATHER IS INVADING THE WORLD TONIGHT. IN THIS, SHE FILLS MUCH THE SAME ROLE AS MISTER Y, BUT WHERE Y LENDS HIMSELF TO COSMIC LEVEL SUPERHEROICS, MONA IS ALL ABOUT MORTAL PROBLEMS, FRAILTY, AND HORROR. SHE IS, IF YOU WILL, THE "VERTIGO VERSION" OF MISTER Y, AND THAT ALSO MEANS SHE WORKS BETTER WHEN YOU WANT TO EMPHASIZE CHARACTER INTERACTION AND PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS OVER FANTASY AND THE ROLLING OF DICE.

MAN OF TOMORROW

THE MAN OF TOMORROW IS USUALLY FROM THE FUTURE, BUT HE MIGHT JUST REPRESENT WHAT MANKIND WILL EVOLVE INTO, SHOULD THE SPECIES SURVIVE LONG ENOUGH. HE IS A PRODUCT OF SCIENCE FICTION, WITH PSIONIC POWERS OR AN ARSENAL OF ADVANCED WEAPONRY.

EXAMPLES: BISHOP, BOOSTER GOLD, CAPTAIN COMET, DOCTOR TOMORROW, RACHEL SUMMERS, RAGGED ROBIN, SAMARITAN

RELATED ARCHETYPES: ASTRONAUT, GADGET GUY, PSYCHIC HERO

QUALITIES & CHALLENGES: IF THE MAN OF TOMORROW IS ACTUALLY FROM THE FUTURE, HE IS TASKED WITH EITHER PREVENTING OR SAFEGUARDING HIS OWN TIMELINE. HIS PERSONALITY DEPENDS GREATLY ON THIS DICHOTOMY. A HERO WHO IS FROM AN IDYLIC FUTURE TIME WILL PRIZE IT OVER THE PRESENT, LEADING HIM TO SEE PRESENT-DAY PEOPLE AS HISTORICAL FIGURES AND NOT REAL INDIVIDUALS. HE DISREGARDS LAWS AND SOCIAL CUSTOMS BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN "OUTGROWN" IN HIS FUTURE WORLD. HE WILL BE CRITICAL OF FAILINGS IN OUR OWN SOCIETY, PERHAPS CONSIDERING US UNCIVILIZED AND BARBARIC. THIS KIND OF HERO CAN BECOME COMIC RELIEF BECAUSE HIS MISCONCEPTIONS ABOUT OUR PRESENT LEAD HIM TO RIDICULOUS BEHAVIOR WHEN HE TRIES TO, FOR EXAMPLE, USE PROFANITY OR MAKE CULTURAL REFERENCES.

HOWEVER, IF THE FUTURE IS A TERRIBLE PLACE, THE MAN OF TOMORROW WILL CHERISH THE PRESENT. THIS IS HIS CHANCE TO PREVENT DISASTER, AND HE WILL DO ANYTHING TO KEEP THE TERRIBLE EVENTS OF HIS OWN FUTURE FROM COMING TO PASS. OTHER HEROES WILL BE REVERED AS LEGENDS. EVERY LITTLE THING ABOUT OUR WORLD WILL BE SEEN BY THE TIME-TRAVELER AS SOMETHING WE TAKE FOR GRANTED AND WILL NOT APPRECIATE FULLY UNTIL IT IS GONE. IN CONTRAST TO THE "IDYLIC" VERSION OF THE MAN OF TOMORROW, THIS DARKER VERSION OF THE ARCHETYPE CAN TURN INTO A DARK AVENGER; HE HAS FEW COMPUNCTIONS AGAINST KILLING SINCE, IN HIS FUTURE, EVERYONE HE KNOWS IS ALREADY DEAD.

REGARDLESS OF THE FUTURE HE COMES FROM, THE MAN OF TOMORROW WILL HAVE LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE. OFTEN RECORDS OF THE PAST HAVE BEEN DESTROYED OR LOST, WHICH IS CONVENIENT SINCE A PLAYER CHARACTER WHO KNOWS HOW THE ADVENTURE IS GOING TO PROCEED MAKES THINGS PRETTY BORING INDEED. IN FACT, THE MAN OF TOMORROW'S OWN ACTIONS MAKE THE FUTURE LESS AND LESS PREDICTABLE, SO EVENTS HE EXPECTS SOMETIMES NEVER HAPPEN OR TURN OUT QUITE DIFFERENTLY THAN HE ANTICIPATED. THE MAN OF TOMORROW WILL KEEP SECRETS FROM HIS NEW FRIENDS IN THE PRESENT; OFTEN HE KNOWS TERRIBLE THINGS THAT HAPPEN TO THESE PEOPLE IN THE FUTURE, OR EVEN TERRIBLE ACTS WHICH THEY PERFORM! HE MAY HAVE A PERSONAL CRIME WHICH HE IS TRYING TO ATONE FOR. SOMETIMES THE MAN OF TOMORROW IS THE PERSON ACTUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE AWFUL FUTURE HE IS TRYING TO PREVENT, BUT HE KEEPS THIS SECRET UNTIL HIS NEW FRIENDS DISCOVER IT, LEADING TO ALIENATION AND MISTRUST. THE MAN OF TOMORROW MAY HAVE RELICS FROM THE FUTURE - COMPUTER DATABASES, SUPER-WEAPONS, OR A SPORTS ALMANAC - WHICH HE MUST KEEP OUT OF THE HANDS OF PRESENT-DAY ENEMIES, LEST ITS KNOWLEDGE RUIN THE SPACE/TIME CONTINUUM.

THE MAN OF TOMORROW IS PURSUED THROUGH TIME BY MANY ENEMIES. IF HIS FUTURE IS AN IDYLIC PARADISE, THESE TIME POLICE ARE CHARGED WITH KEEPING THE PAST SAFE AND SECURE AND THEY RESENT HIS RECKLESS GALAVANTING THROUGH HISTORY. THEY SEEK TO APPREHEND HIM AND RETURN HIM TO HIS HOME TIME, PERHAPS AFTER WIPING NOT ONLY HIS MEMORY BUT THOSE WHO HAVE COME INTO CONTACT WITH HIM. BUT IF THE FUTURE IS A TERRIBLE PLACE, THE MAN OF TOMORROW IS PURSUED BY CRUEL AND PITILESS STORMTROOPERS WHO ARE SOLDIERS IN THAT FUTURE. THESE FOES ARE OFTEN EVIL AND OLDER VERSIONS OF PRESENT DAY HEROES, TWISTED BY THE TERRIBLE THINGS THEY HAVE HAD TO ENDURE IN THE FUTURE, OR THEY ARE CHILDREN OF PRESENT DAY HEROES, NOT RECOGNIZED AT FIRST BUT EVENTUALLY REVEALED AT A MOMENT OF PROPER PATHOS.

MAN OF TOMORROW

THE "EVOLVED" VERSION OF THE MAN OF TOMORROW ARCHETYPE IS FROM OUR CURRENT TIME BUT HE REPRESENTS MAN'S POTENTIAL. HE MAY BE GENETICALLY ENGINEERED TO BE AN "IDEAL HUMAN" OR HE USES "100% OF HIS BRAIN'S CAPACITY." WITH HIS INCREDIBLE INTELLECT AND PEERLESS PHYSICAL ABILITIES - WHICH ARE BEYOND CURRENT HUMAN CAPABILITIES BUT STILL REMOTELY PLAUSIBLE- HE FORGES NEW TECHNOLOGIES, BUILDS NEW SOCIETIES, AND LEADS MANKIND INTO A NEW ERA. THIS VERSION OF THE MAN OF TOMORROW IS ALL ABOUT TRANSCENDING MAN'S CURRENT LIMITATIONS; HE IS A MASTER OF PERPENDICULAR LOGIC, OF ADAPTING TO HIS ENEMY'S OLD-FASHIONED STRATEGIES, AND STAYING THREE STEPS AHEAD OF HIS FOES.

ABILITIES:

THE MAN OF TOMORROW WILL HAVE MANY ABILITIES IN THE 5-6 RANGE, AT THE LIMIT OF HUMAN POTENTIAL BUT NOT QUITE SUPERHUMAN. IF HE HAS A SCORE OF 7 OR MORE, IT IS PROBABLY INTELLECT, WILLPOWER, OR PROWESS.

SPECIALTIES:

SCIENCE FICTION SKILLS LIKE COMPUTERS, ELECTRONICS, MEDICINE AND SCIENCE ARE COMMON FOR MEN OF TOMORROW, BUT IN MANY WAYS IT IS LESS ABOUT SPECIFIC SKILLS AND MORE ABOUT TAKING THAT SKILL INTO THE FUTURE. IN OTHER WORDS, WHATEVER THE MAN OF TOMORROW HAPPENS TO BE GOOD AT, BE IT MARTIAL ARTS, PERFORMANCE, OR MILITARY, HIS VERSION OF THAT SKILL HAS BEEN REFINED OVER FUTURE CENTURIES TO BE FAR MORE EFFECTIVE THAN WHAT IS DEMONSTRATED BY HIS PRESENT-DAY RIVALS. TO REPRESENT THIS, USE EXPERT AND MASTERY LEVELS.

POWERS

MANY MEN FROM TOMORROW HAVE NO POWERS AT ALL, AND INSTEAD RELY ON SCIENCE FICTION WEAPONRY AND VEHICLES. CONSIDER THE WIZARDRY (GADGETS) POWER. BUT THOSE THAT DO HAVE POWERS OFTEN RELY ON PSYCHIC ABILITIES SUCH AS TELEPATHY OR ESP, SO LOOK FIRST TO MENTAL POWERS. IF THE MAN OF TOMORROW HAS LIMITED KNOWLEDGE OF THE FUTURE, THIS CAN BE REPRESENTED WITH PRECOGNITION. WHILE IT IS POSSIBLE THE MAN OF TOMORROW CAN TRAVEL THROUGH TIME, THIS GREATLY REDUCES THE URGENCY OF HIS MISSION AND IT REMOVES HIS NATURE AS A CASTAWAY, AS A MAN STUCK IN A TIME THAT IS NOT HIS OWN.

SPECTRUM

FIRST APPEARANCE: JOURNEY INTO WONDER #141
ARCHETYPES: MAN OF TOMORROW, DESCENDANT
QUALITIES: KNOWS THE FUTURE, HUNTING THE ONE WORLD CONSPIRACY, FAMOUS PARENTS
CHALLENGES: VULNERABLE TO MIND-ALTERING DRUGS, GETTING USED TO NEW POWERS, CAN NEVER GO HOME



PROWESS	6
COORDINATION	4
STRENGTH	4
INTELLECT	5
AWARENESS	5
WILLPOWER	5
DETERMINATION	1
STAMINA	9

POWERS:

ULTRA-POWER 8 (ABILITY BOOST: STRENGTH, BLAST, INVISIBILITY, INVULNERABILITY, PHASING, POWER NULLIFICATION, SUPER-SPEED)

SPECIALTIES:

ART (PAINTING, SCULPTURE), INVESTIGATION EXPERT, LANGUAGES MASTER, LEADERSHIP, OCCULT MASTER, STEALTH EXPERT

STUNTS:

ORANGE SHIFT (BLAST): SPECTRUM CAN USE HIS BLAST TO BLIND A SINGLE TARGET RATHER THAN DO HARM;

TEMPORAL RESISTANCE (WILLPOWER): WHENEVER A TEMPORAL EFFECT WOULD "REWRITE HISTORY", SPECTRUM RESISTS THIS WITH A WILLPOWER OF 7. EVEN IF HIS BODY IS TRANSFORMED BY SUCH A CRISIS, HE RETAINS FULL MEMORY OF THE WAY THINGS WERE BEFORE.

SPECTRUM

ORIGIN

"SOMETIMES JUSTICE ISN'T BLACK AND WHITE."

IN A NOT-TOO-DISTANT FUTURE, ALL THE CARES AND WORRIES OF THE WORKADAY WORLD HAVE BEEN SWEEPED AWAY BY BENEVOLENT WONDERS, WHO HAVE EMERGED FROM HIDING AND NOW RULE THE ONE WORLD AS SELF-APPOINTED GOVERNORS. THEY ARE UNTOUCHABLE IN THEIR POWER, PROTECTED BY MIRACULOUS WEAPONS OF FANTASTIC SCIENCE, AND THEY HAVE REMADE EARTH INTO A PERFECT SOCIETY DEVOID OF CRIME, POVERTY, AND DISEASE. THAT, AT LEAST, IS WHAT THEY WOULD HAVE YOU BELIEVE.

SULEIMAN WILLIAMS GREW UP IN THE ONE WORLD AND, FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF HIS LAMENTED PARENTS THE CHAMP AND THE VEIL, HE DEVOTED HIS LIFE TO ITS MAINTENANCE. BORN WITH BOTH THE INCREDIBLE STRENGTH AND STAMINA OF HIS FATHER, AND HIS MOTHER'S ABILITY TO PASS UNSEEN TO THE NAKED EYE, HE WAS KNOWN AS SPECTRE, A COVERT AGENT OF THE GOVERNMENT. HIS JOB WAS TO TRACK DOWN AND ELIMINATE THREATS TO SOCIETY: BLACK MARKETEERS, REVOLUTIONARIES, AND THE LAST VESTIGE OF A CRIMINAL UNDERGROUND THAT SOMEHOW MANAGED TO SURVIVE DESPITE HAVING EVERY CARD IN THE DECK STACKED AGAINST THEM.

THE DAY CAME WHEN, HAVING LOST CONTACT WITH HIS GOVERNMENTAL MASTERS AND FOLLOWING A LEAD FAR OFF HIS ASSIGNED MISSION, SULEIMAN CAME FACE TO FACE WITH THE SECRET MASTERMINDS OF THE REVOLUTION, THE SOURCE OF ALL THAT WAS EVIL AND CORRUPT, THE ONE ROGUE ELEMENT WHICH, IF IT WERE ONLY DESTROYED, WOULD MAKE THE FUTURE OF ALL MANKIND SAFE FOREVER: HIS MOTHER. THE VEIL HAD NOT PERISHED IN A TERRORIST ATTACK AS SULEIMAN HAD BEEN TOLD, AND IT IS A TESTAMENT TO THE ONE WORLD'S CONDITIONING TECHNIQUES THAT DESPITE THIS REVELATION, HE STILL TRIED TO KILL HER. BUT A LIFETIME OF TRICKS (AND AN ARSENAL OF WEAPONS ACCUMULATED FROM WONDERS OF THE PAST) ALLOWED HER TO TRIUMPH AND RENDER HER SON UNCONSCIOUS.

OVER THE NEXT THREE DAYS, AS HIS WOUNDS HEALED, SABIRA SLOWLY DISMANTLED THE LIES HER SON HAD BEEN TOLD. BLOOD-WASHING TREATMENTS ELIMINATED THE MIND-NUMBING DRUGS FROM HIS SYSTEM. A SERIES OF WITNESSES FILED INTO HIS ROOM AND TOLD OF THEIR SUFFERING AT THE HANDS OF ONE WORLD. HE LEARNED OF THE BETRAYAL THAT CAUSED HIS FATHER'S DEATH. SULEIMAN'S CONFIDENCE WAS SHATTERED, BUT THE WORSE WAS YET TO COME: TRACER ELEMENTS IN HIS BLOODSTREAM HAD LED SUPERHUMAN ENFORCERS OF THE ONE WORLD TO SABIRA'S SECRET LAIR. THE ONLY WAY TO AVOID THEIR ARRIVAL WOULD HAVE BEEN TO KILL SULEIMAN, BUT THAT WAS A PRICE SHE WAS ULTIMATELY UNWILLING TO PAY.

SULEIMAN RESOLVED TO DIE ALONGSIDE HIS MOTHER, BUT SHE WAS LESS FATALISTIC. THE RESISTANCE HAD A PLAN: BY HOTWIRING A TMI COMPANY CAR, THEY COULD SEND SULEIMAN BACK TO BEFORE THE RISE OF THE ONE WORLD. THERE, IN THE FIRST YEARS OF THE 21ST CENTURY, HE COULD ENSURE THAT THIS AWFUL FUTURE WOULD NEVER COME TO PASS. IF SUCCESSFUL, HE WOULD ERASE HIS OWN FUTURE FROM EXISTENCE; TO SECURE AGAINST PARADOX, THE TIME TRAVEL MACHINERY HAD BEEN ALTERED TO ENACT PERMANENT CHANGES ON SULEIMAN'S TEMPORAL SIGNATURE; HE WOULD BE "IMMUNIZED" AGAINST TEMPORAL CORRECTION. AS AN ARMY OF TYRANT WONDERS BROKE DOWN THE DOOR, SULEIMAN TOOK THE LAST TRAIN OUT OF THE ONE WORLD.

HE ARRIVED, AS PLANNED, IN THE EARLY 21ST CENTURY, BUT THE GENETIC ALTERATION OF THE HOTWIRED TIME MACHINE HAD UNEXPECTED SIDE EFFECTS. HIS POWERS WERE STRANGELY CHANGED: WHILE HE STILL POSSESSED GREAT STRENGTH, INVULNERABILITY, AND INVISIBILITY, HE COULD ACCESS THESE POWERS ONLY ONE AT A TIME, AND A WHOLE NEW SPECTRUM OF ABILITIES HAD ALSO BEEN GRANTED TO HIM. AS HE SHIFTED FROM ONE POWER TO ANOTHER, A BRILLIANT AURA OF CHANGING COLORS SURROUNDED HIM. FOR A COVERT AGENT USED TO OPERATING IN THE SHADOWS, ALL THIS TOOK A BIT OF GETTING USED TO.

SPECTRUM

IN THE MONTHS THAT HAVE FOLLOWED, SULEIMAN WILLIAMS HAS MADE HIS WAY TO RADIANT CITY, WHERE HE PURSUES LEADS THAT HE HOPES WILL BRING HIM FACE TO FACE WITH MEMBERS OF THE ONE WORLD CONSPIRACY. HE HAS BEEN FORCED TO USE HIS POWERS IN PUBLIC AND HAS ADOPTED A NEW IDENTITY FOR HIMSELF, USING THE NAME SPECTRUM. UNFORTUNATELY, SULEIMAN KNOWS PRECIOUS LITTLE ABOUT HOW THE ONE WORLD WILL COME TO BE, BUT HE PRESUMES THE CONSPIRACY IS THE RIGHT PLACE TO START. HE HAS YET TO SEE OR SPEAK TO HIS PARENTS, OR TELL ANYONE IN THE PRESENT ABOUT THE NATURE OF HIS MISSION, BUT HE IS NOT RELUCTANT TO DO SO. AFTER ALL, EVERY EFFORT HE MAKES TO EXPOSE THE CONSPIRACY IS ONE MORE STEP TOWARDS ENSURING THAT THE WORLD HE CAME FROM NEVER HAPPENS.

ABILITIES:

GENETIC ALTERATIONS PERFORMED UPON SPECTRUM'S BODY - INTENDED TO MAKE HIM IMMUNE TO TEMPORAL ADJUSTMENT- HAVE CAUSED UNEXPECTED CHANGES IN HIS FORMER POWERS. WHEN AT REST, HE NOW DISPLAYS NO UNUSUAL TRAITS AT ALL, BUT BY CONCENTRATING HE CAN ACTIVE ONE OF SEVEN ENERGY STATES, EACH OF WHICH GRANTS HIM A DISTINCT POWER. WHEN SPECTRUM ACTIVATES HIS "RED SHIFT" HE GAINS SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH. HIS "ORANGE SHIFT" ALLOWS HIM TO MANIFEST A BLINDING AND DEADLY ENERGY BEAM. WITH HIS "YELLOW SHIFT," HIS SPEED ACCELERATES TO 250 TIMES THAT OF A NORMAL MAN. INVULNERABILITY IS GRANTED BY HIS "GREEN SHIFT" STATE, AND HE CAN NEGATE THE SUPERHUMAN POWERS OF THOSE HE TOUCHES WHILE IN "BLUE SHIFT." FINALLY, HE CAN BECOME ENTIRELY INSUBSTANTIAL ("INDIGO SHIFT") OR INVISIBLE, THE LAST BEING DETECTABLE ONLY BY A BRIEF FLASH OF VIOLET LIGHT BEFORE HE DISAPPEARS.

ASIDE FROM HIS POWERS, SULEIMAN WILLIAMS IS A WELL-TRAINED COVERT AGENT. HE IS AN EXPERT AT INVESTIGATION, INFILTRATION, AND HAND TO HAND COMBAT, THOUGH HE IS STILL USED TO FIGHTING WITH THE ADVANTAGES OF STRENGTH, INVULNERABILITY, AND INVISIBILITY. HIS NEW POWER ARRAY IS TAKING SOME GETTING USED TO.

APPEARANCE:

SULEIMAN WILLIAMS IS A HANDSOME MAN OF MIXED AFRICAN AND PERSIAN DESCENT. HE IS LEANER AND NOT QUITE AS TALL AS HIS HEAVYWEIGHT FATHER, AND POSSESSED OF A NATURALLY COLD DEMEANOR THAT MAKES HIM HARD TO LIKE. HIS UNIFORM IS A SLEEK BLACK LEATHER OUTFIT THAT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF A HOLLYWOOD MOVIE; THE SILVER PIPING AND TRIM REFLECTS THE COLOR OF HIS ENERGY AURA WHEN HIS POWERS ARE ACTIVE.

NEW POWER!

ULTRA-POWER

YOU HAVE A NUMBER OF SUPERHUMAN ABILITIES, BUT YOU CAN ONLY USE THEM ONE AT A TIME! SELECT THREE DIFFERENT POWERS; POWERS WHICH COUNT AS TWO FOR CHARACTER CREATION CANNOT BE CHOSEN. EACH PAGE YOU CAN CHOOSE ONE OF THESE POWERS TO BE "ON." YOU CANNOT SUSTAIN ANY POWER THAT YOU DON'T HAVE "ON."

ULTRA-POWER COUNTS AS TWO POWERS FOR CHARACTER CREATION; FOR A BONUS POWER, YOU CAN ADD ANOTHER POWER OPTION TO YOUR ULTRA-POWER. THERE IS NO WAY TO EVER HAVE MORE THAN ONE OF YOUR ULTRA-POWERS WORKING AT ONCE, EVEN WITH STUNTS OR DETERMINATION.

FOR EXAMPLE, ULTRA-WOMAN HAS ULTRA-POWER (ENHANCED STRENGTH, BLAST, AND INVULNERABILITY). ON HER TURN, SHE TURNS ON HER ULTRA-STRENGTH AND PUNCHES THE MALTHUSIAN IN THE FACE, BUT SHE DOES NOT HAVE ANY ULTRA-INVULNERABILITY FOR THIS PAGE. ON HER NEXT TURN SHE ACTIVATES INVULNERABILITY, BUT ALL HER ULTRA-STRENGTH VANISHES AND SHE IS FORCED TO ATTACK WITH HER NORMAL STRENGTH OF 4.

ULTRA-POWER IS SIMILAR TO WIZARDRY, BUT IT IS NOT LIMITED BY ONE OF YOUR MENTAL ABILITIES AND WIZARDRY POWERS CAN BE SUSTAINED EVEN WHILE YOU USE MORE OF THEM.

SPECTRUM

STORIES

SPECTRUM IS A REFUGEE FROM AN AWFUL FUTURE, AND MOST OF HIS STORIES WILL PLAY OFF THAT FUTURE IN SOME WAY. HE IS HUNTING THE ONE WORLD CONSPIRACY, WHICH COULD BRING HIM INTO CONFLICT WITH OTHER HEROES, MOST OF WHOM WILL PROBABLY HAVE NO IDEA WHAT HE'S TALKING ABOUT.

SULEIMAN DECIDES TO TAKE A BIG STEP TOWARDS HIS GOAL BY GATHERING A GROUP OF ALLIES. OF COURSE, HE WILL PROBABLY PLAY THE WHOLE "FROM THE FUTURE" ANGLE A LITTLE QUIET AT FIRST, SINCE HE MIGHT TIP OFF AGENTS OF THE CONSPIRACY IF HE IS TOO VOCAL. IN THE PAST HE REMEMBERS SO HE CAN SEIZE THE ADVANTAGE IN HIS BATTLE AGAINST THE ONE WORLD. SPECTRUM'S TEAM IS LIKELY TO BE CROSS BETWEEN HIGH-TECH AND COVERT MILITARY; IT MAY TRY TO STRADDLE THE LINE BETWEEN "RUTHLESS EFFICIENCY" AND THE HEROISM THAT MOTIVATED SULEIMAN'S PARENTS.

A NEARLY-OMNIPOTENT WIZARD, EXTRADIMENSIONAL ENTITY, OR "UNIVERSAL ELDER" DECIDES TO REWRITE SPACE AND TIME. ALL OF EARTH'S WONDERS ARE CAUGHT UP IN THE NEW VERSION OF EXISTENCE. ONLY SPECTRUM, THANKS TO HIS TEMPORAL RESISTANCE, REMEMBERS THE WAY THINGS USED TO BE!

THE ONE WORLD OF SPECTRUM'S FUTURE WAS RULED BY THE AGED VERSIONS OF SOME OF TODAY'S MOST RESPECTED AND CELEBRATED WONDERS. SPECTRUM KNOWS THE PEOPLE THEY WILL BECOME, BUT THESE INDIVIDUALS SHOW NO PRESENT SIGN OF THEIR CORRUPT FUTURE. SHOULD HE CONFRONT THEM? MONITOR THEIR ACTIVITIES? ELIMINATE THEM NOW?



MASTER OF THE ATOM

A LIVING EMBODIMENT OF THE ATOMIC AGE, THE MASTER OF THE ATOM WIELDS TREMENDOUS POWER THAT IS ONLY PARTIALLY UNDERSTOOD AND IS STILL VERY DANGEROUS. HE HAS THE POTENTIAL TO BE A GREAT HERO, BUT ALSO TO CAUSE UNTOLD DISASTER.

EXAMPLES: CAPTAIN ATOM, DOCTOR MANHATTAN, FIRESTORM, HULK

RELATED ARCHETYPES: EMBODIMENT, MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS, ULTIMATE HERO

QUALITIES & CHALLENGES: THE PRODUCT OF A SCIENTIFIC EXPERIMENT GONE AWRY, THE MASTER OF THE ATOM WIELDS THE TWO-EDGED SWORD OF NUCLEAR POWER. YES, HIS POWERS ARE VERY GREAT, AND HE CAN DO MUCH GOOD, BUT HE RUNS THE RISK OF CONTAMINATING HIS FRIENDS AND THE VERY ENVIRONMENT ITSELF THROUGH THE USE OF HIS OWN POWERS, WHICH SOMETIMES GROW BEYOND HIS CONTROL WITH DESTRUCTIVE RESULTS. THE MASTER OF THE ATOM IS A SYMBOL OF HUBRIS, OF PROUD MANKIND MEDDLING WITH FORCES BEYOND ITS CONTROL. WHEN HEROES LEARN OF A DARK FUTURE THAT IS IN STORE FOR EARTH, A MASTER OF THE ATOM IS USUALLY RESPONSIBLE FOR CREATING THAT FUTURE, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE WAS CORRUPTED AND FELL INTO EVIL, PERHAPS BECAUSE HE LOST CONTROL OF HIS OWN POWERS AND DESTROYED NOT ONLY HIMSELF BUT HALF THE COUNTRY AT THE SAME TIME.

SOMETIMES THE DUAL NATURE OF THE MASTER OF THE ATOM, HIS LIMITLESS POTENTIAL AND HIS TERRIBLE CURSE, ARE REPRESENTED PHYSICALLY, SO THAT THE MASTER OF THE ATOM IS ACTUALLY TWO PEOPLE OR TWO PERSONALITIES COMPETING IN THE SAME BODY. ONE OF THOSE SELVES REPRESENTS THE OPTIMISTIC POSSIBILITIES OF SCIENCE WHILE THE OTHER REPRESENTS THE RISKS WHICH RECKLESS EXPERIMENTATION POSE FOR OUR SPECIES AND OUR WORLD. OTHERS FEAR THE MASTER OF THE ATOM OR PERCEIVE HIM AS RECKLESS AND RASH, BUT HE IS A FIRM BELIEVER IN THE ATOMIC AGE AND REMAINS SUPREMELY CONFIDENT. BECAUSE OF THIS ATTITUDE AND HIS GREAT POWER, HE MAY HAVE A LEADERSHIP POSITION. IN PREVIOUS GENERATIONS HE WAS ALMOST CERTAINLY AMERICAN, BUT WITH THE PROLIFERATION OF NUCLEAR POWER AROUND THE WORLD HE MIGHT BE CHINESE, RUSSIAN, KOREAN, INDIAN, PAKISTANI, ISRAELI, ENGLISH OR FRENCH. REGARDLESS OF HIS NATIONAL ORIGIN, HE IS PATRIOTIC AND IS CONSIDERED SOMETHING OF A NATIONAL SYMBOL. AS A LIVING EMBODIMENT OF THE NUCLEAR FOOTBALL, HE MAY ANSWER DIRECTLY TO THE PRESIDENT.

IN RECENT DECADES, AS WE LEARN MORE ABOUT SUBATOMIC PHYSICS, THE BREADTH OF THE MASTER OF THE ATOM ARCHETYPE HAS BROADENED, LEADING TO THE QUANTUM HERO AND OTHER SIMILAR CHARACTERS WHO ARE UPDATES OF THE OLD ATOMIC ONE.

ABILITIES:

THE MASTER OF THE ATOM PROBABLY HAS GREAT STRENGTH AND, SINCE HE IS USUALLY A SCIENTIST AS WELL, INTELLECT. BECAUSE HE RELIES ON POWER OVER SKILL, HIS PROWESS AND COORDINATION MAY BE QUITE LOW. HIS AWARENESS AND WILLPOWER WILL DETERMINE HOW HE BALANCES THE TWO HALVES OF THE NUCLEAR THREAT; IF THESE SCORES ARE LOW, HE WILL BE RECKLESS AND OFTEN PUT HIS ALLIES AND INNOCENT PEOPLE IN PERIL. BUT IF THEY ARE HIGH, HE BECOMES A MODEL OF RESTRAINT AND WISDOM WHO DEMONSTRATES THE BENEFITS OF ATOMIC ENERGY.

POWERS:

THE MASTER OF THE ATOM WILL USUALLY FLY AND HE IS PROBABLY INVULNERABLE. HE PROBABLY HAS A BLAST OF ATOMIC ENERGY WHICH FEW VILLAINS CAN WITHSTAND. IF HE CAN MANIPULATE MATTER AT THE SUBATOMIC LEVEL, HE WILL HAVE TRANSMUTATION OR TRANSFORMATION RAY. ALL OF THIS COMBINES TO MAKE THE MASTER OF THE ATOM VERY POWERFUL; HE WORKS BEST IN A GROUP OF OTHER POWERFUL HEROES, OR WHEN HIS ENEMIES HAVE WEAPONS DESIGNED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF HIS LIMITATIONS (SUCH AS THEY ARE).

SPECIALTIES:

THE MOST COMMON SPECIALTY IS SCIENCE (PHYSICS), BUT THE POWER SPECIALTY IS ALSO LIKELY, ESPECIALLY IF THE MASTER OF THE ATOM HAS TRANSMUTATION OR TRANSFORMATION POWERS. BECAUSE OF HIS CONNECTION TO THE GOVERNMENT, MILITARY AND LEADERSHIP ARE ALSO POSSIBILITIES.

WATCHDOG

FIRST APPEARANCE: WATCHDOG #1

ARCHETYPES: MASTER OF THE ATOM, ARMORED WONDER, ULTIMATE HERO

QUALITIES: UN AGENT, AUSTRALIAN ACCENT, GIRLFRIENDS ACROSS EUROPE

CHALLENGES: CAN'T OPERATE ON US SOIL, UNDER-APPRECIATED, COLLATERAL DAMAGE

PROWESS 6

COORDINATION 6

STRENGTH 8

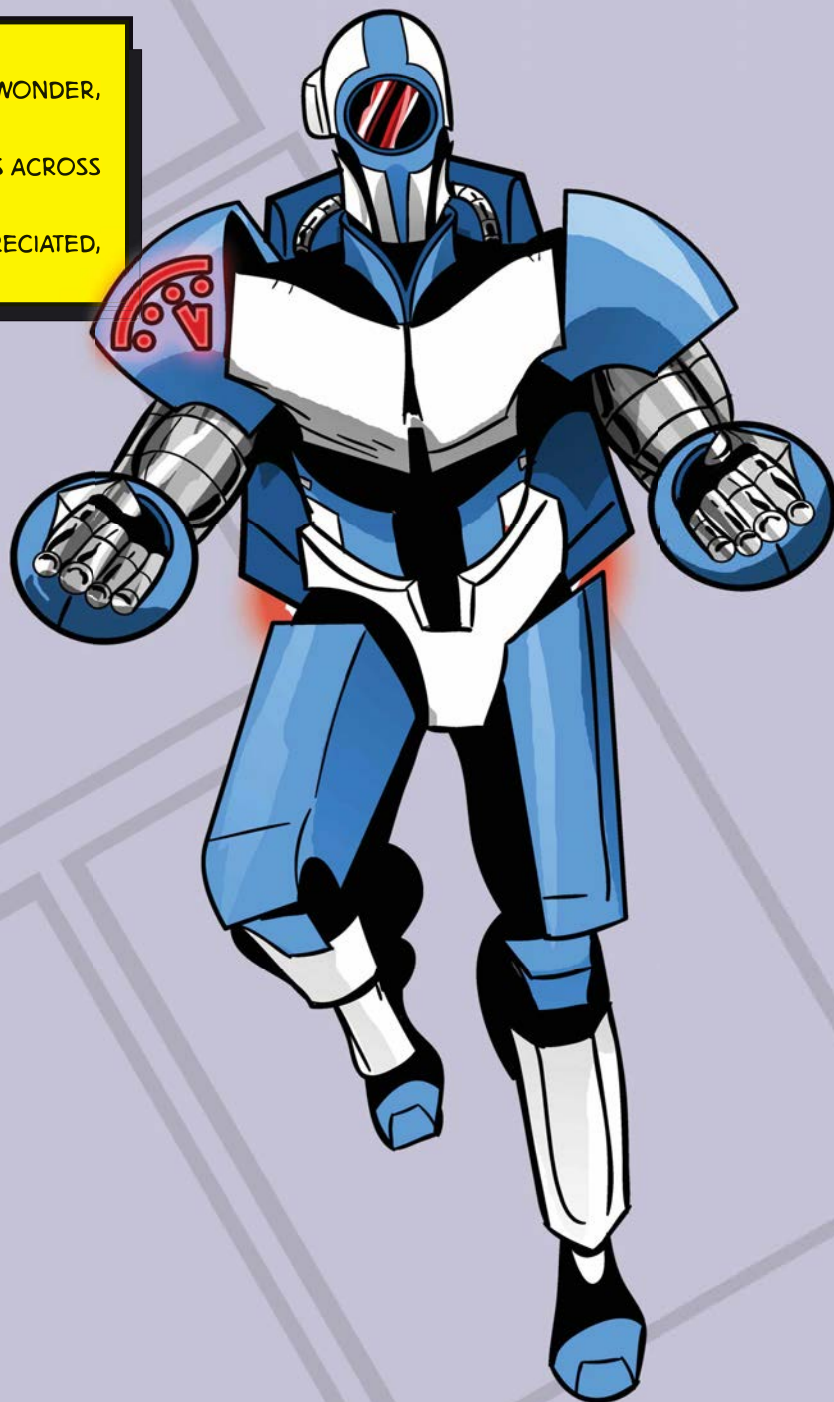
INTELLECT 4

AWARENESS 4

WILLPOWER 4

DETERMINATION 1

STAMINA 12



POWERS:

BINDING 8, BLAST 8, FLIGHT 7, IMMUNITY (RADIATION), INVULNERABILITY 10, MIND SHIELD 7, SUPER-SENSES 2 (RADAR, DETECT RADIATION)

SPECIALTIES:

LANGUAGES, MECHANICS EXPERT, MILITARY, SCIENCE (PHYSICS)

STUNTS

EOD (INTELLECT) WILL HAS A +2 BONUS ON ANY ATTEMPT TO DISARM OR TAKE APART A BOMB;

ANTI-RADIATION FOAM (BINDING) ANYONE CURRENTLY AFFECTED BY WATCHDOG'S BINDING POWER GAINS RESISTANCE (RADIATION) 8;

NUCLEAR DAMPERS (INVULNERABILITY) WATCHDOG CAN USE POWER NULLIFICATION AGAINST ENEMIES WITH NUCLEAR, ATOMIC, OR RADIATION POWERS, WITH A POWER OF 10.

WATCHDOG

ORIGIN

"GO AHEAD. PRESS THE RED BUTTON. THEN WE CAN GET THIS OVER WITH."

SINCE THE END OF THE COLD WAR AND THE ECONOMIC IMPLOSION OF THE SOVIET UNION, NUCLEAR PROLIFERATION HAS BECOME ONE OF THE GREATEST DANGERS TO MANKIND. A UN WORKING GROUP CONCLUDED IN THE EARLY '90S THAT THE THREAT WAS PARTICULARLY ACUTE WHEN NUCLEAR WEAPONS, OFTEN BUILT BY THE RUSSIANS BUT SUBSEQUENTLY LOST OR STOLEN, CAME INTO THE HANDS OF TERRORIST GROUPS AND WONDER MASTERMINDS. TO COUNTER THIS THREAT, THE INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY (IAEA) INITIATED THE WATCHDOG PROJECT: AN ARMORED BATTLESUIT OPERATING AT THE DISCRETION OF THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY. USING WATCHDOG, THE IAEA WOULD BE ABLE TO NOT ONLY MONITOR "LOOSE NUKES," BUT ACTIVELY SEEK THEM OUT AND RETURN THEM TO SECURE LOCALES. CAPTAIN WILLIAM TURNER, AN AUSTRALIAN, WAS EVENTUALLY CHOSEN TO WEAR THE WATCHDOG ARMOR.

THE WATCHDOG PROGRAM MUST BE JUDGED A SUCCESS, THOUGH THE RIDE HAS NOT ALWAYS BEEN SMOOTH. BY FAR THE MOST POWERFUL WONDER OPERATING UNDER THE UN UMBRELLA, WILL TURNER HAS OFTEN FOUND WATCHDOG "LOANED OUT" TO OTHER UN AGENCIES WHO COULD SHOW PRESSING NEED, AND THIS INCLUDES EVERYTHING FROM THE DELIVERY OF FOOD AND HUMANITARIAN AID TO MILITARY INTERVENTION. POLITICAL PRESSURE ON THE WATCHDOG HAS THEREFORE BEEN INTENSE. THE US, IN PARTICULAR, HAS REFUSED TO ALLOW WATCHDOG TO OPERATE IN ITS TERRITORY, INSISTING THAT THE FBI AND OTHER SECURITY AGENCIES ARE PERFECTLY CAPABLE OF HANDLING NUCLEAR THREATS INSIDE THE COUNTRY. RUSSIA, HOWEVER, HAS COOPERATED CLOSELY WITH WATCHDOG AND HIS MASTERS AT THE IAEA, PASSING ON INTELLIGENCE REGARDING NUCLEAR DEVICES AND EVEN ALLOWING TURNER TO TAKE DIRECT ACTION AGAINST ROGUE SOVIET SOLDIERS WHO SOUGHT TO USE THE MISSILE SILOS THEY WERE GUARDING AS EXTORTION TOOLS.

AS A RESULT OF THESE PRESSURES, WATCHDOG HAS PROVEN VERY EFFICIENT AT HIS JOB WHEN HE IS ALLOWED TO WORK, BUT HAS OFTEN FOUND HIMSELF PARALYZED BY POLITICAL REALITIES. MANY OF HIS MOST IMPORTANT VICTORIES HAVE BEEN HUSHED UP BY THE UN IN ORDER TO PREVENT GLOBAL PANIC OVER THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR TERRORISM, AND SINCE HE IS FORBIDDEN FROM WEARING THE ARMOR ON US SOIL, MOST AMERICAN WONDERS DON'T EVEN KNOW HIS NAME. ALTHOUGH HE HAS BEEN INVITED TO JOIN AT LEAST ONE WONDER ORGANIZATION, HE HAS BEEN FORCED TO REFUSE ON THE BASIS THAT HIS MISSION FOR THE IAEA ALWAYS COMES FIRST. WHEN A CRIMINAL MASTERMIND THREATENS THE WORLD WITH NUCLEAR WEAPONS, WATCHDOG OFTEN FINDS HIMSELF WORKING WITH OTHER HEROES WHOM HE BARELY KNOWS, AND WHO DO NOT KNOW HIM.

THESE DAYS, TURNER'S ACTIVITIES HAVE LARGELY TURNED TO PAKISTAN, IRAN, NORTH KOREA, AND OTHER "ROGUE STATES" WHICH ARE EITHER SELLING THEIR ALREADY-ACQUIRED NUCLEAR TECHNOLOGY OR WHICH SEEK TO ADD THEMSELVES TO THE "NUCLEAR CLUB" IN VIOLATION OF UN TREATY. MORE AND MORE OF HIS WORK IS DONE UNDERCOVER, AND WILL'S BLACK OPS EXPERIENCE AS AN AUSTRALIAN SOLDIER IN THE IRAQ WAR IS PROVING FAR MORE USEFUL THAN HE EVER EXPECTED.

APPEARANCE

THE WATCHDOG ARMOR IS A MILITARY-STYLE MECHA TEN FEET TALL, EQUIPPED WITH A LONG ROTATING AUTOCANNON ON ONE ARM AND A MISSILE RACK OVER THE OPPOSITE SHOULDER. ENORMOUS JET THRUSTERS RISE FROM HIS BACK. THE SYMBOL OF THE IAEA IS MARKED IN RED ON THE RIGHT SIDE OF THE ARMOR'S CHEST.

WILL TURNER IS A HANDSOME AUSTRALIAN WITH DARK BLOND HAIR AND A SERIOUS DEemeanOR. HE'S BEEN IN SO MANY LIFE-OR-DEATH SITUATIONS OVER THE YEARS THAT HE SELDOM SMILES ANY MORE, AND HE HAS LOST TOUCH WITH MANY OF HIS OLD FRIENDS IN THE AUSTRALIAN ARMY. HIS DAYS ARE SPENT READING INTELLIGENCE BRIEFINGS, IN TRAINING, OR WANDERING THE STREETS OF VIENNA OR NEW YORK CITY, WAITING FOR A CALL.

WATCHDOG

ABILITIES:

WILL TURNER WAS ALREADY A WELL-TRAINED VETERAN OF THE IRAQI WAR BEFORE HE WAS ACCEPTED BY THE WATCHDOG PROGRAM AND PUT THROUGH AN INTENSIVE TRAINING COURSE THAT EMPHASIZED NUCLEAR ORDNANCE DISPOSAL. BUT WHEN HE IS WEARING THE WATCHDOG ARMOR, HE BECOMES ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL WONDERS ON EARTH.

WATCHDOG CAN FLY AS FAST AS A JET FIGHTER, LIFT A 747, AND WITHSTAND ASSAULT UP TO AND INCLUDING THE NUCLEAR WARHEADS THAT HE IS SO OFTEN OUT TO SECURE. HIS MULTIPLE WEAPON SYSTEMS INCLUDE A RAPID-FIRING GATLING CANNON ARMED WITH ARMOR PIERCING ANTI-VEHICULAR ROUNDS, SELF-GUIDED MISSILES, AND AN ANTI-RADIATION FOAM THAT HE HAS OCCASIONALLY USED TO GAIN A COMBAT ADVANTAGE OVER FOES. BECAUSE MOST OF WATCHDOG'S WEAPONRY IS MILITARY ISSUE, HE SOMETIMES FINDS HIMSELF AT A DISADVANTAGE WHEN OPERATING IN URBAN AREAS AND AGAINST NON-SUPERHUMAN FOES; HIS SUPERIORS AT THE IAEA RECOGNIZE THAT SOME CASUALTIES ARE INEVITABLE, BUT HE HAS NEVER BEEN SO CARELESS AS TO KILL A CIVILIAN.

ADDITIONAL SYSTEMS INCLUDE FLASH-RESISTANT VISUAL SENSORS THAT PROTECT TURNER FROM EVEN THE LIGHT OF A NUCLEAR DETONATION, A PSYCHIC SHIELD TO PREVENT MENTAL DOMINATION, AND A HIGH-TECH "NUCLEAR DAMPER" THAT IS CAPABLE OF RETARDING NUCLEAR PROCESSES IN ITS AREA, KEEPING ATOMIC WEAPONS FROM DETONATING OR NUCLEAR-POWERED DEVICES FROM PRODUCING POWER. SENSITIVE RADIATION DETECTORS ALLOW TURNER TO PINPOINT NUCLEAR ACTIVITY FROM HUNDREDS OF YARDS AWAY, AND HE HAS BUILT-IN RADAR WITH A RANGE MEASURED IN MILES.

STORIES

WATCHDOG FACILITATES STORIES BASED AROUND THE UN AND INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY OR WHICH INVOLVE THE THREAT OF NUCLEAR TERRORISM.

AN AMERICAN NUCLEAR SUB HAS DROPPED OUT OF CONTACT AND IS BELIEVED TO BE DAMAGED, RESTING ON THE OCEAN FLOOR. TURNER IS READY TO GO, BUT THE AMERICANS DENY HIM ACCESS, CLAIMING THE SUB IS AN ELEMENT OF NATIONAL SECURITY AND OFF-LIMITS TO A FOREIGNER. OTHER WONDERS (POSSIBLY THE ALL-AMERICANS?) ARE DISPATCHED TO THE RESCUE, BUT TURNER'S BOSSES AT THE UN AUTHORIZE HIM TO COVERTLY APPROACH THE SUB AND MONITOR THE ACTIVITY THERE, IN CASE THINGS GO BAD. IT IS DEEP UNDERWATER THAT THE MYSTERY IN THIS SCENARIO COMES TO THE FORE. WHAT CAUSED THE SUB TO WRECK? COULD THE AMERICAN STANCE BE DUE TO THE FACT THE SUB WAS IN FACT CARRYING SOMETHING OTHER THAN "MERE" NUCLEAR WEAPONS? WHAT IF THE OTHER HEROES SENT TO HANDLE THE PROBLEM FIND MORE THAN THEY BARGAINED FOR, OR ARE FACED WITH A LIVE NUKE AND ARE CUT OFF FROM THEIR TECHNICAL SUPPORT? HOW WILL THEY FEEL ABOUT THE APPEARANCE OF WATCHDOG, WHOM THEY HAVE BEEN WARNED ABOUT? AND WHAT MENACE, DEEP UNDER THE WAVES, COULD POSSIBLY BRING THESE DISPARATE HEROES TOGETHER IN A RACE FOR SURVIVAL?

THE IAEA DOESN'T JUST KEEP TRACK OF SUPER-CRIMINALS; PLENTY OF HEROES USE NUCLEAR POWER FOR WEAPONS, DEVICES, OR VEHICLES, AND EACH ONE OF THEM IS A POTENTIAL DANGER TO NEARBY CIVILIANS. TURNER IS ASSIGNED TO MONITOR THE ACTIVITIES OF ONE SUCH HERO OR HERO GROUP, LEADING TO FRICTION WHEN HIS WELL-INTENTIONED SURVEILLANCE IS DISCOVERED.

TURNER HAS HAD A LONG CAREER AS WATCHDOG, AND ALTHOUGH HIS SUPERIORS ARE EAGER TO RETAIN HIM, HE IS STARTING TO FEEL THE ISOLATION OF THE JOB. HE BEGINS SEARCHING COVERTLY FOR A POSSIBLE REPLACEMENT: SOMEONE WHOSE RESPONSIBILITY COULD BE TO THE COMMUNITY OF NATIONS RATHER THAN A SINGLE COUNTRY, AND WHO HAS THE KIND OF INDEPENDENT RESOURCEFULNESS REQUIRED FOR A WONDER WHO USUALLY WORKS ALONE. AT THE SAME TIME, A WELL-INFORMED MASTERMIND PLOTS TO STEAL THE WATCHDOG ARMOR BY CREATING A POTENTIAL REPLACEMENT AND LURING TURNER INTO SUPPORTING THE PLANTED AGENT. IT IS UP TO THE HEROES TO FIGURE OUT THE RUSE, TRACK THE "PLANT" BACK TO HIS MASTER, AND DEFEAT A BAD GUY WHO MAY HAVE ALREADY GAINED ACCESS TO WATCHDOG'S SECURITY CODES.

MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS

THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS CONTROLS OR BECOMES SOME KIND OF ENERGY OR MATTER. EXAMPLES INCLUDE DARKNESS, FIRE, ICE, LIGHT, LIGHTNING, MACHINES, MAGNETISM, METAL, PLANTS, ROCK, SOLAR ENERGY, SOUND, WATER, THE WEATHER, WIND AND WOOD.

EXAMPLES: CAPTAIN MARVEL, MONICA RAMBEAU; DAZZLER; THE HUMAN TORCH, JOHNNY STORM; ICEMAN; LIGHTNING LAD; OBLIVION; POLARIS; SONGBIRD; STORM; TERRA

RELATED ARCHETYPES: EMBODIMENT, FOCUSED HERO

QUALITIES & CHALLENGES: WITH A RECOGNIZABLE STYLE AND EFFECTIVE POWERS, THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS IS A VERY POPULAR CHARACTER TYPE. HE IS ESPECIALLY COMMON ON TEAMS BECAUSE HIS ALLIES COMPENSATE FOR HIS NARROW FOCUS AND HIS ABILITIES COMPLEMENT THE TEAM'S TACTICS IN INTERESTING WAYS. SOMETIMES THE TEAM IS MADE UP SOLELY OF MASTERS OF THE ELEMENTS. HE IS OFTEN VULNERABLE TO AN "OPPOSING ELEMENT," SO THAT A FIRE HERO LOSES HIS POWERS FOR A PAGE OR TWO IF HE IS STRUCK WITH WATER, AND A DARKNESS HERO HAS NO DEFENSE AGAINST THE POWER OF THE SUN.

THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS PROBABLY HAS ANOTHER ARCHETYPE AS WELL, BUT HIS ELEMENT DOES HELP TO DEFINE HIM BECAUSE HE TAKES ON PERSONALITY TRAITS DERIVED FROM HIS ENVIRONMENT. MASTERS OF STONE WILL BE ROCK-SOLID AND STURDY, THE FOUNDATION ON WHICH THEIR TEAMS ARE BUILT. MASTERS OF FIRE WILL BE HOT-TEMPERED AND MERCURIAL, RASH BUT IMAGINATIVE. MASTERS OF THE WEATHER WILL BE ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS, AWARE OF THE LONG-TERM RAMIFICATIONS OF SEEMINGLY SMALL ACTIONS. THEIR PERSONALITY WILL MANIFEST IN THE LOCAL AREA AS RAIN, THUNDER, OR SUN.

BECAUSE THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS HAS RELATIVELY SIMPLE AND STRAIGHT-FORWARD POWERS, HE SUFFERS FROM MANY OF THE SAME CHALLENGES FACED BY CHARACTERS LIKE THE FOCUSED HERO. TO KEEP A CHARACTER WITH SIMPLE POWERS INTERESTING, HIS PERSONALITY AND PAST BECOME MORE COMPLEX AND DEVELOPED. A MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS MAY FIND HIMSELF PUSHED INTO A LEADERSHIP POSITION AS A WAY OF GIVING HIM MORE "SCREEN TIME", A BALANCE FOR FIGHT SCENES IN WHICH HE IS OVERSHADOWED BY OTHER, MORE FLASHY, HEROES. ALTERNATELY, HE CAN FIND HIMSELF RELEGATED TO THE SIDELINES, WHERE HE BECOMES COMIC RELIEF OR SIMPLY IGNORED. AT THE SAME TIME, BECAUSE THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS CAN BE SUMMED UP SO QUICKLY AND SUCCINCTLY AS THE "FIRE GUY" "ICE GUY" OR "WATER GUY", HE IS INSTANTLY RECOGNIZABLE AND SURPRISINGLY LONG-LASTING.

HOWEVER, MASTERS OF THE ELEMENTS ALSO TEND TO GROW IN POWER AS THEY AGE, ESPECIALLY AS THEY BEGIN TO COMMAND MORE AND MORE INFLUENCE OVER THEIR PARTICULAR ELEMENT. AFTER ALL, IF A CHARACTER CAN CONTROL FIRE, WELL, CAN HE CONTROL ANY FIRE, ANYWHERE ON EARTH? PERHAPS HE CAN CONTROL HEAT AND, IF HE CAN MOVE OR REDUCE HEAT, DOESN'T THAT MEAN HE ALSO CONTROLS COLD? IT IS IN THIS WAY THAT THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS GROWS FROM A ONE-TRICK-PONY INTO A FORCE TO BE RECKONED WITH. EVENTUALLY THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS CAN GROW INTO AN EMBODIMENT, A KIND OF COSMIC PERSONIFICATION OF HIS ORIGINAL, HUMBLE, POWER.

MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS

POWERS: OBVIOUSLY, ELEMENTAL CONTROL IS THE PLACE TO START. ALTERNATE FORM IS ALSO LIKELY. THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS SHOULD HAVE LIFE SUPPORT OR IMMUNITY AGAINST HIS OWN ELEMENT, SINCE IT'S NEVER A GOOD THING FOR THE FIRE GUY TO GET BURNED. MASTERS OF THE ELEMENTS OFTEN FLY, SUPPORTED ON THEIR ELEMENT, BUT THEY MIGHT ALSO TELEPORT BY MOVING THROUGH THEIR ELEMENT, BYPASSING THE SPACE IN BETWEEN.

SPECIALTIES: THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS RELIES ON THE POWER SPECIALTY TO COMPENSATE FOR HIS MEDIOCRE ABILITIES.

STUNTS: BECAUSE THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS HAS SUCH WELL-DEFINED AND NARROW POWERS, HE MAKES USE OF MANY STUNTS WHICH REPRESENT CREATIVE USE OF THOSE POWERS. OFTEN THESE STUNTS WILL APPEAR ONLY ONCE IN A WHILE, BUT THEY BECOME PART OF THE HERO'S REGULAR BAG OF TRICKS AND SHOULD BE WRITTEN DOWN FOR LATER USE.

ABILITIES

THE MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS IS RATHER ORDINARY ASIDE FROM HIS CONTROL OVER THE ELEMENTS, SO UNLESS HIS ELEMENT HAS SOME SORT OF CONNECTION TO AN ABILITY (STONE/STRENGTH) HIS ABILITIES ARE ALL IN THE 2-5 RANGE.



DUSK & DAWN

FIRST APPEARANCE: DUSK & DAWN LIMITED SERIES #1
ARCHETYPES: MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS, YOUNG HERO (DAWN), DARK AVENGER (DUSK)

DAWN: "DON'T YOU EVER GET TIRED OF ALL THIS CLOAK & DAGGER STUFF?"

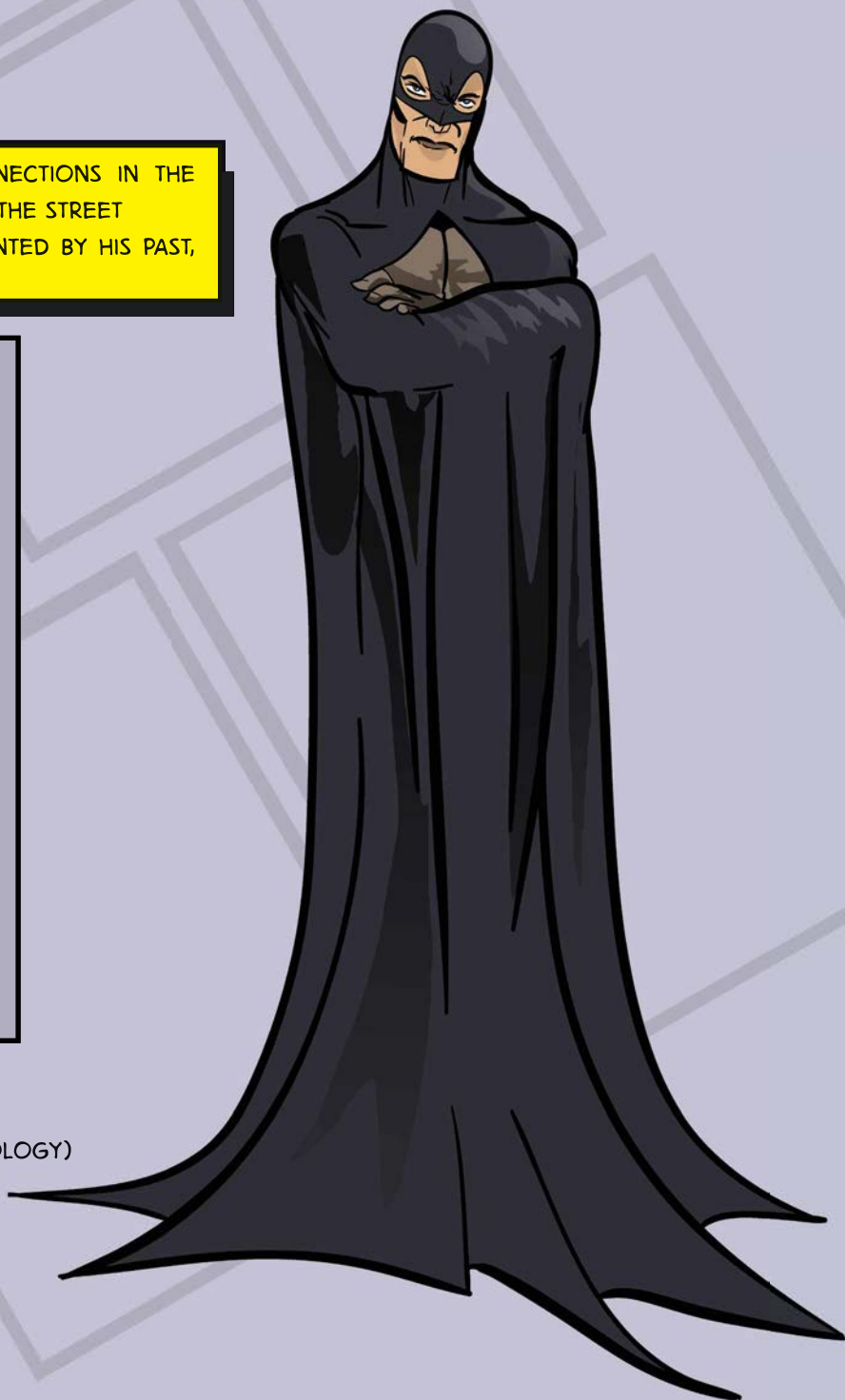
DUSK: "WHY DO YOU ASK QUESTIONS WHEN YOU ALREADY KNOW THE ANSWERS?"

DUSK

QUALITIES: TELEPATHIC LINK, VETERAN, CONNECTIONS IN THE LEAST LIKELY PLACES, FEARED ON THE STREET
CHALLENGES: CREATURE OF THE NIGHT, HAUNTED BY HIS PAST, OVERCONFIDENT

PROWESS	8
COORDINATION	6
STRENGTH	6
INTELLECT	4
AWARENESS	6
WILLPOWER	5
DETERMINATION	2
STAMINA	11

POWERS: IMMUNITY 5 (DARKNESS POWERS), INVISIBILITY 5, SUPER-SENSES 1 (DARKVISION)
SPECIALTIES: INVESTIGATION, SCIENCE (PSYCHOLOGY)



DAWN

QUALITIES: TELEPATHIC LINK, SUNNY DISPOSITION, BRIGHT IDEAS, GORGEOUS

CHALLENGES: SUN CHILD, JUST WANTS TO HAVE FUN, GETTING USED TO VIOLENCE

PROWESS 6

COORDINATION 5

STRENGTH 3

INTELLECT 4

AWARENESS 3

WILLPOWER 4

DETERMINATION 1

STAMINA 7

POWERS:

ELEMENTAL CONTROL 8 (LIGHT; BLAST, BLINDING), FLIGHT 6, IMMUNITY 5 (LIGHT), SUPER-SENSES 1 (LOW-LIGHT VISION)

SPECIALTIES:

NONE

STUNTS

CLOUD OF LIGHT (ELEMENTAL CONTROL) DAWN CAN SHED LIGHT SO BRIGHT THAT SHE ATTACKS ALL CREATURES WITHIN CLOSE RANGE OF HER WITH BLINDING 8

ELI PLEASANCE WAS AN ARMY VET WORKING IN LOS ANGELES AS A PSYCHOLOGIST WHEN HE WAS BROUGHT IN TO CONSULT ON THE UNUSUAL CASE OF COLLEGE SOPHOMORE DAWN WYATT. WYATT HAD DROPPED OUT OF SCHOOL, WAS IGNORING HER FRIENDS AND WEALTHY HOLLYWOOD FAMILY, AND NO LONGER APPEARED TO SPEAK ENGLISH. HER ACTIONS WERE WHOLLY IRRATIONAL AND, SINCE SHE ALSO SEEMED TO HAVE NO INTEREST IN FOOD OR OTHER BODILY NEEDS, HER HEALTH WAS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER. PLEASANCE, WHO HAD SOME LIMITED EXPERIENCE WITH WONDERS, SUGGESTED THE GIRL MIGHT HAVE FALLEN UNDER SOME SORT OF POSSESSION. THE EVIDENCE QUICKLY PROVED HIM RIGHT: DAWN WYATT HAD BECOME THE HOME FOR AN ALIEN PSYCHO-INTELLIGENCE, POSSIBLY FROM THE REGION OF TAU CETI.

ORDINARY TREATMENT WAS COMPLETELY INEFFECTIVE, OF COURSE, SO PLEASANCE DECIDED TO RESORT TO DRASTIC MEASURES. WITH THE APPROVAL OF THE WYATT FAMILY, HE BEGAN A SERIES OF INTENSE HYPNOTIC EPISODES LINKED TO JUNGIAN ARCHETYPE THERAPY. HIS REASONING WAS SOUND: IF ELI COULD STRENGTHEN DAWN'S SUBMERGED PERSONALITY BY LINKING IT TO POWERFUL



DUSK & DAWN

HUMAN ARCHETYPES, THE ALIEN ENTITY DWELLING IN HER MIND WOULD BE CAST OUT. IT WAS A PSYCHOTHERAPIST'S VERSION OF AN EXORCISM. IT WORKED ... ALL TOO WELL.

IN THE THERAPY SESSION, DAWN FOUND STRENGTH IN THE JUNGIAN ARCHETYPE OF THE SUN QUEEN, A SOURCE OF LIGHT AND ENERGY THAT ALLOWED HER TO OVERCOME HER MENTAL PRISON AND REGAIN CONTROL OF HER BODY. UNFORTUNATELY FOR BOTH SHE AND PLEASANCE, THE JUNGIAN ARCHETYPE WAS NOT EASILY PUT TO SLEEP ONCE ROUSED. IT WOKE TO FULL POWER AND TOOK OVER DAWN'S BODY WITH EVEN MORE STRENGTH THAN THE ALIEN INTELLIGENCE HAD. ELI, FURIOUS AT HIMSELF OVER THE RECKLESS CHANCE HE HAD TAKEN WITH HIS YOUNG PATIENT, DECIDED TO FIGHT FIRE WITH FIRE: HE USED THE SAME JUNGIAN THERAPY TECHNIQUES TO CONTACT THE ARCHETYPE OF THE NIGHT KING, AND PIT ITS DARKNESS AGAINST THE SUN'S LIGHT. ELI WAS HOPING FOR A MIRACLE. HE GOT ONE.

WHEN THE DUST HAD SETTLED, ELI PLEASANCE AND DAWN WYATT WERE MORE OR LESS HUMAN ONCE MORE. BUT THE POWERFUL SPIRITS OF THE COLLECTIVE UNCONSCIOUS THEY HAD CALLED UPON HAD FOREVER TRANSFORMED THEM AND BOUND THEIR FATES TOGETHER. DURING THE DAY, DAWN WAS FILLED WITH RADIANT ENERGY WHICH ALLOWED HER TO FLY AND COMMAND THE SUN'S LIGHT. BUT WHEN THE SUN SET, SO DID HER POWERS, AND ELI FOUND HIMSELF STRONGER, FASTER, AND WITH KEENER PERCEPTIONS. HE WAS NOW A CREATURE OF THE NIGHT, ABLE TO BLEND SEAMLESSLY INTO THE SHADOWS. JUST AS ALARMING, THE PAIR COULD NOW COMMUNICATE WITH ONE ANOTHER BY THOUGHT.

REALIZING THAT THEY WERE NOW WONDERS, THE PAIR FELT OBLIGATED TO ACT THE PART. DAWN ENROLLED IN NIGHT CLASSES AND SPENT HER DAY FIGHTING CRIME AND (GRUDGINGLY) LEARNING TO USE HER PRODIGIOUS POWERS. ELI TOOK ON THE ROLE OF MENTOR, INVESTIGATING CRIMES AND PASSING ON HIS SPECIAL OPS TRAINING TO HIS YOUNGER PARTNER. THE TWO HAVE HAD A DIFFICULT TIME ADJUSTING TO THEIR NEW CAREERS: DAWN CRAVES THE IRRESPONSIBLE LIFE OF A YOUNG COLLEGE WOMAN, WHILE ELI WAS HOPING TO LEAVE THE SHADOWY VIOLENCE OF HIS MILITARY LIFE BEHIND HIM. AS A RESULT, DAWN IS OFTEN HARD TO FIND, DITCHING HER HEROIC RESPONSIBILITIES IN FAVOR OF A SOCIAL LIFE OR SCHOOL WORK. ELI, WHO ALREADY FEELS ENORMOUS GUILT OVER THE ENTIRE BUSINESS, IS FORCING HIS YOUNG PARTNER TO GROW UP OVERNIGHT ... AND HATING HIMSELF FOR IT, EVERY MINUTE.

APPEARANCE:

ELI PLEASANCE IS A GRIM AND RUGGED 40-SOMETHING MAN WITH STEELY-GRAY HAIR IN THE CUT OF A MILITARY OFFICER, AND A PHYSICAL BUILD TO MATCH. HE'S SOMETHING OF A CHAMELEON, WEARING CLOTHING THAT SUITS HIS MISSION, BE IT A RECON EXPEDITION TO THE INNER CITY OR A BLACK-TIE AFFAIR IN HOLLYWOOD. DAWN, HOWEVER, IS A PRETTY 20 YEAR-OLD WITH GOLDEN HAIR, BRIGHT BLUE EYES, AND FASHION SENSE. HER NATURAL Demeanor IS CHEERFUL AND OPTIMISTIC, BUT HER NEW LIFE HAS FORCED HER TO COME TO GRIPS WITH SECRETS AND SHADOWS, SOMETHING THAT IS TAKING A LITTLE GETTING USED TO.

WHEN DUSK AND DAWN TAKE UP THEIR JUNGIAN ASPECTS, THEIR FEATURES AND APPAREL CHANGE. ELI'S FEATURES ARE CONCEALED BY A DARK COWL, AND HIS BLACK CLOAK MAKES IT EASY FOR HIM TO MERGE WITH THE SHADOWS. DAWN'S HAIR BECOMES EVEN MORE GOLD, WHILE HER EYES GIVE OFF A PALE RADIANCE AND SHE IS SHEATHED IN PALE LIGHT. THEIR CHEST SYMBOLS DEPICT THE DUSK AND DAWN IN OPPOSING COLORS.

ABILITIES

DUSK AND DAWN ARE PERSONIFICATIONS OF THE ARCHETYPAL NIGHT AND DAY. FOR DAWN, THIS MANIFESTS IN THE POWER OF FLIGHT AND THE ABILITY TO CREATE ANY SORT OF LIGHT - FROM A VAST FIELD OF ILLUMINATION TO A NARROW BEAM WITH THE POWER OF A LASER. SHE IS ALSO IMMUNE TO ALL LIGHT AND HEAT, WHICH SHE HAS FOUND TO BE ENORMOUSLY USEFUL WHEN WORKING ON HER TAN. HER MUNDANE SKILLS ARE LIMITED BUT SHE IS A QUICK LEARNER, AND SHE'S PICKING UP ON ELI'S COMBAT TRAINING ALL TOO QUICKLY. AT NIGHT, DAWN LOSES ALL HER POWERS BUT GAINS AN EXTRA POINT OF DETERMINATION FROM HER "SUN-CHILD" CHALLENGE.

DUSK HAS BECOME IDEALLY SUITED TO NOCTURNAL ACTIVITIES, WITH ENHANCED STRENGTH, STAMINA, SPEED AND SENSES. BY NIGHT HE WIELDS A POWERFUL CHARISMA, WHICH HE USES TO INTIMIDATE AND INTERROGATE. WHEN IN SHADOW, HE IS ALL BUT UNDETECTABLE. EVEN WITHOUT HIS POWERS, HOWEVER, ELI IS A COMPETENT INVESTIGATOR AND STREET FIGHTER. BOTH ELI AND DAWN CAN READ EACH OTHER'S THOUGHTS ACROSS ANY DISTANCE, SOMETHING WHICH THEY FIND USEFUL WHEN COOPERATING ON A CASE, AND ANYTHING FROM EMBARRASSING TO ANNOYING AT OTHER TIMES. DURING THE DAY, ELI LOSES HIS POWERS AND 2 POINTS OF COORDINATION, STRENGTH, AWARENESS AND WILL-POWER, BUT HE GAINS A POINT OF DETERMINATION.

DUSK & DAWN

STORIES

DUSK AND DAWN ARE IMPORTANT TO STORIES OF INTERDEPENDENCY. AN EASY PARTNERSHIP WOULDN'T BE INTERESTING, SO THEY ARE MOST USEFUL WHEN SOMEONE IS THREATENING THAT PARTNERSHIP, OR WHEN THEY ATTEMPT TO REJECT IT. THEIR ORIGIN IS ALSO A POTENTIAL OPENING FOR PLENTY OF OTHER HEROES AND VILLAINS WHO GOT THEIR POWERS IN A SIMILAR WAY.

SOMEONE BREAKS INTO ELI'S OFFICE AND STEALS HIS NOTES ON AWAKENING THE JUNGIAN ARCHETYPES! SOON A RASH OF NEW VILLAINS BEGINS TO APPEAR, BASED ON WELL-KNOWN HUMAN FEARS AND TRAUMA. DUSK AND DAWN MAY HAVE THE MOST EXPERIENCE WITH THIS SORT OF THING, BUT THERE'S NO WAY THEY CAN HANDLE THE PROBLEM BY THEMSELVES.

ONE OF THE REASONS ELI AND DAWN ARE HAVING SO MUCH TROUBLE DEALING WITH THEIR NEW SITUATION IS BECAUSE THE ARCHETYPES THEY EMBODY TRADITIONALLY ENJOY A POWERFUL EMOTIONAL RELATIONSHIP - ONE THE 40-SOMETHING ELI AND 20-SOMETHING DAWN ARE BUSY DENYING. DAWN COMPENSATES BY PICKING UP A NEW BOYFRIEND EVERY COUPLE OF WEEKS AND THEN FINDING SOME EXCUSE TO CALL THE RELATIONSHIP OFF BEFORE IT GETS SERIOUS; ELI IS COMPENSATING BY AVOIDING HIS PARTNER AND GROWING INCREASINGLY CURT AND DISTANT. PLAYER CHARACTERS COME INTO THIS WHEN DAWN TARGETS A PC AS HER NEXT "LOVE" INTEREST.

A BAND OF WELL-MEANING BUT OBSESSED OCCULT INVESTIGATORS DECIDE THAT DUSK IS ACTUALLY A VAMPIRE, AND DAWN IS HIS MENTALLY ENSLAVED DUPE. THEY KIDNAP THE EX-MERCENARY AND ARE EAGER TO KILL HIM, AS SOON AS THEY CAN FIGURE OUT WHY NONE OF THE TRADITIONAL WEAPONS ARE WORKING. DAWN CAN SENSE HIS DANGER, BUT THERE'S NO WAY SHE CAN GET HER MENTOR OUT BY HERSELF.



MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS

HE'S SO GOOD, HE DOESN'T NEED POWERS. THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS HAS MADE HIS BODY INTO A LIVING WEAPON, BATTLING SUPERVILLAINS USING ONLY SKILL, DETERMINATION, AND CLEVERNESS.

EXAMPLES: BLACK CANARY, IRON FIST, JUDOMASTER, KARATE KID, THE QUESTION, RICHARD DRAGON: KUNG FU FIGHTER, SHANG CHI, WHITE TIGER

RELATED ARCHETYPES: DARK AVENGER, FOCUSED HERO

QUALITIES & CHALLENGES: THE TRADITIONAL MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS HAS STUDIED IN THE ORIENT AT THE FEET OF INSCRUTABLE MASTERS. ALTERNATELY, HE IS AN AMERICAN WHOSE FOREIGN-BORN PARENTS PASSED ON FAMILY SECRETS NORMALLY FORBIDDEN TO WESTERNERS. HOWEVER, WITH OUR INCREASING AWARENESS OF THE MANY MARTIAL TRADITIONS WORLD-WIDE, A MODERN MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS MIGHT PREFER BRAZILIAN CAPOEIRA, ESCRIMA STICK-FIGHTING, OR THE TRADITIONS OF INDIA. REGARDLESS OF HIS PERSONAL STYLE AND ORIGIN, THERE IS A CERTAIN GLOBE-TROTTERING ASPECT TO THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS AS HE FACES CHAMPIONS FROM MANY CULTURES AND MANY LANDS, EACH EXPERT IN THEIR OWN FORM AND EACH EAGER TO TEST THEIR SKILLS AGAINST THE MASTER. SOMETIMES THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS WILL ADAPT THESE NEW FORMS INTO HIS OWN REPERTOIRE AND BE ABLE TO SWITCH BETWEEN VARIOUS STYLES AT NEED, BUT USUALLY HE HAS ONLY THEORETICAL KNOWLEDGE OF OTHER TECHNIQUES WHILE ALWAYS REFINING HIS OWN, CHOSEN, STYLE TO PERFECTION. HE MAY HAVE QUALITIES LIKE "WELL TRAVELED" OR "FRIENDS EVERYWHERE" TO REPRESENT HIS DIVERSE EXPERIENCES IN FOREIGN LANDS.

THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS HAS RIVAL STUDENTS WHO COMPETED FOR THE ATTENTION OF THEIR SENSEI, AND SOMETIMES THE SENSEI HIMSELF IS STILL ALIVE AND A RECURRING CHARACTER. ALTHOUGH POSSESSED OF GREATER SKILL AND WISDOM THAN THE HERO, THE SENSEI IS TOO OLD, ECCENTRIC, AND FRAIL TO BATTLE EVIL ANY LONGER. HE HAS ENTRUSTED HIS BEST STUDENT WITH THE GREATEST SECRETS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS, AND THE HERO IS OBLIGED TO ONE DAY PASS THOSE SKILLS ON TO ANOTHER STUDENT, SO THE HERO BECOMES THE SENSEI. IF THE HERO HAS A RIVAL STUDENT AS AN ENEMY, THAT RIVAL MAY KNOW THE SECRET WEAKNESS IN THE HERO'S TECHNIQUE OR MAY BE RESPONSIBLE FOR DESTROYING THE TEMPLE WHERE THE HERO STUDIED, THUS MAKING THE HERO AND HIS ENEMY THE LAST LIVING DISCIPLES OF THE TRUE PATH OF KUNG FU. ALTERNATELY, THE HERO WAS TRAINED BY A SCHOOL OF EVIL NINJA OR ASSASSINS, AND HE HAS FLED THAT SCHOOL TO SATISFY THE DEMANDS OF HIS CONSCIENCE. IN THIS CASE, HE IS LIKELY PURSUED BY HIS FELLOW STUDENTS AND FORMER MASTER, WHO HAS COMMANDED HIS DEATH.

WISE BEYOND HIS YEARS AND A PACIFIST BY NATURE, THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS FIGHTS TO PROTECT OTHERS AND SEE JUSTICE DONE. RESPONSIBLE, ALWAYS PROTECTING THE WEAK AND INNOCENT, HE IS A ZEN-LIKE CHARACTER WHO LONGS FOR A DAY WHEN HIS SKILLS ARE NO LONGER NECESSARY. HE AVOIDS GUNS AND OTHER TRAPPINGS OF WESTERN CULTURE, IS PROBABLY A VEGETARIAN, SPIRITUALLY AND ENVIRONMENTALLY CONSCIOUS, AND HE MAY NOT WEAR A COSTUME, PREFERRING INSTEAD CIVILIAN CLOTHES. MARTIAL ARTS STORIES OFTEN SWERVE INTO THE MYSTICAL, INVOLVING CULTS, EVIL SORCERERS, AND MYTHICAL MONSTERS. LIKewise, THEY ARE OFTEN CRIME STORIES BASED ON ASIAN MOBS, HUMAN TRAFFICKING, AND DRUG SALES. BUT BECAUSE THE MARTIAL ARTS ARE SO LINKED TO ASIAN CULTURE IN THE AMERICAN MIND, HIGH TECHNOLOGY CAN OFTEN BECOME A STORY THEME, LEADING TO SPY SAGAS WITH FANCY GADGETS AND 21ST CENTURY CRIME.

THE PURE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS HAS NO POWERS BEYOND HIS UNCANNY FIGHTING TECHNIQUES, WHICH MAKES HIM A SOLO HERO SELDOM SEEN ON TEAMS. ON A TEAM THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS IS QUICKLY OVERSHADOWED BY AVATARS, ARMORED WONDERS AND ULTIMATE HEROES, AND HE MUST ADAPT IF HE IS TO SURVIVE. HE SOMETIMES ACQUIRES ONE SPECIFIC SUPER-POWER WHICH HELPS EVEN THE ODDS (MAKING HIM A FOCUSED HERO) OR HE USES GADGETS AND WEAPONS (MAKING HIM A DARK AVENGER).

MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS

POWERS:

THE SPIRITUAL OR MYSTICAL SIDE OF MARTIAL ARTS CAN SERVE AS AN EXPLANATION FOR MANY POWERS, ESPECIALLY IF YOU ARE A FAN OF THE MORE WILD ACTION MOVIES OF THE LAST FEW DECADES. EVERY POWER FROM FLIGHT TO HEALING HAS BEEN DEMONSTRATED BY MARTIAL ARTS HEROES IN FILM, BUT COMIC BOOK MASTERS OF THE MARTIAL ARTS TYPICALLY RELY ON STUNTS FOR MOST OF THESE TRICKS AND GIVE UP POWERS IN FAVOR OF A LARGE STORE OF DETERMINATION.

SPECIALTIES:

REGARDLESS OF HIS PROWESS, THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS SHOULD TAKE AS MUCH MARTIAL ARTS AS HE CAN. AFTER ALL, "EXPERT IN THE MARTIAL ARTS" JUST DOESN'T SOUND AS GOOD. ACROBATICS, LANGUAGES, STEALTH AND WEAPONS ARE ALSO COMMON. DEPENDING ON YOUR STYLE, YOU MAY HAVE TRAINING IN OCCULT, INVESTIGATION AND MEDICINE.

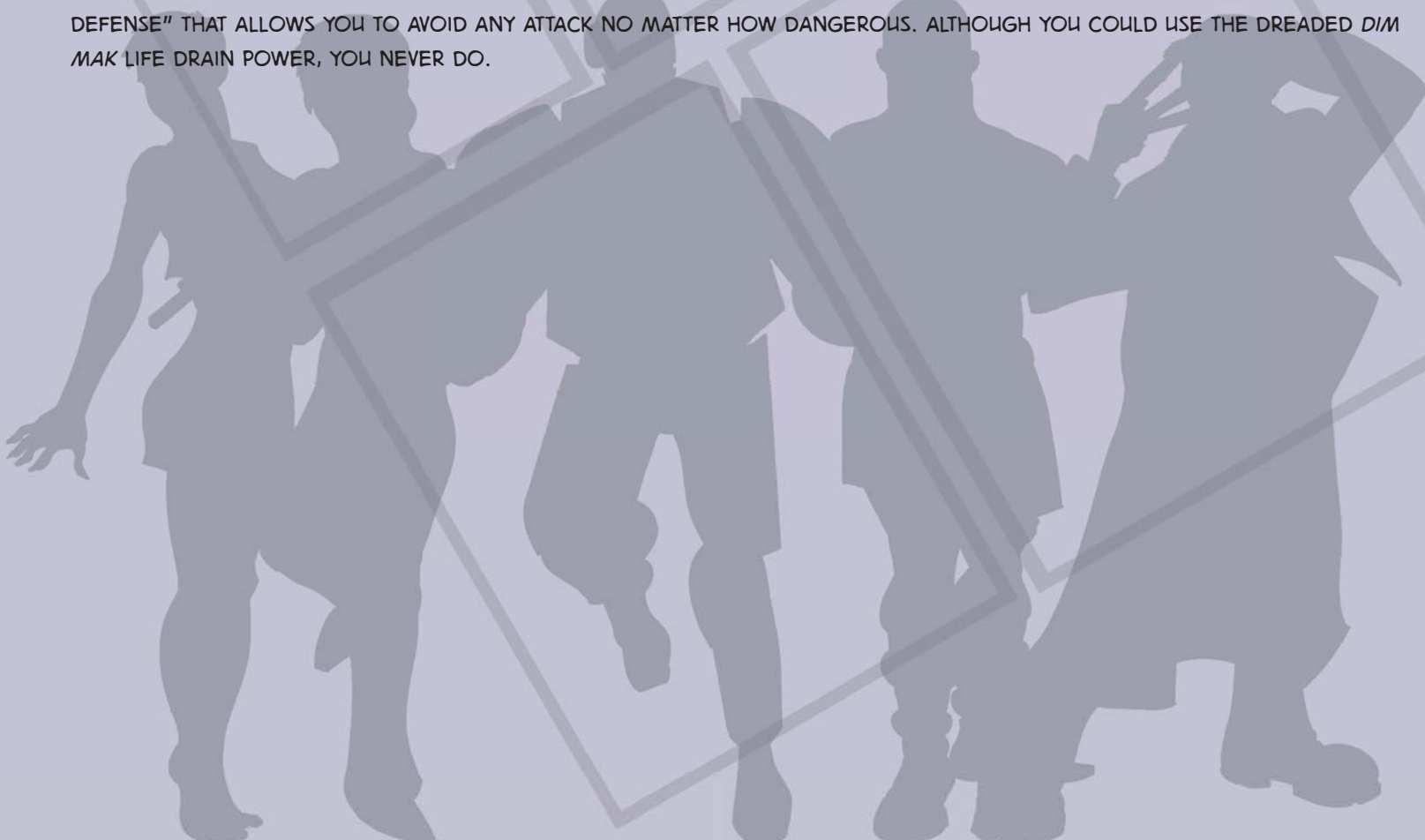
STUNTS:

THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS LIVES BY HIS STUNTS. ANYONE CAN THROW A PUNCH, BUT ONLY THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS CAN WIELD THE AWESOME POWER OF THE SPINNING MONKEY KICK. IN FACT, YOU SHOULD THROW OUT NAMES FOR YOUR VARIOUS ATTACKS EVEN WHEN YOU AREN'T USING A STUNT.

USE STUNTS TO REPLICATE OCCASIONAL POWERS, SUCH AS PARALYSIS, FAST ATTACK, HEALING, INVISIBILITY OR BLINDING. AN AURA CAN REPRESENT YOUR INSTANT COUNTER-ATTACK WHENEVER AN ENEMY TRIES TO STRIKE YOU; USE PHASING FOR AN "ULTIMATE DEFENSE" THAT ALLOWS YOU TO AVOID ANY ATTACK NO MATTER HOW DANGEROUS. ALTHOUGH YOU COULD USE THE DREADED *DIM MAK* LIFE DRAIN POWER, YOU NEVER DO.

ABILITIES

THE MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS HAS PROWESS AS A SUPER-POWER; IT SHOULD BE 7+. COORDINATION AND STRENGTH MAY BE AS HIGH AS 6. EVEN HIS AWARENESS AND WILLPOWER WILL BE GOOD. INTELLECT IS PROBABLY HIS LOWEST ABILITY.



THE DRAGON

FIRST APPEARANCE: THE DRAGON #1

ARCHETYPES: MASTER OF THE MARTIAL ARTS, MYTHIC HERO, OCCULT HERO

QUALITIES: MASTER OF KUNG FU, LIGHTNING FAST, A THOUSAND LIVES

CHALLENGES: HUNTED BY AGENTS OF THE OLD DRAGON, TRAGIC FIGURE

PROWESS 9

COORDINATION 8

STRENGTH 5

INTELLECT 4

AWARENESS 5

WILLPOWER 5

DETERMINATION 2

STAMINA 10

POWERS:

DANGER SENSE,
SUPER-SENSES 2 (BLIND SIGHT,
CHI SENSE)

SPECIALTIES:

ATHLETICS, MARTIAL ARTS MASTER,
MENTAL RESISTANCE, OCCULT,
WRESTLING EXPERT

STUNTS

BATTLE CRY (WILLPOWER) THE DRAGON CAN USE THE INTIMIDATE ACTION ON A GROUP OF FOES WITHIN CLOSE RANGE;

BATTLEFIELD PUNCHES (PROWESS) WHEN THE DRAGON USES THIS TECHNIQUE, HE GAINS FAST ATTACK 9;

BREAKING BLOW (STRENGTH) THE DRAGON HAS STRENGTH 7 WHEN HE IS TRYING TO BREAK AN INANIMATE OBJECT, SUCH AS A PILE OF BRICKS OR AN ENGINE BLOCK;

CHINESE MEDICINE (WILLPOWER) THE DRAGON CAN SPEND A POINT OF DETERMINATION TO ACQUIRE HEALING 5 FOR ONE PAGE;

COUNTERPUNCH (PROWESS) WHILE THE DRAGON IS USING HIS COUNTERPUNCH TECHNIQUE, HE IS TREATED AS HAVING AN AURA EQUAL TO HIS STRENGTH (5);



THE DRAGON

STUNTS CONTINUED...

DIM MAK (PROWESS) THE DRAGON CAN SPEND A POINT OF DETERMINATION TO ACQUIRE AFFLICTION 9;

EAR CLAP (PROWESS) WHEN THE DRAGON USES HIS EAR CLAP ATTACK AND STUNS THE TARGET, THE ATTACK DOES NO DAMAGE, THE FOE IS STILL STUNNED, AND IS ALSO DEAFENED FOR THE DURATION OF THE STUN; THIS ATTACK CAN STUN EVEN IF IT INFLECTS LESS THAN 0 DAMAGE;

HORSE STANCE (STRENGTH) WHILE THE DRAGON IS IN HORSE STANCE, HE CANNOT BE SLAMMED BY ANY FOE OF STRENGTH 7 OR LESS,

ONE INCH PUNCH (PROWESS) WHEN THE DRAGON USES HIS ONE INCH PUNCH, HE CAN SLAM THE FOE EVEN IF HE DOES LESS THAN 0 DAMAGE;

PRESSURE POINT STRIKE (PROWESS) WHEN THE DRAGON USES THIS STRIKE, HE GAINS PARALYSIS 5

ORIGIN

"YOU MUST BE LIKE THE WATER, SOFT AND YIELDING YET ABLE TO LEAVE YOUR IMPRINT IN SOLID STONE. WHEN YOUR FOE ADVANCES, YOU MUST RETREAT. WHEN YOUR FOE RETREATS, YOU MUST ADVANCE. YOU MUST BE SPONTANEOUS, LIKE THE REFLECTION OF A BIRD PASSING OVER THE SURFACE OF A LAKE."

IN 1973 A YOUNG MAN WITH A BRIGHT FUTURE AHEAD OF HIM, A MASTER OF MARTIAL ARTS, DIED IN WHAT SEEMED TO BE A FREAK ACCIDENT: AN ALLERGIC REACTION TO A COMBINATION OF INNOCUOUS PAIN KILLERS. MANY RUMORS WERE SPREAD CONCERNING HIS DEATH. SOME SUGGESTED HE WAS MURDERED, AND A FEW WHISPERED THAT THE KILLERS MAY HAVE BEEN ASSASSINS SENT TO SILENCE THIS MAN, WHO WAS TEACHING TO HOLLYWOOD AND THE WORLD SECRETS PREVIOUSLY KNOWN ONLY TO SECRET AND ANCIENT MASTERS. BUT ALL THESE STORIES - FROM THE FANTASTIC TO THE ABSURD - WERE WRONG. THE TRUTH WAS FAR, FAR STRANGER.

LONG AGO, ALMOST BEFORE RECORDED HISTORY, THE PEOPLE WERE ENSLAVED BY A TERRIFYING DRAGON. ALTHOUGH A BEING OF GREAT POWER AND MAJESTY, THE DRAGON USED ITS MAGNIFICENCE FOR EVIL, AND ALL WHO GAZED UPON IT WERE AFRAID. THUS IT WAS THAT, CRINGING IN THE SHADOWS AND FEARFUL OF THE DRAGON'S TYRANNY, THE PEOPLE BARELY NOTICED WHEN A YOUNG WARRIOR CAME AMONGST THEM SEEKING DIRECTIONS TO THE DRAGON'S CAVE. THIS WARRIOR WAS USHERED ON HIS WAY, AND QUICKLY TOO, LEST HIS IMPERTINENT QUESTIONS DRAW THE ATTENTION OF THAT WHICH HE SOUGHT. FOR THE DRAGON HAD MANY EYES AND EARS AMONG THE PEOPLE; THERE WERE THOSE WHO SOUGHT TO RISE IN THE ESTEEM OF THE DRAGON BY SERVING IT. BUT WHEN THIS WARRIOR REACHED THE DRAGON'S CAVE HE REVEALED THAT HE CAME NOT TO SERVE THE DRAGON, BUT TO DESTROY IT FOREVER, AND END ITS CRUEL MASTERY OVER A TERRIFIED LAND. AND THUS THE CHAMPION AND THE DRAGON FOUGHT, AND THE DRAGON BREATHED A RIVER OF BRIGHT FLAME UPON THE HERO, AND THE HERO'S BODY WAS DESTROYED.

YET THE WARRIOR LIVED ON. AN IMMATERIAL SPIRIT OF PURE FLAME, HE LAUGHED AT THE DRAGON, AND TAUNTED HIM. "YOU HAVE GIVEN ME EVERYTHING I NEED TO DEFEAT YOU NOW," HE SAID. "FOR I KNEW I COULD NEVER DEFEAT YOU IN A SINGLE LIFETIME. INSTEAD I PRAYED, I FASTED, AND I PURIFIED MY SPIRIT SO THAT WHEN YOU DESTROYED MY BODY WITH YOUR FLAMES MY SOUL WOULD BE CLEAN, AND LIVE FOREVER. NOW MY SPIRIT IS MINGLED WITH YOURS, AND MY SOUL IS THE SOUL OF A DRAGON TOO. I SHALL BE BORN INTO A NEW BODY AND CONTINUE MY TRAINING, AND A THOUSAND LIVES I SHALL LEAD, ONE AFTER THE OTHER, AND WITH EACH I SHALL BECOME MIGHTIER, SWIFTER, AND MORE DEADLY, UNTIL IN TIME I CAN DEFEAT EVEN YOU. AND THIS CURSE I PLACE UPON YOU: THAT UNTIL THE DAY I RETURN YOU SHALL FEAR THE SMALLEST SHADOW, FOR YOU SHALL THINK IT ME, RETURNED AT LAST." BUT THE DRAGON LAUGHED NOW, AND DISMISSED THE SPIRIT OF THE MAN-DRAGON, CALLING HIM A MERE SHADOW WITHOUT SUBSTANCE. AND THE MAN-DRAGON DEPARTED.

THE DRAGON

BUT AS THE MONTHS CREPT BY THE DRAGON BEGAN TO WONDER IF PERHAPS THE WARRIOR HAD INDEED FOUND A WAY TO CHEAT DEATH, PURIFIED AS HE WAS IN THE HOT CAULDRON OF THE DRAGON'S FLAME. AND THE DRAGON BEGAN TO INQUIRE THROUGH HIS MANY AGENTS ABOUT CHILDREN BORN IN THE YEAR AFTER THE MAN'S PASSING. AND ALTHOUGH NONE OF THESE CHILDREN SEEMED TO BE THE HERO RETURNED, STILL THE DRAGON FELT A GNAWING UNCERTAINTY IN HIS BREAST, AND HE KNEW THE MAN'S DYING CURSE HAD COME TO PASS. YEARS LATER, AS THE DRAGON HID DEEP INSIDE HIS MOUNTAIN RETREAT, WORD CAME TO HIM OF THE DRAGON-WARRIOR, WHO HAD SURFACED AT LAST. AND THE DRAGON FELT HIS COURAGE FLICKER AND DIE, AND HE SENT AN ARMY OF SOLDIERS TO SEE TO THE HERO'S DEATH. THEY RETURNED WITH HIS HEAD, AND WHEN THE DRAGON RECOGNIZED IT, HIS BLOOD WENT COLD, FOR HE KNEW THE CYCLE WAS JUST BEGINNING.

MANY GENERATIONS HAVE COME AND GONE SINCE THEN. FEAR LONG AGO DROVE THE DRAGON DEEP INTO HIDING. HE GAVE UP THE RULE OF MEN, SLOWLY DEVOTING MORE AND MORE OF HIS WAKING ENERGY TO THE ENDLESS HUNT FOR THE MAN-DRAGON WHO VOWED TO SLAY HIM. NOW HIS HIDDEN AGENTS ARE EVERYWHERE, IN EVERY SHADOW AND DARK RECESS OF THE WORLD, SEEKING THIS CHAMPION WHOSE SPIRIT IS IMMORTAL. MANY TIMES HAVE THEY FOUND HIM, FOR THE HERO CAN HIDE HIS FACE ONLY SO LONG. WHEREVER HE WANDERS, THE PEOPLE SENSE THE GREATNESS OF HIS SPIRIT, AND THEY CALL HIM DRAGON, AND MANY OTHER NAMES BESIDES. SOMETIMES HIS IMMORTAL SPIRIT HAS COME BACK IN THE BODY OF A GIRL, AND THEN HE IS CALLED SAI FON, "LITTLE PHOENIX." BUT USUALLY HE IS JUN FAN, "RETURN AGAIN," OR SOMETIMES SEI LUNG, "LITTLE DRAGON." EACH TIME HE HAS RETURNED, THE ASSASSINS WHO SERVE THE OLD DRAGON HAVE FOUND HIM AND SLAIN HIM, BUT EACH TIME THE TASK BECOMES HARDER, MORE DIFFICULT, FOR JUN FAN HAS GROWN STRONG OVER HIS MANY LIVES, AND THE TIME FOR THE FINAL BATTLE IS NEAR.

IT WAS IN THIS WAY THEN THAT A YOUNG ACTOR AND MARTIAL ARTIST WAS KILLED IN THE PRIME OF HIS LIFE BY HIDDEN ASSASSINS, AS THE TERRIFIED DRAGON HUDDLED DEEPER IN HIS LIGHTLESS DEN. ALMOST AT ONCE THE LITTLE DRAGON WAS BORN AGAIN, AND AS HE GREW TO MANHOOD HIS ENLIGHTENED SOUL RETAINED THE MEMORIES OF HIS MANY FORMER LIVES. HE REMEMBERED NOW HIS DESTINY, AND THE POWER IN HIS HANDS. BOLDLY AND WITHOUT FEAR HE BEGAN TO WALK THE WORLD, SEEKING THE FOOTPRINTS OF HIS QUARRY IN THE STARS, THE WIND, AND THE WATER. THE TAO WALKS WITH HIM, AND WITH EVERY STEP HE COMES CLOSER TO THE DAY WHEN HE AT LAST FULFILLS HIS ANCIENT QUEST, AND DELIVERS THE PEOPLE OF THE WORLD FROM THEIR UNSEEN MASTER. THEN AT LAST SEI LUNG'S ETERNAL LIFE WILL COME TO ITS LONG ANTICIPATED END.

ABILITIES:

JUN FAN IS AN ABSOLUTE MASTER OF HAND TO HAND COMBAT, AND OVER MANY LIFETIMES HAS REFINED HIS PHILOSOPHY AND FIGHTING TECHNIQUES TO INCLUDE A NUMBER OF SUPERNATURAL POWERS THAT RELY UPON HIS HARNESSSED CHI. HE CALLS HIS STYLE "THE WAY OF THE INTERCEPTING FIST," BUT IN TRUTH IT IS MORE OF A PHILOSOPHY THAN A TRUE FIGHTING STYLE. INDEED, IT IS IN MANY WAYS AN "ANTI-STYLE", ONE THAT PLACES SPONTANEITY AND FLEXIBILITY OVER RIGID FORMS. THE DRAGON IS CONSTANTLY LEARNING AND EXPERIMENTING WITH NEW TECHNIQUES IN ORDER TO BROADEN HIS CAPABILITIES AND KEEP HIS FIGHTING FRESH AND INNOVATIVE. HE BELIEVES THAT ADHERENCE TO ANY ONE STYLE ONLY MAKES A FIGHTER MORE PREDICTABLE AND THUS EASIER TO DEFEAT.

THE DRAGON HAS MANY STUNTS; MOST OF THEM DO NOT COST HIM DETERMINATION, BUT HE CAN ONLY USE ONE OF THEM AT A TIME. HE IS FAMOUS FOR HIS "ONE INCH PUNCH," WHICH SENDS FOES FLYING BACKWARDS, AND BY FOCUSING HIS EFFORTS ON A SINGLE FOE HE CAN STRIKE FOUR TIMES IN A SINGLE SECOND. HIS "BREAKING BLOW" IS WHAT HE USES TO DEMOLISH SOLID OBJECTS WITH A PUNCH. (SPEND A POINT OF DETERMINATION TO BREAK THE BRICK ON THE BOTTOM OF THE STACK WHILE LEAVING THE REST UNTOUCHED.) HE CAN PARALYZE A FOE BY STRIKING A QUICK SERIES OF PRESSURE POINTS, AND HE USES "STICKING" TECHNIQUES TO IMMOBILIZE A FOE AT VERY CLOSE RANGE (HIS WRESTLING SPECIALTY USUALLY SUFFICES FOR THIS). HIS FAMOUS "CAT SCREECH" BATTLE CRY (SOMETIMES REPLACED BY AN "ATATATAH" SOUND) FRIGHTENS AND INTIMIDATES HIS FOES, WHILE AN

THE DRAGON

INSTANTANEOUS COUNTERPUNCH IS MOST USEFUL WHEN FIGHTING MANY OPPONENTS AT ONCE. JUN FAN IS A STUDENT OF ORIENTAL HEALING ARTS WHICH INVOLVE ACUPRESSURE AND CHI MANIPULATION, AND HIS SENSES ARE EXTRAORDINARILY KEEN, ALLOWING HIM TO FIGHT PERFECTLY EVEN IF BLIND.

WITHOUT QUESTION, HOWEVER, THE DRAGON'S MOST DANGEROUS TECHNIQUE IS THE DREADED "TOUCH OF DEATH," A CHI STRIKE WHICH UTILIZES A SERIES OF FIVE PRECISELY PLACED BLOWS TO POISON THE TARGET'S SOUL. THE "DIM MAK," AS THIS TECHNIQUE IS KNOWN, IS A WEAPON OF LAST RESORT FOR THE DRAGON; HE HAS ONLY EVER USED IT A HANDFUL OF TIMES, EACH TIME RESULTING IN A MAN'S DEATH.

STORIES

AS THE WORLD'S FOREMOST MASTER OF KUNG FU, THE DRAGON IS LIKELY TO BE INVOLVED IN STORIES WHICH INVOLVE THE MARTIAL ARTS. HIS NATURE AS A REINCARNATING HERO LENDS HIM TO STORIES WITH A HISTORICAL ELEMENT, AND HIS FORMER LIFE AS A HOLLYWOOD ICON MAKES HIM INSTANTLY RECOGNIZABLE.

ONE OF THE PLAYER CHARACTERS IS ACTUALLY A WEAPON CREATED BY THE OLD DRAGON IN AN EFFORT TO DESTROY JUN FAN. THIS IS A "SECRET ORIGIN"; EVEN THE PC DOES NOT KNOW THE TRUTH BEHIND HIS POWERS. BUT WHENEVER JUN FAN IS NEAR, THE PC'S POWERS INCREASE AND HE IS OVERCOME BY A FURIOUS BATTLE RAGE. CAN THIS EVIL INFLUENCE BE BROKEN, WITHOUT COSTING THE PC ALL HIS SUPERHUMAN POWERS? AND WHAT IF HE IS ACTUALLY POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DESTROY JUN FAN ONCE MORE, THIS TIME FOR GOOD?

A PC TRAINED IN THE MARTIAL ARTS CONFRONTS A VILLAIN, BUT IS DEFEATED BY A SEEMINGLY UNBEATABLE TECHNIQUE. NURSING HIS WOUNDS, THE HERO LEARNS THAT THERE IS A WAY TO DEFEAT HIS RIVAL: A SECRET MOVE KNOWN ONLY TO JUN FAN. THE PC NOW HAS TO FIND THE DRAGON AND CONVINCHE HIM TO TEACH THE SECRET MANEUVER.

JUN FAN LEARNS THAT SOME OF HIS FORMER PUPILS FROM PREVIOUS LIVES HAVE TURNED HIS TECHNIQUES TO EVIL, TEACHING UN-SCRUPULOUS STUDENTS WHO USE THEIR SKILLS FOR VIOLENCE AND CRUELTY. SEQUESTERED IN A REMOTE LOCALE AND PROTECTED BY ADVANCED SCIENCE, THIS DEN OF SERPENTS IS TOO DANGEROUS FOR ANY ONE MAN TO ATTACK ALONE. THE DRAGON APPROACHES THE PCS AND ASKS FOR THEIR HELP IN REMOVING THIS STAIN FROM HIS HONOR.

APPEARANCE

THE DRAGON LOOKS EXACTLY LIKE BRUCE LEE, PERHAPS A YEAR OR TWO BEFORE THAT MAN'S TRAGIC DEATH. HE'S SHORT AND LEAN BUT INCREDIBLY POWERFUL, WITH PARTICULARLY STRONG FOREARMS AND A DISCIPLINED ABDOMEN. HIS HAIR IS BLACK AND KEPT SHORT, AND HE CAN GO FROM A QUIET CALM TO A WIDE AND EXPRESSIVE SMILE IN AN INSTANT.

MINORITY HERO

REGARDLESS OF HIS POWERS, MOTIF, OR SKILLS, THE MINORITY HERO IS FIRST AND FOREMOST A REPRESENTATIVE OF HIS RACE, SOCIAL CLASS, GENDER, RELIGIOUS CONVICTION OR EVEN SEXUAL ORIENTATION. HE STANDS UP FOR HIS GROUP, WHATEVER IT IS, PROVING HIMSELF EVERY BIT AS GOOD AS THE WASPS THAT SURROUND HIM.

EXAMPLES: BATWOMAN, KATE KANE; BLACK LIGHTNING; BLUE BEETLE, JAIME REYES; EL HOMBRE; FALCON; POWER MAN, LUKE CAGE; TRIATHLON, DELROY GARRETT; RED WOLF

RELATED ARCHETYPES: DEFENDER, FOCUSED HERO, HANDICAPPED HERO, SIDEKICK, SPIN-OFF HEROINE

QUALITIES & CHALLENGES: THE SPECIFIC CHOICE OF MINORITY WHICH THE MINORITY HERO REPRESENTS IS VERY IMPORTANT AND INFLUENCES THE CHARACTER'S BACKGROUND, HOME TOWN, ENEMIES, ALLIES, AND RIVALS. BECAUSE HE WILL PROTECT THE AREA WHERE HIS MINORITY LIVES, HE HAS ASPECTS OF THE DEFENDER ARCHETYPE. EVEN THE UNIQUE SPEECH PATTERNS OF HIS MINORITY CAN QUALIFY AS A QUALITY, WORKING LIKE A CATCHPHRASE. IF THE MINORITY HERO IS PUT IN A SITUATION WHERE HE MUST CHOOSE TO HELP EITHER A MEMBER OF HIS OWN MINORITY GROUP OR A GENERIC VICTIM, THE MINORITY HERO WILL CHOOSE HIS OWN PEOPLE EVERY TIME, AND THIS PRIORITIZATION OF ONE GROUP OVER OTHERS SOMETIMES GETS HIM IN TROUBLE WITH OTHER HEROES WITH DIFFERENT STANDARDS. BUT ONCE HE PROVES THAT HE IS NOT AN "UNCLE TOM" OR SELL-OUT TRYING TO CULTIVATE POPULARITY FOR HIS OWN EGO OR SECURITY, THE MINORITY HERO WILL BE EMBRACED BY THOSE HE PROTECTS AND REPRESENTS, SO THAT THEY COME TO SEE HIM AS "THEIR HERO."

AN OUTSPOKEN CHARACTER, THE MINORITY HERO IS ONE OF THE MOST COMMON REBEL CHARACTERS, WILLING TO ARGUE WITH THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE TEAM WHEN HE SEES SOMETHING THAT ISN'T RIGHT. GOVERNMENT AND MEDIA FIGURES WILL SUCK UP TO THE MINORITY HERO IN AN ATTEMPT TO MAKE THEMSELVES LOOK GOOD. HE MAY FIND HIMSELF PLACED ON A HERO TEAM IN ORDER TO SATISFY AFFIRMATIVE ACTION QUOTAS OR OTHER CALCULATIONS WHICH SUGGEST THAT, IN ORDER FOR THE TEAM TO HAVE MAXIMUM POPULAR APPEAL, IT MUST HAVE A BLACK/LESBIAN/HISPANIC/MUTANT ON THE ROSTER. THIS CAN LEAD TO A RIVALRY WITH ANOTHER HERO WHO WAS DENIED HIS RIGHTFUL SPACE ON THE GROUP IN ORDER TO MAKE ROOM FOR THE "TOKEN."

MOST HEROES ARE OBLIGED TO MAINTAIN A STRICT PERSONAL CODE BUT THE MINORITY HERO FEELS THIS BURDEN ESPECIALLY HARD BECAUSE OF ALL THE EYES THAT ARE ON HIM. IF HE BEHAVES POORLY, IT IS PERCEIVED AS MORE THAN A MERE PERSONAL FAILING; IT IS AN INDICTMENT OF HIS ENTIRE SOCIAL OR ETHNIC GROUP. THE MINORITY HERO IS USUALLY "OUT," IN THE SENSE THAT EVERYONE IS AWARE OF HIS PARTICULAR ETHNICITY, BUT SOME CHARACTERS MAY BE "CLOSETED", AT LEAST AT FIRST. A HERO WORKING IN THE SOUTH MIGHT CONCEAL THE FACT THAT HE IS BLACK, IN ORDER TO AVOID THE PREJUDICE OF WHITES, AND A GAY HERO MIGHT SEE NO REASON OR NEED TO REVEAL TO HIS COLLEAGUES THAT HE IS HOMOSEXUAL, BUT THESE SECRETS USUALLY COME OUT EVENTUALLY, LEADING TO GENERAL ACCEPTANCE FROM OTHER HEROES BUT SOME NEGATIVE REACTIONS FROM RIVALS OR LOVED ONES WHO ARE MORE IGNORANT THAN TRULY SPITEFUL. BEFORE HE ACQUIRED HIS POWERS AND BECAME A HERO, THE MINORITY HERO WAS THE SUBJECT OF EXTREME PREJUDICE AND HE PROBABLY GREW UP POOR. HE MAY HAVE STRUGGLED TO GET A PROPER EDUCATION, BUT SUCCEEDED IN HIGHER EDUCATION THANKS TO WELL-DESERVED SCHOLARSHIPS BASED ON HIS INTELLECT OR PHYSICAL PROWESS.

AT LEAST SOME OF THE MINORITY HERO'S ENEMIES WILL COME FROM HIS OWN SOCIAL GROUP, AND MANY OF THEM WILL EMBODY THE NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES FOR THAT MINORITY. OTHERS WILL BE TRADITIONAL SUPER VILLAINS RECAST WITH THE HERO'S ETHNIC-

MINORITY HERO

ITY, RELIGION, OR ORIENTATION, JUST TO PROVE THAT ONE DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A WHITE STRAIGHT MAN TO BE EVIL.

POWERS:

AS WITH ABILITIES, A MINORITY HERO'S POWERS ARE INFLUENCED MORE BY HIS SECOND ARCHETYPE THAN BY HIS NATURE AS A MINORITY. BUT THE NATURE OF THE MINORITY HERO MAKES HIM A HERO WHO MUST PROVE HIS ABILITY AS A HERO WHILE SUFFERING UNDER SOME SORT OF HANDICAP OR LIMITATION; AS HIS RACE, ETHNICITY OR OTHER CHARACTERISTIC LIMITS HIM IN THE WORLD OF ORDINARY MEN, SO HIS LACK OF POWERS LIMITS HIM IN THE WORLD OF SUPERHEROICS. HE TRANSCENDS THIS LIMIT THROUGH CLEVERNESS, SKILL, AND A BOATLOAD OF DETERMINATION. FOR THIS REASON, MANY MINORITY HEROES HAVE ONLY ONE POWER, OR NONE AT ALL. THEY MAY RELY ON GADGETS OR WEAPONS INSTEAD OF POWERS, REINFORCING THE THEME OF A HERO WHO IS MADE, NOT BORN. SOMETIMES A MINORITY HERO HAS THE SAME POWERS AS A MORE FAMOUS WHITE HERO; IF THE HERO'S MINORITY IS "WOMAN," THIS MAKES HER A SPIN-OFF HEROINE.

SPECIALTIES:

THE MINORITY HERO RELIES ON TRAINING AND SKILL TO MAKE UP FOR RAW POWER, AND THIS USUALLY MEANS THAT SPECIALTIES ARE KEY. SCIENCE, WEAPONS, STEALTH AND MARTIAL ARTS ARE ALL LIKELY.

ABILITIES

THE MINORITY HERO WILL HAVE A SECOND ARCHETYPE WHICH FURTHER DEFINES HIS METHODS, ORIGIN, AND ROLE, AND THIS WILL HELP DETERMINE HIS ABILITIES AND POWERS. BECAUSE THE MINORITY HERO IS MORE HEROIC IF HE HAS LITTLE OR NO POWERS, HIS ABILITIES ARE USUALLY IN THE 4-6 RANGE.



THE RUBBERBAND MAN

FIRST APPEARANCE: THE INVINCIBLES #12

ARCHETYPES: MINORITY HERO, FOCUSED HERO

QUALITIES: THEME SONG, MUSIC SEMI-LEGEND, NEIGHBORHOOD HERO, SCHOOL OF HARD KNOCKS

CHALLENGES: DRIED UP, UNNOTICED, "TOKEN"

PROWESS 6

COORDINATION 4

STRENGTH 3

INTELLECT 3

AWARENESS 4

WILLPOWER 4

DETERMINATION 3

STAMINA 7



POWERS:

INVULNERABILITY 2,
STRETCHING 2,
SUPER-SPEED 1

SPECIALTIES:

ACROBATICS, INVESTIGATION EXPERT,
PERFORMANCE (MUSIC) EXPERT,
STEALTH, WRESTLING EXPERT

STUNTS

PARACHUTE (STRETCHING): RUBBERBAND MAN CAN EXTEND HIS BODY INTO A PARACHUTE SO THAT HE TAKES NO DAMAGE FROM ANY ORDINARY FALL.

ORIGIN

"Y'ALL PREPARE YOURSELF FOR THE RUBBERBAND MAN."

BY THE 1970S, THE GENERATION OF HEROES WHO HAD DEBUTED IN THE EARLY '60S HAD MATURED AND ACHIEVED GREAT FAME -IN THIS DECADE THEY HAD SOME OF THEIR MOST AMAZING ADVENTURES, SAVING THE WORLD (OR SOMETIMES EVEN THE ENTIRE UNIVERSE) IN SPECTACULAR FASHION. BUT NOT ALL HEROES WERE SO WELL KNOWN TO THE PUBLIC; MANY NEW HEROES DEBUTED DURING THIS TIME, AND THEY STRUGGLED TO ESCAPE THE SHADOW OF THEIR MORE FAMOUS BRETHREN. ONE OF THESE HEROES WAS MILO JEFFERSON, THE RUBBERBAND MAN.

THE RUBBERBAND MAN

JEFFERSON'S POWERS OF ELONGATION WERE HIS FREAKISH BIRTHRIGHT AND HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATED AS EARLY AS THE DAY OF HIS BIRTH (AN EXPERIENCE WHICH THE ATTENDING PHYSICIAN NEVER FORGOT, ONE CAN BE SURE). HE GREW UP IN CHICAGO'S SOUTH SIDE, A CHILD OF SEGREGATION, BUT HE FOUND COMFORT IN HIS BIZARRE TALENT. WHILE HIS PARENTS RAISED HIM TO BE CAREFUL ABOUT USING HIS ABILITIES IN PUBLIC, HE EXPLORED AND ENJOYED THEM IN ISOLATION. HE FELL INTO A MUSICAL CAREER BY ACCIDENT, ATTEMPTING TO EARN A LITTLE EXTRA MONEY FOR HIS FAMILY, BUT MILO ALWAYS HAD MORE TALENT THAN BUSINESS SENSE. THOUGH AN EXCITING MUSICIAN HE NEVER EARNED MORE THAN A SUBSISTENCE LIVING.

JEFFERSON'S "BIG BREAK" CAME WHEN HE SAVED A BLUES LEGEND FROM LYNCHING BY A WHITE STREET GANG. A WELL-KNOWN WHITE HERO APPEARED SECONDS TOO LATE, AND ENDURED THE JEERS OF SPECTATORS WHO INSISTED THEY DIDN'T NEED ANY WELL-MEANING INTERLOPER TO HELP THEM WHEN THEY HAD A PERFECTLY GOOD HERO RIGHT HERE: THE RUBBERBAND MAN. IN THIS WAY, MILO JEFFERSON WAS MORE OR LESS THRUST INTO A SUPERHEROIC ROLE. HE TRIED TO DO WHAT WAS EXPECTED OF HIM, DONNING A FLAMBOYANT RED OUTFIT AND ADOPTING A SLANG VOCABULARY FRESH FROM "BLAXPLOITATION" FILMS AND TELEVISION SHOWS. OUT OF NOWHERE, HE FOUND HIMSELF RECRUITED ONTO THE INVINCIBLES, WHERE HE SERVED AS THEIR TOKEN BLACK MEMBER. AFTER ABOUT A YEAR OF BEING IGNORED EVEN BY THE TEAM'S ENEMIES, HE SLIPPED OUT THE BACK DOOR AND NEVER RETURNED.

OVER THE YEARS THAT FOLLOWED, THE RUBBERBAND MAN MADE AN OCCASIONAL APPEARANCE, ALWAYS HELPING OUT ANOTHER HERO WHO HAPPENED TO BE "IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD." FEW NOTED HIS SEMI-RETIREMENT, THOUGH HE CONTINUED TO PLAY HIS MUSIC IN THE BARS AND CLUBS OF THE SOUTH SIDE. AS THE YEARS PASSED, AND AS HIS MUSICAL SKILLS INCREASED, HIS BODY BEGAN TO BETRAY HIM. HIS JOINTS STIFFENED, HIS LIMBS LOST THEIR AMAZING PLIABILITY. HIS SOUND ALTERED, BUT HE LEARNED TO ADAPT, DEVELOPING AN EXPERIMENTAL STYLE THAT YOUNG MUSICIANS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY TRIED TO EMULATE. IN LATE 2002, HIS FATHER FINALLY PASSED AWAY, AND MILO DISCOVERED THAT HIS PARENTS, FRUGAL BY NATURE, HAD PUT AWAY A SURPRISING NEST EGG. THIS, COMBINED WITH A MODEST RECORD DEAL RESULTING FROM A SUDDEN INTEREST IN MILO'S MUSIC AMONG THE BLUES AND JAZZ COMMUNITY, MADE HIM WEALTHIER THAN HE HAD EVER BEEN. BUT JEFFERSON WAS AN OLD BLUES-HOUND BY THIS TIME; HE HAD NO INTEREST IN A LIFE OF OSTENTATIOUS LUXURY. ALL HE WANTED TO WAS TO KEEP ON PLAYING HIS MUSIC AND SPENDING TIME WITH THE FRIENDS AND FAMILY HE HAD COME TO KNOW OVER SO MANY DECADES. SO ... WHAT TO DO WITH HIS SUDDEN WEALTH?

APPEARANCE:

IN HIS PRIME, THE RUBBERBAND MAN WORE A LOOSE RED OPEN-CHESTED SHIRT AND TIGHT-FITTING BLUE TROUSERS. A RED BANDANNA TIED IN THE BACK SERVED AS A MASK. THESE DAYS, HOWEVER, MILO IS TOUGH TO PICK OUT OF A CROWD. IN HIS 50S, WITH SHORT GRAYING HAIR, A MUSTACHE, AND BEARD, HE DRESSES IN COMFORTABLE LONG-SLEEVE SHIRTS AND PANTS THAT LOOK LIKE SOMETHING YOUR GRANDPA MIGHT OWN.

ABILITIES

MILO JEFFERSON HAS THE POWER TO STRETCH HIS BODY TO GREAT LENGTHS (THOUGH NOT AS GREAT AS HE ONCE COULD). HIS BONES, MUSCLES, AND FLESH HAVE AN AMAZING PLASTICITY THAT MAKES HIM QUICK AND AGILE EVEN FOR A MAN OF HIS AGE. HE RETAINS KNOWLEDGE OF MANY TRICKS LEARNED IN HIS EARLIER DAYS, AND CAN IMMOBILIZE A ROWDY BAR PATRON OR RAGING DRUNK IN SECONDS.

MORE USEFUL, PERHAPS, MAY BE MILO'S STREET SKILLS. A VETERAN OF THE SOUTH SIDE, HE IS HIGHLY RESPECTED IN THOSE CIRCLES AND KNOWS EVERYONE. HE IS A KEEN JUDGE OF CHARACTER AND HAS FOILED SCAMS WITH AS LITTLE AS A SINGLE PHONE CALL. HE DOES NOT TRY TO BE A FULL TIME DO-GOODER ANY MORE, BUT HE KEEPS AN EYE ON THOSE PEOPLE WHO ARE IMPORTANT TO HIM, AND WILL DO WHATEVER IT TAKES TO PROTECT THEM FROM THE CRUEL SIDE OF HUMANITY.

THE RUBBERBAND MAN HAS GOTTEN STIFF AS HE'S GOTTEN OLDER, AND HIS POWERS ARE NOT WHAT THEY ONCE WERE. WERE HE TO REGAIN HIS FULL RUBBER ABILITIES, RAISE HIS COORDINATION AND STRETCHING TO 8 AND HIS INVULNERABILITY AND SUPER-SPEED TO 4. REDUCE HIS DETERMINATION BY 1.

THE RUBBERBAND MAN

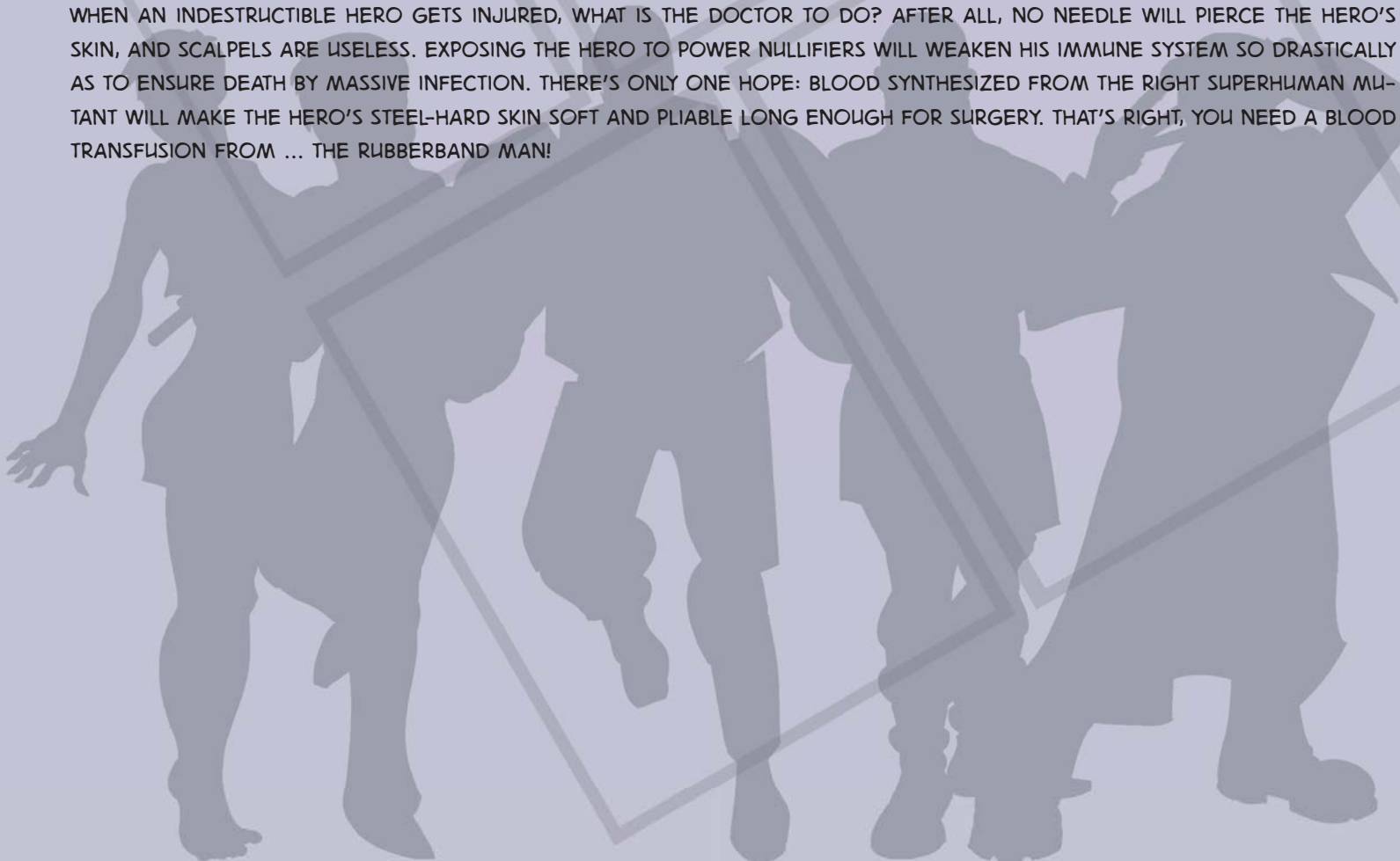
STORIES

WHEN THE RUBBERBAND MAN ENTERS A STORY, WE KNOW IT WILL HAVE SOMETHING TO DO WITH THE WAY BLACK AMERICANS ARE PORTRAYED IN OUR SOCIETY AND IN OUR COMICS. AS A SEMI-RETIRED HERO WITH EXPERIENCE AND MONEY TO SPEND, HE MAKES AN IDEAL PATRON FOR A GROUP OF NEW HEROES, PARTICULARLY THOSE WITH AN URBAN BENT.

MILO SEES A NEW, DOWN ON HIS LUCK HERO (READ: PC) IN ACTION AND DECIDES TO LEND A HAND. KNOWING THAT THE GOVERNMENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS WILL NEVER TAKE SUCH HEROES SERIOUSLY, AND WELL AWARE OF THE COSTS INVOLVED WITH STARTING UP A NEW SUPER-TEAM, MILO BECOMES THE GROUP'S SPONSOR. HE CAN'T AFFORD THE EXPANSIVE MANSION OR SATELLITE HEADQUARTERS OF SOME GROUPS - A BACK ROOM IN A BAR IS MORE HIS STYLE, WITH SATELLITE TV - BUT IT'S BETTER THAN NOTHING. AND A GUY LIKE MILO, WHO HAS BEEN AROUND THE BLOCK A FEW TIMES, MAY SEE THINGS OTHER, MORE WHITE-BREAD, HEROES MISS.

MILO'S NIECE HAS REAL TALENT; SHE'S GOING TO BE A CONCERT CELLIST, NOT LIKE HER RUN-DOWN OLD UNCLE. HE'D DO ANYTHING FOR HER, AND THAT'S WHY, WHEN SHE'S CAPTURED BY THE VILLAINOUS CONCERTO, MILO HAS TO GO AFTER HER. FIRST, HE'LL NEED TO FIND A WAY TO REVITALIZE HIS FADING POWERS, AND IF HE HAS TO BREAK A FEW LAWS TO DO IT ... SO BE IT. MILO WOULD NEVER KILL ANYONE, AND HIS THREATS ARE MOSTLY BLUFFS, BUT EXPERIMENTAL SCIENTISTS AND SUPER-VILLAINS WON'T KNOW THAT, AND EVEN THE LEVEL-HEADED MILO MIGHT FIND HIMSELF DOING SOMETHING RASH.

WHEN AN INDESTRUCTIBLE HERO GETS INJURED, WHAT IS THE DOCTOR TO DO? AFTER ALL, NO NEEDLE WILL PIERCE THE HERO'S SKIN, AND SCALPELS ARE USELESS. EXPOSING THE HERO TO POWER NULLIFIERS WILL WEAKEN HIS IMMUNE SYSTEM SO DRASTICALLY AS TO ENSURE DEATH BY MASSIVE INFECTION. THERE'S ONLY ONE HOPE: BLOOD SYNTHESIZED FROM THE RIGHT SUPERHUMAN MUTANT WILL MAKE THE HERO'S STEEL-HARD SKIN SOFT AND PLIABLE LONG ENOUGH FOR SURGERY. THAT'S RIGHT, YOU NEED A BLOOD TRANSFUSION FROM ... THE RUBBERBAND MAN!



MONSTROUS HERO

SUPERHUMAN POWERS ARE A BLESSING FOR MANY INDIVIDUALS, BUT THEY ARE A CURSE FOR THE MONSTROUS HERO. DESPITE HIS HORRIFIC APPEARANCE, THE MONSTROUS HERO IS KIND-HEARTED, AND HE USES HIS VAST STRENGTH AND FORTITUDE FOR THE BENEFIT OF MANKIND, EVEN THOUGH THEY SHUN HIM.

EXAMPLES: BEAST, DARKMAN, JACK OF HEARTS, MAN-THING, THE THING

RELATED ARCHETYPES: ALIEN HERO, FERAL HERO

QUALITIES & CHALLENGES: THE MONSTROUS HERO DRAWS HIS INSPIRATION FROM HOLLYWOOD'S FRANKENSTEIN'S MONSTER. (HE IS NOT INSPIRED BY THE MONSTER OF THE NOVEL, WHO IS A HORSE OF A VERY DIFFERENT COLOR!) HE IS A GENTLE GIANT WHOSE APPEARANCE IS SO HIDEOUS AND UNNATURAL THAT PEOPLE INSTANTLY FEAR AND HATE HIM. ALTHOUGH HIS CONDITION MAY BE HIS OWN FAULT, HE SPENDS SOME TIME DENYING THIS, BLAMING SOCIETY OR A SPECIFIC INDIVIDUAL FOR HIS NEW CONDITION. HE MAY HAVE A TEMPER OR STRUGGLE WITH HIS DARK SIDE, A STRUGGLE WHICH IS MADE ALL THE MORE ACUTE WHEN CHILDREN CRY AT THE SIGHT OF HIM, MEN HURL STONES AND INSULTS, AND PRETTY WOMEN CALL HIM A FREAK. IF THE MONSTROUS HERO TRANSFORMS BETWEEN MAN AND MONSTER, THIS WILL BE A CHALLENGE WHICH THE NARRATOR CAN TAG AT INCONVENIENT TIMES.

WHEN HE IS IN HIS RIGHT MIND AND AT PEACE, THE MONSTROUS HERO IS A BENEVOLENT BEING. HE IS A GOOD CHARACTER IN TEAMS BECAUSE HIS POWERS ARE TYPICALLY STRAIGHT-FORWARD AND USEFUL, AND HIS TEAMMATES ACCEPT HIM AND WORK TO CURE HIM. BUT AT HEART HE IS A LONER, SO HE WILL SPEND A LOT OF TIME OFF BY HIMSELF, DISGUISED WITH A TRENCH COAT AND WIDE-BRIMMED HAT OR A CONVENIENT "IMAGE INDUCER" HOLOGRAM, TRYING TO BLEND IN WITH ORDINARY PEOPLE AND GENERALLY FAILING, FOLLOWED BY BOUTS OF ANGST, SELF-PITY AND RAGE.

THE MONSTROUS HERO HAS FRIENDS AND LOVED ONES WHO KNEW HIM BEFORE HE WAS TRANSFORMED: TEAMMATES, ROMANTIC INTERESTS, AND FAMILY MEMBERS. THESE INDIVIDUALS PLAY PROMINENT SUPPORTING ROLES IN HIS STORIES; NOT ALL WILL KNOW OF HIS NEW CONDITION AND THE MONSTROUS HERO WILL INITIALLY TRY TO HIDE THE TRUTH, BUT DISCOVERY OR REVELATION IS INEVITABLE, LEADING TO TRAGIC REJECTION OR SURPRISING ACCEPTANCE. THROUGH CONTACT WITH THESE KEY INDIVIDUALS, THE HERO REMINDS HIMSELF THAT HE IS HUMAN AND NOT A MONSTER. IN TIME, A MONSTROUS HERO CAN BECOME ESPECIALLY WELL-ADJUSTED, EMBRACING HIS NEW APPEARANCE AND REVELING IN ITS NEW ADVANTAGES. USUALLY, AS SOON AS THIS HAPPENS, HE ATTRACTS ROMANTIC ATTENTION FROM POTENTIAL LOVERS WHO FIND HIS UNIQUE APPEARANCE AND HIS NEWFOUND SELF-CONFIDENCE EXCITING.

USUALLY THE MONSTROUS HERO SEEKS A CURE FOR HIS CONDITION, BUT THESE CURES ARE ALWAYS TEMPORARY OR LEAD TO BIZARRE SIDE EFFECTS THAT ARE WORSE THAN HIS ORIGINAL CURSE. IF HE IS CURED, AN IMMEDIATE NEED FOR THE HERO'S POWERS QUICKLY SURFACES, SO THAT HE MUST RE-EXPOSE HIMSELF TO THE SAME MUTAGENIC AGENT THAT WAS HIS BANE IN THE FIRST PLACE. THIS IS A METAPHOR FOR THE MONSTROUS HERO'S GREAT CHOICE IN LIFE: HE CAN BE A HERO AND A MONSTER, OR HE CAN BE ORDINARY. ULTIMATELY, THE HERO ALWAYS CHOOSES TO BE A MONSTER NOT OUT OF SELF-GRATIFICATION, BUT TO HELP OTHERS. IF THE WORLD WERE A SAFE PLACE WITHOUT EVIL OR SUPER VILLAINS, THE MONSTROUS HERO WOULD GLADLY SINK INTO MUNDANE OBSCURITY. BUT BECAUSE OUR WORLD IS IMPERFECT, IT DEMANDS AN IMPERFECT HERO, AND THUS THE MONSTER IS REBORN.

MONSTROUS HERO

POWERS:

INVULNERABILITY OR REGENERATION IS COMMON BUT ALMOST ANY POWER IS POSSIBLE AND THE MORE FREAKISH IT IS, THE BETTER.

SPECIALTIES:

THE MONSTROUS HERO WILL HAVE SPECIALTIES THAT REPRESENT HIS TRAINING BEFORE HE TURNED HIMSELF INTO A MONSTER; SCIENCE, MEDICINE OR OCCULT ARE LIKELY SUSPECTS. HE IS LIKELY TO HAVE WRESTLING OR STEALTH, BUT WILL NOT NEED ATHLETICS BECAUSE OF HIS GREAT STRENGTH.

ABILITIES

THE ARCHETYPAL MONSTROUS HERO HAS GREAT STRENGTH AND, BECAUSE HE WAS A SCIENTIST WHOSE NEW FORM IS A RESULT OF HIS OWN INVENTIONS GONE AWRY, INTELLECT. THE MONSTROUS HERO MAY HAVE A LOW WILLPOWER TO REFLECT HIS INABILITY TO PERSUADE OR INTERACT SUCCESSFULLY WITH OTHER PEOPLE, BUT THIS IS BETTER REPRESENTED BY A CHALLENGE SUCH AS "HIDEOUSLY UGLY."



THE DRIFTER

FIRST APPEARANCE: THE VEIL #63

ARCHETYPES: MONSTROUS HERO, DARK AVENGER, FOCUSED HERO, DEFENDER

QUALITIES: LOSING HIS MIND, WAR HERO, 'ACE, THE BANDAGED MAN'

CHALLENGES: HIDEOUS APPEARANCE, DOESN'T BURN WHILE WET, CHASED BY COPS, DESTITUTE

PROWESS 5

COORDINATION 4

STRENGTH 5

INTELLECT 3

AWARENESS 5

WILLPOWER 4

DETERMINATION 3

STAMINA 9

POWERS:

ABILITY BOOST (STRENGTH) 7,
AURA 7,
IMMUNITY (BURNING) 4

SPECIALTIES:

INVESTIGATION,
MILITARY,
STEALTH



ORIGIN

"HOW DO YOU LIKE IT? BEING AFRAID? BEGGING FOR MERCY? LIFE'S NOT AS MUCH AS FUN NOW, WHEN YOU'RE NOT THE GUY HOLDING THE STICK, IS IT? IS IT?"

BRUCE SAYNER WAS A CASUALTY OF ECONOMICS. ALTHOUGH A DECORATED HERO OF THE FIRST IRAQ WAR, HE HAD TROUBLE RE-ADJUSTING TO SOCIETY ONCE HE LEFT THE MILITARY, AND FOUND HIMSELF OUT OF WORK. UNABLE TO PAY HIS BILLS, HE ENDED UP

THE DRIFTER

ON THE STREETS OF TITAN CITY. HE TRIED TO MAINTAIN HIS DIGNITY, EVEN WHILE HOMELESS, BUT THE ENVIRONMENT WAS A HARD ONE. THERE ARE THINGS A DESTITUTE MAN MUST SOMETIMES DO, THINGS BRUCE WOULD LATER BE ASHAMED OF, BUT AT THE TIME IT WAS A SIMPLE MATTER OF SURVIVAL. HE AVOIDED THE DRUGS, BUT NOT THE LIQUOR.

IT WAS IN THIS WAY THAT BRUCE FOUND HIMSELF SLEEPING IN AN OLD WAREHOUSE WHICH HE HAD THOUGHT TO BE ABANDONED. IN FACT, THE PLACE WAS A HIDEOUT FOR MEMBERS OF THE RUSSIAN MOB, WHO WERE SHIPPING CHEMICAL WEAPONS INTO THE US FOR LATER RESALE TO CRIMINAL MASTERMINDS OR OTHER TERRORIST GROUPS. WHEN THE VEIL DISCOVERED THE SAFEHOUSE AND RAIDED IT IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS, A FIREFIGHT BROKE OUT, AND BRUCE GOT CAUGHT IN THE CROSSFIRE. THE VEIL WAS WOUNDED, AND THE MOBSTERS DECIDED TO TAKE OUT THE ENTIRE BUILDING IN AN EFFORT TO KILL HER; THE CHEMICAL WEAPON VATS WERE RUPTURED WITH GUNFIRE AND A FIRE BROKE OUT. BRUCE WAS TRAPPED WITHIN.

HE WILL NEVER FORGET THOSE AGONIZING SECONDS; BURNING CHEMICALS WASHED OVER HIS BODY AS HE STRUGGLED TO CARRY THE INJURED VEIL TO SAFETY. HE STAGGERED OUT, SWATHED IN FLAMES, DUMPING THE UNCONSCIOUS VIGILANTE TO THE GROUND EVEN AS THE MOBSTERS OPENED FIRE. BUT THE STING OF THE BULLETS WAS NOTHING NEXT TO THE HORRIBLE BURNS THAT ALREADY COVERED BRUCE'S BODY. HE ROARED IN PAIN AND FURY, AND THE GUNMEN WISELY FLED. THE VEIL WOKE UP JUST IN TIME TO SEE A CROUCHING, SMOKING FIGURE STUMBLING INTO THE SHADOWS.

BRUCE COULD NOT STOP BURNING; HE WAS IN CONSTANT PAIN. IN DESPERATION HE SOUGHT OUT THE RIVER, AND DIVED WITHIN. THIS BOUGHT HIM TEMPORARY RESPITE, BUT AS SOON AS HE ROSE FROM THE WATER HIS BODY BURST ONCE MORE INTO FLAME. USING FIRST CAST-OFF CLOTHES FOUND IN THE RIVER, AND LATER BANDAGES STOLEN FROM A DRUG STORE, HE FOUND THAT IF HE SOAKED CLOTH IN WATER AND BOUND IT TIGHTLY AROUND HIS BODY, HE COULD KEEP HIS BODY FROM IGNITING. THE BANDAGES HAD TO BE KEPT MOIST, HOWEVER, AND DRIED QUICKLY IN THE SUN, SO HE TOOK TO THE SHADOWS AND BEGAN TO HIDE IN THE DAYLIGHT HOURS, EMERGING ONLY AT NIGHT WHEN COOLER TEMPERATURES GAVE HIM EASIER MOBILITY.

HE DID NOT CHOOSE HIS FIRST FIGHT, BUT THERE ARE MANY OCCASIONS FOR A VAGRANT TO BE KICKED AROUND AND HUMILIATED, AND BRUCE WASN'T GOING TO BE A VICTIM ANY MORE. WHEN A BRUTAL COP TRIED TO SHOW HIM THE BUSINESS END OF A NIGHT-STICK, BRUCE LET SOME OF HIS BANDAGES FALL OFF, REVEALING A GRISLY HAND BURNING WITH GREEN CHEMICAL FLAME. OTHER HOMELESS SPREAD THE WORD, AND SOON HE FOUND HIMSELF THE PROTECTOR OF THIS DISPARATE GROUP OF UNFORTUNATES. THE NEWSPAPERS AND POLICE BEGAN TO REFER TO THE ANONYMOUS BURN VICTIM AS "THE DRIFTER," BUT AMONG THE OTHER HOMELESS, HE WAS "ACE, THE BANDAGED MAN."

BRUCE HAS MANAGED TO KEEP HIS HEAD, DESPITE THE AWFUL TURN OF EVENTS THAT HAVE MADE HIM A HUMAN TRAGEDY. HE IS ALWAYS BANDAGED HEAD TO TOE WITH WHITE BANDAGES, SOAKED DARK WITH WATER. TO KEEP THEM MOIST, HE KEEPS THE SUN OFF WITH A LONG ARMY-GREEN TRENCHCOAT AND A WIDE-BRIMMED HAT. BY DAY, HE HIDES IN WHATEVER IMPROVISED SHELTER HE OR HIS FELLOW HOMELESS CAN MANAGE: UNDERNEATH BRIDGES, OLD RAILWAY TUNNELS, OR EVEN A SIMPLE CARDBOARD BOX BEHIND A TENEMENT. BUT BY NIGHT HE EMERGES TO TAKE A FEW QUICK BREATHS OF FREEDOM, AND THE OTHER HOMELESS COME TO HIM, TELLING HIM OF WRONGS THAT NEED RIGHTING, OF SINS THEY HAVE OBSERVED OR OVERHEARD. WHEN HE CAN, HE SETTLES THE SCORE.

BRUCE SAYNER TRIED TO LEAVE THE WAR AND GO HOME, ONLY TO LOSE HIS HOME, AND FIND A WAR.

THE DRIFTER

APPEARANCE: THE DRIFTER WEARS AN OLIVE-DRAB MILITARY STYLE TRENCH COAT AND GREEN FATIGUES OVER HIS BANDAGES, WHICH COVER ALL HIS EXPOSED FLESH. ONLY HIS EYES, A SMOKY GRAY, ARE STILL VISIBLE. A WIDE-BRIMMED HAT IS MASHED DOWN ATOP HIS HEAD, AND HEAVY HIKING SHOES PROTECT HIS FEET. WHEN THE BANDAGES ARE REMOVED, GREEN FIRE SURROUNDS BRUCE'S BURNED FLESH.

STORIES

THE DRIFTER IS GOOD FOR STORIES THAT INVOLVE THE HOMELESS COMMUNITY OR THE UNDERWORLD, AS WELL AS THOSE WHICH INVOLVE A "CURE" FOR HIS AWFUL CONDITION. AS A MONSTROUS HERO, HE IS ALWAYS STRUGGLING FOR ACCEPTANCE BY SOCIETY.

BRUCE'S FORMER CO IN THE ARMY, A MAN WHO PERFORMED HIDEOUS ATROCITIES IN IRAQ, IS NOW A WAR HERO AND RUNNING FOR POLITICAL OFFICE. THERE IS NO EVIDENCE OF THE MAN'S FORMER CRIMES, AND NO ONE WILL BELIEVE BRUCE, WHO IS JUST A HOMELESS FREAK. HE NEEDS TO CONVINCE SOME HEROES TO HELP HIM STOP THE MAN'S BID FOR POWER. BRUCE MIGHT START WITH FELLOW VETERANS, LIKE DUSK OR PATRIOT, AND HE WILL BE OPPOSED BY WHATEVER GROUP IS REALLY BEHIND THE POLITICAL BID. THIS MAY BE A CRIMINAL GROUP LOOKING FOR POLITICAL MUSCLE, A FOREIGN COUNTRY, OR JUST A RELATIVELY SIMPLE WOULD-BE DESPOT LOOKING TO LEVERAGE HIS MILITARY CAREER INTO WASHINGTON-STYLE POWER AND INFLUENCE.

SOMETHING IS PREYING ON THE HOMELESS, AND BRUCE PROVES UNABLE TO STOP IT BY HIMSELF. SINCE HE CAN PRETTY MUCH HANDLE MUNDANE CRIMINALS WITH GUNS, THIS MIGHT BE SOMETHING OTHERWORLDLY OR SUPERNATURAL; THE HOMELESS ARE A CLASSIC SOURCE OF SUSTENANCE FOR THIRSTY MONSTERS OR PREDATORY ALIENS. THE HEROES MAY KNOW ABOUT THE DEATHS, BUT NOT WHAT IS CAUSING THEM, AND WHEN A SHROUDED MAN IS SEEN HOVERING OVER THE LATEST CASUALTY, THIS PROVOKES A CLASSIC ELEMENT OF THE SUPERHERO GENRE: A HERO-ON-HERO FIGHT. IT MAY BE HARD FOR THE DRIFTER TO CONVINCE THE PLAYERS THAT HE IS ON THE SIDE OF THE ANGELS, BUT ONCE HE DOES, HE CAN USE THEIR HELP TO TRACK DOWN THE MYSTERIOUS HUNTER, DOWN IN THE SEWER TUNNELS WHERE IT DWELLS.

THE LOCAL MOB DECIDES THAT "ACE" HAS BEEN TOO MUCH TROUBLE; THEY DECIDE TO NEUTRALIZE HIM BY GIVING HIM EVERYTHING HE WANTS. THEY BUY HIM A NICE HOME ON THE OUTSIDE OF TOWN, GET HIM A PRIVATE NURSE TO SEE TO HIS BURNS, AND TREAT HIM TO A LIFE OF REASONABLE COMFORT. BUT WITH THEIR PROTECTOR OFF THE STREETS, THE CITY'S HOMELESS BECOME PREY TO WHATEVER SCAM THE MOB HAS GOING: PERHAPS A WELL-USED SHELTER NEEDS TO BE DEMOLISHED TO MAKE WAY FOR A NEW MOB-RUN CONSTRUCTION PROJECT, OR A GROUP OF HOMELESS HAVE TO BE RUN OFF SO THE MOB CAN SECURE EVIDENCE BURIED IN THE AREA. CAN THE DRIFTER BE LURED BACK INTO THE VIGILANTE LIFE? HASN'T HE SUFFERED ENOUGH?

ABILITIES

WHEN BRUCE SAYNER'S SKIN IS EXPOSED TO THE AIR, IT BURSTS INTO GREEN FLAME. TO CONTROL THE FLAMES, BRUCE COVERS HIMSELF WITH WET BANDAGES, BUT MAINTAINING THESE BANDAGES IS A CONSTANT EFFORT THAT HAS COME TO DEFINE HIS LIFE. WHEN HE GETS IN TROUBLE, THE BANDAGES AROUND HIS HANDS ARE PARTICULARLY EASY TO REMOVE, ALLOWING HIM TO SET PEOPLE ON FIRE WITH A TOUCH.

THE HORRIBLE BURNS WHICH COVER BRUCE'S BODY HAVE LEFT HIM ALMOST IMPERVIOUS TO PAIN. FRANKLY, ONCE YOU'VE SURVIVED BEING BURNED ALIVE, THERE'S NOT MUCH MORE PEOPLE CAN DO TO YOU. HE'S A TERRIFYING FIGURE AS HE SHAMBLES THROUGH THE ALLEYS OF TITAN, AND ONLY THE HOMELESS AND IGNORANT DARE APPROACH HIM. HE'S BEEN AROUND THE DESTITUTE AND HALF-CRAZY FOR SO LONG THAT A BIT OF THAT MADNESS HAS CREPT INTO HIM AS WELL; WHEN HE LOSES HIS TEMPER IT'S EVERYTHING HE CAN DO TO KEEP HIMSELF FROM KILLING SOMEONE.

MYTHIC HERO

THE MYTHIC HERO TRACES HIS LINEAGE BACK TO A FAMOUS FIGURE FROM MYTH OR LEGEND, SUCH AS KING ARTHUR OR HERCULES. MANY MYTHIC HEROES ARE MODERN INDIVIDUALS WHO HAVE BEEN INSPIRED BY A LEGEND, BUT SOMETIMES THE MYTH HIMSELF HAS SURVIVED TO THE MODERN DAY OR BEEN REBORN INTO A NEW BODY.

EXAMPLES: BLACK KNIGHT, GILGAMESH, GREDEL, HERCULES, KEVIN MATCHSTICK, SHINING KNIGHT, VALKYRIE

RELATED ARCHETYPES: AVATAR, DESCENDANT, WEAPON MASTER, WOMAN WARRIOR

QUALITIES & CHALLENGES: SINCE MYTHS AND LEGENDS ARE NOT COPYRIGHTED, THIS IS PARTICULARLY FERTILE GROUND FOR COMICS PUBLISHERS. MANY DIFFERENT VERSIONS OF THE MOST FAMOUS HEROES EXIST, SO DON'T BE AFRAID TO MAKE YOUR OWN. LIKEWISE, MYTHIC HEROES ARE ONLY LOOSELY BASED ON THE LEGENDARY FIGURE, AND VARY WIDELY FROM THE SOURCE MATERIAL, SO YOU SHOULD NOT FEEL OBLIGATED TO DO A TREMENDOUS AMOUNT OF RESEARCH OR MAKE A STRICT INTERPRETATION OF YOUR FAVORITE LEGEND. A CHARACTER INSPIRED BY POPULAR MOVIES IS OFTEN MORE IN THE SPIRIT OF COMICS THAN A CHARACTER WHICH IS ACCURATE TO THE ORIGINAL SOURCE MATERIAL. WHILE GREEK, NORSE, AND ARTHURIAN MYTH HAVE BEEN THE MOST COMMON WELLSPRINGS IN COMICS, OUR INCREASED AWARENESS OF GLOBAL CULTURE HAS OPENED THE FIELD TO HEROES DRAWN FROM NATIVE AMERICAN, ASIAN, SOUTH AMERICAN OR AFRICAN LEGEND.

THE HERO'S ORIGINAL SOURCE MATERIAL COMES INTO PLAY IN LATER STORIES WHEN IT SERVES AS THE SPAWNING GROUND FOR COUNTLESS ENEMIES, RIVALS, FRIENDS, FAMILY AND QUESTS. LIKE THE AVATAR, THE MYTHIC HERO HAS NO SHORTAGE OF CONNECTIONS, MAGICAL WEAPONS, AND LONGTIME FOES; IT IS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE THEY ALL APPEAR, SO PICK YOUR FAVORITE AND MAKE THEM QUALITIES OR CHALLENGES. SOMETIMES THE ORIGINAL MYTHIC HERO WILL GET BORING AFTER A WHILE AND BE TAKEN IN A "BOLD NEW DIRECTION" WHICH MOSTLY INVOLVES PILLAGING EVERYTHING YOU'VE EVER READ IN MYTHOLOGY AND THROWING IT AT THE HERO IN SEQUENCE. THE BEST STORIES IN THIS MODE MIX MYTHOLOGY WITH MODERN SOCIETY AND CULTURE; TO ORDINARY PEOPLE THE MYTHIC HERO IS SOMETHING FANTASTIC AND STRANGE, BUT WHAT SEEMS ORDINARY TO US CAN ALSO BE MAGICAL AND AMAZING TO A MYTHIC HERO. THIS CAN BE PLAYED FOR LAUGHS OR FOR POETRY, DEPENDING ON YOUR TASTES.

MYTHIC HEROES WHO HAVE SURVIVED THE CENTURIES ONLY TO AWAKEN IN THE 21ST CENTURY WILL HAVE TROUBLE RELATING TO MODERN SOCIETY AND ARE CONFUSED BY THINGS LIKE CARS, GUNS, AND TELEVISION. THEIR HONOR AND BRAVERY PLACES THEM IN THE FOREFRONT OF THE BATTLE AGAINST EVIL, BUT THEIR INITIAL DESIRE TO SETTLE ALL SCORES WITH BLOODY FINALITY WILL CAUSE FRICTION WITH TEAMMATES AND LAW ENFORCEMENT OFFICIALS UNTIL THE HERO ADAPTS TO MODERN EXPECTATIONS. OTHERS THINK THE MYTHIC HERO IS OUTDATED OR BEHIND THE TIMES, BUT HE IS ALWAYS WILLING TO PUT HIS LIFE ON THE LINE TO DEFEND THE INNOCENT. THIS SORT OF MYTHIC HERO IS OVERCONFIDENT, SINCE HE HAS BATTLED MONSTERS OF EVERY STRIPE IN CENTURIES PAST (AND HE'S USUALLY EAGER TO TELL YOU ALL ABOUT IT). HE FINDS ONE MODERN DAY INDIVIDUAL TO EDUCATE HIM ABOUT SOCIETY AND BE HIS HANDLER. IF THIS CHARACTER HAS POWERS, HE BECOMES A SIDEKICK, BUT USUALLY THE HANDLER IS ALL TOO ORDINARY, FLAWED AND WORRYING CONSTANTLY ABOUT THINGS THE MYTHIC HERO HAS NO TIME FOR, LIKE MONEY.

THE ALTERNATE FORM OF THE MYTHIC HERO IS A MODERN INDIVIDUAL WHO HAS BASED HIS COSTUME, POWERS, AND WEAPONRY ON A FIGURE FROM THE PAST. THESE CHARACTERS ARE TRYING TO FILL PRETTY BIG SHOES, AND WILL STRUGGLE TO BE EVERY BIT AS HEROIC AS THE LEGEND WHOSE NAME THEY HAVE TAKEN. THEY ARE OFTEN LEADERS AND ORGANIZERS. THEY RELY ON SCIENCE FICTION GADGETS TO DUPLICATE LEGENDARY WEAPONS, POWERS, AND VEHICLES. THIS IS A KIND OF DESCENDANT HERO, AND

MYTHIC HERO

OFTEN THE CHARACTER WILL HAVE AN ACTUAL FAMILY LINK TO THE ORIGINAL HERO. VILLAINS MAY BE MODERN VERSIONS OF CLASSIC CHARACTERS, BUT IN THIS CASE CONTRAST MAKES FOR BETTER STORIES, AND A MODERN VERSION OF A LEGENDARY HERO USUALLY FIGHTS THE ACTUAL VILLAINS OF LEGEND, WHO CONSIDER THE NEW VERSION TO BE A PALE IMITATION OF THE ORIGINAL.

POWERS: IF THE MYTHIC HERO HAS SURVIVED MANY CENTURIES, HE MAY BE IMMORTAL. HE IS LIKELY TO HAVE SOME LEVEL OF INVULNERABILITY IF HE ALSO POSSESSES SUPERHUMAN STRENGTH, AND HE MAY BE ABLE TO TRAVEL TO HIS LEGENDARY HOME USING DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL. OTHER POWERS MANIFEST IN THE FORM OF MAGICAL WEAPONS OR GEAR. IF THE MYTHIC HERO HAS A MOUNT, IT IS PROBABLY BEST REPRESENTED AS A QUALITY WHICH HE CAN TAG WHEN NECESSARY BUT OTHERWISE IGNORE.

SPECIALTIES: WEAPONRY IS UBIQUITOUS FOR THE MYTHIC HERO; FEW HEROES HAVE ACTUALLY LIVED THROUGH THE LAST THOUSAND YEARS, BUT IF THEY HAVE, THEY COULD HAVE ALMOST ANY SPECIALTY IN ORDER TO REPRESENT MANY CENTURIES OF STUDY. OCCULT IS COMMON, AND SCIENCE OR ELECTRONICS FOR MODERN HEROES WHO HAVE ADOPTED A MYTHIC THEME.

ABILITIES

GREAT STRENGTH IS COMMON, AS IS PROWESS. COORDINATION AND INTELLECT ARE AVERAGE, UNLESS THE HERO IS A MODERN VERSION OF AN OLD MYTH, IN WHICH CASE HIS INTELLECT IS HIGH ENOUGH TO EXPLAIN HIS HIGH-TECH WEAPONRY AND TOOLS.



GIZA

FIRST APPEARANCE: GIZA #1

ARCHETYPES: MYTHIC HERO, OCCULT HERO

QUALITIES: GREAT PYRAMID HQ, MASTER HISTORIAN, IDEALIST

CHALLENGES: JUST WANTS HIS MUMMY, ENEMY OF APEP, OLD GUARD, VISIONS OF HIS PAST LIFE

PROWESS 5

COORDINATION 3

STRENGTH 4

INTELLECT 4

AWARENESS 4

WILLPOWER 4

DETERMINATION 4

STAMINA 8

POWERS:

GROWTH 8,
IMMUNITY (SOLAR) 4

SPECIALTIES:

LEADERSHIP,
OCCULT EXPERT,
WEAPONS (BLADES)

STUNTS

LONG STRIDE (GROWTH): WHEN GIZA GROWS TO HIS MAXIMUM SIZE, HE RUNS AS IF HE HAS SUPER-SPEED 4.

ORIGIN

"THERE IS AN OLD ARABIC SAYING: 'MAN FEARS TIME, BUT TIME FEARS THE PYRAMIDS.' YOU WOULD BE WISE TO FEAR ME."

PROFESSOR RICHARD CORNWALLIS THOUGHT HE WAS A MIDDLE-AGED AND MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL EGYPTOLOGIST. HE THOUGHT HE TAUGHT REGULAR COURSES AT OXFORD. HE THOUGHT THE REASON HE'D NEVER BEEN ABLE TO FIND THE RIGHT WOMAN AND



GIZA

SETTLE DOWN TO A FAMILY WAS BECAUSE HE WAS TOO DEVOTED TO HIS WORK. BUT HE LEARNED THE TRUTH BEHIND ALL THESE MISCONCEPTIONS ONE FATEFUL NIGHT ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF CAIRO.

RICHARD HAD DEDICATED HIS LIFE TO THE STUDY OF ANCIENT EGYPT, ESPECIALLY THE RELICS OF THE OLD KINGDOM. THE REIGN OF THE FOURTH DYNASTY, TWENTY-FIVE CENTURIES BEFORE CHRIST AND SHROUDED IN MYSTERY, FASCINATED HIM. HIS RESEARCH LED TO SEVERAL WELL-RECEIVED SCHOLARLY PAPERS, BUT HE FELT IN HIS BONES THAT TO GET TO THE BOTTOM OF THE RIDDLE POSED BY THE PYRAMIDS HE HAD TO GO TO THE PLAINS OF GIZA HIMSELF. THIS HE DID, WITH A SMALL FOLLOWING OF GRADUATE STUDENTS AND A TIGHT BUDGET FUNDED BY ACADEMIC GRANTS.

INITIAL SURVEYS PROVED PROMISING: RICHARD FOUND SIGNS AMONG THE SUBTERRANEAN CORRIDORS AND ROOMS OF THE GREAT PYRAMID THAT A SERIES OF HIDDEN CHAMBERS WERE LOCATED FARTHER UNDERGROUND, CHAMBERS THAT MODERN EGYPTOLOGISTS HAD YET TO DISCOVER. BUT HIS THEORIES REQUIRED VERIFICATION, AND THAT WOULD MEAN DRILLING INSIDE THE PYRAMID ITSELF. NOT SURPRISINGLY, THE EGYPTIAN AUTHORITIES FORBADE ANY SUCH "DESTRUCTION" OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS MONUMENT. BUT RICHARD WAS OBSESSED; WHILE NEGOTIATIONS CONTINUED, TIME AND MONEY WERE RUNNING OUT. HE RESOLVED TO DO THE DRILLING ANYWAY, UNDER COVER OF DARKNESS AND WITH THE HELP OF ONLY HIS MOST TRUSTED AIDES. AT FIRST, ALL WENT SMOOTHLY. USING DRILLS BARELY THICKER THAN A NEEDLE, RICHARD DUG DOWN TOWARDS THE HIDDEN CHAMBERS HE KNEW WERE THERE. BUT JUST AS THE EQUIPMENT BEGAN TO INDICATE SUCCESS, GOLDEN LIGHT ERUPTED FROM THE STONE BENEATH RICHARD'S FEET. THE ENERGY LEFT HIM UNCONSCIOUS, AND HIS AIDES BEGAN TO REVIVE HIM, BUT AT THAT MOMENT THE SONS OF APEP MADE THEIR MOVE.

THE SONS WERE THE REMNANT OF AN ANCIENT CULT DEDICATED TO THE WORSHIP AND PRESERVATION OF AN ANCIENT EGYPTIAN GOD OF EVIL. THE CULT, THOUGH SMALL, KNEW OF RICHARD'S THEORIES AND THEY KNEW THAT THE CHAMBERS HE SOUGHT DID IN FACT EXIST - THEY WERE BATTERIES DESIGNED FOR THE CAPTURE AND EVENTUAL RELEASE OF THE SUN'S MYSTICAL ENERGIES. ONE OF THE SONS PLANTED HIMSELF IN RICHARD'S GRADUATE TEAM AND ACCOMPANIED HIM TO GIZA, ALL THE WHILE INTENDING TO SUBVERT THE EXPEDITION FOR THE CULT'S PURPOSES. WHEN RICHARD WAS KNOCKED INTO A COMA BY THE SOLAR ENERGY DISCHARGE, THE TRAITOR DREW A PISTOL, SHOT THE REMAINING GRADUATE STUDENTS, AND DESCENDED INTO THE NOW-ACCESSIBLE CHAMBERS HIMSELF. HE KNEW THAT THE POWER CONTAINED WITHIN THE PYRAMID OF KHUFU COULD, IF PROPERLY USED, RETURN THE SERPENT GOD APEP TO ULTIMATE POWER.

BUT THERE WAS ONE MORE SURPRISE THAT NIGHT. WHAT RICHARD CORNWALLIS DID NOT KNOW, WHAT NO ONE KNEW, WAS THAT HE HIMSELF WAS THE PHARAOH KHUFU, REINCARNATED IN THIS MODERN AGE AFTER FORTY-FIVE CENTURIES. KHUFU HAD BEEN A CRUEL AND VICIOUS TYRANT IN HIS FORMER LIFE, A MAN WHO HAD SUDDENLY REPENTED OF HIS EVIL WAYS AND HAD THE GREAT PYRAMID CONSTRUCTED SO THAT THE MYSTIC POWER IT COLLECTED COULD BE USED TO TRANSFORM ALL REALITY AND USHER IN A NEW GOLDEN AGE IN WHICH DEATH WAS BANISHED FOREVER AND THE GODS WALKED HAND IN HAND WITH MAN. SUCH A PROJECT WOULD TAKE AN ENORMOUS AMOUNT OF POWER, HOWEVER: FORTY-FIVE CENTURIES OF IT, WHICH THE PYRAMID HAD BEEN DESIGNED TO COLLECT. WHEN HE NEARED THE END OF HIS MORTAL LIFE, KHUFU HAD HIS BODY MUMMIFIED AND HIS SOUL SENT INTO STASIS, AWAITING THE DAY WHEN ENOUGH ENERGY HAD BEEN STORED INTO THE PYRAMID TO OPEN A DOOR TO HEAVEN FOR ALL MANKIND.

WHEN HE AWOKE ON THE STONE FLOOR OF THE PYRAMID, KHUFU'S MEMORIES HAD RETURNED. HE REALIZED THAT THE GREAT PYRAMID HAD DONE ITS WORK, AND THAT WAS WHY HE HAD BEEN REINCARNATED AT LAST IN THE BODY OF THIS ENGLISH SCHOLAR. AT LAST, AFTER SO LONG, THE NEW AGE COULD BEGIN. BUT HIS OWN TRAITOROUS STUDENT HAD BETRAYED HIM, AND IF KHUFU DID NOT STOP HIM ALL THE POWER OF THE PYRAMID WOULD BE FOR NAUGHT. QUICKLY, RICHARD-KHUFU PICKED HIMSELF UP OFF THE GROUND AND RAN TO INTERCEPT HIS FOE. THERE WAS A VICIOUS FIGHT BETWEEN THE TWO MEN, WHEN EACH REVEALED THEIR TRUE NATURE TO THE OTHER, AND IN THE END KHUFU WAS FORCED TO TAKE THE COLLECTED ENERGY OF THE PYRAMID INTO HIMSELF.

GIZA

THIS SAVED HIS LIFE -- IT HEALED THE GUNSHOT WOUNDS INFLICTED UPON HIM BY HIS STUDENT -- BUT MUCH OF THE POWER BLED AWAY, TOO MUCH FOR HIS PUNY MORTAL FRAME. THE REST FOREVER TRANSFORMED HIM, TURNING HIM INTO A COLOSSAL FIGURE THIRTY FEET HIGH AND POSSESSED OF ALMOST INCALCULABLE STRENGTH. THE SAME ENERGY OBLITERATED THE BODY OF RICHARD'S STUDENT, BUT NOT THE VILLAIN'S SOUL, WHICH FOUND A NEW HOME IN KHUFU'S OWN MUMMY, STILL INTACT IN THE BURIED CHAMBER. BY THE TIME KHUFU REGAINED HIS SENSES AFTER HIS TRANSFORMATION, THE SON OF APEP WAS GONE - WITH KHUFU'S BODY.

THE NEWLY-REVIVED PHARAOH SWORE THAT HE WOULD USE HIS NEWFOUND POWERS FOR THE GOOD OF ALL HUMANITY. KHUFU HAD COME CLOSE TO CREATING A NEW, BETTER WORLD ALL IN ONE MOMENT. INSTEAD, HE WOULD HAVE TO ACCOMPLISH HIS MISSION ONE BIT AT A TIME. IN THE YEARS SINCE, HE HAS SLOWLY WORKED TO INTEGRATE HIS ANCIENT AND MODERN SELVES. THANKS TO HIS AGE, EXPERIENCE, AND GREAT STRENGTH, KHUFU HAS COME TO BE SEEN AS ONE OF THE MOST RESPECTED OF MODERN WONDERS, AND HE HAS LENT HIS WISDOM AND MIGHT TO MORE THAN ONE TEAM. WHEN HE VISITS AMERICA, HE IS TREATED AS A VISITING DIGNITARY, BUT MOST OF HIS TIME IS SPENT IN HIS REMOTE PYRAMID HEAD-QUARTERS ON THE BANKS OF THE NILE. OTHER WONDERS SEEK HIM OUT FOR ADVICE, AND HIS HOSPITALITY IS BECOME WELL KNOWN.

APPEARANCE: ALTHOUGH HE HAS THE MEMORIES OF THE PHARAOH KHUFU, GIZA STILL RETAINS THE BODY OF RICHARD CORNWALLIS: A TALL AND LEAN ENGLISHMAN NOW IN HIS EARLY 40S, WITH DARK EYES AND A RECEDING HAIRLINE. ALTHOUGH HE IS MOST COMFORTABLE IN THE CLOTHING OF ANCIENT EGYPT, KHUFU USUALLY ADOPTS MODERN DRESS WHEN HE LEAVES HIS PYRAMID. BUT WHEN HE LETS THE POWER OF THE SUN FILL HIS BODY, KHUFU REGAINS HIS ORIGINAL FACIAL FEATURES. IN THIS SHAPE, HE IS A THIRTY-FOOT TALL EGYPTIAN WHO APPEARS TO BE MADE OF GOLDEN STONE AND IS DRESSED IN ANCIENT GARB.

STORIES

GIZA IS USEFUL FOR STORIES WHICH INVOLVE ANCIENT EGYPT, A RICH AND FERTILE GROUND FOR SUPERHERO COMICS AS WELL AS ADVENTURE FICTION. HIS ENEMIES, THE SONS OF APEP, COULD POTENTIALLY THREATEN THE WORLD.

KHUFU IS STILL SEARCHING FOR A "QUICK FIX" TO THE WORLD'S PROBLEMS. THIS TIME, HE'S DECIDED THAT A CONJUNCTION OF THE PLANETS WILL GENERATE ENOUGH COSMIC ENERGY TO USHER IN HIS "GOLDEN AGE," PROVIDED IT IS PROPERLY INVOKED. HE BEGINS RECRUITING OCCULT SPECIALISTS TO HELP HIM WITH THE NECESSARY RITUALS. ULTIMATELY, THIS COMES DOWN TO A LESSON IN THE DANGERS OF HUBRIS, AND THE LURE OF THE "QUICK FIX." PERHAPS THE CONJUNCTION HAS AN EVIL TAIN TO IT THAT KHUFU, IN HIS OBSESSION, HAS FAILED TO NOTICE. MAYBE HE CAN'T FIND ENOUGH HEROIC MAGICIANS TO HELP HIM, SO HE HAS TO MAKE DO WITH VILLAINS, WHO SUBVERT THE RITE TO THEIR OWN PURPOSES. ULTIMATELY, KHUFU MAY HAVE TO MAKE A HARD CHOICE: IS HE WILLING TO SACRIFICE SOME INNOCENT LIVES IN THE NAME OF HIS GOLDEN AGE? AND IF HE IS ... HAS HE REALLY LEARNED ANYTHING AT ALL, IN FOUR AND A HALF MILLENNIA?

ABILITIES

AS THE WONDER CALLED GIZA, KHUFU IS ONE OF THE STRONGEST BEINGS ALIVE, ABLE TO LIFT OVER TWO HUNDRED FIFTY TONS WITH EFFORT. MOREOVER, HE IS VIRTUALLY INVULNERABLE TO HARM. HE HAS OCCASIONAL FLASHBACKS TO HIS TIME AS A PHARAOH OF EGYPT BUT THESE VISIONS ARE ERRATIC AND OFTEN HARD TO UNDERSTAND. (BECAUSE GIZA CAN ONLY SEE VISIONS OF ANCIENT EGYPT, AND BECAUSE THESE VISIONS ARE CONTROLLED BY THE NARRATOR, THEY ARE REPRESENTED AS A CHALLENGE RATHER THAN AS A POWER). HE CAN RUN AT 50 MILES AN HOUR AT HIS GREATEST HEIGHT, AND IS EFFECTIVELY IMMUNE TO ANY SORT OF SUN-BASED POWER. IN ADDITION, KHUFU RETAINS HIS MEMORIES AS RICHARD CORNWALLIS. THIS MAKES HIM AN EXPERT ON EGYPTOLOGY AND ANCIENT HISTORY. HE HAS, SINCE BEING TRANSFORMED INTO GIZA, MADE THE GREAT PYRAMID HIS HOME.

GIZA

APEP WAS AN EGYPTIAN SNAKE-DEITY ASSOCIATED WITH FIRE AND DESTRUCTION. THE SONS OF APEP ARE ITS SERVANTS AND PRIESTS, AND WHILE THEY LOVE THE TRAPPINGS OF ANCIENT EGYPT AS MUCH AS THE NEXT GUY, THEY'VE ALSO KEPT PACE WITH THE MODERN WORLD. HAVING FAILED TO REVIVE APEP WITH THE GREAT PYRAMID, THEIR LATEST SCHEME INVOLVES SABOTAGING A STRING OF NUCLEAR POWER PLANTS AROUND THE WORLD. THIS "RING OF FIRE" WILL CONJURE FORTH APEP, THE FIERY WORLD SERPENT, WITH HIS TAIL IN HIS MOUTH, AND PROBABLY DESTROY THE PLANET (AS THE SONS INTEND). GIZA HAS SUSPICIONS ABOUT ALL THIS, AND HAS COLLECTED A FAIR AMOUNT OF DATA IN HIS PYRAMID, BUT HE'S NO DETECTIVE AND THERE'S LITTLE CHANCE THAT HE CAN STOP ALL THE SONS ACTING AT ONCE. CLEARLY, HE'S GOING TO NEED SOME HELP.

ONE THING KHUFU WOULD LIKE MORE THAN ALMOST ANYTHING IS TO GET HIS ORIGINAL BODY BACK. UNFORTUNATELY, IT'S CURRENTLY IN USE BY HIS SWORN ENEMY, THE SONS OF APEP. SINCE KHUFU HIMSELF IS RECOGNIZED THE WORLD OVER AND ISN'T EXACTLY THE MOST SUBTLE OF WONDERS, HE ASKS THE HEROES TO RECOVER THE BODY FOR HIM; HE CAN THEN USE THE POWER OF THE PYRAMID TO REVITALIZE THE MUMMY AND TRANSFER HIS SOUL BACK INTO IT, LEAVING THE CORPSE OF RICHARD CORNWALLIS BEHIND FOREVER. OF COURSE, THE HEROES WILL HAVE TO FIND SAID MUMMY, STOP WHATEVER SCHEME THE SONS ARE UP TO, THEN CAPTURE IT WITHOUT DAMAGING IT TOO BADLY.



OCCULT HERO

THE OCCULT HERO TRACES HIS ORIGIN AND POWERS TO A SUPERNATURAL SOURCE. HE MAY BE A DEMON, VAMPIRE, OR GHOST, OR WIELD A SUPERNATURAL WEAPON. REGARDLESS, HE TYPICALLY MOVES THROUGH THE SHADOWS OF THE WORLD, HIS EXISTENCE UNKNOWN TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC. HE WAGES WAR AGAINST OTHER SUPERNATURAL CREATURES, FIGHTING FIRE WITH FIRE FOR NO REWARD.

EXAMPLES: BLADE, BUFFY THE VAMPIRE SLAYER, HELLBOY, LADY DEATH, SNOWBIRD, VAMPIRELLA

RELATED ARCHETYPES: DIVINE HERO, FERAL HERO, MAGICIAN, MONSTROUS HERO, MYTHIC HERO

QUALITIES & CHALLENGES: THE OCCULT HERO IS A MEMBER OF AN ARCAINE SUB-COMMUNITY, AMONG WHOM HE IS TYPICALLY WELL KNOWN AND EITHER REVERED OR REVILED. TO THE REST OF THE WORLD, HOWEVER, HE IS NOBODY, AND THIS IS EXACTLY HOW HE LIKES IT. FROM A POSITION OF ANONYMITY, THE OCCULT HERO CAN WAGE A PRIVATE WAR AGAINST EVIL SUPERNATURAL FORCES, INCLUDING BLACK MAGICIANS, DEMONS, LOVECRAFTIAN MONSTERS FROM BEYOND, AND OF COURSE THE UBIQUITOUS VAMPIRE MENACE. HE IS OFTEN PURSUED BY POLICE AND THE FBI, WHO EITHER DO NOT BELIEVE HIS CLAIMS ABOUT DEMONS OR VAMPIRES, OR WHO KNOW ALL ABOUT THESE THREATS AND SEEK TO TAKE DOWN THE OCCULT HERO BECAUSE THEY DISAGREE WITH HIS METHODS OR BECAUSE THEY HAVE BEEN CORRUPTED FROM WITHIN BY EVIL FORCES.

LIKE THE DIVINE HERO, THE OCCULT HERO WILL KNOW THE TRUTH ABOUT HEAVEN AND HELL, BUT UNLIKE ANGELIC SUPERHEROES, HE SEES THESE ENTITIES FROM A JADED PERSPECTIVE THAT LEADS HIM INTO CONFLICT WITH FANATICAL FORCES OF GOD AS MUCH AS SATAN. WHILE THE OCCULT HERO IS ALL TOO FAMILIAR WITH BLACK MAGIC AND SORCERY, HE WILL SELDOM CAST SPELLS HIMSELF (THAT IS THE MAGICIAN) AND WHILE HE MAY BE A DEMON, VAMPIRE, OR MONSTER, THESE ATTRIBUTES ARE USUALLY CONCEALED AND HE CAN PASS FOR MORTAL UNDER CASUAL SCRUTINY (UNLIKE THE MONSTROUS HERO). REPRESENT THIS CHANGE IN FORM AS A QUALITY IF IT IS VOLUNTARY, OR AS A CHALLENGE IF IT CAN BE FORCED. IF THE OCCULT HERO IS ALSO A WEREWOLF OR SIMILAR CREATURE, HE MAY BE A FERAL HERO STRUGGLING WITH HIS ANIMAL SIDE.

OCCULT HEROES ARE OFTEN EXCEPTIONS AMONG THEIR KIND: THE ONLY GOOD VAMPIRE IN THE WORLD, FOR INSTANCE, OR A DEMON WITH A SOUL. THEY MAY BE THE ONLY PERSON IN THE WORLD WHO CAN WIELD THE UNIQUE MAGICAL WEAPON THEY CARRY. THIS MAKES THEM SUBJECTS OF PROPHECY, EARNING THEM BOTH ALLIES AND ENEMIES IN THE SUPERNATURAL WORLD. BECAUSE THE OCCULT HERO IS BASICALLY A LONER, HE SELDOM APPEARS ON TEAMS UNLESS THE ENTIRE TEAM IS MADE UP OF OCCULT HEROES, MAGICIANS, AND MONSTROUS HEROES. INSTEAD, HE HAS A LARGE SUPPORT NETWORK OF RELIABLE ALLIES WHO BUILD HIS SPECIALIZED WEAPONS, REPAIR HIS VEHICLES, SUPPLY HIM WITH VITAL TIPS AND LEADS, AND HELP HIM KEEP HIS OWN CURSE UNDER CONTROL. HE PROBABLY HAS A SECRET LAIR RIGGED WITH BOOBY TRAPS AGAINST THE INEVITABLE DAY IN WHICH THE DEMON HORDE TRACKS HIM DOWN AND INVADERS. HE WILL ALSO HAVE CONTACTS AND CONNECTIONS AMONG THE OCCULT WORLD; THESE ARE UNTRUSTWORTHY RIVALS AND OTHER SHADY INDIVIDUALS WHO WILL INFORM ON THEIR OWN ENEMIES ONLY TO REPLACE THEM IN LATER STORIES.

BECAUSE OF HIS JADED VIEW OF THE WORLD, THE OCCULT HERO IS SOMETHING OF A FATALIST. IN FACT, IF HE IS A VAMPIRE, HE MAY EVEN BE DEAD ALREADY! HE LONGS FOR A NORMAL LIFE BUT SELDOM CONFESSES THIS, SINCE IT WOULD BE AN ADMISSION OF WEAKNESS HE CANNOT AFFORD. IF HE HAS A ROMANTIC INTEREST, IT IS USUALLY WITH A MORTAL WHOM HE AVOIDS BECAUSE HE

OCCULT HERO

POSES TOO MUCH RISK TO HER, OR WITH A MONSTROUS LOVER WHO HAS EVIL TENDENCIES BUT WHO THE HERO HOPES TO REDEEM. HIS OCCULT NATURE PROBABLY GIVES HIM SEVERAL WELL-KNOWN AND COMMON WEAKNESSES WHICH APPEAR ON THE CHARACTER SHEET AS CHALLENGES; LOOK FOR THINGS LIKE "BURNED BY THE LIGHT OF THE SUN", "CANNOT ENTER HOLY GROUND" OR "REPELLED BY TRUE FAITH".

POWERS:

THE OCCULT HERO'S POWERS WILL BE DETERMINED BY HIS OCCULT NATURE; IF HE IS A VAMPIRE, LOOK AT POWERS LIKE MIND CONTROL, ANIMAL CONTROL, OR TRANSFORMATION INTO A VERY SMALL RANGE OF ANIMALS. (THIS FORM OF TRANSFORMATION DOES NOT COUNT AS TWO POWERS, SINCE "BAT" AND "WOLF" ARE THE ONLY OPTIONS.) SUPER-SENSES SUCH AS DARKVISION OR TRACKING SCENT ARE COMMON, AS IS LIFE SUPPORT OR SOME KIND OF SPECIALIZED IMMUNITY TO MIND CONTROL OR OTHER COMMON SUPERNATURAL POWERS.

STUNTS:

THE OCCULT HERO OFTEN HAS A BEWILDERING ARRAY OF SPECIALIZED WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT DESIGNED TO TAKE OUT A PARTICULAR KIND OF SUPERNATURAL FOE. SILVER BULLETS, ULTRAVIOLET LIGHT GRENADES, HOLY WATER CANNONS, GARLIC SPRAY AND SO ON ARE MATCHED BY DEFENSIVE GEAR LIKE STEEL NECK-GUARDS OR METAL PLATES OVER THE HEART TO PREVENT STAKING. RATHER THAN REPRESENT THESE WITH POWERS WHICH ARE SELDOM USED, PUT THEM ON YOUR SHEET AS SPECIFIC STUNTS OR AS BROAD QUALITIES LIKE "VAMPIRE HUNTING KIT".

ABILITIES

THE OCCULT HERO USUALLY HAS EXCELLENT PROWESS; DEPENDING ON THE SOURCE OF HIS OCCULT POWERS, STRENGTH, COORDINATION OR AWARENESS MAY ALSO BE SUPERHUMAN.



NAGA

FIRST APPEARANCE: CITY OF WHISPERS #121

ARCHETYPE: ANIMAL HERO, MINORITY HERO (BUDDHIST), OCCULT HERO, DARK AVENGER

QUALITIES: TERRIFYING, SLIPPERY, WALKS THE EIGHT-FOLD PATH

CHALLENGES: IT'S ALL IN THE EYES, "UBIQUITOUS SNAKE VIL-LAINS", LONGS TO TRAVEL, LAST OF HER KIND

PROWESS 8

COORDINATION 7

STRENGTH 5

INTELLECT 4

AWARENESS 5

WILLPOWER 5

DETERMINATION 1

STAMINA 10



POWERS:

AFFLICTION 5, ANIMAL CONTROL (REP- TILES) 7, IMMUNITY (AFFLICTIONS) 5, MIND CONTROL 8, SUPER-SENSES 2 (INFRAVISION, SCENT)

SPECIALTIES:

OCCULT EXPERT, STEALTH, WRESTLING

STUNTS

SUMMON SERPENTS (ANIMAL CONTROL): NAGA CAN CALL SNAKES FROM THE SURROUNDING AREA TO ASSIST HER. IF THERE ARE NO SNAKES, SHE CANNOT MAGICALLY MAKE THEM APPEAR! SHE CAN SUMMON UP TO SEVEN SNAKES AT ONCE; USE THE STATS FOR A VIPER FROM THE *ICONS* RULES.

NAGA

ORIGIN

"LIFE IS SUFFERING. ESPECIALLY YOUR LIFE, AND ESPECIALLY FOR THE NEXT HALF HOUR."

THE LEGENDS OF THE NAGA ARE TOLD THROUGHOUT SOUTHERN ASIA. THEY ARE SAID TO BE BOTH SERPENTS AND PEOPLE, POSSESSED OF MANY STRANGE POWERS, AND THEIR HOME IS BHOGAVATI, AN UNDERGROUND TIBETAN CITY. BUT IN THE EARLY YEARS OF WORLD WAR II, GERMAN EXPLORERS CAME TO TIBET AND, FORGING AN ALLIANCE WITH NATIVE SORCERERS, UNEARTHED THE SECRET PATHS TO BHOGAVATI AND DESTROYED IT, IMPRISONING MANY OF THE NAGA AND SCATTERING THOSE WHO REMAINED. EVEN AFTER THE NAZI EAGLE WAS FINALLY BROUGHT LOW, IT WAS CLEAR THE NAGA WOULD NEVER RECOVER. THEY HAD BECOME A DOOMED AND DESPERATE PEOPLE, WALKING IN SHADOWS AND DARK WATER, TRYING TO PRESERVE THEIR TRADITIONS IN A STRANGE NEW WORLD THEY DID NOT RECOGNIZE. WHEN, DECADES AGO, A SINGLE DAUGHTER WAS BORN TO A NAGA AND HIS HUMAN CONSORT, IT WAS A CAUSE FOR GREAT CELEBRATION. CHILDREN HAD BECOME VERY RARE INDEED.

SHE WAS NAMED MANASA, AND SHE TRAVELED WITH HER FATHER UNTIL SHE BECAME STRONG IN THE WAYS OF HER PEOPLE. FROM HIM SHE LEARNED THE PRECEPTS OF BUDDHISM, AND SHE LEARNED THAT SHE MUST ALWAYS USE THE POWERS OF THE NAGA FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS. THERE WERE MANY PEOPLE WHO FEARED HER KIND, WHO LITTERED PRAYERS AND CURSES AGAINST THEM AND DREADED THEIR INHUMAN GAZE. THE PAIR WAS ALWAYS MOVING, CHASED FIRST BY SURVIVING NAZIS AND THEN, LATER, BY AGENTS OF A US GOVERNMENT WHO THOUGHT THE "SNAKE PEOPLE" WERE AN INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION BENT ON WORLD DOMINATION. SOME OF THE NAGA CAPTURED BY THE NAZIS, IT TURNED OUT, HAD BEEN USED IN MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS, AND NOT EVERYONE THOUGHT THIS COOPERATION HAD BEEN FORCED. TO MANY GOVERNMENTS, THE NAGA WERE JUST FASCISM RAISING ITS SCALY HEAD ONCE MORE.

MANASA'S FATHER FINALLY DIED, IN HIS BED BUT WEAK FROM YEARS OF RUNNING, AND THE GIRL WAS ON HER OWN. EVENTUALLY HER PATH LED HER TO A WHISPERED RUMOR AMONG HER PEOPLE, A PLACE SAID TO BE A HAVEN FOR SUPERNATURAL BEINGS OF ALL KINDS. THE WINDING ALLEYS AND SHADOWED STEEPLES OF HAWKSMOOR PROVED TO BE ALMOST AS DANGEROUS AS AMERICA, BUT SHE FOUND THAT NOT EVERYONE HAD FORGOTTEN THE OLD TRADITIONS. WITHIN A FEW DAYS, WORD OF HER EXISTENCE SPREAD AMONG THE MORTAL INHABITANTS OF THE TOWN, AND SHE BEGAN TO FIND OFFERINGS OF MILK AND RICE, FISH AND HARD LIQUOR, LEFT OUT FOR HER BY THOSE IN NEED. THESE SACRIFICES GAVE HER STRENGTH, AND SHE REPAID KINDNESS WITH VIGILANCE. MANASA HAD FOUND A HOME.

THAT WAS FOUR YEARS AGO, AND THE NAGA OF HAWKSMOOR CONTINUES TO OBEY THE BUDDHA AND USE HER POWERS FOR GOOD. SHE HAS GROWN STRONG, QUICK, AND LETHAL; HER FANGS CARRY A DEADLY POISON AND HER HYPNOTIC GAZE CAN SAP A MAN'S WILL. SILENT AND SINUOUS, SHE MOVES ALL BUT UNSEEN THROUGH THE TOWN AND ITS LABYRINTHINE STREETS AND SEWERS, AND SHE HAS BECOME SOMETHING OF A FOLK HERO. WHEN THE WEAK AND DEFENSELESS HAVE BECOME PREY TO AGENTS OF CHAOS AND EVIL, THEY KNOW AN OFFERING OF FOOD AND WINE TO THE NAGA WILL BRING JUSTICE. (SHE ALSO ACCEPTS FROGS, A STAPLE OF THE NAGA DIET.) NEVERTHELESS, MANASA LONGS TO SEE THE ANCIENT PALACES OF HER PEOPLE IN TIBET, AND SHE IS STILL DODGING AMERICAN INVESTIGATORS WHO BELIEVE SHE IS A LINK TO A MYSTERIOUS ORGANIZATION (EVERY COMIC BOOK UNIVERSE SEEMS TO HAVE ITS UBIQUITOUS SNAKE VILLAINS) WITH A TERRORIST AGENDA.

APPEARANCE

LIKE THE REST OF HER PEOPLE, MANASA IS A MIXTURE OF HUMAN AND SNAKE CHARACTERISTICS. SHE IS LONG AND SLENDER, HER BODY COVERED IN COOL, DRY, SCALES WHICH SHE PERIODICALLY SHEDS. HER FINGERS END IN SHARP CLAWS, BUT HER FANGS ARE USUALLY INVISIBLE AGAINST THE ROOF OF HER MOUTH. WHEN IT COMES TO CLOTHING, MANASA HAS NO STANDARD UNIFORM, BUT SHE PREFERS TO KEEP THINGS LIGHT SINCE HER SKIN IS VERY SENSITIVE. OFTEN, SHE WEARS LITTLE MORE THAN A LONG CLOAK AND HOOD.

NAGA

ABILITIES:

MANASA IS VERY STRONG, FAST, AND TOUGH. SHE HAS A SUPERNATURAL CHARISMA THAT MANIFESTS IN A HYPNOTIC STARE, ALLOWING HER TO CONTROL THE MINDS OF OTHERS. VICTIMS OF HER MIND CONTROL ARE FULLY AWARE OF THEIR OWN ACTIONS, AND SHE USES THIS POWER PRIMARILY TO INTERROGATE LOW-RANKING CRIMINALS, GATHERING INFORMATION ON THEIR BOSSES. OTHERWISE, SHE FINDS MENTAL DOMINATION TO BE DISTASTEFUL, PREFERRING TO KEEP HER ENEMIES IN LINE THROUGH FEAR. HER "ALL IN THE EYES" CHALLENGE REPRESENTS THE FACT THAT SHE MUST MAINTAIN EYE CONTACT WITH SOMEONE IN ORDER TO DOMINATE THEIR WILL; IF HOODED, OR EVEN IF SHE IS JUST DISTRACTED, THE EFFECT WILL END.

OF COURSE, MANASA HAS A NATURAL LINK TO SNAKES OF ALL KINDS. SHE CAN COMMUNICATE WITH THEM AND THEY OBEY HER COMMANDS. SHE CAN CALL SNAKES TO HER, AND THE SEWERS OF HAWKSMOOR ARE BREEDING GROUNDS FOR HER BROTHERS AND SISTERS. SHE IS SELDOM WITHOUT ONE OF THESE ANIMALS, EVEN IF ITS JUST FOR THE COMPANY. CURRENTLY NAGA'S ABILITY TO SUMMON SNAKES IS REPRESENTED AS A STUNT ON HER ANIMAL CONTROL POWER, BUT IF YOU HAVE ACCESS TO A SUMMON POWER, USE THAT INSTEAD.

ALTHOUGH SHE DOES SO RARELY, MANASA CAN UNHINGE HER JAW AND MAKE USE OF LONG POISONOUS FANGS. HER POISON IS QUITE DEADLY TO ORDINARY PEOPLE, BUT MOST SUPERNATURAL FOES WILL ONLY BE WEAKENED AND SHE SOMETIMES USES HER VENOM FIRST ON A FOE, STRIKING BY SURPRISE AND SOFTENING UP THE TARGET. BECAUSE OF HER ALMOST BONELESS BODY, MANASA IS ALSO AN EXPERT GRAPPLER, ABLE TO STRANGLE A FOE BY WRAPPING HERSELF AROUND HIM. HER TALENTS, HOWEVER, DO NOT LOAN THEMSELVES WELL TO LONG DRAWN-OUT BATTLES; IF SHE CANNOT GET THE DROP ON A FOE IN THE FIRST FEW ROUNDS, SHE IS LIKELY TO RETREAT AND PICK A BATTLEGROUND MORE TO HER LIKING.

STORIES

NAGA IS A DARK AVENGER OF THE SUPERNATURAL SET, AND IS FOUND IN STORIES WHICH SPOTLIGHT HER SENSE OF JUSTICE. HER BUDDHIST CONNECTIONS AND HER STATUS AS THE REPRESENTATIVE OF A DYING RACE LEND HER TO STORIES WHICH STRESS NON-WESTERN MYTHS, OR THE POTENTIAL RETURN OF THE NAGA.

AFTER SO MANY YEARS AS A HOME TO SUPERNATURAL CREATURES OF ALL SORTS, THE RESIDENTS OF HAWKSMOOR HAVE PRETTY MUCH LEARNED TO HANDLE MOST THREATS, INCLUDING THE UBIQUITOUS VAMPIRE MENACE. TROUBLE COMES WHEN THE LATEST MYSTICAL INVASION IN TOWN COMES NOT FROM WESTERN VAMPIRES, BUT FROM ASIAN ONES. NONE OF THE USUAL PROOFS AGAINST VAMPIRES SEEM TO BE WORKING, EVEN THE VAMPIRE HUNTERS ARE STUMPED, AND ITS UP TO NAGA TO TRAIN A CREW OF ABLE DEFENDERS WHO CAN HELP KICK THE HOPPING MENACE OUT ON A RAIL.

THE US GOVERNMENT'S SUSPICIONS ABOUT A SNAKE-THEMED CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION ISN'T JUST PARANOIA: THE TIBETAN MYSTICS COOPERATED WITH THE NAZIS TO BREAK INTO BHOGAVATI SO THAT THEY COULD STEAL THE MAGIC OF THE NAGAS FOR THEMSELVES. BY MEANS OF MEDICAL EXPERIMENTS IN WORLD WAR II CONCENTRATION CAMPS, THEY LEARNED THE SECRETS OF SERPENTINE REJUVENATION, AND HAVE TRANSFORMED THEMSELVES INTO IMMORTAL SNAKE PEOPLE! OF COURSE, THE PROCESS REQUIRES OCCASIONAL RENEWAL, ACCOMPLISHED BY THE RITUAL EATING OF A LIVE NAGA. WITH THE RACE ALMOST EXTINCT, TIBETAN SNAKE-HUNTING NAZIS CLOSE IN ON HAWKSMOOR WHILE AMERICAN AGENTS, HOT ON THEIR TRAIL, DO THE SAME. MANASA IS CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE, AND BEFORE SHE CAN FIGHT BACK SHE'S GOING TO HAVE FIGURE OUT WHAT IS GOING ON.

NAGA

MANASA IS A HALF-BREED, BUT SHE LEARNS THAT TWO PUREBLOOD NAGA STILL EXIST AND THEY ARE ABOUT TO SPAWN. THIS COULD BRING HUNDREDS OF NEW NAGA TO THE RACE, AND PROTECTING THE PARENTS IS OF VITAL IMPORTANCE. SHE TRAVELS TO WHERE THE PAIR ARE HOLED UP, BUT EVEN AS SHE DOES, THE SUPERNATURAL PREDATORS OF HAWKSMOOR BEGIN TO PREY ONCE MORE ON THE TOWN'S INNOCENT RESIDENTS. SHE IS FORCED TO CHOOSE BETWEEN HER ADOPTED PEOPLE AND HER BIRTH RACE, BETWEEN THE OBLIGATION SHE HAS TAKEN UP FOR HERSELF AND THE DUTY HER FATHER ASSIGNED TO HER. OFTEN IN THESE SORTS OF STORIES THE TWO PLOTS TURN OUT TO BE CONNECTED: THE VILLAIN WHO IS THREATENING MANASA'S NAGA FAMILY TURNS OUT TO BE THE PERSON HIRING HAWKSMOOR'S MERCENARY MONSTERS AND ARRANGING THE UPRISING, POSSIBLY TO KEEP NAGA OUT OF THE WAY.



PSYCHIC HERO

THE PSYCHIC HERO HAS VAST MENTAL POWERS, OFTEN AT THE EXPENSE OF THE BODY.

EXAMPLES: JEAN GREY, PROFESSOR X, SATURN GIRL

RELATED ARCHETYPES: FOCUSED HERO, MAN OF TOMORROW, MASTER OF THE ELEMENTS

CHARACTERISTICS: LONG BEFORE THE NOTION OF THE SUPERHERO, SCIENCE FICTION WRITERS SPECULATED ON THE POWER OF THE HUMAN MIND, THEORIZING THAT IT MIGHT ALLOW A SKILLED PERSON TO SEE INTO THE THOUGHTS OF OTHERS, MANIPULATE MATTER, OR EVEN SEE THE FUTURE. INDIVIDUALS ABLE TO PERFORM SUCH FEATS FRIGHTENED ORDINARY PEOPLE, AND PSYCHIC CHARACTERS BECAME PARIAHS, HIDING THEIR TALENTS UNDER A GUISE OF NORMALCY OR SEEKING REFUGE WITH OTHERS OF THEIR KIND. THE PSYCHIC HERO TAKES THIS RICH TRADITION AND MERGES IT WITH THE SUPERHERO GENRE.

THE PSYCHIC HERO IS USUALLY A COMBINATION OF NATURAL TALENT AND RIGOROUS TRAINING; PSYCHIC POWERS ARE NOTORIOUSLY HARD TO CONTROL AND THREATENING TO INNOCENTS. THE PSYCHIC HERO MAY ACCIDENTALLY READ THE MINDS OF THOSE NEARBY, HURL FURNITURE AROUND WHILE DREAMING, OR ACCIDENTALLY START FIRES WHEN ANGRY OR SURPRISED. SOME LUCKY PSYCHICS ARE FROM A SOCIETY WHERE EVERYONE HAS PSYCHIC POWERS; THIS MAKES IT EASY FOR THEM TO GET THE TRAINING THEY NEED. OTHERS ARE FOUND BY A MENTOR WHO OFFERS TO TEACH THEM HOW TO CONTROL THEIR UNIQUE ABILITIES, USUALLY AFTER SOME TRAGIC EVENT WHICH RESULTED IN THE LOSS OF THE HERO'S ORIGINAL FAMILY. IF THE MENTOR IS WELL-MEANING AND SUPPORTIVE, THEN THE ORIGINAL TRAGEDY WAS THE PSYCHIC HERO'S FAULT AND SHE LIVES WITH THAT GUILT TO THIS DAY, BUT IF THE MENTOR IS SECRETLY EVIL AND MANIPULATIVE, THEN IT WAS THE MENTOR WHO CAUSED THE FAMILY'S DEATH WHILE ALLOWING THE PSYCHIC HERO TO TAKE THE BLAME. IN THIS CASE, THE HERO LEARNS WHAT SHE NEEDS TO SURVIVE AND CONTROL HER POWERS, THEN LEARNS THE TRUTH AND ESCAPES, PURSUED BY BEARS.

WHETHER ALONE OR ON A TEAM, THE PSYCHIC HERO IS A VERY FLEXIBLE AND CAPABLE CHARACTER. BECAUSE THE PSYCHIC HERO CAN COMMUNICATE TELEPATHICALLY WITH SEVERAL PEOPLE AT ONCE OVER GREAT DISTANCE, SHE OFTEN SERVES AS THE LYNCHPIN OF HER TEAM: BROADCASTING ORDERS FROM THE LEADER AND ALLOWING THE OTHERS TO COORDINATE WITHOUT ALERTING THE ENEMY OF THEIR PLANS. BEING ON A TEAM ALSO GIVES THE ISOLATED PSYCHIC A BAND OF FRIENDS OR FAMILY WHO SYMPATHIZE WITH HER PLIGHT (OR A CAPTIVE AUDIENCE FOR THOSE OCCASIONAL ANGST SESSIONS). WHEN OPERATING ALONE, HOWEVER, THE PSYCHIC'S NATURAL SELF-RELIANCE SURFACES, AND SHE DOES NOT HAVE TO "HOLD BACK," OFTEN USING HER POWERS IN MORALLY AMBIGUOUS WAYS THAT WOULD JUSTIFY THE FEAR AND HATRED OF OTHERS WERE SUCH TACTICS TO BE USED IN A TEAM ENVIRONMENT.

THE PSYCHIC HERO SHOULD HAVE A CHALLENGE WHICH REPRESENTS HER CONTROL ISSUES; NARRATORS WILL TAG THIS CHALLENGE IN ORDER TO PUT THE HERO IN UNCOMFORTABLE SITUATIONS. SHE WILL BROADCAST HER DOUBTS AND SUSPICIONS TO HER TEAMMATES, READ SECRETS OUT OF THE MINDS OF HER ALLIES AND SHOW UP IN THE PRIVATE DREAMS OF HER ADMIRERS. SHE IS OFTEN TEMPTED BY THE LURE OF EVEN GREATER POWER; IF SHE JUST LET DOWN HER PSYCHIC SHIELDS AND LOST ALL RESTRAINT, SHE WOULD BECOME MORE POWERFUL THAN SHE COULD IMAGINE. IN ORDINARY CIRCUMSTANCES THE PSYCHIC HERO EASILY RESISTS THIS URGE; TO MAKE IT ACUTE, THE NARRATOR MUST PUT HER IN SITUATIONS WHERE IT SEEMS ONLY INCREDIBLE POWER CAN SAVE THE HERO'S LOVED ONES. A FAIR NARRATOR ENSURES THAT THERE IS, IN FACT, ANOTHER WAY OUT OF THE SITUATION. NARRATORS ARE NOT ALWAYS FAIR.

PSYCHIC HERO

POWERS:

OBVIOUSLY THE MENTAL POWER CATEGORY IS THE PLACE TO START, BUT THE LIST OF PSYCHIC ABILITIES DEMONSTRATED IN FICTION, FILM, AND COMICS IS VAST. ESP, POSTCOGNITION AND PRECOGNITION ARE ALL SENSORY POWERS; YOU MAY HAVE RESISTANCE TO MENTAL POWERS, BUT YOU ARE PROBABLY NOT IMMUNE AS THIS DEPRIVES YOU OF A RELIABLE SOURCE OF PSYCHIC ADVERSARIES. EMPATHIC HEALING IS SOMETIMES SEEN, AND ALTHOUGH HEROES WITH TELEKINESIS WILL USUALLY FLY, SCIENCE FICTION PSYCHICS TELEPORT INSTEAD. TELEPATHS CAN REACH INTO YOUR MIND AND CONVINCED YOU YOUR POWERS DON'T WORK (POWER NULLIFICATION). IN FACT, SOME PSYCHIC HEROES FROM THE COMICS ARE BETTER MODELED WITH THE WIZARDRY (PSYCHIC) POWER, ALLOWING THEM TO DO ALMOST ANYTHING AND JUST CALL IT "PSYCHIC."

SPECIALTIES:

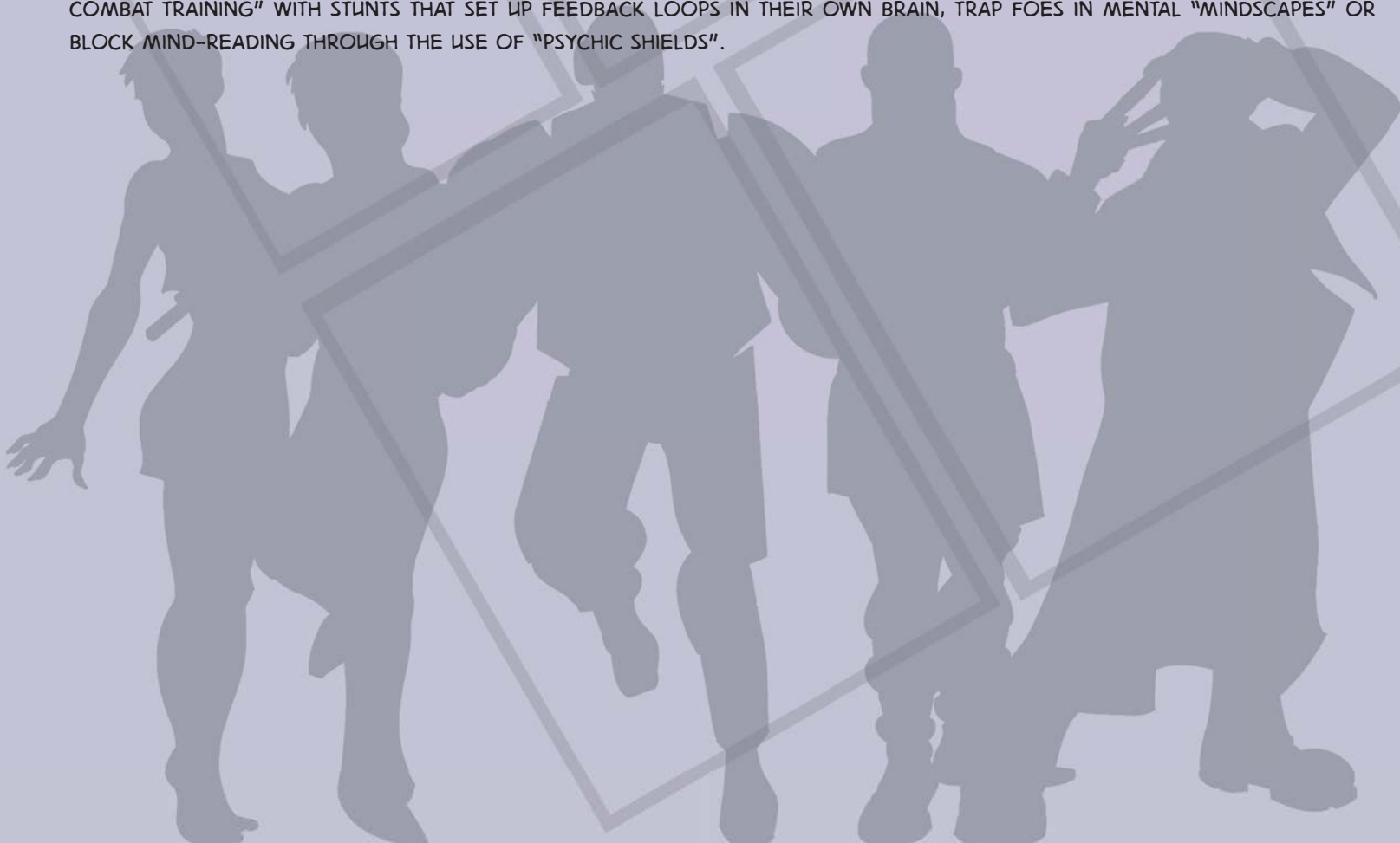
BECAUSE THE PSYCHIC HERO HAS LOUSY PHYSICAL ABILITIES, SHE RELIES ON "PSIONIC COMBAT TRAINING" TO LEVEL THE PLAYING FIELD. REPRESENT THIS WITH THE POWER SPECIALTY AND MENTAL RESISTANCE, IF YOU DO NOT ALREADY HAVE RESISTANCE OR IMMUNITY (MENTAL). SCIENCE AND MEDICINE ARE LIKELY SKILLS, ESPECIALLY IF THE PSYCHIC HERO IS LEARNING ABOUT HER OWN ABILITIES AND HOW THEY WORK.

STUNTS:

THE WIDE ARRAY OF PSYCHIC ABILITIES LENDS ITSELF TO A GREAT MANY STUNTS. PSYCHIC HEROES MAY REPRESENT THEIR "PSIONIC COMBAT TRAINING" WITH STUNTS THAT SET UP FEEDBACK LOOPS IN THEIR OWN BRAIN, TRAP FOES IN MENTAL "MINDSCAPES" OR BLOCK MIND-READING THROUGH THE USE OF "PSYCHIC SHIELDS".

ABILITIES

WILLPOWER IS KEY FOR MOST PSYCHIC HEROES; THOSE WITH ESP OR OTHER CLAIRVOYANT POWERS WILL ALSO HAVE GOOD AWARENESS, WHILE THOSE TRAINED IN MEDICINE, BIOLOGY, OR OTHER SCIENCES WILL HAVE SOLID INTELLECT. STRENGTH, PROWESS AND COORDINATION ARE ALL AVERAGE AT BEST.



IHERO

FIRST APPEARANCE: JOURNEY INTO WONDER #0 (AUGUST, 2000)

ARCHETYPES: PSYCHIC HERO, GADGET GAL, WOMAN OF TOMORROW

QUALITIES: POP ICON, HACKER, WIRED, MUNDANE EQUIPMENT

CHALLENGES: SELF-CENTERED, ANIME ADDICT, RUBS PEOPLE THE WRONG WAY

PROWESS 6

COORDINATION 4

STRENGTH 2

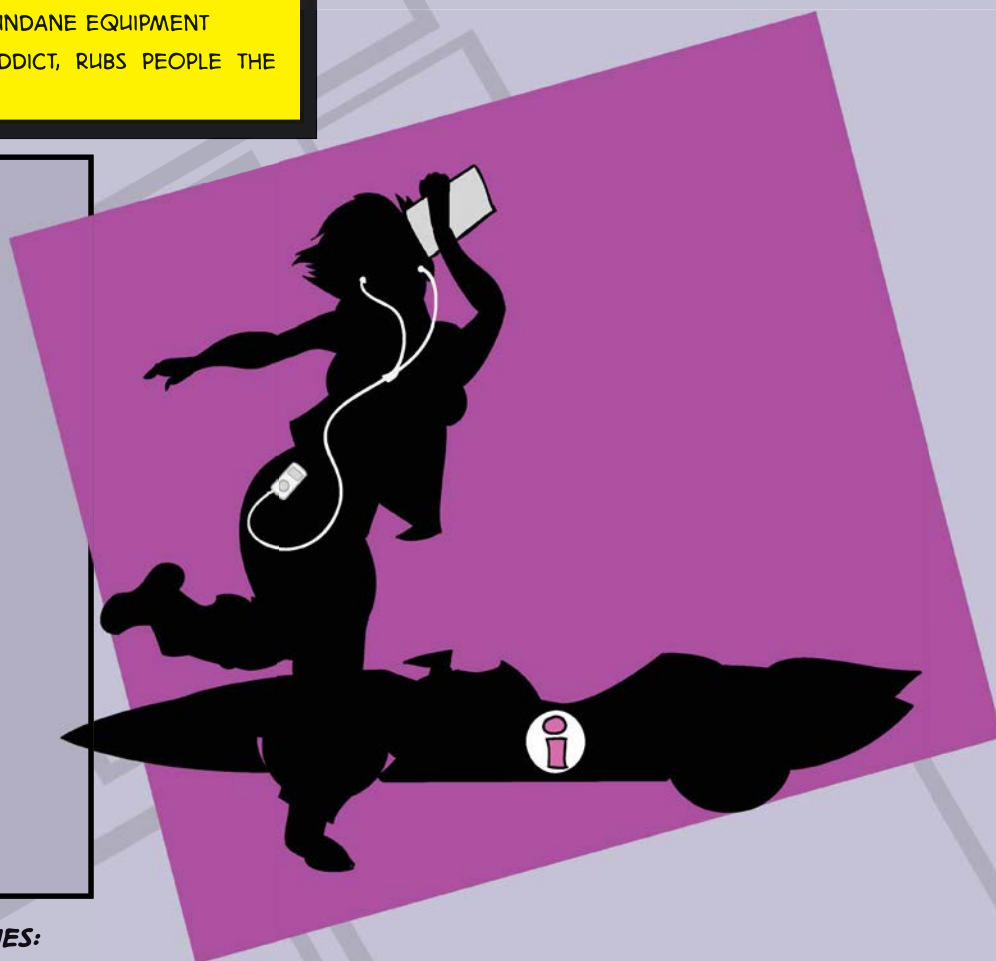
INTELLECT 7

AWARENESS 4

WILLPOWER 5

DETERMINATION 1

STAMINA 7



POWERS:

MENTAL BLAST 6,
MIND CONTROL 8,
TELEKINESIS 6,
TELEPATHY 8

SPECIALTIES:

COMPUTERS,
ELECTRONICS,
MENTAL RESISTANCE MASTERY

STUNTS

UNBOUND (MENTAL RESISTANCE): IHERO'S WILLPOWER IS TREATED AS 2 HIGHER WHEN RESISTING MIND CONTROL, FOR A TOTAL DEFENSE OF 10.

ORIGIN

"THINK DIFFERENT."

IN THE EARLY 1980S A PRIVATE CORPORATION INVESTIGATING GENETIC RESEARCH BEGAN EXPERIMENTS DESIGNED TO CREATE THE "NEXT GENERATION" OF HUMAN BEING. THE BREEDING TOOK PLACE IN LARGE BATCHES, SINCE CELL FAILURE WAS SO COMMON, AND IT WAS NOT UNTIL 1984 THAT AN EMBRYO REACHED STABILITY. THAT INFANT, A GIRL, BECAME THE CHIEF FOCUS OF THE RESEARCH PROGRAM, ESPECIALLY WHEN A LABORATORY FIRE DESTROYED ALL THE OTHER GENETIC SAMPLES.

HERO

FOR MOST OF HER LIFE, RACHEL (AS SHE WAS NAMED BY THE HEAD OF THE PROJECT) NEVER SAW THE OUTDOORS. SHE WAS RAISED IN THE TOP SECRET RESEARCH FACILITY AND EDUCATED BY HAND-PICKED TUTORS AIDED BY COMPUTERIZED EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS. IT WAS NOT UNTIL SHE WAS A TEEN THAT SHE BEGAN TO REALIZE THE LEVEL OF HER OWN INDOCTRINATION, AND BY THIS TIME HER PSYCHIC ABILITIES WERE BEGINNING TO BLOSSOM. HER NANNIES AND HANDLERS BEGAN TO FIND HER FRACTIOUS AND WILLFUL; SHE DEMANDED NEW CLOTHES, A STRICT VEGETARIAN DIET, AND ACCESS TO MORE MODERN MUSIC.

SOON, RACHEL'S TANTRUMS HAD BECOME ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTROL. ONLY THE DIRECTOR OF THE PROGRAM COULD CALM HER, AND AFTER A PARTICULARLY FIERCE ARGUMENT WHICH RESULTED IN TWO NURSES BEING REDUCED TO A VEGETATIVE STATE, THE DIRECTOR TOOK RACHEL INTO HIS OFFICE AND EXPLAINED EVERYTHING. HE ADMITTED THAT, ORIGINALLY, SHE HAD BEEN NOTHING BUT A GENETIC EXPERIMENT, A MEANS FOR REAPING BILLIONS FROM THE MEDICAL RESEARCH INDUSTRY. BUT IN THE YEARS SINCE THEN, HE HAD COME TO SEE HER AS SO MUCH MORE. SHE WAS, HE BELIEVED, THE NEXT STEP ON THE EVOLUTIONARY LADDER, A "NEW HUMAN" WHO COULD TEAR DOWN THE OUTDATED, FOSSILIZED, METHODS OF CONTROL THAT KEPT MANKIND IN BONDAGE. HE URGED HER TO THROW OFF ALL AUTHORITY, TO SPIT IN THE FACE OF BIG BROTHER, TO CHANGE THE WORLD, AND TO DO IT ALL WITH A CHILD'S INNOCENCE. HEAVY WITH THIS CHARGE, RACHEL LEFT THE OFFICE, AND THEN THE DIRECTOR SHOT HIMSELF WITH THE PISTOL IN HIS DESK.

APPEARANCE

ALTHOUGH SHE IS ACTUALLY IN HER MID-TWENTIES, SHAYNA LOOKS LIKE A TEENAGE GIRL WITH LONG STRAIGHT RED HAIR, LANKY LIMBS, AND A SLIGHTLY ASIAN ETHNICITY. HER COSTUME IS REALLY JUST A COMBINATION OF HIP, TRENDY CLOTHING, USUALLY INVOLVING BOLD COLORS AND SHORTS. SHE HAS A PORTABLE MUSIC PLAYER ON A LANYARD AROUND HER NECK AND EARPHONES BARELY VISIBLE IN HER EARS. HER PDA IS CLIPPED TO HER BELT AND SHE WEARS BIG, CLUNKY SHOES.

GOVERNMENTAL AGENCIES INVESTIGATED THE LAB AND SEIZED ALL ITS RESEARCH, BUT RACHEL WAS NEVER FOUND. BY NOW, SHE HAD ADOPTED A NEW NAME - SHAYNA WINTERS - AND HAD INSINUATED HERSELF INTO YOUTH CULTURE. SURVIVING AT FIRST ON HANDOUTS AND THE GOODWILL OF OTHERS, SHE SLOWLY BEGAN TO ACCUMULATE THE TOOLS OF THE ELECTRONICS TRADE. SHE SALVAGED OLD COMPUTERS AND BORROWED GARAGE TIME TO REMAKE THE OLD MACHINES INTO TECHNO MASTERPIECES OF FORM AND FUNCTION. WITH A VISIT TO A SECOND HAND STORE SHE THREW TOGETHER A SUPERHERO "COSTUME" THAT SPOKE TO HER GENERATION. WITH AN EAR TO THE STREET AND PROGRAMS WRITTEN TO MONITOR ONLINE CHAT ROOMS, SHE INTERCEPTED CRIMES BEFORE THEY BEGAN AND TOOK HER REWARD FROM THE PERPETRATOR'S BANK ACCOUNT. SOON IT WAS SHE WHO WAS PROVIDING AID TO THOSE WHO KNEW HER, NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND. SHE BOUGHT A LIME GREEN VW BEETLE AND CALLED IT HER ICAR.

SHAYNA IS NOW A WELL KNOWN SUPERHERO, AND HER REPUTATION IS THAT SHE IS EASY TO WORK WITH. BECAUSE OF THIS, SHE HAS BEEN INVITED ONTO SEVERAL TEAMS, WHO FIND HER MENTAL ABILITIES, TECHNICAL SAVVY, AND GENERALLY AFFABLE PERSONALITY ENDEARING. SHE HELPS THOSE IN TROUBLE, RETAINS AN ETERNALLY SUNNY DISPOSITION, AND HAS ALL THE INVULNERABILITY OF HELLO KITTY. UNFORTUNATELY, SHE IS ALSO A DRAMA QUEEN COMPLETELY DISMISSIVE OF ALL CRITICISM. THOSE FAULTS SHE CANNOT BLAME ON SOMEONE ELSE SHE SIMPLY IGNORES. WHEN SHE IS DRIVEN OFF OF TEAMS, SHE INVARIABLY SEES THE OUSTER AS UNJUST, AND SHE KEEPS TO THE MORAL HIGH GROUND BY CONTINUING HER HEROIC CAREER AND PERFORMING ANY SERVICES HER FORMER TEAM-MATES MIGHT WANT. THE YOUNG ADORE HER AND SHE HAS FAN CLUBS IN MANY COUNTRIES, REVELING IN THE ADMIRATION AND FAME; THE OLD GUARD FIND HER TEDIOUS IN THE EXTREME. SHE HAS THE LARGEST ANIME COLLECTION IN AMERICA.

ABILITIES: SHAYNA'S BIO-ENGINEERS SUCCEEDED IN CRAFTING THE "NEXT GENERATION" OF HUMAN BEING: A WOMAN WITH AMAZING MENTAL ABILITIES. TO BEGIN WITH, SHAYNA CAN COMMUNICATE TELEPATHICALLY WITH ANYONE ON EARTH. SHE CAN READ MINDS AND EVEN CONTROL OTHER PEOPLE THROUGH THE POWER OF HER OWN WILL. GIFTED WITH MINOR PSYCHOKINETIC GIFTS, SHE CAN LIFT APPROXIMATELY 1,500 POUNDS WITH A THOUGHT. FINALLY, THOUGH SHE OFTEN CONSIDERS SUCH ATTACKS CRUDE AND WITHOUT STYLE, SHE CAN LAY OUT A FOE THROUGH THE SIMPLE EXPEDIENT OF A BLAST OF MENTAL FORCE. HER OWN HIGHLY-DEVELOPED PSYCHIC SHIELDS PROTECT HER FROM POWERS SIMILAR TO HER OWN.

iHERO

IN ADDITION TO HER PSYCHIC GIFTS, SHAYNA IS A GENIUS WHEN IT COMES TO COMPUTER PROGRAMMING AND ENGINEERING. SHE HAS OFTEN ACTED AS A SCIENTIFIC RESOURCE FOR HEROES WHO DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO SUCH SKILLS (AND WHO CAN TOLERATE HER SELF-CENTERED BEHAVIOR). SHE'S A PART-TIME MUSICIAN AND KNOWS SHE'S NOT PARTICULARLY GOOD, BUT THIS DOES NOT STOP HER FROM HAVING FUN. HER TOTAL IMMERSION INTO POPULAR CULTURE HAS MADE HER KNOWLEDGEABLE ON A WIDE VARIETY OF TOPICS, FROM GEEK TRIVIA TO THE LATEST FRENCH FASHIONS.

IN A SUPERHUMAN MELEE, SHAYNA RELIES ON NOT GETTING HIT. SHE IS AGILE AND ALERT, AND BATTLES WITH HER SEEM TO BE MORE LIKE A CHOREOGRAPHED DANCE ROUTINE THAN A RAGING BRAWL. IT'S VERY HARD TO CATCH HER BY SURPRISE, BUT THOSE THAT DO FIND HER JUST AS FRAGILE AS A TWENTY-SOMETHING COMPUTER GEEK SHOULD BE. IT IS FOR THIS REASON THAT SHE TRIES TO AVOID SUCH FIGHTS, PREFERRING TO HANDLE PROBLEMS THROUGH "PERPENDICULAR LOGIC." SHE APPROACHES DIFFICULT SITUATIONS FROM UNEXPECTED ANGLES, OFTEN BY ELIMINATING THE SUPPORT STRUCTURE REQUIRED TO MAKE THE CRIMINAL SCAM WORK. WHEN A MASTERMIND HIRES A LEGION OF FACELESS MERCENARY MINIONS, SHE WILL MAKE THEIR PAYCHECKS BOUNCE. WHEN SHE DETECTS CORRUPTION IN CITY HALL, SHE'LL CREATE AN AD CAMPAIGN REVEALING IT TO THE WORLD. SUPER-CROOKS WILL FIND THEIR MOTHERS BEGGING THEM TO GIVE UP A LIFE OF CRIME. BY NOT ALLOWING HERSELF TO FIGHT AN ENEMY'S STRENGTH, AND ALWAYS FOCUSING ON THE ENEMY'S WEAKNESS, SHE USES A KIND OF CRIME-FIGHTING JUJITSU THAT GOES BEYOND EVEN HER PRODIGIOUS POWERS.

SHAYNA IS SELDOM WITHOUT HER SMARTPHONE AND PAD, AND SHE USUALLY HAS ACCESS TO ANY COMPUTER HARDWARE SHE NEEDS. SINCE THESE ITEMS DO NOT COME INTO PLAY IN MOST SUPER-FIGHTS, SHE JUST TAGS HER "MUNDANE EQUIPMENT" OR "WIRED" QUALITIES WHEN NECESSARY.

STORIES

iHERO HELPS THE NARRATOR TELL STORIES ABOUT THE RESPONSIBLE USE OF POWER, STORIES IN WHICH THE HEROES NEED TO THINK OUTSIDE THE BOX AND WORK IN AN UNORTHODOX MANNER, AND STORIES WHICH EMPHASIZE THE FEAR AND DISTRUST WE FEEL TOWARDS THOSE WHO CAN READ OUR MIND.

A PC HERO WITH A MYSTERIOUS PAST DISCOVERS HE IS PART OF THE SAME PROJECT THAT CREATED SHAYNA. HOW MANY OTHER VICTIMS MAY HAVE ESCAPED? HAS THE GOVERNMENT KEPT SOME OF THE SURVIVORS, TRAINING THEM AS COVERT OPERATIVES? WHEN SHE FINDS OUT, SHAYNA DECIDES SHE MUST RESCUE HER BROTHERS AND SISTERS, EVEN IF IT MEANS THUMBING HER NOSE VERY PUBLICLY AT THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ... AND SHE INSISTS THE PC HELP HER.

THAT TALK ABOUT A "NEXT GENERATION OF HUMANITY" MAY NOT HAVE BEEN JUST TALK. A DOZEN CHILDREN HAVE BEEN BORN THIS YEAR WITH THE SAME PSYCHIC POWERS AS iHERO, AND MORE ARE BEING DISCOVERED. IT APPEARS THAT THE PROJECT ISN'T DISMANTLED AFTER ALL, AND INNOCENT PEOPLE MAY BE GETTING TREATMENTS (PERHAPS IN THEIR WATER, OR THROUGH PRESCRIPTION MEDICATION) THAT ALTER THEIR UNBORN CHILDREN.

SHAYNA MAKES A GOOD CASUAL CONTACT FOR THE PCS. SHE'S KNOWLEDGEABLE, DOESN'T EXPECT A REWARD, AND DOESN'T TELL THE PLAYERS WHAT TO DO. DEPENDING ON THEIR INTERESTS, SHE MIGHT MAKE A GOOD MENTOR FIGURE FOR PCS INTERESTED IN DEVELOPING THEIR SCIENTIST SKILLS, OR A GOOD FRIEND WHO CAN GO OUT CLUB-HOPPING FOR THE NIGHT. IT'S IN SUCH SITUATIONS THAT PLAYERS WILL NOTICE SHAYNA'S CAVALIER ATTITUDE TOWARDS HER OWN MIND CONTROL AND TELEPATHIC POWERS. SHE USES THESE POWERS ON ORDINARY PEOPLE ALL THE TIME, ALWAYS "FOR THEIR OWN GOOD." BUT WHO DECIDES "THEIR OWN GOOD", AND WHAT DO HEROES DO ABOUT IT?

WORLDS OF WONDER: SUPER-GROUPS

THE WORLDS OF WONDER SETTING HAS HAD MANY SUPER-GROUPS OVER THE DECADES. THE MOST IMPORTANT ARE DISCUSSED HERE. ANY OF THEM MAKE A FINE CANDIDATE FOR AN *ICONS* GAME, BUT THEY ARE ALSO POTENTIAL RIVALS, ALLIES, AND ENEMIES DEPENDING ON THE STORY. WHEN A COSMIC CHESSMASTER DECIDES TO PIT TWO SUPER-GROUPS AGAINST EACH OTHER FOR THE FATE OF THE UNIVERSE, OR EVEN IF YOU WANT TO CHALLENGE YOUR HEROES TO A GAME OF SUPER-BASEBALL, THESE GROUPS WILL GIVE YOU EVERYTHING YOU NEED.

GROUP TYPE: THE SUPER-GROUPS HERE ARE GIVEN LABELS THAT HELP ILLUSTRATE THEIR ROLE IN STORIES. THIS IS NOT A DEFINITIVE LIST OF SUPER-GROUP TYPES AND THEIR STORIES! FOR THAT, WE WOULD NEED A FIELD GUIDE TO SUPER-GROUPS. HERE, WE CAN ONLY SCRATCH THE SURFACE.

A **VARSITY** GROUP IS MADE UP OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER HEROES; STORIES INCLUDING THE VARSITY ARE PRESUMED TO BE OF WORLD-SHAKING IMPORTANCE AND, IF THE PLAYERS ARE ON THE VARSITY, THEY KNOW THAT IT'S USELESS TO CALL FOR HELP BECAUSE THEY'RE ALREADY THE TOUGHEST HEROES AROUND! THE *ICONS* RULES REFER TO THE VARSITY AS "THE ELITE TEAM" ON PAGE 83.

THE **JUNIOR VARSITY** IS DISTINGUISHED BY ITS YOUTH; THE MEMBERS SHOULD BE TEENS OR YOUNG ADULTS. THEY OFTEN STARTED OFF AS A TEAM OF SIDEKICKS AND PARTNERS TO THE VARSITY. OTHER JUNIOR VARSITY GROUPS NEVER WORKED FOR THE VARSITY AND NEVER WOULD! THEY CONSIDER THE VARSITY TO BE "OLD FASHIONED" AND BEHIND THE TIMES. WHAT THE WORLD NEEDS ARE YOUNGER, SMARTER, HEROES OF A NEW GENERATION.

GOVERNMENT GROUPS ARE A KIND OF "EMPLOYEE TEAM" (*ICONS* PAGE 84) BUT, AS AGENTS OF THE GOVERNMENT, THEY HAVE SOME UNIQUE CHARACTERISTICS. MANY OF THE MEMBERS ARE SUPER-PATRIOTS WHO DISPLAY STRONG MORALITY, ETHICS, AND VIRTUE, BUT BECAUSE GOVERNMENTS ALSO DO A LOT OF SHADY THINGS, THERE CAN ALSO BE A FEW SECRET AGENTS, COVERT OPERATIVES, OR ASSASSINS ON A GOVERNMENT TEAM.

THE ALL-AMERICANS

TYPE: GOVERNMENTAL

MEMBERSHIP: PATRIOT, RUSHMORE, THE EAGLE, MAJOR RAGER, ALL-AMERICAN GIRL III. THE ROSTER OF THE ALL-AMERICANS SHOULD BE QUITE LARGE, AND IT MAKES A GOOD HOME FOR PLAYER CHARACTERS WHO MAY OPERATE OUT OF A REGIONAL HEADQUARTERS IN LA OR NEW YORK.

BASE OF OPERATIONS: WASHINGTON, DC

THE ALL-AMERICAN WONDER SQUAD - AS IT IS OFFICIALLY KNOWN - WAS CREATED IN 1954 UPON THE RETIREMENT OF THE ALL-AMERICAN GIRL AND WAS INTENDED AS A FIGHTING FORCE OF WONDERS SERVING NATIONAL INTERESTS. IT NOW SERVES AS AN UMBRELLA ORGANIZATION FOR ALL WONDERS IN FEDERAL EMPLOY AND INCLUDES TWO AUXILIARY AGENCIES: THE CIVIL SERVICE WONDER CORPS (FOR SUPERHUMAN EMPLOYEES WITH ADMINISTRATIVE DUTIES) AND THE DRAGONFLY PROJECT (COVERT OPERATIONS).

IN THE 1930S AND 40S, THE VAST NUMBER OF WONDERS COMBINED WITH THEIR SUDDEN APPEARANCE AND THE GOVERNMENT'S LACK OF EXPERIENCE HANDLING THEM MADE IT ESSENTIALLY IMPOSSIBLE FOR WASHINGTON TO IMPOSE ANY KIND OF ORDER OR REGULATION TO THE SUPERHUMAN POPULATION. THE US ACCEPTED THE HELP OF MASKED INDIVIDUALS ON LITTLE MORE THAN BLIND FAITH. THERE WERE SURPRISINGLY FEW TRAGEDIES DURING THIS PERIOD (TWO NAZI AGENTS SUCCEEDED IN INFILTRATING THE AMERICAN WONDER COMMUNITY, BUT BOTH WERE EVENTUALLY EXPOSED) BUT FEDERAL PLANNERS CHALKED THIS UP TO LUCK. WHEN WONDERS STARTED RETIRING IN LARGE NUMBERS IN THE EARLY 1950S, WASHINGTON SAW AN OPPORTUNITY TO SET UP SOME SORT OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND LEGAL FRAMEWORK THAT WOULD REGULATE WONDERS IN SERVICE TO THE NATION. THE ORGANIZATION WAS WELL INTO THE PLANNING STAGES WHEN THE ALL-AMERICAN GIRL ANNOUNCED HER RETIREMENT AND THE PRESIDENT DECIDED TO CAPITALIZE ON THE MOMENT BY REVEALING THE NEW TEAM.

MEMBERS OF THE ALL-AMERICAN WONDER SQUAD ARE ASSIGNED A MILITARY RANK NO LOWER THAN SERGEANT. A NUMBER OF "FIRE TEAMS" EXIST, EACH LED BY A CAPTAIN, USUALLY WITH ONE OR TWO LIEUTENANTS AS AIDES. OVERALL SUPERVISION OF THE SQUAD'S MEMBERS IS PERFORMED BY A MAJOR. HIGHER RANKING OFFICERS IN THE SQUAD DO EXIST; ALL ARE SENIOR OFFICERS WHO BEGAN AT LOWER RANKS AND WERE PROMOTED UP AS THEY "AGED OUT" OF TRADITIONAL HERO WORK. THESE SENIOR OFFICERS OCCUPY STAFF POSITIONS IN WASHINGTON AND HELP TO ADVISE THE PRESIDENT AND CONGRESS ON SUPERHUMAN ISSUES. MANY MEMBERS OF THE SQUAD TRANSFER INTO IT FROM ANOTHER BRANCH OF THE AMERICAN MILITARY. IN THESE INSTANCES, THE INDIVIDUAL RETAINS HIS OR HER FORMER RANK AS AN HONORARY TITLE, BUT MUST OFTEN TAKE A DEMOTION ONCE PLACED IN THE SQUAD. DUE TO THE ELITE NATURE OF THE SQUAD, THIS DEMOTION IS CORRECTLY UNDERSTOOD AS A LOGISTICAL MOVE, NOT A PUNISHMENT. THE SQUAD RECEIVES ITS AUTHORITY FROM CONGRESS, AND IS OVERSEEN BY THE SENATE SUBCOMMITTEE FOR SUPERHUMAN AFFAIRS. AS FEDERAL AGENTS, THEY HAVE SENIORITY IN ANY WONDER-RELATED CRIME OR THREAT, AND CAN COMMANDEER LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT IN THESE INSTANCES. WHEN WONDERS ARE NOT INVOLVED, HOWEVER, THE SQUAD IS OUT OF ITS JURISDICTION. COOPERATION WITH LOCAL LAW ENFORCEMENT IS A HIGH PRIORITY FOR THE SQUAD, WHICH IS VERY CONSCIOUS OF ITS PUBLIC IMAGE. THE MILITARY CHAIN OF COMMAND WORKS IN A SIMILAR FASHION: MEMBERS OF THE SQUAD ARE NOT OBLIGATED TO OBEY THE ORDERS OF OUTSIDE OFFICERS WHEN THE ISSUE IS WONDER-RELATED, BUT IN ALL OTHER SITUATIONS THE CHAIN OF COMMAND IS IN EFFECT. AS FEDERAL EMPLOYEES, MEMBERS OF THE SQUAD ARE ALL REGISTERED WITH NARWAL AND RECEIVE AN EXCELLENT BENEFITS PACKAGE. AFTER SEVERAL HIGH-PROFILE CASES IN WHICH SQUAD MEMBERS WERE TURNED INTO INFORMERS BY SOVIET HANDLERS WITH DEEP POCKETS, THE PAY SCALE FOR SQUAD MEMBERS WAS RAISED TO A QUITE COMFORTABLE LEVEL. IT WAS THOUGHT THAT THIS WOULD SOMEWHAT INSULATE THE TEAM FROM TEMPTING OFFERS BY FOREIGN NATIONS.

THE ALL-AMERICANS

FLYING DESK JOBS: THE CIVIL SERVICE WONDER CORPS

ORIGINALLY CONCEIVED AS AN ANTI-COMMUNIST FORCE WORKING TO OPPOSE THE SOVIETS IN KOREA AND OTHER LOCALES, THE ALL-AMERICANS BEGAN TO TRANSFORM ITSELF AS MORE CIVILIAN WONDERS JOINED ITS RANKS. BY DEFINITION, THE ORGANIZATION COUNTED EVERY WONDER IN THE FEDERAL EMPLOY AS A MEMBER, NO MATTER WHERE THAT INDIVIDUAL WORKED OR HOW MENIAL THE JOB SEEMED. THE DIVERSE NATURE OF THE SQUAD WAS DIRECTLY ADDRESSED BY PRESIDENT KENNEDY, WHO CREATED THE CIVIL SERVICE WONDER CORPS AS A BRANCH OF THE ALL-AMERICANS. THOSE WONDERS WHOSE POWERS OR PERSONALITY WERE NOT CONDUCTIVE TO FIELD WORK WERE ASSIGNED TO THE CORPS, WHILE THE SQUAD PROPER CONTINUED TO PERFORM THE TRADITIONAL DUTIES OF A "HERO TEAM." THE RANKS OF THE CIVIL CORPS INCLUDES MANY WONDERS WHO NEVER WEAR A COSTUME OR MASK AND WHO PERFORM THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS FROM DESKS ACROSS THE COUNTRY. MOST HAVE POWERS WHICH ARE QUITE MINOR OR EVEN USELESS, WHILE OTHERS (SUCH AS NED WILLIS, WHOSE TALENT FOR PLANT GROWTH EARNED HIM THE MONIKER "THE LANDSCAPER") ARE EMPLOYED IN WAYS WHICH MAKE THE MOST OUT OF A POWER THAT MIGHT OTHERWISE SEEM LAUGHABLE.

THE CIVIL CORPS EMPLOYS NO MILITARY RANK. PROMOTION IS DETERMINED BY TIME SERVED AND REGULAR PERFORMANCE REVIEW. FEDERAL OFFICES AROUND THE WORLD ARE USUALLY GRATEFUL TO HAVE CIVIL CORPS EMPLOYEES, SINCE THIS MEANS THE INDIVIDUAL'S SALARY COMES FROM THE COFFERS OF THE ALL-AMERICANS INSTEAD OF THE DEPARTMENT IN WHICH THE INDIVIDUAL WORKS. LIKE OTHER SQUAD MEMBERS, ALL CIVIL CORPS EMPLOYEES ARE REGISTERED WITH NARWAL.

"GOOD EVENING, MR. FABULOUS": THE DRAGONFLY PROJECT

THE THIRD BRANCH OF THE ALL-AMERICANS, THE DRAGONFLY PROJECT, IS HIGHLY CLASSIFIED. THE DRAGONFLIES HAVE THEIR ROOTS IN THE "LOST PLATOON", A UNIT OF US ARMY WONDERS WHICH WAS OFFICIALLY DISBANDED AT THE END OF THE WAR EVEN AS ITS MEMBERS WERE TRANSFERRED TO A TOP SECRET FACILITY FOR TRAINING IN THE COLD WAR AGAINST THE SOVIETS. WHEN THE ALL-AMERICAN WONDER SQUAD WAS FORMALIZED IN 1954, THE LOST PLATOON WAS BROUGHT UNDER ITS UMBRELLA AS THE CLASSIFIED DRAGONFLY PROJECT. TO THIS DAY, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT REFUSES TO ADMIT THAT A COVERT BRANCH OF THE ALL-AMERICANS EXISTS, AND THE NAME OF THE PROJECT IS NOT COMMON KNOWLEDGE.

THE PROJECT CAN BE DIVIDED INTO TWO PARTS: THE AGENT CORPS AND THE OFFICERS RESPONSIBLE FOR ADMINISTRATION AND TRAINING. MOST, BUT NOT ALL, OF THESE OFFICERS ARE THEMSELVES WONDERS WITH EXPERIENCE IN THE REGULAR MILITARY, THE SQUAD, OR BOTH. THE OVERALL ADMINISTRATOR OF THE DRAGONFLY PROJECT IS A COLONEL. ORIGINALLY THE PROJECT WAS INTENDED TO ANSWER ONLY TO THE PRESIDENT, IN CONTRAST WITH THE REST OF THE SQUAD WHICH IS SUBJECT TO CONGRESSIONAL OVERSIGHT. HOWEVER, BY THE NIXON ERA, IT WAS JUDGED PRUDENT TO BEGIN INSULATING THE PRESIDENT FROM SOME OF THE PROJECT'S ACTIVITIES, WHICH HAD BROADENED TO INCLUDE ACTION NOT ONLY AGAINST ENEMIES OF THE ADMINISTRATION ABROAD BUT ALSO AT HOME, INSIDE AMERICAN BORDERS. TODAY THE PRESIDENT CAN STILL GIVE AN ORDER TO THE PROJECT'S COMMANDER AND EXPECT IT TO BE OBEYED, BUT MANY MORE ACTIVITIES THAT THE PRESIDENT KNOWS NOTHING ABOUT ARE ORDERED BY HIS ADVISORS AND STAFF WHO BELIEVE THE DRAGONFLIES ARE THE BEST AND MOST EFFICIENT WAY TO ACCOMPLISH A PARTICULAR GOAL OF THE ADMINISTRATION.

AGENTS ARE RIGOROUSLY TRAINED AND INDOCTRINATED INTO A CULTURE OF SERVICE TO THE NATION WHICH LEAVES NO ROOM FOR MORAL QUANDARIES. WHILE THE TRADITIONAL SQUAD WORKS AS A PUBLIC FACE FOR PATRIOTIC WONDERS, DRAGONFLIES PERFORM THOSE "BLACK MASK" OPERATIONS THAT OTHER WONDERS SHY AWAY FROM, INCLUDING SPYING, COUNTERINTELLIGENCE, AND COVERT OPERATIONS (MILITARY ACTIONS ABROAD AND AT HOME). THE DRAGONFLY PROJECT REACHED ITS HEIGHT (IN TERMS OF FUNDING AND SIZE) DURING THE 1980S AND SUFFERED A SERIOUS CUT AFTER THE COLLAPSE OF THE SOVIET UNION. BUT THE REALITY OF A POST-COLD WAR WORLD HAS REVITALIZED THE PROJECT, WHICH IS NOW ONE OF THE NATION'S MOST-USED WEAPONS IN THE "WAR ON TERROR."

THE ALL-AMERICANS

MEMBERS OF THE DRAGONFLY PROJECT ARE NOT REGISTERED WITH NARWAL. MANY DRAGONFLIES CLAIM TO WORK FOR OTHER BRANCHES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT. THE REST OPERATE UNDER "NONOFFICIAL COVER," MEANING THEY POSE AS PRIVATE CITIZENS OF THE UNITED STATES OR ANOTHER COUNTRY. REGARDLESS, THE SUPERHUMAN NATURE OF ANY DRAGONFLY IS ALWAYS SECRET. THEY ARE PAID LUCRATIVE AMOUNTS AND IN CASH BY FRONT COMPANIES AND OFF-SHORE ACCOUNTS. BETWEEN THEIR FREQUENT TRAINING AND MISSION ASSIGNMENTS THEY TEND TO PLAY HARD. SINCE EACH MUST LIE ABOUT HIS OR HER TRUE NATURE AND JOB, LONG-TERM PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS ARE RARE. IF CAPTURED IN THE COURSE OF A MISSION, THEY ARE DISAVOWED BY THEIR GOVERNMENT.



PROJECT ATLAS

TYPE: VARSITY

MEMBERSHIP: THE CHAMP, THE VEIL, THE BRONZE STAR, VICTORIA, THE LADY OF THE LAKE, GIZA, MATRIX. ONLY THE CURRENT ACTIVE ROSTER IS LISTED HERE; THE PROJECT HAS DOZENS MORE INACTIVE AND RESERVE MEMBERS, SOME OF WHICH MAY BE PCS.

BASE OF OPERATIONS: ATLAS TOWER, TITAN CITY

THE ATLAS PROJECT WAS FOUNDED IN 1990 BY A COALITION OF RICH PHILANTHROPISTS WHO FEARED THAT THE COMBINATION OF POST-COLD WAR TENSIONS, MILLENNIAL FERVOR, AND THE RISE OF CRIMINAL WONDERS COULD RESULT IN THE WORLD'S DESTRUCTION WITHIN A DECADE. THE BACKERS OF THE ATLAS PROJECT CAME FROM ACROSS THE POLITICAL SPECTRUM, HOWEVER, AND ALTHOUGH THEY COULD AGREE THAT A SUPERHUMAN ORGANIZATION WOULD BE THE BEST WAY TO ENSURE GLOBAL STABILITY, THEY DID NOT TRUST ANY OF THEIR FELLOWS TO OVERSEE IT. THE RESULT WAS A LARGE ENDOWMENT SET UP AS A BLIND TRUST; WHILE THE WONDERS OF PROJECT ATLAS CAN ACCESS THIS MONEY TO PAY BILLS AND OTHERWISE FINANCE THEIR ACTIVITIES, THEY HAVE NO IDEA HOW MUCH MONEY IS IN THE TRUST, HOW THAT MONEY HAS BEEN INVESTED, OR WHERE IT COMES FROM. IF THE FINANCIAL BACKERS OF PROJECT ATLAS WERE EVER TO COME TO AGREEMENT, THEY COULD UN-FUND THE TRUST AND CLOSE THE PROJECT; THERE HAVE BEEN THREE CLOSE CALLS IN THIS REGARD, THE MOST NOTABLE IN 2001, BUT SO FAR THE PROJECT CONTINUES TO OPERATE.

DUE TO THE FACELESS NATURE OF THE BACKERS OF PROJECT ATLAS, THE SUPERHUMAN MEMBERS OF THE GROUP ENJOY NEAR-TOTAL AUTONOMY, AND THEY OPERATE ACCORDING TO PRECEDENTS THAT HAVE COLLECTED OVER THE PROJECT'S 21-YEAR HISTORY. THE POSITION OF CHAIRMAN, ONCE UNOFFICIAL, IS NOW ELECTED AND THE CHAIR SERVES UNTIL HE OR SHE CHOOSES TO STEP DOWN OR IS REPLACED. THERE ARE THREE LEVELS OF MEMBERSHIP: ACTIVE, RESERVE, AND INACTIVE. ACTIVE MEMBERS ARE EXPECTED TO ATTEND ALL MONTHLY MEETINGS AND RESPOND TO ALERTS WHENEVER POSSIBLE. THEY RECEIVE A \$5,000 MONTHLY STIPEND, HAVE ACCESS TO ALL PROJECT EQUIPMENT AND FILES, VOTE ON ALL ISSUES TO COME BEFORE THE PROJECT, AND ENJOY FREE ROOM AND BOARD AT ATLAS TOWERS IN TITAN CITY. ACTIVE MEMBERS ARE NOT ALLOWED TO SERVE ON ANY OTHER SUPERHUMAN ORGANIZATION.

RESERVE MEMBERS HAVE SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED OBLIGATIONS TO THE PROJECT. THEY ARE NOT REQUIRED TO ATTEND MEETINGS, THEY DO NOT VOTE, AND THEY RECEIVE A \$1,000 MONTHLY "RETAINER." RESERVE MEMBERS ARE ONLY OBLIGED TO ANSWER AN ALERT WHEN THE MEMBER IS SPECIFICALLY CALLED. THEY DO, HOWEVER, RETAIN ACCESS TO ATLAS FACILITIES AND EQUIPMENT, AND CAN LIVE AT THE TOWERS IF DESIRED. MANY SERVE IN OTHER SUPERHUMAN ORGANIZATIONS, AND THIS IS ALLOWED.

MEMBERS WHO RETIRE OR TAKE EXTENDED LEAVES OF ABSENCE ARE PLACED ON AN "INACTIVE" ROSTER. THEY LOSE ALL RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERSHIP, BUT CAN RETURN TO ACTIVE DUTY WITH A VOTE OF THE ACTIVE MEMBERS. TECHNICALLY, PROJECT ATLAS DOES NOT RECOGNIZE A MEMBER'S ABILITY TO QUIT THE TEAM; SUCH INDIVIDUALS SIMPLY BECOME "INACTIVE."

OVER 15 YEARS, THE PROJECT ROSTER HAS BECOME SURPRISINGLY LARGE. NEW MEMBERS ARE VOTED IN BY A MAJORITY OF THE ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP. SUCH MEMBERS ARE USUALLY (BUT NOT ALWAYS) MADE RESERVE MEMBERS FIRST, SERVING AN INFORMAL PROBATIONARY PERIOD OF ONE TO TWO MONTHS. THIS PROBATIONARY PERIOD HAS OCCASIONALLY BEEN WAIVED. ALL MEMBERS MUST BE LEGAL ADULTS, BUT THE PROJECT DOES NOT REQUIRE THE DIVULGING OF SECRET IDENTITIES, SO THIS RULE HAS SOMETIMES BEEN BROKEN. THE NUMBER OF ACTIVE MEMBERS IS DECIDED BY THE CHAIRMAN, AND HAS BEEN AS FEW AS FOUR AND AS MANY AS TWELVE. THE CHAIRMAN CAN REMOVE ANY MEMBER FROM ACTIVE STATUS AT ANY TIME.

THE PROJECT'S MOTTO -- "IN UMEROS TOLLEMUS" -- IS LATIN AND MEANS "WE TAKE THE BURDEN ON OUR SHOULDERS."

THE MEMBERS OF THE ATLAS PROJECT ARE OCCASIONALLY REFERRED TO AS "THE A-LIST" OR "THE A-TEAM."

THE YOUNG WONDERS

TYPE: JUNIOR VARSITY

MEMBERSHIP: THE GRAIL, THE BRUIN, G-MAN, ESQUIRE, DAWN

BASE OF OPERATIONS: LOS ANGELES

THE "YOUNG WONDERS" IS A SUPER-GROUP WHOSE FORMATION INVOLVES THE PLAYER CHARACTERS. THE INITIAL IMPETUS FOR THE ORGANIZATION COMES FROM SOPHIE FISHER, THE GRAIL, WHO IS ON THE RUN FROM THE TEMPLARS AND IN NEED OF AID. SLOWLY SHE GATHERS OTHER YOUNG HEROES INTO A LOOSE FELLOWSHIP, UNITING THEM WITH DIRE WARNINGS OF A COMING THREAT. TO USE THE YOUNG WONDERS IN YOUR STORY, BEGIN BY INSERTING THE BRUIN INTO ANY OTHER ADVENTURE. KYLE IS AN INNOCENT BYSTANDER IN WHATEVER PLOT YOUR VILLAIN IS UP TO, BUT BECAUSE HE HAS POWERS, HE TURNS OUT TO BE MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER VICTIM. THE HEROES MIGHT BE TAKEN BY SURPRISE WHEN A HOSTAGE IS TAKEN OUT BACK TO BE SHOT ONLY FOR A GIANT BEAR TO COME SMASHING BACK THROUGH THE WALL, AND KYLE MIGHT EVEN GET ATTACKED, BUT EVENTUALLY EVERYONE SHOULD FIGURE OUT THAT THE BRUIN IS ONE OF THE GOOD GUYS. KEEP HIS ROLE MINOR; HE IS NOT IN THE ADVENTURE TO OVER-SHADOW THE HEROES BUT, RATHER, TO BEGIN A LARGER PLOT. AT THE END OF THE ADVENTURE, KYLE MAY EXCHANGE CONTACT INFO WITH ANOTHER PLAYER OR SIMPLY FADE BACK INTO THE BACKGROUND.

REGARDLESS, SOPHIE SEES THE BRUIN ON YOUTUBE AND USES HER POWERS TO OBSERVE HIM, QUICKLY DISCOVERING HIS SECRET IDENTITY. AFTER THE HEROES ARE GONE, SHE APPROACHES HIM IN COSTUME AND WARNS HIM THAT A TERRIBLE EVIL IS SWIFTLY APPROACHING AND KYLE MUST JOIN WITH OTHER HEROES IN ORDER TO STOP THIS MYSTERIOUS THREAT. KYLE, EASILY PERSUADED BY THE CALL TO HEROIC ACTION, AGREES TO DO HIS PART AND SUGGESTS THE PAIR TRY TO LOCATE AND RECRUIT G-MAN, A SUPER-SPEEDSTER WHOSE EXPLOITS IN A NEARBY LA SUBURB HAVE REACHED KYLE'S COLLEGE CAMPUS. YOUR PLAYERS COME INTO THIS PART OF THE STORY WHEN RESEARCH DISCOVERS THAT ONE OF THEIR ENEMIES, NOW DEFEATED OR IN JAIL, HAD A "WONDER CAR" WHICH THE AUTHORITIES HAVE YET TO LOCATE. INFORMANTS SUGGEST THE CAR MIGHT HAVE BEEN USED FOR ILLEGAL STREET RACING BY SOME LOCAL GANGS. WHEN THE HEROES GO TO INVESTIGATE THEY CAN FIND MARIO ORTEGA AND HIS BROTHER GILBERT, WHO CONFESS TO STEALING THE CAR FROM A VILLAIN WHEN THE MAN'S BACK WAS TURNED, BUT THE VEHICLE LATER EXPLODED ON THE RACE TRACK AND IT WAS ONLY BY A MIRACLE THAT MARIO AND HIS RIVAL RAY ORTIZ SURVIVED THE WRECK. BOTH ARE UNHARMED. THE HEROES MIGHT EVEN DISCOVER MARIO'S NEW POWERS, BUT HE DOES HIS BEST TO KEEP A DISTANCE, INSISTING THAT "IT JUST WOULDN'T WORK, MAN." LITTLE DO THE HEROES KNOW THAT, JUST AN HOUR BEFORE THEY ARRIVED, GRAIL AND BRUIN PERSUADED MARIO TO JOIN THEIR GROUP AS THE SUPER-FAST G-MAN.

SOON AFTER, A GRIM AND BROODING VIGILANTE APPROACHES THE HEROES AND ASKS FOR THEIR HELP. THIS IS DUSK, AND HE HAS UNCOVERED EVIDENCE OF SOME KIND OF LARGE CRIMINAL CONSPIRACY SHIPPING GUNS AND MONEY THROUGH LA. THIS IS A BIG OPERATION AND, AFRAID THAT HIS ERSTWHILE PARTNER DAWN WOULD GET HURT, HE HAS CHOSEN TO GO BEHIND HER BACK AND ENLIST THE PLAYER CHARACTERS INSTEAD. WHAT DUSK DOES NOT KNOW IS THAT THE CRIMINAL ORGANIZATION HE HAS STUMBLERED ACROSS IS ONE SMALL BRANCH OF THE TEMPLAR PLAN; THE MONEY AND WEAPONS ARE BEING MOVED TO A CENTRAL AMERICAN NATION WHERE A TAKEOVER, LED BY RELIGIOUS ZEALOTS FIRMLY IN THE TEMPLAR'S POCKETS, IS ABOUT TO BE LAUNCHED. THE HEROES CAN LOCATE AND INTERRUPT THIS EXCHANGE, RUINING THE SMUGGLING RING AND FIGHTING SOME OF LA'S LOCAL SUPER-VILLAINS IN THE PROCESS, BUT WHEN DAWN FINDS OUT HER PARTNER HAS BEEN "MOONLIGHTING" ON THE SIDE SHE DECIDES TO DO THE SAME. HER OWN ATTEMPTS TO FIND OTHER SUPERHEROES TO BOND WITH LEADS HER TO BRUIN, G-MAN AND GRAIL, WHO HAS BEEN WORKING THE SMUGGLING RING FROM THE OTHER END WITHOUT EVER TELLING HER COLLEAGUES THAT THE TEMPLARS ARE, IN FACT, BEHIND IT ALL.

THE YOUNG WONDERS

BY THIS TIME, THE PLAYER CHARACTERS MIGHT BEGIN TO HEAR ABOUT THE SO-CALLED "YOUNG WONDERS". PERHAPS THE GROUP GETS CAUGHT ON SOMEONE'S CELLPHONE CAMERA AND AN ASPIRING COLLEGE JOURNALIST GIVES THE TEAM ITS NAME. THE PLAYER CHARACTERS ARE LIKELY TO RECOGNIZE AT LEAST ONE OF THE YOUNG WONDERS AND MAY SEEK TO ARRANGE A MEETING, BUT BEFORE THAT MEETING CAN HAPPEN A HIGHLY DANGEROUS TEMPLAR-BACKED SUPER VILLAIN APPEARS ON THE SCENE AND BEGINS CAUSING HAVOC. YOU CAN USE REX MUNDI (ICONS P.108) FOR THIS PURPOSE; REX IS OPERATING WITHOUT THE SANCTION OF THIS WORLD'S TEMPLAR ORGANIZATION, BUT HE'S READY TO BEGIN HIS GLOBAL CONQUEST BY OPENING A TIME PORTAL THROUGH WHICH HE CAN CALL ARMIES FROM THROUGHOUT THE PAST AND FUTURE. ROMAN LEGIONNAIRES, PIRATES, COWBOYS, NINJA AND ROBOTS OUGHT TO GIVE THE HEROES PLENTY TO HANDLE. THE YOUNG WONDERS APPEAR AND DO THEIR PART IN SAVING INNOCENT PEOPLE AND CLEARING THE STREETS OF MINIONS, BUT REX SEEMS TO RECOGNIZE GRAIL AND MAKES A SPECIAL EFFORT TO CAPTURE HER BEFORE HE IS THWARTED AND ESCAPES.

RIGHT AS THE HEROES ARE ABOUT TO QUESTION THE WONDERS AND GRAIL IN PARTICULAR (THEY MAY HAVE QUESTIONS FOR G-MAN OR BRUIN AS WELL), A NEW FACE APPEARS: ESQUIRE, PROFESSIONAL SIDEKICK. ESQUIRE CLAIMS HE IS A MEMBER OF THE YOUNG WONDERS AND HE DEFLECTS ALL QUESTIONS LIKE A PRACTICED LAWYER. HE PROTECTS G-MAN'S SECRET IDENTITY, EXPLAINS THAT REX IS FROM ANOTHER DIMENSION AND DOUBTLESS THOUGHT HE KNEW GRAIL BUT ACTUALLY REMEMBERS ONLY HER ALTERNATE SELF, STAKES OUT A SAFE "TURF" FOR THE NEW TEAM THAT DOES NOT CHALLENGE THE PLAYER CHARACTERS, AND SKILLFULLY POSTPONES ANY TALK ABOUT WHO THE LEADER OF THE YOUNG WONDERS MIGHT BE, SAYING THE TEAM IS "AN AUTONOMOUS COLLECTIVE." MORE IMPORTANT, ESQUIRE HAS ALREADY CASHED IN SOME FAVORS TO ARRANGE A FULLY OUTFITTED HEADQUARTERS FOR THE TEAM -- LOCATED ABOVE A SWANK DOWNTOWN DANCE CLUB -- AND A JET HE CALLS THE WONDER-WING. (IT'S AN OLD INVINCICRAFT, BUT ESQUIRE COULDN'T GET ROAD SCHOLAR TO BUILD A NEW JET IN AN HOUR.) SWEEPED UP BY ESQUIRE'S PREPARATION AND EXPERIENCE, THE REST OF THE YOUNG WONDERS GO ALONG, AND THE NEW TEAM FLIES OFF AFTER A BRIEF APPEARANCE FOR THE PRESS. IF NECESSARY, GRAIL CAN TELEPORT THEM ALL AWAY IN A FLASH OF LIGHT.

IN THE MONTHS THAT FOLLOW, THE YOUNG WONDERS BECOME A SORT OF HALF-OBSERVED RIVAL TO THE PLAYER CHARACTER TEAM. THEY SEEM TO BE PURSUING SOME KIND OF INVESTIGATION OF THEIR OWN, ONE WHICH ELUDES THE HEROES AT EVERY TURN. ONLY GRAIL'S SUPERNATURAL CLAIRVOYANCE AND HER OWN NATURE AS THE OBJECT OF TEMPLAR AGGRESSION ALLOWS THE YOUNG WONDERS TO MAINTAIN THE INVESTIGATION, BUT HINTS AND CLUES OF SOME DEEP CONSPIRACY CONTINUE TO MOUNT. EVENTUALLY THE TEMPLAR PLAN WILL REACH ITS APOGEE AND SUPER-HEROES ALL AROUND THE WORLD WILL BE TURNED INTO TOOLS OF THE TEMPLARS, TRICKED INTO BATTLING ONE ANOTHER WHILE TEMPLAR AGENTS USURP THE REINS OF GLOBAL POWER IN A SECRET COUP. WHEN THAT HAPPENS, THE YOUNG WONDERS WILL NEED HELP AND THEY WILL TURN TO THE ONLY GROUP THEY TRUST, THE ONLY GROUP THEY THINK THEY CAN PERSUADE OF THE TERRIBLE TRUTH. WHETHER OR NOT THE HEROES BELIEVE THEM REMAINS TO BE SEEN.

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