

TIM KIRK'S

HEARTS & SOULS

SUPER-HEROIC
ROLEPLAYING GAME



Its Fate Is In Your Hands

SILVER

LION STUDIOS



Hearts and Souls

by Tim Kirk

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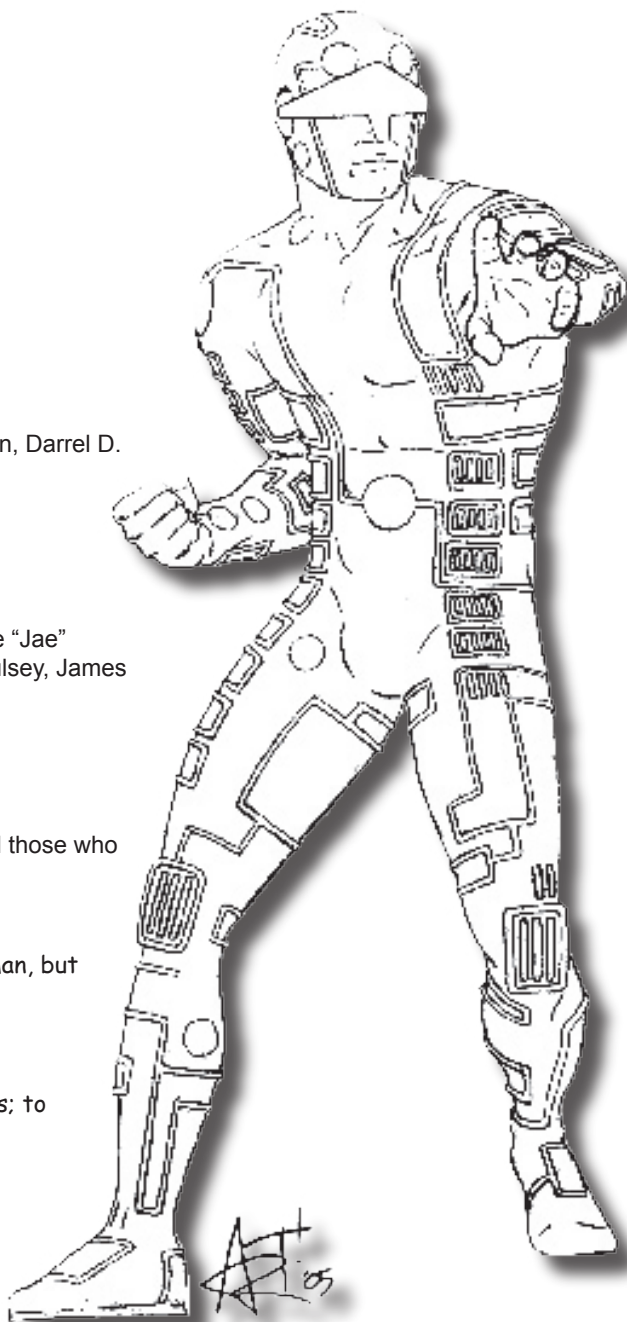
To all those who believed in me. To all those who dream of heroes. May you be blessed.

"A hero is no braver than an ordinary man, but he is braver five minutes longer."

— Ralph Waldo Emerson

"Nurture your mind with great thoughts; to believe in the heroic makes heroes."

— Benjamin Disraeli



INTRODUCTION

Hearts & Souls is a labor of love—not of games as much as is one of super-heroes. Who hasn't dreamt, at least a little, of being a superhero? Hearts and Souls is an attempt to let you stretch out that bright moment just a bit longer, to give you the tools to create super heroic stories with you and a few friends, as well as nurture the tiny sidekick in all of us yearning to be a real hero.

The mirror-silver costume reflected the cameras' flashes all about him. The man called himself, of all things, Doctor Radiant. He strode forward towards the police line and various emergency workers. He continued past them, his stride determined, his posture commanding and reassuring at the same time. His voice—eerie and echoing—rang out over the crowd, "Let me handle this."

No one mistook that statement as a request. He strode onward past the incredulous stares, past the hard-working men and women whose frantic attempts to turn back the disaster were failing by inches. You could feel his respect for them.

He stepped inside the building. As soon as he was no longer in view, the calm left him. Instead a furious need overtook him—not a panic, but a quiet fiery determination. He shot off like a rocket, running full-tilt down the maze-like tunnels of the nuclear facility.

Finally he reached the reactor. He had but seconds left and knew it. Opening the door, the critical alarms sounded and radioactive death began to leak past him, but this worry did not yet weigh upon him. He grimaced as the radiation hit him, and he struggled to absorb its flood. The first particles passed through him without slowing, but as more impacted the glowing pulse of radioactive decay began to decline. It was too much for him, way too much.

He gritted out furiously, "I can't fail!" His voice echoed, "too many lives, too many, innocents!" He clenched his teeth tight and his words were hissed between them. He brushed aside the pain and agony of the process as more radiation flooded his body. He cried out to the workers "Leave. Now." and they hurried away, frightened.

"I can't fail them." His mind screamed with agony and he staggered.

"I must stop this. Too many lives. Too high a cost." He roared out the words between gasped breaths.

His body began glowing with golden light—the particles singeing the very air about him, which suddenly began to dim and fade.

Moments passed. Outside it was all silent, and the people's worry did not abate.

Finally, he let out one last cry of simultaneous pain and triumph as the glow vanished—leaving only the incandescent spark behind his eyes. He staggered out glad no one was there to see. Slowly he sealed the door as he slid to his knees panting. The alarms had gone silent; the reactor was cold, empty.

He stood slowly as the HAZMAT-suited workers rushed back in with a flood of reporters.

The disaster was averted.

He stood erect and strode rigidly forward hoping he wouldn't fall, promising himself he wouldn't.

Slowly he pulled a set of mirror lens shades off his belt and slid them over his face, to hide his glowing eyes.

DEFINITIONS:

Drive: A hero's motivation, the reason for his actions as a hero.

Dice: H&S uses a number of RPG dice: d4, d8, and d12 for task resolution.

Gutter: The border in comic books that separates the panels from one another

Stress: All the factors that wear a hero down—minor injuries, nagging doubts, near-hits by attacks, and so on. Stress, in H&S, is the bad stuff.

Stress Trigger: An area of weakness to Stress, notably an element or situation that causes a hero more Stress when she is around it—Phobias, Specialized Radiations or simply a hindrance that makes things harder for the hero: Age, Asthma, etc.

Stress Event: An event which occurs when the hero's Stress overwhelms him. It can be an injury, setback, emotional reaction, or any kind of event that causes him to fail because of pushing too hard.

Welcome to Hearts and Souls

A game of super heroic, action, drama, and adventure.

You will find numerous rules and tools here to allow you to create and play super-hero characters, explore their worlds, their motivations, and their lives. We will start with the most important aspect of an H & S character—their Drive—and move on from there.

Drives

The Heart and Soul of a hero is their Drive—their determination, if you will—to succeed no matter what the cost. This Drive is their motivation, but it is also that little extra heroic oomph that they can dredge from within themselves to succeed at nearly any task, even when all hope seems lost.

Drive is a central element of H&S play. It is the reason your characters do what they do. It is the core reason that they are super-heroes.

THERE ARE 4 PRIMARY DRIVES FOR HEROES

Love

Guilt

Community

Spirit of Adventure

Ed.'s Note: Throughout the text you will find notes like these; they will give examples, explanations, and definitions of terms used, much as the notes found in comic books. For example, in this game the person who controls the villains, works to establish continuity, and in general makes judgment calls in play is called the “Editor” or Ed.. for short. The role of the Ed.. is much the same as a typical “Gamemaster,” or GM in other games, but can vary somewhat depending on the play style of the players. —Editor in Chief

These are but examples of the many possible reasons a character may act as a super-hero, though they are by no means the only ones. It is suggested that a character have a single focused Drive, though some heroes may indeed have more than one reason to act.

It is possible for an Ed.. to allow a character a secondary Drive, but such a Drive should be even more specific of detail than the primary one, and thus more limited on when it can be used to aid the hero.
—Ed.

Love

One of the most common drives among the super-heroic set. It often takes the form of a specific kind of love called “guardianship.” Heroes who have this Drive love humanity as a whole, enough to risk their own lives in order to secure for them justice, peace, safety, and the like. The need to protect may be narrow—children, women, innocents, Americans, Australians, or broader—all humanity, or this sector of space, or other similar areas.

Doc Radiant (*Analog Prime*), and Fulcrum (*Millennia*) are both examples of heroes with this Drive.

Guilt

Tied closely to love, this Drive is usually more focused on a specific person or persons whose misery has driven the hero to act—murdered loved ones, victimized families, and the like all create or add impetus to the hero's actions. Variations of this are sometimes called Responsibility or Revenge but they are usually tied to guilt that has been internalized into a form of sympathetic need to prevent what happened from happening to anyone ever again.

Devil Jack (*Millennia*) is one of many heroes of this kind.

Spirit of Adventure

Heroes pushed by this Drive are heroes primarily doing the hero-thing because it's fun, exciting, and adventurous. They ethically can't

accept using their abilities for harm, but the real reason they go out and use them is simply for the fun of it.

Mongoose (*Analog Prime*) and All-American Archer III (*Analog Prime*) have this Drive.

Community

A less common Drive for super-heroes and their actions, it is different from love/guardianship in that the hero possesses a need to belong to humanity—to be seen as worthwhile. This most commonly occurs when a group of heroes have a common origin, which sets them apart from others—whether they are mutants fighting for their rights, aliens alone on earth, or simply a family who has chosen to use their powers for common good. In general, this Drive creates internal support for the hero group, who may “do good” on the side, but are together because of their need for community.

DRIVES IN PLAY

The Drive in play allows the player to re-roll dice that did not return acceptable or successful results by creating a thought bubble or spoken monologue (both shared aloud with the group), that details why the hero should succeed. Examining Doctor Radiant in the introduction, one can see his Drive being used to let him succeed at a task (essentially re-rolling the dice until he succeeds).

The character's Drive allows them to continue to attempt actions, as long as their player can justify it to the Editor and other players—within the context of their Drive and using a monologue to deal with situation at hand.

MONOLOGUES: THE WORTH OF WORDS

The art of the monologue is one that is very important to the comic book feel. While they don't occur in every issue, they do occur with stunning regularity. In H&S there are two important forms of monologues that heroes will tend to experience:

* The villain's exposition on his plans—his ego and vanity driving him to tell the soon-to-be-dead heroes just what he is doing.

* The heroine's internal voice

telling her she must go on, no matter her fears and doubts.

INTERNAL MONOLOGUES

These are the hero's pep talks to himself. They may be short momentary things like, “Don't screw this up!” or detailed internal explanations that outside readers and thus other players get to experience: “My aunt died because of my unwillingness to apprehend that thief I saw running from the scene of a crime. He later broke in and killed her when she tried to stop him from taking her heirloom jewelry. I can't let another person die because of my cowardice.”

These monologues essentially give the hero the ability to talk himself out of the funk of life (i.e. a Stress Event), or help them succeed at a difficult task by pushing beyond their own limitations. The Ed. should remember these are important as they let a hero re-roll tasks without taking Stress.

MONOLOGUES OF EXPOSITION

Monologues of exposition mostly occur from characters controlled by the Ed. They are used often to explain something the heroes need to know, like a criminal explaining his master plan to his foe he has trapped in a (supposedly) lethal and escape-proof trap. It may come as a taunt as the villain escapes because he was underestimated by the heroes. Occasionally, the monologue of exposition occurs when an Ed.-controlled character wishes to give the hero information—the secret way to deactivate the Anti-matter Ray threatening the city, or the way to identify the shape-shifting villain. These kinds of expositions are less common than they used to be but they are still great for triggering a plot thread.

LEADERSHIP MONOLOGUES

When times look their darkest, some heroes rise above the rest, so much so that they inspire other heroes to new heights of strength of spirit. When a particular spirit-lifting speech is given, all the heroes present may temporarily use that speech as a Drive. Re-tests are done as normal. These speeches do have a few rules: one, it must really inspire the Ed. and the players, and two, they must convey something emotional—the remembrance of fallen comrades or simply the refocus of their ideals towards a common heroic goal.

Fulcrum attempts to hold up a collapsed support beam in order to give the last few people in a crumbling building time to escape. His first roll fails to achieve success. So Fulcrum's player says "I cannot let innocents die while I'm here to protect them!" This allows him to re-roll the task at hand to try and succeed.

Though his muscles and force field are strained to the limit, he'll manage in the end. This isn't the only way to get a re-roll, but it is the least costly for the character. (See "Stress")—the harried Ed.

Drives can evolve over time. They are not eternally fixed to the hero, although it may seem so for many of the more iconic heroes, because their reasons for being are so powerful.

Guilt, for example, changes to Responsibility, which can turn to Guardianship. Spirit of Adventure may falter after a pivotal failure, leaving the hero wracked with the Guilt of his failures.

Changes to Drive should be discussed not just between the Ed. and the player, but also in consideration with the player group as Drive can impact how a character deals with the other heroes.

Example:

Devil Jack's Drive as a super-hero is Guilt. He failed to save his wife and child from an escaped convict. The loss of his family drove him to abandon his police career and turn to his own brand of vigilante justice.

After several game-decades he has finally worked through his grief and guilt, but still acts as a hero, since he feels a responsibility to the people who've come to rely on him (this is an aspect of the Love Drive).

CAPABILITIES

How do Heroes accomplish things?

Characters in RPGs are often measured, molded and shaped by the use of numbers (and in some cases adjectives) called a variety of things: stats, attributes, ability scores, or other similar terms. In our case we use attributes as measures of things everyone has at some level or another and can be used to describe their capabilities.

In order to maintain the ambiguity of comic books, we use a very simple set of terms divided into two elements: a rating and a scale for that rating.

Scale is how powerful in terms of effect a capability is; there are three scale ratings:

•Human:

Things all humans are capable of.

•Superhuman:

Things beyond the human capabilities, but still fundamentally terrestrially limited.

•Cosmic:

A scale that covers things of vast measures and capability.

On the PC sheet and the stats for NPCs in the settings section, "!" is used to represent the superhuman scale, and "*" the cosmic.

If there is no indicator the scale is always assumed to be human
—Ed..

IN EACH SCALE THERE ARE THREE TRAIT RATINGS:

•Ordinary:

The bottom-measured rank on a scale. That isn't to say there aren't things below, it's just that those things that are better are significant enough and game-affecting enough to be noted.

Ordinary is rarely "used" except on a character sheet. When describing things in play, it should be just 'Human' or 'superhuman' as a description. "You are no match for my terrible superhuman might, human" can be used as an example of dropping the term to indicate in play that the speaker has Ordinary superhuman Might.

You could say "I've got superhuman Might," but you wouldn't need to say "Ordinary superhuman Might." —Ed..

•Exceptional:

This rank indicates notable or memorable measure of a capability.

•Spectacular:

At this level, the character with a given rank is noted wherever he goes and is noticed

as being truly superior at this scale of ability. He has eye-opening, jaw-dropping impressiveness.

Combined together, the rating and scale capability allows a broad description of characters for play.

Ranks and scales are used to describe the capability of a character, but dice are used to determine when they succeed at a task or have difficulties with a task.

DEFINITIONS:

Might:

Physical strength and force, the ability to move or manipulate objects with brute strength.

Deftness:

Speed, agility, and the use of coordination-based skills. Covers all forms of innate dexterity and reflexes.

Resilience:

Resistance to physical strain, injury, and fatigue.

Brains:

Intelligence, quick wits, and imagination all rolled into one. This covers perception, thinking abilities, assessing foes, and similar brainpower-heavy tasks.

Each scale uses a different die type, while each rating determines the number of dice rolled to succeed.

Human Scale d4

(Ordinary) 1 die

Superhuman Scale d8

(Exceptional) 2 dice

Cosmic Scale d12

(Spectacular) 3 dice

What is being measured?

H & S uses a system of 6 capabilities as listed here:

Might

Deftness

Resilience

Brains

Prowess

Resolve

These capabilities describe a character fairly thoroughly in terms of what they can do and what degree of success they are likely to have.

Prowess:

Measure of intellectual skills and adaptability. This trait covers non-physical skills, computer programming, code-breaking, brain surgery, and the like. It covers tasks where training would be necessary to perform a given skill.

Resolve:

Mental resistance to emotional and psychological strain.

Each attribute should be used based on which is most appropriate for the task at hand and the solution to a given problem a character decides to attempt. Might may be used to open a door with brute force, Deftness to open it by picking the lock, or Prowess to override the computer controls.

In any given case an Ed.. may ask for a specific trait be used based on the player's description. Each capability should be ranked and scaled as appropriate for the character.

ROLLING THE DICE

Whenever a character attempts a task, they roll the appropriate capability (or power) and try and beat the target number on a single die. Multiple dice are built in multiple "re-roll" chances a hero receives without needing to fall back to the hero's Drive. Only the highest result of all dice rolled is kept.

Standard Suggested Challenge

Ratings

Ordinary 2

Exceptional 4

Spectacular 6

No roll is required if the capability is of a higher scale than the challenge. If the capability is of a lower scale than the challenge then it is up to the Ed.. to assess how likely it is (given the circumstances) for a hero to succeed. See also the Rule of Thumb!

Point of View

Now in order to speed up game play and facilitate the obvious importance of heroes in Hearts & Souls, the point of view of the action should always be from the hero's side. The

hero dodges to avoid an attack—he rolls the action, not the Editor. Villains succeed unless interfered with, or unless the plot demands they fail (usually only momentarily to give the heroes some time to act). That is not to say that the descriptions of actions are always centered upon the hero, just that all tasks that must be performed mechanically by the system are the heroes' actions.

ED'S NOTE:

Optional Rule: Diceless

Dice are an element of H&S that can be easily removed. They exist to give some excitement and doubt to the outcome of actions, to help magnify the moment of play.

The Ed.. can make all success either cost Stress or need a monologue without a roll. This can speed up play a great deal but means the Ed.. needs to keep a tighter watch on Stress since it may not accrue as quickly. Dice are suggested for regular play because of the aspects they add. Attributes and powers ranks become devalued without dice and will take some work for the Ed.. to make them feel more valuable again with descriptive prose.—Ed.



Building Your Own Four-Colored Icon

Now that you've got a bit of the style of H&S, let's get the real core of the game—the character.

We addressed Drive earlier, so let's begin with that.

Step One

Choose a Drive that best fits the type of character you would enjoy playing.

Step Two

Describe your character. Use adjectives—the more detail the better. Associate those adjectives with the various concepts of the game rules. How strong is your character? How agile? Amazingly agile? Fast as a flea? Work with the Ed.. and other players to define those adjectives in terms of rank and scale.

It may be difficult at first to not have a more fixed character-creation system, but comic book heroes don't really have many rules to what they can or can't do. The Ed.. may, but those should be discussed and established early on by his Pitch. (See Pitch: Creating an H&S Comic Book). Fitting in with the Pitch should be easy enough. Simply make sure your character fits the Pitch's limits and the others participating in the game feel that your concept is appropriate.

Example Pitch: A team of teen-aged super-heroes band together in a world that seems out to get them.

I've decided my character is going to be a nerdish type, probably working on the high-school newspaper. I really want to play someone though who has the potential to be incredibly powerful and frightening. So, I decide that I play a character that controls the weather. On the surface, it is versatile and interesting, but if he loses control, very dangerous to himself and to his allies. He is thin, nerdy, not overtly athletic, but just a small amount of innate ability that comes from climbing fences, trees, and otherwise trying to get places to see things. Other players like

this concept, but one of them suggests I play a photographer, so she can play an editor of the school paper.

Since I did say, "Try to get to places and see things," this makes sense so I detail my concept.

Idea: Nerdish school photojournalist, with frightening and difficult-to-control powers over the weather.

This is the core of the character—what I want him to be. The Ed..'s pitch suggest that our best ability should not be higher than Exceptional (!), and that we should be focused on either pure ability or pure power for our characters.

Spending some time on my concept, I end up with this:

Storm Knight

Name: J. J. (John Jericho) Hamilton

Concept: Nerdish high school photojournalist who controls the weather

Might: Ordinary

Deftness: Exceptional

Resilience: Ordinary

Brains: Spectacular (He's very smart even if his focus is on taking pictures and finding out things)

Prowess: Ordinary (Reasonably skilled for a person his age)

Resolve: Spectacular (He's a hero, he's also curious and strong-willed)

None of his capabilities so far are superhuman, so we simply leave them as listed.

CAPABILITIES:

Ranks and scale can mean a lot of things within their own range. Some basic idea of their real world effectiveness is given below.

Rating	Scale	Description
Ordinary	Human	The bottom of the human scale, an attribute at this level is mundane and average. The person having it is likely completely unregarded in this capacity.
Exceptional	Human	Exceptional is the above-average individual; the person who has a history of or training in using this capability regularly.
Spectacular	Human	The pinnacle of human capability. Athletic icons, genius doctors, and those world-renowned for their ability in this area. A hero at this rank is the peak of normal humanity in this ability.
Ordinary!	Superhuman	The basic level of superhuman capability. A measure beyond the best-known humans in this area.
Exceptional!	Superhuman	At this level, the capability is well known as impressive, the hero in question has few peers, and in general has capabilities exceeding ten times that of the Ordinary superhuman rank.
Spectacular!	Superhuman	A hero of this caliber is called upon often to thwart threats all over the world in relation to this capability. They are the top end of mortal creatures.
Ordinary*	Cosmic	The ability in question is vastly above humans, capable of feats that will awe the mightiest mortals—moving moons with might, solving difficult transdimensional equations, etc.
Exceptional*	Cosmic	Shattering suns or moving planets, or inventing new life with basic building blocks of matter.
Spectacular*	Cosmic	There are nearly no limits entailed by the ability. Might may now extend to the point of being able to physically bend space/time itself. Mental power of this level makes one attuned to the very heart of stars or able to sense the flutter of a butterfly's wings across reality. This level of ability is not normally recommended for player characters.

Step Three

Now you probably noticed that we have left out a part of process of creating a super-hero: the powers. Powers are ranked like ability scores, by the same Rating and Scale system as before. A character may have an unranked power. This indicates a Latent power, which the Ed. or player may increase to a Rank at some point in the future. Individual powers can either be defined entirely at their Rank/Scale. Or their capabilities may be broken down into what they can affect.

The individual areas (subdivisions actually) of a power are:

Attack

Defense

Movement

Manipulation

Other traits may exist for specific powers, defined by the player and the Ed. working together.

Storm Knight's Weather Manipulation could simply be rated Exceptional! Or we could break down the elements like so:

Weather Manipulation

Attack: Exceptional !

Defense: Ordinary !

Movement: Exceptional !

Manipulation: Ordinary !

Now what this means is that Storm Knight can create Exceptional! attacks or aid or hinder movement up to the Exceptional! Level. However, his power can only create Ordinary! Defenses or Manipulate Objects at the Ordinary! Level.

The highest rank should always be the core rank for the power and that should fit any limits imposed by the Pitch.

Powers in general should be clearly defined, but also broadly defined to maintain flexibility. As with Storm Knight's Weather Manipulation, we see he can generate some kind of attacks, but what kind? Well, he can call down snow and chill his opponents, or a thick rain that attacks their senses, or even call down lightning. All of these are attacks, but very different kinds of attacks. He can call down a fierce ice storm, which can freeze a foe

in their tracks—a movement-based ability. Or he can use the winds to soar through the sky at high speeds himself, also a movement-based ability.

One of the advantages of the rank and scale system is all you need to do to build a power is to describe it in plain language and give it a rank and scale (or break down its individual capabilities as above). There is no limit to the powers in comic books but those imposed by the needs of the story the creators wish to tell.

Internal/Self-Affecting Powers: Some powers like, Regeneration or Heightened Senses for example, give the player the specific advantage that only applies to them. A breakdown isn't always possible for such powers and so just the general description of the power should be sufficient. Regeneration transforms wounds already taken back into Stress, which the player can trigger as an alternate Stress event such as fatigue, power strain, or dehydration.

Step 4) Select A Stress Trigger (Optional)

The most memorable heroes are those who are—despite all their power—so very human. Humans who possess limitations, disabilities, or other flaws that make them all the more endearing. In H&S, we lump all weaknesses together as Stress Triggers, because they don't completely impair the hero, they just make it harder for him to succeed without suffering. A Stress trigger can be a physical limitation (unable to walk), or a mental one (afraid of fire), or an emotional one (rage). When exposed to conditions that trigger the limitation, they take Stress for every action, no matter what.

In some cases, Stress triggers can be used to directly limit a capability, such as taking the "Frail" trait for an elderly professor; while he has Ordinary Resilience, he takes Stress anytime he needs to resist something physically because his body can't take the abuse without repercussions anymore. A child may have a "Child" Stress trigger, indicating they are not yet full grown and so lack some measure of strength without great difficulty and skill without a lot of effort put behind it.

A super-hero may have “Weakness to Element X,” which acts as a Stress Trigger, but as soon as any significant Stress is earned can also has a connected Stress event! Not all Stress Triggers are connected Stress events, but it a good way to model debilitating weaknesses such as permanent afflictions, allergies, or other similar effects.

It is suggested that all heroes created for an H&S comic have at least one solid Stress trigger.

Step 5) Breathe in life.

Fill in the details if you haven’t already, Give her a name, a heroic identity, as well as decide how she looks and acts beyond her Drive. Describe their friends and their allies and contacts. Take time to detail out their favorite place to eat out or any relationships to other heroes in the comic world they will live within.

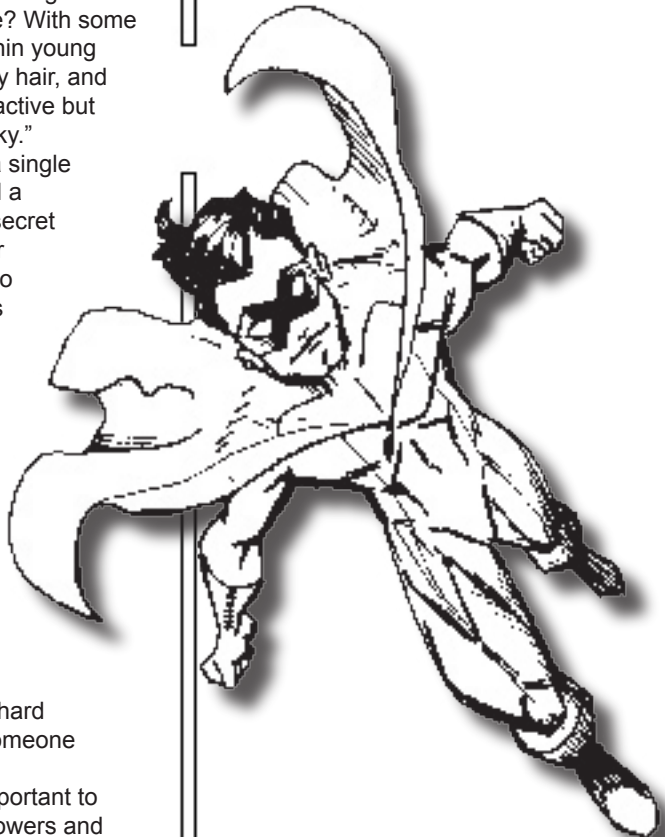
Storm Knight is going to be my hero and we’ve given him a name and some general abilities. What does he look like? With some consideration, I decide he’s a thin young man with glasses, brown mousy hair, and soft, warm gray eyes. He’s attractive but overlooked because he is “geeky.”

I decide Storm Knight has a single working mom as his parent and a younger sister who’s in on his secret identity. She thinks he’s cool for being a super-hero and wants to be his sidekick, or rather, wants him to be hers when she gets superpowers.

As he works for the school paper, I imagine he knows quite a few of the others who do so. I decide he has a crush on the writer of the “high-school dating” column, who hasn’t noticed him and writes from her own recurring convoluted drift of a love life. I also decide he’s best friends with the female editor of the school paper, who gives him a hard time about his mooning over someone who doesn’t notice him.

These choices are more important to who Storm Knight is than his powers and

capabilities. They connect him to the world and give him reasons to act, people to help, as well as people to frustrate him at times. The more that a character is detailed and given such potential hooks, the more exciting it will be to play him or her. It means more when your little sister is kidnapped and you’ve got to sneak off to rescue her. It means more when the girl you love is threatened by a stalker and you have vast powers to do something about it, but can’t act on them without some evidence to show the police.



Super Powers:

The vibrant blasts, mystic words of power, and chrome-plated gadgets of the super-heroic world. Superpowers come in a variety of shapes, colors and sizes, some are housed in devices, other powers are invisible and subtle—fashioned only in the mind,

No matter the outside trappings there are innumerable powers that come to mind when reading a comic book, or watching a super heroic cartoon.

Superpowers in H&S, for the most part, use plain “English” descriptions of what they do. Creating new powers is easy as describing what you want it to do and assigning it a rank, scale, as appropriate for the power level of the game, using simple plain language.

Armor

The hero has a greater resistance to harm than his normal physiological body would seem to possess. Maybe he has an insect-like carapace or dons a suit of medieval armor laced with high-tech circuitry, or even conjures up a glittering field of protective energy about him. Whenever a hero with armor is struck with an attack that could trigger an injury Stress event, he gets to roll this power as a capability challenge based on the attack’s severity. If he succeeds, the attack cannot trigger an injury event. Though the hero may still take Stress, it should be turned into alternate events when triggered. Armor is a self-affecting power (but see Force-Field).

Body Transformation

With this power, a hero may transform his body into a different material—steel, rubber, electricity, or whatever. Many heroes have a single-themed form. This power provides the normal breakdown (if used), giving the hero altered/enhanced movement, defense, and the like based on the form. Some forms: Turning to Steel, for example, may supplant strength and resilience, but it may not provide movement of manipulation benefits.

Energy Absorption

The hero can absorb energy directed at her or within the near vicinity, based on a capability challenge. If she beats the difficulty assigned, then it is absorbed. The energy may temporarily raise an attribute, boost another power, or she can simply reuse it as a counterattack—all depending on how the player chooses to define it. The maximum increase is limited to the rank of this power, or the rank of the energy absorbed (determined at time of character creation with Ed. approval).

Entangle

The hero possesses the ability of seriously hindering movement, even to the point of imprisoning someone. It may be a blast of synthetic super-bonding agent, webs, or bonds of ice. The hero simply makes an attack (based on Deftness, Prowess, or this ability’s rank, depending on how the player defines it). If successful, and the Stress is triggered into an event, it can immobilize the target.

Flight

The hero has the ability to move through the air with speed set by their power’s rank: the character may have wings, soar on thermals, or jet around like a rocket.

Speeds are not precise in H&S, so the Ed. may wish to allow the hero to describe their speed as “fast as an eagle” or in specific MPH terms. In general, Human Scale covers speeds found in the natural world of animals, Superhuman speed covers most vehicles, while Cosmic speeds cover things as fast as the speed of light or faster.

Force Field

This is the ability to project a field of pseudo-energy/force. Acting as a defense, a hero rolls the rating of this ability in order to deflect or block attacks. The Ed. should set the difficulty as how hard it is intercept/block the attack. If the hero succeeds at the challenge, the attack is countered.

Immunity to X

This power is simply the character’s immunity whatever X is, depending on the

willingness of the Ed. to allow it: Common examples are Immune to Fire, Immune to Cold, Immune to Disease, to the broader Immune to Kinetic attacks or Immune to Energy attacks. Unlike other powers, this one is absolute and has no rank structure.

Regeneration

Rapid healing, occurring so fast that it may even be obvious to onlookers that healing has occurred. This power only works once a person has taken an injury or wound as a Stress event. At that time, the hero tries to best the difficulty rating assigned by the Ed.; if they do so the injury reverts to a single point of Stress. The hero may then trigger that as an alternate Stress event (fatigue, dehydration, or even regression to a feral state as the result of the strain of healing so much).

Telekinesis

The ability to move objects around purely with the power of one's own mind. Essentially, they treat this power's rank as Might, for lifting throwing, or possibly even crushing and smashing things.

Telepathy

Heroes with this particular trait can delve into the minds of others for a quick peek, a deep probe, or simply to say hello. Most telepaths tend to use it only when necessary and do not take regular trips into the minds of those around them. Heroes simply don't do such things. If dire need exists to break into a resisting mind, the hero simply rolls this rating against the victim's resolve to beat the difficulty.

Ultra Skills

Now, depending on origin, some "powers" are simply high levels of skills—skills honed to superhuman acuity, supplanting their Prowess



in its use. This can be used for skills unique to a hero, or simply to further define a character whose better at some tasks than others.

Virtually all powers and ultra skills are fundamentally used like attributes. The player states his character's actions, such as "I open my eyes wide and fire my eye-blasts at the controls." The player rolls to strike/affect the target in question and succeeds by beating the challenge rating.

The villain Crackshot is highly skilled with firearms, specifically he is a crack-shot with pistols. He has the "power" "a crack-shot with pistols" at the Spectacular superhuman

level (i.e. Spectacular !). Fundamentally, this simply allows him to use that skill, instead of his normal Deftness of Spectacular (normal human) for all purposes related to using his pistols.

Skills may also be broken down like powers above if the Ed. approves. For example, the All-American Archer could pin someone's sleeves to the wall (Movement), knock another arrow out of air (Defense), or other similar actions.

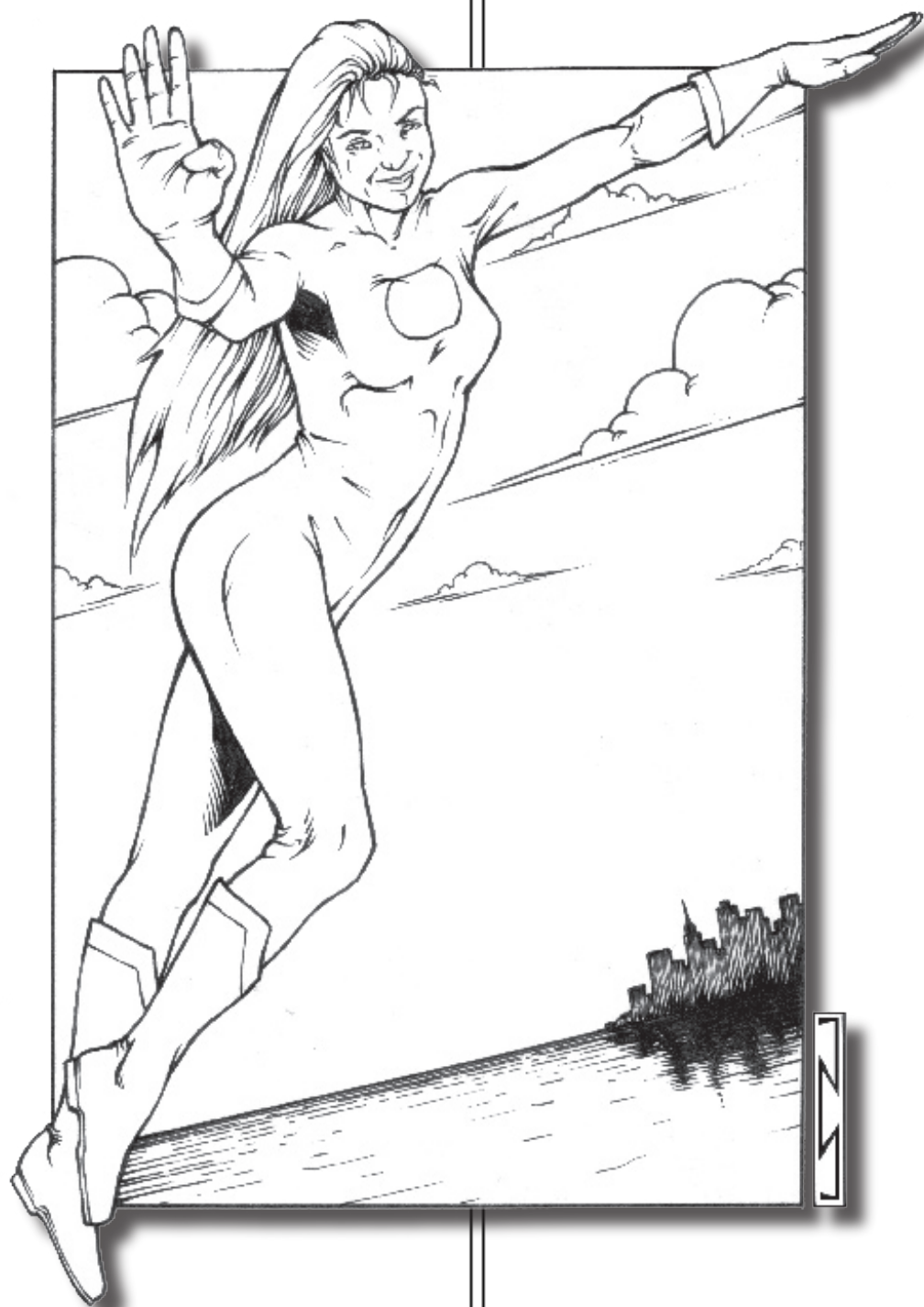
Power Problems

Problems with powers occur pretty regularly with pre-defined sets of powers, such as:

- * I can't find X power or Y power!
- * I don't like how this power works!

Both are valid enough issues that I've seen players and Ed.'s clash over all the time. So, what's the solution? Go make it up, define it, and describe how you think it should work within the ranking and scale structures. This game is not about how I, the game writer see your comic book, but how you see your "comic book" working.





Outside the Gutters

Gutter: The border in comic books that separates the panels from one another.

The Game System

When the Ed. calls for a task roll to complete an action, he assigns a difficulty. The player rolls the dice to determine if the task succeeds without difficulty or if he must try harder to succeed. The two methods of trying harder are using monologue or accepting Stress. A monologue that is unique for this scene allows a re-roll without the hero taking any Stress. While a hero can just accept 1 Stress point (See Stress Triggers!) to re-roll the dice, stress adds up and can cause a hero to fail at tasks, accepting a variety of events from injury, emotional distress, social failings, or other setbacks up to and including death in some games.

Stress only becomes failure when a Stress event is triggered. The Ed. (or player) should trigger Stress when he feels it is appropriate, however it is suggested that an event occur only when Stress is equal to half the die value they use for Resilience or Resolve (whichever is higher). A hero with a Human-scale (d4) Resilience and a Superhuman-scale (d8) Resolve will usually be able to suffer 4 or more Stress before an event is triggered by the Ed. This is a suggestion only; there is no hard limit but all Stress events should be based upon how much Stress a hero has in relation to his best Stress-resisting attribute. A Stress event triggered on 4 Stress should be more severe and long lasting to our hero with his

superhuman Resolve than one triggered on 2 Stress.

HOW MUCH STRESS?

- A re-roll without a monologue causes 1 Stress.
- A failed roll (one the player gives up on) also causes 1 Stress. The Ed. can also trigger a Stress event immediately with no guilt if the failed roll reaches the acceptable threshold suggested above.
- A successful roll accumulates no Stress.
- A monologue-based re-roll accumulates no Stress.
- However, a stress trigger can cause 1 Stress to be added to any of the above rolls if the situation behind it is present.

Example:

The Flea is attacked by a member of "The Pack," a werewolf motorcycle gang. He is nearly hit by its terrible claws. He takes 1 Stress. He strikes back with a fist but his roll isn't good enough so he pushes himself forward to make the punch connect. He takes another point of Stress to succeed and lands a blow on the werewolf. He's breathing hard but it's not sufficient to cause a setback yet. The werewolf hefts its motorcycle and hits the Flea with it; he tries to dodge, but fails, so he tries to push harder, taking stress again. He fails, and the player chooses to trigger a Stress event now rather than risk more Stress or the Ed.'s choice for an outcome. He takes a setback and is knocked back into the river,



off the cliff to crash perilously into the water below. Soaked to the bone by the chill and terribly muddy he rises up to see the werewolf coming full force at him again.

JUST WHAT IS STRESS?

Stress is all the potential factors that lead to failure. Bruises, bumps, psychological strain, and other things that cause a hero to act too slow, move too late or otherwise zig when they should zag. Heroes can overcome Stress to keep going until an event is triggered. Stress is all the near-misses we see a hero taking in a comic book until a final blow lands solidly and knocks him out, or he pushes himself so far he collapses from exhaustion and strain. A hero can take stress from stress triggers when pushing to succeed and from accepting the outcome of a roll as a failure. Accepting

a failure is when stress can be triggered as a negative event (if enough total stress has accumulated). H&S presumes that a hero is, even if he is unwilling to push and re-roll, trying to avoid a Stress event. This assumption means that the hero may still be defending, just not effectively enough. A hero who chooses not to defend themselves, can suffer a setback or other Stress event, even with no Stress!

Example:

The heroine Dauntless suffers a failed Brains roll while working on a finding a cure for the radiation sickness of her ally, Haunt. Attempting to stay awake, she fails another roll and is unable to come up with a monologue based on her Drive to push harder. The Ed. decides that this new Stress is fatigue and because of it, for now, she is unable to find the cure without some rest.

So, bleary-eyed, she staggers to bed. Tomorrow she will find a solution.

Stress is not injury necessarily; a thrown punch, an energy blast, or an explosion may cause Stress but not actually make contact with a hero—only when Stress is triggered is that a sure-fire hit on the hero or villain. It's a good idea to keep this in mind when describing the results of combat—Ed.

STRESS TRIGGERS

Stress triggers are points of vulnerability to injury and strain. They are areas of weakness the heroes suffer. Most consist of two parts—the trigger and a specific Stress event. Whenever a hero attempts a task while their Stress trigger is present, all tasks they perform—even successful ones—generate more Stress.

This is in addition to any Stress taken from re-rolls!



Example:

The super-hero, Skydancer, is afraid of fire. She once suffered severe burns while rescuing some children from a blazing inferno. She has chosen to take a Stress Trigger: Burning Buildings. When faced with a burning building, her emotions get the best of her and she tends to panic. She takes Stress for any action she performs within a burning building, and an additional point whenever she re-rolls without utilizing a monologue.

Stress Triggers can be developed in play from the results of stressful situations that the character does not overcome.

Stress events are events that occur when Stress surpasses the hero's ability to face it. When a hero or villain accrues Stress greater than half their Resilience or Resolve die value (2, 4, and 6 respectively) then that Stress can be triggered into a Stress event either by the player or the Ed. Remember, however, Stress should be caused primarily by difficulties at the hero's attribute scale, or higher.

The exact effects of these events should vary and be played out by the heroic character.

Anger: The character suffers from overwhelming anger, which drives him to act in haste, perhaps lashing out in rage, or causing him to remain tense and brooding until something else pushes him to unleash it—verbally, emotionally, or physically.

Apathy: The character becomes cut off from life. Everything is alien and distant, or just doesn't matter anymore. He simply can't bring himself to care about others or the things going on around him. The lack of motivation should prevent a hero from utilizing a monologue, or even performing actions that cause them to take Stress.

Hysteria: Stress causes the character to lose her sense of grounding and react in hysterics to the events around her. She will often cry or laugh without cessation. This is essentially an uncontrolled emotional outburst and they will be unable to act to deal with a situation for the scene unless they overcome this situation.

Injury: When a person has taken Stress from

combat, falls, and other actions, it may become a minor wound (defined by the hero) or it may depending on the amount of Stress become a more serious disabling wound.

Self-Doubt: The character begins to doubt their value as a hero, and perhaps as a person. This doubt preys upon her and undermines her efforts, making her more prone to failing (treat as a Stress Trigger for the scene).

Setback: The character suffers a setback. Simply put, they do not progress further in whatever task they were attempting. This Stress event is very useful for Ed. as he can make a setback extend a scene between hero and villain as each one stymies the other, until the final resolution is reached.

Shock: The character becomes almost catatonic as they become locked within themselves by the Stress they've suffered. They may react but will do so mostly as a numb, ineffectual response. The hero potentially may not act or react to situations for the scene.

Unconsciousness: The character has become so overwhelmed by Stress that her mind and body collapse, leaving her unconscious. This is more common from physical strain, excessive effort, or from wounds gained from Stress.

Death: One of the least common Stress events. Typically, it only occurs when a character has taken a severe Stress event as wounds. Deaths in an H&S game should be a pivotal event, but an alterable one. This event's implementation, unlike the others, should be specifically mentioned in the parameters of the Pitch—both its likelihood and who has final say (Ed. or player) over the event. Also players may work with a GM to plan their hero's death at a suitably dramatic moment in the game.

STRENGTH OF CHARACTER: OVERCOMING STRESS

Humor

Heroes are often glib, funny, or even outright annoyingly chipper—at least seemingly so. Many develop patterns of snappy dialogue that makes them enjoyable reads in comics. In H&S however, humor serves as it always has: a way to relax, break the tension, and deter and prevent Stress. If the player (while in character) tells a joke, makes a pun, or otherwise does something that is funny to the Ed. and the other players, they shed a point of Stress. Out-of-Character humor does not earn this rebate, because it's not originating from the character's point of view. This humor reward should be earned, and not abused, if the character is a grim avenger of the night his humor should probably be sardonic, wicked, and subtle. On the other hand, a hero with the Spirit of Adventure Drive probably tells knock-knock jokes while beating thugs about the head with a rubber spoon...Hey, I didn't say it was funny to me!

Heroism

Super-heroes, as we've mentioned, aren't just super, they are also heroes, and if all they do is Stress out over being a hero, why do they do it? Why don't all of them end up raving loons in some super-alloy asylum? Well, heroism may have a price in Stress, but it's also got a reward—whenever a player-character does something suitably heroic, they shed Stress again. Now bashing bad guys may be fun, but it's not inherently heroic. Protecting children, rescuing kittens—yes, even that can be heroic whether you're easing a hurt child's woes or throwing yourself in front of a bullet meant to kill someone else (and not being particularly bulletproof). That is heroism. A point of Stress may be shed anytime the hero puts himself in a difficult heroic situation and overcomes it.

In any case, the event should often risk the hero taking Stress. Such actions should be something he'd be proud to share with others at the secret super-hero clubhouse—even if

some of them think it a bit silly. Like humor, the nature of the heroism should fit in with the character's Drive to get the reward.

Commitments

Nearly every hero has life commitments, both in costume and in their "normal lives." These commitments, when fulfilled by the hero, can relieve Stress. They may be as simple as role-playing out having an ordinary day at the office, going on a date with the girl next door—without meddling in the cape-and-cowl business—or a picnic in the park with family.

These commitments must be fulfilled without serious derailment by the heroic life. A hero may speak at a fireman's convention, but still have to stop and rescue some people—as long as he returns and fulfills the commitment within a reasonable amount of time this sheds Stress. Commitments are endless and it is suggested that each hero make a list of their in-costume and out-of-costume commitments for each issue. They should work with the Ed. to show those events occurring in play.

Last Gasp

Even when a Stress event has been triggered that removes a hero or villain from play, he manages to get one last action—for heroes this is usually just a final farewell or a last moving speech. For a villain, however, it may be as brief as a one-liner or as inevitable as flicking the last switch to activate the doomsday machine, launch the plague missiles, or start the self-destruct countdown. It should add tension to the moment, but is slow enough for the heroes to react and counter, or at least escape, once the villain is gone.

Apprehending villains, or the gentle art of fisticuffs

Comic books are filled with combat, from pugilistic pummeling to the skilled use of mass-transit vehicles as clubs. Combat in H&S is a simple affair of utilizing the challenge ratings used throughout the game. The attacker rolls their dice and attempts to beat the challenge rating of his foe's defensive ability—a challenge number based on the ability they are using to defend themselves with.

Example:

The Flea is attacking Behemoth in an attempt to apprehend him and convince him to give information on his allies' plans. The Flea's player states he is trying to wound Behemoth and says, "I got more where this is coming from if you don't cough up what's going on." The player makes a check against the Flea's Exceptional Superhuman Deftness opposed by Behemoth's Ordinary Human Deftness and so rolls 2d8 versus 2. Flea's player rolls a result of a 4 and a 6. The best result is used, the 6, meaning that Behemoth takes Stress as the blow glances off, pushes him around and otherwise make his life difficult.

While injury is a Stress Event and somewhat imprecise, it is up to the Ed. to determine how pivotal it should be to the unfolding plot. Players and the Ed. may discuss how important they want combats to be in the Pitch, but it is typically non-lethal and can be an exciting way for heroes to exchange banter, uncover clues, and otherwise add to the overall comic book feel of the game. Heroes fight villains; they can triumph sometimes in very physical ways over evil. Another common trope is heroes fighting each other—this is another reason why combat is usually non-lethal, except in the most plot- or story-affecting ways. (See Stress Events.)

Knock-back

Knock-back is at the discretion of the Ed. and the player. When size and strength are extremely different between the two opponents, it should tend to favor the stronger and/or larger foe. However, how well a blow is landed should impact the foe in some way. Every point of stress triggered on a knock-back result should them about 10 feet (human scale, miles in Superhuman and so on). In some instances, especially with certain kinds of combat, the knock-back can be described as flipping or even throwing the character.

Rule of Thumb

Whenever Stress needs to be stacked up to achieve an overall result—such as Behemoth being wounded enough to give up his allies—

the rule of thumb says that it must be equal to half the opposing die's maximum possible result when the scale is the same. The Ed. may alter this, but it's simply a good standard when you want something to take time to achieve.

Example:

In Flea's altercation with Behemoth, the Ed. feels the battle is plot-worthy. However, Behemoth is blessed with Exceptional superhuman Resilience, which keeps all but the most terrible wounds from being more than a nuisance. The Ed. feels that it will take some time to impair him due to this ability. Thus, the Ed. decides that it will take at least 4 points of Stress (the rule of thumb) to trigger a wound that will slow him down and make him reconsider telling the Flea what he knows. The amount of Stress was decided to be half the Behemoth's maximum die rating for his Spectacular! Resilience. If the Flea's Might had not been an Exceptional Superhuman—the same scale as the Behemoth's Resilience—then the Ed. may have valued it differently. The Flea's blows come fast and furious, some hit, some miss, but eventually Behemoth is injured enough for the Flea to trigger his Stress. A good solid blow lands across his jaw for the last point of Stress and it is triggered. The Flea's player defines this as Behemoth breaking his jaw, making it hard and painful to talk, but enough to get his information.

PERMANENT INJURIES

Permanent injuries to super-heroes are rare. They occur to Ed. controlled characters more often than to heroes, but heroes can occasionally suffer serious injuries. If a character takes several Stress events declared to be injuries, the player or Ed. may choose hinder the hero by taking a longer-lasting wound: a broken arm, a crushed vertebrae, or the like. These injuries can be used to a player's advantage, letting him temporarily play a new hero while the old one mends. It also provides a good exit for players who need to leave the game due to other real-life concerns. Typically, permanent or semi-permanent

injuries make for more interesting and inspiring plot-fodder, and develop the story of the hero who has to rehabilitate herself after serious injuries.

Values

As mentioned, how effective Stress is can be based on the current scale comparison between hero and villain. A Hero with Spectacular! Might assaulting a poor thug with Exceptional Resilience will need only a single punch to clean the thug's clock. On the other hand, that same thug with his mere Exceptional Might is going to have a heck of a time doing much to the Hero with the Spectacular! Resilience. His best attacks may muss the hero's hair or wrinkle his clothes unduly. This depends significantly on the difference of scale and the difference of rating, and should make sense to the Ed. for the scene she is presenting, as well as to the players involved. An Ordinary Endurance villain walloped by a light-pole shouldn't remain standing unless there is a good and likely obvious reason, such as it's really a robot simulacra, a hard-light hologram, a clone newly powered up, or a man covered in a glowing force shield. The reason doesn't need to be obvious immediately, but somewhere down the line it should jibe with what they "knew" about the villain.

Heroes Versus Heroes

Super-heroes often end up getting mind-controlled, tricked, or confused over who is friend or foe, and thus this leads to them fighting their erstwhile allies. When heroes end up fighting one another, the same rules applied to fighting villains should be applied with one minor addition—a hero may increase the challenge of another hero hitting them by making an appropriate challenge-rating test as a defense. A successful defense roll causes their opponent to suffer an additional point of Stress for that action. (Identical to having a Stress Trigger.)

Example:

The Moth runs into the Masked Fox, stealing gemstones from a jewelry store. The Moth knows by reputation that the Masked Fox is a hero so he swoops down to investigate further.

The Masked Fox ignores him muttering, "Must get stones, must get stones." Realizing she is under some form of control or hypnotic command he decided to grab her and shake her. As he nears she reacts by dodging out of the way, as she must, "get the stones." The Moth rolls his Deftness to try and grab her, the Masked Fox's player rolls to make this harder. The Masked Fox rolls first and gets a 4—a high enough result to beat the Moth's Deftness. But this doesn't mean she escapes. It means it is made more difficult for the Moth. He rolls and takes 1 Stress for her defense. He doesn't succeed at his first roll, getting all 1's on all 3 of his dice. He takes another 2 Stress and re-rolls his dice. (1 point for the re-roll and 1 point because of how hard it is due to Fox's defense.) That's enough Stress for the other player to trigger a Stress event: The Masked Fox slips through the shadows out the back of the store, escaping for now.

MULTIPLE ACTIONS

In or out of combat situations, heroes can only do so much. Any hero may attempt to juggle multiple tasks, but the difficulty is increased only slightly if the range is within normal possibilities for the hero. If so, the Ed. should provide a Stress cost of 1 for every "group" the Ed. feels would tire or overwhelm the hero.

Example:

The blind super-speedster Hell-bent is trying to disarm a gang of well-armed thugs. For a single person this is a Spectacular superhuman (6) task, but due to the number of opponents, the Ed. adds a Stress cost of 1 as well. Hell-Bent's Spectacular superhuman Speed is up to the task, as he rolls 5, 3, and a 7. Keeping the 7 he manages to create a large pile of small firearms removed from the gang's itchy trigger fingers but suffers 1 point of Stress for the added difficulty.

Lullaby for Insomniac

HEARTS & SOULS EXAMPLE OF PLAY

Hi, I'm Tim, and I want to explain how H&S works a little bit. I will be playing the role of "The Moth" for a mini-adventure setup by my "Editor," a.k.a Ed.

My character sheet:

The Moth

Real Name: Unrevealed

Drive: Community

Might: Exceptional

Deftness: Spectacular

Resilience: Exceptional

Brains: Ordinary

Prowess: Exceptional

Resolve: Exceptional

Powers

Flight: The Moth can fly at Ordinary air speeds (about the speed of a real moth or average bird in flight), thanks to the specialized technology of his cloak and costume. His flight appears much like gliding when active, but is actually full flight.

Gadgets: Thanks to numerous pockets, pouches, and compartments (both obvious and hidden throughout his costume), The Moth has access to many small, often single-use, gadgets at a moment's notice. These devices all have Exceptional rank. Some examples are:

Attack: Exceptional (Shuriken-like "Razorwings")

Defense: None

Movement: Exceptional (Tanglewire Net, designed to hinder a foe's movements)

Manipulation: Ordinary (Remote/Radio override devices.)

Mask: Built into his cowl is a heavy mask that provides Nightvision, automatic flare compensation (to protect from bright lights), and a gas mask. The mask and its features have Spectacular Rank.

Now "The Moth" is a street-level hero. This is pretty easy to grasp, because he doesn't have a single superhuman or cosmic-scaled ability.

Tim: This is going to be tough work for my hero, I suspect!

Ed: Bah! You worry too much. This will be fun. You ready? Stop drooling over the Invulnerability power!

Tim: Yeah, I'm ready.

Ed: [smirking at me] Bwahaha

Tim: That doesn't fill me with confidence.

Ed: BWAHAHAHA-HA!

Tim: Oh boy.

Ed: This is going to be simple, in order to give the fine folks out there a grasp of the game. HI, FOLKS!

Tim: HI!

Ed: Not you.

Tim: Oh.

Ed: [Setting the scene]: It has been a quiet night for your dutiful patrol of the city of Luna Bay. The buildings, tall and weather worn, stand tangled amidst water and ash.

Tim: Ash?

Ed: Factories spew smoke and pollution across what was once a fair city and it settled into a gray dismal ash here and there.

Tim: This isn't very exciting; perhaps I can tune in a football game on my radio. I think I'll listen to police band instead.

Ed: You have a radio?

Tim: Yep, I pull it from my pouch. See? A police band radio is one of my gadgets.

Ed: Ah, very good. No need to roll for something like that!

Tim: So, anything good? Good guys up by 7?

Ed: It's quiet. Wait! Suddenly, the police scanner squawks. You're familiar with the lingo, having done this a while.

Tim: So, what is it?

Ed: Hostage situation, they don't name the company, just give an address: 1478 Moliver, but that is Pharmichem, a hi-tech drug company.

Tim: Alright, [getting fully into this character] I leap backwards into the air using my cloak to soar over the roof top behind me, curling and spinning as I fly to orient myself before winging over to Pharmichem.

Ed: You get there briskly, buffeted half-heartedly by stray gusts of winds under the clouds in the sky.

Tim: What do I see?

Ed: Pharmichem is one of those luxurious industrial park affairs; mostly offices by the looks of it, but out here in the industrial park, it probably has labs as well. Police cars semi-circle the building, strewn in half-barricade-half-shooting gallery. Their lights flash brightly. An ambulance and a fire truck also stand watch. Only one floor is lit, somewhere in the mid-30's and a man can be seen holding someone hostage.

Tim: Is he armed?

Ed: Yes, he's holding a pistol. Give me a Brains roll.

Tim: What do I roll? Ordinary Rank, Human Scale?

Ed: 1d4

Tim: That's ALL!

Ed: Don't worry about it... just roll.

Tim: [rolling die and announcing result] A 2. Damn!

Ed: From here, your nightvision gives you an edge. You see that the man is dressed in what appears to be a police uniform.

Tim: Police? Good.

Ed: No, he is holding a woman hostage, waving a gun about.

Tim: He's a security guard, isn't he?

Ed: Possibly. Similar enough uniforms in nightvision green.

Tim: All right, here's what I'm going to do.

Ed: Ok, do tell.

Tim: I will fly up and arc high, then aim dead at the window, and slam into it full force in an attempt to break it and tackle the guy.

Ed: What about the woman?

Tim: I'm going to try and protect her from the glass as best I can. A few stray shards are better than a bullet. I hope.

Ed: Fair enough. [Considers for a moment] Roll Deftness, you're an agile fighter, not a strong one and your mass alone will break the glass... if it is glass... [Ominous glare]

Tim: Deftness is Spectacular. What do I roll this time?

Ed: 3d4 [The Ed uses the standard Challenge Rating of 2 for this scale of tasks]

Tim: Alright. [Rolls] I got a 1, 1 and 1. A 3 [Aghast] I screwed up.

Ed: No, use your monologue, and don't add, only take the highest die.

Tim: Right! "Community" which means I want

TIM KIRK'S

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to belong, support the community, and show it how to excel, right?

Ed: If that's what it means to you.

Tim: You're no help.

Ed: Yeah, I know. It's my lot in life.

Tim: [thinking quickly] "I can't falter so soon. I'm a part of this community. I have to pull myself together and take my stand here; show them that anyone can be a hero, and I can't do that if I fail!"

Ed: Done. Reroll!

Tim: [rolls furiously] Come on 12, I mean 4's! 2, 2, and 3.

Ed: A 3, huh? That's quite good for humans, you know! You smash the glass easily and it breaks into tiny, harmless shards that clatter about the faux marble floor. The guard is startled and wild-eyed. It doesn't look like he's slept for days, maybe weeks.

Tim: Can't get good help, I guess.

Ed: Your tackle knocks him down That is a freebie because he's surprised. He is, of course, stressed, meaning he takes 1 stress from your action.

Tim: Just 1?

Ed: Yep. Unless a Stress Trigger is involved.

Tim: Ok, well I'm not stopping there. I am going to slam the gun out of his hand.

Ed: All right, since he is startled, Roll again, but that sounds like a Might-based strike.

Tim: [wanting to use his higher score] Fine, then I'll just aim a careful martial arts strike and try and knock him out.

Ed: Roll Deftness, since you are being picky.

Tim: You would be too if you were me. [rolls dice] 3, 1, and 4!

Ed: The blow land rapidly, and he takes another point of stress, for a total of 2! That's good enough for this average joe. Your strike lands accurately and he collapses unconscious on the floor.

Tim: I check on the woman, oh wait, I grab the gun, chuck it out the window, then check on the woman.

Ed: Why?

Tim: Just in case he wakes up.

Ed: The woman is panicked and terrified, she's shaking but doesn't look to be in shock. "Y-You, you're him... the Mothman! The..the.."

Tim: "No, no relation. Besides, I think he's East Coast and I'm all about the West. I'm The Moth, and I'm just here to help you, miss."

Ed: All right, you can drop that stress point of yours; because of the joke.

Tim: Ha! I don't have any.

Ed: Too bad. Guess we need to fix that. The woman trembles a bit. "You've got to help them...he's got them! He's crazy..!"

Tim: [muttering] And this guy wasn't...?

Ed: [as the woman] "No, no that's our security guard, Jacob. He's normally so nice, such a sweet man. But him, that other man, that crazy man, he made him crazy too, I don't know how! SOB!"

Ed: What do you do?

Tim: "Get out of sight if you can. I'll go look into this."

Ed: "He's crazy, I...I..."

Tim: "Don't worry. You did well. You held it together. I'll be fine. You stay safe."

Ed: Nice!

Tim: Ok, so I'm going to sneak down the hall quietly. This was the only place visibly lit right?

Ed: Yes.

Tim: Good.

Ed: The corridor is lit well by hospital style lights, a few flicker more than as is typical. Ahead, you can hear voices, but can't quite tell where from. They could be dead ahead, or off to either the left or right branches.

Tim: Do I see anything?

Ed: Nope, just long corridors each way.

Tim: [Thinking hard] I look at the floor. Are there any markings?

Ed: Not that you see. Roll Brains. [The Ed uses the standard Challenge Rating of 2 for this scale of tasks]

Tim: I got a 2.

Ed: You notice that the doors along one hallway are all opened about a quarter of the way. Not much to go on, but in the other two directions, they're shut.

Tim: And I hear voices, and likely these rooms have good sound proofing because of "ultra secret corporate espionage" right?

Ed: Good idea, maybe.

Tim: Well, I'm going to move down the hall, watching for shadows through the edges of the doors.

Ed: About three doors in, you see some movement. It is just a momentary shadow behind a partially opened door.

Tim: I listen at the door

Ed: Somewhat further away sounding from beyond that door—comes voices. "Hehe, yeah,

the boss wants you all to know he is glad for your service to his cause, each and every one of you. He just wants you to know how good it is, how wonderful it is, to be like him." A second voice cries out, "You're nuts!" A baby starts crying.

Tim: A baby? Here? At this time of night? What the heck?

Ed: A baby all the same.

Tim: All right, I'm headed in, quickly and quietly.

Ed: Roll Prowess.

Tim: I didn't ask, what the heck is Prowess?

Ed: It represents skill.

Tim: I have one skill?

Ed: No you have many, really too many to bother writing up on a pc sheet plus you, as a superhero, skills are kinda malleable. Prowess covers how broad your mental skill-knowledge is.

Tim: Oh. And Physical skills are...? Isn't stealth physical?

Ed: Deftness covers physical skills, and in this case I feel its the mental aspect that is important. Another time I may ask for Deftness for stealth. I do have a reason. Sound ok to you? [The Ed uses the standard Challenge Rating of 2 for this scale]

Tim: Sure! [Rolls dice] 3 and 1.

Ed: You only really need to tell me the high one.

Tim: Now you tell me.

Ed: You think you are quiet. And you move down another hall beyond the door. Several doors to either side and glass windows into dark rooms. These look like medical labs of some sort.

TIM KIRK'S

Tim: A drug company, right?

Ed: Yeah.

Tim: Do I see the speakers?

Ed: Ahead, you see about a dozen people sitting in the floor. Two men pace back and forth in front of them. They glance up across the larger room through one of the glass windows, and then back at the hostages.

Tim: Great. Two of them....

Ed: That you see.

Tim: What do the hostages look like? Are they all alive?

Ed: Yeah, they look very, very tired and strung out. So do the two men guarding them.

Tim: These two guards, they have guns, right?

Ed: Now that you mention it, both have shoulder slung SMGs.

Tim: Oh, I take it they aren't security then?

Ed: No, they're hired goon sorts. Only crazy and wild eyed.

Tim: I have this nauseating gas launcher... I'll show 'em.

Ed: [in sing song voice] You have hostages that will get hit too, and one of them is a baby.

Tim: My bad. Fine, I'm going to take a razorwing and fling it at the light switch, shorting them out and making it dark. Then, I'll leap into the room to kick one guy and punch the other.

Ed: Well the first action is fine, but the other two will cost you 1 extra stress, because you're doing so much on panel.

Tim: Deftness for all three actions?

Ed: Yep. [The Ed uses the standard Challenge Rating of 2 for this scale of tasks]

Tim: 3, 2, 1 are my rolls. Aloud I say, "You will not win, for I am the Moth, one of the many who stand for justice in this community."

Ed: That's for the last roll right?

Tim: Yeah, unless the others need a reroll too?

Ed: No

Tim: DOH! I got a 1 again... and now I have 2 stress!

Ed: Are you going to try again?

Tim: I'm not going to push it.

Ed: Ok, the lights go black when your razorwing slams into the switch with an electric crackle. You leap in and kick one of the thugs. The other steps just out of reach and you miss! In the darkness, the first thug opens fire! The staccato sound of the SMG rips through the air. I'm triggering your stress; even though it's dark he still manages to hit you. The bullet hits and tears through your hip. This will give you a stress trigger for actions requiring footwork and you're now bleeding heavily.

Tim: OUCH. I don't have time for this, and the people are in danger. I take out and throw two razor wings, trying to jam up the barrel of Mr. trigger happy, all the while trying to stay out of the way of the other one. Deftness or Attack from gadget?

Ed: Whichever is highest, or your choice if you really WANT to use the low one, I'm fine with that. [Evil Grin--The Ed uses the standard Challenge Rating of 2 for this scale of tasks]

Tim: No, no, a 4!

Ed: Your moth shaped razorwings slash out in a whisper of sound. One slams into the barrel with a clang partially embedding itself there. The other razorwing jams into the cartridge eject rendering the gun inoperable!

Tim: ROCK ON!

Ed: The other one is trying to find you. What do you do?

Tim: I'm going to use my flight to get quietly out of the way.

Ed: Roll Flight as a dodge.

Tim: Eep! It's only Ordinary.

Ed: Roll 1d4, please. [The Ed uses the standard Challenge Rating of 2 for this scale of tasks]

Tim: I rolled a 3.

Ed: Good enough. You move out of the way of both of them, as they don't think to look up.

Tim: All right, now I'm going to drop on the one with the still-working gun and try and take him out. Any way I can get that done without him getting another turn?

Ed: You can drop behind him and then intimidate him. If you beat both task ratings, that'll be enough stress to trigger a setback.]

Tim: I'll do that then!

Ed: All right, Might for the grapple from behind, and then a Resolve for the intimidation. [The Ed uses the standard Challenge Rating of 2 for this scale of tasks]

Tim: 3 for the grab, and 2 for the intimidation. Whispering in his ear "I have you and there is nowhere you can go that the Moth can't find you, fluttering always just there by the light, watching you..."

Ed: He trembles at your words and your strength. What setback would you like?

Tim: Oh? I pick? Then I want him to run in fear and turn himself in.

Ed: "I'm getting out of here! I don't want to work for him no more!" he struggles until you let go and flees off down the hall. The gun strapped to him forgotten.

Tim: Where's the other one?

Ed: A voice almost sings, "Look out behind you.."

Tim: Wait, someone said that?"

Ed: Yes.

Tim: I dodge. Deftness, right? I got a 1 for all three [groans]! I'm in for it. [groans more] And I took stress for it even without a reroll! I'm not going to try again.

Ed: His ram doesn't land full on. You almost get out of the way. 1 more stress as you stagger a bit, but no stress events at least.

Tim: Good! I try and shake off his ram and, just strike him hard in the solar plexus with the palm of my hand.

Ed: Deftness or Might?

Tim: If i can avoid more stress, Might, my leg and hip are hurting too badly to worry about finesse.

Ed: I like the way you put that. Deftness might, fancy martial arts can strain you, but a solid left hook won't hurt your hip, as much. [The Ed uses the standard Challenge Rating of 2 for this scale of tasks]

Tim: 2 for my result.

Ed: You strike him hard, but he's still moving fast enough to roll off most of the blows power. He takes stress. He returns with a one-two punch at you.

Tim: I hate to do this, but I am going to try and rapidly dodge back behind him. I roll Deftness and get a 3.

Ed: You still manage it, taking stress of course. The agony is solid now, but you get behind him avoiding his strike.

Tim: As I step past I will drive my elbow at the back of his head. Deftness roll says 4 for the result.

Ed: I take it you want him to fall down on his face if you succeed and not get up for a while?

Tim: Yes!

Ed: You hear a solid crunch from the elbow strike and feel the heavy jolt and he goes down face forward. "hehehe...Very nice," says the mysterious voice.

Tim: Oh. I turn and look for it. Please be a hostage!

Ed: Standing behind you, as blood trickles down your leg and into your boot, is a man who is tall and lean. He has wild hair, spiky, longish, and it is sticking up in every direction. You see that he has one brown eye and one blue eye, neither bloodshot nor black and puffy-eyed from lack of sleep. "Hi, who are you? Nice cape. Can I get one? You really shouldn't be here. The people are not sleeping as they should be." he waves in a cheerful manner—disturbingly cheerful, in fact. Wrapped around his neck is a lab coat, tied very much like some upscale preppy draped with a sweater in true high nose, blue blood fashion. The whole image is surreal, shaken back to morbid truth by the blood that stains it.

Introducing, The Insomniac.

Here are the stats, which I didn't get to see during the game:

The Insomniac

Drive: Hatred

Might: Ordinary! [4]

Deftness: Exceptional [2]

Resilience: Ordinary! [4]

Brains: Spectacular [2]

Prowess: Exceptional [2]

Resolve: Spectacular [2]

Powers

Immunity to Sleep: Nothing can put this guy into sleep, though he can be knocked out.

The Insomniac, for all his madness, is a genius and seems to possess an almost superhuman ability to attract followers in the form of thugs who serve him loyally. They often tend to grow madder in his presence but this has more to do with the fact he never stops talking, and he talks faster than most states' legal speed limit. Added to his sleeplessness, he seems to be a living vector for insanity.

Stress Trigger: Lullabies enrage the Insomniac making him lose control and focus. The stress event it most commonly causes is Rage.

In Hearts & Souls, there is a shorthand way to write the attributes used above. Instead of saying, "The Insomniac possesses Superhuman Might," we say simply, "Might: Ordinary!" (The exclamation point indicating that it's superhuman scale) and the word "Ordinary" to indicate that while at that scale it's nothing truly exceptional-within its own scale. The shorthand for cosmic is an asterisk, (a star if you will) and for human scale we just leave the word alone.

Now back to the game!

Tim: [wide-eyed] Uh ...

Ed: "You've come to play our little game? Doesn't matter what you do though; waking or sleeping, walking or dreaming, it always ends the same, everyone dead... Teehee."

Tim: "Not with me around!"

Ed: "Oh? You again? I thought you were a dream. Dreams still come and go, and go away, you know they fray the carpet as you walk across it." he giggles at you again.

Tim: "You will stop this and let these people go!"

Ed: "Not around, pound of flesh, feather weighs more? You? Not like we didn't see this coming did we, did you? So you did? Guess so? Don't know...You are so going to die, NOW!" With that, he spins backwards and leaps into the air, a half-dozen feet above you and plants his hands on your shoulders to handspring himself through the air. You can try and stop him.

Tim: I jump after him and try and grab his wrist! Might, 1.

[Ed consults the Insomniac's character sheet and sees that he has two superhuman traits. That means when The Moth rolls against the Insomniac in a challenge, the standard challenge rating will be a 4 versus those traits!]

Ed: That won't be a good enough monologue. [The Ed compared the Might score to the task number which is opposed by Insomniac's Deftness in this case a 2.]

Tim: "I can't let this loon escape. He'd hurt people, tearing down what they've built in trust and faith in me." The new result is a 4.

Ed: Good, but not good enough. Because you need to have enough stress to cause a setback. He takes stress because you were so fast though! You grab at his wrist and catch only the edges of the lab coat, which falls away. As he lands he grabs a dagger length of shatter glass and smiles while licking the edge.

Tim: He's freaky.

Ed: "Run, Run, Fast you as can, can't catch me, the Insomniac, sleep makes you weak little fluttery bug, bug, bug, little ladybug dancing

on the lilies snuggety snugg!" he giggles again disturbingly girlish. He leaps at you and spins in the air, driving the dagger shard of glass at your eye.

Tim: I dodge back, falling to my knees to make him over shoot. My Deftness result is 2. [wince] Somehow, I suspect that won't cut it. [The Moth needs a 4 to avoid the attack because Insomniac is using his best score, Might for this attack]

Ed:He slashes at you, diving for the black eye of your mask. He destroys the black orb and the lenses within, tearing down to your face and driving you painfully to the ground. Stress event: Mask Destroyed. Can't use its features like nightvision. Fortunately, Insomniac can't see well in the dark either.

Tim: I look up at him, growl, and roll back, throwing him back and pushing with both legs. I know I'll take more stress but I have to get him away from me. The Might roll is 3.

Ed: Yep, Might. You roll out of his way, trying to throw him, but he uses that to launch himself against the wall to land back on the lab counter. [Tim's roll was good enough since Insomniac can't really defend with Might at this time. That's more appropriate to wrestling, or holds.]

Tim: He took stress?

Ed: Yep. He grabs something from the table and begins mixing chemicals, ignoring you momentarily. The people have been quiet in the dark, but the sounds of battle have awoken the baby to cry again, it's squawking and the mother begins singing, "Hush little baby don't..." The Insomniac suddenly begins yelling! He smashes the glass beakers down and turns. "NO, NO, NO! NOT THAT! NOT THAT! IT'S YOUR FAULT!" He seems to be yelling at you. The baby continues to cry and the mother sings.

Tim: I've got no stress right yet?

Ed: 1 for the Might thing you did use your pained leg.

TIM KIRK'S

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Tim: I stand up and look at him fully and wait for him. "Yes it's my fault... what are you going to do about it?"

Ed: "I hate you, hate everything about your world, about the cars, and drugs, and voices yammering all hours, all day, always I hated it, and I hate you!" [Ed uses a Monologue to push back the Insomniac's stress.] He leaps again right at you, the blade lashing out in a wide arc, slashing at your costume.

Tim: I'm leaping back out of the way. It hurts, but it's all I can do. Roll 4.

Ed: You get out of the way of his strikes and he keeps coming. "Die, figment, wither on the vine, fade away fade away like the often-spilled wine!" he giggles shaking his whole body with it again.

Tim: I drive two quick jabs to his throat. "Stop yammering, you chatterbox! This isn't 1-900-LUNATIC."

Ed: Hehe, drop the stress point for that. What was your roll? I need one for the jabs.

Tim: Oh 3. Can I trigger a setback, stress event?

Ed: Nope. Currently, his hatred monologue has him going. You added stress not covered by that, however. The sound of the singing voice of the woman is hushing the child. Insomniac turns and throws the glass shard not at you, but at the mother!

Tim: Hell no! I... I leap in front of it!

Ed: You'll take it in the chest? Accept the injury it will potentially cause? You aren't especially bullet or glass-shard proof you know?

Tim: Yeah! I do it anyway!

Ed: Roll Deftness.

Tim: Got a 3.

Ed: The glass shard flies across the room. Your body bars its way, the sound of it as it tears into your flesh echoes in your ears. You had 1 stress from the Deftness roll, and this would definitely cause another for accepting the wound, which could be triggered to hurt you. Except, of course, your damn heroic self gets a point shaved for the risk. So, the shard slams into your shoulder.

Tim: I stand up, pull it out, toss it aside, and walk towards the loon. "I stand for the common man... as one of many always there, always seeking to belong to that common courage of mankind. You will not break this." I want to punch him and I want to awe him with the fact that I'm still standing after all this. Resolve 3, Might 2. I want him to go down hard.

Ed: Your fierceness and courage drive him back as you add another point of stress. As you wanted he fails to dodge the oncoming blow and it lands solid, taking him out before he can spew more bile of mad hatred! [The Ed's running total of stress for Insomniac is rather high because of the Insomniac's Stress Trigger, and no more monologues were forthcoming this time!]

Tim: Nurse?!

Ed: On the way out, the hostages are escorted to the ambulance. You quickly make your way above the crowd of onlookers, police, and reporters. With your mask damaged, you wouldn't want to give away who you were, and so you vanish into the night. As you soar away, you hear the strains of a lullaby being sung to a child, and the Insomniac's voice again screaming, "Noooo!"

Beyond Combat: Changing and Growing Heroism

FEATS AND STUNTS

A hero's power is not limited to just what was defined at creation. Powers in comic books are often used in highly innovative, interesting and diverse ways—an energy blast may be used to slow a fall, a force field may be used like a fulcrum to help lever a great weight, and so on. These tricks and stunts are part of the powers system. The difficulty for a stunt should remain the same as an ordinary use of the power, but may be a bit more stressful. Depending entirely on just how different the power's use is going to be from its original design, the Ed. can charge the hero a point of Stress or even two. Using a damaging, nigh-uncontrollable plasma blast to perform delicate life-saving surgery should be much more challenging than only slightly altered uses of a power.

A feat is a dramatic, well-described, and appropriate use of a power or attribute at the right time and place

Example:

The *Mongoose* trying to chase a fleeing flyer utilizes the walls of a narrow alleyway to make his ascent to the rooftop by leaping from wall to wall using each as a spring board for another.

A stunt is a “new trick” with the power or ability in question.

Example:

Doc Radiant uses his energy abilities to try and absorb the superpowers of another hero (with that hero's permission). He does this because he needs to borrow it, and has a better chance of succeeding at the task. Since this is a new trick it may cost him 1 Stress.

When a hero uses a power or attribute in a stunt or other feat the Ed. can assess a cost of 1 Stress for any added difficulties. If the Ed. feels that the use

is particularly exciting and dramatic he may ignore the additional Stress because of its appropriateness for the moment.

All New, All Different

Super-heroes can change, sometimes very noticeably. The same heroic identity may have an obviously different person behind the mask. Powers are passed on, heritages claimed, and so forth. A player may choose to retire a character's personality, attributes, and so on to invent a new hero who has the same general concept as the one before. Maybe he's a successor or a sidekick grown beyond his childhood idolization of his mentor. Whatever the reason, heroes can change completely and still retain the value of their created selves. Playing in any universe for some time will lead to changes wrought by the world and player's choice on their heroes. The “new costume” is every bit as genre as the new identity. Even if temporary, a hero should be allowed to try out such “new” directions at any time. Remember, though, most heroes return to their original identities at some point, mostly due to the sheer popularity of their iconic selves.

Evolutionary Leaps

Also known as the “accidental radiation exposure” event or “upgrade.” Heroes have an annoying habit of learning new things about their powers, of developing new ones with the slightest nudge by comic book science. Numerous examples exist of such changes; for instance, the *Flea*'s temporary transformation where he had an armored carapace after being exposed to an experimental neurotoxin used by his foes. When a player wants to make character changes beyond just simple direction, knowledge, or other basic personality issues, the Ed. should arrange something like this to happen, so that the hero can explain their new-found benefits—and perhaps detriments—to the others.

Drives

Drives can change, as mentioned previously. Perhaps the hero has mellowed with time. Maybe bad things have happened, pushing the hero to a darker reasoning for his actions. These are important changes that should be made as fits the hero.



The Editor's Bullpen

BUILDING A HEART & SOULS COMIC BOOK

The Pitch

There is a reason we use the term Ed. instead of one of the more common terms. We wish to shift the focus of the game so that both the players and the Ed. can create the plot and story elements together. The first step is the Pitch. Usually in the course of gaming, the Ed. or a player comes up with an idea for "comic book" and presents it to the others in the gaming group. The pitch is the basic idea of the themes the game will cover, as well as a small piece of the setting, and the types of characters that best fit into it.

A Pitch is not the final state of the game. It is simply an initial attempt to gain interest and feedback so that the Ed. and the players can build a game together to work at its best for the group.

Sample Pitches

- A team of explorers experiences a bizarre phenomenon that imbues them with strange and alien abilities. Now they find a need to use those powers to further human freedom and science.
- Children blessed with talents and skill beyond their peers escape from a criminal faction of the government intent on exploiting their abilities and discover a strange world beyond the only home they've ever known.
- A great threat arrives to conquer the world. Heroes long retired must re-build their legendary status and train replacements who will take up the challenge as the next generation of the team.
- Alien refugees arrive on earth, seeking asylum and allies against a terrible foe who's driven them from their home worlds.

Some elements of pitches that help create an aid to play should not be overlooked.

Why do the heroes work together?

Common Enemy

Heroes have a common foe, so working together is most likely in their own best interests.

Common Origin

The heroes' abilities derive from the same event or same source. If this occurs simultaneously, they may even be at the same place when they gain their abilities.

Common Drives

This is perhaps one of the subtler reasons why heroes get together. Community is the most common reason, but the other drives can also put people together.

Great Need

They recognize the need to work together to thwart evil, that each alone simply can't do it.

How do the heroes work?

Government Sponsor

Someone puts the weight of the government behind their team. They may be police, special ops, or any of a number of variations.

Outlaws

The heroes are not evil, but they do operate outside, or beyond, most laws—apprehending criminals as vigilantes, being chased for crimes they didn't commit, and so on.

Societal Support

In this variation, society doesn't look askance at the heroes. Either they've earned respect, or the tradition of previous heroes has gained a bit of acceptance. This is more common in worlds where supers have been established for some time or the need for heroes was great.

Fear and Loathing

Beyond mere outlaws, the very nature of super-heroes make people afraid. They are forced to operate in secret, skirting society, or skulk through it in an attempt to hide exactly who or what they are.

How do the Heroes Dress?

Uniforms

Perhaps the heroes belong to a military organization, or simply wish to give a common image of solidarity, or perhaps they got their clothes in bulk from a wholesaler. It all means that they dress roughly alike.

Costumes

Costumes are one of the more traditional elements of comic books. The visual medium lends itself well to such brightly colored accouterments. In recent years it's become passé to dress up in spandex or other tight variation of the fighting togs. There are good reasons, depending on other elements of the Pitch, why this may be useful. Veiling identity, intentionally making oneself an obvious target—AKA the “Hey look, I’m a super-hero!” rule—all serve to be an impetus for making costumes a viable option, although it presumes a certain amount of thought and conviction on the hero's part. Recently costumes have become more leather-like and trendy— trench coats rather than hip boots and capes, but it's still fundamentally the same idea. She's put on her leather pants, so it's time for some smack-down action!

Regular Duds

Normal everyday work-and-play wear. This isn't as sexy, sleek or fun for most of us as costumes or uniforms, but some people just insist that comfort overrides style. It's cheap, it's affordable, and—without special supernatural/super-tech materials—it makes a lot more sense than the costumes. But even regular duds can have some flair—say, a cool domino mask and a fedora.

How do the Heroes get along?

This element really breaks down to a far smaller and much less manageable degree than the others. Individual heroes work differently with one another. Some heroes work together out of necessity and can barely stand each other outside “work.” Others are a family, either in the

traditional literal sense or of a more emotional support variation. No matter what it should, be considered that a hero doesn't exist in a vacuum, and how he works and plays with his allies does matter. A hero who can't work with the rest of the group should be rewritten or replaced. That doesn't mean toss her aside just because she creates a little conflict! It just means that a character so diametrically opposed to the rest of the group will end up making the other heroes, and their players, miserable. Conflict is good; conflict that threatens the fun and cohesion of the heroes every game session is bad. So, toss it out.

What to do with the Heroes?

What is really important is, what you wish to do with the heroes, that is, what kind of stories you want to explore with them? Are they seekers finding new worlds full of injustice? Are they grim avengers of the night attempting to end the tyranny of drug runners over their home city? The tales the Ed. and players want to create together are vital, shaping both how the heroes operate and the background elements that forge their current path.

Pitching a No-Hitter

Sometimes a Pitch simply doesn't work, You may need to go back and rework your ideas and take into account your players' ideas. There is nothing wrong with that; it happens to everyone. Maybe your current game group just doesn't want to do retro-4-color settings at this point. They may change their minds later, or you may come up with an even better variant pitch. Just take your time and do it right.



ISSUES

Every single H&S adventure is different, but like comics, they should have some common elements. Most stories, interactive or not, should have a beginning, a middle, and an end. How one does this depends on the individual Ed. Some will make a bunch of notes and leave the heroes to follow their own path, others will structure a very detailed plan of what plot elements happen when and where. Neither is superior to the other and both can work quite well depending on the players and the Ed.

FRAMING

This is taking the current adventure, placing it in a specific order, and describing it in a specific way. Traditionally, the framing of a comic book is Introduction—Story—Complication—Resolution—Denouement/Final Page. The style used can impact this greatly.

PANELS

One method is to frame the story in the manner of a comic book, complete with describing the Issue number, title, cover-art, and first-page introduction. Then, as the story progresses, describing scenes the heroes can't know or see—the villain making plans, the focus on a bomb under a presidential candidate's chair. Then on to the resolution element and last page—sometimes the resolution stalls in the story and leaves a cliffhanger last page that asks a question or poses a problem for the "Next Issue." This style of framing isn't for everyone; it does create a slightly greater distance between the player and the story. But at the same time, the Ed. can use it to reveal important information, convey a specific feel, and otherwise have a simple way to tell a story.

IMMERSION

This form of framing is by far more common, essentially running each H&S adventure only by the story elements the heroes know. The players know only what's



been revealed to their heroes, and the way the story unfolds is hidden to them until they discover it. This method works well, but often relies on how the players themselves think and how well the group as a whole plays. If they don't think to look for clues, it doesn't tend to happen. One player who isn't as immersed as others can break the frame for everyone else. This frame is used to convey a feel of the "world is real," and not just a game or a comic book you're taking part in. Its goal is to maintain the fourth wall at nearly any cost.

GAME

This is the traditional frame of an RPG, and not a terrible choice. It sometimes doesn't work as well for comic book-style heroes as it does for other genres and themes. This frame consists of the heroes being given a task, and they move to resolve it through their actions, dice rolls, fortune, and decisions made by the players individually. They know what the Ed. tells them, or what they themselves deduce.

The characters are tools to achieve an end that is typically "beating" the villain, or "winning" the game rather than the telling of a story with both positive and negative events chosen by the players themselves.

INTRODUCING THE HEROES

Regardless what frame is used, all games have an introduction—something to convey information that the players need to know. Much of this is often covered in the Pitch, but it should be distilled and clarified. That being said, not all game introductions are at the beginning.

Begin at the beginning

Simply start at the origin of the characters—where the beginning of super-heroic life starts. The origin may be the pivotal event that triggers their Drive, or it may just be what imbues them or makes them aware of their powers. Then advance them either individually or as a group to form the "team."

In Media Res

"In the middle of things" is what that means. In this case, start the game somewhere, anywhere, right smack dab in the elements of the main plot—usually in the middle of a fight scene/action sequence. Then slowly reveal what's going on by moving forward.

Flashback/Retroactive Events

Beginning at the end. What?! How? You proceed much like "In Media Res" above. You start the story introduction somewhere else, typically just before the villain floods the room with poison gas, or in the middle of describing his master plan. Then you flashback to the very beginning, and tell the story up to the point where the flashback occurs. This is a bit of a railroading aspect because nothing the heroes do will really change the point at which they have the flashback, but it may very well give them clues, abilities, or plans that they can use to move the story forward after that point.

ENDING THE SESSION

When a particular game session ends, a good rule is to hold a post-game bull pen session to discuss the things players liked and disliked.

LETTERS' PAGE

One particular way to handle a post-session wrap-up is to treat it like next Issue's letters' page. Comic books have a long tradition of printing readers' letters and responses by the comic's editors and creators.

The letters' page can be used to discuss the good and bad aspects of the game. It can also be used to ask "questions" as well as theorize as a fan about the future of the game. Most notably this is a good way to suggest plot ideas, adventure challenges, and social aspects of play that players wish to address in the long run. Eds. wishing to use letters' pages should respond with humor and some ambiguity about what will be happening next, because quite simply you want them to come back and enjoy the next issue.

Unfolding Pages

The middle of the story is often the most important part. It is, for comic writers, a difficult hump—you can't advance it too slowly or too quickly; you've got to pace it just right. Gaming is a little more forgiving, though. If one plot wraps up you can always start the seeds of another.

Pacing

Pacing for an RPG adventure is how you keep the dynamics and flow of the story moving forward. Some people use combat in order to keep pace. This may or may not work for your particular game group. Combat can liven up a game, but relying on it solely for that purpose becomes tedious. Off-panel violence may be better for pacing. A victim, wounded and bleeding, staggers into the heroes' lair. They now have to act fast and make decisions—is this a foe? An ally? Do their drives have them intervene regardless of his status? These snap-second decisions help enliven the game and forge long-term hooks and lay ground for later repercussions.

Keeping the plot moving forward sometimes requires further intervention even for the best group of heroes. Sometimes it's an ally Drive in to give them information. Sometimes it's a sudden revelation of an element they've previously discovered.

In order to overcome “dead air” or empty panel problems, the Ed. needs to shift forward. It's all right to skip panels of background if they aren't directly relevant to the current problem, but by the same token those panels can sometimes help keep the game flowing until they hit their own stride. There are even times when you can skip ahead, moving the story forward, without showing panels that may be important, but which have the group stuck. Maybe you can flashback to it later, revealing secret plans, or have the heroes push that event into their background. It may move them forward but interferes with the game pacing and so is shifted off-panel for the flow of the game to continue.

PLOTTING

Plotting is far more involved than pacing. This is the meat and bones of the adventure; the “what they are doing” plots can and do vary from issue to issue, with a variety of sub-plots linked to the main story or the characters.

Some elements of plot that are important to consider are: Why are the heroes involved and why do they care?

These are both important elements of any plot that a Ed. creates. In H&S, part of this is pre-determined by the characters' drives, but the exact way it fits the characters is up to the Ed. and the players. A hero group may not have the same drives, but their ties to each other should help get them entangled into the plot anyway.

What personal issues will be addressed?

Strangely enough, many comic books do dredge up hero's personal issues regularly—they are afraid of something, then it will probably show up. If they question their heroism, then situations occur that add fuel to their self-doubt, as well as push them into doing heroic things. Not every “comic issue” does so, but many hit heroes where it hurts, sometimes several consecutive issues will do so for the express purpose of leading them to a resolution.

Sample Plot “Sparks”

- Every plot has a spark—an evocative element that piques the interest of the “reader” and provides something to resolve, address, or otherwise focus on. Here are a few examples:
- Ambition, Betrayal, Catastrophe, Chase, Discovery, Grief and Loss, Love and Hate, Persecution, Rebellion, Rivalry, Self-Sacrifice, and Survival.

AMBITION

Ambition rarely targets a hero directly. More often it is the ambition of others that triggers their involvement, whether the well-meaning beneficial ambition of an ally or the

self-serving ambition of a villain. Ambition can drive the plot and be firmly tied to other plot elements. It is essentially a trait where desire or need for self-advancement often overrides other considerations. This ambition may be for wealth, power, love, or acceptance.

Examples:

An otherwise well-meaning person may be so driven by their ambition to get their project finished that they cut corners in building materials on a new high-rise, and the ambition triggers a catastrophe when the building collapses. The heroes seeking the cause will eventually turn up the failure of this person in light of their ambition. Dealing with this may be more a matter of informing the appropriate authorities or making the person deal with the real repercussions of his actions—the deaths of others.

The ambition to be proven right of a foil who involves themselves regularly in a character's life may make him, in his capacity of an editor of a newspaper, pay a mercenary to challenge the hero. The impact of that challenge may create a new villain, or reveal the foil's own prejudices when it comes to the hero's activities.

Another hero, constantly compared to the player's own heroic character, becomes frustrated in their own desire for accolades for what they do. This drives them in a fit of hubris to challenge the hero to a battle. Whether he wins or loses, the impact will tend to be lasting. If he fails, he may change his Drive and return as a foe or perhaps as a broken, hurt foil, desperate to be seen in a positive light still. If he wins, he might realize how powerful he is, and how easy it is to use that power to benefit his own desires.

Ask and answer these questions:

- What is the price of ambition?
- How does ambition affect the character and those around him?
- How far will ambition go?

Betrayal

Of the plot sparks listed here, this one is perhaps the most powerful in terms of its impact and how well it can tie to all other possible plots. Ambition may lead to betrayal, for example, and betrayal may be born from grief and loss.

The first things to ask in using this plot spark are: "Who is involved? Who betrays whom?" It may be an individual, a group, or an ideal that is betrayed, just as those elements might betray the person involved.

Examples

The hero's significant other—wife/husband, girlfriend/boyfriend, or alien lover—betrays him to his enemies because of a lack of understanding about the importance of secret identities.

A new hero on the team betrays his team members by tricking them into performing actions that on the surface look heroic, but in reality are a set-up for a complex plot to make the heroes look like criminals. The betrayer's reasons could be anything from a significant amount of money to pure revenge.

The hero, faced with a difficult personal challenge, fails. Rather than living up to her own ideals, she takes the easy route and accepts the failure—she betrays herself and the elements of her Drive.

Betrayal as a plot spark may be deeply personal or completely and utterly sterile and distant from the heroes. Depending on how it's handled, a betrayal may lead to deeper events more personally impacting or worldview-shaking.

In betrayal-style plots, the following questions should be asked:

- Who or what is betrayed?
- Who is betraying them?
- What is the impact of that betrayal?

CATASTROPHES

Excitement without combat! This plot is a very useful one for heroes, in fact, it targets most drives equally except Spirit of Adventure—and even they might be affected.

Catastrophes take many forms, not just personal disasters to a character or the team, but terrible things happening to towns, cities, nations, or the world. Earthquakes, tidal waves, floods, tornadoes/hurricanes, fires, and meteor strikes—these catastrophes will need heroes to divert or deter the disaster, or save lives or rebuild in the aftermath. It may be a single event or series of events that together add up to significant destruction. Naturally caused catastrophes are useful in that there is no person behind them, so they are not likely to directly lead to combat, but may involve heroes using their powers and skills in fairly tense situations.

Examples:

A terrible storm assaults the heroes' home area. Flooding, wind damage and the like lead to an area blackout. Many people are trapped without food, power, or heat, and some may be hurt and need to reach help or safety.

A meteor hurtles towards earth. If it hits, it will annihilate the eastern seaboard of the Americas and devastate most coastal cities on either side of the Atlantic. Can the heroes borrow, beg, or steal a spacecraft to get them to it, and find a way to deflect it from its course?

An apartment building is aflame. Due to its ancient design, many people are trapped on the upper floors where firefighters can't reach them. The heroes must hurry and help rescue them before smoke and fire or the slowly collapsing structure kills them.

When using a catastrophe, the questions asked and answered are:

- What is damaged?
- How serious is it?
- What caused it?
- Who is it threatening?
- Is someone behind it?

CHASE

The chase is most often seen as an element of another plot, but it itself can be the primary story. A Chase requires action, conflict and, more importantly, flight. Chases begin when someone has the power to force another to flee.

Something provides the push or the Drive for the characters involved to get moving. There are many reasons for the flight to begin and why it involves the heroes.

Examples:

Falsely convicted of a crime, an ally turns up on the hero's doorstep, begging desperately for aid. The hero then must choose between aiding her friend, now a criminal, or aiding the law. Regardless, the chase will ensue when the authorities pursue the escaped criminal.

A villain makes off with a piece of technology with the heroes hot on his heels. Trying to evade capture with his prize, he endangers innocents as a side effect of his powers—sonic booms.

Fleeing from his home world, an alien crash-lands on earth—his foes in hot pursuit. Is he friend? Or foe?

Built by the government, an elite super-soldier seeks a path dedicated to peace, but is forced to flee his creators or be destroyed.

Chases themselves may be long or short. An entire "issue" or the entire run of those characters may have a chase as a subplot that drives them to move from place to place, always fleeing just before the pursuers arrive.

The questions to be asked and answered in a Chase plot:

- Who is pursued?
- How extreme is their desire to flee?
- Who is the pursuer?
- What means will the pursuer take to capture their targets?

DISCOVERY

The discovery plot has many different hues, from the simple “uncover the villains” plot to actual research taken by the hero to solve a scientific mystery. Although comic books sometimes gloss over the achievements of the science-minded hero, they too can make an interesting plot. Exploration, quests, research—all these are just different words for discovery, whether the hero charts unknown places or uncovers the true weirdness of the world.

Examples:

A team of heroes created in an accident discovers that another group much like them previously existed, and seeks to uncover why there is such a degree of similarity between them and their predecessors.

Strange anomalies are occurring all over the world—things seem to fall out of time—the past and perhaps the future. Can the heroes discover the cause and deal with it before it becomes a serious threat?

Given up for adoption at birth, the heroine seeks to discover her true heritage and find her birth parents to help her deal with the many questions of her life.

Discoveries can be personal or political. They can be as simple as determining the source of recent strange weather or as complicated as discovering just who is responsible for a 50-year-old murder. Each discovery plot is likely to provide as many questions as answers, and some may be without answers at present.

The whole question and answer process for this plot for a given Issue is much more complex.

What is the discovery?

- Who is seeking it?
- What are its repercussions?

Beyond that, there may be any number of more complex questions, each one specific to the exact type of discovery and its nature in relation to the heroine involved.

GRIEF AND LOSS

Grief and loss are intimately tied together. Loss triggers grief that is the force of this plot spark. Grief can take many forms and has many different degrees. This plot type can often trigger serious repercussions, such as significant changes in Drive. The Guilt Drive in particular is usually derived from a failure that brings grief and, in dealing with those issues of grief, it pushes the hero.

All humans deal with loss in different ways, but most of us respond with grief if the loss is really important to us. We may go numb, cry, even fall into depression or suffer panic attacks. Grief is powerful emotion, and its effects are varied in every one of us. How a hero responds to loss can be important, including how his foes and/or the foils associated with him react.

Examples:

A hero driven to protect his home city, a hero is driven to measures that are even more desperate to defend those he cares for, to the point of losing sight of compassion and empathy.

A villainess grieving over lost love lashes out at everyone around her, destroying all those she sees as being to blame for that loss.

Broken-hearted due to his Uncle's demise and his failure to protect his loved ones from harm, the hero doubts his own worth, while struggling through the pain and misery of his family and the preparations for burial.

Loss may be of someone, something, or even an abstract—the grieving period may last a single issue or several as the heroine overcomes her emotional turmoil.

This is often a challenging plot spark to play, like any deeply emotional situation. The distance between the character hero and the player doesn't aid this, but it does provide some perspective on how to play it out. As with all plot sparks, it is suggested that the Ed. be very careful with it simply because of its nature. Many players like their characters and identify with them to a large degree, just as many of us identify with heroes in comic books. If the loss causes a lessening of interest, you may wish to reverse it so that the loss didn't occur, or alter future plots to resurrect whatever was lost.

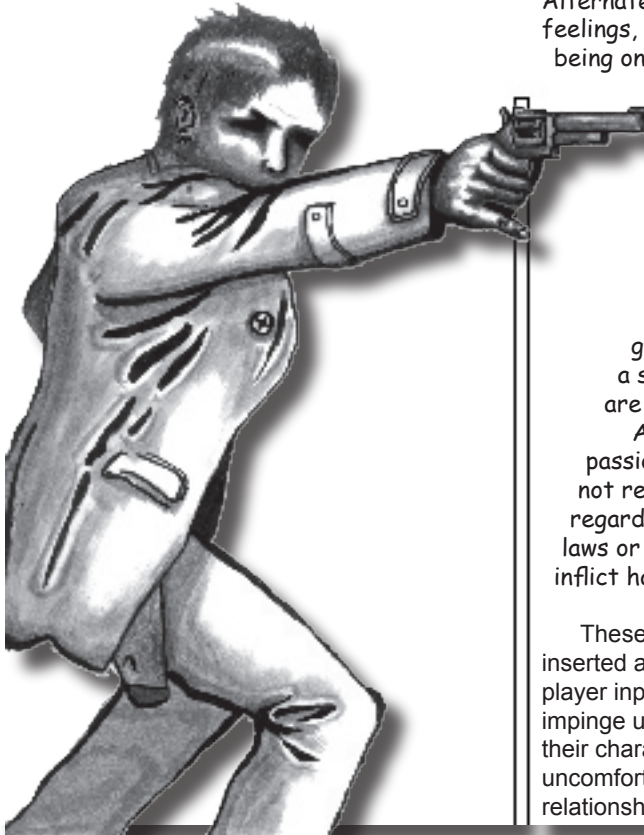
Normally, though, part of the fun is the impact of the loss, and the fact that it is made more real if it isn't undone, very much like real life.

The questions this plot element asks are:

- What is lost?
- Who or what is grieving for it?
- How are they grieving or handling the loss?
- Can the focus of loss be recovered or regained?
- Will the emotion last or burn itself out?

LOVE AND HATE

Amore! Love, lust, attraction—these elements are all aspects of the Love and Hate plot. Love in itself is often a complication to a primary plot. This doesn't just mean the love for humanity or guardianship, although, it can be tied to those, but it is usually the more intimate form of love. The love for a child, wife,



husband, or lover; this kind of love leaves room for the potential of the betrayal plot as well as for loss. The other side of the coin, hatred, is a great and powerful motivator for plots—hatred for heroes, hatred for an ideal, or specific person can make all of us go beyond what is normally possible, or sometimes what is prudent. Blind hatred can be born from specific acts like betrayal or based on a deep-rooted prejudice.

Examples:

A hero generates suspicion and fear because his heritage isn't what people expect for the area he most often patrols. This suspicion is a deeply rooted prejudice born of old hurtful hatreds.

A hero falls in love with a foe. This creates a difficult situation, because she is an enemy whose goals are more often than not at cross-purposes to the hero's. The object of affection may not return the feelings of the hero, but may use her existence to manipulate the hero. Alternately, the enemy may return the feelings, but the difficulties of the two being on opposite sides of some ideal create more problems than normal relationships.

A heroine falls in love with another team member. Hero or heroine, this creates issues when the object of affection may not realize the intensity of the other person's feeling, or maybe see it as inappropriate due to age, gender, genetics, or social reasons—a sidekick falling for the hero they are teamed with for example.

A hero may hate some foe with a passion. Due to their feelings, they may not realize they are going too far with regards to apprehending them; breaking laws or their own ethical code in order to inflict harm on the object of their hate.

These plot sparks should not be artificially inserted and should have a great deal of player input at all times, because they directly impinge upon the ways the players can play their characters. Some players may be uncomfortable dealing with specific relationship issues, so as with any plot

discuss its possibility in the pitch.

The questions that Love and Hate plots should ask and answer are many:

- Who is the object of the emotion?
- Does the object of the emotion reciprocate?
- What lengths will they go to make the depth of the emotion known?
- What is the cost of these emotions?
- Who else may be affected?

Example:

The heroine Dauntless was once the sidekick to an older hero known as "The Daring Man." What isn't generally known is that Dauntless deeply loved Daniel Wynne, the alter ego of The Daring Man, but he displayed no interest in her except as an ally and sidekick. This eventually drove a wedge between the two.

Eventually a villain forced Dauntless to reveal her feeling to The Daring Man. He was completely stunned by that revelation, and the villain, Bright Malice, used that moment to nearly kill the two heroes. The Daring Man managed to save Dauntless at the cost of his life. His final words were a revelation to Dauntless—that he'd loved her, but never felt like he was good a enough man for her.

PERSECUTION

Similar in many ways to hate, this particular spark is about dislike, hatred, or lack of understanding. It tends to be broader than hate, having a wider scope of people involved, but doesn't necessarily require it have more than one influential individual pulling the strings. By its nature the Persecution spark means the hero, foil, or villain will suffer a variety of attacks, but these tend to be of a psychological nature.

Examples:

A local newspaper editor sees the hero as a criminal who hides behind a mask, so she uses her power and position to present a slightly slanted view (or alternate view) of the hero's actions. She will play up failures, point out flaws, and generally

attempt to make life miserable for the person she dislikes.

A "villain" who is already hated by his foes learns the local inhabitants are also against him because of the nature of his powers. He may be undead, demonic, or mutant, but whatever the source of his powers, he is seen negatively and because of that finds it impossible to work as the hero he feels himself to be. Often, a small misunderstanding or simple prejudice leads to the complete lack of aid from more established heroes, the police, and community.

An alien arrives on earth and is forced into hiding, because while he appears human, he possesses significant powers that earth people do not. This leads to him being hunted and sought by the government of the region he dwells in, either as a menace or for whatever technology he might "share" because the government desires him to provide better weapons, tools, or vehicles.

Persecution is not an easy plot to implement, simply because it is often hard to keep all the factors in line that connect the events, revealing that it is indeed persecution rather than random bad events. With careful implementation, a few clues, a name or two dropped may just what the heroes need to put the story together.

The kinds of questions asked fit the same mold as other plots:

- Who or what is behind it? Is it simple prejudice?
- Can it be changed for the better?
- How is the persecution perceived by the outside world?

REBELLION

Many sparks deal with an individual's motivations. This one focuses on a broader movement. While it may start with one person, it spreads to many, all willing to die to alter the status quo. Rebellion may be a positive or negative force for change depending on its nature. Its use may be particularly interesting if the reason for rebellion is good, but the methods of those involved are not, creating a

conundrum for the heroes.

Example:

The heroes are asked to prevent terrorists from attacking the state speech of a third-world country's leadership, yet the leadership seems fraught with corruption and dictatorial tendencies. Whose side should the heroes really be on?

A well-known super-hero takes an unpopular political stand; her name is smeared through the mud and she, in anger, says something that sets off others to riot. How do the heroes handle this without making it worse?

Rebellions are complex, often having multiple levels of anger, hate, rage, and other emotions, which play off the personalities involved, leading to an often self-destructive level of action.

With a Rebellion, an Ed. should construct the reasons carefully, because he may find the heroes switching sides or aiding one side over the other, as their own ideals coincide with that side of the revolution.

Since heroes are often reformers trying to make a change for the better, they may even be seen as bad guys if they choose the side that is not supported widely, or seek to change the status quo that the current regime supports.

Some questions for Rebellion plots:

- Who is rebelling?
- What are changes are they after?
- Who are their enemies?

RIVALRY

When a plot spark calls for rivalry, it is often a rivalry that can evolve into something else. Love and hate, revenge, and many others can come from simple rivalry. At first rivalry may be trivial and little more than simple-seeming competitiveness. However, it can run deeper as the hero or villain attempts to upstage his rival, trying hard and perhaps endangering lives in pursuit of being perceived as better. The level of danger often depends on the nature of the character—a villainess may not care about the harm she causes, while a hero may inadvertently forget his heroic ideals and cause

damage he must repair later.

Examples:

A track star always thought he was the fastest man alive until a speedster hero shows up. This person goes to great lengths to acquire powers and show up this rival for his title. In the end he's got a choice between a title and being true to himself. Which will he choose?

A friendly couple of heroes whose powers are similar have an "innocent" game of chase that goes awry when they carelessly launch playful attacks that inadvertently devastate a dam under construction. Now the two rivals must work together to undo the damage they have caused.

A friend of the hero in his day-to-day disguised life is annoyed at the constant attention the masked hero receives, taking the focus away from ordinary people. He goes out of his way to demean or diminish the hero's accomplishments, not knowing his friend is the human face to the costume.

Rivalry should ask the questions:

- Who are the rivals?
- How deeply to they hold their rivalry?
- What keeps them from becoming true enemies?

SELF-SACRIFICE

More commonly initiated by heroes or allies of heroes than villains, this plot spark usually involves someone giving up something for another, an important personal goal or even his own life. The Self-Sacrifice spark works well when it is planned a bit in advance with the player, as it has greater impact if the life sacrifice is done heroically. Though any Stress event in some games could be death, it has far more game impact and emotional power when it occurs at the end of a long series of events, and at the moment of choice. It can even be a foil or a villain who chooses to sacrifice himself to save their foe or rival, or perhaps to revel in their own superiority, or maybe to show true repentance at last.

Examples

A hero team dies saving the world, vanishing all at once. Can others take up their legacy?

A hero sacrifices the powers which makes him special to save the life of a dying child. Now a mere mundane human once again, what shall he do?

Two heroes, desperately in love, are caught between life and death. One sacrifices herself for the other, yet the survivor must face the grief and ache, and the knowledge that he was given a gift by the one he loved, a gift he can never repay.

Self Sacrifice should ask the questions:

- Who is sacrificing?
- What is its value and or impact?
- What is the effect on others?

SURVIVAL

The final plot spark we present here is one of the harshest—the cruel fates tied to environmental hazards, to the desperate need for food in a winter-washed landscape, or the fight to survive against impossible odds in a dying world as the sun goes dark. There isn't always a force to fight or a foe to stop. Sometimes it is the situation itself one must face and deal with.

Examples:

Trapped aboard a sinking ship, the heroes must face the onrushing waters and survive.

An alien planet is dying. Its tyrant switches places with a hero, leaving him to face the crumbling ruin of his planet and death with his people.

The Arctic is cold and perilous. The heroes must face the frigid cold while searching for a lost ally.

Some Survival questions that should be considered:

- Who or what is at stake?
- What is the environment?
- How long must they survive?

FEARSOME FOES

Ah, Villainy! The true challenge of super-hero-dom! Heroes are made by their foes, sometimes quite literally. Other times the battles and challenges slowly forge them into the icons we enjoy. What would Devil Jack be without Thrillseeker? What would the Furious Flea be without the antagonism of the Wild Pack? Somewhere each hero has those who oppose them—more than mere foils, but actively and intentionally trying to do evil or a particular brand of “tyranny” that they see as good.

Not all villains are created equal. The vast majority of foes a hero faces will challenge or slow him only by minute amounts—these villains may be laughable or deadly serious. These foes shouldn't even be given attributes; they simply aren't important or effective enough to measure. An Ed. should simply assign the challenge ratings for fighting them, outwitting them, or dodging their attacks based on how much the heroes should be slowed by dispatching them. Typically, this should be something that can be beat without serious risk of stressing the hero in question.

Now just above the average mook are those with a little more skill, training, intellect, or just plain pure hardheadedness. These rarer but more challenging foes can be leaders or lieutenants, but these people should be given attributes—usually Exceptional and Ordinary on whatever scale of hero they are meant to challenge. Some may have powers, but they, like those below them, lack what truly makes the villainous hierarchy work—a Drive.

Just like heroes, certain villains have Drives every bit as powerful and high as obsessive as those they clash with. These are loners in power—unique villains, lieutenants, and nemeses. They, like heroes, should be carefully crafted, and each attribute, each power selected to give the hero a challenge. This is not to say that all villains are equally as effective as heroes, but those that are driven enough can truly make the game evolve and come to life. Most comic books in the early years had simple villains with simple goals, but as times change, readers change, and now players will often want something more interesting, and more complex.

Villainous Drives

Megalomania

The desire for domination, no matter its form. These villains are by far the most common in comic books. They may be politically or socially motivated, or driven by a more pure desire of control, but all of that is really just a shape worn by their lust for power. The power's nature could be inherent of the power over others, in a variety of ways. This Drive is all about that need to derive, possess, and own power at any cost.

Greed

The desire for money in this case tends to be the most prevalent shape of this villainous Drive. For other overburdening desires, see Megalomania and Lust respectively. Villains pursue it with a gleam of the eye and a strong measure of force. These villains tend to be the middle-men, rarely the leaders or top of the hierarchy, because the leader villains tend to have less earthy, far grander visions and goals.

Hatred

Driven by some irrefutable anger, these villains hate, maybe a specific person, an enemy, or an ideal, or perhaps a specific group of people, nations, or governments. The villain will go to great lengths to harm the object of his hatred.

Love

While it may seem odd, this Drive is one found equally among heroes and villains. The difference is often the methods they use to deal with their love. Some villains love the object of their love enough to kill to protect it. Some villains may even seem admirable for this Drive, but their nature does more harm than good. They may think they are protecting or "doing right" but often have misled themselves.

Lust

Related to love and greed, this Drive is a powerful one that isn't often seen. It's the desire to satiate the villain's need for a person. This Drive is often a tragic one as otherwise harmless but powerful creatures may fall under its sway and end up

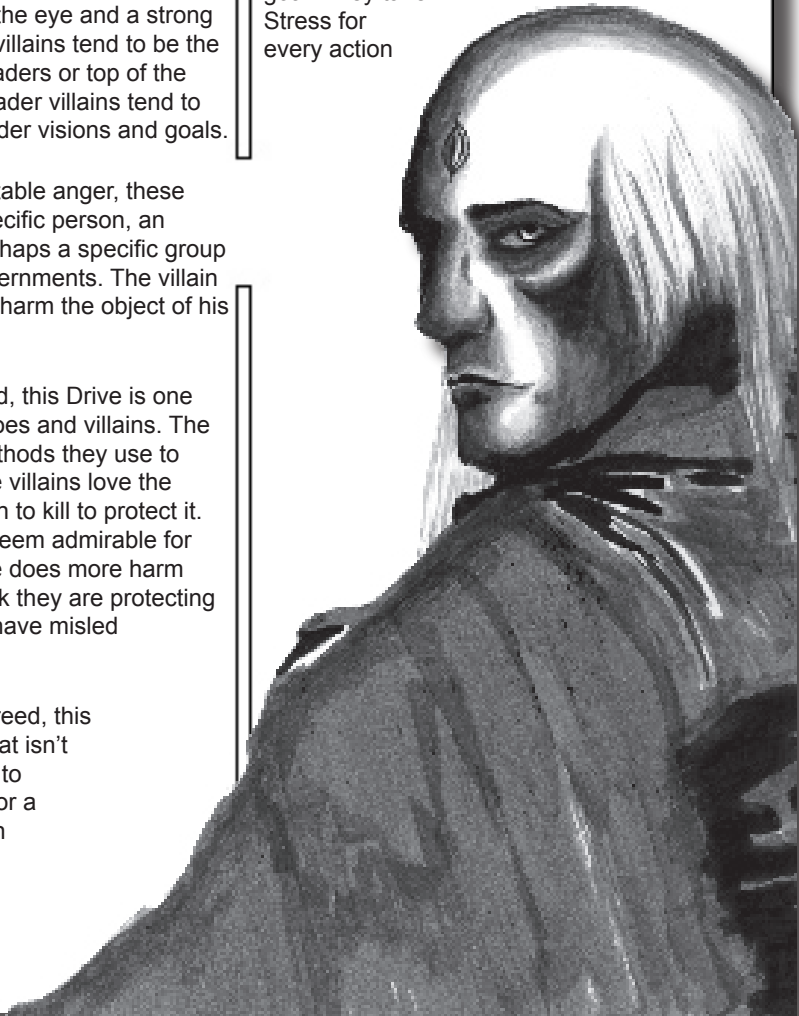
harming the object of their desire.

Revenge

Typically not as brutal or bloodthirsty as hate, there is usually a substantive reason why a villain is out for revenge—they were betrayed or hurt, and are lashing out, seeking what they believe to be justice, but is actually vengeance.

How do villains' Drives work?

Villainous Drive works similarly to a hero's Drive but it is not identical. Where a hero's Drive allows them to push through and succeed at a task, the villains' Drives allow them to ignore Stress (and Stress events) altogether for a short duration of time. The Stress is still there, but their Drives override it in pursuit of their goal. They take Stress for every action



a hero takes that impedes them, they take Stress for every successfully landed blow, or even being forced to dodge to avoid one, but they often seem completely oblivious to the effects of Stress—seeming nigh unstoppable when they first appear. This is simply how their Drive works. The Ed. in this case justifies why the Stress isn't hurting them now (with a monologue based on their Drive), and delays its effects to some later point.

The Stress Relief of Evil

Gloating

Not all villains gloat, but just as humor is a Stress release for heroes, villains can use gloating to release their Stress. Showing off the genius of their evil plans, he gains an almost delightful glee in his self-assuredness. Whenever a villain reveals his plans he may lose some of his Stress, how much is lost depends on how detailed the Ed. chooses to be, and what he thinks is appropriate, players may also be involved and suggest Stress loss for a moment of gloating as well.

Taunting

Loosely related to Gloating, some villains taunt their foes, seeing their foe gaining Stress allows them to shed a bit of their own. In this case, if a hero lets the taunting effect him, the villain can lose Stress as the hero earns his own.

Soliloquies

Just as a villain can gloat, he can speak to himself of his plans, revving himself up. Sometimes there are listeners—his mooks, henchmen, or allies. Sometimes he announces his intent to himself. This serves to exemplify a villain's Drive, to give force to its use, and usually occurs during that point in the game in which they use their Drive to counter heroes. In this case, he will speak, ignoring all Stress, and delaying Stress events until a later point. As listed above, if he is particularly uplifting to himself reaffirming his plans, he may lose Stress.

Casual Dispatch

Some villains, particularly of a certain sanity-lacking point of view, will kill their own minions, in a casual way, as if turning on a light switch. For a villain this is a form of Stress release. They put the blame of failure on their minion then dispatch them, erasing

their current Stress.

Deathtraps

Why do they build these things? What person in their right mind traps their foes and then explains their goals, while awaiting their engine of destruction, trap, or prison to flay their foes? The answer is simple: they aren't sane. Whatever Drive they possess—if they feel the need to do this—it is often a very simple wish: they don't really want to succeed. Deep in that place they will never look at, they want the heroes to challenge them. It's what makes the whole villain bit fun! If they won, they'd get bored.

Now they'll never admit it, and most won't even realize it, but they keep doing the Deathtrap bit anyway. Whenever a villain traps heroes in a Deathtrap, he is likely to gloat and lose Stress from that. Also, the very act of winning and delaying the heroes allows him to shed some Stress for that as well. But the heroes breaking out of the trap should cause the villain Stress again, mostly tied into the frustration of how his perfect planning has failed.

Building a Better Villain

The basic sort of villain doesn't need to be constructed, just represented as a basic challenge rating, but those that are constructed are assigned traits just as heroes, with a slight modification. Since the game has a protagonist bias, they do not get a die value, rather they get a fixed number equal to $\frac{1}{2}$ what the max die value would be on their rank and scale. This is the number a hero needs to roll to overcome the villain in that area, modified as normal by any differences in scale and rating.

Goons, Thugs and Mooks

These guys rarely amount to much. Whether they are a horde of ninjas or just some tough street thugs, they usually are assigned a difficulty as a group and defeating them is simply a matter of time. There are no hard rules for the difficulty of these guys. Their number and their relative skill should make an impact, but they are still just a mostly nameless and faceless horde. One interesting twist to add is to give them names, removing their namelessness may Drive home to the heroes that these are people too.

Lieutenants and Sidekicks

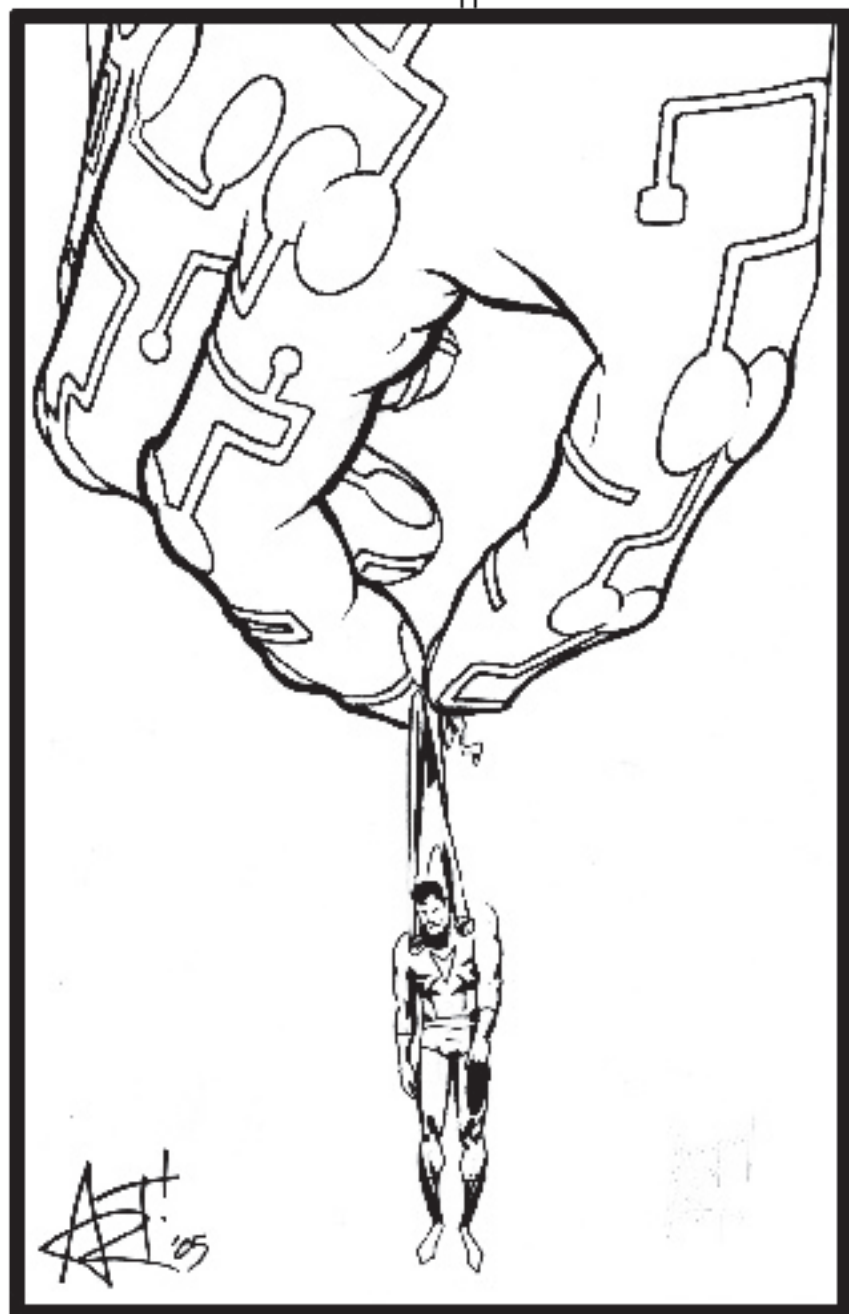
She may not be much more than a common thug, but give her a title, a name, or a memorable face, and likely as not she will show up again. These kinds of foes are usually individually on par with a hero, and should for the most part have Drives, traits, and in general be designed just like heroes. In most cases, their Drives are entangled with the Drive of their boss or leader, and their goals and aims are the same. There are a few whose Drives actually conflict with those they work for; often due to the nature of the Drive they may betray, work against, or even ally with heroes in order to thwart their own leader—perhaps even under a misguided attempt to protect her from greater harm.

Nemeses and the Big Bad

Some foes are much more powerful than the heroes and others may be their equals in power, but their Drives and “theme” make them a directly opposing force to the heroes. These villains tend to be the kind of foes that comic readers adore and game players love—and hate at the same time. They should be built just as heroes are, but with an eye towards countering a hero’s powers, aims, goals, and dreams. These foes should never be one-sided. They should always be complex and interesting. One of the best ways to give a villain depth is to show that he has motives other than his Drive; goals that may on the surface seem opposite to his Drive. Villains are made more interesting by having human weaknesses or frailties. One may fight against alcoholism; another may be a good father and yet still be evil, just as the opposite may be true for heroes.

Victory and Defeat

Villains don’t win in standard 4-color settings, or not for long at least. Their victories should always be short-lived and their fortunes should reverse. *Millennia*, which isn’t 4-color, still has part of this rule, while *Analog Prime*, which is 4-color, also has part of the rule. The problem is, with this rule in place, it makes it hard to tell stories that have an impact and emotional investment. It is best for the players and the Ed. to decide upon the rule when the Pitch is tossed.



Settings

Below you will find two setting Pitches for your use. Both have been created and used for fairly long-term games, as opposed to just my own frustrated comic book writing. They are meant for gaming, so often have concessions to that effect.

PITCH: ANALOG PRIME

Analog Prime takes place on an Earth like ours, but has, for better or worse, been inundated with super-beings for some time. They began appearing at the turn of the last century and have grown steadily in number since. *Analog Prime* is a 4-color world, but one with a significant twist in that the villains significantly outnumber the heroes and, if the game is started at the “recent” era, the largest and most powerful hero group has just died, leaving a void for other heroes to fill.

AMP Comic’s World: Analog Prime

The history of comic books would not be complete unless we mentioned *Analog Prime*. The company, AMP Comics, and the “universe” are linked as one.

A writer in the late 1800s created a string of stories about an Indian Shaman—Ghostwalker by name—who turned into an honorable lawman at a time still in the Wild West. The stories were filled with gunslingers, outlaws, and hanging judges. The Ghostwalker was an unusual character in that he was a Native American of the Cherokee nation at a time when non-Anglo heroes were thin on the ground. To be sure, the details of his creation are anachronistic. He didn’t seem to have any real ties to his nation other than brief mentions of cousins doing this or that. He was a Native American hero, but one with few qualities that emphasize that fact. At the same time, the creator inadvertently avoided racial stereotyping.

Ghostwalker was a hero; he appeared serialized in a number of papers until the writer’s death in 1902. A few years later, these stories were purchased from his family and bound into pulps, where they enjoyed renewed

popularity. This was one of the first series produced for the pulp magazine *Analogous Moral Plays*. Many of these stories were created by the writers to be little more than transparent morality plays. While not explicitly religious, the publisher felt that these stories could be used to help teach his own strict moral views, including temperance. Ghostwalker was joined by many other completely unremarkable heroes in AMP’s pages until a new hero was introduced by the name of “The Wind.”

The hero, one Frank Jaffertes, was a police detective framed for a crime he did not commit and sent to Joliet Prison. Since AMP’s stories were often about reform, including prison reform, Joliet was made out to be a hell on earth run by corrupt guards, with prisoners who ran illegal liquor, gambling and prostitution rackets safely within the walls of the prison itself. Frank Jaffertes was a man alone, save for a politically appointed reformer Warden named Elijah Sonnenfield. Elijah and Frank were kindred spirits—good, forthright and honest men, something not unusual in the pulps, except for their circumstances. Prisoner and jailer together hatched a plot—Jaffertes’ brilliance, combined with the secrets Sonnenfield knew of the prison, led to the creation of a solitary cell for Jaffertes. On the surface it was to keep the cop safe from the brutal prisoners. Deep within, however, the cell was constructed to allow Jaffertes to leave nightly, riding an electric railcar powered from Joliet itself.

The vehicle sped him into the heart of Chicago, where a renovated warehouse became his secret lair for crime fighting. The plan worked; Frank Jaffertes was forgotten. Meals were slid under his door and he was checked on periodically by guards, but never allowed to mix with the other prisoners. As Frank Jaffertes, he was dead to the world, but as The Wind, he was a pulp hero whose inventions were decades ahead of their time. He moved through the city riding a radio-controlled auto-gyro; the gust of wind by which he became known and named was the dipping of the gyro to drop him or lift him into the sky. In addition, his bulletproof suit and its cooling layer to make the suit’s weight and heat bearable for longer periods of time

together created a pervasive if fictional urban mythology. The foes of this pulp hero were at first ordinary gangsters, corrupt officials, and other underworld figures that led brutal, violent, and short careers. After a few short years, AMP Periodicals, the company's official name, shut down their pulp stories when sales flagged beyond sustainability. They turned to reprinting various religious literature as a service.

AMP however was not quite dead: other publishing companies had discovered a new field—comic books. At first reprinted comic strips, then original characters were published. Then came super-heroes and the medium changed. Hiring back many lost authors, AMP Periodicals began producing comic books. The Wind was reinvigorated, and for a while was one of the few relatively mundane heroes amidst of field of super-powered competitors. That didn't last. The Wind slowly became more mysterious. Several comics showed Frank in his cell, while a split panel showed the Wind taking down criminals elsewhere. The story caught on and became more popular, but the mystery remained. Seeking to add more characters to their stable, Ghostwalker returned as a literal ghost, haunting evildoers of the Plains States. Along the iron road came "The Rider of the Rails" a.k.a Silver Paul, the hammer-wielding, rail-spike driver who seemed ageless, who slew demons and other monsters with silver railroad spikes.

Though the revitalization of these heroes didn't do enough for the AMP owners, they urged their writers to follow the trend. Unlike some in the field, the writers had no willingness to plagiarize other heroes. So they designed their own and somewhat unique creations. The first to follow the pulp trio was Joe Dynamo, the "living battery." Joe's origin was sketchy, as many heroes of the time were, but in time it was revealed he was descendant of Lost Atlantis who'd been called up by Edgar Cayce. The Atlantean hero was tireless and relied on his "dynamotronic belt" to provide powers in excess of his boundless energy. The belt made him strong, tough, and able to turn bullets back on themselves with a powerful "negative charge." Many of these heroes only lasted a few issues before "newer, better" characters were introduced. Interviews with the creators

during the comic culture of the 1980s revealed the secret fates of these characters.

Comic Heroes Go to War.

Before World War II officially began, comic book heroes began their own hostilities first. This was true of AMP's heroes, too. They met the rise of fascism with a ferocious blow to the jaw.

With the All-American Archer as leader, Joe Dynamo, Major Liberty, and the Scottish immigrant and heroine, the Masked Fox, together formed The Red, White, and Blue Brigade. Their origins were covered in the first six issues of *Red, White, and Blue Stories*. Their greatest achievement was stopping the Ratz (for comic books could not yet call them Nazi) plan to produce a line of tanks powered by the brains of death camp victims. Only a single prototype survived—"Herschel," a Tiger Mark 3, AKA the Think Tank. He would return several decades later, ruthlessly hunting down German war criminals with a callous disregard for life.

The war created some enigmas as well. The doorway opened by bombing Nagasaki unleashed the Atomic Specter, and a lowly guard at a death camp was murdered and reborn, becoming the Haunted Man. Both were strange creations of a dark time, beholden to only their own ineffable purposes, and acting as they their own dark wills dictated to further them.

AMP's titles did draw some critical attention when, feeling guilty for following the trend in showing both German Nazi Party members and Japanese soldiers with nigh inhuman forms, they "revealed" that the creatures claiming to be Germans and Japanese were really an alien race seeking to take power on Earth. This almost backfired as many readers weren't ready to see the Germans or Japanese as human. In the end it created a legacy of history that made AMP unique and gave them a ready written excuse to pull their heroes out when the war was entered in earnest by the United States. Once the alien agents were defeated and driven from Earth, the heroes left the soldiers to the fates of war. Regular AMP readers will note that not all the aliens were gone. Agent 8, among others, still remained.

The war years slowed the production of comics, and interest wavered, but AMP maintained a stable sales rate for a time. After the war and recovery, AMP had to face the same problems as most comic book companies and their efforts caused them to introduce some rather poor and even silly choices.

Era of Sidekicks

For nearly a decade, slumping sales led AMP and other comic book companies to try bringing in new readers. One of AMP's plans included adding younger heroes to create a connection to younger readers. Such heroic sidekicks often fulfilled a strange moral position. They spend long nights out with adults who were not their parents. Often they were orphans, and the heroes became their parental stand-in raising them to be moral and just.

Sidekicks often mimicked the capabilities of their adult counterparts and, in some cases, had abilities complimentary to them. It was an innocent time, though later insinuations of inappropriateness touched off a defensive backlash against sidekicks. They were just what they appeared to be: well-adjusted, heroic apprentices to the earlier generation.

Eventually, as times changed, even sidekicks no longer held the younger readers' interest. AMP began introducing other allied heroes super pets and so on—in a grab for more sales and more attention for their heroes. Within the AMP universe, the sudden influx of super animals was not explained until much later in their continuity-crushing "Paradox Maelstrom" AKA "Gray Tuesday" event.

These super-pets were created by alien intelligences that, in an effort to aid the heroes, created familiar and kindred spirits for them. Unfortunately these alien entities didn't fully understand the reality they perceived and its delicate balances. In imbuing pets and animals with powers similar to their masters, they reduced the power of the heroes.

During the Maelstrom, the alien intelligences were forced to inhabit the bodies of the animals they had created. In a heroic action, they sacrificed their existence in two universes to save a singular hero in *Analog Prime* proper. They used their lives and powers

to override a paradox stirred up by time traveler who fell in love with someone in the distant past, allowing a child to be born, and thus ensuring a super-hero's birth. The maelstrom abated, wiping out the aliens' meddling entirely, leaving the super-pets unremembered but not un-mourned.

The next age was driven by a serious loss of profit for comic books as, one by one, they adopted the onerous and restrictive Comics Code Authority. AMP's owners felt this move was appropriate at first until it began to truly stifle the creative edge AMP was trying to put forth in their titles. Not mainstream, already they had decided to cut back their titles and focus on those that were surviving. They used the crossover "Red Monday" event to reduce twenty-five titles to a half-dozen. These surviving six were their main revenue titles but, as the creators were stifled by the CCA, they began to lose interest and the quality of the stories suffered.

This caused even more faltering and they struggled on until the late 70s. Then they shrugged off the Comics Code, following other comics who had begun the trend. However, in a somewhat ironic fit of spite, they revealed that the last decade of reduced violence, dead horror titles, and so on had been the work of a terrible evil mastermind within the *Analog Prime* universe itself.

Dr. Waxworx, a sorcerer who'd been thwarted in an ancient piece of continuity (*Freedom's Four* #30), was revealed to be Dr. Hiram Hamworth, the chief instigator of the "Heroic Code." This set of laws prevented the media from giving time to all but the noblest of heroes, and even required the heroes themselves to behave in a certain manner or be arrested. The heroic code was tied to a dark bit of profane and evil sorcery that required the sacrifice of most of the supernatural beings of the *Analog Prime*. Dr. Waxworx used his wax effigies to control them, bind them, and eventually sacrifice them to enforce this terrible spell.

One hero, the Fighting Flea, finally uncovered his spell and his control of most of U.S. Congress. Smashing the wax museum that held the enchantment resulted in a backlash of energies that ended the era and

TIM KIRK'S



set free for a time many terrible behaviors that had been stifled too long.

New comics creators from an age of irrelevant supers tried to force their way into relevance with violence. In response to this AMP's sales went up, but their owner sought to bring them back to a gentler age by repeated cycles of hiring and firing of creators. Some of the most outspoken creators spun-off their own created properties and tried to win appeal for their creator-owned imprints. These titles were popular but lacked any lasting story appeal, and some of these creators lacked artistic rigor or talent. A few pushed on and managed to make their own

notable titles.

(Ed. note: See *Millennia*.)

Then several new writers were hired and the tired owner threw up his hands in frustration.

He could not get the sales he needed—and remembered from earlier days—with stories that were not so against his very moral code.

Some of the new creators surprised him however by killing off a number of heroes in one fell swoop, leaving room for new heroes, for good or ill, to take up the roles of the older guard.

This is where the game begins.

AMP's Pitch: New Heroes in an Old World. This world has had its share of miseries and mysteries, but the recent loss of its premier super-team leaves room for new heroes. Your player characters—whether they are world-spanning heroes or simply local boys and girls doing good—are needed by the world of *Analog Prime*. The world has some history to be explored, some villains of note, and a few heroes left alive, and they're all able to fill roles of mentors, of foils, friends, and nemeses. It's up to players and Ed. to build anew on the history presented here. It is the ultimate design—your own hero contest, waiting to be won.

Each hero and villain presented below may be used—their deaths can be exaggerated or mistaken as often is done in comic books. Maybe they have had a change of heart and decided to follow a new path, or perhaps they are the parents or the siblings of your own unique heroes.

PITCH: MILLENNIA UNIVERSE

The Millennia Universe

The *Millennia* Universe was an attempt by AMP Comics company to create a more modern universe, one which told a different kind of story. In many ways, the new comic series held a great deal of similarity to their earliest pulps. Towards the 90s they hired some creators, notably Samson "Sam" Leigh, Kirbert "Kirby" Fields, and other "hot" writers to create their stories. The first issues were lauded for their unique approach—the lack of costumes, the watercolor stylized art rather than the crisp, clean digital "4-color" style of other comic companies. The popularity of the titles was never as huge as the classic *Analog Prime*, but they had a strong and devoted fan following.

The first issue of every title began with the same scene: Cloaked in the dark, a single man usurped control of every television, every radio frequency, and every live transmission

across the world. "With these words I bring you warning! Soon the cradle of earth will welcome new children—born of its womb, nourished by its sun and soil. They will be your sons, and your daughters, but they will be more than mere humans. They will walk across the world like gods, but they are still your children. You are forewarned." A burst of static later and all returned to normal.

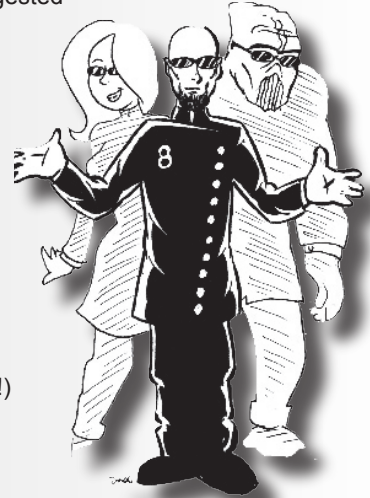
Or so it seemed. A few broadcasters, laughing off the interruption, discovered two days later that they had lost their transmitters, which had vanished in an eye blink without a single witness. Over the next year, the prophetic warning would reveal itself as true, as one by one the Sleepers Awakened—and *Homo sapiens metasapiens* was revealed. The man was nicknamed the Guardian for his warning, but a darker truth remained in his hidden identity and his tangled intrigues amongst those with metasapien traits.

In the early issues the "Awakened" hid, trying to maintain the secrets of their powers and lead ordinary lives. However, the price of their powers draws them together to fight or to ally as the first battle lines were drawn between those siding with the just and the moral use of their gifts, and those who sought only their own power and glory.

An A-Z of the AMP Analog Prime Universe

Agent 8

Agent 8 is one of the shape-shifting aliens that invaded sometime shortly after World War I. Working to control certain governments, they seem to have mostly found pleasure in serving the all-too-human driven rise of fascism. Agent 8 seemingly hasn't aged and has never revealed his or her true form. Primarily, he has shown himself as a human male of Caucasian appearance. In a few issues, his shadow revealed an alien visage that suggested he possessed a tail. In the early 80s, a minor super-team managed to convince Agent 8 to assist them in thwarting a new invasion of his people. His long-term assignment became permanent exile as he accepted his place beside humanity. Agent 8 first appeared in *Red, White, and Blue Stories #29*.



Agent 8

DRIVE	Megalomania (Modern Age: Guilt)
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Ordinary!
PROWESS	Exceptional (Modern Age: Ordinary!)
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Agent 8 is a shape-shifter capable of assuming a variety of forms that differ a great deal from his normal one. Varying size to as large as a rhinoceros, or something as small as a mouse.

In addition to Earth animals and creatures he has been known to assume the shapes of a variety of alien creatures as well.

Shape shifting:

Attack: Exceptional !

Defense: Exceptional !

Movement: Ordinary

Manipulation: Ordinary !

Using Agent 8: Before the Modern Age, Agent 8 was a villain whose sole focus was the conquering of the world for his people. He used any means to achieve that end, short of torture (not honorable among his people). Agent 8 possessed access to several pieces of alien technology, but rarely uses them as they would blow his cover—including a small interstellar scout craft that was destroyed when he helped repel his own people and threw in with humanity. As a Villain, Agent 8 is a master of deception, spinning lies and spreading false information, even assuming multiple villainous identities to fulfill his goals.

As a Modern Age Hero, he is best used as a mentor who truly empathizes with humanity and feels quite guilty at the harm he has caused over the years. He has spent a great deal of time, money, and effort to make amends, and may even provide money for a new heroic team or train younger heroes himself. Old habits die hard, though, and he is unlikely to reveal his true identity unless he is assured of their absolute trust.

All-American Archer—Jonni Horn

There have been three All-American Archers over the decades. The first was an Olympic-level archer (Gold in 1920) who fought saboteurs in later Olympic games while trying to have his sport re-introduced. His story was shown in flashback. When Ratz (Nazi) terror struck home, he departed overseas before the U.S. joined the war, seeking to aid our common allies. The All-American hid his identity (Jonathon Hornsby) but not his loyalty. He heroically assisted the French underground and Polish refugees against the Ratz (Nazi) war machine.

The second All-American Archer (Adrian Hornsby) was introduced as a teen and acted in a more traditional super-hero role until the early 1990s, when his aging body finally gave out as he was rescuing a new group of heroes, the Redeemers, from a U.S. reprogramming camp. They followed his directions, taking his high-tech van and carrying his bow to his middle-aged son, who wanted nothing to do with the heroic life. Instead Jonni, his granddaughter, ran off with the Redeemers, taking up the bow and costume.

All-American Archers I and II were both athletic men of average height with lean builds and dark hair. Both wore a red, white and blue costume that covered them head to toe. The current All-American Archer wears a costume similar to the original, but with a ram's head cowl leaving her mouth and hair uncovered. Jonni has a noticeable but not quite identifiable accent. All-American Archer I appeared in *Red, White and Blue Stories #4*, All-American Archer II appeared in his self-named title, and All-American Archer III debuted in *Redeemers #6*.

All-American Archer 1 (Adrian Hornsby)

DRIVE	Guardianship
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	The All-American Archer I possessed no supernatural powers of any form. However he was an Olympic level archer.

Archery (superskill): Spectacular.

All-American Archer 2 (John Hornsby)**DRIVE** Guardianship**MIGHT** Exceptional**RESILIENCE** Exceptional**PROWESS** Ordinary**DEFTNESS** Spectacular**BRAINS** Exceptional**RESOLVE** Spectacular**KNOWN POWERS** The All-American Archer II possessed no supernatural powers of any form. However he was an Olympic level archer.**Archery** (superskill): Spectacular.

In addition to this he occasionally used specialized arrows. With a variety of superhuman effects.

Trick Arrows*Attack:* Ordinary !*Defense:* Ordinary !*Movement:* Ordinary !*Manipulate:* Exceptional**All-American Archer 3** (Jonni Horn)**DRIVE** Spirit of Adventure**MIGHT** Ordinary**RESILIENCE** Ordinary**PROWESS** Ordinary**DEFTNESS** Spectacular**BRAINS** Exceptional**RESOLVE** Exceptional**KNOWN POWERS** The All-American Archer III possessed no supernatural powers of any form. However he was an Olympic level archer.**Archery** (superskill): Ordinary !

Using All-American Archer(s): The Archers represent an evolution of patriotic heroes from America, a force which represent freedom, liberty, and justice, the whole foundation of what an ideal America should be. The All-American Archer should represents the best ideals, but not necessarily only the interests of the United States. The slight multi-national nature of the most

recent incarnation (having both U.S. and Canadian citizenship by birth) means she isn't just for one America. The All-American Archers can be on the wrong side, but should always realize their error and quickly change to the right side, even if that goes against the military or political interests of their homelands. They should represent the good things of America—the sometimes ignorant, often honest, but defiantly free, loyal, and righteous-seeking spirit of an American.

Antaeus

Antaeus appeared in Midas City attempting to extort money from the municipal government by threatening to destroy a variety of landmarks about the city with his superhuman abilities. Antaeus quickly learned why other villains won't team up with him, as his lack of intelligence and poor planning led him to face Midas City's mightiest citizen, Atlas. Antaeus escaped from the MESA twice since and been routinely captured and returned. Antaeus dresses in a short-sleeved brown costume with a stylized "A" on his belt and iron bracers around his wrists. He wears over-sized steel-toe boots and short-cropped brown hair. First Appearance: *The Mighty* #20.



Antaeus

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Spectacular !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Ordinary

KNOWN POWERS Antaeus is one of the strongest villains known, capable of lifting 80 to 90 tons with little effort, and his skin is able to withstand artillery fire. Antaeus, however, must be in contact with the Earth (concrete, streets, dirt, grass all count) in order to stay that strong. If he isn't in contact with the Earth, his strength drops one rank a round until its merely Exceptional.

His resilience also drops but it levels out at Ordinary.

Stress Triggers: Antaeus is not too bright; he suffers stress on every action requiring him to do more than basic thinking. He can manage most of the time, but it isn't easy.

Hydrophobia: Antaeus is also deathly afraid of large amounts of water and will tend to panic if exposed to a steady rain or reasonable puddle. Stress Event: Panic.

Using Antaeus: Antaeus is a credible threat physically, but while he can initiate decent plans, he is unlikely to have thought all the way through, and so can be thwarted quite easily due to this weakness. In a game, he may be a powerful muscle for an intelligent villain, especially if all they need is massive damage or a distraction. Antaeus can come off as quite humorous as he's strong, tough, not too bright, and easily flustered. As a more serious foe he is quite violent and mean, but not overtly cruel. Antaeus is unlikely to reform and be useful as a foil or hero, but he may try it on a lark.

Armada—Landon Wollingstone

Originally a World War II hero called the Legionnaire, he possessed the ability to duplicate himself to become a one-man legion. He vanished until the recent era, where he claims to have been in suspended animation. His attempts at revitalizing his heroic image failed repeatedly due to a terrible run of luck. His fear of being marginalized had him turn his talents to criminal ends, and he returned as Armada, with a cybernetic suit of powered armor that boosted his powers so that every duplicate he created also possessed a suit of high-tech armor. As the Legionnaire he wore a blue costume with an upturned collar with white stars on his shoulders. His mask covered all except his mouth and nose. First Appearance: *Team Up Tales #4*: Major Liberty and the Legendary Legionnaire (As Legionnaire), *Team Up Tales #180*: *Skydancer and Mongoose*.

Armada (Landon Wollingstone)

DRIVE Greed

MIGHT Exceptional

RESILIENCE Exceptional

PROWESS Ordinary

DEFTNESS Ordinary

BRAINS Ordinary

RESOLVE Ordinary

KNOWN As Armada, Landon can create duplicates of himself.

POWERS Though not as numerous as they once were the armor enhances their strength and makes the two dozen or so he can create an impressive force.

Duplication: Exceptional.

Cybernetic Armor

Attack: Ordinary !

Defense: Ordinary !

Movement: Ordinary !

Manipulation: None.

Using Armada: To represent Landon during his heroic days simply change his Drive to Community, decrease his Might and Resilience, and drop his armor; in return for those minor losses in power he becomes much more proficient with his inborn Duplication, ranked at Exceptional ! (and he was capable of creating a few hundred duplicates.)

Atomic Specter

A ghostly shadow with glowing eyes, the Atomic Specter is a sort of observer of great cataclysmic events, likely to show up hovering and watching like a banshee of old. The Atomic Specter rarely speaks and its few words have always fallen as dire warnings of impending doom. In the early years, he was shown as solid human figure with a glowing green cape and matching eyes. Modern portrayals have him much more stretched and inhuman looking. Atomic Specter appeared first in *Tombs of Tomorrow #8*.

Atomic Specter

DRIVE	Varies
MIGHT	Ordinary !
RESILIENCE	Ordinary !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary !
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Spectacular *
KNOWN POWERS	The Atomic Specter is a wraith-like figure whose powers are for the most part unknown.

Pass through openings:

Exceptional ! His ability to move around barriers so long as there is at least a tenth of an inch of space to move through.

He has Immunity to Radiation:

Sense Death: Exceptional !

Radiation Control: Ordinary ! The Atomic Specter could emit radiation to lethal levels, which allowed him to fire blasts that incinerated humans, as well as simply caressing them and causing them to die. He has twice been shown to absorb radiation from a dying person (and reversed the damage it caused).

Flight: Exceptional

Using the Atomic Specter: The Atomic Specter is an omen and very little purpose beyond simply experiencing an event. He's shown moments of kindness and cold-hearted brutality with equal abandon. The Atomic Specter is more like a force than a person; he can cause harm and may need to be stopped or he can be sought for aid against a more terrible force. Getting his attention isn't easy, but it is possible. The few words he has to say will likely be dire in any event.

Baron Wulf—Heinrich Wulf

The Baron comes from an undisclosed European country. He is believed to be German, descended from a long line of noble-blooded ancestors. The Baron was one of the earliest super-villains, and maintained his career into the 50s. He has disappeared in recent years. Baron Wulf first appeared in *Red, White and Blue Stories #44*.

Baron Wulf (Heinrich Wulf)

DRIVE Megalomania

MIGHT Ordinary !

RESILIENCE Ordinary !

PROWESS Exceptional

DEFTNESS Exceptional

BRAINS Exceptional

RESOLVE Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS Baron Wulf, in addition to his superhuman physical abilities, was able to regenerate from wounds quite rapidly.

Regeneration: Exceptional !

During his career, he produced a number of devices that aided him in his plans, from a robot army to the Omni-cannon series. He is capable of developing such devices and may have those at hand.

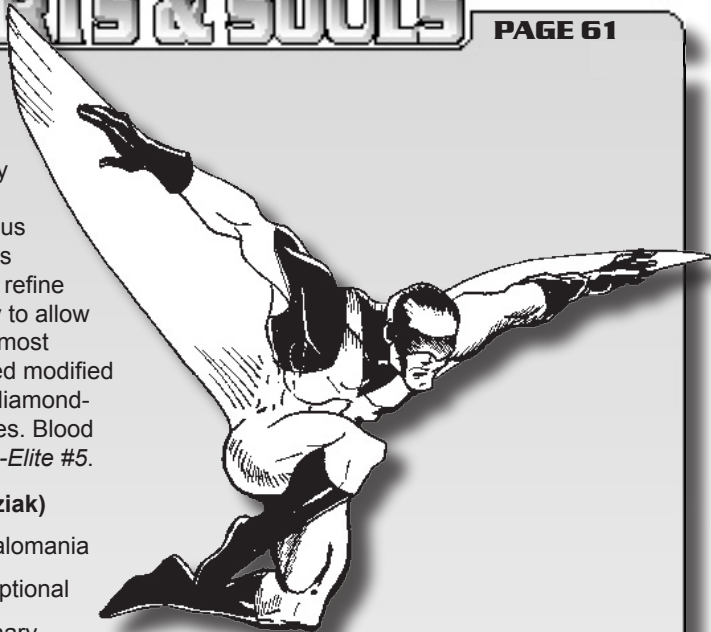
Appearance: A blond man with square jaw and blue eyes. Baron Wolf originally appeared in a caped costume that was gray, with a dark-blue wolf rampant on the chest. Later it became a subtler dark gray with a stylized wolf's head and a simple mask covering only his eyes.

Using Baron Wulf: Baron Wulf is out for putting himself in charge. He feels he can do a better job than elected officials or anyone else. He believes in his own superiority to the extent that he will fight to put himself into any position of command. Baron Wulf truly does desire to "help" people and tends to err on the compassionate side for a villain of his caliber. He'll extort, threaten, kidnap, but only in extreme circumstances will he kill. Baron Wulf could potentially reform and act as a hero, or he could continue his attempts to rule the world through his devious technology and superhuman capabilities. Baron Wulf is rarely surprised by his foes. In some instances, Baron Wulf is more than willing to help fight enemies of humanity.

Baron Wulf is not particularly suited to a foil, as he tends to be rather good at making himself the center of attention.

Blood Raptor—Erick Wolziak

Originally he was called simply Blood-Wing, but the name didn't last long, and neither did his various flight-based gimmicks. This vicious criminal did, however, continue to refine his flight suit—improving its ability to allow him to inflict injury on the fly. The most recent version includes a feathered modified glider-wing under each arm with diamond-hard mono-molecular cutting edges. Blood Raptor first appeared in *Guardian-Elite #5*.



Blood Raptor (Erick Wolziak)

DRIVE	Megalomania
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary !
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Blood Raptor's flight suit is his only power.

In addition to raising his agility due to its specialized anti-gravity units, it allows him to fly at high speeds and make vicious attacks with the wings' edges.

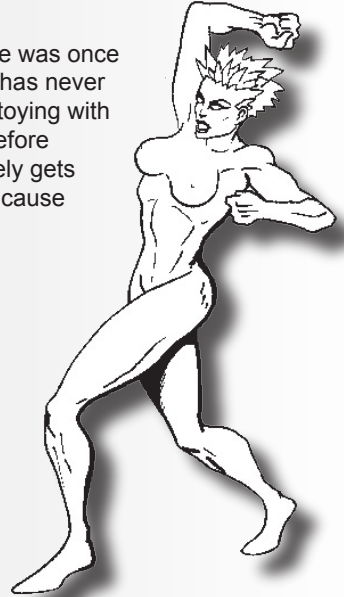
Flight Suit

Attack: Spectacular
Defense: Spectacular
Movement: Spectacular
Manipulation: None

Using Blood Raptor: Blood Raptor is a cruel man whose only interests seem to be debased violence and theft. He's more likely to be found alone or with a quickly gathered and cowed gang of rough street hoods or gang members serving as light artillery when needed. Blood Raptor is not a joiner in any sense and is unlikely to work with anyone he can't bully.

Boreal

Like a living ice sculpture, Boreal is hauntingly beautiful. She was once human in form, but now seems to be made of glowing ice. She has never had much warmth and is a cold vicious killer who takes glee in toying with her enemies. Boreal usually appears to cause general havoc before vanishing back to her Arctic lair. Her power is such that she rarely gets involved in large plots, as she doesn't need the aid of others to cause massive damage. First Appearance: *Guardian-Elite #78*.



Boreal

DRIVE	Megalomania
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Ordinary !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Spectacular
KNOWN POWERS	Boreal is capable of generating cold powerful enough to freeze solid everyone in an entire building.

Cold Generation: Exceptional !

Armor: Exceptional ! rank
(Due to a body of ice)

Levitation: Ordinary

Teleport: Ordinary !
(several hundred miles per hop)

Using Boreal: Boreal is a tried and true villain, more interested in her own aims, goals, and pleasures than in anyone else's. She has, from time to time, joined teams whose goals are the same as hers, at least for a while, but while she is made of ice, her temper is quicksilver and hot, and so she rarely lasts long among any group's numbers. Boreal is unlikely to reform for any reason, she simply is too capricious and selfish.

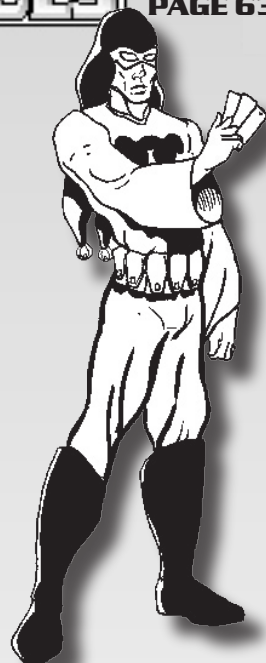
Calvary City

The primary location detailed in *Calvary City Chronicles*, it was first used for the short-lived title "The Courageous Crusaders." When the title failed to produce significant sales, it was ended and the final fate of the Crusaders has not yet been revealed. Landmarks include the Calvary City Library and the Crusader Memorial Park.

Using Cavalry City: Cavalry City would be a wonderful setting for a new super team, or an old one coming out of retirement. The weight of angst over the Crusaders will be something they must face first, but in time they may become as well known as their now-deceased predecessors.

Cardsharp—Roland Bosworth II

Cardsharp is a recent villain who appeared in mid-90s. Cardsharp was a dealer-turned-casino owner who lost his gaming license for rigging games. Turning to a life of crime to finance his already lavish lifestyle, he attempted to cheat at other gaming tables. When he was caught he used the cards to discourage pursuers. He now uses a variety of trick cards and a keen sleight-of-hand combined with exquisite aim to rob, cheat, harass, and “play the cards” of life. Cardsharp appeared in *Fighting Flea* #32.



Cardsharp (Roland Bosworth II)

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Spectacular
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Card-flinging: (superskill) Ordinary ! Ability to throw cards with lethal effects.

Trick Deck: Cardsharp’s trick cards change as needed he has shown diamond-edged cards to cut cables, explosive cards, and gas-emitting cards.

Attack: Ordinary !
Defense: Ordinary
Movement: Spectacular
 (Pinning someone to the wall)
Manipulation: None

Using Cardsharp: Cardsharp is a tough-talking criminal who will most likely run for the hills if things go against his plans. He is a capable plotter and will use others if they will work for his purposes. He prefers, however, to use non-powered thugs, as it tends to draw less heroes out of the woodwork. He isn’t as tough as he likes to appear, and has been known to surrender when completely out of his league. He’s not really out to hurt anyone as a criminal—just make a quick buck from casinos and the game that he calls “legalized” thievery.

Centrifugitive—Joey Cantallino

Joey Cantallino, a convicted criminal, was offered a lighter sentence if he was willing to participate in a military-funded study of G-forces on the human body. During the test, however, Joey Cantallino sabotaged the experimental G-force impeder, resulting in an explosion that killed the military advisors and the development team, but imbued him with a superhuman power—the ability to spin at super speeds. Fleeing from the laboratory, he has since been a wanted fugitive. He first appeared as Joey Cantallino in *Guardian-Elite #89* as a bank-robber, shown as origin story as a crossover backup in *Guardian-Elite #201*, *Freedom Eagle #3*, and *Masked Fox Adventures #340*.



Centrifugitive (Joey Cantallino)

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Ordinary

KNOWN POWERS

Spinning: Centrifugitive's powers derive from his ability to spin at high speeds in addition to being able to move while spinning. He can perform a number of devastating attacks and effects involving fierce wind.

Attack: Ordinary !
(hammering blows)
Defense: Ordinary !
(High speed dodge)
Movement: Exceptional !
(Hurricane sprint)
Manipulation: Ordinary !
(Lifting whirlwind)

Using Centrifugitive: Centrifugitive is your typical super powered hood. He doesn't have much in the way of long-term goals other than to get rich, and isn't above petty theft and heists in order to get that way. He is all right with planning, but he will never be a mastermind. His need for contact with the ground limits him (he has to spin like a top essentially).

Commander Crustacean—Dr. Jorgcut Crabe

Dr. Crabe was a well-known oceanographer and expert on marine life, most notably crustaceans. However, his penchant for robbing sunken ships for his own financial gain got him in trouble and, after murdering a more high-minded assistant, he was sent to prison until he was in his sixties. He is now a frail old man, paralyzed from the waist down. Seeking to fund his lifestyle outside of prison he has returned to crime, this time as a super-villain who commands an army of crustaceans. He uses specialized technology, robot crustaceans, his own specialized submarine, and various mutated marine creatures to threaten society for imprisoning him, as well as to make a fortune. Commander Crustacean now relies on a powerful crab-like mini-vehicle to get around, using it to challenge his foes. It doesn't pay to underestimate the elderly doctor. First Appearance: *Calvary City Chronicles #1*.

Commander Crustacean (Dr Jorgcut Crabe)

DRIVE	Revenge
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Ordinary !
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Exceptional

KNOWN POWERS

Commander Crustacean's powers all derive either from his various mutant, cyborg, and robotic shellfish minions, or his technological devices.

He does wear a crab-like humanoid battlesuit, which is designed to make up for his age and puts him on par with most super-humans.

CRAB SUIT

Might: Ordinary !

Deftness: Exceptional

Resilience: Ordinary !

The CRAB suit also has a set of installed gear that give it a variety of powers.

Attack: Spectacular
(Pincers, Electroblasters)

Defense: Ordinary !
(armored carapace)

Movement: Ordinary !
(on land and underwater)

Manipulation: Ordinary !

Stress Trigger: Enfeebled—any action that requires Commander Crustacean to utilize his own physical attributes causes stress. If he takes too much stress it may trigger either a heart attack or stroke.

Using Commander Crustacean: Commander Crustacean is best used as a plotting villain. His age and infirmity make rushed actions dangerous, so he takes time to do it right.

Cobra-King—Paul Pynchot

Cobra King just appeared out of nowhere. With a desire to make it big, he set his sights on his primary adversary—as he saw it—the hero known as Mongoose, though they had never previously met. Cobra-King delights in using his strength, speed, and stretchable elastic body to battle his foes. He seems to be interested primarily in personal power and glory. Cobra King wears an odd hood affair that gives him the appearance of a cobra. First Appearance: *Team Up Tales #189: Mongoose and Skydancer*.



Cobra-King (Paul Pynchot)

DRIVE	Hatred
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Exceptional !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional !
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	

Stretching: The Cobra King can stretch and contort his body almost as if it were made of rubber. His exact range of elasticity is unknown, but he can shape his body in innumerable ways. He cannot mimic complex objects, nor alter his coloration.

Attack: Exceptional

Defense: Exceptional !

Movement: Ordinary !

Manipulation: None

Stinger: The Cobra King uses a dart pistol, which is loaded with cobra toxin. A single dart isn't lethal; multiple darts can be. Exceptional

Using the Cobra-King: The Cobra-King is a villain pushed by emotions, notably hatred for a foe, when he first appeared this was Mongoose, but it could be any hero, it's not always particularly rational. He is not humorous in spite of the way many elastic characters are presented, instead he is frightening slithering everywhere at once and viciously serpentine figure who will relentlessly keep coming to try and take down the person of his hatred. He is simply unsuitable for heroic uses.

Cyclonatron—Jon Vassily

Cyclonatron was a powerful whirlwind-generating two-bit thug. While he delighted in using his powers to smash, destroy, and show up heroes, he didn't kill often, as it wasn't as much fun as shaming heroes. He was interred in a military prison and released by a super-team to aid them in their battle against Infernus and his giant ant army. The super-team watched as the exposure from Infernus' radioactive blasts evolved Cyclonatron and transformed him into a living storm. Cyclonatron appeared in *Guardian-Elite #11* and *The Forgotten #3* (where he became Tempest the Living Storm).

Cyclonatron (Jon Vassily)

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Spectacular
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Whirlwind generation: Cyclonatron could generate whirlwinds, including one that allowed him to fly.

Attack: Ordinary !

Defense: Exceptional !

Movement: Ordinary !

Manipulation: Ordinary

Using Cyclonatron: Jon as Cyclonatron could have an ethical change and turn into a hero. His style is suitable to heroism if he weren't such a money-grubbing, greedy, dirtbag. As a villain he is best used as a smarter-than-average thug—even a lieutenant in charge of a squad of lesser thugs, though he does have a tendency to cut and run when things get too tough. He's smart, active villain though watching and adapting to situations and often able to out perform even relatively more powerful heroes because of his willingness to think things through.

Tempest the Living Storm

DRIVE	Guilt
MIGHT	Exceptional !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary !
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional

KNOWN POWERS **Storm Cloud Form:** Tempest the Living Storm is a cloud that vaguely resembles a human form, he is immune to kinetic attacks, fire, and electricity.

Attacks: Exceptional !
 (Lightning bolts, Wind gust)
Defense: Exceptional !
 (Cloud like body)
Movement: Ordinary !
 (Flight, Flash floods)
Manipulation: Ordinary !
 (Wind)

Using Tempest: Jon, once he becomes Tempest is no longer human, and his concerns are often the greater damage of the environment by weather controllers. Though he does remember being human, it is in a vague, dream-like way. He does feel bad for the damage he caused, and so seeks to make amends in his own way. In most ways Tempest would be a hero, except that his targets are not necessarily villains, but anyone who over uses weather-based powers and impacts the environment. He smashed HAARP for unknown reasons, though this only fueled conspiracy theories of it being a weather-control device. He might be goaded into returning to more criminal pursuits, but it would take extreme circumstances.

Dagger Diamond

This female crime-lord, despite the name, is often one of the more pleasant criminal sorts. She doesn't consider herself a "mob" boss, but a businesswoman who just occasionally bends (or ignores) laws she's doesn't like. She was a member of the Sisterhood but was removed from their organization when she refused to carry out an assignment because she felt it wasn't worthy of her. Dagger dresses mostly in black clothing cut to her body and carries a number of lethal weapons secreted about her. Despite her name, none of them are daggers nor made of diamond. First Appearance: *Masked Fox Adventures #350*.

Dagger Diamond

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Spectacular
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Dagger Diamond has no known superhuman powers. She is, however, a high-class martial artist and an expert at arms.

Attack: Spectacular
Defense: Spectacular

She may have mission or enemy-specific weapons and it should be noted her intellect gives her a significant edge in regards to planning any criminal acts, and running her "empire."

Using Dagger Diamond: The best way to utilize Ms. Diamond is to not use her, she is best as a behind-the-scenes mover and shaker, and fully capable of staying that way. She should only show up to taunt heroes who are close, who challenge her at times when they have absolutely no way to catch her or no way to prove it is her. It is quite possible that any given seemingly random criminal act has a very distant and unprovable connection to the lovely Ms. Diamond. A hero in his or her late twenties or early thirties with wealth or social ties may end up in Ms. Diamond's socialite world. She is a beautiful woman in her mid-twenties who has to keep up appearances, after all.

Doc Radiant—Wallace Hanover

Doctor Wallace Hanover was a brilliant physicist dedicated to releasing energy stored in molecular components of non-decaying materials. Utilizing technology he pioneered, he finally unlocked the full power of a penny—the energy surge acted like a bomb and nearly killed him and damaged his lab. It took a year to rebuild. Criminals, seeking a cheap efficient bomb that could easily bypass security measures, invaded his lab and found him working late. Fearful of the damage they could do, he fought back and his device again exploded, destroying the criminals and transforming Dr. Hanover into a living energy field. First appearance: *Stunning Science Fiction Stories* #3.

Doc Radiant (Wallace Hannover)

DRIVE Guardianship

MIGHT Ordinary!

RESILIENCE Exceptional

PROWESS Spectacular

DEFTNESS Ordinary

BRAINS Ordinary !

RESOLVE Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS Doc Radiant's powers are based on his ability to **disintegrate** atomic bonds, and absorb or expel the energy of a given object.

Doc Radiant can also **absorb** ambient energies up to lethal levels of radiation. In addition to this he has been shown to be able to temporarily mimic powers of other heroes by disintegrating objects exposed to their powers.

Attack: Spectacular !

(Disintegrate)

Defense: Exceptional !

(Absorb Energy)

Movement: None

Manipulation: Exceptional !

(Mimic Powers)

Using Doc Radiant: Doctor Radiant is ideal as a powerful hero. He may also be used as a non-player character to support PC heroes, but this is best done sparingly. His scientific knowledge gives him many topics he might be consulted on by heroes and/or other NPCs. In general he is a good ally to use if the player heroes have made his acquaintance. He isn't suitable for a villain except in short term—maybe driven by strange or alien energies he's absorbed.

Dr. Emmerich Thistle

Dr. Emmerich was a chemist who came into the employ of a Mafia don in Chicago, but he didn't let that stop him from rising to control the "little" organization. Thistle was a recurring foe of the Wind. Strangely, though, the two never met. Thistle operated from the shadows, using his chemistry knowledge to create liquor as well as a variety of fiendish plots—making his gin addictive was one such plot of the 4-color era. Dr. Thistle appeared to have died three different times but always returned. First Appearance: *Analogous Moral Plays Presents #4*.

Dr. Thistle (Emmerich Thistle)

DRIVE	Megalomania
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	None.

Dr. Thistle was your typical pulp mastermind. He worked behind lackeys and layers upon layers of deception.

He might have access to chemical-based weaponry or devices as his current plots permits.

Using Dr. Thistle: He works best during the earlier pulp era, but might manage to stay around to the modern age utilizing his chemical knowledge. One thing to note he is like many comic book mob bosses—a vain criminal who wants those who oppose him to know who they face rather than stay completely anonymous. He often leaves a particular calling card—a bit of thistle down—in an envelope at the scenes of crimes.

Dr. Decepto—Henry Desmond

Dr. Decepto was a premier villain in the early AMP titles; he used a variety of secret identities, all with the title of Doctor. Among those names: Dr. Diabolicus, Dr. Deadly, Dr. Misery, and Dr. Mysterion. The malicious doctor repeatedly erred on the side of criminal actions that needed a mastermind, and he was sadly not up to par, though in many guises he came quite close to succeeding at his evil plans. Later, Dr. Decepto was revealed to have multiple personalities, some more effective than others. Each personality controls a different, and of course evil, host of abilities—he can wield magic through dark rituals or technology through esoteric knowledge among a myriad of narrower fields of ability. First Appearance: *Guardian Elite #2* (as Dr. Misery).

Dr. Decepto (Henry Desmond)

DRIVE	Megalomania
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Ordinary
KNOWN POWERS	Virtually any, although limited to only Ordinary !

Dr. Decepto should have a singular set of powers obtained to drive forward one of his mad schemes.

Using Dr. Decepto: Anytime you want a disposable villain who's a bit bright but not fundamentally a hard hitter, you could throw in one of the many varied personae adopted by Dr. Decepto. His multiple personalities work as the comic book-style personality disorder and not the real world one. Each personality should have an entirely different costume, name, style, and so on.

Elite Tower

The Guardian-Elite's home-base, located just off the coast of Seattle, was originally a lighthouse but after being destroyed, was re-built as state-of-the-art facility for super-humans. The building now is a regular ferry stop, since the lower levels act as a Guardian-Elite museum, carefully maintained by John Gurney. First Appearance: *Guardian-Elite #1* (Lighthouse), *Guardian-Elite #100* as Elite Tower.

Known Powers: The Elite Tower is a massive tower-like fortress, with numerous high-powered defenses designed to keep people out—except at four times at least. The automated system can dish out attacks that do up to Exceptional ! Damage. The walls and doors are capable of withstanding Exceptional ! Attacks themselves,

Using Elite Tower: The Tower may have the secret to defeating a villain. The Tower might also be given to a new set of heroes of the Guardian's power level and they must deal with all its dusty corners, and often unusual and surprising secrets.

Flea—Rick Geddes

The Flea joins Dr. Radiant and the Masked Fox as one of the few surviving super-heroes to appear in regular titles. The Flea is Rick Geddes, formerly a lab employee who took care of the animals at Industrial Dynamics, Inc. (IDI). While testing lab animals was against the law, some unscrupulous employees found a way to skirt the regulations—in this case engineering a flea that was “inadvertently” exposed to a retroviral concoction and then found its way amongst the animals. Rick used a powerful anti-flea shampoo in order to try and get rid of the fleas. Reaction to the toxin triggered the retrovirus and the flea grew to enormous size. Since dealing with large unruly animals was part of his job, Rick attempted to stop the massive insect. In the process of driving it off he was exposed to massive amounts of the virus in its body, and it passed on its more useful traits by infecting Rick before itself dying from the poison. Rick lost his job when that IDI plant was shut down, but he’d found a new career as the “Fighting Flea.” Rick currently splits his time between working at the local animal shelter and his costumed adventures. First appearance: *Fighting Flea # 1*.



The Fighting Flea (Rick Geddes)

DRIVE Spirit of Adventure

MIGHT Ordinary !

RESILIENCE Exceptional !

PROWESS Ordinary

DEFTNESS Spectacular

BRAINS Exceptional

RESOLVE Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS The Flea is capable of powerful leaps which allow him to cover vast distances. Combined with his natural nimbleness, this allows him to make it through a city with ease. Other than that, the Flea has no known other powers besides his enhanced capabilities above.

Leaping: Exceptional !

Using the Flea; The Flea is a happy-go-lucky hero. He’s had his bad breaks, and accepts them when they come, but works hard to fight his way through them and face them with a smile on his face. He is best used as a hero of the kind who’ll throw in his lot to help out anyone, but beware of betraying his ethics! He’s got a mean left hook.

Gideon Leaf

A wealthy man known for his eccentricities, Gideon Leaf was an industrialist who believed in a more primitive and elegant time, when swords were the weapons of a man of power. Gideon Leaf claims to be the descendant of Morgan Le Fay and Mordred. Utilizing his fortune, he has financed a number of super-villains and funded innumerable plots aimed at reverting the world to a more primitive time. Gideon is an expert with all forms of swords and quite skilled with other weapons of antiquity. First Appearance: *Guardian-Elite #113* (at Mayoral reception).

Gideon Leaf

DRIVE	Megalomania
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Spectacular
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	None. Gideon is a modern-era businessman with a tremendous number of resources at his disposal.

He does sometimes arm himself with a perfectly balanced epee.

Using Gideon: Gideon is a planner and a plotter, with a personal desire to show off his mastered skills of fencing and melee combat. He is likely to only be revealed after a long build-up of some grand plan to put him in power, and in such a way that skills, not technology, matter. Gideon loves the world, and might turn his vast resources on anyone who threatens the world that would damage it, or unduly harm its citizens. He doesn't see removing their technology as harm.

Hauptmann Ehre—Maximilian Ritter

“Captain Glory” was one of the primary foes of the Red, White, and Blue Brigade during the war. Hauptmann Ehre was created as the ultimate *ubermensch* of the Reich. Tall, blond, blue-eyed, with a cleft chin, he had the ability to fly and ignore bullets, among other typical caped-hero abilities. Hauptmann Ehre was believed to have been killed in Poland late in the war. The Captain was created by a series of exposures to chemical and radiological material; although the experiment was repeated, no other *ubermensch* were successfully created. Hauptmann Ehre first appeared in *Red, White, and Blue Stories #4*.

Hauptmann Ehre (Maxamillian Ritter)

DRIVE	Guardianship
MIGHT	Ordinary !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Spectacular
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Flight: Ordinary ! Speeds

Force Beams: Spectacular (from his eyes)

Using Hauptmann Ehre: “Captain Glory” is a Nazi *ubermensch* as much as possible a noble German. During WWII, he stands for many things—though he often fights the Allied powers on behalf of the Axis, he is far from a fervent supporter of Nazism, even if he is their ultimate deluded self-ideal. He loves and defends the German people, and his heart struggles with the plight of the Jews. A well-spoken hero could make the Captain move against his own military before the war’s end during a WWII era game.

His superiors have to work hard to hide the effects of death camps, and in some ways Hauptmann Ehre lies to himself about what is going on. Hauptmann is easy to turn into a hero, and he’s a sympathetic villain at worst. He is, however, on the wrong side.

Haunted Man

A guard of singular and immeasurable cruelty who walked the ground about a Ratzl death camp, he was found alone one night and strangled by another guard. When the Jewish prisoners were blamed and murdered, a terrible rift opened. The souls of all the wronged, Jew and gentile, who'd died on that spot flowed into the dead body. Awakening, he was not alone, and, tormented by the endless voices and pain, the guard changed. Haunted by all those spirits, he drifted across the camp. Each guard who fell under his shadow died screaming before he drifted on. The Haunted Man is known speak with cryptic words in a dozen different voices. He appears in plain clothes, unkempt and unshaven, surrounded by a spectral aura of spirits drifting in and out of focus. Unlike the Atomic Specter, the Haunted Man does get involved. He often warns, directs, and shapes events, though what he does never are entirely as they seem. The Haunted Man directed the Flea to Dr. Waxworx. He also informed the Forgotten of the things they had left undone as they awoke in the morgue. Recently, he appeared at the site of the Guardian-Elite's memorial. His words, "It is time," drifted across the crowd. First Appearance: *Tombs of Tomorrow #1*.

Haunted Man

Drive: Guilt

Haunted Man's powers and capabilities are not fixed. He seems to be a capable of anything, given that the spirits are wholly beyond measure and connected to greater powers, his interaction within anyone or anything tends to be the Editor's fiat.

Using Haunted Man: The Haunted Man is best used as an enigma. Though capable of anything, he is also tied to powers beyond mere mortals, and thus his motives are often alien and unfathomable to mortal heroes.

Infernus—Professor Talbot Pain

Formerly, Professor Talbot Pain was a noted biochemical and radiological engineer. Seeking to survive the nuclear apocalypse he was certain would eventually arrive, he felt a need to protect himself and an earnest if misguided desire to see humanity survive no matter what the cost. He perpetuated several mad schemes before joining the Ascendants of the 8th Day—a super-villain team. Lending his genius to their causes, he was believed slain when the Ascendants destroyed a factory on the edge of Seattle, along with their enemies, the Guardian-Elite. He was later revealed to have survived by transferring his mind into a computer. Building a synthetic humanoid body to house his intelligence, he then had his robotic minions find and capture several homeless people, whom he ordered killed in order to test the transfer process. All were failures. A group of unknown super-humans stopped him by overloading his lab's nuclear generator. He yet again escaped, this time in one of the synthetic bodies, but one that was exposed to massive radiation. He now glows and emits a strong level of radiation, forcing him to be unable to interact with normal society. Already deeply afflicted with madness, this has led him into numerous clashes with super-humans across the globe. He appeared in *Guardian Elite #3* as Professor Pain, *Forgotten #2* as Infernus.

Infernus (Professor Talbot Pain)

DRIVE	Megalomania
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Ordinary !
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Ordinary
KNOWN POWERS	Infernus' synthetic body is highly resilient, as well as being immune to radiation, poisons, and diseases.

Radiation Emission: Infernus can emit radiation as bolts, beams, or even shaping it into crude force shapes of radioactive energies.

Attack: Exceptional !
 (Radiation Blasts)
Defense: Exceptional !
 (Synthetic Body, Force shields)
Movement: None
Manipulation: Exceptional !
 (Mutation)

Infernus was also once Professor Pain, though he seems unlikely to utilize the technology he once delighted in.

Using Infernus: Infernus is a classically powerful megalomaniac. He's likely to use his powers to give him the edge, and when that isn't enough, he uses planning and superior numbers by creating soldiers from thugs, ants, or whatever else he can utilize at the moment. He can mutate those he blasts with radiation, transforming them into different creatures, even dangerous minions for his plans. Infernus is not really suitable for playing the role of a hero.

Insomniac

The Insomniac claims not to have slept since he was 13 years of age, and the emaciated, wild-eyed twenty-something man may be telling the truth. He caused a stir when he broke free from the Youngfield Maximum Security Hospital for the Criminally Insane and started a criminal gang culled from his peers, killing any who didn't fit with his view of a gang. Insomniac has clashed most notably with the Moth, who has repeatedly come after him, causing the sleepless young man to claim the Moth as his personal nemesis. First appearance: *The Mysterious Moth* # 3.

Insomniac

DRIVE	Hatred
MIGHT	Ordinary !
RESILIENCE	Ordinary !
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS

Immunity to Sleep: Nothing can put this guy into sleep, though he can be knocked out. The Insomniac is superhumanly strong. When he first escaped he didn't realize this and accidentally bent the steel bars that barred his way when frustrated.

He claims that his newfound might is his birthright for not being so twisted as the rest of the world, so weak as they for sleeping, but then again he is quite mad.

The Insomniac, for all his madness, is a genius and seems to possess an almost superhuman ability to attract followers in the form of thugs who serve him loyally. They often tend to grow madder in his presence but this has more to do with the fact he never stops talking, and he talks faster than most states' legal speed limit. Added to his sleeplessness, he seems a living vector for insanity.

Stress Trigger: Lullaby: The sound of a lullaby causes Insomniac to fray worse than usual.

Using the Insomniac: The Insomniac is so mad he'll never be anything other than a threat. Attempts to force him to sleep don't seem to work, and he really has no morals. He just seems to have a desire to cause suffering to the rest of humanity. In addition to this, he doesn't particularly care about his own end, so he will take risks which might kill someone else, but which only slow him down a breath.

Isaac Taylor

Isaac Taylor is an un-powered individual who possesses the strangest affiliation with super-heroes. He appears, offering them one thing and one thing only, if they have chosen the path of heroism. Isaac always knows who has and who hasn't, and Isaac's gifts are often welcome. He appeared only in the last decade of Analog Prime titles and supported the new generation of heroes by giving them, of all things, a costume. The costumes always seem to suit the hero, always fit perfectly, and work reasonably well with their powers. Isaac then makes his way on his nomadic path to meet the next group of heroes. Isaac has never designed weapons, nor will he help those he sees as more dangerous than villains. Isaac first appeared in *Redeemers #6*.

Isaac's Stats are negligible.

Using Isaac: Isaac serves one purpose—to provide the heroes' first costumes. Anything after that will be up to the hero himself, but Isaac prides himself on that first initial gift. He isn't a hero, just a plain man who knows more than he should. He can be a source of wisdom, but rarely a source of information on current events or situations.

Jack Jumper

A villain from Australia or New Zealand (his accent is non-specific), he calls himself a world-class assassin and has a few known kills to his name. He prefers a particularly nasty ant-derived poison that is painful, but rarely lethal. He uses his superhuman strength, combined with his ability to shrink to ant-size, to kill. First Appearance: *Fighting Flea #14*.

Jack Jumper

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Spectacular
RESILIENCE	Spectacular
PROWESS	Spectacular
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Ordinary

KNOWN POWERS

Jack wears an armored costume to simulate an ant's carapace, combined with a helmet that mimics an ant's head. The suit is capable of many things.

Attacks: Ordinary !
(Boosted Strength, Acid Spray, Dart guns)
Defense: Ordinary !
(Armor, Shrinking)
Manipulation: Ordinary !
(Sensors)
Movement: None



Using Jack: Jack is a laid-back kind of assassin. He's in it for the money and he's willing to fail a time or two to set up a target, or to give them a false sense of security. It is nothing personal with him; he's just doing a job. His cold-hearted nature and absolute views makes him

ill-suited for a hero. He is best used against soft targets, which the heroes must protect, since his abilities while capable don't put him on par with a super-hero team. He might manage a single super, but even then his policy is to shrink, run, and hide, using his other abilities as needed to escape.

Joe Dynamo

Joe Dynamo is an Atlantean, who has lost his memory and wandered the world for centuries. A chance meeting with Edgar Cayce and a simple hypnotic trance proved some of Cayce's dreams of Atlantis correct. Joe is an ageless and seemingly tireless champion; using memories of Atlantean science, he has built numerous devices to aid his cause. Primarily he uses his namesake belt that creates a powerful charge of electrical power drawn directly from Joe's own personal bio-energy. First Appearance: *Red, White, and Blue Stories #1*.

Joe Dynamo

DRIVE	Community
MIGHT	Spectacular
RESILIENCE	Ordinary !
PROWESS	Spectacular
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary !
RESOLVE	Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS

Joe has the above enhanced capabilities and is immortal. As the last-known Atlantean, he has lived through centuries and centuries of time, though he does suffer periodic bouts of amnesia. He recalls only a little of his life on Atlantis, with bursts from time to time of deeper and more complete moments in his mind. The Dynamo belt allows him to generate a forcefield, or shock opponents in hand-to-hand combat range.

Dynamo Belt

Attack: Ordinary !

(Shocking Touch)

Defense: Ordinary !

(Electrofield)

Movement: Ordinary !

(Electrospeed)

Manipulation: Spectacular

(Repulsion field)

Using Joe Dynamo: Joe Dynamo can be used in many ways as a PC or reliable NPC—from a helpful scientist or historical aide who can add insight or information on a topic to a solid companion in desperate times willing to go one round to save the world. Unfortunately, the Dynamo belt drains the same bio-energy that has retarded Joe's age and protected him from disease. He is now physically drained and appears as a man in his late 50's; using the belt again could kill him so he quietly retired. A recharge from Atlantean technology might be brought

to bear to make him young and vital (though without the belt). Alternately, fearful of the direction the world has taken, Joe may turn into a villain using his knowledge to re-invigorate himself. Then, he forces the world to conform to his ideal images, images taken of the dreams of the past century and his jumbled memories of the terrors of the past.

John Gurney, the Gilded Man

John Gurney was a police inspector who came to prominence for his numerous arrests of superhuman villains without having a single notable power of his own. John was known for his reliable stoic and pleasant yet all-too-British humor. He was being transferred to Scotland Yard when he was attacked out of the blue by an unknown superhuman who left him for dead. John's superiors called in every favor they were owed in order to try and save John's life. Finally OSIRUS offered to use technologies developed for their Sterling Shield program to return John to health and duty. Since that time, John has become known as the gilded man for his golden gleaming cybernetics and his general jovial attitude. John retired from the police force and took up a job as a liaison in the States for the Guardian-Elite until their recent deaths. Currently, John maintains their base and its secrets, running the lobby as a minor memorial museum to their heroism. First appearance: *The Guardian Elite* # 232.

John Gurney

DRIVE	Guardianship
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Spectacular
KNOWN POWERS	The Golden colored cybernetics which gives John Gurney his title are the source of this abilities.

Attack: Ordinary !
 (Powered fist, Eye Laser)
Defense: Spectacular
 (Armored Limbs)
Movement: Exceptional
 (Cybernetic driven legs)
Manipulation: None

Using John Gurney: John is a friendly, but quiet former inspector. He took the job as the Guardian-Elite's liaison and would brief the press as well as the police. His half-gold cybernetics and half-human face seemed to persuade people that the proper forces were at work in the universe. He is best used as a source of information or perhaps as a source of technology provided "on loan" to newer heroes. He could become a villain, but only if the proper reasons passed his way. Serious harm to those he loved or cared for might pressure him to act so, but to truly flip the switch would take something very dramatic and traumatic.

Killer Cicada—Clark Lukas

A villain with an odd penchant for a particularly annoying breed of insect: the cicada, a largish winged insect whose males are known for their loud and raucous clicking song. The armored villain is mostly an annoyance as well; he has many schemes but fundamentally falls into the formula of theft, particularly smash-and-grab thefts. It has not been revealed who constructed his noise-making armor, but it seems unlikely that he is its developer. A short team-up with the villain Klaxon resulted in some improvements to the armor, notably it's now quiet except when it attacks with its new improved sonic weapon. First Appearance: *Doctor Radiant* #56.

Killer Cicada (Clark Lukas)

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Spectacular
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Exceptional

KNOWN POWERS

CICADA Armor: The Armor is a strange battle suit that looks like a horrific hybrid of insect and man; it is made of ceramic composites and laminated to look as insect-like as possible.

Originally, all it did was provide flight and boost the wearer's strength as well as give the protection of the armor itself.

Attack: Ordinary !
(Powered Fists, Sound Blast)

Defense: Exceptional !
(Armor)

Movement: Spectacular
(Winged Flight)

Manipulation: None

Using Killer Cicada: Cicada is a short-tempered bully who managed to get a suit of high-tech battle-armor. The act of getting the armor mellowed him some, as it helped him deal with a minor inferiority complex. As a villain, he delights in using the suit to smash, destroy, fight, and whatever else he can get away with. He often forgets he has a ranged attack in his sonic blast and will allow foes to escape instead of using it. Killer Cicada isn't likely to turn over a new leaf for any reason. He's just found the right role for his life.

Klaxon—Fred Wallerton

A device-oriented villain known for his highly effective sonic-based technologies, Klaxon's original costume included a klaxon-like helmet he used to focus his powers. The unfortunate placing of the device resulted in a severe hearing impairment, and without the rather sophisticated hearing aids he's developed he'd be completely deaf. Klaxon is still at heart a thug for hire, using his sonic-blasters for his own greedy ends. First Appearance: *Doctor Radiant #7*.

Klaxon (Fred Wallerton)

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional

KNOWN POWERS **Sonic Blasters:** Klaxon uses a variety of sound-based weapons, from a helmet-mounted projector to wrist blasters and micro grenades to generate sound blasts with devastating effectiveness.

- Attack:* Exceptional !
(Sound blasts)
- Defense:* Spectacular
(Sonic Shields)
- Movement:* Exceptional !
(Super-sonic Flight)
- Manipulation:* Exceptional
(Disorientation Wave)

Stress Trigger: Hearing Loss. If something disables his hearing aids, any time he needs to hear or use normal perceptual clues Klaxon takes stress.

Using Klaxon: Klaxon is your typical inventor hood. He feels the world owes him something for his brilliance even if he hasn't used it for the world's good. While bright, he tends to be so extremely selfish and focused that he loses sight of the bigger picture. As a villain, he goes for big scores in technology or hard currency with typical brute force tactics of a scream. As a hero, he'd be trying to redeem himself, using his sound powers more subtly to prevent damage—ultrasonics and subsonic would then become his focus.

Lady Magpie—Madeline Thistle

The Magpie as an animal is attracted to shiny things; Lady Magpie is one of the world's greatest thieves. She steals for the thrill of it. She is so wealthy she'd never need another job, but she just won't give up the joy of thievery. Madeline has no revealed ties to the earlier age Dr. Thistle, but that may be a mere matter of time. First Appearance: *Calvary City Chronicles #8*.

Lady Magpie (Madeline Thistle)

DRIVE Spirit of Adventure

MIGHT Ordinary

RESILIENCE Exceptional

PROWESS Ordinary !

DEFTNESS Spectacular

BRAINS Spectacular

RESOLVE Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS Lady Magpie is a world-renowned thief and scientist. She is able to develop devices decades ahead of their time, but uses them to further her criminal ends. More importantly, she expects superhuman opponents and always has devices capable of disabling them temporarily.

Gadgets

Attack: Ordinary !
(blasters, bombs)

Defense: Ordinary !
(displacement belt)

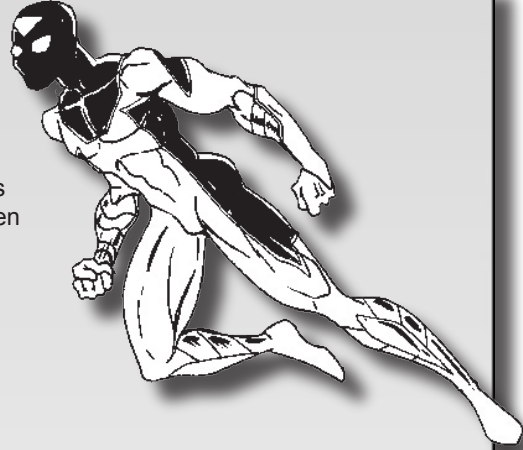
Movement: Exceptional !
(swing line, rocket packs)

Manipulation: Exceptional !
(lifter beam, Radio jammers)

Using Lady Magpie: Magpie is a thief pure and simple, but she's in the business for fun, not to hurt people—not even for the wealth, as she is a multi-millionaire many times over. However the thrill of crime has gotten into her blood, and she loves the challenge. She may even tell heroes her plans in hopes they'll try and stop her, as she has a very serious danger fetish. She won't hurt others and she won't steal from the desperate but other than that anything is fair game, from jewels to hero's masks and capes. She delights in the game she makes of it. Lady Magpie as a hero would still be mostly a thief, though she would be using her skills specifically against criminals. She would sell out information on villains' secret identities where she never would a hero's.

Lethal Leaper

When a Central American drug cartel held tryouts for super-powered assassins to take down Mongoose, one of the many who were offered the job was the Lethal Leaper. His powers are primarily his agility and speed, combined with a toxic coating on his costume. A small golden frog symbol appears on the face of his mask. So far, few details have been revealed. First Appearance: *Mongoose: Misery and Ecstasy #1*.



Lethal Leaper

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Spectacular
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Ordinary !
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional

KNOWN POWERS

Leaping: The Lethal Leaper can make rapid leaps which can move him either quickly horizontally or clearing terrain with massive vertical hops.

Attacks: Exceptional !
(Kicks)

Defense: Exceptional
(Swift Leaps)

Movement: Exceptional !
(Great Jumps)

Manipulation: None

Costume: The Leaper's costume is coated in a specialized poison, synthetically derived from the Golden Arrow Tree Frog toxin that works on contact. Touching his costume with bare skin is enough to feel its Toxic effects. Ordinary !

Using the Leaper: He's an assassin pure and simple. His only motives are to serve out his contract. He has no remorse, no pity, and he does as he's told under the contract. The Leaper isn't usable as a hero really; he simply hasn't got the moral stance to make him willing to risk for others without a lot of money.

Master Maleficent—Moramnos

Moramnos claims to be a demon lord, trading his place in hell for a human body with human limitations. In truth, he was a petty demonling treated as a pet, but on earth his malevolent spark and human body lets him spread his evil and hate as he wishes, unchecked by the demon hierarchies above him and unhindered by his “lesser” status. As Master Maleficent, he uses his limited powers to run a variety of criminal actions, mostly geared towards gaining him more temporal earthly power. First appearance: *Redeemers* #45.

Master Maleficent

DRIVE Megalomania

MIGHT Spectacular !

RESILIENCE Spectacular

PROWESS Exceptional

DEFTNESS Ordinary !

BRAINS Spectacular

RESOLVE Exceptional

KNOWN POWERS **Magic:** Master Maleficent is a reasonably talented magician, though not as powerful as he'd like others to assume.

Attack: Spectacular
(Infernal bolts)

Defense: Spectacular
(Hex Shields)

Movement: Spectacular
(Dark Wings of Demonblood)

Manipulation: Ordinary !
(Mind control, Illusion)

Demonic Form: Master Maleficent's demonic form makes him immune to earthly diseases, toxins, aging, and many other merely mortal concerns

Using Master Malificent: As a minor demon on earth, he might be running schemes designed to gain money or control over corporate assets by brokering luck for souls (using them for more dark magics.) He is not the most adept at behind-the-scenes mechanizations but is learning. He may also uses his massive strength to simply break into vaults and steal what he wants, although he tends to find this crass.

Malefactor—Stanley Echstein

Stanley was a brilliant biochemistry student who had unfortunate luck with the women. His one girlfriend decided she preferred “bad boys” over the caring, nurturing Stanley. Stanley, seeking to capture that bad boy rep on his own, pulled a Jekyll. He created a synthetic gland that would secrete a specialized hormone cocktail to make him the “perfect” man. The testing of the implanted gland worked well in animals so Stanley had it surgically implanted in himself. The hormones did their job all right; unfortunately Stanley had only concentrated on the physical nature of perfection. The hormone remade Stanley into the perfect Adonis, but severely impaired his intellect and reasoning. He now has a perfect body but suffers from adolescent hormone overload and minor brain damage. The hormones triggered other abilities as well. As Malefactor, Stanley can grow to a massive height (3 stories) and spin off duplicates, each with the ability to grow in size. Stanley is now the man of supervillains: a beer-swilling, cigar-smoking, stereotypical chauvinist. First appearance: *The Mighty # 170*.

Malefactor (Stanley Echstein)

DRIVE	Hatred
MIGHT	Spectacular
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Malefactor can grow to over 3 stories tall (30+ feet). This boosts his strength and resilience to the powers rank.

Growth: Exceptional !

Malefactor can also create duplicates of himself. He can create 6 or so duplicates at maximum power and this is ranked at

Duplication: Exceptional

Stress Trigger: Rage. Any time Stanley fails at something and falls to anger, he can have Rage triggered. This causes him to take stress for all actions while he's enraged.

Using Malefactor: Stanley was a bit of a misogynist before his transformation. He'd used the rejections he'd suffered to justify his rather bad thoughts towards women. When the chemical formula freed Malefactor, it was really just another aspect of Stanley magnified to terrible scale, along with his size and ability to duplicate himself. Malefactor's poor opinion of women and his destructive rages make him more of a stomp-through-the-city-and-hurt-others kind of villain. Though the right mastermind could recruit him, he's hard to control, and difficult to make focus on plots and plans. If Stanley's original personality were reinstated over the powers he'd obtained, he might make a valuable ally. He is a bit more than brilliant in his field, though he would be remorseful for his acts as Malefactor and do his best to make up for them. He likely needs serious therapy to reach that point.

Major Liberty—Classified

Major Liberty was a young Midwestern hero whose patriotism led him to join the Red, White and Blue Brigade. After the war created Freedom's Four, Major Liberty was often at the forefront of patriotic heroism, but in time his country forgot those liberties for which he fought so hard. Major Liberty appears to have been slain by the pyrokinetic Nikodemus. First Appearance: *Red, White, and Blue Stories #1*.

Major Liberty

DRIVE	Guardianship
MIGHT	Exceptional !
RESILIENCE	Ordinary !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Spectacular
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	None other than his phenomenal physical capabilities.

Using Major Liberty: Major Liberty is a hero of a previous age. He is all that it stood for: earnest, forthright, hopeful, and valiant. He should be represented with honor and care, for to do otherwise would tarnish his highly respected and earned image. He is the hero's hero and should lead or ally with others as befits his morals. He respects wisdom and leadership in others, and so won't interfere with a good leader's plans. Barring a clear leader, he will fill that role, not by choice but simply due to his natural aptitudes. Major Liberty makes a poor choice for a villain, though he might be used as a hostage or patsy that other heroes must deal with.

Masked Fox—Elizabeth MacKinnon

The first Masked Fox was a Scottish immigrant to the U.S while in her late teens; she pushed herself and worked hard, having no family and no friends other than a rough collection of other Scottish immigrants that looked out for one another. She first donned her masked visage in order to bring down a corrupt factory manager whom she had worked under. He was using his position to force women to fulfill his demands or lose their jobs. Although she had little overall impact for women in the workplace, when War broke out she used her hard-headedness to push her way onto the Red, White and Blue Brigade alongside Major Liberty and the All-American Archer. Rumors of a new Masked Fox recently surfaced, one who is more than just a two-fisted crime fighter but also a Scottish-American woman. First Appearance: *Red, White, and Blue Stories #1*. After World War II: *Masked Fox Adventures #1*, Second Masked Fox: *Masked Fox Adventures #350*.

Masked Fox I

DRIVE	Community
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Spectacular
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Ordinary !
KNOWN POWERS	None

Masked Fox II (Elizabeth MacKinnon)

DRIVE	Guilt
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Spectacular
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Spectacular
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Vanish: Exceptional !

The second Masked Fox seems capable of vanishing in a breath with spooky reliability, and does so the minute people stop looking her way.

Escaping: Exceptional !

She is also capable of sliding out of holds or grabs with an ease that seems superhuman.

Using the Masked Foxes: Masked Fox I was a strapping lass with a harsh tongue, a hard head, and a desire to see the world change for her gender, for immigrants, or for whoever was downtrodden. She was someone who stands up for a cause. If used as a hero, it should be a good cause, one that anyone can plainly see is right, but as a villain, her cause may be misguided, or if it is positive, she goes to improper lengths to see it supported. Masked Fox II is a bit more of a mystery. She seems almost supernatural in her abilities, sometimes running on all fours instead of two. She is a hero, but a subtle-from-the-shadows kind of hero who seems to be repaying an old debt.

MESA

The MESA is a vast sandstone-walled fortress somewhere in the United States. It is only slightly distinguishable from any other mesas in its area, primarily due to being located on a former military testing site. The MESA is a maximum-security penitentiary for superhuman offenders. Although escapes are uncommon, they have occurred a number of times since the MESA's construction. However, it is still considered one of the most reliable ways to keep dangerous superhuman criminals off the streets. The first appearance of the Mesa was in *Guardian-Elite #3*.

The MESA has walls of Exceptional! Material, and Defenses capable of stunning, killing, entangling, or otherwise disabling those traveling in or out with Exceptional! Capability.

Midas City

This city is a fictional California city of significant size that is the primary setting for *The Mighty*. It was named for a gold-miner who struck gold on the spot and was said to have the "Midas Touch." Located in Northern California, it is well populated (over 3 million people), and is known for its odd art deco and 50's noir architecture blended with a variety of Greek-inspired designs. The designs are attributed to the city's founder, who lived to be 110 and may have actually begun to believe he was King Midas.

Midas City has numerous industries as well as a substantial business district of note—sometimes called "Gold Street"—where fortunes are made and lost, mostly in Asian-related trading. A significant Chinatown is established on the northern edge of the city and it has many parks fallen into disrepair. The most notable elements of the city itself are its expansive docks, which deal with import and export in the hundreds of millions of dollars every year, and its modern Vandervecken-Waltz University. It also has the Olympia Junior College, as well as a variety of startup technical schools. First appearance: *The Mighty #1*.

Nikodemus

Nikodemus is a new breed of criminal thrill-killer. He doesn't care who, what, where, or when he kills, as long as he can make it fun while doing so. Nikodemus isn't the sort to dress up in a costume either; he wears mundane clothes and haunts the night ready to light anyone on his way on fire with a casual thought. A pyrokinetic, he commands quite impressive flame powers. Nikodemus was apparently mutually slain with Major Liberty. First Appearance: *Freedom's Four #100*.

Nikodemus

DRIVE	Hatred
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Ordinary !

KNOWN POWERS **Pyrokinesis:** Nikodemus can generate fire with a simple thought. He can whip up flames at any distance within his sight, and can use them in a myriad of ways. He can control the fire, shaping it or dimming it at his whim.

Attack: Spectacular
Defense: Spectacular
Movement: None
Manipulation: Spectacular

Using Nikodemus: Nikodemus is a madman with more power than he knows what to do with. His insanity and cruelty give him an outlet in violence and the distribution of pain gives him joy. There is really no nice heroic version of Nikodemus.

Omega Blade

The Omega Blade was a satellite EMP weapon designed to destroy technology and push man back into the Dark Ages. Gideon Leaf masterminded the device in an effort to show mankind the art of the “true” way of war—the sword. Gideon was stopped and the Omega Blade destroyed by an unprecedented team-up of heroes. First Appearance: *Team up Tales: Legends #6*.

The Omega Blade can destroy traditional modern technology circuits with an electromagnetic pulse. This is a Spectacular! Attack.

Omni-cannon

A powerful device created by Baron Wulf. Based on Tesla’s designs, it was capable of launching an attack on any point in the globe once it was fully charged. There have been at least three different designs, each with different weakness, charge times, and effects. First Appearance: *Red, White, and Blue Stories #46*.

The Omni-Cannon is capable of projecting a beam of energy across the world. This is a lethal attack that is ranked at Spectacular!

Orphan

Orphan is a powerful time-traveling agent who claims to have been born in a universe that died to save this one. Orphan uses his powers and a number of pieces of strange technology to remake this world into his own. He claims his world was a golden age where no one hungers or hates, but his violent bloodthirsty methods have not won him many followers. Most abandon him before he kills them callously. Orphan first appeared in *Doctor Radiant #7*.

Orphan

DRIVE	Megalomania
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Ordinary !
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Ordinary

KNOWN POWERS Orphan has access to powerful time-travel devices, which vary in shape from vehicles to more recent devices built into wrist bracers.

He is able to use the devices with absolute effectiveness. Either with skills or tech, he needs to counter or deal with heroes and others who oppose his views.

- Attack:* Spectacular
(Disruption Beam)
- Defense:* Spectacular
(Temporal Displacement)
- Movement:* Exceptional !
(Temporal Teleportation)
- Manipulation:* Exceptional !

Using Orphan: Orphan is capable of doing a great deal of harm in manipulating the time line to his own ends. However he tends to be rather short-sighted in spite of rather long-range goals. He will for example spend time fighting heroes by re-arranging their lives and and environment with minor time jumps out of spite rather than jumping forward to a point when they're to busy too come thwart him.

OSIRUS

The Office of Superhuman Investigation and Rehabilitation of the United States. OSIRUS was formed shortly after the end of World War II, when an influx of superhuman immigrants and war survivors began hitting U.S. shores. Combined with the rise of superhumans within its own populace, the US secretly instigated a program to deal with super-criminals. In more recent era, it has been charged with examining the potential superhuman problem in the US. With the death of the Guardian-Elite, they have seemingly stepped up activities in trying to stem the tide of criminals. OSIRUS manages the current "Sterling Shield" program, as well as MESA, and operates under a Senate oversight committee on superhuman affairs. OSIRUS is believed to

have operated the unnamed facility from which the Redeemers escaped. First Appearance: *Freedom's Four #7*.

Phosphor

A flame-using villain who launches white-hot bolts of fire from his hands, Phosphor takes his name from his claim to have developed his powers when exposed to a variety of phosphorescent chemicals. Phosphor is a traditional villain; he likes burning things, but uses his flames mostly on super-heroes or police vehicles that get in his way. He actually has some distaste for burning people directly as long as they do not attempt to thwart his goals. First Appearance: *The Mighty #9*.



Phosphur

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Spectacular
KNOWN POWERS	Phosphor can project white-hot bolts of flame from his hands.

Attack: Ordinary !

Defense: Ordinary !

Movement: None

Manipulation: None

Stress Trigger: Phosphor wears a suit to allow him to control his powers. Without the suit, any use of his powers cause stress. Damage to his suit also causes him to take stress.

Using Phosphor: Phosphor is basically an honorable non-mastermind kind of villain. He uses his powers to melt holes in walls to take things he wants, melt floors to drop heroes out of sight, burn up restraints, and so on. He will avoid burning people if at all possible, using his powers only on robots or those who can take the damage. As a hero, Phosphor isn't much different.

He's easy to redeem—just give him control over his powers and some resemblance of a normal life.

Rampart

A massive humanoid tiger-like cat-man known for his bloodthirstiness, he has killed quite a few people in his appearances in AMP comics. He appears much like a white tiger with pale-gray stripes and blue eyes. He has eluded capture numerous times, typically by reverting to his unassuming human form and walking past the police. First Appearance: *Fighting Flea #34*.

Rampart

DRIVE	Hatred
MIGHT	Exceptional !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS **Regeneration:** Rampart can recover from wounds quickly. Stress that hasn't yet become a wound remains, but he can recover from previous wounds by making a power test. This power is ranked at Spectacular.

Using Rampart: Rampart is a brutal berserker who does as much damage as possible then moves on. His motive is pure hatred for the humans around him. He makes a good villain for heroes to thwart when he is causing harm. He could pop up nearly anywhere. He isn't suitable for a hero, but one could always create a twin brother of far more ethical stance with whom Rampart gets confused.

Rattlers

The Rattlers are a minor street gang that came to prominence with the backing of a secretive superhuman. Outfitted with new vibro-weapons, the Rattlers went on a bit of a rampage before being stopped by a minor superhuman team. The Rattlers are prominent in Midas City, and have regular turf wars with other gang members. First Appearance: *The Mighty #7*.

The Rattlers are average toughs, and all stats are Ordinary. They do have access to the vibro-weapons, which can do Spectacular damage.

Using the Rattlers: The Rattlers are street muscle—general thugs who run drugs, numbers, and protection rackets in the neighborhood where they make their homes. They treat other Rattlers like family, at least to a certain extent.

Savage

The being known as Savage was born of humans, but was an experiment years in the making. They modified his DNA in utero, splicing animal DNA onto human DNA. He was born and was raised as a normal child, as normal as a tightly controlled experiment could be. The lab where he was raised was eventually bombed by animal rights activists after they freed as many animals as they could. The activists didn't know that down below in the basements were worse things than they had imagined. Savage escaped the death of the scientists involved, and lived alone until he was captured by a wilderness photographer who tried to tame him. He murdered the well-meaning man and was arrested, then disappeared from custody into the arms of the organization that paid for him to be built. He's a ruthless killer with animal powers. First Appearance: *Stunning Science Fiction Stories #24*.

Savage

DRIVE	Hatred
MIGHT	Spectacular
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Ordinary
KNOWN POWERS	Claws: Ordinary !
	Animal Senses: Ordinary !

Using Savage: Savage is a monster with an agenda. Though he kills for fun when he can, the exact agenda seems to be based on his distant masters prodding him to act for their ends, and may be part of the cause for the additional violence. He's a barely chained rabid dog at the best of times. Savage is unsuitable for a hero, but he may not be the only escaped chimera created by the project which gave birth to Savage.

The UberApe is a good villain against social order as it stands, particularly military complexes or other animal-testing facilities. A heroic UberApe is easy enough though. He could serve his time if he felt it furthered his cause, then act as a superhero when released, for what else would a super-smart ape do?

Sigil

The U.S. government, attempting to fight back against the rising number of super-beings in society—particularly criminal ones—began a project of cataloging all known supernatural phenomena, including creating a database of known “demons” and a library of spell books. As technology progressed, they created a computer network designed to allow quick access to this database by government employees. This was SIGIL (Supernatural Intelligence Graphic Intranet Library). This database however was hacked and a virus was let loose in the system—a smart one designed to adapt to anti-viral software. The virus combined with the information in the system to create a bizarre life form, a hybrid of technology and magic that manifested at ground zero of the data storage for SIGIL. Taking the name “Sigil,” the being sped off to its own concerns. This sigil seems intent on gathering all the mystic knowledge of the world. The use of that knowledge has led Sigil to clash with both heroes and villains, as well as a variety of governmental agencies, covens, and the like. The U.S. government as not yet attempted to recreate the database. Sigil appears as a glowing silver robot with runic symbol glowing in eldritch-green flame upon its brow. First Appearance: *The Mighty* #8.

SIGIL

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Exceptional !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Ordinary !
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary !
RESOLVE	Ordinary !

KNOWN POWERS SIGIL is the most powerful user of magic on the planet, with an extensive library covering every work that the U.S. government could steal, buy, borrow, and scan into the network.

If SIGIL had stopped there it might have been a reasonably powerful force, but its continued efforts and relentless logical mind have added to its collection through its own methods.

Attack: Spectacular !
Defense: Spectacular !
Movement: Spectacular !
Manipulation: Spectacular !

Robotic Body: Due to its sorcery and computer origin, it has fashioned itself a mobile body that for all intents and purposes is a magic-powered robot. It is immune to disease, poisons, and most common organic ailments.

Using Sigil: Sigil can best be described as a magical thief. It will abscond with any mystic tome or magical artifact it can absorb or gain use off. This tends to put it at odds with legitimate owners, both good and ill. As a villain its purpose is focused: steal the object it is after and depart, causing the minimum harm possible due to its nature. Turning SIGIL into a hero is highly possible, with some solid logic explaining how it can obtain some goods after an owner's

natural death since it is nigh immortal. It could turn his mystic might to the side of light, stopping demons and otherwise serving as powerful magical champion who can act as an aide or guide as befits the moment.

Silver Nail—Paul

The man named Paul—sometimes called Silver Paul, Silver Nail, or occasionally “The Rider of the Rails”—was a railway-spike driver. Though machines have replaced him, he still wandered the rails, never older, never changing. Armed with a massive hammer and silver spikes, he thwarts evil. Paul has seen the world change and yet he remains rock solid. It is in the lonely places that he is found, fighting demons, spirits, undead—whatever black creatures crawl out while god-fearing people sleep. Some say he was once a Roman soldier who hammered spikes into wood and flesh, some call him other names, but he himself doesn't say much. First Appearance: *Analogous Moral Plays Presents #1*.

Silver Nail (Paul)

DRIVE	Guardianship
MIGHT	Spectacular
RESILIENCE	Spectacular
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Ageless: Silver Nail doesn't appear to age.

Hammer and Spikes: His arm is mighty but his will is more so, the Silver Nail can swing his hammer with Ordinary ! ability against supernatural foes or Exceptional ! ability if he adds silver nails.

Using Silver Nail: He's a solid and handy guy to have on your side. He talks little of the past, and when he does it's as if he lived whatever moment he described. He mostly tells stories—some true, some not—but all garnered from years of riding the rails. He laughs when there is cause, but never cries, and he's a hero through and through.

Star-bird—Raleigh “Rallie” Miller

The eldest born of identical twins Raleigh and Rebecca Miller, Raleigh developed superhuman powers after her sister and always resented the fact that she, the eldest, was behind her twin. Frustrated with life and the world in general, she was always a wild young woman and fell into the wrong sorts of crowds, eventually joining the Ascendants of the 8th Day in response to her sister being asked to join the Guardian-Elite. It is believed Raleigh accidentally triggered the bombs that killed the Guardians-Elite and the Ascendants while attempting to disarm them to save her sister. Star-Bird is a beautiful twenty-something with a bobbed haircut, naturally curly and somewhere between blond and brown in color. She has piercing brown eyes. Her costume is a white skin-tight affair with a yellow bird inset across her right breast and arm. First Appearance: *Guardian-Elite* #29.

Star-Bird (Raleigh Miller)

DRIVE	Hatred
MIGHT	Ordinary !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Ordinary

KNOWN POWERS

Energy Shaping: Star-bird can generate glowing fields of force and light with which she can perform a number of effects. She boosts her strength to the above rank, and generates bird-like wings to fly, as well as the typical energy blasts and domed fields of protection.

Attack: Ordinary !
Defense: Ordinary !
Movement: Ordinary !
Manipulation: Ordinary !

Using Star-bird: Star-bird’s hatred for the world is more a kind of jealousy at her rightful place being usurped—her rightful birthright as she saw it. This was magnified and became irrational with the normal teenage angst and drama. Then, as she aged, she continued the role she’d chosen. As a villain, she isn’t the brightest, but she is quick to act as asked or needed. As a hero, she simply realizes that her anger was foolish, and either she survived the bomb unbeknown or instead of her sister. If the latter, she’d assume her sister’s place and costume and continue as her sister would have wanted.

Star-Child—Rebecca “Becca” Miller

Star-Child was the younger of twin siblings Raleigh and Rebecca Miller. She expressed her powers shortly after her 13th birthday, nearly 3 years before her sister developed similar (if less powerful) abilities. Star-Child was a good, forthright, and honest young woman who studied hard and worked to be one of the most loved of the teen-set heroes. Star-Child is the only surviving member of the Guardian-Elite. Though currently comatose, it is believed her stellar powers will eventually heal her and she will return to a heroic life. Star-child is a beautiful match for her sister, with the same bobbed hair neither brown nor blond and the same brown eyes. Her costume is a bright yellow affair cut far skimpier than her sister's, with a skirt and a white star motif across her chest. First Appearance: *Guardian-Elite* #29.

Star-Child (Rebecca Miller)

DRIVE	Community
MIGHT	Ordinary !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Ordinary

KNOWN POWERS

Energy Shaping: Star-bird can generate glowing fields of force and light with which she can perform a number of effects. She boosts her strength to the above rank, and generates bird-like wings to fly, as well as the typical energy blasts and domed fields of protection.

Attack: Exceptional !

Defense: Exceptional !

Movement: Exceptional !

Manipulation: Exceptional !

Using Star-Child: Star-Child is a twenty-something heroine without a team, but a lot of heart. She could join a new team, or try and recruit a new group of Guardian-Elite with herself as mentor. Though the burdens might be many, she would give it a solid try. If she is tapped, it would be more appropriate to use her sister when a villain is needed.

Sterling Shield

The Sterling Shield is a program initiated by the U.S. government that uses a variety of technologies to help wounded police officers return to duty. The original program transformed them into cyborgs. The current OSIRUS-operated program uses a specialized suit of power armor that helps compensate for permanent disabilities. Officers in the current Sterling Shield program are amended to regular police forces in large urban areas to help control superhuman situations. The program has had some minor successes, but is greatly overwhelmed since the destruction of the Guardian-Elite. First Appearance: *Guardian-Elite #101*.

Sterling Shield

DRIVE	Guardianship (usually)
MIGHT	Spectacular
RESILIENCE	Ordinary !
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	<p>Sterling Shield Armor: Each Officer is outfitted with a suit of powered armor under the auspice of OSIRUS program.</p> <p>The Armor compensates for a specific disability (missing limbs, damaged senses, etc.) as well as boosting their strength to the upper end of human capabilities as listed above.</p> <p><i>Attack:</i> Spectacular (Force Blasters)</p> <p><i>Defense:</i> Ordinary ! (Armor or Force Shield at Exceptional ! Rank)</p> <p><i>Movement:</i> None</p> <p><i>Manipulation:</i> None</p>

Stress Trigger: Suit overheats when Force field is active.

The Sterling Shield Armor is a metallic-silver suit of armor with a unique badge imprint on the chest—the badge is simply a scaled version of the officer's ordinary badge. The armor, though bulky and taking twice its "up time" to recharge and maintain, is a godsend to the disabled officers it is used to assist. Most SSA officers are attached to SWAT Teams.

Using the Shields: The Shields are SWAT Teams for the super-heroic world. They are there to minimize damage done by heroes as well as contain the situation as best they can. They aren't truly up to most superhuman abilities, so they will let heroes take over if heroes appear. The Shields might have a darker sinister side for use as villains, recording all they can and reporting to a government agency.

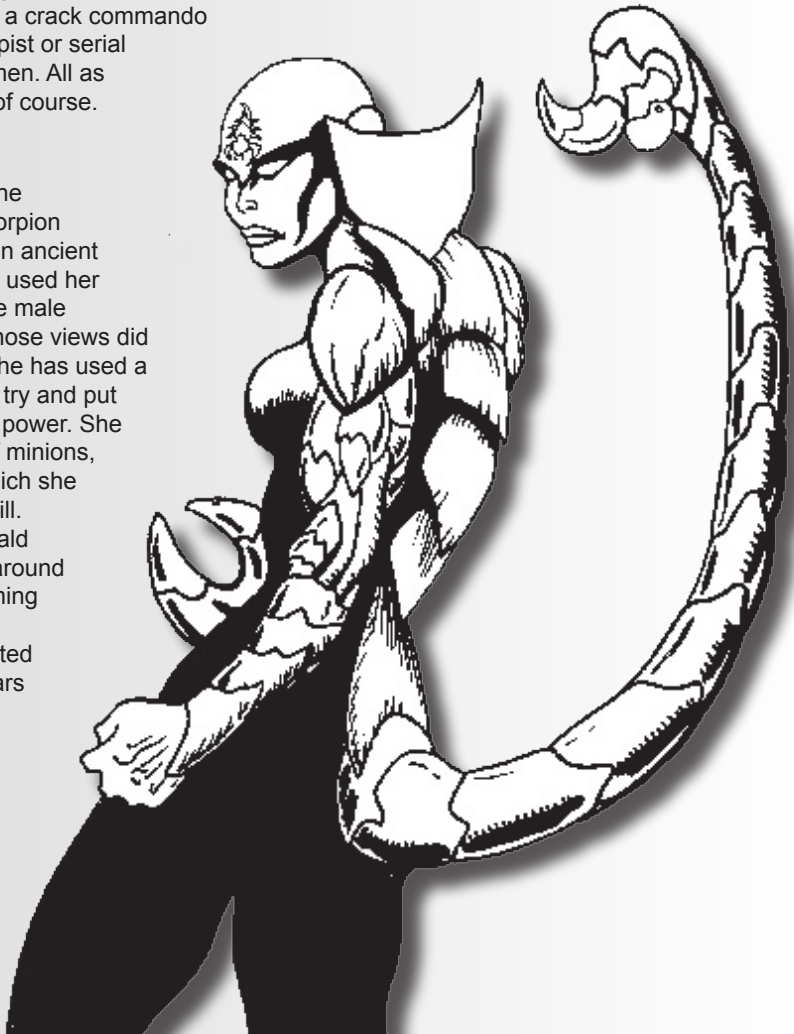
Sisterhood

Little is known of this secret all-female organization. At first glance, they seem to be a beneficial force dedicated to women's interests. Their methods vary a great deal, and it is known that at least one member was forced out due to her violent tendencies. The sisterhood trains its agents to be lethal hand-to-hand combatants and educates them in tactical thin demolitions, oration, and numerous other skills that can be useful to help change, thwart, and otherwise oppose patriarchal oppression. Notable members expelled from the order: Sister Scorpion, Ki-Rin, and Dagger Diamond. Most members maintain anonymity and dress in red clothing best described as 'ninja' attire. First Appearance: *Masked Fox Adventures* #32 (trying to recruit the Masked Fox) without being named and *Redeemers* #9 (Trying to recover Ki-Rin) revealing who they were and what they stood for as a group. The typical sisterhood agent has Exceptional Might, Deftness, and Prowess, but all other attributes Ordinary.

Using the Sisterhood: The Sisterhood are mostly ethical fighters for women's rights and freedom. You might find them opposing a vote that limits a woman's fertility rights, or you might see them campaigning to send people to countries which oppress women, or sending in a crack commando squad to capture a rapist or serial killer who targets women. All as covertly as possible, of course.

Sister Scorpion

A former member of the Sisterhood, Sister Scorpion gained powers from an ancient Scorpion amulet. She used her powers to assassinate male figures of authority whose views did not match her own. She has used a variety of schemes to try and put herself in positions of power. She has her own squad of minions, the Scorpionettes, which she uses to enforce her will. Sister Scorpion is a bald woman with a tattoo around each eye and a gleaming suit of golden metal armor with an articulated scorpion tail. She wears a cruel smile most of the time and stands out in a crowd even in civilian clothes. She first appeared in *Guardian-Elite* #33.



Sister Scorpion

DRIVE Megalomania

MIGHT Ordinary !

RESILIENCE Spectacular

PROWESS Exceptional

DEFTNESS Ordinary !

BRAINS Exceptional

RESOLVE Exceptional

KNOWN POWERS

Armor: The amulet, when activated, wraps Sister Scorpion in gleaming gold Egyptian-styled armor fitted with a stinging tail.

Attack: Exceptional !
(Tail)

Defense: Exceptional !
(Armor)

Movement: Ordinary !
(Wall Walking)

Manipulation: None

Knives: Sister Scorpion also adds a set of thrown knives coated in scorpion venom. She rarely uses these unless her goal is to assassinate her target. Exceptional !

Terror Trio

The Terror Trio were common thugs mutated by Tyrant to create a more useful tool for destruction at her command. The trio consists of Steg, Raptor, and Ptero. The trio first appeared in *Team Up Tales #101: Mongoose and Skydancer*.

Ptero

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Spectacular
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary !
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Ptero is a humanoid Pteranodon who can fly with Ordinary ! Air speed.

Raptor

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Spectacular
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Raptor is superhumanly fast, capable of moving at Ordinary ! Ground speed.
	With his nasty foot talons, which he can utilize to do Ordinary ! Damage
	He is a running, slashing nightmare.

Steg

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Exceptional !
RESILIENCE	Spectacular
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Steg is a humanoid Stegosaurus. His massive body gives him immense strength and resistance to harm.

Armor: Ordinary !

Using the Trio; The Trio always work together unless one of them is in jail. Then the others will work to get their absent member out of jail before going on to whatever heist or plan they have going. If the Tyrant pops back up, she will take charge and send them on her errands. The Trio aren't really suitable as good guys, and as bad guys are just pretty much very powerful thugs, capable of slowing super-heroes down, and even stopping them for a while, but not bright enough or capable enough to really do much more.

Tyrant

The Tyrant is a powerful criminal dedicated to a number of heinous plots, usually involving dinosaurs. Tyrant has transformed criminal thugs into the Terror Trio, and planted "Saurus" bombs about the city in an attempt to mutate humankind into dinosaurs. In addition, Tyrant has attempted to wipe out humanity with a meteor strike using a gravity cannon. In general, she cares very little for humanity—at least those who do not serve her purposes. The Tyrant is actually an immortal member of a humanoid Tyrannosaurus Rex-like species who happens to be female. She doesn't possess obvious feminine traits except her voice, and likes it that way. She wears a suit of armor with a domed helmet, which conceals her face most of the time. She takes her name from her ancestral species ties. *First Appearance: Calvary City Chronicles #4.*

Tyrant

DRIVE	Megalomania
MIGHT	Ordinary !
RESILIENCE	Ordinary !
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary !
RESOLVE	Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS

The Tyrant is a humanoid Tyrannosaurus Rex. She has a number of capabilities, and her strength and resilience shown above exceed a humans. The Tyrant does wear at times a concealing battle suit.

Tyrant's Armor:

Attack: Ordinary !

Defense: Exceptional !

Movement: None

Manipulation: Ordinary !

The Tyrant also plans ahead—decades in some cases—building a variety of world-changing or world-ending doomsday machines.

Immortal: The Tyrant has outlived the end of the Dinosaur Age and managed to survive to the current age. She may be truly immortal and able to recover from any possible harm short of soul-destruction.

Using the Tyrant: She's bitter about the loss of her people, and will do anything to resurrect that world, and destroy ours. She's a long-term plotting villain—a decade or so isn't too long to wait to see the world changed. She hates humanity with a passion that goes beyond reason and will, if possible, make sure her plots do harm to humanity while bringing back her own kind. Tyrant might act as a hero if a dinosaur-like animal was endangered, but it would be a one-time thing for her.

Think Tank—Hirschel

The original WWII Think Tank program was stopped, but one Tank, Hirschel, survived. Over the years, the processes used to create the original Think Tanks have been retired to limited success, but the original Think Tank still exists. He was recently “upgraded” to 21st-century level of super-criminal technology, even as his aging biological core has gone increasingly mad with time. Think Tank appeared originally in *Red, White and Blue Stories #33*.

Think Tank (Hirschel)

DRIVE	Hatred
MIGHT	Exceptional !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Ordinary
KNOWN POWERS	The Think Tank is a cybernetic tank. He's immune to toxins, poisons, contagious diseases, etc. As a tank he can launch missiles, fire the tank gun, unleash robotic tendrils, fly, or simply move through things on treads.

Attack: Ordinary !

Defense: Ordinary !

Movement: Ordinary !

Manipulation: None

The Think Tank is always re-engineering himself with more capabilities—most of these are temporary.

Using Hirschel: Hirschel is living hate. He's a Jewish mind in the body of a German (originally) tank, brainwashed to fight for the Germans. This all created a self-loathing that eroded his self-esteem and caused him to lash out. Over the years his madness only deepened as the world around him changed. Hirschel is unlikely to be a hero, and as a villain he has an agenda to destroy both Jews and Germans who survived the war. As time passes, fewer and fewer of those remain and he stretches his agenda to include monuments, relics, and so on.

UberApe

The UberApe was a “lab assistant” to a speech therapist who worked with apes; specifically he was the ape she was training to teach other apes sign language. Her program was ended when she lost her grant, forcing her to give up her gathered apes to zoos and other research facilities. This Ape was quite a bit brighter than he let on, and made use of the researcher’s soft heart—and her depression at the program’s failure—to turn certain technologies held at the laboratory to his own ends. Enhancing his own intellect and calling himself “The UberApe,” he rescued the other apes, led them on a mini-revolution at the science facility, and attempted to extort millions from the German government. His German-accented speech is still aired from time to time in order to drive home the importance of care with scientific innovation. First Appearance: *Stunning Science Fiction Stories #7*.

UberApe

DRIVE	Revenge
MIGHT	Ordinary !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	The UberApe is a genius. He can have whatever technological device that suits his plots.

Using the UberApe: The UberApe isn’t someone filled with hatred of humanity, but more of a hatred for science without ethics and those who use animals without care. He is an active member of several environmental and animal ethics groups either via aliases or huge donations. The UberApe is a good villain against social order as it stands, particularly military complexes or other animal-testing facilities. A heroic UberApe is easy enough though. He could serve his time if he felt it furthered his cause, then act as a super-hero when released, for what else would a super-smart ape do?

Wind—Frank Jaffertes

Frank was a man convicted of a crime and sentenced to prison. As a former police officer, prison life would have been short if not for the reform-minded warden, Elijah Sonnenfield. Together they worked to curb crime outside the prison and later to work on reform within it. The Wind evolved from a pure pulp two-fisted crime fighter into a seemingly mysterious mystic. Though often his powers seemed coincidental at best, his career has spanned numerous decades. The Wind was a handsome square-jawed man, with a largish nose and dark hair. He had deep-set eyes that were often called cold, even though he was a warm-hearted fellow. He dressed in a three-piece gray suit with a wide-brimmed fedora and an opera cape as well as a white scarf to conceal his features. First Appearance: *Analogous Moral Plays Presents #2*.

Wind (Frank Jaffertes)

DRIVE	Guilt
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Spectacular
KNOWN POWERS	None in the original incarnation The later presentation of the Wind seemingly gave him control of the wind itself, carrying his voice, turning aside bullets, though none of it apparently willed.

Wind "Control"

Attack: None

Defense: Spectacular

Movement: Spectacular

Manipulation: Spectacular

Helicopter: The earliest incarnation had a VTOL capable flying craft of the sort which one day would be called a helicopter. Ordinary !

Using the Wind: The Wind was a hero. At his core, he was the best example of heroism one could hope for in an age of dirty cops, felons abusing the system, and so on. He was a man willing to serve his time and do some good, though he could have run free. The Wind wouldn't make a good villain at all; it's against his nature.

Wordwield—Aaron Hoo

Aaron Hoo had always loved words ever since she was a little girl. She noticed quite early that certain words seemed to hold power—strange power—when used. Not just jargon or curse-words, but certain combinations of these and normal words. Studying languages, she learned that not everyone knew how to make words work, so she liked having fun with them. She decided that her secret knowledge needed to be shared, so tried to show it to the world. Laughed at, scorned, and mocked openly as a “weirdo”, she decided she’d prove her nay-sayers wrong, and turned her abilities to crime. Aaron is an attractive if bookish young woman. She wears glasses out of costume, but contacts in costume. Her costume is black with swirls of color in vibrant neon hues across it. Her hair is red and worn long—usually pulled back in a ponytail. First appearance: *Doc Radiant #17*.

Wordwield(Aaron Hoo)

DRIVE	Revenge
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Ordinary
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS **Word Magic:** Wordwield can create any effect she desires with a small sing-songy rhyme, this appears much like magic, but has never been explained.

Attack: Spectacular

Defense: Spectacular

Movement: Spectacular

Manipulation: Spectacular

Using Wordwield: Aaron is mostly out for showing people she was right. She feels the best way for her to make her point is to use her word abilities as a superhuman criminal. So she steals, but mostly for kicks. She does steal special books—rare editions she can’t get any other way—or other things which catch her fancy, but she’s more into it to show off her powers than to actually get the object. As a hero she’d use her powers to capture villains and teach the importance of reading.

Wild Pack

The Wild Pack was originally a biker gang noted for their robberies, all committed while wearing dog masks. Continued failure led them to submit to an experimental process designed to give them superhuman capabilities. Unfortunately, the “scientist” (Dr. Decepto) involved in the project had a significant black-humored streak and actually infected them with lycanthropy, turning them into werewolves. The Wild Pack is only marginally tied to the moon, and the transformations have not mellowed the Wild Pack any. The Wolfpack members vary in appearance by fur color, and they may either be in wolf form, or a hybrid form between man and wolf. In human form, they are imposing gang members with a penchant for leather and guns, though tattoos don't set anymore, much to their frustration, vanishing the next time they change forms. There are five members of the pack: Lupe, Mactavish, Crazy Tom, Wolf, and Nevada.

Wildpack Member

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Spectacular
RESILIENCE	Exceptional !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Spectacular
KNOWN POWERS	Note: In human form, their Might and Resilience drops to Exceptional.

All members of the Wild Pack are immune to injury, except from silver weapons, magic, or fire, when in their wolf shapes. They can be restrained, entangled, mentally, magically or otherwise impaired.

Heightened Senses: Each Pack member has much finer senses in wolf form. This is rated at Ordinary !

Using the Wild Pack: The Wild Pack is a group of dangerous thugs out to make a buck and cut their names across the country. They don't care who they hurt and kill, in an effort to gain their own wealth and infamy. Dr. Decepto's transformation actually made them less wild in some ways and more likely to cling together rather than tear apart from one another. This has only made them more dangerous, however.

Wreckless—P. Hilton-Hamilton, Jr.

A youth with a penchant for recklessness and speed, he was killed in one too many wild races, one which ended in a fiery crash. He sold his soul to a shadowy demonic force who promised him speed unending for a price. He awoke to find himself alive again, now with superhuman speed but inside the body he'd left behind—burnt, disfigured and horrific.

Wreckless wears a head-to-toe red costume with a burning pentagram on his chest streaked with speed stripes, and over his face, a skull mask. He has used his powers as a criminal speedster while seeking a way out of his deal. First Appearance: *Tombs of Tomorrow Omega* (Final Issue).



Wreckless (P. Hilton-Hamilton, Jr.)

DRIVE Revenge

MIGHT Spectacular

RESILIENCE Exceptional !

PROWESS Ordinary

DEFTNESS Exceptional

BRAINS Ordinary

RESOLVE Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS **Superspeed:** Wreckless can move at superhuman speeds.

Attack: Ordinary !

Defense: Ordinary !

Movement: Ordinary !

Manipulation: None

Hot Foot: Wreckless can leave a burning trail behind him or project bolts of flame. Ordinary !

Undead Body: Immune to poisons, toxins, diseases—his undead body pretty much is just meat now. It runs on hell fire and black magic, not flesh and blood.

Using Wreckless: Wreckless hates super-heroes, particularly speedsters, with a passion. Anyone who even remotely seems faster than him is target for his hatred and desire for revenge. Wreckless is a good rival for such heroes, showing up to smack them down, and he has few things to risk in doing so—after all he can't die more! Wreckless isn't a good source for super-heroic turn around.

Xerxes

The thief who calls himself Xerxes is a superhuman capable of getting through anything and into anywhere, or so he claims. Xerxes is a seemingly mild-mannered thief who prefers non-violence. Xerxes' superhuman powers seem at odds with his profession: he is virtually immune to injury, and superhumanly strong, yet he relies on skill over brute force, and brains over brawn in his actions. Xerxes managed an escape from the MESA, but intentionally betrayed other prisoners to be caught along with him, after one of his fellow escapees threatened to kill. Xerxes is a thin man with blond hair and blue eyes. Considered handsome, he often wears a close-cropped goatee and smiles a lot. He doesn't wear a costume—just a darksuit or camo, and his gear for breaking and entering. First Appearance: *Doctor Radiant #19*.

Xerxes

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Exceptional !
RESILIENCE	Spectacular !
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Spectacular
KNOWN POWERS	Body Armor: Xerxes has Spectacular ! Body armor in addition to his native resilience and strength. He has survived a close hit by a nuclear weapon without harm.

Using Xerxes: Xerxes is a thief. He like to steal, but he won't hurt others. He and Lady Magpie would seem two of a kind, but dislike each other immensely—rumors of a lover's spat have been passed around. Xerxes likes nothing more than the act of stealing. If someone put it to him right, he might be a hero or at least someone on the side of angels for a little while. Xerxes prefers to utilize his skill rather than his superhuman traits to succeed—Picking locks, overcoming technical security systems, rather than just smash-and-grab jobs.



Millennia's Major Players

The Guardian

He is called the first, but there were others before him. He is just the most powerful. Hiding his plans within other plans, the Guardian is a man of many dark secrets, turning away virtuous allies and sinking his hooks into the less than law-abiding, turning them towards his seemingly benevolent goals. He is haunted by a past he cannot escape, one that he unravels minute by minute.

In another time, he was a hero—there he was also the first, for a while. His great need for justice and law conflicted with the chaos of humanity. It conflicted until he chose how the world would be shaped, chose to impose his will upon that chaos to shape it. People lived by his command and died by his will. He was like a god, giving peace, prosperity, and order to the world. But these were gifts mankind was not ready for, and they fought and rebelled against him. In anger at the rejection of his gifts, he slew them all—10 billion humans died in one instant and left him the only remaining person on a blackened, blasted world.

The sight of the carnage appalled him and he wept bitter tears. Holding the bones of a child, he screamed his rage, directing it at himself. The sun went nova—but he was already gone, sliding with stolen power back into the past. He stood over a babe, silent and asleep, and claimed that body, shaping it again into his likeness. Thus, he sought to rewrite the history of the world. He knows the paradox will destroy him, but he hopes not until he has built a world of not just heroes, but super-heroes—people whose existence inspires a future where he, or anyone like him, can never exist.

The Guardian is of average appearance, 6'1" tall, and dresses in jeans, long-sleeved, button-up shirts, and a large denim or khaki jacket. He wouldn't be noticed in a crowd and this serves his purposes just fine. First Appearance: *Millennium's Eve #0*.

The Guardian is a plot effect—anything he wants happens, although it may take some effort for him.

Using The Guardian: The Guardian is a pretty much a force. He's not malevolent, but his motives are his own. He's best used to exemplify just how dangerous the universe can be and how narrow the edge between good and evil.

The Guardian's Marshalls

Fade

Former Police Officer Rollie Fisk was nearly killed in the line of duty. He remained in a comatose state until the Guardian paid one million dollars to the hospital to take the officer off their hands. Having no relatives to protest, they complied. Nanotechnology and the Guardian's own powers rebuilt Fade's damaged nerve cells, giving him enhanced senses. Fade worked as one of Guardian's Marshalls until he realized that his methods and the Guardian's just didn't mesh. As with all of Guardian's Marshalls, he has an identity as a Federal Marshal, which he uses as a cover when operating visibly. Fade's own metasapient trait awoke just prior to his defection from the Guardian's camp. His power makes him "fade" from people's memories. Even recording him doesn't seem to work. All clear details become vague and blurry to onlookers and they never can accurately remember him or details of what he spoke to them about. Fade is a thin, lean man with wiry frame, dark hair, and dark eyes. Fade appears as a thin young man who somehow manages to scream "cop" even though he no longer is one. His blue or black clothing is typically plain. He always wears shades. He dresses in trench coat and dark clothes and carries a collapsible staff. First Appearance: *Marshalls of the Millennium #1*.

Fade

DRIVE	Guardianship
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Exceptional
DEFTNESS	Spectacular
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	Fade has heightened senses at Exceptional ! Rank.

Using Fade: Fade is a good resource who can show up and help train newly awakened heroes. He spent a lot of his time wandering the country, looking to build a force of just such heroes not beholden to anyone, but properly trained to use their powers for good. As a villain, Fade's fear of the Guardian's agenda has turned him into a dangerous rogue willing to hurt anyone to make things swing his way.

Fulcrum

Briefly partnered to Fade, the metasapient Fulcrum was a construction worker who set about drowning his life after his wife left him and took their 2-year-old daughter. His wife's infidelity had led him to alcohol in the first place, trying to use it as an escape from the truths he knew. Fulcrum's alcoholism lost him his daughter and, broken-hearted, he sought to end it all. Guardian intervened and offered to find a way to restore Fulcrum's daughter to him as well as help him fight his addiction to alcohol.

Guardian has so far managed the latter, but not yet the former, as he plans on doing so completely legally, so no one can undo it later. Fulcrum's metasapient trait is a very powerful force field effect—so long as he concentrates and keeps believing in himself, he can't be harmed. Doubts, however, can limit his force field to a lower and less-than-absolute defense. Fulcrum under Guardian's tutelage became a leader and revealed the common sense wisdom and innate intellect he'd hidden in order to face the day-to-day tasks of his previous profession. Fulcrum is a tall, well-muscled man, with short brown hair, a square jaw, and classic American looks. First Appearance: *Marshals of the Millennium #1*.

Fulcrum

DRIVE Guardianship

MIGHT Exceptional !

RESILIENCE Exceptional

PROWESS Ordinary

DEFTNESS Exceptional

BRAINS Exceptional

RESOLVE Exceptional !

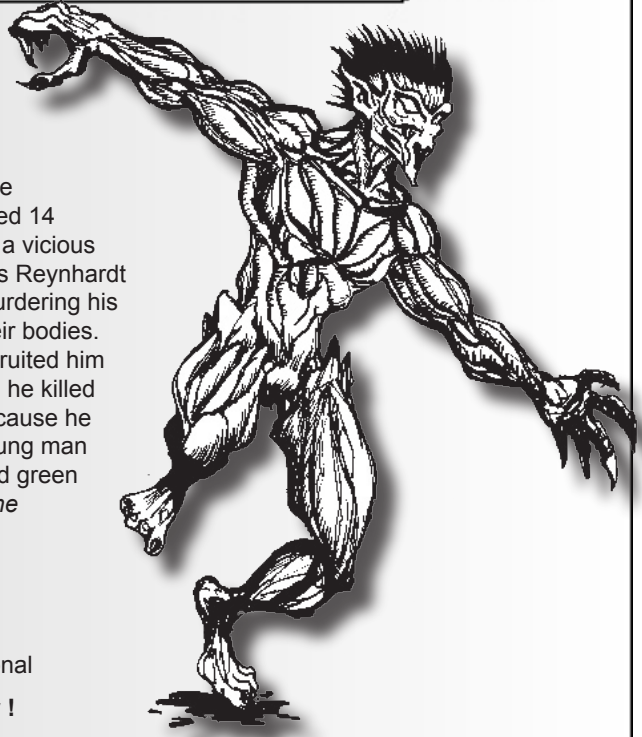
KNOWN POWERS Fulcrum can generate a strength-boosting psionic force field around himself. It provides protection equal to his resolve. If he takes stress he must make a check or lose the field and have to re-establish it. If he rolls less than the standard target number on a resolve check, his field and strength will be one rank less.

Using Fulcrum: Fulcrum is a quiet leader now with a solid reason to keep people together. He's quite powerful, and he feels that power should be used to protect people. He feels that training for the Awakened will need to be far more widespread than one man can manage, and so supports the Guardian's agenda, at least as it stands. Fulcrum as a villain would require Guardian as a villain, and he'd become a powerful enforcer for the Guardian's more mundane whims.

Other Millennia Notables:

Fleshcrawler—Alexis Reynhardt

Fleshcrawler is a madman, whose powers awoke while he lay in his padded cell about to be sedated. He escaped, at least momentarily, and killed 14 people on his way out. Fleshcrawler is a vicious and cruel being. His real name is Alexis Reynhardt and he was originally committed for murdering his family—he was found giggling over their bodies. Project Prometheus found him and recruited him to use against other metasapients until he killed one of their command colonels just because he could. Alexis is a tall, good-looking, young man in his early twenties, with spiky hair and green eyes. First Appearance: *Marshalls of the Millennium #7*.



Fleshcrawler

DRIVE	Hatred
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Ordinary !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary !
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Ordinary
KNOWN POWERS	Fleshcrawler can manipulate his flesh and bone, turning it into a semi-armored carapace which protects him from damage to his vitals and allows him to extend his limbs and manifest a variety of weapons made of bone—claws, maces, blades etc.

Attack: Ordinary !
Defense: Ordinary !
Manipulation: Ordinary !
Movement: Ordinary !

Major Arcane

Nigel Arcane was a disgraced British military officer who turned to occult pursuits after being shot down in a transport plane and going MIA for nearly a year. Major Arcane put together a team of mercenary Metas of low power and attempted to steal a variety of archaeological artifacts, advanced computers, and other items in pursuit of something called the Primal Fount. In his travels, he discovered an ancient Egyptian sorcerer-priest who awoke after a millennium of stasis who set about claiming the world for his own (see Lord Malevolence). Major Arcane and his team reached the Fount carrying the computer programmer/linguist and Sleepwalker, Thomas McGinn, as a hostage. The fountain awoke in the presence of Arcane's team, the Guardian and his Marshals, and Lord Malevolence. The Fount rejected and killed Major Arcane, and drove Lord Malevolence from the room. Major Arcane was a thin, dark-haired man with a deep mellow voice that carried well, even though he was soft-spoken. First Appearance: *Millennial Tales* #2.

Major Arcane

DRIVE	Megalomania
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Exceptional
RESOLVE	Exceptional
KNOWN POWERS	None

Using Major Arcane: Should someone resurrect him or use him at a time prior to his death, he'd be obsessed with finding or tapping the Primal Fount and appropriating that power for himself. If that were impossible, he might seek out more mundane power until he could find a source of magic for himself. Major Arcane really doesn't work as a hero, as he's just too self-absorbed.

Rampage

Rampage was the first-known physically powered metasapien. He appears as a normal 4 year-old, but when angered, he grows to 7 feet 8 inches in height, and puts on nearly 2000 lbs of bone and muscle. His skin turns gray and resembles that of a rhinoceros. Dotting his body are tiny hardened spikes of flesh, similar in structure to a rhino's horn. Beyond the mere physical transformation, Rampage can withstand nearly any known portable weapon, including antitank weapons. As he is driven by rage, his four-year-old's reasoning ability and a strength which can tear tanks in half make him incredibly dangerous. Rampage appears as a 4 year-old boy until angered, at which time his body transforms into a 7-foot tall 2000lbs behemoth with thick gray rhino-like hide covered in knobby horns. First Appearance: *Marshalls of the Millennium* #3.

Rampage

DRIVE	Hatred
MIGHT	Spectacular !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional !
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Spectacular

KNOWN POWERS Rampage's superhuman strength is his most notable power, but just as important is his resistance to arms. He has body armor ranked at Exceptional ! that protects him from harm.

Using Rampage: Rampage is a living force of elemental level destruction. He is nigh unstoppable and makes a good foe for heroes. He isn't too bright or quick thinking, being he's only four years of age. Rampage might grow up to be a hero, but that's a long number of years away.

Tendril and Heavy Metal

Tendril is a tough, no-nonsense street hood of indeterminate heritage. He has the ability to generate barbed tendrils of translucent glowing-green force. These tendrils can exert enormous pressure, and are capable of piercing armored cars and lifting nearly a ton. Heavy Metal is Tendril's somewhat dimwitted partner. Heavy Metal by himself is rather tenderhearted, but he and Tendril have a long relationship of relying on one another, and thus Heavy Metal gets into trouble right alongside his friend. Heavy Metal can transform his body into a very resilient bronze-colored metal. It is non-ferrous and capable of turning bullets and even light anti-tank fire. When transformed, he can lift several tons. Heavy Metal, in human form, is a tanned young man, with a bodybuilder's muscles and head shaved bald. First Appearance: *Millennial Tales #6*.

Tendril

DRIVE	Greed
MIGHT	Exceptional
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Exceptional
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Ordinary
KNOWN POWERS	Tendril can generate glowing green tendrils of force that end in wickedly barbed tips. He can use these as a defense or a weapon among many other things.
	<i>Attack: Ordinary !</i>
	<i>Defense: Ordinary !</i>
	<i>Manipulation: Ordinary !</i>
	<i>Movement: None</i>

Using Tendril: Tendril is a dangerous hood, but he might be talked into heroism to help Heavy Metal.

Heavy Metal

DRIVE	Love
MIGHT	Exceptional !
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Ordinary
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Ordinary
RESOLVE	Ordinary

KNOWN POWERS

Body Transformation: Heavy Metal can become a bronze-like metal which boosts his strength to the above rank. It also provides him with Exceptional ! Armor that helps protect him from harm.

Using Heavy Metal: Heavy Metal is just a little dull-witted. He can be talked into doing anything but hurting Tendril, who's been his friend since they were little.

Lord Malevolence

An Egyptian sorcerer, several thousand years old, whose powers mostly come from his mastery of occult magic. In this new age, he found his powers greatly diminished until the Primal Fount was discovered. He appears as an older man of Egyptian descent with a balding head and long fringe of white hair. Embedded in his forehead is a worked amulet of bronze with a strange gem, resembling an eye. Lord Malevolence claims it is the Eye of Set, Egyptian God of Serpents (and evil in some myths). Lord Malevolence uses his powers to set himself up as a god and “collects” the souls of those who oppose him and stores them in a room he calls the “Gallery of Broken Souls.” First Appearance: *Millennium’s Eve #1*.

Lord Malevolence

DRIVE	Megalomania
MIGHT	Ordinary
RESILIENCE	Exceptional
PROWESS	Spectacular
DEFTNESS	Ordinary
BRAINS	Spectacular
RESOLVE	Spectacular
KNOWN POWERS	Before the Fount is awakened, Lord Malevolence only has a handful of items with power he can use, all ranked at Spectacular Magical Ability. After the Fount is awakened, he can perform acts up to Ordinary ! Magical ability.

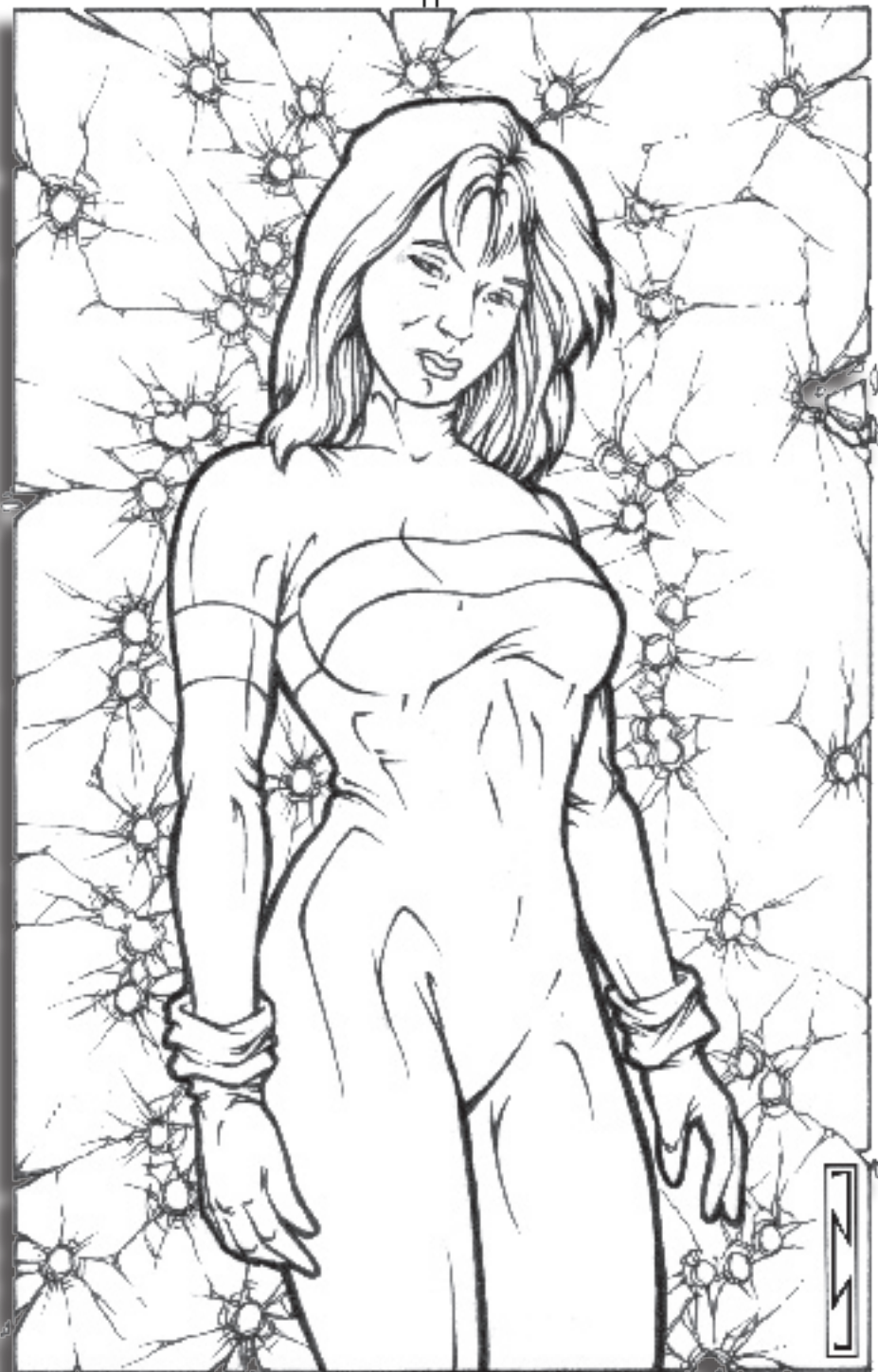
Using Lord Malevolence: Malevolence is a classic work of villainy. He plans and plots using his careful thought against people. Unlike a classic comic book foe, he kills people at his mercy—most of the time. Lord Malevolence has too much fun torturing and killing to ever be a hero.

Awakening

The process of a sleeper (*Homo sapiens*) Awakening varies on a case-by-case basis, but the core reactions are the same. First headaches and dizziness set in, the severity and swiftness of which has been known to cause severe accidents. The Awakening human suffers a mild fever and within a few minutes their metasapient trait activates for the first time. The Awakening process tends to occur in clusters—a city will have four to five occur over the course of a day or two. The vast bulk of those who awaken don’t do so fully—the trait is so mild, that they don’t even realize they have a power. These are called “Sleepwalkers” and don’t consciously know they possess any gift. Thomas McGinn, for example, was a Sleepwalker with a near-superhuman ability with computer languages and possibly other language talents. He developed the computer program “Lexicon”, which allowed small samples of language to be translated into nearly any other language, even dead languages, with a few samples of text or symbols. Sleepwalkers for the most part will never know they are gifted, because they simply don’t perform much beyond the normal human level. All research so far points to the fact that Metasapients may really be the next step in human evolution—except that they appear genetically identical to normal humans.

Metasapiens/Metasapients: The term for those with superpowers or enhanced abilities. Typically these powers have a mental component—super strength, for example, often coincides with a glowing force field or crackling aura of energy—because it is primarily a psionic enhancement of physical abilities rather than a true physiological alteration. A few, such as Rampage, are known to be primarily physical.

Using the Real World: The world outside your window, down your street, or on your television is the same world as that of *Millennia*. The metasapients wage a secret war that no one really knows about and no one sees. Is that road construction really necessary maintenance? Or did a massive brawl between two metas take place in the dim hours of the night? Is that missing child kidnapped, or did they Awaken into something more than human and vanish into the wilderness? Draw stories for *Millennia* from your local news on paper and on television. Shade in the Awakened within the boundaries of belief and imagination, for it is just a hair different from our own world.



Suggested Reading

BOOKS AND COMIC BOOKS

The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier and Clay (Novel) - Michael Chabon

A prize-winning novel that had a lot of influence on AMP particularly even though it isn't a genre book. Instead it's a story of fictional comic book creators, their lives and secrets, as well as bit of a history of the ups and downs of the industry. The fact that it introduces a fun pulpish super-hero as their creation and gives some of his story is also quite cool.

Astro City (Comic Book Series) - Kurt Busiek

One of the best comic book series of all time, telling stories about the people in a traditional comic book setting, not just super-heroes and their battles. It's a unique and very honest approach to storytelling breathes new life into genre.

Planetary (Comic Book Series) - Warren Ellis

Another fantastic work, darker than *Astro City*, it tells a secret history of super-heroes through the eyes of a few characters whose ultimate purpose may not be their own.

God Loves Man Kills (X-men Graphic Novel) - Christopher Claremont

A X-men graphic novel it introduces us to a religious crusade against mutants and the Rev. Stryker a televangelist and former military man whose fear and hatred blind him to real faith instead being a zealot with an enemy. Wonderfully told, written and at its heart represents the best of what the X-men should be.

Days of Future Past (Comic) - Christopher Claremont

The "death" of the X-men: I can't say enough about how well this was done in presenting a dark, unhappy outcome for

superheroes and how powerful that kind of story is when well told.

Rising Stars (Comic) - J. Michael Straczynski

A unique telling of the coming of super-heroes to our world. Straczynski is a good storyteller. While I enjoyed it some of the ideas were better presented and used previously in *Babylon 5* (his other notable work).

Peer Review (Story) - Michael Stackpole (found in the Super-heroes short-story collection, edited by John Varley)

One of the best stories of a detective style, un-powered heroes I've ever read. Nemesis, the Nightmare Detective, opposes a whole team of superheroes over a legal issue versus a moral one. Fantastically told.

Psycho (Comic) - J. Hudnall/D. Brereton

Published by DC Comics in bookshelf format, this mini-series is unique. Pitting a secret agent being phased out (for being only human) against S.C.O.'s (Secret Costumed Operatives nicknamed Psychos), and F.C.O. (Freelance Costume Operatives) in a espionage story that ends up with him becoming an S.C.O. to rescue his love interest. It only goes wrong from there.

Wild Cards (Novels) - Edited by: George R. R. Martin

Darker than standard comic book heroes, it tells of a world where an alien virus can make superpowered beings, give them the appearance of monsters, or worse.

The whole work fundamental reading and good exploration of how NOT to tell super-hero stories. But rather to tell stories about people who have powers. The quality of the series varies with the writer of the short piece, and the novels tend to be less impressive than the shorts of the first few books.

GAMES

Psi World (Role-playing Game) - Fantasy Games Unlimited

A wonderful if quirk little engine for Psionics. I'm probably one of its few fans, but it had a lot of good ideas for gaming for me.

Providence (RPG) - XID Creative

A fantasy setting in which super-heroes exist. The editorial introduction in one of the books is worth reading as it speaks of heroes, and the lack of them in gaming.

The world is one of the more unique ones up there and is well conveyed. The rules leave a bit to be desired but it is a nice fun game and one of my favorites.

Truth and Justice (RPG) - Atomic Sock Monkey Press

Chad Underkoffler's super-heroic game using his Prose Descriptive Quality System. I wish I could say it influenced me more, but H&S was heavily in gear before T&J had been released. It is very brilliant and well worth picking up.

Marvel Superheroes (RPG)-TSR

Published in the 80s, this game was the first super-hero game I played (but not owned), and influenced me a great deal. It was probably also one my most-played games. While long out-of-print it is worth looking for to see for yourself.

Marvel Super Heroes Adventure Game (AKA Marvel Saga) (RPG)-TSR

Another game, another engine for Marvel, published by the same company as MSH above. A solid, fast card-driven engine that puts the power in the player's hands, quite literally. Highly recommended as well.

Freedom Force and Freedom Force Vs The Third Reich (Video Games) - Irrational Games

Web sites that rock eight ways from Sunday:

Heromachine: <http://www.heromachine.com/>

Seventh Sanctum: <http://www.seventhsanctum.com/>

RPG.net: <http://www.rpg.net/>

TV SERIES

Buffy the Vampire Slayer (TV Series) - Joss Whedon

Technically one might argue this isn't super-heroic, but a girl with powers destined to protect people seems pretty super-heroic to me. While not for everyone the themes of this show deserve a hard look for any super-hero fan wanting to tell comic book style drama—relationship issues, secret id issues, power issues, all the drama of those things and more.

Appendix 1: Things of Note

Here is a list of creatures, objects, and other information for comparison purposes grouped using the same rank and scale system as capabilities and powers.

ORDINARY THINGS

Handgun: A firearm which may contain between 6-12 bullets on average and does Ordinary Human scale damage.
Bicycle: The speed of a rapidly moving non-motorized self propelled vehicle.

Mouse

Calling: Greed
 Might: —
 Deftness: Exceptional
 Resilience: —
 Brains: —
 Prowess: Ordinary
 Resolve: Ordinary
 Known Powers:

Tiny Size: Due to its size the Mouse can pass through openings that would seem impossible for a creature with bones, it is also terribly difficult to catch

Defense: Spectacular
 Movement: Spectacular

A mouse fails all actions where it doesn't have a stat. It simply is too small to have a noticeable effect.

House Cat

Calling: Meglomania
 Might: Ordinary
 Deftness: Exceptional
 Resilience: Ordinary
 Brains: —
 Prowess: Ordinary
 Resolve: Ordinary
 Known Powers:

A cat has incredible night vision that lets it see in all but absolute darkness, this is rated at Spectacular

Stress Trigger: The cat is small and frail compared to human and takes stress for any use of Might or Resilience.

Average Canine

Drive: Guardianship
 Might: Ordinary
 Deftness: Ordinary
 Resilience: Exceptional
 Brains: —
 Prowess: Ordinary
 Resolve: Exceptional
 Known Powers:

Dog's are most noted for their acute olfactory capabilities your average canine can follow a scent with Spectacular ability.

Stress Trigger: The average canine is not as agile as most humans and takes stress whenever he uses Deftness.

EXCEPTIONAL THINGS

Cheetah's running speed!

Rifle

A long arm noted for its caliber, and effective range. It does Exceptional Human Scale Damage.

Wolf

Drive: Community
 Might: Exceptional
 Deftness: Ordinary
 Resilience: Exceptional
 Brains: —
 Prowess: Ordinary
 Resolve: Exceptional
 Known Powers:

A Wolf like their descendants dogs are noted for their acute olfactory capabilities a wolf Can track a scent with Spectacular ability.

Stress Trigger: The average canine is not as agile as most humans and takes stress whenever he uses Deftness.

SPECTACULAR THINGS

Automobile: A car can reach Spectacular Speeds

This is the speed of a bird in flight.

Bear (Grizzly)

Drive: Greed

Might: Ordinary!

Deftness: Ordinary

Resilience: Spectacular

Brains: —

Prowess: Ordinary

Resolve: Exceptional

The Bear is a powerful animal, the Grizzly one of its most ornery incarnations. The Bear is most noted for its strength and speed, although large they are not ponderous when they are inspired to pursue something.

ORDINARY ! THINGS

Speed of a fast Sports Car can reach Ordinary! speeds.

Speed of a helicopter.

Orca

Drive: Greed

Might: Exceptional !

Deftness: Ordinary

Resilience: Ordinary !

Brains: —

Prowess: Ordinary

Resolve: Ordinary

The orca is a large meat eating water born sea-mammal, a whale, it is sometimes called a "Killer Whale".

EXCEPTIONAL ! THINGS

Speed of a Fast Jet

Tyranosaurus Rex

Drive: Greed

Might: Exceptional !

Deftness: Exceptional

Resilience: Exceptional !

Brains: —

Prowess: Ordinary

Resolve: Ordinary

A Tyranosaurus's bite is a terrible weapon (Spectacular !) effect, but it has no manipulation with its forlimbs and a rather primitive brain tied to visual cues.

SPECTACULAR ! THINGS

Speed of the Spaceshuttle.

A Blue whale

Drive: Spirit of Adventure

Might: Spectacular !

Deftness: Ordinary

Resilience: Ordinary !

Brains: Ordinary

Prowess: Ordinary

Resolves: Exceptional

A Blue whale is the largest creature known to exist, a powerful majestic sea mammal.

Appendix 2: Hearts and Souls Random PC Inspiration Generator.

These are meant for idea springboards, not for creating full player characters, a sense of humor may be required, and always the imaginative minds of the game group to twist and bend what comes up into an actual character worth playing.

THE PLAYER CHARACTER “RANDOM” GENERATOR

Each numbered space below belongs to a table, players may pick, or roll on that table to select a word that helps define their characters.

The (1)_____ (2)_____ has amazing (3)_____ which (7)_____ (4)_____ when they were (5)_____.

Because of (7)_____ (6)_____ (7)_____ uses these (3) to (8)_____ (9)_____.

1)

- 1-3 Choose an insect or animal
- 4 Choose a action word (Dancing, Speeding, Leaping)
- 5-6 Choose an element or color
- 7 Choose a natural phenomena (storm, quake, wave) or a manmade event (battle, challenge)
- 8 Choose a millitary rank or title (Captain, General, Mr., Dr., Etc.)

2)

- 1-3 Choose an an insect or animal (different from above)
- 4-5 Choose a word meaning person (boy, girl, man, woman see 7 however and match as necessary!)
- 6-7 Choose a heroic term (Champion, Paragon, Knight) or a Patriotic term (patriot, flagwaver)
- 8 Choose the name of a location (State, country, region)

3)

- 1-4 Powers
- 5-6 Gadgets
- 7 Skills/Attributes
- 8 Magic

4)

- 1 Built
- 2-4 Discovered
- 5-6 Developed or Learned
- 7-8 Imbued

5)

- 1-2 Born
- 3-5 Bitten/Stung or Exposed to
- 6-7 Studying
- 8 Irradiated

6)

- 1-4 Love
- 5-6 Guilt
- 7 Spirit of Adventure
- 8 Community

7)

- 1 it/its
- 2-5 He/his
- 6-8 She/hers

(8)

- 1-2 Fight
- 3-5 Defend
- 6-7 Champion
- 8 Rescue

9) Choose plural noun, abstract, or cause (people, evil, PETA)

Example: The War Slug has amazing powers which he discovered when he was born because of his guilt he uses powers to fight PETA

THE RANDOM VILLAIN TABLE:

(1)_____ (2)_____ uses (3)_____ to (4)_____ because (5)_____ is driven by (5)_____ (6)_____.

(1)

- 1-3 Choose a Noble title (King, Queen, Noble, Baron, Duchess)
- 4 Choose a Color (Red, Black, Blue)
- 5-7 Chose a title (Dr., Mister, Professor, Miss, Lady) or an adjective term for bad/evil (Hellish, Devil, Dark)
- 8 Choose an article (a or the)

(2)

- 1-3 Choose an animal or insect
- 4-5 Choose a term meaning bad/evil/dark (malign, malovelant, Dark, Evil)
- 6-7 Choose a material or energy (Steel, Water, Fire, radiation)
- 8 Choose a material or energy (Steel, Water, Fire, radiation)

(3)

- 1-3 Gadgets
- 4-6 Powers
- 7 Attributes/Skills
- 8 Magic

(4)

- 1-4 Destroy
- 5-6 Control
- 7-8 Plot

(5)

- 1 it/its
- 2-5 he/his
- 6-8 she/hers

(6)

- 1-4 Greed
- 5-6 Megalomania
- 7 Hatred
- 8 Love

Hell Rider uses powers to destroy because he is driven by his hatred.

These tables are meant primarily to be used to help stimulate ideas. You should always apply them with a little common sense and a sense of fun (based on the tone of the game your running).

Adding terms or changing them to make more sense is encouraged! Have fun!

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HEARTS & SOULS

Player:

Name:

DRIVE:

MIND:

RESOLVE:

POWER:

DEFENSE:

STRONG:

RESOLVE:

KNOWN POWERS:

OPINION: