The Secret Society of Singular Specialists

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The Setting

You are a person with unique abilities that sets you apart from other people. This ability may be something that you are famous for, or it may be something that you prefer to keep hidden, so few other people know about it.

In any case, you are one day approached by representatives of a secret government-funded group called "4S", short for "The Secret Society of Singular Specialists". You are being told that 4S are called to solve problems that are outside the scope of police, military and even the usual intelligence organisations. You are offered a good pay and the companionship of other unique characters as well as an opportunity to serve your country. But the 4S is so secret that the government will deny any connection with its members, and all contact with the government is through a gentleman known to you only as "H", who gives you your tasks and provides the means you need.

The GM plays the part of H and all persons aside from the player characters, who are each a Singular Specialist.

The game starts with recruitment: The player characters are, one by one, approached by H and offered membership of 4S. Each such recruitment is played as a short session where the PC is using his abilities and is, during or immediately after this, approached by H. This short session serves to introduce the PC to the group.

When all PCs are recruited, they are shown to a town house or mansion that will serve as their new home and headquarters. This place comes complete with a selection of vehicles and sufficient staff to keep the members from having to do household chores.

Each campaign starts with H approaching the group with a new task, which usually involves strange phenomena or other people with special abilities. Example: Precious artifacts are stolen from several museums with no sign of break in, and the 4S are called to find the thieves and recover the objects. But they find that there is more than simple theft behind this. When this task is resolved, one way or other, the group reconvenes. If a PC should die during a campaign, a new recruit may be introduced to the group.

The time and place of the setting can vary: 19th century England will give a flavour similar to The League of Extraordinary Gentlemen while 21st century USA will give a flavour like Agents of Shield or The Avengers. Imperial China, Ptolemaic Egypt or colonial America are other interesting possibilities. History should not be adhered to strictly: There are supernatural elements like super powers, mad tech (steampunk or futuristic), magic and so on. This is likely to make society and history subtly or blatantly different from what you learned in school.

Character Creation

All characters are assumed to be average humans except for their special abilities. Age, sex, looks, and all other "mundane" aspects are described only by words.

Character creation is simple: Each character describes a number of abilities and weaknesses each rated from 1 to 3. The sum of abilities should equal the sum of weaknesses and should not exceed a number set by the GM (usually 3 to 5). A short background story that describes how the character came to have these abilities is made. Abilities, weaknesses and back story are subject to GM approval and should fit the power level of the campaign.

Sample characters

These have different power levels, so they might not work well together.

Mad scientist You work with science on an intuitive level and can construct amazing contraptions. You are, however, not disciplined enough to report your results in a way that other people can comprehend, so you are not truly respected in the scientific community. **Abilities:** Construct technological marvels (2). Find weaknesses in technological constructions (1). **Weaknesses:** Your constructions are a bit rushed and corners are cut, so they may not be entirely reliable, especially with repeated use (1). You have absolutely no social skills (1), You suffer from a debilitating disease that you, with partial success, try to combat using your technological expertise (1).

Magician You have learned the ancient arts by studying forgotten works or with ancient, now departed masters. **Abilities:** You can summon spirits or demons

to perform tasks for you; these usually disappear after completing a single task (2). You can recognize and use magical items and detect magical auras (1). **Weaknesses:** You have enemies in magical circles (1). You can not use electronic equipment, as your magical aura interferes (1). The demons you summon are inimical and will try to interpret your commands in a way that is not to your benefit (1)

Vampire You are a vampire with all that implies. **Abilities:** You heal most forms of physical damage almost instantly (3). You can shape-shift to a wolf or bat (2). **Weaknesses:** Direct sunlight burns you at a rate of one wound level per minute (2). You must drink the blood of living creatures to survive (1). You can not enter a building unless invited (1). Religious symbols cause you intense pain (1).

Martial artist You are an expert in several forms of martial arts, both with and without weapons. **Abilities:** You have exceptional skills in unarmed combat and classical, non-technological weapons (1). You can perform acrobatic feats (1). You can move stealthily (1). **Weaknesses:** You adhere to a strict a code of conduct (1). You have only limited grasp of the language and customs used where the adventures take place (1). You must spend an average of four hours per day to keep up your training (1).

Mechanics

The character attempting a task gets an ability value A equals the highest rating of abilities that are appropriate for the task minus the highest rating of weaknesses that may hinder the task and plus 1 if the task is something that is not beyond normal human capabilities.

For unopposed tasks, the GM decides a difficulty factor D ranging from 0 (trivial) to 4 (challenging), occasionally using difficulty 5 or more for extremely challenging tasks. For opposed actions, the ability value of the opponent (possibly adjusted by circumstances) is used as D. If either A or D is negative, both are increased equally until one is 0. If several characters combine forces, the GM may assign a combined ability value depending on the characters' abilities and how well they can act together.

The player rolls $A + D + 1$ six-sided dice, removes the A lowest and D highest results, leaving a single die. The resulting value is interpreted in the following way:

1. **No, and**: You fail to achieve the desired result and, additionally, something bad happens as a side effect.

2. **No**: You fail at achieving the desired result, but nothing else of interest happens.

3. **No, but**: You fail at achieving the desired result but, additionally, something that mitigates the failure happens as a side effect.

4. **Yes, but**: You achieve the desired result, but something bad happens as an unintended side effect.

5. **Yes**: You achieve the desired result, and nothing else of interest happens.

6. **Yes, and**: You achieve the desired result and, additionally, get an extra benefit, which either magnifies the result or provides an unrelated advantage.

It is up to the GM to determine what the side effects are, but the player can suggest appropriate effects through narrating what he tries to achieve and what the risks are. The GM is not required to follow these suggestions.

Combat and damage

Combat is done as opposed actions using the above rules, treating failures as opponent successes. If an attack is successful, the opponent receives a minor wound. If a character that already has a minor wound receives another wound, they combine to become a serious wound. A character with a serious wound will subtract one die from his ability value in all rolls until the wound is healed. If he receives another wound while seriously wounded, the wound becomes critical, and the character is taken out of action and will not be able to take any nontrivial action until the wound is reduced to serious. A wound on top of a critical will kill the character. It takes one week to heal from a minor wound, one month to reduce a serious wound to a minor wound and three months to reduce a critical wound to a serious wound.

A benefit from a "Yes, and" result in combat can be used to knock the opponent unconscious. It takes four hours to wake from this.

If two characters gang up on a third, they may chose to do this as two separate combat rolls or combine their forces to make one roll with a higher combined ability.

Karma points

In addition to affecting dice rolls, a character's weakness can be exploited by enemies or the GM to bring the character into a hazardous situation or to aggravate an already hazardous situation.

When this happens, the player gets a karma point, which can later be added to the ability value of any later roll (even if the character is opposing another character). Use of karma points must be announced before the dice are rolled. A karma point, once used, is not returned to the player, and only one karma point can be used in a single roll.