

ATLAS OF EARTH PRIME



A FANTASTIC WORLD OF
SUPERHEROIC ADVENTURE FOR
MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS

ATLAS OF

EARTH PRIME

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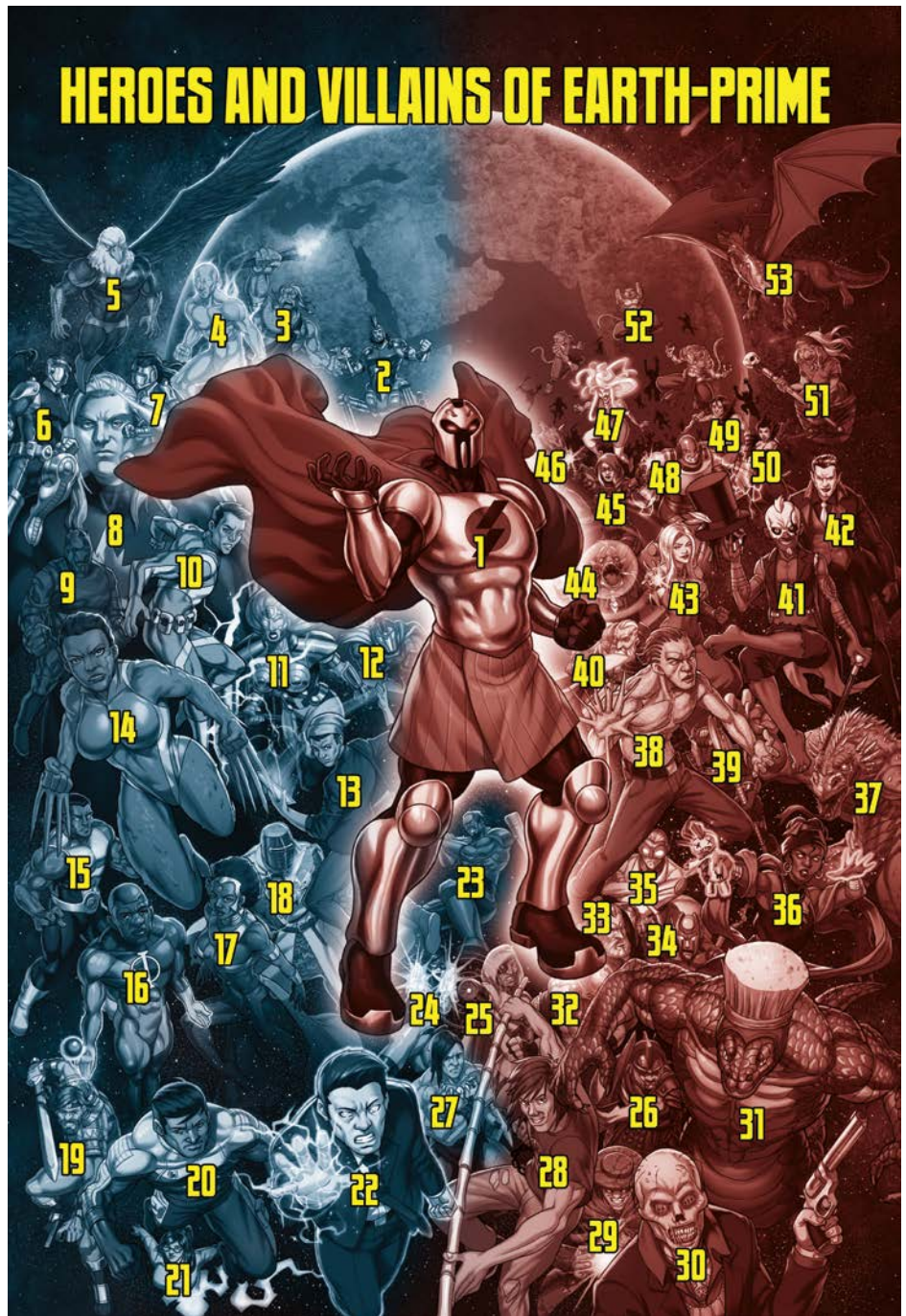
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4. El Aguila de Sangre
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9. Labrador Rock
10. El Crononauta
11. Skjaldmeyjar
12. Ajax
13. #Hashtag
14. Coral
15. Kupe
16. Maitre Aimant
17. Fantasma
18. The Knight of Malta
19. The Slayer
20. El Bolivariano
21. Delphi
22. Central Power Collective Agent
23. Macroth
24. Stella D'Argento
25. Dominion
26. Duca Nefando
27. Zandar the Jungle Lord
28. Hanuman
29. The Ophidian Magus
30. Tepalcatl
31. Cottonmouth
32. Dreckete Party Cyborg
33. Dreckete Party Cyborg
34. Dreckete Party Cyborg
35. Dreckete Party Cyborg
36. Lady Mamba
37. Tarrasque
38. Snowman
39. Black Anubis
40. Cyber Viking
41. Baron Samedi
42. Count Dracula
43. Countess Carat
44. Frog Prince
45. Red Hood
46. Big Bad Wolf
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INTRODUCTION

Earth-Prime—known for years simply as “the World of Freedom”—started off small, just a single city on the Eastern Seaboard of the United States. The *Freedom City* sourcebook established a number of things about the world outside of the city’s borders, but the rest of the world still rated no more than a few pages of that book, barely a glimpse. Then came *Emerald City* and the world stretched between two poles, one on the east coast, the other on the west coast. Emerald City shifted the sole focus away from its sister city and began to widen the world. The next step was to take our view of Earth-Prime (as it is sometimes known to its inhabitants) beyond the bounds of the United States, and that’s where this book comes in.

The Atlas of Earth-Prime started out as a regular series, released electronically, with each chapter looking at a region of the overall world. This book collects that series between two covers in print for the first time, adding even more material to those initial chapters to round out our view of the whole of the “World of Freedom”—and what a world it is! In these pages, you’ll find details on dozens of countries and geographic regions, the alternate history of a comic book superhero world strangely like our own in so many ways, and a vast array of heroes, villains, and others in the ongoing battle between the forces of good and evil, a struggle that knows no nationality or borders.

POINTS OF VIEW

To bring you this view of the world of Earth-Prime as a whole required many different points of view. First and foremost it involved seeking out and working with creators from outside the United States and our own particular view of the rest of the world. In creating the initial *Atlas* entries, we tried, whenever possible, to work with authors local to or familiar with that region, including Canada, Mexico, Australia, and parts of Europe. When finding a local author proved too difficult, we tried to ensure the author working on the region had some working familiarity. This gives the *Atlas* a truly international flavor and style.

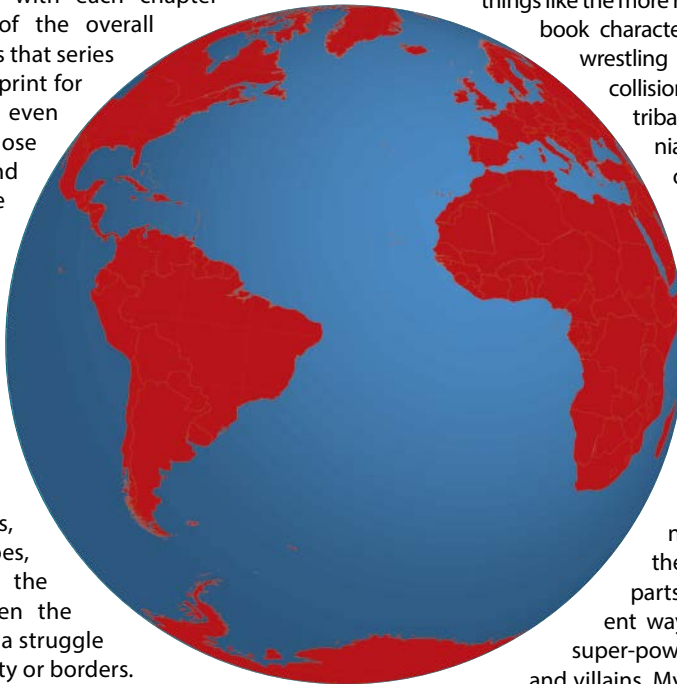
FOUR-COLOR REALITY

At the same time, we focused the idea that Earth-Prime is a *comic book* superhero world, and not our own real world, so there is an emphasis on the fantastic, on heroes and villains, mad science and mythology, aliens and other dimensions, rather than realpolitik. We did not seek to erase social issues or injustices, or differences in culture, but focused on the idea that people with powers in other parts of the world would still be heroes and villains, and on the ability to tell comic book style superhero stories anywhere on Earth-Prime. We also asked authors to incorporate elements of how those real world cultures view the notion of superheroes, an idea that has spread far and wide since its appearance in the American comic books of the early 20th Century. So you’ll find things like the more religious and historic comic book characters of Quebec, the heroic wrestling *luchadores* of Mexico, the collision between Egyptian myth, tribal culture, and Western colonialism in Africa, and the rise of “fan vigilantes” in Japan, to name just a few.

ADVENTURES AND ORIGINS

Similarly, each region of Earth-Prime looks at opportunities for both adventures and origins. In addition to numerous villains and their schemes, the different parts of the world offer different ways characters might gain super-powers and become heroes and villains. Myth and magic are powerful in some places, while advanced technology and super-science are more common in others. Although using super-humans as military assets is largely banned by international treaty, there are no few secret research projects designed to create the next great “super-soldier” and some of them have gotten out of hand. Alien artifacts, hidden civilizations, and interfering gods all contribute to the growing ranks of superhumans around the world.

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS gamemasters can use *The Atlas of Earth-Prime* as a guide-book for world-hopping heroes to visit faraway places, the starting point for a series set anywhere on (or even in or under) the Earth, or a resource for diverse characters and threats that can come and visit the heroes’ home city and country, wherever they might be. It is a whole world at your fingertips!





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WORLDVIEW



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THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

The Land of the Free and the Home of the Brave, the United States is also the home of heroes and the land of opportunity, especially where super-powers are concerned. Some link America's long status as preeminent amongst first world nations to its large superhuman population while others suggest it is vice versa, but whatever the case, the U.S.A. has a long history of both great heroes and villains and the eyes of the world are frequently focused there because of it.

FROM SEA TO SHINING SEA

The two best known cities in the United States, at least from the perspective of those watching its super-powered population, are Freedom City on the East Coast and Emerald City on the West Coast, the two most "super" cities in the States—and, indeed, in the world.

Freedom City has a long and storied history of super-powers and unusual activity, going back to the dawn of the "modern age" of superheroes in the 1930s. More super-beings have called Freedom City home than any other place in the world, and the city has learned to adapt to its extraordinary environment.

Life in Freedom is not necessarily for the faint of heart, but those who choose to live there say they wouldn't trade it for anything. "In Freedom City, you can count on somebody coming along to save you," one local famously commented. "You just have to be okay with the idea of needing to get saved sometimes."

Emerald City, Freedom's West Coast "counterpart," has almost the opposite experience. Although Emerald City also has a long history with super-powers, up until recently that history was hidden from public view and kept secret for the most nefarious of reasons. Emerald City was an unofficial "haven" for super-criminals and outcasts, who maintained a delicate peace amongst themselves and kept things quiet to make Emerald City a safe harbor.

That all changed when the alien robot Tellax, buried for millennia off the Emerald City coast, reactivated and pursued its mission to "develop" Earth's inhabitants as a weapon in an interstellar conflict. The first stage of this was dubbed "The Silver Storm," a nanotech explosion in

the heart of the city that gave Emerald City a burgeoning super-powered population and shattered the delicate peace behind the scenes in a single stroke.

For more information on Freedom City and Emerald City, see the *Mutants & Masterminds* setting sourcebooks devoted to each city.

BUCKNER RIDGE, TENNESSEE

Far from the cosmopolitan hustle and bustle of places like Freedom City, the sleepy town of Buckner Ridge lies nestled in the mountains of Tennessee. Founded as a mining town in 1892, Buckner Ridge grew up along with the local coal-mining industry. It experienced a boom in growth until the Great Depression, which started a long, slow decline. Even the temporary reprieve of the Second World War putting miners back to work did not last, and by the 1990s, Buckner Ridge was becoming a virtual ghost town.

That's when American Security Concerns (ASC) Corporation came to town and proposed what has become known as "the Mountain," a privately-funded super-max prison designed to hold super-powered inmates, and address the growing need for such facilities in the United States, ideally away from large urban areas (unlike Blackstone Prison near Freedom City). The construction project alone brought jobs and money into town, and now the Buckner Ridge Penitentiary—nicknamed "Lockdown" by the locals—is the largest employer in the area, and the town's population has grown to its highest level ever.

What most do not know is that Lockdown and ASC Corporation are fronts for a criminal organization known as the Cartel, which uses the prison as a means to recruit super-criminals as covert operatives and a base from which to deploy them, giving their agents the perfect "alibi" of already being in prison! Of course, Cartel agents (or "trustees") are well aware that failure on a mission or compromising the Cartel's secret will lead to their elimination, especially since authorities are inclined to put them right back into the Cartel's hands by returning "escapees" to the prison.

The Cartel has compromised both the prison staff and Buckner Ridge's government, although few outside of the





BUCKNER RIDGE PENITENTIARY - "LOCKDOWN"

prison known about the Cartel or its plans. Buckner Ridge is sufficiently influenced by the stranglehold ASC has over its economy to not ask too many questions or probe too deeply into any unusual activity.

LOCKDOWN

The Buckner Ridge Penitentiary—or “Lockdown”—is a privately owned and run super-max prison leased to the U.S. federal government for the detainment of super-powered (and otherwise unusual) inmates. Lockdown helped to take some pressure off of Blackstone Prison, the first such “super-prison,” by relocating some inmates, and continues to serve as both a way station and “overflow” facility after the creation of the Deep Six prison off the coast of Emerald City.

Housed deep within “the Mountain” near Buckner Ridge, Lockdown has a series of tiers descending from its sally ports and landing pads, dug into solid bedrock, with cell-blocks extending off the central shaft like a spiral staircase. The deeper one goes, the more secure the cell-block area, and the more powerful and dangerous its prisoners.

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

The Windy City has seen a variety of costumed heroes come and go in its time, from the mysterious “elastic investigator” known as Gumshoe, to the local team of air- and weather-controllers called the Four Winds (each named after a cardinal direction), and Chicago has seen a number of super-powered and costumed criminals as well, from the sinister Ganglord to the mournful Dirge and the serial killer Slaughthouse.

A few Chicago super-beings, like the mysterious Codex, keeper of a vast library of obscure lore, are unclear in their allegiances, or prefer to have none. Those familiar with the occult suggest Codex may be a cosmic being on the order of Mr. Infamy, or even one of the Primals themselves. Whatever the case, he makes his collection available to those who manage to find their way into it, sometimes quite unexpectedly from the stacks of another library.

Superhuman activity in Chicago, while greater than most of the country, has never matched even that of New York City, much less Freedom or Emerald City, and has been on the decline for some time. The city’s law enforcement is not taking things for granted, however, and has been vigilant against a new increase in super-crime following the Silver Storm in Emerald City and the new spike in America’s super-criminal population.

EMBOUCHERE, LOUISIANA

Along the Gulf Coast near the state border between Louisiana and Mississippi is the town of Embouchere, one of many in the greater orbit of New Orleans and the Mississippi Delta. For more than a century, the local economy of Embouchere has been based on shrimping and other seafood catches in the lakes, bayous, and gulf, and limited tourism to the surrounding nature preserves and wildlife refuges. Never a wealthy area, Embouchere suffered along with the rest of the Gulf Coast in the wake of the hurricane and oil spill that caused so much damage before heroes like Siren were able to limit their effects.

Embouchere is noteworthy because the town has been a crossroads of criminal activity, both mundane and mystical, and indications are that it is a metaphysical crossroads as well.

IN THE SHADOW OF FREEDOM

Readers may wonder: why is America—in particular, Freedom City—such an epicenter of superhuman activity? There are two explanations for this.

The first is that comic books originated as a medium in America and superheroes were an American concept for a long time. Thus, to reflect the comic book superhero universes, a lot of super-powered activity and individuals are concentrated in the United States. Since the Freedom City setting source material for *Mutants & Masterminds* focused on one city, it made sense that the greatest concentration of superhuman activity was there.

On Earth-Prime, the reason for Freedom City's prominence can be traced to the origin of its first and most important hero, the Centurion. His arrival on Earth-Prime nearly a century ago punched a "hole" through the fabric of the dimensions, bathing Freedom City in an invisible cascade of extradimensional energies and subtly shifting quantum structures.

To this day, Freedom City is the center of a kind of extradimensional "ripple" effect, causing superhuman origins to be more common there than anywhere else, and acting like a kind of "magnet" that draws unusual occurrences. It is why, for example, industrial accidents in Freedom City result in new superhumans, while industrial accidents elsewhere result only in tragedy. It's likewise why super-criminals don't just rob banks or commit crimes out in the middle of nowhere, but seem fixated on places like Freedom.

These things are changing on Earth-Prime. One of the results of the Silver Storm in Emerald City is the creation of a new "pole" in the superhuman population of the United States, one that has its own unique draws, but that also doesn't "hold" its population as strongly as Freedom City. So while some are drawn to the opportunities in Emerald City, others are leaving and seeking opportunities elsewhere, leading to a superhuman population that is spreading out across different parts of the country and the world.

In your own Earth-Prime *Mutants & Masterminds* game, feel free to use some of the power incidents from this *Atlas* as inspiration for your own area of the world, or to introduce your own "catalyst" to kick-off your series, such as the Silver Storm in Emerald City at the start of *Emerald City Knights*.

THE MAYOMBE

The cult of the Mayombe stretches back as far as the history of Voodoo itself. For as long as people have worshipped the loa, the spirits of Voodoo, there have been those drawn only to the corrupt side. Whether motivated by hatred, vengeance, or simple power-lust, they have fallen under the influence of evil spirits and become their agents in the material world.

The Mayombe's stronghold has always been in the area around Embouchere. There, the cult thrived in the

shadows of the bayous late at night, when other folk were asleep. Mayombe cultists were responsible for many crimes, and they did a great deal to give Voodoo its dark and sinister reputation among non-believers. At least a part of the Mayombe's power came from an intermingling between humans and debased Serpent People out in the bayous. Their families often initiated members of the cult from childhood, and some bloodlines were particularly influential within the Mayombe's ranks.

LADY MAMBA

The Mayombe came under the sway of Lady Mamba, an initiate of the cult. Lady Mamba gave birth to two children by two fathers. Her daughter's father was human, and Dahlia inherited a measure of her mother's mystical potential. Her son's father, on the other hand, was a Serpent Man, making Cottonmouth a mutant mix of human and reptile. The two siblings were raised in the ranks of the Mayombe as Lady Mamba's primary agents.

Lady Mamba's power and influence waned as she aged, but she wasn't about to let a failing body stop her. She hatched the vicious scheme of sacrificing her own daughter's soul on the altar of her ambition, possessing Dahlia's younger, stronger body, and declaring the new "Lady Mamba" her "successor" as leader of the cult.

Use the **Cultist** archetypes from **Chapter 3** of the *Game-master's Guide* for the rank-and-file members of the Mayombe.

COTTONMOUTH

Silas, more often known as "Cottonmouth," is a hideous monster. He is a nearly pure-blooded Serpent Person, but the mixture of reptilian and human blood, com-

COTTONMOUTH

PLT1 - 142 POINTS

STR 5 STA 4 AGL 4 DEX 1 FGT 4 INT -1 AWE 2 PRE -2

Powers: **Amulet of Protection** (Immunity 10 (mental powers), Easily Removable), **Bite** (Strength-based Damage 2 linked to **Paralyzing Venom** (Progressive Affliction 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Paralyzed), **Scales** (Protection 2), **Serpentine** (Movement 2 (slithering, sure-footed), Regeneration 2, Senses 5 (acute olfactory, darkvision, tracking scent), Speed 1)

Advantages: All-out Attack, Animal Empathy, Improved Hold, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Power Attack, Takedown

Skills: Athletics 6 (+11), Close Combat: Unarmed 5 (+9), Insight 8 (+10), Intimidation 10 (+8), Perception 6 (+8), Ranged Combat: Throwing 5 (+6), Stealth 8 (+12)

Offense: Initiative +8, Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 7 plus Progressive Affliction 9)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 11, Toughness 6, Will 7

Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 49 + Advantages 7 + Skills 24 + Defenses 28 = 142

Complications: **Motivation** - Loyalty. **Prejudice** - Freakish half-reptile.

LADY MAMBA

PL10 -167 POINTS

LADY MAMBA

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 3 DEX 2 FGT 4 INT 3 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Magic** (Array: **Concealing Mist** (Cloud Area Concealment Attack 4, Ranged), **AE: Curse** (Perception Ranged Progressive Affliction 5, Resisted and Overcome by Will, Impaired, Disabled, Incapacitated), **AE: Emotion Control** (Perception Ranged Cumulative Affliction 6, Resisted and Overcome by Will, Entranced, Compelled, Controlled, Limited to Emotions), **AE: Mystic Blast** (Ranged Damage 10), **AE: Poltergeist** (Move Object 10), **AE: Scrying** (Remote Sensing 10, visual, 4 miles), **AE: Zombie Potion** (Progressive Affliction 10, Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude, Entranced, Compelled, Controlled, Limited: target must drink potion), **AE: Zombie Horde** (Summon Zombies 1, Controlled, Horde, Mental Link, Multiple Minions 5 (32 minions)); **Mystic Awareness** (Senses 3 (darkvision, mystic awareness)); **Mystic Blessing** (Immunity 4 (aging, disease, poison, starvation, Limited to Half Effect); **Mystic Mind** (Immunity 10 (mental powers), Limited to Half Effect)

Advantages: Artificer, Defensive Roll 4, Diehard, Fascinate (Deception), Improved Initiative, Leadership, Minions 10 (Mayombe cultists), Move-by Action, Power Attack, Ritualist, Well-informed

Skills: Deception 8 (+10), Expertise: Dance 8 (+11), Expertise: Magic 10 (+13), Expertise: Streetwise 8 (+11), Insight 8 (+10), Intimidation 8 (+10), Perception 6 (+8), Ranged Combat: Magic 8 (+10), Sleight of Hand 4 (+6), Stealth 4 (+7), Treatment 4 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +7, Mystic Blast +10 (Ranged, Damage 10), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 1), or other Magic effect

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 10, Fortitude 8, Toughness 6/2*, Will 12 *Without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 38 + Powers 37 + Advantages 23 + Skills 38 + Defenses 31 = 167

Complications: **Motivation** – Power. **Power Loss (Magic)** - If unable to cast spells.

bined, perhaps, with a a measure of his mother's corrupt magic, makes Cottonmouth a nightmare. From the waist down, he is a powerful serpent. Above the waist, his body is humanoid, but covered in armored scales. He has snake-like eyes and powerful jaws he can open wide enough to swallow small animals (his favorite food) whole. Unlike other Serpent People, Cottonmouth has no talent for shapeshifting, and he cannot assume human-like form. His true appearance can be concealed with spells, but that is all. Cottonmouth doesn't feel like a freak. He was raised in a cult that practically worshipped him. He's not as clever as his mother, and he lets her do most of the thinking. Still, anyone who underestimates Cottonmouth is likely to find out about his cunning, and venom, the hard way.

THE KREWE

The criminal gang known as "The Krewe" (sometime called "The Krewe Kriminel") has besmirched the reputation of Embouchere for years, through several incarnations. The original Krewe used the Mardi Gras tradition of the same name as a cover for their criminal activities, a "private club" for planning robberies and con games. Initially, the Krewe went in for Mardi Gras-themed costumes and gimmicks, and they ran afoul of Siren, who saw most of the original members sent to prison.



But the idea and "tradition" of the Krewe refused to die. It became a deeply rooted criminal gang in the area, branching out into racketeering, smuggling, vice, and drug peddling, including Baron Samedi's "zombie powder". The Krewe still sometimes uses Mardi Gras masks, and they communicate by covertly passing "doubloons," small fake plastic coins of the type often used as "throws" by legitimate krewes in parades. This has transitioned from a code system using the symbols and style of the coins to ones with computer chips and transmitters, capable of working like radio-frequency ID tags.

Use the **Underworld** archetypes from **Chapter 3** of the *Gamemaster's Guide* for members of the Krewe.

THE CROSSROADS CONFLICT

For some years now, two sides of the loa, the spirits of Voodoo, have been in the struggle for the future

STEEL CITY JUSTICE

Ferroborg is a setting for a different style of *Mutants & Masterminds* series, a city in need of heroes, but lacking in the kind of super-powers found elsewhere on Earth-Prime. Ferroborg's defenders are otherwise "ordinary" people with an extraordinary calling, using their skills, talents, and resources to try and make the city a better place.

A "Steel City Justice" series should tend towards PL6 to PL8, possibly going as high as PL10, with characters limited to powers with the skill, talent, training, or equipment descriptors. The **Martial Powers** and **Talent Powers** sections of *Power Profiles* may provide inspiration, along with many *Gadget Guides*, p

articularly those on weapons, vehicles, stealth, installations, and infiltration.

Blackjack and the Witness could be non-player characters in the series, roles for the players (if they wish), or placeholders for the players' own heroes. They might even become cautionary tales of vigilantes who go too far, requiring the players' heroes to confront them and, if need be, bring them to justice.

of humanity. One side, represented by Baron Samedi, maintains that humans are base creatures, driven only by their animal needs, and should be treated as little more than chattel for the spirits able to control them. Given their way, the world would be a graveyard playground for them. Fortunately, the opposing side, represented by Siren, hold hope for humanity's potential and champions the cause of good, inspiring us to live up to our ideals rather than give in to the temptations of the other side.

Embouchere is one battlefield in the struggle. For more on the loa and their conflict, see the **Caribbean** entry of the *Atlas*.

FERROBURG, PENNSYLVANIA

During the Industrial Revolution, towns and cities like Ferroborg built America from a rural former colony into a land of towering cities and powerful rail lines. For decades, the factories and foundries of "Steel City" turned out the metalwork that raised up a nation.

Now a part of the "Rust Belt" of the post-industrial economy, Ferroborg has been in decline ever since heavy manufacturing began moving overseas. The city's population has shrunk to almost half of what it was at its height more than a half century ago, and virtually all of its factories are closed down and boarded over, slowly rusting away and forgotten.

Some of the "new economy" of information has taken hold in Ferroborg, with local tech-firm Delta Media providing new job opportunities and buying up some old properties. Still, urban decay and crime are rampant in Ferroborg, with citizens of the Heights keeping their gated communities closely guarded and people in the Glens afraid to move about after dark.

Recently, however, it is the criminals of Ferroborg who have reason to fear: rumors are flying about mysterious vigilantes operating in the city, providing leads to the police or simply going outside the law to do what the authorities cannot. One is the hacker known as "The Witness," who has anonymously provided police and law enforcement with digital evidence and leads, as well as posting video online and stealing millions from criminal bank accounts for donation to charity to rebuild Ferroborg's poorest neighborhoods.

There's also the crime-fighter the press has dubbed "Blackjack" after his trademark of leaving a Jack of Spades to mark or warn his criminal targets. He's apparently a masked fighter of considerable skill who uses a staff or baton-like weapon. Blackjack may or may not be working with the Witness (some even speculate they're the same person), but their mutual activities have given hope to the people of Ferroborg and may be inspiring a new generation of heroes there.

MIDVALE, KANSAS

Like much of the heartland of America, the town of Midvale, Kansas is a place in transition, from generations of a traditional way of life, to a future dominated by agribusinesses and farm subsidies, and a world market for produce and farm products where the "breadbasket" of America is no longer as competitive as it once was.

Midvale is primarily a farming community, surrounded by family farms and fields, where the central "two roads and a stoplight" area has grown up into a thriving town to serve the community's needs. The homecoming game of the Midvale Monarchs high school football team is still a major event in town. The remainder of Midvale's economy is driven by tourists who come to visit local geographic features like Crater Mound and Serpent's Run.

Midvale has seen some conflict between local farmers and "big agro" with companies like Amalthea, Inc. buying up farmland, often leasing it back to local farmers in what they call "modern serfdom." Some protests against Amalthea and accusations of violations of environmental regulations and labor laws have led to bad blood in the community.

CRATER MOUND

One of Midvale's most famous sites is Crater Mound, a circular, raised earthen mound created by an ancient meteor impact, forming a bowl-like valley surrounded by a hill that rises up above the surrounding plains. Crater Mound is state parkland and open to visitors, and the occasional site of scientific exploration into the creation of the crater, or of ancient human inhabitation of the area. Archeologists believe primitive tribes saw Crater Mound as a sacred site and may have performed religious rituals there, although there are no signs of long-term settlement anywhere in or near the mound.

HIDDEN HEARTLAND

Midvale is a setting for stories of the “Hidden Heartland,” where the unusual lurks behind the façade of the ordinary and everyday, and where aliens and gods might walk amongst us in the most American of backdrops.

What created Crater Mound? It might have been an ancient meteor, with radioactive fragments still buried in the earth, coming to the surface through erosion or dug up by prospectors, scientists, or just curious kids. Perhaps portions of it are materials like viridian from *Emerald City* or other strange unearthly substances. It could have been the crash of an alien vessel or artifact, leaving behind wreckage containing advanced technology and unusual materials, or perhaps still intact and waiting to be found, including its alien crew held in stasis.

Likewise, Serpent’s Run might be the creation of the ancient Serpent People or cults devoted to them, and could mark geomantic lines of mystic power, ancient ritual sites, or burial places for Serpent or human artifacts of mystic potency. Occult power could even “leak” from the site, under the right conditions, affecting the local flora and fauna (including people).

Finally, agribusiness giant Amalthea, Inc., might be more than it appears. The name comes from Greek mythology, so connections to villains like Medea, Talos, or Hades from *Freedom City* are possibilities. Even if Amalthea is a mundane megacorporation, accusations of regulatory violations might be true, and the use of experimental (or banned) chemicals in Midvale might contribute to the local “weirdness index” or trigger some other incidents or origins.

SERPENT’S RUN

Across the plain from Crater Mound is the earthwork known locally as “Serpent’s Run,” similar in many regards to the Great Serpent Mound in Ohio. It is a series of earthen mounds that wind in a twisting, serpentine fashion, pointing towards (or away from) Crater Mound. Archeologists have attributed Serpent’s Run to several different prehistoric cultures but, ultimately, know little about who built the earthworks or why. Considered together, Serpent’s Run and Crater Mound have earned various juvenile nicknames from Midvale youth for their resemblance to reproductive cells, and Serpent’s Run has become a popular makeout site for teenagers from Midvale High.

MYSTERY, NEW HAMPSHIRE

Nestled on the eastern side of Mystery Mountain in southern New Hampshire is the eponymous town of Mystery, a sleepy New England town on the surface, but concealing strange depths known only to a few.

Mystery was founded in the mid-1700s by the Hale family, well known for their involvement in the Revolutionary War on the side of the colonies, leading to Col. Josiah Hale becoming the first magistrate of Mystery after independence. The Hales owned logging and mining interests in town, and the family’s legacy includes Hale College, a prominent local institution of higher learning (and home to the Hale Highlanders football team). “Hale House,” the family’s estate built in the early 1800s, is situated on a large plot of land not far from what is now the center of town.

Since the decline of its forestry and mining industries, Mystery’s economy has been driven primarily by education and tourism. Hale College sees an influx of students each Fall, and relations between “town and gown” are occasionally tense: the locals often find Hale students crass troublemakers, while students at the college (especially moneyed transplants) consider the locals backward townies. Nearby Mystery Mountain sees plenty of hiking

THE MYSTERY SERIES

Mystery makes an excellent setting for an *M&M* series or adventure using resources from the *Supernatural Handbook*. The town can be home to rogue teenaged werewolves, a coven (or more) of witches, a Colonial-descended cult worshipping Elder Things from the Dawn of Time, underground “mole people,” a lone wizard or mad scientist, or all of these and more! Mystery Mountain might well be the site of an ARCADE base operating in or near the town.

Mystery can also play host to a more conventional super-team, perhaps a group of “Mystery Men” based out of the mountain, or investigating strange happenings in and around the area. Some of them might even be students or faculty at Hale College in their civilian identities.

Lastly, Mystery could be the site of a top-secret government or corporate research center, with Mystery Mountain concealing an underground complex of some sort. What are they researching? Could be anything from extradimensional exploration to a study of the arcane in all of its forms. Whatever the case, it’s sure to attract attention and be in need of some heroic help at some point.

in the summers and skiing in the winters; the occasional disappearance is usually chalked up to accidents, bad weather, or wild animal attacks, and kept quiet by the local police department, so as not to cause any bad publicity.

MYSTERY MOUNTAIN

Mystery is in the shadow of Mystery Mountain, the largest peak in the southern New Hampshire area, situated some distance from a spur of the White Mountains. “The sun sets early in Mystery” the locals say, given the vivid sunsets over the peak of the mountain as its shadow spreads eastward over the town in the early evening.

Although some granite quarrying and mining took place on Mystery Mountain generations ago, the whole area has been a state park since the 1930s, and the only commercial enterprise is the Mystery Mountain Lodge Ski and Recreation Area. Colorful local legends refer to the peak

as “the Devil’s Mountain” and talk about covens of witches meeting in dark groves along its slopes, or sightings of strange lights or shapes late at night.

There is some truth to the legends: Mystery Mountain marks a dimensional “fault line” and nexus, allowing extradimensional energies (and, sometimes, beings) to slip into Earth’s reality. Abandoned quarries and mine shafts have connections to Sub-Terra, while those of a mystical bent have sought to exploit, or guard against, alignments of power here.

MANAKA ROOT

The rare North American plant manaka is found only in parts of central New England. Originally slightly more common, it was believed extinct (even mythical) for many years. Native American lore claims manaka root grants great strength, speed, and stamina, if used sparingly. In a small portion of the population, manaka root can grant super human physical abilities in short bursts, lasting not much more than a minute or so. The Colonial-era masked hero Minuteman used manaka root for just this purpose.

Compounds extracted and synthesized from manaka root have been used in experiments to create permanent physical enhancements, including elements of the DNAscent Process used by the Labyrinth, and the “super-serum” that gave the Patriot his powers in the 1940s. Unfortunately, large and regular doses of manaka root have serious side-effects, such as those seen in the street drug “max,” which is derived from the Patriot Formula, and usually causes

cardiac arrest, internal bleeding, or organ failure with repeated use, despite giving users a temporary “boost” and a sense of invincibility.

For Gamemasters looking for a “scientific” explanation, regular manaka consumption might be mutating or “boosting” some animals (or even people) near Mystery Mountain, creating some of the “savage beasts” reputed to hunt there.

NEW YORK CITY, NEW YORK

New York City, the “Big Apple,” remains the most populous, cosmopolitan city in the United States, the unofficial capitol of its financial markets, and the headquarters of the United Nations. Indeed, one of the few titles New York City cannot claim is largest superhuman population, eclipsed by both Freedom and now Emerald City. Still, NYC does have a number of both costumed heroes and criminals, with a tendency towards “costumed” over “super-powered.”

Whereas Freedom City’s superhero icon was always the Centurion, New York’s was the original Raven beginning in the 1960s. So the loss of the Raven to Freedom City—when the second hero to take up the name and the costume relocated there—came as a blow to New York’s considerable pride. The recent retirement of the second Raven, and sightings of a third hero to use that identity swinging amongst the rooftops of Manhattan has even jaded New Yorkers cheering for local heroes. The new Raven’s appearance is well-timed, as both costumed and super-powered crime are on the rise in New York City.



THE RAVEN

STAR SQUADS

Started in Freedom City, the police Superhuman Tactics and Regulation or STAR squad program, has become a model for similar “superhuman tactics” squads for police departments throughout the United States and other parts of the world. The name and acronym has come into common usage, much like SWAT (Special Weapons and Tactics) units, but each police department and municipality creates and administers its own program.

STAR Squad training is fairly uniquely American in that it focuses on when to engage with superhuman threats and when to try to contain them until super-powered help can arrive. Indeed, critics have pointed out that the program relies somewhat heavily on the concept of cooperation with one or more local superheroes, a concept that cannot be applied in many areas. They have lobbied for stronger local enforcement resources, rather than just “contain and assist” approaches.

Use the SWAT Officer archetype from the *Hero's Handbook* for most STAR Squad officers. They are often equipped with the most advanced weapons and armor available to their department, items from the *Gadget Guides* are useful examples.

THE RAVEN

He doesn't remember if he had a name before winning one. That was part of the Murder League's brutal training. He remembers snippets of another life—a smiling woman—his mother, he thinks. Somewhere, in the back of his mind, he's afraid that he killed her. He thinks that was his final test, before the real indoctrination began, before he earned the name “Elite”.

The Murder League trained him well. It was the premier assassin's guild, not only of his Earth, but many others. He's been to too many alternate worlds where the Murder League exists and where they have recognized him as a rogue. Under the Murder League's tutelage, he learned the art of killing, became their instrument, until a mentalist target tore apart his conditioning and his former masters and associates turned on him.

He found a most unusual escape: rescuing visitors from another dimension, another Earth, and then leaving with them. Navigatrix helped find others in need, and the Alterni-Teens ended up at Claremont Academy on Earth-Prime. Elite proved his abilities as a leader and earned the respect of Duncan Summers, school headmaster and the original Raven. He trained with Duncan's daughter, Callie, as well, so when she needed to give up the role of Raven, she chose to pass it on to him.

So it was that “Elliot Allen” relocated to New York City, becoming a part of the nighttime social scene, but spending most of his time away from his high-rise condo and studying the city from Nevermore, a secret headquarters hidden in a dimensional fold with the assistance of his old friend Navigatrix, studying and planning a war on crime such as the city has not seen in more than a generation.

RED ROCKS, ARIZONA

On the outskirts of the Painted Desert area of Arizona is the town of Red Rocks, named for the distinctive color of the stone formations around it. Originally a rough-and-tumble frontier town mostly noted for prospectors, rail wars, and gunfights, Red Rocks has become a tourist stop for visitors to the Painted Desert and the area's other natural wonders, with a mixed Anglo, Latino, and Native American population.

THE RAVEN

PL10 • 195 POINTS

STR 2 STA 2 AGL 5 DEX 4 FGT 13 INT 3 AWE 4 PRE 4

Powers: **Acquired Immunity** (Immunity 2 (Disease, Poison), Half effect); **Athletic** (Speed 3 (16 MPH)); **Raven Suit (Microspike Boots and Gloves)** (Wall-crawling 1), **Peak Limiters** (Immunity 5 (Sensory Affliction Effects)), **Raven's Wings** (Flight 3 (16 MPH), Gliding, Wings); **Roof-runner** (Movement 4 (Environmental Adaptation (Urban), Safe Fall, Sure-footed 2), Limited to Urban Environments (3 ranks)); **Vaulting** (Leaping 2 (30 feet), Acrobatics Check Required)

Equipment: **Utility Belt** (see Chapter 7 of the *Hero's Handbook*)

Advantages: Assessment, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 4, Equipment 9, Evasion 2, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improvised Tools, Instant Up, Jack-of-all-trades, Leadership, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Prone Fighting, Quick Draw, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery 2 (Investigation, Stealth), Trance, Uncanny Dodge (hearing)

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+11), Athletics 8 (+10), Deception 6 (+10), Expertise: Streetwise 6 (+9), Insight 6 (+10), Intimidation 6 (+10), Investigation 8 (+110), Perception 6 (+10), Persuasion 4 (+8), Ranged Combat: Throwing 6 (+10), Sleight of Hand 4 (+8), Stealth 8 (+13), Technology 6 (+9), Treatment 6 (+9), Vehicles 6 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +9, Unarmed +13 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 14, Parry 14, Fortitude 8, Toughness 6/2*, Will 12 *Without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 74 + Powers 17 + Advantages 34 + Skills 46 + Defenses 24 = 195

Complications: **Motivation** – Redemption.

NEVERMORE

HQ • 20 PTS

Size: Huge • **Toughness:** • 12 **Features:** Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Gym, Isolated, Laboratory, Living Space, Power System, Sealed, Secret 2 (+15 DC), Security System 2 (DC 25), Workshop

MAGIC MESA

In the desert not far from Red Rocks stands a lone tower of rock, rising up above the painted sands, casting a long shadow in the rising and setting sun. Native legends speak of it as a place of power, where the spirits dwell and where braves went on vision quests seeking their wisdom and aid. Those who know of it call it “Magic Mesa,” and say it's a place where strange things happen, a place best avoided by those who know what's good for them.

DUST DEVIL

PL11 • 208 POINTS

STR 7 STA 7 AGL 1 DEX 2 FGT 6 INT 0 AWE 5 PRE 0

Powers: **Body of Sand (Anatomic Split)** (Summon Body Part 2, Controlled, Mental Link, Side Effect: loses use of part while separated), Elongation 5, Enhanced Strength 2 (Limited to lifting), Growth 4, Immunity 11 (aging, life support), Movement 4 (permeate 3, slithering, Limited to natural earth), Protection 5 (Impervious), **Sand Fist** (Strength-based Damage 5)), **Earth Elemental** (Burrowing 5 (Alternate Effect: Teleport 5 (Extended, Limited to Extended, Medium: natural earth)), Immortality 5 (1 day), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: desert), Regeneration 2 (Source: sand)), **Mystic Mind** (Comprehend 4 (languages: speak, understand, understood; spirits), Senses 4 (direction sense, extended touch, magical awareness, ranged touch)), **Sandstorm** (Cloud Area Visual Concealment Attack 4)

Advantages: Chokehold, Diehard, Favored Environment (desert), Improved Grab

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+9), Expertise: History 4 (+4), Expertise: Magic 8 (+8), Insight 8 (+13), Intimidation 10 (+12), Perception 4 (+9), Ranged Combat 6 (+8), Stealth 8 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +1, Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 12)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 10, Fortitude 11, Toughness 12, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 40 + Powers 114 + Advantages 4 + Skills 26 + Defenses 24 = 208

Complications: **Motivation** – Redemption. **Bound to Magic Mesa**

Magic Mesa is a nexus, a gateway between worlds, where someone lost in the desert can find the dark tower of stone, then wander away from it to end up somewhere quite different from where they started. It's a place where space and time have little meaning, and distant places and times sometimes touch. It's a well of mystic power and insight.

In the days of the Old West, Magic Mesa was a sacred place to the local tribes, and became the sanctum of Broken Crow, a powerful Sioux shaman and the Master Mage of his era. Its magic helped resurrect Adam Prophet, the Pale Rider, and may have influenced many other fantastic tales in the Old West. After Broken Crow's death at Wounded Knee, the location of Magic Mesa was lost to all but a few, although stories continued of people traveling in the desert and stumbling across it, for good or ill. Those who seek Magic Mesa to exploit its power discover—to their regret—that it is guarded to this day.

DUST DEVIL

Alejandro Roja wasn't an honest man. He was a thief and a cattle rustler, a brawler and a gambler, but he wasn't a killer. Unfortunately, some of the men he rode with were. They left Alejandro for dead one night in the desert, but he was too stubborn to lie down and die. Alone and wounded, without water or food, he stumbled toward a shadow looming on the horizon under the burning sun until he could go no further.

Roja's lifeblood soaked into the dry sand as the vultures wheeled overhead, but when the shadow of Magic Mesa passed over his lifeless form, something happened. Roja's body and spirit melted into the desert sands, becoming one with them. Alejandro Roja was gone, but something

else arose in his place. That night, the bandits who betrayed and murdered Roja were trapped in a terrible sandstorm. Their bleached bones were found only days later, picked clean in the desert.

Ever since then, the elemental guardian known as the Dust Devil has watched over the mystic nexus of Magic Mesa, protecting it from poachers and thieves. Within the creature of shifting sand dwells a human spirit, seeking peace and understanding of his new existence as a force of nature. Dust Devil looks like a humanoid shape formed out of sand, sometimes taking on more distinct features, like those of Alejandro in life.

BOCA TIERRA CAVERNS,
NEW MEXICO

The Boca Tierra Caverns in southern New Mexico have a long and storied history, from the days when they were reputed to be "the gullet of the earth," leading into its innermost depths, to their discovery and exploration by Spanish and American settlers into the region.

Stories abounded about how the caverns were linked to "lost mines" rich with gold, emeralds, diamonds... all the riches of the Earth, but most would-be prospectors found nothing but frustration and beautiful (but largely worthless) rock formations, and more than a few found their ends in deep chasms and rock falls.

In the 1950s, the U.S. government used the caverns for scientific testing and study, both for the controlled environment and the proximity to nuclear testing sites in the desert southwest, with the caverns shielded by vast amounts of metal-laced rock. It was not until decades later that they discovered Boca Tierra was connected to the vast depths of Sub-Terra through a shifting series of dimensional passages that caused the labyrinthine tunnels of the deep caves to seemingly rearrange themselves.

An attack by magmin, native rock mutants of Sub-Terra, led to the abandonment of the research facility and the closing of Boca Tierra. AEGIS, aided by the U.S. Army, maintains a watch-post near the sealed entrance to the caverns, and they have dealt with the occasional creature that finds its way to the surface over the years. Attempts to find a more permanent solution—such as collapsing the whole cave complex—have been dismissed as too dangerous, given the unstable nature of the structure and the unknown variables of the dimensional interface.

SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA

The "Gateway City" of the West Coast, San Francisco is a center of culture and commerce, and the urban hub of nearby Silicon Valley in the southern Bay Area. While lacking the kind of superhuman activity that Emerald City has become famous for on the Left Coast, San Francisco has a few "super" features of its own that make it a Gateway City in more ways than most people know.

First, the city not only lies close to a geological fault line (the San Andreas Fault) but to a meta-physical “fault line” as well. The San Francisco Bay Area, particularly the peninsula, is a natural nexus of geomantic and “earth energies,” ley lines, and mystic forces. At least part of the city’s famous fog banks is not just water vapor, but a blurring and overlapping of dimensions. People sometimes “slip” from world to world in San Francisco, accounting for mysterious disappearances and incidents.

For some time, secretive residents of the city’s Chinatown have known the most about the forces at work there. Dr. Sin and Emerald City’s Golden Dragon Society, amongst others, worked in the shadows to take opportunities presented by the alignment of mystical energies (see *Threat Report* and the *Emerald City* book for more on Dr. Sin and the Golden Dragon Society). Guardians against the powers of dark magic walked the nighttime streets of San Francisco, combating werewolves and much worse.

Matters came to a head in a recent alignment of worlds, opening certain passages in the Dimension of Doors, a realm connecting all other mystical dimensions. During this conjunction, the Door Wardens named Kyle Vance the Gatekeeper, guardian of the nexus between worlds.

GATEKEEPER

As a child, Kyle Vance always wanted to travel, to see fantastic and faraway places. He spent hours lost in the pages of fantasy and science-fiction stories and dreamed of traveling the world, leaving behind life in the sleepy rural community in Colorado where he grew up. As he got older, Kyle became aware he was different from his peers, not only in terms of his imagination and artistic sensibilities, but also in his unusual awareness of things and in his romantic feelings towards other boys.

Attending art school in San Francisco allowed Kyle to stretch his wings as he’d never been able to do back home: he not only developed a dating and social life, but he improved his artistic skills and flirted with the city’s occult subculture. It nearly ended in disaster, when a local cult came after him. Only the intervention of the Door Wardens saved his life. They took Kyle to the Dimension of Doors and revealed he was the new Gatekeeper, guardian of the nexus between worlds.

Since then, Kyle has split his time between his career as a freelance artist, his training with the Door Wardens, and operating as the superhero Gatekeeper in the San Francisco Bay Area (and worlds beyond). Although his true identity remains secret, it’s publicly known Gatekeeper is a member of the city’s gay community, a considerable source of pride for both them and Kyle. Gatekeeper has become San Francisco’s most prominent hero and has helped to minimize the dangers posed by the area’s regular “reality tremors.” At one point considered a candidate for Earth’s Master Mage,



GATEKEEPER

GATEKEEPER

PL10 • 160 POINTS

STR 0 STA 1 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 4 INT 2 AWE 6 PRE 3

Powers: **Dimensional Pocket** (Feature 5 – stores up to 1,600 lbs. mass), **Dimensional Warp** (Insubstantial 4, Limited to allowing things to pass through him, affected by spatial and dimensional attacks), **Gatekeeper** (Movement 2 (dimensional, mystic dimensions)), **Levitation** (Flight 1), **Magic (Mystic Blast)** (Ranged Damage 12), AE: **Conjuration** (Summon 6, Broad Type: extradimensional beings), AE: **Disrupting Touch** (Affliction 12 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated; Affects Corporeal 12), AE: **Obscuring Mist** (Cloud Area Concealment Attack 4, Visual), AE: **Spatial Distortion** (Burst Area Affliction 10 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Impaired, Stunned, Incapacitated)), AE: **Walk Between Worlds** (Teleport 7, Change Direction, Change Velocity, Extended)), **Mystic Senses** (Senses 5 (Dimensional Awareness (Accurate, Acute), Magical Awareness)), **Protective Aura** (Immunity 10 (life support), Sustained)

Advantages: Ritualist

Skills: Expertise: Artist 8 (+10), Expertise: Magic 8 (+10), Perception 4 (+10), Persuasion 4 (+7), Ranged Combat: Magic 7 (+8), Stealth 4 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +1, Magic +8 (Ranged, Damage 12 or Alternate Effect), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 10, Fortitude 8, Toughness 1, Will 12

Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 71 + Advantages 1 + Skills 22 + Defenses 30 = 160

Complications: **Motivation** – Responsibility. **Power Loss (Magic):** If unable to cast spells. **Prejudice.**

TEAM AMERICA

One thing the United States does not have (yet) is an “official” super-team sponsored by the federal government, although the feds (and organizations like AEGIS) offer their support to “civilian” teams like the Freedom League or the Sentinels. Attempts to create and maintain a federally run national hero team in the past have not proven successful, and have even ended in disaster, such as when SHADOW used one such attempt to infiltrate AEGIS with a double-agent.

Of course, in your own M&M series, you can launch a successful national super-team, either based in D.C., or with franchises in multiple U.S. cities, including the one your heroes call home. Events in Emerald City might help inspire this “initiative” or you can create your own set-up. The Patriot might be appointed the leader of the new team (perhaps even as a player character) or could assume a more administrative role, overseeing a large team of heroes with various “field” commanders.

PATRIOT

PL11 - 203 POINTS

STR 10 STA 10 AGL 7 DEX 4 FGT 10 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Android Body** (Immunity 10 (mental powers, Limited to half effect), Immunity 10 (sensory effects, Limited to half effect), Immunity 30 (Fortitude Effects))

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Benefit (Ambidexterity), Connected, Defensive Attack, Eidetic Memory, Inspire, Leadership, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Set-up, Takedown

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+15), Athletics 4 (+14), Deception 8 (+10), Expertise: Espionage 8 (+9), Expertise: History 4 (+5), Expertise: Streetwise 6 (+7), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 6 (+8), Investigation 6 (+7), Perception 6 (+8), Ranged Combat: Throwing 6 (+10), Stealth 8 (+15), Technology 2 (+3), Vehicles 8 (+12)

Offense: Initiative +7, Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 10, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 92 + Powers 46 + Advantages 11 + Skills 43 + Defenses 11 = 203

Complications: **Motivation** – Patriotism. **No Life** - Patriot is an android with no legal existence.

Gatekeeper later learned his existing role and title prohibits him from taking on that responsibility.

Gatekeeper is a “living portal” between dimensions, able to step between worlds as easily as most people cross a room. He can visit all of the mystic dimensions of the Cosmic Coil, particularly the Dimension of Doors. By slipping between worlds, he can also teleport virtually anywhere on Earth. He can cause things to disappear into the folds of his cloak and reappear later, as well as pass harmlessly through him.

Most of Gatekeeper’s dimensional effects center on his hooded cloak, lined with a shifting, starry blackness, although the cloak itself is *not* the source of his powers, as some believe. In addition to his innate dimension-spanning abilities, Gatekeeper is a promising and adept magician, with a natural ability for tapping into extradimensional sources of power for his spells and rituals.

WASHINGTON, D.C.

The nation’s capitol is a monument to patriotic pride as well as a target to all those seeking to make an example of America, or to tear down all it has built. Fortunately, the nation’s defenders—both super-powered and otherwise—have prevented widespread disaster in Washington, D.C.

AEGIS

The American Elite Government Intervention Service, or AEGIS, is headquartered in Washington, along with most other federal agencies. AEGIS’ mandate is to deal with “unusual threats” to the nation and its citizens, which usually includes super-powered criminals and terrorist organizations, such as SHADOW, with access to unusual technology or resources.

PATRIOT

To the world and the people of the District, the man called the Patriot is the second to carry the mantle, the first being a member of the Liberty League during the Second World War. What most do not know is that this Patriot is actually the same man, Jack Simmons, in a different form. Simmons was transformed in the 1940s by a top-secret formula into the perfect human fighting machine. He later went on to become the first Director of AEGIS and its guiding force, but time still took its toll, and Jack Simmons succumbed to mortality.

Thanks to another top-secret project, Simmons’ mind was downloaded into an android body, giving him even greater physical abilities than he possessed at his peak. After some time serving as a secret agent for AEGIS and the U.S. government, the “new” Patriot has been deployed as a symbolic and public hero in Washington. He keeps his “true identity” secret far more than the media and the public are aware but, thus far, no one has been given cause to question him.

CANADA

Renowned as lands of peace, order, and good government, the heroic heritage of the peoples of the north is long standing and undeniable. While Canada has long lay under the shadow cast by its southern neighbor, the heroes (and villains) of this land believe they are second to none, and certainly do not lack opportunities to prove themselves against the many dangers of the true north, strong but beleaguered.

The native Canadian attitude toward superhumans is more welcoming than parts of the United States, and UNISON operates with fewer restrictions on Canadian soil (indeed, many of UNISON's best operatives are Canadian citizens). The Canadian government frowns on foreign superheroes operating on their soil without authorization, especially those who use weapons (given their lack of respect for Canadian firearms regulations) and disapproves of superhumans setting up private enclaves, believing they attract violence. On the other hand, in keeping with its socially progressive tradition, Canada is more accepting of extra-terrestrial refugees than the United States (provided that they go through proper channels). Most of the provisions of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms apply to extra-terrestrial refugees. In general, "freaks" face fewer prejudices on Canadian soil, and many have come to see it as a safe haven.

QUEBEC

Throughout Quebec, particularly in times of struggle and strife, a ghostly cathedral has appeared on a hill outside various communities. Its melancholy bell strikes a note of doom, drawing visitors against their better judgment, and many who enter its beautiful stained glass doors do not return. This is *la Cathédrale de la Douleur*, "the

Cathedral of Pain", built in the 18th century in Quebec City. Originally just a beautiful church, it became infamous as a center of cruelty by the infamous Soeur Madeleine in the early 19th century, who used it as the center of a brutal cult. Destroyed by champions in the service of the Church in 1808, Soeur Madeleine vowed that even death would not halt her campaign to purify Upper Canada (the former name for the southern portion of what is now Ontario) of its sins, and she's made good on that vow ever since.

The Cathedral has played a key role in the lives of two of Quebec's most prominent superhumans. Alouette, the leader of La Ligue des Héros du Québec (LHQ), was captured as a young girl and raised among the Sisters of Severity until she was 15; another child victim, Pierre Legault, was also captured and released by the Cathedral.

He chose a different path, becoming the leader of Quebec's supervillain community, the shadowy Malfaiteur (an inherited title for Quebec's most honored criminal mastermind since the 1930s).

The LHQ's members include Alouette (or Lark), a speedster, Monument, a powerhouse, Alain Aventure, a gadgeteer, and Merveille D'hiver (or Winter Wonder), an energy projector/elemental with cold powers. As a group, they have vowed to shut down the Cathedral. To this end, they've recruited Quebec's most gifted occultist, the mysterious Andre Delacroix. However, Delacroix has his own agenda: the Cathedral is but one of a number of Quebec's "ghost buildings" drawing on an ancient source of mystical energy, commonly used by his brotherhood of mystics (Mystères Québec). Delacroix will protect the secret of that source at all costs, even if he has to sacrifice all of Quebec's greatest heroes (and any foreigners entangled in the battle against Soeur Madeleine) to do it.



HEROES OF LA BELLE PROVINCE

Quebec's comic book heritage varies from the experience of English Canada. Whereas Canada's Golden Age books mostly consisted of pulp adventure and superheroes, for decades Quebec's comic market was dominated by religious and historical comics. In the 1960s, the cultural revolution brought dramatic changes to the comic market, but Quebec's comics community was more eager to embrace French science fiction and satire than traditional American superheroes.

To reflect this, Quebec's superheroes often eschew gaudy costumes and flashy identities for plain clothes and code-names which mix real names with a bit of the fantastic (such as "Alain Aventure"). Quebec's heroes are more likely to reflect *Tintin* than *Batman*, and a campaign set in Montreal or Quebec City should employ liberal use of shadows, so it's akin to film noir, with a French accent.



OTTAWA

Canada's capital is the home of the Peace Tower and the Houses of Parliament—among many government institutions, archives, and museums—but for many, the most important thing is it's also the home of the Bastion, the headquarters of Team Canada, the roughest, toughest, most capable and, some would say, most notorious superheroes north of the 49th parallel.

TEAM CANADA

Team Canada was formed in the late 1970s after the revelation of the original Project Inferno (see **Project Inferno**, later in this chapter). Summit founded the team, and it has continued to function despite a history of internal conflict and upheaval. The current team leader is the exiled storm giant Big Thunder, and includes the mentalist (and former beauty pageant winner) Miss Canada; Luna, the bizarre, self-styled queen of the *rougarou* (Quebec's werewolf nation); the earth-controlling Labrador Rock, and super-speedster Chris Cage, the Opportunist.

Team Canada is effective, but they have a decidedly un-Canadian reputation as one of the loudest, most trash-talking, most contentious, and brutal superhero groups around. Their relations with the public and the media reflects this: people either love the team as unapologetic badasses, or hate them with a deep, abiding passion. One Canadian Broadcasting Company commentator has referred to them as “a team of hockey goons with capes” and “Canada’s dullest, bluntest instrument.” The group has

publicly said they're proud of the fact that the only negotiating tactic they employ “is a good, hard stomp to the bad guys' faces.” Their relations with law enforcement are mixed: some R.C.M.P. and Canadian Security Intelligence Service personnel openly admire their ability to get things done, while others have had unpleasant experiences when the heroes were involved in delicate operations. Other Canadian heroes like the LHQ and GLOBAL have little time for Team Canada, and their hardcore nationalism has set them at odds with foreign teams like the Freedom League.

While centered in Ottawa, Team Canada can quickly traverse the country in “the flying leaf,” a captured, refitted alien scout cruiser that roughly looks like a flying maple leaf with its wide prow and forward-swept wings. Team Canada is officially sponsored by the Canadian government, who set up the Canadian Metahuman Affairs Department (Department Meta) to administer them (and other government-sponsored supers). Team Canada completely ignores them, which serves the interests of a handful of its senior administrators: they're secretly in league with Project Inferno, and most of CMAD's budget is diverted to the Project (something the team might discover if anyone was remotely interested in managing their finances.)

BIG THUNDER

Erik Torborn was a warband leader of the Jotun, the storm-giants enemies of Asgard. He was never respected by the *jarls*; in retaliation, he attempted to steal their treasure and establish his own realm. Alas, as he attempted to steal his *jarl's* treasure, he accidentally freed two of Jotunheim's greatest enemies: the sons of Thor,

BIG THUNDER

PL10 - 171 POINTS

STR 12 STA 8 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 4 INT 1 AWE 3 PRE 6

Powers: **Dimensional Travel** (Movement 2 (Dimensional, Asgardian dimensions); **Giant** (Growth 8 (Huge, 30 feet), Permanent); **Jotun Senses** (Senses 3 (Vision Counters Illusion, Detect Magic)); **Jotun Strength** (Power-lifting 4 (lifting Str 16 (1,600 tons))); **Tough** (Impervious Protection 6); **Weather Control** (Array (33 points) **Lightning Bolt** (Ranged Damage 12, Accurate 3, Indirect 3 (any point from the sky), AE: **Arctic Freeze** (Cumulative Affliction 12 (Resisted by Dodge, overcome by Fortitude; Hindered, Defenseless, Paralyzed), Accurate 3, Reach), AE: **Hailstorm** (Ranged Cloud Area Damage 9, Indirect 2 (any point down)), AE: **Stormy Weather** (Environment 10 (2 miles), Cold, Impede Movement, Visibility)); **Wind Walk** (Flight 6 (120 MPH))

Advantages: Attractive, Benefit (Security Clearance: Team Canada), Benefit (Status: Member of Team Canada), Benefit (Wealth: Well-off), Extraordinary Effort, Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Improved Trip, Language (English, Jotun native), Startle

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+6), Athletics 2 (+14), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+8), Intimidation 6 (+16), Ranged Combat: Throw 4 (+6), Stealth 0 (-6)

Offense: Initiative +2, Lightning Bolt +8 (Ranged, Damage 10, Indirect), Arctic Freeze +8 (Reach, Affliction 12, Resisted by Dodge/Fort.), Unarmed, +8 (Close, Damage 12), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 12)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 10, Toughness 12, Will 10 (Growth bonuses already included.)

Totals Abilities 44 + Powers 84 + Advantages 10 + Skills 10 + Defenses 23 = Total 171

Complications: Motivation—Recognition: Big Thunder wants to be acknowledged as the best and most powerful. He lives for adoration. **Enemy:** Big Thunder is still wanted by the Jotun of Asgard for releasing the sons of Thor.

Magni and Modi! Branded as “traitor to the Nine Worlds,” Erik made a deal with a hag and fled to Midgard, where he ended up an amnesiac mortal on a fishing boat. An encounter with the corrupted thunderbird Stormwing re-awoke his powers (including his size). Erik christened himself Big Thunder and decided to use his powers to show the weakling humans what a real defender could do for them. Adapting well to the life of a superhero, he took over leadership of Team Canada from Lady Ultra when she retired. He’s been leader for the past ten years, during which time the team has become less idealistic and more brutal.

MISS CANADA

Anika Davis is a Saskatchewan native, a small town prairie girl who grew up to be first in her class, a sports star, and a beauty queen. However, her natural beauty, intelligence, and physical abilities have a dark origin. Her father is the failed Canada-conquering supervillain known as Gravos. He hasn’t been seen in years, because he escaped from a 1994 vicious defeat by placing himself in suspended animation for twenty years—but not before genetically engineering a psionic killer to serve at his side: Anika. She is completely unaware of her true origins; she’s simply the girl everyone likes: head cheerleader, captain of the volleyball team, beauty queen, valedictorian, telepathic superhero, and media superstar! But Gravos will return, and Miss Canada’s life is going to change in a big way.

MISS CANADA

PL10 - 168 POINTS

STR 0 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 2 FGT 2 INT 4 AWE 8 PRE 4

Powers: **Force Field** (Sustained Impervious Protection 10), Immunity 5 (Cold, Heat, Pressure, Radiation, Vacuum); **Telekinetic Abilities** (Array (25 points); **Telekinetic Blast** (Ranged Damage 8, Accurate 5, Penetrating 4), AE: **Telekinetic Constructs** (Movable Create 8)); **Telekinetic Flight** (Flight 5 (60 MPH)); **Telepathy** (Mind Reading 10)

Advantages: Attractive, Ultimate Effort (Will resistance checks)

Skills: Athletics 4 (+4), Expertise: Current Events 4 (+8), Insight 4 (+12), Investigation 1 (+5), Perception 4 (+12), Persuasion 8 (+12), Sleight of Hand 1 (+2), Stealth 2 (+3), Technology 2 (+6), Treatment 2 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +1, Telekinetic Blast +12 (Ranged, Damage 8, Penetrating 4), Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 7, Toughness 12, Will 13

Totals Abilities 46 + Powers 81 + Advantages 2 + Skills 16 + Defenses 23 = Total 168

Complications: Motivation—Recognition: Miss Canada is an attention hound, possibly more so than Big Thunder, and takes any opportunity to play to her fans. **Secret:** Unbeknownst to her, or anyone else, Miss Canada is the daughter of the villainous would-be conqueror Gravos.

CHRIS “THE OPPORTUNIST” CAGE

PL10 - 179 POINTS

STR 3 STA 3 AGL 4 DEX 3 FGT 4 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 2

Powers: **Fast Attack** (Strength-based Multiattack Damage 3, Selective); **Super Speed** (Enhanced Advantage 3 (Improved Initiative 3), **Movement 3** (Wall-crawling 2, Water Walking 1, both Limited to while moving)), **Quickness 10, Speed 12** (8,000 MPH)); **Suffocation Vortex** (Cumulative Shapeable Area 2 (60 feet cubic) Affliction 10 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated), Limited: Must be able to run around target(s))

Advantages: Connected, Defensive Roll 3, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative, *Improved Initiative 3*, Instant Up, Interpose, Languages (French, English native), Move-by Action

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+8), Athletics 6 (+9), Close Combat: Unarmed 6 (+10), Expertise: Photography 6 (+6), Intimidation 4 (+6), Perception 8 (+9), Ranged Combat: Throw 4 (+7), Stealth 4 (+8), Technology 2 (+2), Vehicles 2 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +20, Fast Attack +10 (Close, Multiattack Damage 6, Selective), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 14, Parry 14, Fortitude 8, Toughness 6/3*, Will 8 * Without Defensive Roll.

Totals Abilities 40 + Powers 73 + Advantages 11 + Skills 23 + Defenses 32 = Total 179

Complications: Motivation—Greed: Cage loves creature comforts and is happy that playing the hero pays so well and allows him to live life to the fullest. **Obsession:** If money weren’t so important to Cage, he’d be motivated by recognition. He loves being popular and goes out of his way to create photo opportunities and maintain his high profile.

CHRIS “THE OPPORTUNIST” CAGE

Ottawa native and (mostly-reformed) criminal Chris Cage offered to serve on Team Canada after enduring a particularly brutal beating—at the hands of Team Canada. He’s proven a reliable teammate to date, as he likes the recognition and the affection of his adoring public and, more importantly, he’s finding super-heroics provides a

LUNA

PL10 - 172 POINTS

STR 5 STA 6 AGL 6 DEX 4 FGT 10 INT 0 AWE 6 PRE 3

Powers: **Alternate Form—Werewolf** (Standard action (-2 points); **Claws** (Strength-based Damage 2, Split), **Enhanced Abilities** (Agility 4, Awareness 3, Dexterity 2, Fighting 5, Stamina 3, Strength 3), **Regeneration** (Regeneration 1, stacks with Quick Recovery), **Speed of the Wolf** (Quickness 2, Speed 4 (30 MPH)), **Werewolf Form** (Morph 1 (werewolf)), **Werewolf Transformation Bite** (Progressive Affliction 7 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Vulnerable, Defenseless, Transformed), Grab-based), **Wolf-like Senses** (Senses 11 (Accurate, Acute, Analytical Olfactory, Low-light Vision, Tracking, Ultra-hearing)); **Quick Recovery** (Regeneration 1)

Advantages: Agile Feint, All-out Attack, Animal Empathy, Assessment, Benefit (Status: Member of Team Canada), Close Attack 3, Defensive Roll, Improved Defense, Improved Grab, Improved Smash, Instant Up, Language (English, French native), Move-by Action, Power Attack, Precise Attack (Close, Concealment), Prone Fighting, Redirect, Takedown, Uncanny Dodge

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+12), Athletics 2 (+7), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+12), Expertise: Supernatural Quebec 5 (+5), Intimidation 5 (+8), Perception 6 (+12), Stealth 6 (+12)

Offense: Initiative +6, Claws +13 (Close, Damage 7, Split), Unarmed +15 (Close, Damage 5)

Defense: Dodge 13, Parry 13, Fortitude 10, Toughness 7/6*, Will 8* Without Defensive Roll.

Totals Abilities 40 + Powers 79 + Advantages 21 + Skills 16 + Defenses 16 = Total 172

Complications: Motivation—Acceptance: Luna has always felt like an outsider and is a “hero” because she hopes it will help her (and her kind) gain acceptance. **Casual Killer:** Luna kills opponents as a matter of course and rarely considers the consequences. **Honor:** Luna’s word is bond and she considers others to share the same belief until they prove otherwise. **Prejudice:** Luna looks like a werewolf, which attracts attention and causes fearful reactions.

cushier lifestyle than that of a thief or inmate. No more dingy warehouse meetings or smelly sewer lairs for him! Cage is thoroughly conceited, and people taking pictures almost always gets him to stop and pose for a few seconds, even in the midst of combat or when he’s on an important mission.

LUNA

The bizarre, self-styled queen of the *rougarou*, Luna Anjou, was born into a circus troupe from Quebec, but this was a circus unlike any other, because hers was a circus of werewolves! After a massacre committed against her clan by a criminal gang in league with Mal-faiteur, Luna merged the remnants with Quebec’s underground mutant community, and formed a group called *Les Bizarrieres* (meaning “the strangeness” or “the freaks of nature”). They waged a bloody war against gangs in the province, but eventually the gangs fell to *Les Bizarrieres*. During the final battle, Luna was saved from execution by the intervention of Team Canada, and despite her record, Big Thunder recruited the blond, tattooed, leather-clad she-wolf to the team. She hasn’t been an easy fit: not only is she a casual killer, she has a strong sense of honor that sets her apart from her more pragmatic teammates.

LABRADOR ROCK

PL10 - 170 POINTS

STR 12 STA 10 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 6 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 4

Powers: **Big** (Growth 2 (7 feet tall), Permanent); **Burrowing** (Burrowing 6 (4 MPH)); **Earth Control Powers** (Array (30 points), **Earth Control** (Perception Range Move Object 10), AE: **Earthen Shield** (Deflect 6), AE: **Earthquake** (Burst Area Damage 10, Limited: Both Labrador Rock and targets must be on the same ground); **Immunity** (Immunity 13 (Aging, Critical Hits, Life Support)); **Regrowth** (Regeneration 1, Persistent, Source: Earth); **Stone Body** (Impervious Protection 4); **Tremorsense** (Senses 9 (Accurate Penetrates Concealment Detect Ground Disturbances, Direction Sense, Distance Sense))

Advantages: Benefit (Security Clearance: Long-time member of Team Canada), Benefit (Status: Member of Team Canada), Benefit (Wealth: Well-off), Close Attack 2, Languages (French, English native)

Skills: Athletics 4 (+16), Expertise: Magic 5 (+6), Insight 2 (+4), Intimidation 7 (+12), Persuasion 2 (+6), Stealth 0 (-1)

Offense: Initiative +1, Earthquake — (Close, Burst Area Damage 10), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 12)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 14, Toughness 14, Will 6 (Growth bonuses already included.)

Totals Abilities 66 + Powers 73 + Advantages 6 + Skills 10 + Defenses 15 = Total 170

Complications: Motivation—Doing Good: Labrador Rock was created to protect mankind and defend it from harm. **Fame:** As a long-time member of Team Canada, Labrador Rock is very well known, much to the chagrin of some of the more vain members of the team. **Prejudice:** Labrador Rock is a giant “man” made of stone and earth, which is disturbing to some.

LABRADOR ROCK

Labrador Rock is a golem crafted by an R.C.M.P. officer with an interest in the occult to assist in the guardianship of Labrador, the large mainland section of Newfoundland. For years, Labrador Rock, a seven-foot tall, man-shaped piece of basalt, assisted the police in everyday operations, but the massacre of his R.C.M.P. detachment at the hands of SHADOW inspired Labrador to join Team Canada and fight the enemies of the country. He doesn’t have much of a life outside the team, but he attempts to make a life for himself under the name Darby Fisher, which the government has set up for him. For twenty years he’s been a mainstay on that team, though some of their recent actions are causing him to question his place on the squad.

OTHER HEROES

Team Canada aren’t the only superheroes in Canada’s capital. Mace Michaels is a parliamentary officer permanently stationed on Parliament Hill, using his namesake weapon to protect public figures and dignitaries, and the American government has two superheroes stationed at their embassy, the little-known super-powered agents Vigil (a flying paragon with super-senses) and Castle (a teleporting martial artist). In addition, Captain Saint-Laurent, a plucky, low-grade paragon, who makes his home in nearby Gatineau, frequently patrols the St. Lawrence from Ottawa to New Brunswick.

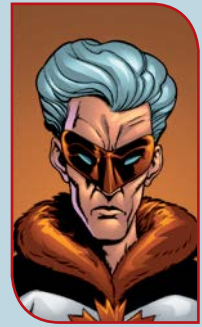
A MAD MAN OUT OF THE BOX!

Canada's most notorious supervillain is the Mad Maple. Known for his nationalism, formidable cold powers, prolific output of letters to the editors of various magazines, obsession with fonts, and a "death to America" attitude that makes most zealots look warm and fuzzy by comparison, the mad one is Canada's poster child for super-villainy.

For a decade, the Mad Maple has embarked on one ill-advised scheme after another to bring down the United States. He hired a mad scientist to construct a hysteria ray and aimed it at American cable news networks. No one noticed. He attempted to kidnap Mary Pickford ("America's sweetheart") only to learn she was actually Canadian (and, also, dead for thirty years). He took a smarmy, drunk Canadian pop singer and saturated America's air waves with his latest single and lame dance moves, in hopes of creating "the maple fever phenomenon." Unfortunately, the days of broadcast television were over, and no one received his signal. He tried to dry up America's supply of beer, believing that would force them to turn to Canadian beer (which is too strong for Americans to handle, leading to the collapse of their country).

The plan failed due to fairly dramatic logistical miscalculations. Even he admits he doesn't know what he was thinking when he cooked up that scheme. But still, he keeps on trying. And. He. Never. Shuts. Up. (The Mad Maple's game stats are in the **Time of the Apes** adventure in the *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS Deluxe Hero's Handbook*.)

The Mad Maple is not the *only* great Canadian supervillain, of course. Stormwing is a corrupted thunderbird who attacks anything he believes harms the environment. Major Menace is a paragon, once the leader of Team Evil in the 1960s and 1970s, now an embittered and battered supervillain whose best years are behind him. H.E.C.T.O.R. is an agent in advanced battle armor who believes that superhumans foster weakness and societal decay; he leads a power armor squad called the New Trojans. Coffin Clown is a mutant powerhouse who preferred acting to heroics, but whose failures eventually led to psychotic rampages, wholesale destruction that he views as slapstick comedy. Eve Violence is an energy projector and villainess from Quebec whose mystical pact gives her control over fire. She's a mercenary who will do any job for anyone for the right price and also an "old flame" of Ellis, the Devil's Own (see **Project Inferno**, following).



SERVICE HILL

The most unusual center of superhuman activity has to be Service Hill, a retirement community and rest home for aged superheroes located in the heart of the Gatineau Hills. Run by Brendan McCulloch, nephew of the Silver Age Canadian Shield, this is an assisted living facility where aging superheroes (and a few villains) from across North America can go to enjoy their final years with quality medical care and dignity. A few of these old folk can still pack a punch, as the Crime League discovered last year when they attempted to kidnap a retired villain from the facility.

TORONTO

Canada's largest city, the fourth largest metropolis in North America, Toronto's importance to the country cannot be understated: it's the center of culture, media, finances, and trade. If you were to take New York, Chicago, and Los Angeles and combine them into a single city, that city would be as prominent to the United States as Toronto is to Canada. One in every six Canadians lives in the metropolitan Toronto region. Naturally, the rest of Canada resents its power and status, calling it "the self-styled Center of the Universe."

Toronto's long super-heroic heritage dates back to the post-World War II period. The original Canadian Shield was buried in Toronto at the end of the WWII, and many young superheroes flocked to Toronto in the wake of the baby boom. The Silver Age Canadian Shield was the most prominent of those, but others included the Rocket Rocker, the Terrific Titan, Mister Disguiso, and

even the '70s most amiable (if not the brightest) hero, the Beaver.

Today, Toronto is one of North America's leading centers of super-normal activity. Most of the big name heroes have passed on, but a new generation of superheroes, such as the Golden Sojourner, have picked up the torch (see **Centurion's Sanctum**, following).

GLOBAL

Toronto is also the headquarters for GLOBAL, Canada's most idealistic security agency. Bankrolled by a wealthy and mysterious private investor (who draws his wealth from a number of sources, some located on parallel earths), GLOBAL is a small group of well-trained agents and superhumans who serve as an independent peace-keeping force around the world. They intervene only when invited (they serve as an alternative to UNISON for organizations and factions that distrust the UN) or in the face of humanitarian disasters. They're trained to handle conflicts with diplomacy first, but defend themselves when attacked. GLOBAL is still led by the Fighting-Canadian, who seems unchanged since his first appearance in the 1940s.

GLOBAL headquarters is a dome on the Toronto waterfront, built around an artifact called the Terminus Shard. It is a giant piece of black metal of unknown composition, which plunged into Toronto in 1991, and was the focal point for Omega's forces during the invasion. No one knows if it's a weapon, a recording device, an encased entity, or something else completely, but GLOBAL has made keeping it from falling into the wrong hands one of their highest priorities.

THE FIRST NATIONS

Canada's native population constitutes 700,000 (2%) of Canada's 35 million population. The preferred term is "First Nations" or aboriginals. Descendants of the original inhabitants of Canada, they live primarily on reserves, spanning every Canadian province and territory.

Canada's First Nations population is scattered across cities as well as 600 bands (the favored Canadian term for tribe) that operate local governments on reserves across the country. Despite stereotypes, there is no monolithic First Nations culture: as one should expect, given the vast size of the North American continent, there are many variations in religious beliefs, customs, and culture. For instance, totem poles and potlatches are rarely found outside the coast of British Columbia, the sun dance is almost exclusive to Plains First Nations bands, etc. However, there are some broad commonalities between many First Nation cultures. First Nations bands share animistic religions, meaning they believe animals possess a spiritual essence. Contrary to popular belief, there are no "shamans" among First Nations peoples; that word is a foreign term applied to spiritual leaders in First Nations cultures. First Nations bands are more likely to use terms like "spirit elder" and "medicine elder."

Canada's history with its aboriginal population is not as bloody as the United States'. With the exception of the Riel Rebellion of 1885 and several small-scale conflicts in the 1990s, Canada has rarely gone to open war against its native population. One of the keys to this relative peace was the early R.C.M.P., which tended to treat the natives with more respect than many of their American counterparts. In fact, Canada became a safe haven for natives in the 19th century, with high profile Native American leaders such as Sitting Bull fleeing into Canada to escape the United States army.

Unfortunately, Canada's own history with its First Nations peoples is anything but sterling. In the late 19th century, traditional cultural artifacts like the potlatch gift giving ceremony, the Plains sun dance, and totem poles were outlawed. In some instances, children were forbidden to learn about their native culture and language, and were placed in "residential schools" which ripped children away from their families, even as late as 1996. Conditions in residential schools were abusive and harsh, and death rates for aboriginal students far exceeded those of non-aboriginals at government institutions.

Many reserves suffer from extreme poverty, though others, particularly those with rich resource deposits, are experiencing boom economies. Self-government is a major goal of most First Nations bands. There have been tensions between First Nations bands and Canada's federal and provincial governments, and occasional armed conflicts, and there are many land claim disputes still ongoing. Of course, superheroes sometimes get caught in the middle.

Perhaps unfairly, Canada's First Nations are seen as being on the front lines against mystical threats in Canada. There is, however, a secret council of spirit elders (the Assembly of the Spirit Nation) from across Canada, currently led by

the Ojibwa medicine elder Chris Sault. They have provided advice and aid for heroes such as Team Canada, though only a small number would be considered mages of significant power in the superhuman world.

While the mystical supers are perhaps the best known, the bulk of First Nations superhumans, like Phillip Eagleclaw (a '70s hero who was part of the original Team Canada) and the '90s villain Scarletstorm, have absolutely no connection to native mystical or spiritual beliefs. There's intense debate among First Nations supers on whether they should adopt historically accurate code-names, or whether the presence of supers like Steven Sun Bear (Canada's earliest First Nations hero, active in the 1950s and '60s) honors their heritage, or plays too heavily into stereotypes.

THE INUIT

In the North lives the second of the region's three main aboriginal groups. The Inuit (known by past generations as "Eskimos") are a nomadic people, originally from northern Europe, now dwelling in Alaska, Greenland, and the Canadian arctic. They have an ancient and complex mythology, honoring gods and powers such as Nanook, master of polar bears, Amarok, the wolf-god and hunter of the lost, and Sedna, mistress of sea creatures. Their shaman are called *angakok*. While the majority of Inuit were Christianized long ago, some still honor the old ways, and the old gods have been seen more than once in the far north, especially when the northern lights are in the sky.

THE METIS

The last of the First Peoples are the Metis. These are the descendants of French traders and settlers who bred with the aboriginal population, and can be found in small communities across Canada.

The monsters of First Nations folklore are, of course, real and terrifying. This includes the reclusive Sasquatch (native to the forests of British Columbia), Quebec's *rougarou* (a type of werewolf, spread by curses, who live in clans in remote areas of rural Quebec), and the wendigo (a cursed cannibal spirit of great strength and ferocity), and various *manitou* spirits of many shapes and breeds, the most malignant of which are demons who lead people astray and then devour them when they are lost.

PAWAGAN, MANITOBA

In northern Manitoba, there's an empty black circle, about a mile in diameter, in a forest of tamarack trees. This is a mystical phenomenon created centuries ago by Cree and Ojibwa medicine elders when the smallpox epidemic that devastated the First Nations was blamed on bad dream spirits. Pawagan is essentially a dream catcher as geographical feature; from here, spirits visit people across North America, and attempt to lure nightmares away from dreamers and let them chase them into the circle. Sleepers who've experienced a huge sense of relief when they suddenly wake from a nightmare, probably have the spirits of Pawagan protecting them.

The circle has been used as a prison for greater dark spirits related to the First Peoples, so much so that the Freedom League calls it a “native American Zero Zone.” Unfortunately, the more it’s used, the more strained its wards become, and many of the mightiest spirits are breaking free to torment North America. Popogusso the Devouring Abyss is a conglomeration of these escaped spirits, but there are worse to come. The circle might be repaired, but it would require a dangerous vision quest into the heart of the nightmares to hold them at bay while the medicine elders perform the necessary rituals.

To make matters worse, Popogusso has attracted the corrupted thunderbird Stormwing, drawing him away from the west coast and allowing him to make his nest in the heart of the circle, which makes the enactment of such a ritual even more difficult.

PROJECT INFERNO

Canada’s supposed super-soldier program, based in a secret facility known as “The Ninth Circle,” somewhere in the heart of Nunavut, Project Inferno has had no less than four incarnations since the 1930s. The Project is the creation of the demon Croatoan, who plans to create a race of cloned and indoctrinated superhumans as an advance force for an invasion by his army of techno-demons. To that end, a cabal of mad scientists has set up a covert government agency that diverts the fund to run the Project and achieve their master’s goals.

There have been at least four incarnations of Project Inferno since the late 1930s. Each has been shut down by heroes (often with Ellis’ help), and each time, it comes back, bigger, stronger, more advanced, and more of an inexplicable burden to the Canadian taxpayer than ever. Despite their defeats, the average Canadian believes that Project Inferno was closed down in 1978 and knows nothing about its long history. Even veteran heroes understand little about its ultimate goals.

ELLIS, THE DEVIL’S OWN

The crowning achievement of Project Inferno is perhaps the most unfortunate superhuman in history: Ellis, the Devil’s Own. He may or may not have been a Scottish nobleman named Andrew McBain, who discovered his powers when he was burned at the stake as a witch in the 16th century, and who came to America as a member of the Roanoke colony where he fell under the influence of the demon Croatoan. He has spent much of the last eighty years being kidnapped, tortured, vivisected, and cloned while scientists tried to mold him into the perfect living weapon, making Ellis’ memory and sense of identity (and sanity) tenuous, at best.

In addition to superhuman speed, ferocity, and immortality, the Devil’s Own can superheat his fingertips, which burn anything he touches, often raking his enemies with his trademark burning slashes. He also regenerates slowly, wounds “burning” away—unless he’s also set on fire, in which case he heals even faster, although it still feels like he’s burning.

POPOGUSSO

PL13 · 236 POINTS

STR 5 STA 10 AGL 4 DEX 4 FGT 5 INT 0 AWE 5 PRE 8

Powers: **Giant Form** (Growth 8 (Huge, 30 feet tall), Permanent); **Immortal Spirit** (Immortality 1 (2 weeks), Immunity 10 (Life Support), Regeneration 5); **Shadow Aura** (Reaction Damage 6, when touched); **Shadow Control** (Array (27 points), **Shadow Bolt** (Ranged Damage 14), **AE: Blindness** (Cumulative Affliction 13 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Visually Impaired, Visually Disabled, Visually Unaware), Limited to one sense, **AE: Mental Blast** (Perception Range Cloud Area Damage 5, Resisted by Will), **AE: Mind Fog** (Illusion 5, all senses); **Shadow Form** (Protection 6, Impervious Toughness 10); **Shadow Teleport** (Teleport 6 (1,800 feet))

Advantages: Accurate Attack, All-out Attack, Hide in Plain Sight, Language 0 (Algonquian native), Power Attack

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+10), Close Combat: Blindness 8 (+13), Deception 12 (+20), Insight 8 (+13), Perception 8 (+13), Ranged Combat: Shadow Bolt 8 (+12), Stealth 22 (+18)

Offense: Initiative +4, Blindness +13 (Close, Cumulative Affliction 13, Resisted by Fort.), Shadow Bolt +12 (Ranged, Damage 14), Mental Blast — (Perception Range, Cloud Area Damage 5, Resisted by Will)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 16, Toughness 16, Will 10 (Growth bonuses already included.)

Totals Abilities 50 + Powers 116 + Advantages 4 + Skills 36 + Defenses 30 = Total 236

Complications: **Motivation—Doing Evil:** Popogusso was created to wreak havoc, corrupt, and destroy. **Hatred:** Popogusso is consumed by an all-powerful hatred of humanity. **Prejudice:** Popogusso is a giant, shadowy creature that oozes evil.

ELLIS, THE DEVIL’S OWN

PL10 · 181 POINTS

STR 5 STA 2 AGL 3 DEX 3 FGT 10 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 3

Powers: **The Devil Protects His Own** (Immunity 11 (Fire effects, Heat); **Devil’s Touch** (Damage 10, **AE: Burning Blast** (Ranged Damage 5)); **Fire Control** (Perception Range Move Object 1); **Lightning Fast** (Quickness 2, Speed 4 (30 MPH)); **Burning Blood** (Regeneration 1, Regeneration 4, Limited to while on fire, stacks with Regeneration 1); **Infernal Resurrection** (Immortality 16 (1 minute), Limited to while on fire); **Tough as Hell** (Protection 8)

Advantages: All-out Attack, Animal Empathy, Attractive, Diehard, Evasion, Extraordinary Effort, Fearless, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Initiative, Instant Up, Interpose, Languages (French, English native), Move-by Action, Prone Fighting, Set-up, Teamwork, Tracking, Ultimate Effort (Will resistance checks), Weapon Break

Skills: Acrobatics 9 (+12), Athletics 8 (+13), Deception 5 (+8), Expertise: History 4 (+4), Insight 8 (+9), Intimidation 12 (+15), Perception 9 (+10), Ranged Combat 7 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +7, Devil’s Touch +10 (Close, Damage 10 (fire)), Burning Blast +10 (Ranged, Damage 5), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 5)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 8, Toughness 10, Will 8

Totals Abilities 54 + Powers 57 + Advantages 19 + Skills 31 + Defenses 20 = Total 181

Complications: **Motivation—Justice:** The Devil’s Own is seeking justice for himself and for those who can’t defend themselves. **Enemy:** Project Inferno wants the Devil’s Own back under its control. **Temper:** When the Devil’s Own is in combat, he often loses control of himself and may attack friend or enemy alike.

CENTURION'S SANCTUM



CENTURION'S SANCTUM

High above the Arctic Circle, on Baffin Island, sits the long-unused secret hideaway of earth's greatest hero, the Centurion. It served as his home away from home and headquarters, an isolated place for trophies and storage for hazardous items recovered during a lifetime of adventure. Dubbed "the Sanctum," only a few trusted friends and allies visited it during the Centurion's lifetime.

After the death of his wife Laurie, Centurion made the Sanctum his full-time residence, bequeathing it to the Freedom League after his death. The League made it a seldom-used secondary base, maintaining it as a memorial to their old friend. Recently, Centurion's daughter from an alternate timeline, Centuria, was given command-level access and the Centuritrons have been programmed to recognize and obey her. The only Canadians who know about the Sanctum are R.C.M.P. Constable Andrew Enuaraq and his daughter Dorothy; they privately protect the area from the overly curious.

The Sanctum is buried deep beneath the arctic ice, with a tunnel leading to a massive metal hatch (constructed from an alien alloy) covering the front entrance. The hatch weighs 200 tons and has Toughness 24. There is a secondary tunnel, leading to the cliff face of nearby Mount Thor, that can only be accessed if the Sanctum itself is in danger of destruction. The Sanctum contains a great hall, a menagerie of alien animals rescued from the Curator, a memorial to Centurion's lost home world (including the original dimensional pod that brought him to Earth), a trophy room with mementos of past cases, and an arsenal of confiscated weapons and devices. The "cyber-city" of Tronik is contained in a computer module in the Sanctum. A monitor room equipped with viewing screens can display world media broadcasts, and there is a teleportal accessible from the Freedom League's satellite headquarters, the Lighthouse.

The Sanctum also contains a featureless white chamber called the Zero Room. It can transport things to and from the extra-dimensional Zero Zone. The Centurion used it to imprison threats to humanity so great they could not be entrusted to the conventional authorities. The Freedom League has only used the Zero Room twice since taking over the Sanctum, first to imprison the Alpha-Centurion, and more recently against the alien Ultracide Nox, a telepathic leech that attempted to drain the mental capabilities of every individual on earth (overcome by a temporary alliance between the Freedom League and their arch-enemies in the Crime League). The Freedom League keeps the Zero Room in reserve, unbeknownst to anyone

THE SANCTUM

HQ • 25 POINTS

Size: Colossal • **Toughness:** 16 • **Features:** Communications, Computer, Dimensional Portal (to Zero Zone), Gym, Isolated Library, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 4 (DC 35), Teleport 18 (250,000 miles, Portal, Extended Only, Earth to the Moon), Workshop

else, although they have debated the possibility of shutting it down altogether.

CENTURITRONS

The only full-time “inhabitants” of the Sanctum, apart from the alien menagerie and the virtual citizens of Tronik, are the Centuritrons, robot doubles built by Centurion decades ago to handle minor tasks and provide cover for his secret identity (allowing Mark Leeds and the Centurion to appear together on numerous occasions). The robots now function as caretakers and defenders of the Sanctum. The Freedom League has access to the Centuritrons’ command codes, but keep the robots at the Sanctum, with one noteworthy exception.

THE GOLDEN SOJOURNER

After his wife’s death, one of Centurion’s greatest projects was the creation of a robot lieutenant who would serve as his surrogate son. The robot was never completed in Centurion’s lifetime, but came online by accident in 2011. Refusing to accept his “father’s” death, the robot christened himself “the Golden Sojourner” and left the Sanctum to explore the outside world and find his lost father.

Under the guise of “David Leeds,” the Golden Sojourner has been wandering North America, searching for evidence of his father’s existence. He understands everyone else on Earth believes Centurion is dead, but his core programming stands firm even against overwhelming evidence. However, he often takes a break from his journeys to stay with Jennifer Holt, a Toronto corporate lawyer and younger cousin to Laurie Leeds (the Centurion’s wife). During that time, the Golden Sojourner serves as Toronto’s chief superhuman protector. He is also falling in love with Jennifer, but doesn’t quite understand his feelings. (“How can love be part of my algorithms?”) His actual identity is a secret even from his “relatives,” and even the Freedom League is on the lookout for a “mal-functioning Centuritron.”

The Golden Sojourner is a standard Centuritron robot, but with **Regeneration 2** and **Morph 1** (single form (secret I.D.), hologram projection field), his Responsibility complication changed to **Obsession**: Finding his father, along with whatever background skills the GM feels are best for the story.

TRONIK, THE CYBER-CITY

During one of Centurion’s encounters with the Curator, the alien computer intelligence “saved” the human inhabitants of an Earth-like world by digitizing the memories and intellects of the entire population of the city of Tronik. Millions of people were reduced to optical data stored in an advanced, compact computer simulation of their previous environment. Centurion rescued the Troniks from unending stasis, but had no means to physically restore them, so he kept the storage module for their data, an

CENTURITRON

PL12 • 199 POINTS
STR 16 STA — AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 8 INT 0 AWE 0 PRE 2

Powers: **Propulsion Systems** (Flight 10 (2,000 MPH)); **Resilient Chassis** (Impervious Protection 14); **Robotic** (Immunity 60 (Fortitude effects, Will effects)); **Sensors** (Senses 5 (Extended Vision 2, Low-light Vision, Radio, Ultra-hearing)); **Super-speed** (Quickness 5, Speed 8 (500 MPH))

Advantages: Language (Latin, English native)

Skills: Expertise: History 5 (+5), Expertise: Teacher 5 (+5), Perception 5 (+5), Ranged Combat: Throw 7 (+8), Technology 8 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +1, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 16)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 14, Will Immune

Totals Abilities 46 + Powers 126 + Advantages 1 + Skills 15 + Defenses 11 = Total 199

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** The Centuritron Robots have been programmed to be responsible for Centurion’s belongings and legacy. **Responsibility:** The Centuritron robots are tied to the Sanctum and take this charge as their number one priority.

alien computer the size of a briefcase, in his Sanctum, running continuously.

The Troniks are unaware of the true nature of their existence, and Centurion chose not to tell them, out of concern for the psychological harm it could cause, to know they were no longer “real,” just virtual copies of real people. The virtual world in which they live is such a perfect simulation that the inhabitants of Tronik believe they escaped the cataclysm that destroyed their home world and founded a new city on an uninhabited planet they call Neo.

Tronik’s technology is similar to that of the Lor Republic. It is a city of soaring towers, connected by sky bridges and anti-gravity lifts. Energy weapons, force fields, and similar technology are commonplace. Although none of it is real, Tronik’s “technology” is based on how the real versions once operated.

A virtual reality interface in the Sanctum allowed Centurion and others to visit Tronik, and Centurion maintained a “secret identity” there. Visits to Tronik are risky simply because the “rules” of the virtual environment prevent any super-powers from functioning, so visitors are effectively normal humans. Despite the fact that Tronik’s environment isn’t “real,” biofeedback from the virtual system can induce fatal shock and other damage to visitors, so threats there are more than real enough to outsiders.

Since Centurion’s death, the Freedom League has looked after Tronik, allowing the Sanctum’s automated systems and the Centuritrons to care for it. They have visited the city on occasion to check on the status of the inhabitants and to address problems or faults in Tronik’s virtual program, but have otherwise continued to keep the secret of Tronik’s true nature and allowed its inhabitants to go on leading normal lives, unaware their world is confined to a small box sitting on a counter.

CYBER-VIKING

PL10 • 255 POINTS

STR 10 STA 8 AGL 6 DEX 6 FGT 8 INT 3 AWE 4 PRE 5

Powers: **Cyberblaster** (Ranged Damage 10, Accurate 2, AE: **Energy Sword** (Damage 12)); **Cybercomm** (Radio Communication 3); **Impervious Defenses** (Impervious Protection 4); **Robot Vikings** (Summon Robot Vikings 5 (75 points), Horde, Multiple Minions 4 (16 minions), Sacrifice); **Cyberport** (Teleport 8 (1 mile))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Equipment 15, Great Endurance, Languages 1 (English, Old Norse native), Leadership, Luck 2

Skills: Athletics 3 (+13), Deception 1 (+6), Insight 5 (+9), Intimidation 5 (+10), Perception 6 (+10), Persuasion 1 (+6), Stealth 2 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +6, Cyberblaster +10 (Ranged, Damage 10), Energy Sword +8 (Close, Damage 12), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 10, Toughness 12, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 100 + Powers 114 + Advantages 21 + Skills 12 + Defenses 8 = Total 255

Complications: **Motivation—Greed:** Like the Vikings of old, Cyber-Viking is a raider at heart and believes it is only proper for him to take what he wants. **Obsession:** Cyber-Viking hates all advanced technology (even his own, in a way) and goes out of his way to destroy it. **Temper:** Cyber-Viking is a berserker and often fights without thinking about tactics.

THE CYBER-VIKING



ROBOT VIKINGS

PL5/MR5 • 62 POINTS

STR 6 STA — AGL 2 DEX 0 FGT 2 INT — AWE 0 PRE 0

Powers: **Armored Chassis** (Impervious Protection 8); **Robotic** (Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects)); **Self-repair Systems** (Regeneration 1); **Senses** (Senses 3 (Darkvision, Radio)); **Technospear** (Range on Strength Damage 6)

Advantages: Close Attack 2

Skills: Athletics 7 (+13), Perception 5 (+5), Ranged Combat: Technospear 4 (+4), Vehicles 12 (+12)

Offense: Initiative +2, Technospear +6 (Ranged, Damage 6), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 8, Will Immune

Totals: Abilities -10 + Powers 56 + Advantages 2 + Skills 14 + Defenses 0 = Total 62

Complications: **Motivation—Loyalty:** The Robot Vikings are loyal to Cyber-Viking and follow his commands. **Temper:** The Robot Vikings are programmed to behave like real Vikings and rage with berserker fury.

CYBER-VIKING LONGSHIP

VEHICLE • 75 POINTS

Size: Huge • **STR:** 8 • **Speed:** 8 (Flight) • **DEF:** 4 • **TOU:** 16
Features: Navigation System 3, Remote Control, **Powers:** **Dragon Prow** (Ranged Cone Area Damage 10); **Flight** (Flight 8 (500 MPH)); **Impervious Defense** (Impervious Toughness 8)

THE CYBER-VIKING

Lars Egillsson, a Viking warrior and bold explorer, made a discovery no one of his time could have imagined. Lost amidst the ice floes of the Arctic, Egillsson found the entrance to an alien ruin, long abandoned by any living thing, but still operated by strange machines. He was captured, augmented with alien cybernetics, and has remained preserved beneath the ice for centuries, until climatic shifts began melting it. Soon, a Cyber-Viking and the robots molded to his needs may be freed upon the world. Isolated by his artificial frame, with his people long since dust, he strikes out, seeking glory and hoping to bring Ragnarok that much closer to end his mad exile.

THE AERIE

Located near the slopes of Mount Mara in Northern Greenland stands the world's great northern refuge. Hidden atop impassable cliffs, honeycombed into a natural fortress of stone, is the Aerie, home of the Avians, a human-variant race with bird-like adaptations.

Although Avian history is unclear, it appears their race is a genetic offshoot of humanity, most likely the result of Preserver experimentation. Similarities between the Avians and winged humanoids from Areesh (a planet "seeded" by the Preservers) support this conclusion. The Avians have dwelt apart from humans ("the grounders") throughout their recorded history. The oldest structures in the Aerie appear beyond current Avian technology, and may have been built by whomever settled there. These proto-Avians were also responsible for the

creation of nearby Timelost Valley, a vast, hidden wonderland where Pleistocene megafauna like woolly mammoths and smilodons still exist and thrive.

The Avians have become the focus of various legends and folktales over the years. Many people are aware of Avian civilization, but few know the actual location of the Aerie. The United Nations has declared the Aerie a sovereign state, although the Avians decline U.N. membership or representation within the community of nations. More than anything, they want only to be left alone.

In the past, misunderstandings, intrusions on the Aerie, or human carelessness (particularly involving airborne pollution or aircraft) has led to conflict between Avians and humans, even the threat of all-out war. Many of these crises were exacerbated by the Avian warrior Talona, perhaps the most infamous of her race, who has championed their cause and threatened the outside world on many occasions. Fate has recently provided the perfect rallying cry for Talona: in the past few years, the melting of Arctic glaciers caused by worldwide climate change has triggered landslides that threaten the Timelost Valley and the Aerie itself.

Avians have an agrarian culture with domesticated animals and also hunt for food in the mountains. Game is plentiful in the Timelost Valley and conventional game such as musk ox are plentiful in other areas. However, climate change has begun to threaten their hunting grounds. If these problems can't be dealt with, the Avians will be forced to hunt over greater distances and possibly prey on animals that already belong to the grounders. Unless a minor miracle occurs to address the damage to the Aerie and Timelost Valley, it's probable the Avians will rise up to "defend" their homeland once again.

DOMINION CITY

Canada's most recent, and perhaps most unusual, feature is an entire city from another reality. Designed and built by scientists in a parallel universe, the floating city became that world's sole surviving haven after a global nuclear holocaust. The city's security chief, a nanotech-infused cyborg named Dominion, attempted to raid our universe in order to conquer and resettle his charges. He "anchored" Dominion City near the city of Nanaimo on the east coast of Vancouver Island. Thanks to the collaborative efforts of heroes from America and Team Canada, Dominion's plans quickly came to naught. The city's governor, a female artificial intelligence named Regina, surrendered and, after a brief negotiation with the provincial and federal government, Dominion City disappeared—but not for long.

The city reappeared, days later, floating above Halifax, Nova Scotia, remaining there for just over a week before disappearing again. Since that time, Dominion City has appeared in places all over Canada, always north of the 49th parallel, but on the Canadian side of the North Pole, and always over land. Experts have a

number of theories involving the city's initial dimensional shift, quantum instabilities, and magnetic fields (to say nothing of unknown variables like Pawagan in Manitoba). Whatever the case, Dominion City appears in a location, remains there for anywhere from a day to nearly a month (at most, so far) then vanishes, reappearing somewhere else anywhere from seconds to as much as a month (the longest disappearance) later. To the inhabitants of the city, no time appears to pass during their "jumps."

Dominion City's technology—and its A.I. governor—relies on huge "nano-furnaces" to produce swarms of "nanogens," microscopic machines released into the air. This technology supports self-driving cars, flying vehicles for police and emergency services, and hospitals with regeneration capabilities for those who have spent years exposed to the nanotech; outsiders, with a few interesting exceptions, are unaffected by the city's nanotechnology.

TYPICAL DOMINION CITIZEN

The inhabitants of Dominion City are slightly stronger and healthier than Earth-Prime humans, able to mentally interface with Dominion City's systems, which broadcast a stream of useful information. To outside observers, residents often appear in a daze because they're silently communicating with the city's computers and each other. The nanogens also sometimes activate a latent genetic potential, transforming a subject into a true superhuman, not unlike the effects of the Silver Storm in Emerald City. Dr. Dyson Hoyle, a "science hero" (use the Gadgeteer archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*) known as the Fortean, is Regina's aide and protector.

The biggest threat to the long-term security of Dominion City is Dominion himself. The exiled warlord is determined to retake his city and, from there, bring the world to its knees. He still has sympathizers within the city, and no one knows Dominion City's strengths and weaknesses better than he. With his ability to exert control over the nanogens, the residents of Dominion City will need outside help to protect their metropolis.

TYPICAL DOMINION CITIZEN

PL2 - 49 POINTS

STR 2 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 2 INT 2 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Bandwidth** (Radio Communication 1, Limited to within distance rank 12 of Dominion City); **Nano Life Support** (Immunity 2 (Aging, Disease), Regeneration 1, both Limited to within distance rank 11 of Dominion City)

Equipment: Audio Recorder, Camera, Cell Phone (Smartphone), Computer, Video Camera

Advantages: Equipment 2

Skills: Athletics 4 (+6), Expertise: Current Events 4 (+6), Expertise: Pop Culture 4 (+6), Perception 4 (+6), Persuasion 2 (+4), Vehicles 2 (+4)

Offense: Initiative +2, Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fortitude 2, Toughness 2, Will 2

Totals Abilities 32 + Powers 5 + Advantages 2 + Skills 10 + Defenses 0 = Total 49



**DOMINION BATTLES
PRINCESS & THE ROOK**

DOMINION

PL12 • 275 POINTS

STR 6 STA 4 AGL 3 DEX 3 FGT 12 INT 6 AWE 5 PRE 8

Powers: Communication (Radio Communication 2 (1 mile)); **Immunity** (Immunity 2 (Aging, Disease), Limited to within distance rank 11 of a nano-furnace); **Invisibility** (Concealment 4 (All Visual Senses), Limited to nanotech-enhanced senses); **Inulnerability** (Impervious Protection 8); **Nano-control Powers** (Array (20 points), **Nanoblast** (Ranged Line Area Damage 10), **AE: Nano-control** (Cloud Area Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Hindered, Disabled, Incapacitated), Limited to targets with nanotech), **AE: Disable Nanotech** (Ranged Cloud Area Weaken Nanotech Defenses 8, Resisted by Fortitude, Broad: All Defenses)); **Nano-sense** (Senses 9 (Acute Analytical Penetrates Concealment Detect Nanotech, Extended 2)); **Regeneration** (Regeneration 5); **Remote Senses** (Remote Sensing 7 (1/2 mile), All Senses Subtle 2, Limited to those with nanotech); **Teleport** (Teleport 8 (1 mile))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Evasion, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Improvised Weapon, Leadership, Quick Draw, Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 6 (+12), Deception 4 (+12), Insight 10 (+15), Intimidation 4 (+12), Investigation 2 (+8), Perception 10 (+15), Persuasion 4 (+12), Sleight of Hand 2 (+5), Technology 15 (+21), Treatment 1 (+7), Vehicles 6 (+9)

Offense: Initiative +7, Nanoblast — (Ranged, Line Area Damage 10), Unarmed +12 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 10, Toughness 12, Will 10

Totals Abilities 94 + Powers 121 + Advantages 8 + Skills 32 + Defenses 20 = Total 275

Complications: Motivation—Power: Dominion wants to rule not just Dominion City, but the world. **Obsession:** Dominion is committed to getting revenge on Regina and taking back Dominion City.

DOMINION

Dallas Freeman was born and bred as a soldier and leader of men, defender of his city. Through guile and good fortune, he kept Dominion City alive following a planet-wide holocaust. But when he asked the public to endure hardships and strict laws to bring them to a better tomorrow, they balked. Then he brought them to another dimension ripe for conquest, but those ingrates didn't have the stomach for another war. They weren't willing to do what was necessary. When this world's super-powered defenders came, the citizens laid down their arms and the traitor A.I. Regina even cooperated to let them in!

But Dominion will show them. Every last one of them. Adversity builds strength. He is a warrior born and bred for glory, and he will take back his city and punish those who wronged him, and teach the inhabitants of this miserable dimension a lesson.

Dominion is a fusion of man and nanotech-based machinery. Although many of his powers focus on Dominion City's unique environment, he's still formidable outside of it, and most of his powers are self-sustaining, unlike those of the city's inhabitants. He's also intimately acquainted with Dominion City's systems, and likely to seek opportunities to infiltrate and compromise them.

MEXICO

Heroes from the United States are in for a surprise if they cross the southern border armed with nothing but images from the media. Sure, they will find a desert landscape punished by sweltering heat, but if they travel a few miles further, they will find snowy mountains, green woodlands, turquoise seas, jade jungles, and bustling towns and cities, big and small in the midst of this varied environmental wealth.

Mexico is a developing country rife with sharp contrasts, home to some of the richest people in the world at the same time as staggering poverty rates; top-notch scientific research a few buildings away from floundering education standards, and tales of selfless heroics in the midst of self-centered corruption. Mexico is a country at odds with itself, and it grew this way by design.

THE EAGLE AND THE SNAKE

Before the Spaniards arrived to the continent, the Aztec Empire stood proud, founded from the prophetic vision given to the nomadic Mexica tribe, who found the matching omen on the shores of Lake Texcoco: an eagle devouring a snake on top of a cactus plant. This was the Spirit of the Mexica Nation made manifest, and it would remain hidden, biding its time to choose a champion. But instead, a champion found it first.

Tlacaelel, a Mexica noble, was instrumental in the rise and consolidation of the

Aztec Empire, serving three emperors before he died. But his death was faked; he found the Spirit of the Mexica in a catacomb under the Great Temple, and through manipulation and sorcery, Tlacaelel fused with the Spirit. The fusion revealed to Tlacaelel the meaning of the Eagle and the Snake: if the glory of the Mexica was to survive, it would have to be split, forever fighting with itself so that the conflict would swallow any influence that sought to conquer the Mexican soul.

Tlacaelel became the immortal guardian of Mexico. He allowed apparent tragedies to make the nation stronger, such as the conquest that merged Spanish with the various native cultures to create a varied whole, or the defeat in the Mexican-American War, so that the Americans bought off territory that was tainted by the practice of slavery and the arrival of the Mayombe. Even today, his machinations drive the violence that grips the rural territories in the catastrophic war on drugs.



NEXUS OF POWER

Imbued with the Spirit of Mexico, Tlacaelel is a powerful sorcerer, but he never sought the title of Master Mage; his skill was in ruling from the shadows and being the power behind the throne. With the unwitting help of Broken Crow working his magic in Arizona, Tlacaelel diverted many magical lines to form small pools of power throughout the Mexican territory. These miniature nexuses lay dormant like landmines that would warp fate for the first person to trigger

STRAINED RELATIONS

Mexico is a country close enough for heroes to make a quick trip, and apart enough in culture and language to give a series an exotic, fantastic touch. As opposed to the stereotypes shown in movies, TV shows, and videogames, Mexico is not that different from the United States: large cities host a modern and sophisticated society that enjoys the latest technological advances, while rural areas are places where tradition reigns supreme and slides towards the backwater.

However, as friendly and cooperative as Mexican authorities are towards UNISON and superpowered visitors, American heroes will find resistance among the locals as soon as they try to do anything. Having a Mexican hero on the foreigners' side can smooth things out, but unless the heroes are internationally famous and popular, locals will be uncomfortable with the nosy *gringos* at best.

Mexican heroes, on the other hand, are the people's darlings. Heroes and villains alike catch the people's imaginations. The public follows their clashes as if it were a soap opera, and it doesn't take long for the rise of new heroes to spread through social media. Mexican heroes can have any origin and fill any niche; Tlacaelel's pools of power not only trigger magic origins, but twist fate so that after a person is exposed to their energy, a destined exposure to radiation, chemical, drugs or anything else that may have killed them previously, now serves as the catalyst for developing superpowers.



MEXICO'S HEROIC LEGACY

them, whether to transform them or give them the tools to achieve glory. Tlacaelel activated many of these pools during the early 20th century as Freedom City became the focus of heroic efforts, giving rise to many folk heroes during the Mexican Revolution, and years later started the boom of *luchadores*, heroic wrestlers like El Plateado and Scarlet Devil, who fought SHADOW as it tried to sink its claws into the country, and Tlacaelel even molded an impressionable apprentice into the mystic Profesor Siva, who kept supernatural terrors in check.

THINGS GONE SOUTH

In the late 1980s, disguised as “Señor Z”, a fictitious criminal mastermind, Tlacaelel brokered meetings between the SHADOW agents hiding in Mexico and the rising druglords. He let things run their course and did nothing to impede the rise of the incompetent, corrupt, or both into government, laying the seeds for a crisis to come.

The Terminus Invasion ironically consolidated SHADOW’s hold on the Mexican drug cartels, as the last two super-powered wrestlers, Tenebroso and El Plateado II, died as the former used magic to teleport them both to Freedom City in order to help contain Omega’s ground forces. Meanwhile, Tlacaelel simply bid his time.

Violence began to escalate as the druglords prospered and infiltrated more branches and levels of the government, and when Mexico began to cooperate actively in the drug war with the United States around 2006, chaos broke loose as different gangs warred with each other.

Under the confusion, Tlacaelel tipped off UNISON and triggered all his sleeper agents within the Mexican branches of SHADOW. With their supposed minions fighting each other, its local converts turning coat, and now hounded by UNISON investigators, SHADOW abandoned its operations, leaving Tlacaelel with a wealth of captured technology and resources he used to found dozens of small companies in various fields.

When news of the Silver Storm in Emerald City reached Mexican media, Tlacaelel understood that he could not delay any more. He activated all the dormant power pools and assumed the identity of the *Levantador de Ánimas*, or Ghostwaker, as he made himself known to UNISON through rumors and hearsay. The stage was set, and it was just a matter of time for the players to arrive.

CIUDAD JUAREZ, CHIHUAHUA

This large border city is right across the Rio Bravo (or Rio Grande) from El Paso, Texas, and for years has been the stage for a ghastly series of murders, gang killings, and cross-border conflict. Ciudad Juarez is a growing industrial city with many manufacturing plants belonging to foreign companies, and the four bridges connecting it to El Paso are constantly heavy with freight traffic.

Local police have their hands full trying to keep the peace in a city that’s grown and continues to grow rapidly, and they are simply not equipped to handle the war brewing in the underworld. The strongest organized faction is the Santa Muerte cult, which is successfully expanding its hold on local drug gangs. Ironically, the cult is helping

the police indirectly by protecting the territory they have claimed against the advance of American smugglers who are trying to secure contraband routes.

Juarez has no super-powered denizens, but the people who live in the gritty streets hear rumors of a few vigilantes taking up arms to attack gangs, in addition, there have been sightings of the lost soul and urban legend of La Llorona. The hero from Monterrey, Viento Negro, has visited Juarez several times in her crusade to fight the black market arms trade, and she's not shy about crossing the border into the United States, which strains the already tense relationship between the Chihuahua State Police and Texan authorities.

LA LLORONA

The legend of the Weeping Woman has many versions throughout Mexico and even extending into the Latino communities in the United States. The basics of the legend speak of a woman who killed her own children, sometimes to protect them, other times out of jealousy, eventually killing herself to then haunt the streets of whatever city the tale is told, crying out for her dead children.

In Ciudad Juarez, the urban legend came true. One week after the body of Lydia Vasquez, a local factory worker, was found next to the bodies of her two young daughters, an American tourist was also found dead together with a couple of local thugs. The coroner declared that the three of them had died of cardiac arrest and severe tissue damage resembling frostbite. The rumors of La Llorona's return spread quickly, as well as sightings and the terrifying echoes of her cry of "Ay, mis hijos!" (translation, "Oh, my children!")

La Llorona is the ghost of Lydia Vasquez and is a very, very angry spirit. She is attracted to sites where innocents have been murdered and seeks retribution. She only recently regained rationality and pursues her targets relentlessly. It takes heroic efforts of diplomacy to keep her from attacking any male that tries to approach her.

GUADALAJARA, JALISCO

Located in Western Mexico, Guadalajara is the second largest city in the country and in the past few decades has made great strides to become Mexico's cultural capital. The city was important during the colonial years and the Mexican founding fathers signed the first abolition of slavery in the entire continent here.

Government and private interests sponsored and funded many cultural festivals and renewed the city's infrastructure, but this modernization contrasts with the age of its dangers. Despite being considered the Mexican Silicon Valley, the supernatural has a strong presence.

COUNT KAROL DUVAL

This Spanish vampire owns an old hacienda outside the city, from which he rules over a gang of vampire thralls that is quietly making forays into the technology indus-

LA LLORONA

PL10 - 192 PTS

STR 2 STA — AGL 4 DEX 0 FGT 0 INT 2 AWE 4 PRE 2

Powers: **Angry Soul** (Concealment 10 (All Senses, Passive, Quirk: Perceptible to supernatural senses)), Immortality 1, Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects), Regeneration 2), Senses 14 (Accurate Extended Penetrates Concealment Detect Murderous Guilt 2, Darkvision, Postcognition (Limited to seeing murders), Tracking (Murderous Guilt)), Strength Affects Corporeal 2); **Ghostly Rage** (Array (30 points), **Ay, mis hijos!** (Cumulative Burst Area Affliction 10 (fear; Resisted by Will; Entranced and Vulnerable, Stunned and Defenseless, Paralyzed), Extra Condition, Sense-dependent: Auditory), AE: **Grave Touch** (Damage 12 (cold), Accurate 4, Incurable, Reversible, Secondary Effect)); **Phantasmal Body** (Array (20 points), **Ghost** (Insubstantial 4), AE: **Ethereal** (Impervious Protection 10)); **Spirit Travel** (Array (22 points), **Ghostly Flight** (Flight 7 (250 MPH)), AE: **Cross Over** (Movement 2 (Dimensional 2 (Realms of the Dead))), AE: **Chase Death** (Teleport 11 (Accurate, Extended (2,000 miles), Limited to Extended, Medium (Murder Sites)))

Advantages: Favored Foe (Murderers of innocents), Hide in Plain Sight, Languages (Spanish native), Startle

Skills: Insight 6 (+10), Intimidation 12 (+14), Investigation 3 (+5), Perception 7 (+11), Stealth 4 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +4, Ay, mis hijos! — (Cumulative Area, DC Will 20), Grave Touch +8 (Close, Damage 12), Unarmed +0 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 0/10*, Will 8 * With Ethereal active.

Totals: Abilities 18 + Powers 135 + Advantages 3 + Skills 16 + Defenses 20 = 192

Complications: **Hatred:** La Llorona also cannot tolerate men. Innocent men will be frightened away, she will try to kill men with blood on their hands. **Motivation—Revenge:** La Llorona is driven by her hatred of murderers. **Obsession:** La Llorona is obsessed with protecting children. She might use irrational means like kidnapping, if she thinks that's what it takes. **Temper:** As an angry spirit, La Llorona often loses control of herself and attacks anyone nearby.

try. A close call with exposure via a smartphone's camera made Duval realize that mortals had new weapons he'd never seen before and, worse yet, that he didn't control, and he wants to correct that oversight. Use the Vampire archetype in **Chapter 3** of the *Gamemaster's Guide* for Duval, but replace Children of the Night with the Mind Control power from the Puppeteer archetype, removing the Progressive extra. For Duval's minions, use the Thug archetype with Stamina 5 and Regeneration 2. Duval is not averse to creating zombies, but he finds them distasteful.

ANGEL BALLESTEROS

When middle-aged Jesuit priest Angel Ballesteros crossed one of the first power pools that Tlacaoel awakened, he gained the ability to detect and track the supernatural. Afterward, he found himself in a world he suddenly did not understand. Rather than go insane, the priest began documenting what he saw and doing some serious occult research.

Ballesteros abandoned the priesthood and became a private detective, paying the bills with mundane cases and hunting supernatural phenomena as his true vocation. Armed with a meager knowledge of magic and the unerring ability to identify his quarry, he became an adept

PRONUNCIATION AND TRANSLATION GUIDE

The names of Mexican heroes can be difficult to pronounce or understand by their foreign counterparts, especially if the name the hero or villain chose (or were given) is in Nahuatl, the language of Aztecs and Toltecs. Below is a list with the pronunciation and translation with the names of heroes and villains appearing in these pages.

Angel Ballesteros (*AHN-hell Bah-yes-TEH-ros*) given name; surname means “Crossbowmen”

Capitán Vecino (*Ka-pee-TAHN Beh-see-noh*) Captain Neighbor

Cuauhcihuatl (*Koo-aw-SEE-watl*) Eagle Woman in Nahuatl
Dinamo (*DEE-nah-moe*) Dynamo

El Plateado (*El Plah-teAH-doh*) The Silver One

La Inge (*Lah EEN-heh*) feminine short form for “The Engineer”

La Liga de Metaluchadores (*Lah LEE-gah deh Meh-tah-loo-chya-DOH-rez*) The League of Metawrestlers

La Llorona (*Lah Yoh-ROH-nah*) The Weeping Woman

Talachas (*Tah-LAH-chyas*) slang roughly equivalent to “Odd Jobs” and “Hard Work”

Tenebroso (*Teh-neh-BRO-soh*) Tenebrous, Sinister, Shadowy

Tepalcatl (*Teh-pal-KAH-tee*) shard of glass in Nahuatl

Tlacaoel (*Tlah-kah-EH-leh*) He Who Lifts Spirits in Nahuatl; Ghostwaker

Venganza Alada (*Venn-GAHN-sah Ah-LAH-dah*) Winged Vengeance

Viento Negro (*Bee-EN-toe NEH-gro*) Black Wind

ANGEL BALLESTEROS

PL7 • 121 PTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 0 DEX 5 FGT 2 INT 2 AWE 6 PRE 2

Powers: Supernatural Sense (Senses 16 ((mental senses) Awareness (Detect Supernatural), Accurate Acute Analytical Counters All Concealment Counters Illusion Detect Supernatural 2, Danger Sense, Tracking (Detect Supernatural))

Equipment: Camera, Car, Cell Phone (Smartphone), Flashlight, Heavy Pistol (Ranged Damage 4), Holy Water (Ranged Cloud Area Weaken Toughness 5, Resisted by Fortitude, Diminished Range 3 (10/25/50 feet), Limited to supernatural creatures vulnerable to holy items), Lock Release Gun, Toolkit (Investigation), Undercover Shirt (Protection 2)

Advantages: Artificer, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Diehard, Equipment 7, Favored Foe (Undead), Fearless, Improved Aim, Languages (Spanish native), Luck 2, Precise Attack (Ranged, Cover), Ritualist, Second Chance (Mental control)

Skills: Athletics 4 (+5), Expertise: Magic 5 (+7), Insight 4 (+10), Investigation 9 (+11), Perception 6 (+12), Persuasion 5 (+7), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+9), Sleight of Hand 4 (+9), Technology 2 (+4), Treatment 3 (+5), Vehicles 2 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +0, Heavy Pistol +9 (Ranged, Damage 4), Holy Water (Ranged, Cloud Area Weaken Toughness 5, Resisted by Fort. DC 15), Unarmed +2 (Close Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 6, Toughness 6/2, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 40 + Powers 16 + Advantages 21 + Skills 24 + Defenses 20 = 121

Complications: Broken Ties: Many of Angel’s contacts in the Church are starting to believe he is insane. The help they offer may carry strings. **Motivation—Responsibility:** Angel no longer has a rational justification to hunt the supernatural; it has become his entire life. **Shattered Faith:** Angel’s devout Catholicism is the source of his ability to detect the unnatural. If his faith wavers, his power does too.

hunter of the supernatural, mostly unaware of the wider world of superpowers. It was only after some time that he discovered the existence of Count Duval, and the two have been locked in a battle of wits and influence ever since.

#HASHTAG

Miguel Najera is a young college student who was in Emerald City as part of an exchange program during the Silver Storm, but his powers didn’t manifest until he was back home, where he attended a local technology trade show and spontaneously made the image displayed by a prototype 3D projector become solid and real. After mastering his ability to create objects of solid light and use networked devices as extensions of his senses, he called himself #Hashtag. His social media savvy made him an instant hit when he began finding and leaking evidence on corrupt government officials and corporations.

#Hashtag avoids direct confrontation at all costs, fighting through his light constructs while he safely hides and goes elsewhere. He blogs both in English and Spanish, but so far nobody has tried to contact him regarding his exploits or his goals. He is, however, eager to lend his powers to a good cause and would welcome contact from others he considers do-gooders.

EAGLE ASCENDING

When Tlacaoel subdued and fused with the Spirit of the Mexica, the vision of dualism and conflict he received fooled him into believing he had completed the job. However, unbeknownst to him, he only took part of the spirit, the Snake; the worldly half of the equation. The Eagle half escaped and has been in hiding ever since. With the nation-wide activation of Tlacaoel’s pools of power, the Eagle stirred, and is just waiting for the right moment and the right person to turn into a true champion of Mexico.

A hero chosen by the Eagle will be drawn to Tlacaoel, but he will not necessarily feel like the immortal sorcerer is an adversary. However, once this new hero is transformed, Tlacaoel will realize his mistake and prepare for conflict. The powers a chosen of the Eagle is likely to receive resemble those of a Paragon archetype with the abilities of a Vessel as described in **Chapter 2** of the *Hero’s Handbook*, but the details and other powers will vary greatly depend on the person.

HECELCHAKAN, CAMPECHE

This small territory is a municipality in the state of Campeche, one of three states in the Yucatan peninsula, and its capital of the same name is a quiet little city eager to receive and treat tourists to its culinary delights and mix of Mayan and Colonial architecture.

The city’s name comes from the Mayan for “savanna of rest,” and has been a stop for weary travelers for centuries. Hecelchakan’s placid nature has always been the perfect cover for the ancient secrets it held. Not far from the city, one of the peninsula’s famous cenotes, or wide sinkholes, penetrates the ground and connects to the entrance of a forgotten temple the Maya erected to honor the Preservers.

#HASHTAG

PL10 • 168 PTS

STR 0 STA 1 AGL 0 DEX 3 FGT 0 INT 5 AWE 3 PRE 1

Powers: **Bandwidth** (Radio Communication 3, Rapid 2, Subtle, Limited to network protocols); **Find Signal** (Senses 6 (Accurate Analytical Detect 2 Radiowave Transmitters, Radio)); **I/O Protocol** (Comprehend 2 (Machines/Electronics)); **Link-Up** (Remote Sensing 13 (Visual and Auditory, 30 miles), Subtle 2, Medium: Networked devices); **Solid Light Force Field** (Sustained Protection 7); **Solid Light Interface** (Array (20 points)); **Animated Hologram** (Perception Summon 4 (Mental Link, Type: General (Holographic Robot), Quirk: Must appear near a networked device), AE: **Deep Scan** (Mind Reading 6 (Affects Objects Only, Sensory Link)), AE: **Solid Hologram** (Perception Create 6))

Equipment: Cell Phone (Smartphone), Computer, GPS Receiver

Advantages: Benefit (Cipher), Contacts, Defensive Roll 3, Equipment, Great Endurance, Languages 2 (English, Japanese, Spanish native), Skill Mastery (Investigation, Technology), Speed of Thought, Teamwork

Skills: Expertise: Politics 5 (+10), Investigation 11 (+16), Perception 9 (+12), Technology 11 (+16)

Offense: Initiative +5, Light Blast +11 (Ranged, Damage 8), Unarmed, +0 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 9, Parry 7, Fortitude 8, Toughness 11/8*, Will 11 * Without Defensive Roll.

Totals Abilities 26 + Powers 80 + Advantages 13 + Skills 18 + Defenses 31 = Total 168

Complications: **Careless:** #Hashtag's powers don't leave a trace, but his actions in a system may; he sometimes forgets to delete his trail. **Gun-Jumper:** #Hashtag is impatient and acts before fully understanding a situation. **Motivation—Doing Good:** Despite his desire for recognition, #Hashtag does want a better world.

HOLOGRAPHIC ROBOT

PL4/MR4 • 55 PTS

STR 5 STA — AGL 0 DEX 1 FGT 2 INT — AWE 0 PRE —

Powers: **Enhanced Movement** (Leaping 3 (60 feet), Speed 3 (16 MPH)); **Robotic** (Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects)); **Large** (Growth 2, Permanent); **Offensive Systems** (Array (11 points), **Eye Blasters** (Ranged Damage 5, Accurate), AE: **Strobe** (Cumulative Cone Area Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude), Dazed and Visually Impaired, Stunned and Visually Disabled)); **Solid Light Body** (Protection 5)

Advantages: Close Attack 1, Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Improved Initiative, Improved Smash, Interpose, Weapon Bind, Weapon Break

Skills: Athletics 7 (+12), Perception 5 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +4, Eye Blasters +3 (Ranged, Damage 5), Strobe — (Close, Cumulative Cone Area Affliction 4, Resisted by Fort.), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 5)

Defense: Dodge 1, Parry 1, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 7, Will Immune

Totals Abilities -18 + Powers 57 + Advantages 8 + Skills 6 + Defenses 2 = Total 55

AJ KANAN BEEJ KA'AN

Reaching the Preserver temple is an ordeal. The first thing to defeat is the area's enjoyable atmosphere, because the temple below generates a Cumulative Progressive Affliction 8 effect that makes anyone thinking about exploring the cenote wish instead to relax and enjoy themselves

GUADALAJARA, JALISCO



ANCESTRAL ALIENS

The Preservers are a vanished race of advanced beings that meddled with the evolution of life in the galaxy and left behind many secrets and enigmas, chief among them the Preserver Stones that many intergalactic heroes and villains have used to fuel their powers, such as the Star Knights' Starstone and Farside City's Moonstone. Finding Preserver artifacts is the Holy Grail of xenoaercheologists and mad scientists alike.

elsewhere. Then there's the drop that requires rock-climbing gear or superpowers, and then the submerged tunnel that doubles back to the starting pool if visitors don't have the key. At the end of this obstacle course, the pyramid temple can prove a disappointment. Its construction employs Preserver designs and even carvings in Preserver iconography, but the technology used was Mayan, no alien engineering involved. However, anyone who wishes to sacrifice a few months of their lives studying the markings will have knowledge and fluency in the Preserver language imprinted on their mind, and will note an empty niche at the pyramid's top.

LA INGE

Archaeologist Silvana Valladares never gave serious consideration to the fringe theories of alien involvement with the Mayan civilization, even when the world became aware that aliens did exist. She was trying to prove that the Maya had traced a route to their mythological underworld, the Xibalba, across a series of cenotes dotting the Yucatan peninsula and neighboring Central America. Tlacaoel funded her expedition, and entrusted her with the limestone medallion that was the key to the Preserver pyramid; he'd had it for decades but had never found the temple.

Key in hand, Silvana was the only one in her team to resist Hecelchakan's charms of relaxation, and she found the hidden temple alone. She stayed there for three months while the world declared her lost and dead, but when she emerged from the cenote, she was an expert in advanced technology and Preserver language, and wearing a plain silver circlet on her brow. Tlacaoel was waiting for her, and once he realized what the temple had done to her, he recruited her on the spot.

Silvana, nicknamed "La Inge" by her new lab subordinates, currently works for Tlacaoel, building the technology he peddles to SHADOW and the cartels as the bait for UNISON and other heroes, and the technology he intends for other, inscrutable purposes. La Inge uses the Gadgeteer archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*.

MEXICO CITY, FEDERAL DISTRICT

The political, economical, and cultural center of Mexico, the Federal District is a monster of a city, continuously spilling over its boundaries to engulf nearby communities in its urban sprawl. The city's history dates back to

the old Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan, founded in 1325 by a feat of engineering that basically created land over Lake Texcoco. It grew under Spanish rule, which covered all the old temples and constructions with Christian churches and new buildings, and kept growing throughout its history until it became a maze of modern and colonial architecture with wide avenues and narrow cobbled alleys.

As the seat of the federal government and all its branches, Mexico City is the choice location for transnational corporations' regional headquarters, which brings many foreigners to live either in a transient or permanent capacity. This makes the city a very cosmopolitan place and the country's spearhead with regards to social reforms.

Ever since Centurion's arrival decades ago triggered a new age of heroes with the United States as its epicenter, the immortal sorcerer Tlacaoel stepped up his activities using Mexico City as both testing grounds and frontlines. While much lower than the activity in Freedom and (now) Emerald Cities, Mexico City is undergoing an increase in conflicts between heroes and villains; Tlacaoel is only partially responsible for this increase; planting seeds and waiting to reap the harvest.

GHOSTWAKER

The immortal Tlacaoel plots and observes from a modest-looking office building located near the city's main square, and switches between many aliases to carry out his plans. "Ghostwaker" is the latest of his personas, crafted especially for UNISON's benefit. For all the international organization knows, Ghostwaker is a rising underworld mastermind with ties to both SHADOW and the cult of the Santa Muerte, an international dealer in hyper-advanced science and magical artifacts, anything to give supervillains an edge. Tlacaoel slips clues to local and foreign heroes about areas of interest, letting them believe they are thwarting "Ghostwaker's" nefarious plans while they unwittingly follow his true overarching strategy to protect Mexico. Sometimes these leads put the heroes in conflict with some of Ghostwaker's own forces (but nothing he wasn't interested in sacrificing anyway), or to forces that oppose his own that also pose a threat to Mexico as a whole.

When Tlacaoel appears as Ghostwaker, he is a heavy-set, middle-aged man of mixed European and native heritage and uses the Crime Lord archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide*. His true self is a pure-blooded Aztec man eternally in his mid-thirties, impeccably dressed in current business fashion, and Aztec motifs in all his neckties. Tlacaoel avoids direct confrontation if at all possible, but is more than capable of it; if heroes insist on fighting him, use the Overlord archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide*, except that he has Strength 2, and instead of the Overlord's powers, Tlacaoel uses the powers listed for the Sorcerer archetype; and replaces all technological options with their magical equivalents. He also has the following powers in all his aliases: Immunity 3 (aging, disease, poison), Immortality 3, and Morph 3 (any human).

CAPITÁN VECINO

Omar Gutierrez owns a small grocery shop in a dangerous neighborhood. One night he decided he'd had enough of the decay gripping his neighborhood and, inspired by the wrestling superheroes of the past, made himself a costume and set out to patrol the nearby streets, berating vagrant youngsters, volunteering for public works, and otherwise offering a helping hand where he could. His neighbors loved him, and he became a public darling after he received YouTube coverage.

Small-time crooks have tried to teach him a lesson, but he has not only thwarted them, but captured them too. Capitán Vecino has no apparent powers, no training, and no backing; everybody agrees it's a miracle he's still alive. Capitán Vecino is an otherwise normal, honest man, but he has the unconscious ability to alter reality through sheer optimism, apparently. Use the Bystander supporting character archetype from the *Hero's Handbook* but give him all the luck powers from *Power Profiles* at 8 ranks.

LA LIGA DE METALUCHADORES

The "League of Metawrestlers" is a group of professional wrestlers who decided to take up the fight for justice. Highly publicized by their managers, most of the athletes who sign up do little more than public appearances, endorsements, and volunteer work, but they fund the operations of a small group of wrestlers with actual powers (who limit themselves when they're in the ring) that try to fight crime incognito, mostly against the souped-up thugs from the Santa Muerte. Members of the League are a collection of Powerhouse archetypes with some variation, most of the Liga are around PL 8, with the exception of Venganza Alada, who is a PL 10 Paragon, and Dinamo, a PL 10 Speedster from the *Hero's Handbook*.

UNISON MEXICO

Mexico is a signatory of many United Nations treaties, including the one that allows UNISON to operate in Mexican territory with full cooperation from Mexican authorities. UNISON has no office of their own in Mexico City, but are assigned space in two local headquarters: Administrative and investigation duties are carried out from a suite inside the Center for Investigation and National Security (*Centro de Investigacion y Seguridad Nacional*, CISEN, which is basically the Mexican NSA), with a permanent staff of 12, and space for more if a mission warrants it. UNISON armed forces are hosted at the headquarters of Mexico's 2nd Mechanized Cavalry Regiment, but there is no permanent staff there. UNISON escalated operations in Mexico after the Silver Storm and the unexplained increase of superhumans in Mexican territory at around the same time, in addition to the spike in SHADOW's attempts to enter the territory, and the appearance of Ghostwaker. However, UNISON agents are *not* allowed to operate solo; they must partner with Mexican military or federal police if they wish to investigate anything.

MONTERREY, NUEVO LEON

Located in the Mexican Northeast, Monterrey is the third most important city in the nation, an industrial and business powerhouse hosting some of the most important Mexican companies as well as transnational corporations' branch offices. It's also the most modernized, and it was ranked as the safest city in Latin America until recent years, when warring drug cartels brought their fight to Monterrey's streets, taking a complacent government by surprise.

Some of the richest entrepreneurs in the country call this city home, and they are exerting a lot of pressure on the government to get its act together; some of them are even bringing heroes-for-hire from the U.S.A., which is creating a lot of problems for the local police who are just trying to do their jobs. UNISON also has its eyes on the city, as the trickle of American superheroes is bound to bring some supervillains the criminals could hire to fight back.

POWELLFUL

Frank Powell is a C-list supervillain from Chicago who jumped at the chance to earn glory and make a living without police or superheroes ruining everything for him. He has his own condo in Monterrey's richest neighborhood, and all he needs to do is go and trounce other losers with his mighty powers. He attacks both heroes and villains he believes are trying to butt in on his sweet deal, and he grudgingly takes orders from Vicente Benavides, his employer, if only because Benavides is a very canny negotiator who knows how to keep his pet super-guardian on a leash. Powellful is constantly vexed by Viento Negro's successes and, although he has never met her, he has vowed to destroy her. Suffice to say, he doesn't speak a word of Spanish. Powellful uses the Jumped-Up Nobody archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide* (see **Chapter 3**), albeit he is only PL 9 (which means his Energy Blast has a +6 attack bonus and deals 13 damage, his Energy Burst is Damage 9, his Protection is rank 12 and other similar adjustments).

FORKLIFT

Cole Martinez was a simple dock worker in New York, until he handled a container that carried dangerous raw materials for SHADOW's research. He was already strong but he became much stronger, although the pain of the transformation made him go berserk. SHADOW agents captured him before heroes could get to him, and quickly employed him as muscle. With most of his personality gone, it was not him who brokered the deal with the Cartel de la Torre, but his SHADOW handler. He was shipped to Monterrey to aid in the small cartel's fight against imported superheroes, but he has an implant that lets SHADOW see, hear and record everything around him, which is how they are gathering information on the local criminal scene. Forklift uses the Brute archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide* (see **Chapter 3**).

HOME AWAY FROM HOME

Monterrey's openness to foreign heroes (and villains) is a chance for American characters to visit a place in Mexico that's very similar to American cities (fast food franchises included) and is not overcrowded with other heroes trying to make a name for themselves. They can receive an offer from a Mexican industrialist with all the accommodations they desire, or they could be chasing a supervillain hired by the cartels or even by a citizen less concerned with collateral damage.

VIENTO NEGRO

PL10 • 160 PTS

STR 2 STA 2 AGL 4 DEX 3 FGT 8 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 0

Powers: **Consummate Athlete** (**Flurry of Blows** (Multiattack Strength Damage 2), Leaping 1 (15 feet), Movement 2 (Safe Fall (Limited to near a surface), Sure-footed); **Electrostaff** (Feature—Collapsible, Enhanced Advantage (Improved Trip), Cumulative Affliction 6 (electricity); Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed and Impaired, Stunned and Disabled), Extra Condition, Reach (melee); Limited Degree) Linked to Strength-based Damage 4 (Multiattack, Reach (melee)); **Grapnel Gun** (Movement 1 (Swinging)); **Noctis Body Armor (Dampening Soles** (Enhanced Stealth 2 (+4)), **Enhancer Goggles** (Senses 4 (Counters Concealment (Visual), Darkvision)), **Microfiberoptic Coating** (Concealment 6 (All Auditory and Visual Senses), Blending, Partial)), **Teflon-Kevlar Lining** (Impervious Protection 5 (Subtle))

Equipment: Binoculars, Cell Phone (Smartphone), Commlink, Lock Release Gun, Motorcycle, Rebreather, Video Camera, **Arsenal** (Array (18 points), **Flash Bomb** (Ranged Burst Area Affliction 6 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Visually Impaired, Visually Disabled, Visually Unaware)), **AE: Shuriken Flurry** (Cone Area Selective Damage 6 (slashing)), **AE: Smoke Bomb** (Cloud Area Concealment Attack 6 (Sight), Extra Ranks 4, Resisted by Fortitude))

Advantages: Agile Feint, All-out Attack, Assessment, Close Attack 4, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 8, Evasion, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Disarm, *Improved Trip*, Languages (English, Spanish native), Move-by Action, Power Attack, Precise Attack (Close, Cover), Prone Fighting, Quick Draw, Ranged Attack 5, Redirect, Takedown 2, Uncanny Dodge

Skills: Acrobatics 9 (+13), Athletics 9 (+11), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+10), Expertise: Social Sciences 4 (+5), Insight 8 (+10), Investigation 8 (+9), Stealth 6 (+10/+14*) * With Dampening Soles.

Offense: Initiative +4, Electrostaff +12 (Close, Strength-based Multiattack Damage 6 and Close, Affliction 6, Fort DC 16), Flash Bomb — (Close, Area Dodge DC 16), Shuriken Flurry +12 (Close, Cone Area Selective Damage 6), Smoke Bomb (Close, Cloud Area Dodge DC 16), Unarmed +14 (Close, Multiattack Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 11, Fortitude 7, Toughness 9/7**, Will 8 ** Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 44 + Powers 36 + Advantages 36 + Skills 23 + Defenses 21 = 160

Complications: **Mama's Girl:** Despite being an adult, Cynthia still bows to her mother's authority, and takes some effort to go against her wishes. **Noctis Battery:** The battery of her suit depletes quickly; its Concealment effect gains the Unreliable flaw after 10 minutes of continuous operation, and shuts down after 10 more. **Responsibility:** Cynthia is the elder daughter of a public figure; she's expected to attend certain events. **Motivation—Justice:** Viento Negro is out to punish wrongdoers, she won't kill criminals, but she'll make sure they will be hurting when police take them.

VIENTO NEGRO

Monterrey has only one local, native hero, and that is Viento Negro, a black-clad vigilante on a crusade against organized crime both in Mexico and the U.S.A.. Viento Negro is actually a mother-daughter operation, with Cynthia Garza doing the crime-fighting, and her mother Marissa doing the investigation and mission control. Cynthia is the oldest daughter of Carlos Alberto Garza, founder and CEO of Garitu Industries and candidate running for state governor. She's also an athletic prodigy, which earned her a scholarship in Freedom City University, where she pursued social studies. During her stay abroad, her little brother was kidnapped for ransom, but later found dead. Cynthia and her mother talked at length, and agreed that her brother's death would not remain unpunished.

Marissa tracked down Master Lee's School of Self Defense, and Cynthia applied, was accepted and excelled. Master Lee observed her for a couple of years, and after some questions and tests of Cynthia's moral fiber, he agreed to train her in the most advanced styles. When Cynthia returned home from Freedom City, her mother was already waiting for her with a high-tech stealth suit, an advanced electrostaff, and a list of targets. Since then, Cynthia has tracked down each and every one of the gangsters who kidnapped her brother and brought them to justice, and Marissa has tracked their network of clients and providers, which include American criminals and "legitimate" weapon manufacturers.

Cynthia speaks English without an accent and has the fair looks normally associated with an American girl, which allows her to easily cross the border to bring her and her mother's brand of justice to the United States. She doesn't trust American heroes and blames them for overlooking the operations of "their" criminals in Mexico. The super-powered fists-for-hire that are coming to her city are the targets of her vitriolic disdain. Her affluence and relative freedom of movement allow Viento Negro to travel quickly across the border, expanding her operations to border towns and cities like Ciudad Juarez and Tijuana—where she met and collaborated with Star Knight, so far the only American hero to earn her respect. Her mother Marissa uses the Government Agent supporting character archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, and she is not a minion.

PALO SANTO, CHIAPAS

A little town in the middle of the Southern Mexican jungle is ground zero of a nefarious criminal plague. The state has international borders to the south with Guatemala and Belize, and is often a point of entry for illegal immigrants headed for the United States. Palo Santo is a few miles away from the railroad tracks that lead deeper into Mexico, but because reaching the town by other means is difficult, it has become a resting place for the immigrants before they resume their long journey north.

Palo Santo tried to resist becoming a criminal haven, but smugglers and human traffickers know they can find business there, which in turn attracted drug cartels and a local guerrilla group that is clinging to relevance. The town is also near a small ruined Toltec temple called Choloakoya-

pan. A few years ago, an aging shaman went to the ruins, seeking a way to protect Palo Santo from the encroaching forces that threatened to engulf it. The rite he enacted was supposed to bring forth a champion, but he made a mistake during the ritual, and instead what he brought was a new age of darkness.

THE SANTA MUERTE

The shaman brought back from death a lowly member of one of the warring cartels as an undead creature. With one foot in the land of the living and the other on the road to Mictlan, the Nahua underworld, this man had an uncanny understanding of the power of Death. The first thing he did after killing the shaman was to reunite with old comrades and persuade them to worship him and his powers. This was the beginning of the cult of the Santa Muerte, or the Holy Death. It spread like a vile infection as an alternate religion for drug traffickers, thugs, murderers and other criminals whose lives were so close to death, they decided they might as well worship it.

The cult is now an organization onto itself. Its cultists worm their way into the rank and file of criminal organizations and subvert them slowly, thus creating the largest, but least identifiable cartel in Mexico. Agents of the Santa Muerte have clashed with practically every Mexican hero, and they even confound Tlacaoel despite his best efforts to manipulate them. On the other hand, they've stopped SHADOW's return from the south, even if they've only done so to protect their own turf. Agents of the Santa Muerte use the various supporting charac-

ter archetypes under Cultists and Underworld headers in the *Gamemaster's Guide*, but some are beginning to display superhuman traits. It is very possible the cult could create powerful undead minions or sorcerers at some point.

TEPALCATLI

Once named Mauricio Villa, this small time crook was accidentally brought back to life with the knowledge and power of Death magic. He used his new-found power to become Tepalcatl, the head priest and criminal overlord at the head of the Santa Muerte cult. There is little depth to the creature he has become, although he is very cunning. His ultimate goal is to bring death and darkness, but now that he's immortal, he has nothing but time to achieve that goal. Tepalcatl uses the Elder Evil archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide*, but replace his Growth effect with the equivalent Enhanced Strength and Stamina; he is a normal-sized mummified man in an Armani suit and an unbuttoned shirt that exposes his desiccated flesh.

CUAUHCICHUATL

The gods of the ancient civilizations that existed in Mexico are not gone, they just closed the gates to their realms when the Spanish conquered their people. They knew Tlacaoel was a capable caretaker, and went into slumber. The first to wake was Mictlantecuhctli, the Aztec god of the dead, who felt when a soul was wrenched from his domain and returned to life as an undead abom-



CUAUHCIHUATL

PL14 • 211 PTS

STR 10 STA 12 AGL 8 DEX 0 FGT 10 INT 3 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Beauty of the Flowerbird** (Enhanced Presence 2, Enhanced Skill 3 (Persuasion +6), Enhanced Advantages 6 (Attractive 2, Fascinate (Persuasion), Inspire 3)); **Fire Serpent Mace** (Strength-based Damage 3 (Easily Removable; bludgeoning, fire) Enhanced Advantages 4 (Improved Grab, Improved Smash; Reach (melee) 2); **Sight of the Deathlord** (Senses 6 (Counters Illusion, Extended, Detect Death Energies 2 (visual), Extended Sight); **Smoking Mirror Shield** Perception Area (sight) Selective Affliction 12 (Resisted by Will; Entranced), Limited Degree 2), Impervious Toughness 10, Enhanced Dodge 2, Enhanced Parry 2) Easily Removable); **Summon Regalia** (Feature: Shrinks mace and shield into jewelry and quick change into Cuauhchiuatl); **Vivacity of the Old Fire** (Enhanced Strength 8 (Limited to Lifting (lifting Str 18 (6,000 tons)), Regeneration 2); **Wings of the Feathered Serpent** (Flight 11 (4,000 MPH))

Advantages: *Attractive* 2, Close Attack 5, Defensive Roll 3, *Fascinate* (Persuasion), Great Endurance, *Improved Grab*, Improved Hold, *Improved Smash*, Improved Trip, *Inspire* 3, Languages (Spanish native), Power Attack, Ritualist

Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+13), Athletics 8 (+18), Expertise: Magic 6 (+9), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 7 (+9), Persuasion 4 (+12), Stealth 2 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +8, Fire Serpent Mace +15 (Close, Damage 13), Smoking Mirror Shield (Perception Area, Will DC 22), Unarmed +15 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 13, Parry 13, Fortitude 14, Toughness 15/12*, Will 11 *Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 90 + Powers 74 + Advantages 13 + Skills 19 + Defenses 15 = Total 211

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** She was chosen to confront and defeat the Santa Muerte and their undead leader, and she won't rest until she succeeds. **Second Life:** Cuauhchiuatl still remembers being someone else, but she looks nothing like she did, and the connection to her previous life is lost.

ination. He woke his brothers and together watched as Tepalcatl spread the evil of the Santa Muerte. They were dismayed to see that the centuries turned Tlacaoel into a conniving, amoral manipulator, and that the spirit of the Eagle was in hiding. They decided to take matters into their own hands.

The Lord of the Underworld found a candidate in Mina Ortiz-Suckerman, a woman recently sacrificed by the Santa Muerte, and snatched her soul before Tepalcatl could devour it. Ortiz-Suckerman was a journalist of mixed European and native ancestry whose courage and inquisitiveness led her to investigate rumors about the leader of the Santa Muerte. Her body had already been flayed, her organs extracted and eaten, so the gods made a new one for her, strong as Hutzilopochtli, swift as Quetzalcoatl, wise as Tlaloc, canny as Tezcatlipoca, vibrant as Hueheteotl, and beautiful as Xochiquetzal.

She woke up near a road and made her way back to civilization. Tlacaoel sensed her rebirth and went to her, but he was both awed and wary of her power. He recognized the handiwork of the gods, and decided it wiser to let her choose her own path. He provided her with a new identity and the means to restart her life. Now she's a new online journalist named Angelica Osorio, whose first scoop was a report on the murder of the woman she used to be.

THE SILENT ZONE

Also known as the Triad Vertex, this patch of desert spans parts of the Northern states of Chihuahua, Coahuila, and Durango, and is part of the Mapimi Biosphere Reserve. The area gained its nickname due to an intermittent phenomenon where radio waves and other electromagnetic effects simply cease: communications are blocked, cars cannot start, magnets flip polarity, and superheroes that can manipulate the electromagnetic spectrum have their powers nullified.

The Triad Vertex is an extremely powerful, but highly unreliable, nexus. During the height of the Spanish Colonial era, Tlacaoel tried to use it to hide the Mask of Aztlan, a powerful Aztec relic, but the energies fluctuated and the backlash nearly unmade him. Unable to seal the place off, instead he placed mystical sentries around it. The sentries exist to this day and are mindless apparitions that take a form based on the expectations of intruders, which gave rise to the rumors about aliens and other monsters. The sentries are frightening, but harmless. They inform Tlacaoel when the Vertex becomes active, whenever anyone goes in and, more importantly, if anything comes out.

THE MASK OF AZTLAN

Aztlan is the mythic place of origin of the Mexica people who would later found the Aztec empire, and the Mask was the key to finding it. Tlacaoel lost the Mask when he tried to hide it in the Vertex, and now, under the right conditions, it causes a bridge to form directly into this mythical land.

Aztlan is a hidden magical kingdom, guarded by magical constructs and long-since abandoned by its original inhabitants, but full of mystic secrets. Sometimes the guardians slip through the Triad Vertex into Earth-Prime, but dimensional transit distorts both their form and purpose, so they become potential threats, and potential clues to the continued existence of Aztlan.

SAN JACINTO DE LOS JAGUARES, GUERRERO

This little town was built far from any road, but is easily reached by two nearby rivers in the southern state of Guerrero. The funny thing is that, although it appears on maps, no one is really sure how to get there, and its townsfolk would not want it any other way.

San Jacinto is an idyllic location, where people lead pastoral lives, untroubled by the escalating war between drug cartels and the government and small guerrilla movements that plague the rest of the state's outback. People here are farmers, shepherds and artisans who have created a fully self-sustained community. They have no formal law enforcement officials and what little crime they have is resolved by common accord. They want nothing from the outside world, yet they seem to be well informed about current events.

The reason for this Utopic lifestyle is simple: everybody in town is a *nahual*, a particular kind of sorcerer with the ability to assume the power and ferocity of animals. Centuries ago only the best and most powerful of shamans could gain a *nahual's* power, but after the Olmec civilization faded, many spiritual leaders created this town in which to raise their families. Generation after generation was raised by the shamans' teachings, until the magic became endemic.

The town's guardians and leaders learn to channel jaguars, but the people of San Jacinto can learn to use the powers of any other animal.

TIJUANA, BAJA CALIFORNIA NORTE

Dubbed the "Actual Happiest Place on Earth" by American frat boys, Tijuana has the unfair reputation of a "party town" in American media, even though it's considered a global city thanks to its importance in international trade and its conurbation with San Diego across the border. Tijuana has one of Mexico's tallest skylines and is growing at a very fast rate.

Gang violence in Tijuana peaked around 2008 due to a turf war between rival cartels, but the violence has subsided since the Sinaloa Cartel overpowered their rivals and the Mexican authorities have carried out surgical strikes on drug traffickers' chains of command. Despite the fragile peace and dubious security, Tijuana is a magnet for immigration from the rest of Mexico, the rest of the world, and even from outer space.

The conflict has attracted the attention of Star Knight, but the few open forays she's made across the border into Mexico were met with polite requests to leave and mind her own business. She met Viento Negro when the Mexican hero was tracking a shipment of alien weaponry back to its source, and they have helped each other multiple times in their cross-border adventures.

ILLEGAL ALIENS

Mexico usually welcomes immigrants who wish to stay and be productive, but is none too happy about those who are just passing through on their way to the United States. As Tijuana and San Diego are sister cities from different mother countries, many who wish to have a shot at the American way, but want to enjoy cheaper taxes, costs and looser law enforcement choose Tijuana as their home. This includes Asian industries that see better business conditions in Mexico, to San Diego workers who can commute back and forth from a place with a much lower cost of living. And, up 'til recently, this extended to intergalactic aliens who weren't eager to have AEGIS interfering in their lives.

Tijuana has a growing number of new citizens from the remnants of the Lor Republic and from other worlds who have heard about Earth and Freedom City, but find the level of attention by the American government unbearable. A lot of these new residents come as refugees from worlds now controlled by the Stellar Khanate.

SEAT OF POWER

Tlacaclael is aware of the town's existence, because he trained in the magic arts there. He doesn't meddle in the town's affairs because he knows they are perfectly capable of protecting themselves, and because his two masters are still alive and still capable of defeating him. He is, however, grateful to the people of San Jacinto, and offers aid to any townsfolk who wishes to leave the town and see the outside world. Anyone who wishes to learn the secrets behind Tlacaclael's power only need find San Jacinto and gain the trust of the town's elders.

The town is also a perfect place of origin for Mexican heroes who tap into the totemic powers of animals. A hero could be a local that leaves town in search of adventure, a lost traveler who earns the trust of the elders and learns their magic, or even a transgressor cursed with lycanthropy or other bestial affliction until he or she atones.

The American government has repeatedly offered to help Mexican authorities manage Tijuana's alien population, but AEGIS is definitely not welcome across the border. The alien presence has created a black market for alien goods that many individuals and organizations want to exploit. Tlacaclael takes the lion's share of goods through his various channels, and SHADOW is certainly interested. UNISON and the Mexican Army try to keep the traffic contained, but it's an almost impossible task.

TALACHAS

Victor Antunez was a humble mechanic from one of the southern states who intended to cross over to the U.S. as an illegal immigrant, but he found he could get easier and better jobs in Tijuana, and stayed. Not very scientifically minded, but with a knack for understanding machines, he sifted local junkyards in search of cheap parts to use in his little workshop. Then he found a piece of alien battle armor. Interested in his discovery, he toyed with it until he had a rough idea of how it worked, and curious to see what he could do, he began adding to it.

He was working on this personal project when a shootout broke out near his home between two rival drug gangs. It was just after noon and children were returning from school. Victor didn't think twice and donned his incomplete creation to stop the fight outside. He successfully activated the weapons system and physical enhancements, and he found his true calling as a superhero. His newfound purpose led him to complete the armor using materials scavenged, bartered, or simply purchased from new neighbors from alien worlds. Now, he is often seen taking flights and protecting his city. He has heard of Star Knight's few missions in Mexico, but he hasn't met her. He is, however, mightily curious to study Star Knight weaponry and see what he can learn from it.

Talachas uses the Battlesuit archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, but the armor looks like a patched mess of different designs that doesn't look like it has any right starting up, let alone function at peak efficiency.

THE CARIBBEAN

Encompassing hundreds of islands in the tropical waters to the south and east of the United States, the Caribbean is a patchwork of both paradise and poverty, with a history of struggle and weathering storms both from nature and human violence. Indeed, the Caribbean is home to many more conflicts than most people are aware, some of which have the potential to change the fate of the world.

MAGIC & MYSTICISM

The Caribbean is a focus for mystical and spiritual forces, home to a number of mystical folk traditions and religions, most of them syncretizations of the lore of native tribes, enslaved and free Africans, and European Catholics. They include traditions like *Voodoo*, *Santeria*, and *Obeah*. All the various practices developed on the islands in and around the dimensional nexus originally created by the ancient Atlanteans and now defined by the Bermuda Triangle.

For most, folk magic is just that: simple charms and religious practices with no significant effect beyond the practitioner's faith. Some in these traditions have the Artificer and/or Ritualist advantages (see **Chapter 5** of the *Hero's Handbook*) allowing them, with time and preparation, to create magical effects limited primarily by their skill and available resources.

A rare few have the talent and potential to tap directly into magical energies and wield them to cast various spells. They have the Magic power (see **Chapter 6** of the *Hero's Handbook* and **Magic Powers** in *Power Profiles*) with spells as an array of Alternate Effects.

THE BAHAMAS

Made up of hundreds of different islands, the Bahamas also constitute one of the most prosperous nations in the Caribbean, their economy heavily based on tourism to visit the pleasant tropical savannah of the islands.

Although these islands were the site of Christopher Columbus' landing in the New World, the Bahamas were primarily colonized by the English in the 17th century, becoming known as a haven for pirates, including the infamous Blackbeard and the masked marauder called the Crimson Corsair, a pirate who preyed upon other pirates,

making it unclear if he was friend or foe to the cause of law and order on the high seas.

Following the defeat of the British at Yorktown in the American Revolution, the Bahamas became a haven to many British loyalists, who relocated there with their African slaves to set up plantations. When Britain outlawed slavery in 1830, the islands became a haven for African slaves, as any who reached their shores were considered free, and American slave ships that made port in the Bahamas could lose their cargo altogether.

The Afro-Caribbean mystical tradition of *Obeah* is still found in Bermuda, although its practice is technically forbidden by law. It remains a covert folk practice, often viewed with superstitious concern.

The present day Bahamas have a population that is some 90 percent of African descent, with most of the remaining portion of European (largely English) ancestry. It remains a part of the Commonwealth of Nations, acknowledging the monarch of England as head of state, but has its own Parliament and Prime Minister.

THE BIMINI ROAD

One famous feature of the Bahamas is the so-called "Bimini Road," a roughly half-mile of limestone-based beachrock blocks lying on the bottom of the ocean, extending from North Bimini Island, the western-most area of the Bahamas, and the closest to the United States. For decades, experts have debated whether the Bimini Road is a natural or artificial phenomenon and, if the latter, who constructed it, and when.

On Earth-Prime, the Bimini Road is an archeological remnant of the ancient Atlanteans, and marks part of a series of Atlantean outposts in the Caribbean within the Bermuda Triangle, the dimensional nexus surrounding Utopia Isle (see their descriptions following).

THE ZEMI AMULET

The Taíno people were the indigenous inhabitants of the Bahamas and other islands of the Caribbean, displaced by the early European explorers and settlers. Although some modern Caribbeans regard themselves as their descendants, the Taíno are largely extinct as a racial and cultural group.



Part of their spiritual practice honored the *zemi*, or spirits of the ancestors, using particular “spirit house” objects and amulets. One special *zemi* amulet is a small triangular carved stone, just over an inch on each side. When placed on the forehead of a worthy descendant of the Taíno, the amulet adheres there and grants the wearer access to the ancestral powers of the *zemi*, both their knowledge and their skills and abilities, including certain “spirit tools”.

BERMUDA

The nation of Bermuda has long, historic ties with both America and Britain. Charted in 1505 by Spanish explorer Juan de Bermúdez (for whom the nation is named) it was first settled in 1609 by survivors of the English ship *Sea Venture*, which was grounded on the reef surrounding the main island during a hurricane. Bermuda was, in fact, known as “The Isle of Devils” prior to this due to the dangerous storms and reefs in the area.

Bermuda is also one vertex of the infamous Bermuda Triangle (see **The Bermuda Triangle** sidebar), which stretches to the south and west, adding to the area’s reputation as a navigational hazard. In spite of that, most travel to and from Bermuda is routine and unremarkable. Indeed, it was a hub of trans-Atlantic shipping during the Colonial era, prior to the Revolutionary War.

With its ties to both America and Britain (it remains a British Overseas Territory), Bermuda is occasionally the site of face-to-face diplomatic meetings and summits between British and American leaders that do not

THE ZEMI AMULET

ARTIFACT · 37 PTS

Removable (–9 points); **Ancestral Abilities** (Enhanced Agility 5, Enhanced Fighting 5, Enhanced Awareness 3, Enhanced Presence 3); **Ancestral Knowledge** (Variable 3 (15 points), Limited to pre-technological Advantages and Skills); **Spirit Tools** (Array; *Spirit Cord* (Elongation 2, Affects Insubstantial 2, Limited to cord grab; Movement 2 (Swinging, Wall-Crawling), *Spirit Net* (Affliction 8 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized); Affects Insubstantial 2, Extra Condition, Limited Degree), *Spirit Spear* (Damage 8, Affects Insubstantial 2)

take place in either’s home country. Such meetings have become targets for terrorists like Overthrow and SHADOW as well as criminals looking to either obtain state secrets to sell on the black market or to kidnap government VIPs for ransom. Fortunately, Bermuda can boast a protector of its own these days.

CORAL

Cora Kinlee was born and raised in Bermuda and took to the water at a very young age, learning to swim almost before she could walk. Her passion for the water led her to become a champion swimmer in school and to become a certified diving and scuba instructor, working for various resorts and tourist spots, as well as the occasional deep diving expedition.

It was during one of those that Cora ran into the high seas smuggler Trawler (see **Trident** in *Threat Report*). It might have ended for her there, if the combination of an ancient


CORAL & HURICAN BATTLE THE DEAD

CORAL

PL9 • 114 POINTS

STR 10 STA 8 AGL 2 DEX 1 FGT 3 INT 0 AWE 2 PRE 1

Powers: **Coral Form** (Activation: Move Action (-1 point), Enhanced Stamina 4, Enhanced Strength 6, Growth 2 (Density), Immunity 12 (disease, life support, poison), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Protection 2 (Impervious 4), Swimming 2 (2 MPH))

Advantages: Beginner's Luck, Favored Environment (Aquatic)

Skills: Athletics 6 (+16/+8), Close Combat: Unarmed 5 (+8), Expertise: Diving 8 (+8), Insight 4 (+6), Perception 4 (+6), Persuasion 2 (+3), Ranged Combat: Throwing 6 (+7), Treatment 4 (+4), Vehicles 4 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +2, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 10, Toughness 10, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 26 + Powers 45 + Advantages 2 + Skills 22 + Defenses 19 = 114

Complications: **Motivation—Doing Good:** Coral is a lifesaver who wants to do good with her abilities.

potion and a coral reef had not transformed Cora into the amazing Coral!

Now Cora leads a double-life as a diver and the heroine of Bermuda, able to transform in an instant to a super-strong stone-like form that thrives in water. Although she has heard Trawler is now operating out in the Pacific, she's looking forward to the opportunity to even the score.

THE CAYMAN ISLANDS

A British Overseas Territory like the Bahamas and Bermuda, the Cayman Islands are famous as the world's leading offshore hedge fund and the world's second largest tax-haven (after Switzerland), leading to the Cayman Islands having more registered businesses than its population of some 55,000 people.

The territory is made up of three islands: the Grand Cayman (home to the capital, Georgetown), Cayman Brac, and Little Cayman. The Caymans are known for having virtually no direct taxation: no income, capital gains, or wealth taxes. The government makes most of its income from tariffs on imported goods and fees charged to financial institutions and businesses. Popular legend likes to attribute this to "The Wreck of Ten Sail," when Cayman Islanders helped to rescue a fleet of ten merchant ships, one of which carried the son of the King of England, who excused the islands from all taxes thereafter, but there's no evidence the incident actually occurred.

Tax-shelters and off-shore shell companies on the Cayman Islands belong to corporations like Brande Management, Delphic Industries, Grant Conglomerates, KessCorp, Majestic Industries, and many others. This makes their sealed financial information of keen interest to hackers, thieves, and law-enforcement and makes it likely that representatives of those companies make regular visits.

The relatively low-lying islands are prime hurricane territory: the Caymans are hit or see a "near pass" by a hurricane roughly every couple of years, and storm surges make for regular flooding during many of those occasions.

Otherwise, the Cayman Islands see relatively little in the way of the unusual or superhuman. The criminal Devil Ray once made use of stolen experimental marine-life control technology to control large numbers of stingrays (which tend to gather in the coastal waters). There was also an incident at the black limestone formations known as "Hell," where a demon-worshipping cult took the appellation seriously and used it as a site for a ritual to summon their infernal patron (which was, fortunately, prevented by the timely intervention of Siren).

CUBA

Just over ninety miles off the coast of Florida, the largest island of the Caribbean, Cuba is also one of the few remaining socialist states governed by communism, and the remnants of the Cold War between East and West still linger in the shadows of its tropical warmth.

Cuba was a Spanish colony and possession until the end of the Spanish-American war, when it was ceded to the United States in the Treaty of Paris in 1898. Cuba declared independence a few years thereafter, followed by political upheavals and corruption and totalitarian rule by Fulgenio Batista. He was in turn ousted by a Communist revolution led by Fidel Castro, who was head of the new socialist Cuban state for almost fifty years.

THE COMMUNIST CONNECTION

Communist Cuba forged strong ties with the Soviet Union early on, and came to rely upon Soviet support and subsidies, while at the same time supporting communist and anti-imperialist revolution around the world. The Soviets used Cuba as a staging-ground close to the United States, exemplified by the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, a tense diplomatic stand-off concerning the placement of Soviet nuclear weapons on Cuban soil, within striking distance of the United States. Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev expected U.S. President Kennedy to capitulate, but, instead, his administration held fast to a military blockade of Cuba and managed to negotiate an agreement to dismantle the missile sites. Earth-Prime heroes know of at least one alternate Earth where the Crisis led to an all-out nuclear war between the two powers, resulting in a radioactive wasteland inhabited by mutants and a handful of surviving humans.

Following the collapse of the Soviet Union, Cuba has sought alliance with communist China, with mixed success. Meanwhile, some Russian expatriates and Soviet-era secrets and technology have found their way to Havana and, from there, to the international black market.

GUANTANAMO BAY

On the southwestern shore of Cuba sits Guantanamo Bay, the site of a U.S. Naval Base and military detention center.

Treaties in 1903 and 1934 allowed for the establishment of a permanent U.S. military base. The current government of Cuba says the U.S. base is illegal, and does not recog-

THE BERMUDA TRIANGLE

The Bermuda Triangle, also known as the “The Devil’s Triangle,” is an area of ocean roughly between the points of Miami, Florida; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and the island of Bermuda. The Triangle is infamous as a place where mysterious disappearances have occurred over the years, from ships and boats to aircraft, and where travelers have experienced unusual phenomenon, ranging from sudden fog and cloud banks to confusion of navigational instruments and strange sightings.

On Earth-Prime, the Bermuda Triangle is a navigational hazard, the result of a “dimensional fault line” or nexus, where different dimensions meet or overlap, which causes the unusual weather, navigational issues, and sightings, as well as disappearances where vessels sometimes “slip” between worlds, ending up somewhere else in the omniverse, or other things find their way into Earth-Prime’s universe.

The exact cause of the dimensional fault is unknown; it may be a natural phenomenon caused by a conjunction of ley lines and geomantic energies, or a remnant of the Antediluvian Age of Atlantis and Lemuria, either deliberately created by one of those civilizations, or the result of their magic or technology, perhaps during or after their final war. It could also be the result of the intervention of the Preservers on Earth, although this is considered less likely, since the Preservers generally sought to close off such dimensional faults and portals, rather than creating them.

Survivors of the sinking of Atlantis did use the dimensional properties of the Triangle to conceal their new home on Utopia Isle (see its description). M&M Gamemasters can use the Bermuda Triangle as a source of adventure ideas, ranging from the heroes looking for a lost vessel or being aboard a vessel that goes missing in the Triangle to something coming through the nexus into Earth-Prime to challenge them. Dimensional energies cascading through the Bermuda Triangle may be an explanation for various super origins throughout the Caribbean and surrounding areas.

nize the United States’ right to the base, but the matter remains unresolved and the United States continues to maintain the base and a military presence in Cuba.

Since 2002, Guantanamo Bay has been the site of a military detention camp for detainees classified as enemy combatants following the 2001 terrorist attack on New York City and the subsequent U.S. invasion of Afghanistan, in spite of questions of U.S. and international law concerning it. Rumors claim the detention camp is a front for “black ops” government experimentation.

MEDICAL TOURISM

One of Cuba’s newest “industries” is a thriving “medical tourism” business, where foreigners visit the country looking for cut-rate medical procedures (and a pleasant beach to recuperate on).

In Cuba, this has gone well beyond just plastic surgery and routine operations. With the nation’s legacy of Communist super-science, Cuba is fast becoming a site of illegal medical experimentation and procedures of all kinds. Criminals, thrill-seekers, and wealthy clients seek out augmentations of the type provided by the Power-House, from biochemical and gene-splicing to cyborg implants. Indeed, the Power-House has moved some of their labs and “clinics” off-shore.

The most recent developments in “black market augmentations” have been an influx of experimental technologies and techniques from China (using Cuba as a testing-ground for some dubious enhancements) as well as alien technology and genetics smuggled into the Caribbean from Star Island and refugees from the shattered Lor Republic, as well as discoveries in and near Emerald City. International entanglements make it difficult for foreign governments to prove that illegal clinics are operating on Cuban soil, much less shut them down.

TREASURE ISLAND

Isla de la Juventud (the “Isle of Youth”) is the second largest Cuban island, located south of the western end of Cuba itself. Formerly known as both the “Isle of the Pines” and “Treasure Island,” it was the basis of Robert Louis Stevenson’s novel of the same name and for the pirates of Neverland in *Peter Pan* (featuring a combination of pirates, natives with canoes, and crocodiles). Although the island’s pirate days are long since past, literary and mythic associations carry some weight on Earth-Prime, and Captain Blood’s ghost-ship, the *Black Plunder*, has been active here (see **Tortuga**) and the young heroes of the Next-Gen once encountered analogues of the characters from *Peter Pan* there, conjured up by the interdimensional imp Quirk.

SANTERIA

Although Cuba is officially an atheist nation, it still has a substantial religious population. More than half of its people identify as Roman Catholic (from the nation’s Spanish heritage), and the Afro-Caribbean mystical tradition of *Santería* is alive and well here. *Santeros* worship and serve the *Orishas*, powerful spirits much like the loa of Voodoo, and some have mystical powers or serve as hosts or conduits for the power of the *Orishas*.

GUANAJATABEY

The indigenous inhabitants of Cuba when Columbus arrived in the New World were a Ciboney people who called themselves *Guanajatabey*, the only surviving word from their language. Little is known of them: they were likely pre-agricultural cave dwellers, displaced and largely wiped out by the arrival of Europeans and the redistribution of populations on the islands. Given that they were related to the Taíno peoples of the Caribbean, it’s possible the Guanajatabey practiced some type of

mysticism, and left behind some artifacts and remnants of ancient rituals. See **The Zemi Amulet** under **The Bahamas** for an example.

HAITI

The western half of the island of Hispaniola, the nation of Haiti is a focus for the spiritual tradition of Voodoo and its spirits, the loa (see **Les Invisibles: The Loa** sidebar).

“Ayiti” means “land of high mountains” in the language of the native Taíno. Haiti is the third largest Caribbean nation, the first independent nation in Latin America or the Caribbean, and the only nation established by a successful slave revolt (in 1804).

Unfortunately, the success of the Haitian republic has been mixed, at best. The nation has seen ongoing upheaval and conflict, broken by periods of dictatorship. Dr. François “Papa Doc” Duvalier ruled Haiti as President from 1957 until the succession of his son, Jean-Claude (“Baby Doc”) in 1971. The Duvaliers were ousted in 1986. They maintained their rule with the assistance of the *Tonton Macoutes*, a secret



MAITRE CARREFOUR

police named for “Uncle Gunnysack,” a Haitian bogeyman known for kidnapping children, carrying them off in a sack over his shoulder to cook them for breakfast.

In addition to its political conflicts, Haiti has also suffered through a series of natural disasters, from hurricane and storm-related flooding to a devastating earthquake in 2010 which left hundreds of thousands dead and many times more homeless, causing massive damage to the island’s already shaky infrastructure.

MAITRE CARREFOUR

Knowing the power of true names, Maitre Carrefour keeps his a closely guarded secret. He goes only by his title, meaning “master of the crossroads,” the name of a Voodoo loa of sorcery. The name is fitting, as Maitre Carrefour is a formidable mystic. His origins appear to lie somewhere in the Caribbean, where he rose from poverty and obscurity to the heights of occult power.

Maitre Carrefour is notable for having no real ties with the Mayombe cult (see **The United States of America**), his

power is independent and achieved largely on his own.

He is known as a *bokor*, a sorcerer who uses his powers without regard for the laws of the loa or ethical concerns.

For some time, his services were available to anyone able to meet his price, and they remain so, although the

MAITRE CARREFOUR

PL9 • 124 POINTS

STR -1 STA 2 AGL 0 DEX 0 FGT 4 INT 2 AWE 5 PRE 2

Powers: **Magic** (Array: **Mind Control** (Perception Ranged Affliction 9, Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled), **AE: Mystic Blast** (Ranged Damage 9), **AE: Mystic Darkness** (Ranged Burst Area Visual Concealment Attack 4), **AE: Mystic Net** (Burst Area Ranged Affliction 6, Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile; Extra Condition, Limited Degree), **AE: Mystic Snare** (as Mystic Net, but no Area and rank 9), **AE: Summon Beasts** (Summon 1, Controlled, Horde, Mental Link, Multiple Minions 32, Broad Type: Animals), **AE: Vitality Drain** (Ranged Affliction 9, Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Incapacitated), **AE: Zombies** (Summon 1, as Summon Beasts, but with the Sacrifice modifier); **Mystic Deflection** (Deflection 9)

Advantages: Artificer, Languages (English, Creole native), Luck 2, Ritualist, Trance, Well-informed

Skills: Deception 4 (+6), Expertise: Streetwise 6 (+8), Expertise: Voodoo 10 (+12), Insight 5 (+10), Intimidation 8 (+10), Perception 5 (+10), Persuasion 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Magic 9 (+9), Stealth 4 (+4), Treatment 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +0, Mystic Blast +9 (Ranged, Damage 9), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage -1)

Defense: Dodge 9, Parry 9, Fortitude 6, Toughness 2, Will 12

Totals: Abilities 28 + Powers 34 + Advantages 7 + Skills 30 + Defenses 25 = 124

Complications: **Motivation—Power.** **Disability:** Maitre Carrefour is feeling the effect and limitations of advancing age. **Power Loss (Magic):** If unable to speak and gesture to cast spells.

price has steadily increased. Maitre Carrefour has been responsible for numerous cases of blackmail, occult influence, and murder, thought to be untraceable.

His primary foe over his long criminal career has been Siren. Although she has thwarted Maitre Carrefour's schemes on a number of occasions, and even put him in prison, he has usually found a means of escaping punishment for his crimes. Eventually, he returns with some new scheme or the threads of an occult criminal conspiracy trace back to him, like the strings of a puppet-master.

Unlike his immortal foe, however, Maitre Carrefour has begun to feel the effects of his age. Although he remains healthy, time has taken its toll: his hair has gone white, his once-tall form bent. Some of the sorcerer's more recent schemes have concerned ways to restore his lost youth or, perhaps, if left with no other means to stave off death, how to become a true "zombie master" by joining the ranks of the undead. In either case, Maitre Carrefour would become an even more formidable foe.

BARON SAMEDI

Simon DuLac was born in Haiti, so the power of Voodoo was always a proven fact to him. But Simon was always more interested in immediate, worldly power, which led

him to becoming an important figure in the Caribbean underworld. He smuggled drugs and laundered money. He used the fearsome reputation of Voodoo to his advantage, without particularly caring what the loa thought of it—but the loa did notice, and did care.

Baron Samedi, the loa of death and the undead, chose Simon as his *cheval*, his "horse" that he would ride in the mortal world. Baron Samedi maintained to his fellow loa that humanity was a base and unworthy race, suitable only to serve as the loa wished. The sea loa Siren opposed his view, claiming humanity was valuable in its own right. So the two chose vessels to inhabit to prove which of them was right once and for all.

Using Simon's criminal network, Baron Samedi was able to begin distributing his "zombie powder" drug. He works to corrupt and degrade humanity. The Baron knows he will eventually triumph, and the world will become a vast graveyard of his mindless zombie followers.

Baron Samedi is a spirit inhabiting the body of Simon DuLac. He grants his mortal host great strength, endurance, and resistance to injury. He can regenerate damage to his mortal host body at an accelerated rate. Like Siren and her host body, the Baron's presence prevents Simon's body from aging.

LES INVISIBLES: THE LOA

The loa (also spelled Lwa) are the "gods" of Voodoo. Technically speaking, the loa are not gods, but powerful spirits. Voodoo is monotheistic, recognizing a single, distant creator-god (Bondye), with the loa as his/its emissaries and functionaries in the world, intermediaries between the material and spirit worlds.

Like Voodoo, the loa have their roots in African spiritual traditions brought to the New World by African slaves and melded with European Catholic and Native Caribbean beliefs and practices.

There are a vast number of loa with different names and portfolios, but some of the best known (and most powerful) include:

- **Agwé:** Loa of the fish, sea-creatures, and plants. Uncle (although some stories say husband) to Siren.
- **Baron Samedi:** Loa of graveyards and undeath, master of zombies.
- **Damballah & Ayida Wedo:** Damballah is the great white serpent of the underworld while Ayida Wedo, his mate, is the rainbow arc of the sky. They are ancient and primordial loa, wise advisors to the pantheon.
- **Erzulie:** The loa of love and passion, kind and jealous by turns.
- **Gheude & Bridgette:** The loa of the dead, Gheude is a skeletal groom to his bride Maman Bridgette.
- **Loko & Ayizan:** The first priest and priestess of Voodoo, Loko and Ayizan are keepers of lore and tradition.
- **Ogoun:** Ogoun is a mighty iron-skinned warrior, loa of battle, smith work, fire, and gunpowder.
- **Papa Legba:** Loa of gateways and crossroads, the Opener of the Way between the worlds.
- **Siren:** Loa of the seas and, in recent years, a superhero and member of the Freedom League through the medium of her human host.

The loa dwell in an interdimensional realm known as *Guinee* or "The Island Beneath the Sea." Like the other pantheons of human history, they are restricted by the Pact in terms of how much they can interfere in earthly affairs. The loa commonly use (and many say invented) the practice of possession, "riding" human host bodies (referred to as a *cheval*, "horse," in Haitian creole).

In recent years, the loa have become divided over the issue of humanity and their purpose. One faction, led by Baron Samedi, believes mortals are no longer worthy of the aid of the loa, as they have become corrupt and do not honor their responsibilities in the world. This faction considers humanity little more than pets or cattle, to be used as the spirits see fit.

The other faction, led by Siren, claims that if humanity has strayed, it is because the loa are not sufficiently devoted to their duties as guides and guardians, and that they must serve as examples. Siren and Baron Samedi's activities in the world through their human hosts have been about them each trying to prove their case.

BARON SAMEDI

PL12 • 194 POINTS

STR 8 STA 10 AGL 2 DEX 1 FGT 8 INT 1 AWE 10 PRE 9

Powers: **Eternal Spirit** (Immortality 5 (1 day)); **Immortal** (Immunity 3 (Aging, Disease, Poison)); **Sorcery** (Array: 24 points); **Cloud of Darkness** (Ranged Cloud Area 4 Visual Concealment Attack 4), **AE: Mind Control** (Perception Ranged Affliction 12, Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled; Limited to material link to target), **AE: Shadow Snare** (Cumulative Ranged Affliction 8, Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile, Extra Condition, Limited Degree), **AE: Step Through Shadow** (Teleport 6 (1,800 feet), Accurate, Easy, Extended (60 miles), Medium: Shadows), **AE: Zombies** (Summon Zombie 2 (30 point minions), Controlled, Horde, Multiple Minions 4 (16 zombies)); **Spirit Healing** (Regeneration 2, Persistent)

Advantages: Artificer, Contacts, Favored Environment (Ambush), Languages 1 (English, Haitian Creole native), Leadership, Minions 10, Startle, Taunt

Skills: Deception 4 (+13), Expertise: Streetwise 5 (+6), Expertise: Voodoo 12 (+13), Insight 5 (+15), Intimidation 4 (+13), Ranged Combat: Sorcery 10 (+11), Sleight of Hand 4 (+5), Stealth 7 (+9)

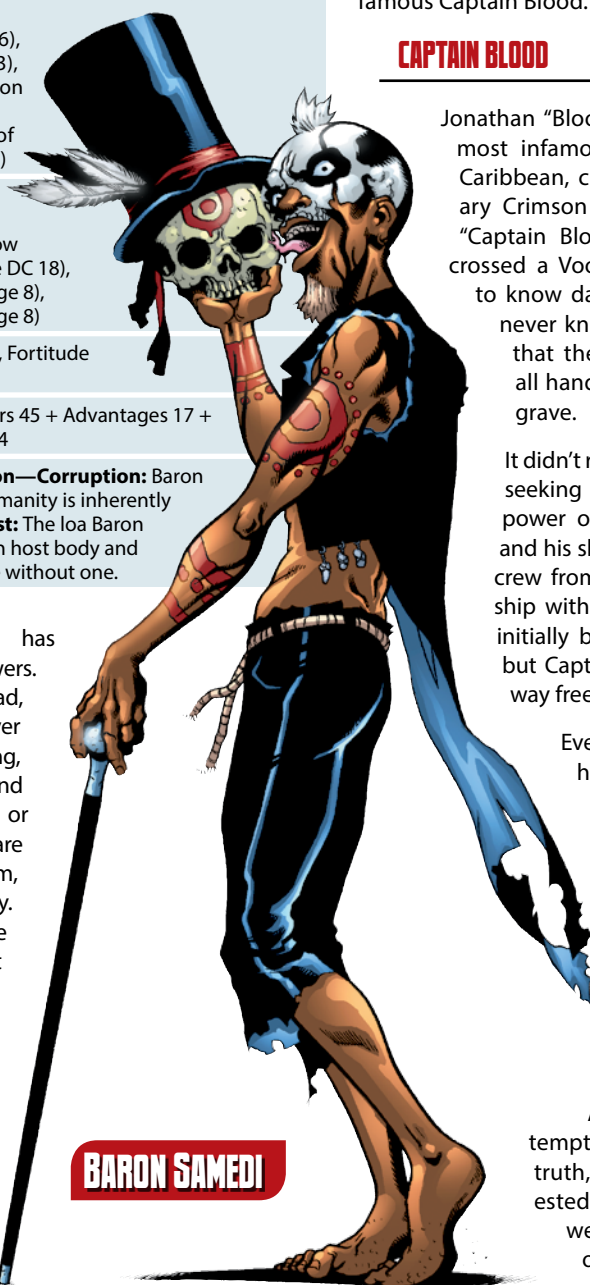
Offense: Initiative +2, Mind Control (Perception Ranged, Will DC 22), Shadow Snare +11 (Ranged, Dodge DC 18), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 8), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 8)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 10, Toughness 10, Will 12

Totals: Abilities 98 + Powers 45 + Advantages 17 + Skills 26 + Defenses 8 = 194

Complications: **Motivation—Corruption:** Baron Samedi wants to prove humanity is inherently corrupt and unworthy. **Host:** The loa Baron Samedi possesses a human host body and has no corporeal existence without one.

Baron Samedi also has various magical powers. He can animate the dead, exert some control over the minds of the living, command reptiles, and create clouds of smoke or pitch darkness. These are innate abilities for him, not just mortal sorcery. He's never without some zombie henchmen at hand, and is always creating more. Baron Samedi usually prefers to have his zombies and enthralled minions do his dirty work for him. If seriously threatened, he can simply step into a shadow and disappear.



TORTUGA

The small Haitian island of Tortuga is off the northwest coast of Hispaniola. It was named *Isla Tortuga* ("Turtle Island") by Christopher Columbus, and he and his crew were the first Europeans to set foot there.

In the 1600s, the English, Spanish, and French wrangled over possession of Tortuga, often in connection to conflicts on nearby Hispaniola. The upheaval and frequent division of the island between different authorities made it a haven for pirates operating in the Caribbean, particularly the self-declared Brethren of the Coast, a coalition of pirates and privateers governed by their own code of conduct, emphasizing independence, democracy, and an equitable division of spoils. Welsh pirate captain Henry Morgan was one of the most famous of the Brethren, along with "Bloody Jack" Carter and the infamous Captain Blood.

CAPTAIN BLOOD

Jonathan "Bloody Jack" Carter was one of the most infamous pirates of the 17th century Caribbean, crossing swords with the legendary Crimson Corsair himself. The success of "Captain Blood" came to an end when he crossed a Voodoo priestess, who cursed him to know darkness, death, servitude, and to never know rest. It wasn't long thereafter that the *Black Plunder* went down with all hands on board to a dark and watery grave.

It didn't remain so, however. Baron Samedi, seeking to plague his foe Siren, used the power of the curse upon Captain Blood and his ship to raise both the vessel and its crew from the briny depths. Now a ghostly ship with a ghostly crew, the *Plunder* was initially bound to Baron Samedi's service, but Captain Blood eventually wormed his way free with Siren's less-than-willing aid.

Ever since, the ghostly pirate ship has caused occasional problems for Atlantic shipping with its periodic raids. When Captain Blood is defeated, he and his crew are banished from the world of the living for three full turns of the moon, but on the third full moon, they return on mysterious tides from elsewhere to resume their career of terror on the high seas.

Although he still raids and sacks tempting ships and seaside targets, in truth, Captain Blood is no longer interested in worldly trinkets or monetary wealth. Instead, he seeks treasures of mystic power, to eventually undo the curse placed upon him

THE BLACK PLUNDER

VEHICLE • 65 PTS

Size: Gargantuan • **Strength:** 12 • **Toughness:** 11 • **Speed:** 3 (air), 6 (water) • **Features:** Cannon (Ranged Damage 8), Cloud-Screen (Cloud Area 5 Visual Concealment Attack 4)

and his men. Ideally, he wants a way to return fully to the world of the living, but, barring that, he'll settle for a means to break his curse and achieve true and final peace in death. Much to the concern of heroes like Siren, it has become clear "Bloody Jack" cares little for the fate of the rest of the world, so long as he gets what he wants. If everyone else has to die with him for him to achieve his final rest, then so be it.

Apart from his nihilistic streak, Captain Blood remains roguishly charming and loves to flirt with lovely ladies and taunt his foes. He enjoys using his ghostly powers, for the most part, and takes full advantage of them in a confrontation.

Treat Captain Blood's crew of ghost pirates like skeletons (*Gamemaster's Guide*, **Chapter 3**) without the Immunity to cold damage, but armed with cutlasses (Close Damage 3).

JAMAICA

"Xaymaca" is Taíno for "Land of Wood and Water." The island nation of Jamaica is another part of the British Commonwealth, the fifth largest country in the Caribbean, and one of its most crime-ridden. Jamaica has been the murder capitol of the world in recent years, as gang violence involving drugs and arms trafficking has run rampant, spreading from "the Yards" (housing projects on the island) to "Yardies" in Jamaican communities in other nations.

THE RASTAFARI MOVEMENT

Although Jamaica is predominantly Christian and has some Afro-Caribbean traditions (like Obeah), it is best known for the Rastafari movement. Disciples of the movement—who do not care for the term "Rastafarianism" along with most other "-isms"—worship the Ethiopian Emperor Hallie Sallasié I of Ethiopia as the Second Coming of Christ and a descendant of King Solomon, believing he will lead the righteous to create a paradise on Earth called Zion, the New Jerusalem.

In opposition to Zion is "Babylon," the whole of Western society, which is corrupted by greed and materialism. As a part of this, they believe Jamaica is a hell where the chosen people languish, until they are led back to paradise. Rastafari are infamous for their use of cannabis as a sacrament (part of a "conversation with God"), their dreadlocks (dictated by Levite and Nazarine creeds against the cutting of hair), and their association with reggae music.

CAPTAIN BLOOD

PL8 • 191 POINTS

STR 2 STA 3 AGL 2 DEX 1 FGT 8 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 2

Powers: **Ghost** (Flight 1 (4 MPH), Insubstantial 4, affected by magic), **Ghostly Weapons** (Array (10 points): **Ghost Flintlock** (Ranged Damage 4, Affects Insubstantial 1), **Ghost Sword** (Strength-based Damage 4, Affects Insubstantial 2)), **Undead** (Immortality 1 (2 weeks), Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects))

Advantages: Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 13 (*The Black Plunder*), Fearless, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Languages (Spanish, English native), Leadership, Minion 8 (Ghost Pirates), Taunt

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+10), Athletics 8 (+10), Close Combat: Swords 2 (+10), Deception 8 (+10), Expertise: Pirate 10 (+10), Insight 6 (+7), Intimidation 6 (+8), Perception 8 (+9), Persuasion 6 (+8), Ranged Combat: Pistols 6 (+7), Stealth 4 (+6), Vehicles 8 (+9)

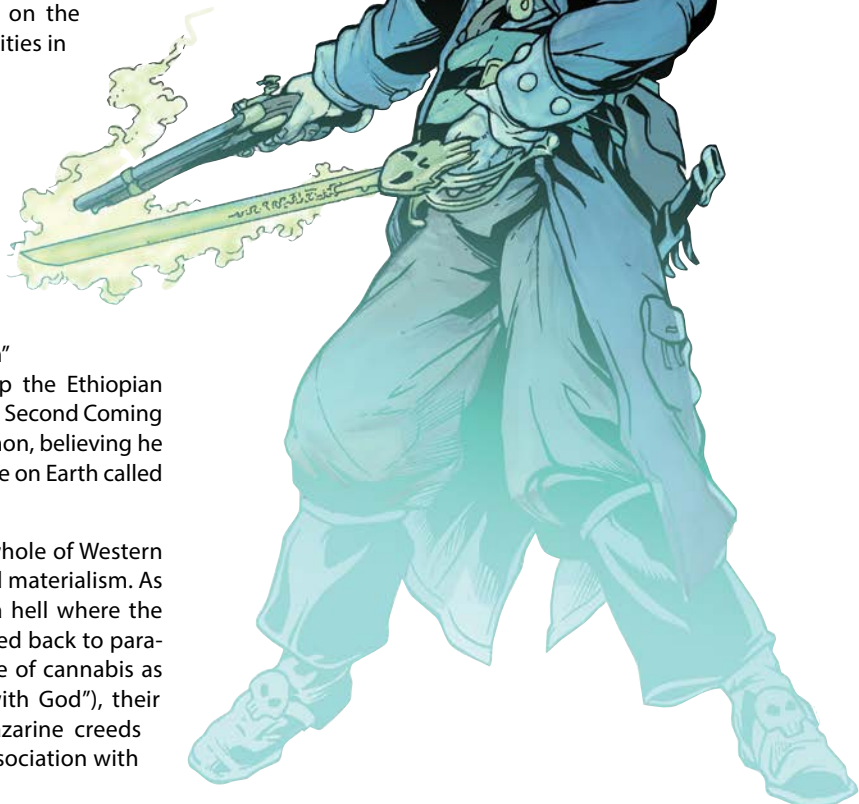
Offense: Initiative +2, Ghost Flintlock +7 (Ranged, Damage 4), Ghost Sword +10 (Close, Damage 7), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 11, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 5/3*, Will 8 *Without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 38 + Powers 64 + Advantages 30 + Skills 40 + Defenses 19 = 191

Complications: **Motivation—Nihilism:** Captain Blood ultimately seeks to return to the peace of death. **Banishment:** Blood is barred from the material world for three turns of the moon after a defeat.

CAPTAIN BLOOD





POSSES

Organized crime in Jamaica is dominated by gangs known as “posses,” a term borrowed from American Westerns for its implications of both allegiance and violence. The primary criminal business of the posses is drug-smuggling and distribution, with a sideline in arms

dealing, since the gangs prefer to be well-armed themselves and are infamous for shoot-outs with authorities. The movement of posse members to areas like the United States was originally driven by arms deals, but they soon discovered they could take over drug operations from less violent and experienced criminals gangs, and moved into those territories in areas with a significant Jamaican population.

SNOWMAN

PL10 • 180 POINTS

STR 7 STA 7 AGL 4 DEX 1 FGT 6 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 1

Powers: “Snowman” Form (Activation: Move Action (–1 point), Elongation 3 (60 feet), Enhanced Agility 3, Enhanced Stamina 5, Enhanced Strength 5, Immunity 10 (life support), Immunity 80 (Toughness effects, Limited to Half Effect), Insubstantial 1, Movement 3 (Permeate 2 (Limited to Earth and Sand), Slithering); **Snowblast** (Ranged Damage 11))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Contacts, Diehard, Power Attack

Skills: Athletics 4 (+11), Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+9), Deception 4 (+5), Expertise: Streetwise 8 (+8), Insight 4 (+5), Intimidation 6 (+7), Perception 4 (+5), Ranged Combat: Snowblast 7 (+8), Stealth 4 (+8), Vehicles 4 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +4, Snowblast +8 (Ranged, Damage 11), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 7)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 10, Toughness 7, Will 7

Totals: Abilities 28 + Powers 109 + Advantages 4 + Skills 24 + Defenses 15 = 180

Complications: Motivation—Greed.

The posses are typically arranged in three tiers: the leaders of the organizations have little direct contact with their contraband “merchandise,” and are focused on directing and managing the middle-tier, which transports money, drugs, and weapons between the leadership and the street-level tier, which arranges for the actual sales. Lower-tier members often have limited knowledge of those above them in order to insulate them from the authorities.

One of the fastest-growing posses is the so-called “Snow Posse,” named both for their principle product (cocaine in both powder and “crack” form) and their leader, the super-criminal known as “Snowman.”

SNOWMAN

Malcolm Avery broke one of the rules of running drugs in that he was fond of “sampling” the merchandise. Indiscriminate mixing of experimental designer drugs, perhaps along with some quirk in Malcolm’s genetic

makeup, led to a “bad trip” where he literally petrified before his horrified posse’s eyes, then crumbled into sparkling, white dust.

He did not die, however. Instead, Malcolm was transformed. He gained the ability to shift in and out of his new form at will. With his new metamorphic form, “Snowman” (as he became known) quickly became a force to reckon with in the Jamaican underworld, one the local authorities had no chance against.

In spite of his name, Snowman’s powers have nothing to do with ice or snow; his transformed body is actually made up of a silicate material like fine, white sand, which he can shift and reform at will, including firing “snowblasts” of grit like a sandblaster.

PUERTO RICO

Puerto Rico is an unincorporated territory of the United States, also ceded to the U.S.A. in the Treaty of Paris in 1898 following the Spanish-American war. Prior to that, Puerto Rico was a Spanish possession in the Western Hemisphere for centuries. The main island of Puerto Rico—the smallest of the Greater Antilles—was known as *Boriken* (“the great land of the valiant noble lord”) to the native Taíno people. It’s Spanish name means “rich port.”

Since it became a U.S. territory, there has been ongoing debate in Puerto Rico over its political future and relationship with the United States, ranging from full independence as a sovereign nation to becoming a U.S. state or remaining an unincorporated territory. This debate has occasionally led to violent protests. Puerto Ricans were granted U.S. citizenship in 1917, and the right to elect their own governors in 1948. They established their own constitution in the 1950s, but all of these provisions were granted with the understanding that they would not otherwise change Puerto Rico’s relationship with the U.S.A.

A significant portion of that relationship is economic: Puerto Rico’s economy is heavily manufacturing-based, and depends on exports to the United States and investment from U.S. companies. Puerto Rico also pays taxes into the U.S. federal government. The income and investments at stake further complicate the question of the territory’s future political status.

The islands of Puerto Rico, particularly the main island, are also connected to places other than the U.S.—the main island lies near the border between the Caribbean and North American tectonic plates, and exhibits caverns and karst topography, including some connections to the realm of Sub-Terra. Additionally, San Juan (the capital) is one vertex of the Bermuda Triangle (see **The Bermuda Triangle** sidebar). The Atlantean Sea-King has suggested that the “valiant and noble lord” after whom the main island was named was an Atlantean nobleman who safeguarded the land during the island nation’s final war with the Serpent People of Lemuria, and possibly settled there after the sinking of Atlantis itself.

HURICAN

PL9 · 111 POINTS

STR 0 STA 1 AGL 3 DEX 2 FGT 2 INT 1 AWE 1 PRE 1

Powers: **Air Control** (Array: **Aerokinesis** (Move Object 9), **AE: Air Blast** (Ranged Damage 9), **AE: Blinding Gust** (Cumulative Ranged Affliction 9; Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware; Limited to Vision), **AE: Suffocation** (Ranged Affliction 6; Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Exhausted, Fatigued, Incapacitated; Concentration), **AE: Whirlwind** (Cylinder Area Move Object 4, Damaging)); **Wind-riding** (Flight 6 (120 MPH)); **Wind-screen** (Enhanced Dodge 3, Enhanced Parry 3, Protection 8 (Limited to Physical Attacks))

Advantages: Agile Feint, Beginner’s Luck, Defensive Attack, Evasion, Favored Environment (Aerial), Languages (English, Spanish native), Move-by Action

Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+8), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+6), Expertise: Superheroes 4 (+5), Insight 3 (+4), Investigation 3 (+4), Perception 5 (+6), Ranged Combat: Air Control 7 (+9), Stealth 3 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +3, Air Control +9 (Ranged, Damage 9 or Affliction), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 9/6*, Parry 9/6*, Fortitude 7, Toughness 9, Will 9 *Without Wind-screen bonus

Totals: Abilities 22 + Powers 44 + Advantages 7 + Skills 17 + Defenses 21 = 111

Complications: **Motivation—Doing Good. Power Loss:** Loses his powers outside of the Caribbean.

Some seventy miles north of the main island lies the Puerto Rico Trench, the deepest point of the Atlantic Ocean, which descends to a depth of over five miles at its deepest point. Atlanteans claim the Trench is inhabited by savage bands of Deep Ones, Atlanteans corrupted by interbreeding with the Serpent People and worship of their strange, alien deities. Legends suggest that other things may dwell in the depths of the Trench, and that Atlantean ruins might also be concealed there, possibly taken over by the Deep Ones.

HURICAN

Juan Olivera idolized heroes like those in the Freedom League, and planned on going into law-enforcement or criminal justice, but found the opportunity to live his dream when he rushed out into a hurricane that struck his home of San Juan in order to help save his younger siblings, Ricardo and Maya. A feminine voice spoke to him from the storm and told him he was worthy of the power it represented, and Juan found himself whirling up into the air, but with his ascent under his control. The winds bent to his command... he was the *Hurican*!

Since that fateful day, Juan has fashioned himself a costume in the style of his idols and gained a reputation as the local hero of Puerto Rico and the Caribbean. To his dismay, upon trying to apply to join the Freedom League’s training program, Juan discovered his powers were somehow tied to the Caribbean itself: when he is away from there, they disappear altogether. His hopes dashed, he continues to proudly work to be the best hero he can for his home, and Puerto Rico is quite proud of its native son.



UTOPIA ISLE

When Atlantis sank, a small number of Atlanteans survived, having been away from the homeland when disaster struck. Some of these survivors scattered to different parts of the world, becoming known as heroes, wizards, and legendary figures in human mythology.

Some of the refugees made their way to a remote outpost in what is now the Caribbean. They settled on an island situated in the midst of a dimensional rift in the Bermuda Triangle, shielded from the outside world. It became known as *Utopia*—literally “a place which is nowhere”—and the Atlantean survivors created a small, self-contained civilization focused on peace, equality, and personal achievement. They abandoned any interest in the mystic arts, believing such things led to the downfall of Atlantis, and focused on the sciences instead. They achieved tremendous advances and enjoyed millennia of peace and prosperity, shunning all contact with the outside world.

In 1941, the Utopians made contact with the first outsiders, and learned of the war raging in Europe against the Nazis. They decided to send an envoy to learn more about this conflict, and a young Utopian named Sarlyn was chosen. He became known as “the Envoy” in the outside world and served as a member of the Liberty League during the Second World War. Although Envoy’s reports showed much promise in humanity, when the United States deployed nuclear weapons to put an end to the war, the Utopians decided to remain isolated from the outside world.

The world at large is generally aware of Utopia Isle’s existence, although its location—and how to reach it—remains a closely guarded secret, known to only a trusted few. Although some Utopians favor renewing contact with the outside world, the majority fear the contamination of their peaceful culture and the threat of what humanity might do if they discover Utopia’s existence. A growing minority lobbies for leaving Earth altogether to colonize another planet in the galaxy, leaving any fear of discovery behind. For now, the Utopians wait and watch for signs that humanity is developing toward the kind of peace and understanding they have achieved.

UTOPIANS

Utopians are genetically-advanced humans with greater strength and stamina, extended life spans (averaging about 200 years) and resistance to diseases. Their culture emphasizes personal training and development, improving intellect, awareness, and memory, and providing some impressive physical skills. Utopians are often trained in Acrobatics and Athletics, although these are not included in the template.

UTOPIAN

TEMPLATE • 25 PTS

Abilities: Strength +4, Stamina +4, Intellect +1, Awareness +1

Advantages: Attractive, Eidetic Memory, Teamwork

Powers: **Advanced Immune System** (Immunity 2 (Aging, Disease), Limited to Half Effect), **Windfall Training** (Movement 1 (Safe Fall), Limited to within reach of a surface)

COUNSELOR SARLYN (ENVOY)

Like most Utopians, Sarlyn grew up vaguely aware of the outside world, but also knowing its inhabitants were dangerous and primitive. As a young adult, he encountered some of the first outsiders on Utopia, and learned of a war that was spreading to engulf the world. When the Utopians decided to send an envoy to investigate, they held a series of tests. Sarlyn competed and was chosen.

He made his debut by helping save American lives in Pearl Harbor, immediately after the Japanese attack and the name "Envoy" stuck once he explained who he was. The War Department (and the Axis, for that matter) was frustrated by Envoy's consistent refusal to reveal anything more about his people or where he came from, but he earned the respect and trust of America and the Allies by his willingness to risk his own life to protect freedom and democracy. In turn, Sarlyn came to care for the people of the outside world.

The disbanding of the Liberty League was the end of the Envoy's embassy in the outside world. His reports led the Utopians to decide to maintain their policy of secrecy, as the rest of humanity was still not sufficiently advanced. Sarlyn has become a respected leader of the community, and still champions humanity's cause among them. He argues against leaving Earth behind and is in favor of renewing contact by sending a new envoy to the outside world.

COUNSELOR KYLANN

Sarlyn's prime rival and opponent on the Utopian Council is Kylann, a staunch isolationist and the leading conservative voice in maintaining Utopia Isle's separation from the outside world. A contemporary of Sarlyn's, Kylann opposed the Envoy's initial foray, and has consistently maintained that his experiences during that time and since support her position that the rest of humanity are dangerous primitives, and Utopia Isle must be protected from them at all costs. In the decades since, she has held the general support of the Council and the populace.

Most of Utopia, including Sarlyn, are unaware of the depths of Kylann's devotion to her beliefs. More than just an isolationist, she is a Utopian supremacist, who believes her people are far more evolved in every regard compared to the majority of humanity, and therefore more fit to survive. Indeed, it is imperative for the future of humanity that the Utopians survive, whereas the "evolutionary dead-end" of mainstream humanity should be permitted to kill itself off, as it inevitably will. If it is necessary to hurry that process along in order to ensure the success of Utopia, then so be it.

COUNSELOR SARLYN (ENVOY)

PL10 • 171 POINTS

STR 6 STA 6 AGL 5 DEX 4 FGT 12 INT 3 AWE 4 PRE 3

Powers: **Advanced Immune System** (Immunity 2 (Aging, Disease), Limited to Half Effect); **Orichalcum Staff** (Easily Removable, Strength-based Damage 2, Ranged on full Damage, Ricochet, Feature: Collapsible); **Windfall Training** (Movement 1 (Safe Fall), Limited to within reach of a surface)

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Agile Feint, Attractive, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Eidetic Memory, Evasion, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Jack-of-all-trades, Languages 3 (English, French, German, Russian, Utopian native), Move-by Action, Power Attack, Precise Attack (Close, Concealment), Prone Fighting, Quick Draw, Set-up, Takedown, Teamwork, Trance

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+13), Athletics 8 (+14), Expertise: Philosophy 4 (+7), Insight 8 (+12), Perception 6 (+10), Persuasion 8 (+11), Ranged Combat: Throwing 8 (+12), Stealth 6 (+11), Technology 4 (+7), Treatment 2 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +9, Staff +12 (Close or Ranged, Damage 8), Unarmed +12 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 10, Toughness 8/6*, Will 10 *Without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 86 + Powers 11 + Advantages 26 + Skills 31 + Defenses 17 = 171

Complications: Motivation—Doing Good

COUNSELOR KYLANN

PL10 • 162 POINTS

STR 4 STA 4 AGL 4 DEX 4 FGT 9 INT 5 AWE 5 PRE 5

Powers: **Advanced Immune System** (Immunity 2 (Aging, Disease), Limited to Half Effect); **Windfall Training** (Movement 1 (Safe Fall), Limited to within reach of a surface)

Advantages: Attractive, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Eidetic Memory, Evasion, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Languages 3 (English, Greek, Latin; Utopian native), Leadership, Move-by Action, Precise Attack (Close; Concealment), Takedown, Trance, Well-informed

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+10), Athletics 6 (+10), Deception 6 (+11), Expertise: Philosophy 6 (+11), Expertise: Politics 8 (+13), Insight 8 (+13), Investigation 4 (+9), Perception 6 (+11), Persuasion 8 (+13), Stealth 6 (+10), Technology 6 (+11), Treatment 2 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +8, Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 8, Toughness 6/4*, Will 12 *Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 82 + Powers 2 + Advantages 21 + Skills 39 + Defenses 18 = 162

Complications: Motivation—Survival

Thus Kylann systematically sabotages any effort at diplomatic relations with the outside world, encourages fear and paranoia of outsiders and their "contamination," and even works towards the dream scenario of a disaster that wipes out human life in the rest of the world, leaving the protected inhabitants of Utopia to build a new, more perfect, civilization from the ruins.

CENTRAL AMERICA

The concept of “Central America” is dodgy. It is easy to group together the nations of Belize, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama by virtue of their geography, but in any kind of grouping, at least one of them stands as an exception. Belize has English as its main language, Guatemala has a strong Mayan population, Panama balks at its economic ties and prefers to side with neighboring Colombia, and even the Dominican Republic, normally considered part of the Caribbean, has very strong ties to Central American nations.

Occupying a strip of land running from Mexico’s Southern border and down until reaching Colombia, Central America looks like a bridge between the great subcontinents of North and South America, and this status as a “buffer” land has cost its inhabitants decades of internecine conflict, foreign interventions, and injustice. However, the people of Central America are proud and resilient; they have weathered the worst of their collective histories and, fiercely independent, are each finding their own way into the future.

COMMON ROOTS

Despite their many differences, the countries of Central America do share a history. Before the Europeans arrived, a trickle of immigrants from the Toltec, Aztec, and Mayan civilizations met and blended with similar movements from southern tribes, creating a number of unique cultures in a very small territory.

While it was a Spanish colony, Central America was a single colonial “captaincy” together with the Mexican state of Chiapas, but Panama was part of Colombia. As the fires of independence spread, Spanish forces were weakened by war at home and by the independence movements from Mexico and South America, and the small Central American provinces rose and claimed their own freedom as one in 1821, adopting many of the reforms of their fellow colonials. They played with the idea of being part of a First Mexican Empire, then a Federation of Central American States, but both projects dissolved by internal conflict between provincial leaders.

After decades of going their separate ways, the present has Central Americans making another bid for unity in the Central American Parliament comprising Guatemala, El Salvador, Honduras, Nicaragua, the Dominican Republic, and a reluctant Panama. Time will tell if they will succeed.

THE UNSTABLE LAND

The territories of Central America are literally standing on shaky ground. The entire landmass is on the edge of three tectonic plates, which have been responsible for the frequent and often devastating earthquakes that rock the land, not to mention a string of volcanoes, around 30% of which are still active.

This geological activity created a nexus of geological, mystical, and dimensional power right off the Pacific coastline, a few miles South from the border between Panama and Costa Rica. Scientists from UNICORN, the little-known UNISON force dedicated to fighting threats from other dimensions, call it the “N.C.C. Nexus”, as it opens above the point where the Nazca, Cocos and Caribbean tectonic plates meet. The activity of the N.C.C. Nexus is tied to seismic activity but it’s hard to predict: a major earthquake may have no effect, while minor tremors or mild volcanic fumes may liberate tremendous amounts of magical power or dimensional energy. And vice versa.

This resonance affected the development of the neighboring nations, who share a history of strife. Colonial governors vied for dominance, political parties betrayed their own ideals just so they could achieve victory over their opponents, foreign powers instigated bloody civil wars, dictatorial succession was achieved through coups and assassinations, and a long and painful etcetera.



THE LOOMING SHADOW

The long history of instability and the proximity of a powerful nexus made Central America a priority in Overshadow’s plans to establish as many bases as he could. Central America was one of the staging grounds for SHADOW’s Operation Inundation, which overwhelmed many nations with brutal attacks by SHADOW’s hidden armies. Even after Overshadow’s defeat, the local governments’ shaky relationship with UNISON ensures that many such bases remain undiscovered.

To further confound his trail, Overshadow directed the terrorists of Overthrow to conduct as much business as they could in the region. The criminal organization is behind many mercenary groups plying their trade in remote and

inaccessible locations, including establishing drug trafficking routes as part of their efforts to recover SHADOW's lost influence in Mexico.

THE ANCIENT TRAIL

When the Aztec sorcerer Tlacaoel set forth many dormant pools of power across Mexico (see the **Mexico** entry), some of them spread into Central America, following the remnants of the Toltec and Mayan civilization in Guatemala, Belize, El Salvador, and Honduras. These pools are fate-warping land mines; whoever awakens one is ensured to gain superpowers in the immediate future, whether by absorbing the magic and supernatural or magic powers, or turning otherwise fatal accidents into a trigger for a new hero's origin story.

BELIZE

This little country rests at the edge of the Yucatan peninsula, facing the Caribbean to the East and Mexico to the West, and sticks like a sore thumb among the shared culture of Central America. Once part of the Mayan empire, it was assumed to be part of the Spanish colonies as the Conquistadors spread throughout the continent, but Spain never really colonized it due to the lack of mineral resources and the frequent attacks by Mayan remnants. This opened the door for British and Scottish settlers who founded a colony to exploit local woods, and later became a port of call for pirates that attacked Spanish ships.

Britain called it the British Honduras, and it remained a British territory until 1954, when it finally gained independence, and in 1973 it was renamed Belize. Unlike its neighbors, the official language of Belize is English and is governed by a parliamentary monarchy (under Britain's crown). Most people, however, speak Spanish and Belizean Creole.

Belize has avoided conflict throughout its history, but a border dispute with Guatemala is ongoing, with Guatemala sometimes claiming part or the whole of Belize as its own. Belize's coastline has served in the past as a stopover for drug traffickers, but criminals must contend not only with Belizean authorities, but also with an elite mercenary team: the All-New Baymen.

THE ALL-NEW BAYMEN

Shortly after World War II, a group of British veteran pilots settled down in Belize, tired from the war and ready to enjoy a well-deserved retirement, but they were faced with a series of mysteries and capers that culminated in a showdown with the Children of Kukulcan, a cult led by Lemurian Serpent People who subverted the image of the Mayan feathered snake god to establish a base of operations in their quiet war against Atlantean survivors in the Caribbean.

Having discovered this insidious evil, the old soldiers regrouped, called themselves The Baymen, after the

PRONUNCIATION AND TRANSLATION GUIDE

The names of Central American heroes can be difficult to pronounce or understand by their foreign counterparts. Below is a list with the pronunciation and translation with the names of heroes and villains appearing in these pages.

- Vendaval** (*Ven-dah-VAL*) Gale of wind
- Letras Por La Verdad** (*LEH-tras pohr lah Ver-DAD*) Letters for Truth
- Replica** (*REH-plee-kah*) Aftershock
- Cadejo Blanco** (*Kah-DEH-ho BLAN-koh*) White Cadejo (mythical hound)
- Cadejo Negro** (*Kah-DEH-ho NEH-gro*) Black Cadejo
- Piroclasto** (*Pee-roh-class-toh*) Pyroclast
- Los Cuatro Mensajeros** (*Loss Coo-AH-tro Men-sah-HEH-ros*) The Four Harbingers
- Camalotz** (*Ka-mah-LOTS*) Mayan for Death Bat.
- Xecotovach** (*Sheh-kot-KOH-vach*) Mayan, name of a legendary bird.
- Cotzbalam** (*Kots-BAH-lam*) Mayan for Night Jaguar
- Tucumbalam** (*Too-koom-BAH-lam*) Mayan, name of a shark-like legendary bird.

pirates who made their home in Belize. They fashioned themselves into a mercenary company and dedicated their twilight years to rooting out the last remnants of the cult. They have survived to this day by recruiting new blood among the founders' own children and well-intentioned British soldiers with attitude problems. They have devoted their expertise to altruistic missions, mostly rescue and extraction forays into other Central and South American countries, defying dictators, corrupt industrialists, Overthrow cells, and the odd Serpent Person looking for revenge.

The Baymen suffered many casualties during the Terminus invasion, but Richard "Highroller" Bantam, grandson of the *de facto* leader of the Baymen, held the survivors together and convinced them to recruit people with minor superpowers and train them to make the most of those powers.

The current roster of the All-New Baymen is drastically different than the good old days. Bantam is still their leader but he's retired from field duty, instead he spends his time finding worthwhile contracts to hand over to his team. The Baymen own three Lynx helicopters, one Hercules transport aircraft, and two Eurofighter Typhoon fighters, plus a fleet of five Watchkeeper drones. In addition to the all-Belizean support team, the All-New Baymen have two field teams; unless otherwise noted, Baymen field operatives use the Elite Soldier minion archetype in the *Gamemaster's Guide* as heroic (non minion) characters. The most active team is comprised of the following members

CAPTAIN NORA "WISECRACK" MACKINNON

The team's field leader is a Belizean-born former SAS operative; she was on leave in Emerald City during the Silver Storm, but the only power she gained was the ability to master any skill for a few minutes. She's PL 8 (add +1 to



all offense and defense stats and effect ranks). Add Variable 1 (Limited to skill ranks) and Enhanced Advantage (Skill Mastery; Variable Descriptor: skills mimicked with Variable).

ROBERT "SKYHIGH" HULSE

The team's designated pilot is a civilian trained by the Baymen for combat. He's all business on the ground, but a daredevil in the air. Add Dexterity 4, Ranged Attack 5, Vehicles 8 (+12) and Favored Environment: Airborne; Remove Ranged Combat: Guns.

NATHANIEL "LONGSHOT" & IDOLLY "POINT-BLANK" LOPEZ

Twins who managed to stick together through various assignments in the Belizean police. Nathaniel is a great sniper (add Perception 12 (+12); Improved Aim, Improved Critical 2 (Sniper Rifle), and Senses 1 (Extended Sight)) and Idolly is his spotter and a terrific recon specialist (add Perception 10 (+10), Stealth 14 (+15); Hide in Plain Sight, Second Chance (opposed Perception checks), and Senses 2 (Extended Sight, Danger Sense)).

DENNIS "MANTIS" COWD

A veteran SAS commando and once Nora MacKinnon's mentor; a tough old bird who specializes in hand-to-hand. Add Expertise: Survival 10 (+10), Stealth 8 (+9); Close Attack 2, Diehard, Fast Grab, Improved Defense, Improved Grab, Improved Trip, and Instant Up.

SHERYLINE "HUMMING" BYRD

Young recruit snatched fresh from the academy and the team's SigInt (signal intelligence) specialist. Use the Green Soldier archetype and add Intellect 4; Expertise: Cryptography 7 (+11), Investigation 6 (+10), Technology 10 (+14), Eidetic Memory, and Quickness 2 (Limited to mental tasks).

COSTA RICA

An unassuming country that is developing quietly but steadily into the perfect place to raise a family. Rated second safest country in Latin America, it's also ranked first in terms of freedom of the press. It has not had an army for over 50 years, and, with the expectation to achieve carbon neutrality by 2021, it is also the most environmentally friendly country on Earth.

Costa Ricans are used to hard work; its harsh geography and hostile weather made it difficult to settle during the Spanish conquest of the continent, and its lack of mineral and agricultural riches meant that the colonial capital preferred to forget about the settlers brave enough to make that territory their home. Lacking a steady and reliable source of serf and slave labor, the European colonists had no choice but work the land together with their subordinates.

Costa Rica's history has been mostly stable, with its internecine strife and couple of dictatorships paling in

THE "BANANA REPUBLICS"

This derogatory term used to describe Central America has a dirty origin in a common villain: the United Fruit Company, a merger between the holdings of two ruthless entrepreneurs from the United States. Throughout the 20th century, the UFC used very shady business tactics to promote the production of bananas in their vast properties in many Central American countries. They would buy agricultural lands and let them sit unused to prevent competition while local farmers were forced into slave labor, oppose the building of roads and highway systems so their monopoly on railways stood unchallenged, co-opt local governments into violently repressing discontent at their practices, and once even conspiring—and succeeding—in replacing a democratically-elected government with a military dictatorship. All for bananas.

In the Freedomverse, the UFC make excellent historical villains, and an early front for SHADOW's activities in the region, but be warned that any foreign hero who dismisses these countries as "banana republics" is not going to get a nice welcome by the locals.

comparison with the brutality endured by other Central American countries. Rocked by economic crises and natural disasters, Costa Rica has never stopped moving forward. It has adapted to the changing conditions of the world and is now a service-based economy rather than agrarian.

LETRAS POR LA VERDAD

There are heroes in Costa Rica, but they don't patrol the streets to root out crime, nor storm the stronghold of criminal masterminds, but they manage to fight evil head on with the power of their curiosity, tenacity, and their pens. Letras Por la Verdad is a group of journalists who exchange notes and tips online and meet face-to-face in cafes and bars. Nobody is quite sure how many people call themselves members, but they identify themselves through their logo: the letters "A" and "A" forming the stirrups of a balance scale.

The journalists who identify with Letras Por la Verdad work for newspapers, radio, TV or are active bloggers. Through diligence, persistence and networking they uncover plots and bring them to the light. They have discovered hidden SHADOW bases and caches across Costa Rica, and are some of the few journalists in the world who know for a fact that the international organization is alive and well, and are not shy about writing about it.

Members of Letras por la Verdad use the Reporter supporting character archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, but once they join they gain the Luck advantage and any one power option from the Luck Control effect. It's as if journalists who commit to the cause of truth receive some sort of divine protection.

GREENFIELDS, CORP.

Humberto Valverde was a middle-aged illegal immigrant working in Freedom City when Centurion arrived and a new era began. Over the course of fifteen years, Humberto realized he no longer became ill, he wasn't aging, and he understood car assembly much better than the engineers in the factory where he worked. A decade later, he was absorbing knowledge while mopping floors at Cape Canaveral. It took him ten more years to gather a small fortune from simple patents, and in 1975 he

finally returned to Costa Rica, where he founded his own company, Industrias Valleverde, although by then, he was going by a different name.

He has faked takeovers and mergers, plus his own death and created false heirs to keep himself beyond suspicion. Today, Greenfields, Corp. is at the forefront of eco-friendly technological research using the principles of hyper-science that heroes would leverage to build battlesuits, or villains to build death rays, but Humberto uses to improve Costa Rica and the world. He paces the release of new technologies so as to not tip anyone to his superhuman intellect or outrun cultural development, but he has the clear aim to guide humanity towards the technological singularity. Humberto uses the Mad Scientist archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide*, adding Immunity 2 (Aging, Disease), and an altruistic and ethical disposition.

EL SALVADOR

El Salvador is the smallest of the Central American countries, and is Belize's counterpart as a country with a coastline facing a single body of water, in El Salvador's case it's the Pacific Ocean. El Salvador has a very high population density, and deforestation threatens its wild areas, which have seen a sharp decrease in wildlife.

Industry and services replaced coffee plantations as the country's main source in revenue, and switching their official currency to the U.S. dollar has helped keep the economy more or less stable and growing, even if social inequality is still a burden to the nation's development. This might change as El Salvador has the first leftist government in its history.

ON UNEVEN GROUND

El Salvador has endured a lot of hardships over the course of its existence. Its early history as an independent nation is marked by a push and give between conservatives and liberals which often turned violent. It has been at war with itself for most of the 20th century, ruled by one military regime after another, and even taking the time to wage a brief war with Honduras in 1969 as both countries were recovering from the passing of SHADOW's Operation Undonation.

REPLICA

PL12 - 210 POINTS

STR 10 STA — AGL 3 DEX -1 FGT 6 INT 4 AWE 2 PRE 0

Powers: **Earthmeld** (Burrowing 16 (4,000 MPH), Teleport 8, Accurate, Extended (250 miles), Limited to Extended, Medium: Faultlines and ley lines); **Earthsense** (Senses 11 (Awareness: spatial breaches, Extended Touch 3, Touch Penetrates Concealment, Ranged Touch, Tracking Touch 2; Limited to targets connected to the ground)); **Granite Body** (Growth 4 (Density, Permanent), Immunity 32 (Critical Hits, Fortitude Effects), Impervious Protection 12, Regeneration 2 (Source: natural earth)); **Strength of the Earth** (Enhanced Strength 6 (Limited to Lifting (total lifting Str 16 (1,600 tons))); **Telluric Control** (Array: 36 points), **Cracked Ground** (Cumulative Line Area Affliction 12 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Hindered and Vulnerable, Immobile and Defenseless, Paralyzed), Extra Condition, Limited to targets on the ground, Quirk: Cumulative failures only apply if on the same area as original failure), **AE: Shatterstrike** (Burst Area Affliction 12 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned), Selective, Limited Degree, linked to Strength-based Damage 6, Accurate), **AE: Spatial Quake** (Burst Area Teleport Attack 3 (Resisted by Dodge, Extra Ranks 9)), **AE: Structural Fault** (Burst Area Damage 12, Affects Objects Only, Limited to objects in contact with the ground, Linked to Burst Area Weaken Toughness 12 (Resisted by Fortitude), Affects Objects Only, Limited to objects in contact with the ground))

Advantages: Close Attack 4, Defensive Attack, Diehard, Favored Environment (Underground), Improved Smash, Languages (Spanish native), Power Attack, Takedown, Throwing Mastery 6

Skills: Athletics 5 (+15), Expertise: Dimensional Science 5 (+9), Expertise: Geology 7 (+11), Investigation 6 (+10), Persuasion 2 (+2), Ranged Combat: Throw 11 (+10), Technology 4 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +3, Cracked Ground (Cumulative Line Area Dodge DC 22), Shatterstrike +10 (Close Damage 14 and Burst Area, Dodge DC 22), Spatial Quake (Burst Area, Dodge DC 22), Structural Fault (Burst Area Damage 12 and Burst Area, Fortitude DC 22), Thrown Object +10 (Ranged, Damage 14), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 8, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 16, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 30 + Powers 133 + Advantages 16 + Skills 20 + Defenses 11 = 210

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** Replica believes it's his duty to help out these in need. **Obsession:** Replica has glimpsed how vast the universe is through the cracks in reality, and he wants to visit everywhere. **Prejudice:** Replica's appearance is unnatural, which affects his interactions with people in the countryside.

A protracted civil war between 1980 and 1992 pitted the corrupt military government against the revolutionary forces of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front (FMLN in Spanish). Operatives from Overthrow contributed to the chaos, committing atrocities and blaming either side as needed.

The conflict allowed SHADOW to build numerous clone reservoirs undisturbed and undetected, but their careful operations came to naught as a series of earthquakes in 2001 buried all but one reservoir under tons of debris and mud. The capital of San Salvador has suffered so many quakes that it's colloquially known as "the city of hammocks," and SHADOW desisted from rebuilding its facilities, moving the clones to less unstable locations and using the surviving compound as a supply cache.

REPLICA

Professor Eduardo Galindo was studying changes in the landscape brought by seismic activities when a minor tremor originating from the N.C.C. Nexus triggered a spatial rip across a few tectonic axes that lasted for a fraction of a second and only manifested in remote locations... like the spot where Eduardo was working. The rip translocated him into the ground itself, where he remained for seven months, fused into the earth and stone yet somehow still alive, and still aware. During his imprisonment, he learned to feel the tears in the Earth caused by the earthquakes and volcanoes of Central America. He also learned to exert some control over his earthly prison. Geological calculations kept him sane, and eventually led him to a solution to his predicament. His practiced control allowed him to trigger a similar tremor in the fabric of space, and he extricated himself from the rock, but he was forever changed.

Eduardo is one of the few recognized superheroes in Central America, as he finds it impossible to hide his condition. His skin turned ashen and angular, as if hewn by an amateur sculptor, and his eyes are empty pits of blackness that are actually bottomless. He continued his geological studies and is now one of the world's leading authorities on dimensional nexuses, moonlighting as a rescue worker in the many natural disasters that torment Central America.

ISLA PORTICO

UNISON keeps a close watch on the N.C.C. Nexus from its base in Panama, and has advised the navies of Central America, Mexico, Colombia, and Ecuador to keep a close watch on an island that is not always there. Codenamed "Isla Pórtico" ("Gate Island" in Spanish), this intermittent landmass appears during energy spikes from the N.C.C. Nexus and disappears as the dimensional window fades and closes. Scientists speculate that it acts like a volcano: a pressure release mechanism, but in this case for dimensional activity.

Satellite imaging reveals that the island has structures, but also some kind of signal shielding that blocks any other reading, including psychic scans. As there has been no sign of any activity, hostile or otherwise originating from the island, the U.N. is content to simply keep an eye on it, but UNISON wants to put some boots on the ground next time the island appears.

RELICS OF NEVERWHEN

Isla Pórtico was aptly named, because it's actually the Easternmost outpost of the lost civilization of Mu, the Lemuria of a parallel world settled by benevolent Serpent People engaged in an ancient war against the evil human warlords of Hy-Brasil, the parallel version of Atlantis.

Isla Pórtico appears in our universe at different points of its history, non-sequential, so at times it will be at the peak of its splendor, others a complete ruin, others in the middle of a fierce battle. Any technology or lore that can be recovered from Isla Pórtico depends entirely on the point

of history in which it appears, but it's a true reflection of Serpent People secrets, only originated by a benevolent, inclusive, and egalitarian society.

Hy-Brasil relics can also be found if Isla Pórtico appears as an old battleground, and they too are perfect mirrors of Atlantean equipment, but tailored and designed by a warrior society of xenophobic oppressors.

CROSSING THE GATEWAY

All plans for an incursion onto Isla Pórtico hinge on readings of dimensional activity and rapid extraction, but the very same reason why the island appears keeps travelers safe from the island's transience: it's highly susceptible to external dimensional phenomena. The presence of travelers will keep the island anchored in our reality until the next spike from the N.C.C. Nexus, which, despite their unpredictability, don't happen twice in the same week.

Any westward travel beginning on the island's coast happens in the parallel world as long as Isla Pórtico is in our reality, and travelers will see an archipelago that eventually leads to the Mu mainland. What explorers will find there depends entirely on luck.

The Mu Serpent People may be welcoming or wary, depending on which point of their history the expedition crossed into, but they never shoot first and ask questions later. The Serpent People realize the explorers, despite looking like Hy-Brasilians, bear very different equipment, and the Mu are aware of the dimensional anomalies occurring around their eastern outposts.

AGES OF WONDERS

Isla Pórtico appears as a window to different moments of Mu history, but always within certain time periods:

ANCESTRAL AGE

At this point, the Mu are a collection of tribes that practice a sophisticated form of shamanism. While reverent of ancestors and spirits, they are curious and open to new ideas. Their ancestors are real forces of nature they can call upon for aid.

PRE-CLASSIC AGE

The continent of Mu is dotted by a collection of city states. Their spirit guardians have evolved into gods that inhabit avatars that rule as wizard-kings. They are super-powered beings at and above the level of Earth-Prime's defenders. Magic is at a very advanced stage, but it's the exclusive province of scholars.

CLASSIC AGE

Mu is a single empire, ruled by a Pantheon of super-beings who pass their "divine" essence to their successors, once their mortal bodies decay and die of old age. Technology is powered by magic and can be described as "magepunk", and the arts are at their most sophisticated.

During this period, contact with Hy-Brasil sparks a war that has not ended by the last time period the gateway opens into. Isla Pórtico may, or may not be abandoned during this period, and half of the times it has intelligent life, it's a Hy-Brasilian beachhead instead of a Mu base.

WARTORN AGE

Mu's holdings have shrunken into the lost continent's mainland, and the archipelago that leads away from Isla Pórtico is abandoned, some of the islands are nothing more than smoking ruins. Advanced magical artifacts are lost, replaced by a crystal-based technology that stores raw magic power from the land's leylines to power different machines. Mu weaponry are at their most powerful, but quality of life has declined, and only a handful of Mu's god-avatars remain, ruling over a rigid society suffering from a besieged mentality.

GUATEMALA

One of Guatemala's defining characteristics is the strength of the native traditions surviving to this day. Lying directly south of Mexico, Guatemala is part of the ancient Mayan and Toltec territories. It wouldn't be until 1697 that the Spanish defeated the last rebellious Mayan tribe, compared to their conquest of the Aztecs in 1521. Today, sub-families of the Maya people account for 40% of the Guatemalan population.

The territory dips and rises in altitude, granting a great variety of climates and wildlife, and the production of sugar cane and cocoa is coupled with mineral resources as a source of revenue.

A SHADOW'S GUIDE TO USURPATION

Guatemala is the main staging ground for SHADOW to try and recover their influence in Mexico and secure routes to infiltrate the United States. After World War II, the Penumbra used the unethical business practices of the United Fruit Company to further their agenda. Dictator José Ubico had just been deposed and the country experimented with a brief decade of democracy, but the land reforms and expropriation plans of President Arbenz threatened to uncover SHADOW operations, and a plan was set in motion to stop it.

The Penumbra used its position within the United Fruit Company to plead the U.S. for help against a "dangerous communist," and then just sat back to watch how the C.I.A. orchestrated the birth of violent paramilitary groups that deposed the reformist president. SHADOW then infiltrated the troops the Americans were financing, and let the carnage begin, ironically using U.S.-trained personnel to protect SHADOW's facilities, which later served as Operation Inundation's main launching points for the Americas theater.

After Operation Inundation failed, the Penumbra resumed its dual insurgency/counter-insurgency program to keep Guatemala destabilized, backing both the brutal military regime, its C.I.A. sponsors, and the Soviet-trained guerril-

CADEJO NEGRO

PL10 • 200 POINTS

STR 8 STA 12 AGL 4 DEX -3 FGT 5 INT 2 AWE 6 PRE 0

Powers: **Borrowed Life** (Regeneration 10 (Source: María's Soul)); **Dark Bite** (Strength-based Damage 5, Affects Insubstantial 2, Incurable); **Dark Senses** (Senses 11 (Accurate Acute and Extended Smell, Communication Link: Mental, Darkvision, Detect Supernatural 2, Tracking: Smell 2)); **Large Supernatural Dog** (Growth 4 (Continuous), Immortality 5 (1 day), Immunity 7 (Aging, Fatigue Effects, Starvation & Thirst), Leaping 7 (900 feet), Speed 3 (16 MPH)); **Mantle of Night** (Concealment 10 (All Senses), Affects Others, Passive, Quirk: visible to magical senses); **Sibling Awareness** (Feature 1: Always knows when Cadejo Blanco is near)

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Assessment, Daze (Intimidation), Evasion, Favored Foe (Cadejo Blanco), Favored Foe (Intoxicated Humans), Fearless, Improved Critical 3 (Dark Bite), Improved Grab, Instant Up, Languages (Mayan native), Move-by Action, Power Attack, Sidekick 23, Startle, Takedown 2

Skills: Athletics 5 (+13), Close Combat: Dark Bite 2 (+7), Insight 5 (+11), Intimidation 14 (+16), Perception 6 (+12)

Offense: Initiative +4, Dark Bite +7 (Close, Damage 13, Crit. 17-20), Unarmed, +5 (Close, Damage 8)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 8, Fortitude 12, Toughness 12, Will 6

Totals: Abilities 52 + Powers 83 + Advantages 40 + Skills 16 + Defenses 9 = 200

Complications: **Anchored Existence:** Cadejo Negro depends on María being awake to exist. It can cling to existence for a few minutes after María loses consciousness, but then it disappears.

Monstrous: Cadejo's giant hound form frightens even the bravest. **Motivation—Dark Justice:** The Cadejo must protect women from harm, otherwise it relishes punishing the innocent along as the guilty. **No Hands:** As a canine, the Cadejo has no hands with which to handle and manipulate things.



las that opposed them. It was an ideal state of affairs until the bloodshed reached such levels that the U.S. cut off all support for the Guatemalan death squads.

A semblance of peace returned in 1986 with the first of many democratic governments, but SHADOW is still strong in the area, and it still has many hidden bases both under urban complexes and in inaccessible locations in the mountains.

CHICHICASTENANGO

This town in the Western highlands has been a trading center literally for centuries, but has resisted becoming a city. Chichicastenango is an important tourism destination thanks to its market, which includes beautiful

local handcrafts, but also because of the fusion of the Maya and Catholic traditions, which worship both saints and spirits.

SHADOW has repeatedly tried to set up covert operations in the town, because the frequent tourist traffic is ideal for passing information and equipment between South, Central, and North American agents, but any operatives that travel there are never heard from again.

CADEJO NEGRO

When teenager María Tecum left her home one night to retrieve her father from a bar, she never expected that taking a shortcut would change her life forever. The path she chose crossed one of the power pools scattered around Mexico and areas still strong with the land's ancient magic. In that moment, she awakened a mythical nightmare that followed her without her knowledge, and through a twist of fate brought about by the same magic, she crossed paths with a SHADOW agent, surveying the area. Annoyed by the interruption, the agent reached for his gun, but before he could draw the weapon, a gigantic black hound leapt from the darkness and devoured him whole. The spectral dog stared at María, who recognized it from the local folklore, it was a *cadejo*, a mythological canine who haunted roads to torment drunken revelers. The black variety was known for killing its prey more often than not, but it was also known as a guardian for women who travel at night.

CADEJO NEGRO

STORN

Without words, the *cadejo* imparted vast stores of magical knowledge to María, and struck a deal with her: it would guard and protect her, but she would have to travel across the land, finding corruption and evil for the monster to destroy. Since then, María roams on paths both mundane and mystical, an anonymous sentinel whose dark companion is starting to tax her soul and blur the lines between right and wrong.

HONDURAS

Honduras is one of the largest countries in Central America, and the southernmost region of the ancient Mayan domains. Despite its terrain being mostly mountains, the land is home to a great diversity of both people and wildlife, and agriculture is its main means of production. Its slow economic growth compared to its fast increase in population is one of the main causes behind Honduran people emigrating to the United States.

During the 20th century there was a steady string of military regimes and dictatorships replacing one another, and *coup d'état* was the most common method of succession. Operation Inundation elevated an actual SHADOW agent into power, which gave the organization free rein to erase any trace of their operations in the country. Ironically enough, the volatile state of affairs allowed a military junta to depose the agent and return Honduras to its “normal” state of affairs, which included allowing the American C.I.A. to train death squads in its territory to send to Nicaragua and El Salvador.

A recent left-leaning government was deposed by the military and right-wing groups. This estranged Honduras from the rest of Latin America and gave SHADOW a lot of maneuvering room—except for the activities of a handful of local heroes and villains who stay unaligned from either authorities or criminals, doing as they please and all the while pursued by Honduran police. The country was just readmitted into the Organization of American States after holding elections, but this doesn't seem to matter to their local super-powered element.

VENDAVAL

Marcial Olivo was a rescue worker, jaded by the constant suffering he witnessed and the corruption that strangled the delivery of aid to people who lost everything to the power of nature. He was in a helicopter during one of the tropical storms that frequently hit Central America when it turned into a hurricane. The helicopter couldn't handle the stress and exploded in midair. Marcial didn't die immediately, instead he was tossed around in the strong winds, where he was given a choice: die or become a child of the Heart of Sky, the Mayan god U K'ux Kaj, better known as Hurakan.

The man known as Marcial Olivo ceased to be, and in his place awakened an elemental creature that called itself Vendaval. However, he was not an agent of a benevolent creator god, but a disappointed god who wanted

MARIA TECUM

PL10 - 115 POINTS

STR 1 STA 4 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 0 INT 1 AWE 3 PRE 1

Powers: **Cadejo's Favor** (Array (20 points), **Borrow Senses** (Mind Reading 9, Sensory Link, Limited to Cadejo), **AE: Gruesome Recovery** (Regeneration 10, Feature: Also provides nourishment, Source: Cadejo's dead victims), **AE: Guilty Verdict** (Perception Range Affliction 10 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Hindered, Immobile), Limited Degree)); **Cadejo's Protection** (Enhanced Trait 17 (Parry +9, Dodge +8), Immunity 5 (Damage Effect: Cadejo Blanco's attacks), Protection 6 (Subtle)); **Psychic Link** (Senses 1 (Communication Link: Cadejo))

Advantages: Defensive Roll, Fearless, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Defense, Languages (Mayan native, Spanish)

Skills: Athletics 7 (+8), Deception 7 (+8), Expertise: Local 6 (+7), Expertise: Magic 7 (+8), Insight 1 (+4), Perception 6 (+9), Persuasion 2 (+3), Stealth 8 (+9)

Offense: Initiative +1, Guilty Verdict (Perception, Will DC 20), Unarmed, +0 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 9/1*, Parry 9/0*, Fortitude 13, Toughness 11/10*, Will 6 *Without Cadejo's Protection.

Totals: Abilities 24 + Powers 52 + Advantages 5 + Skills 22 + Defenses 12 = 115

Complications: Devoured: Every day that Cadejo Negro uses its Regeneration power, María loses another bit of her soul, sanity, and morals. **Motivation—Deluded Duty:** María believes she's in charge of directing Cadejo Negro's powers, and she tries to steer it towards a good cause, but Cadejo only obeys out of amusement. **Unpowered:** If Cadejo Negro goes beyond 1 mile, María loses all her powers.

to cleanse the world of humanity. Vendaval judges that humanity has failed, and he's here to wipe them out. While not at odds with the Cuatro Mensajeros, they are not allies and they oppose each other as many times as they collaborate. Vendaval, however, is the nemesis of the Puerto Rican hero, Hurican (see **The Caribbean**). Vendaval uses the Elemental archetype in the *Gamemaster's Guide*, with powers from both the Air Control and Storm Control themes.

LOS CUATRO MENSAJEROS

When a young Honduran couple invited their two American friends to take a peek at a new Mayan dig, they unleashed ancient forces that, according to Mayan myths, destroyed humanity and ended an age. Those forces were four monstrous bird spirits that each possessed one of the four friends: **Camalotz** took Iliana Santos; **Xecotcovach** claimed Miguel Covarrubias, her boyfriend; they are both archaeology students; **Cotzbalam** took Martin Carver, and **Tucumbalam** took his girlfriend, Nina Jones, both American college students. Now, when any of the friends call upon the power of these legendary monsters, they gain cloaks that transform into fearful wings, and they wear masks apparently carved from wood. Each mask is different, depicting a hybrid between a crow and a bat, an eagle, a jaguar, and an owl, respectively. The four friends were already committed to social justice causes, but when they take on their demigod forms, they are inspired with a terrible thirst for vengeance, and their methods tend to be extremely violent. They fight authorities and criminals alike, but the agents of SHADOW get

LOS CUATRO MENSAJEROS



a special treatment... they are flown high into the sky and dropped.

These four harbingers of violent change use the Savage archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide* with the following changes: their Strength, Stamina and Fighting ranks are Enhanced Ability effects, they have Flight 8 (Wings) instead of Leaping, and they have 8 ranks in Expertise: Mayan Mythology; Xecotcovach has Intellect 0 and additional traits from the hawk listed animal type, Cotzbalam has Intellect 0 and additional cat traits, Camalotz has Intellect 2 and additional bat traits, and Tucumbalam has Intellect 3 and additional traits from the fly type. All powers reside in an Alternate Form effect activated by the youngsters speaking the names of their mythic forms; while not transformed, they have 4 ranks in different skills: Expertise: Archaeology (Iliana and Miguel), Expertise: Law (Martin), and Expertise: Journalism (Nina).

NICARAGUA

No other Central American country has been torn by strife and bloodshed as Nicaragua. All the images from 1980's media depicting Central America as a war-torn country, filled with guerrillas, rebels and terrorists, with trumped-up dictators and a subjugated people are mostly inspired in the bloody 20th century of Nicaragua.

Unlike its Northern neighbors, Nicaragua doesn't have a Mayan legacy. It is, however, believed the Toltecs arrived here when they abandoned their city of Teotihuacan in central Mexico, when an omen lead them to a lake with two volcanoes: Ometepe, the largest lake-bound volca-

nic island in the world. Nicaragua is composed mostly by descendants of the European settlers, with a minority of blacks and natives.

A HISTORY OF VIOLENCE

Its history with violence started early, with the establishment of the Mosquito Coast, where British pirates, freebooters and buccaneers made a home. It followed with an American mercenary, William Walker, who was hired by Nicaragua's opposition party to help them against their rivals, and ended up declaring himself president, reestablishing slavery, and triggering a war with all of their neighbors as they attempted to oust him. Later, the opposition party reciprocated and called upon the U.S. Marines to help them depose a liberal dictatorship, and later support the dictatorship of the Somoza dynasty.

The Somozas dealt with both the Americans and with SHADOW, and UNISON suspects that Somoza's successors were actually clones produced with Overshadow's technology. Nicaragua is the country that suffered the least during Operation Inundation because the country was already under SHADOW's control, but once this support dwindled after Overshadow's defeat, the Sandinista revolutionaries began to gain ground until they finally defeated the dictator in 1979. Even this victory did not bring peace, because the leftist Sandinista movement was not a friend of the U.S.A., and their electoral victory in 1984 sparked the birth of the infamous "Contras," fully financed by the U.S. government to create a climate of brutal fear.

PIROCLASTO

PL11 - 173 POINTS

STR 2 STA 3 AGL 4 DEX 1 FGT 1 INT 3 AWE 1 PRE 0

Powers: **Earth Shield** (Enhanced Trait 6 (Dodge +3, Parry +3)); **Flowing Magma** (Elongation 2 (30 feet), Enhanced Advantages 2 (Instant Up, Prone Fighting), Insubstantial 1 (fluid), Movement 1 (Slithering), Swimming 9 (250 MPH)); **Magma Projection** (Array (22 points), **Molten Rock** (Ranged Damage 11 (fire)), **AE: Molten Stream** (Ranged Weaken Toughness 11 (Resisted by Fortitude)), **AE: Pyroclastic Spray** (Cone Area Damage 11), **AE: Superheat Structure** (Damage 11 linked to Weaken Toughness 11 (Resisted by Fortitude), Affects Objects Only), **AE: Volcanic Rock** (Create 9, Innate, Reversible, Subtle, Permanent)); **Pyrogenic Organism** (Immunity 10 (Critical Hits, Fire Damage, Heat, Pressure, Suffocation: Drowning)); **Sense the Blood of the Earth** (Senses 8 (Detect: Magma Flows 2, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Penetrates Concealment: Detect Magma Flow)); **Solidified Rock** (Sustained Impervious Protection 8)

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Defensive Roll, Diehard, Improved Critical 2 (Molten Rock), *Instant Up*, Languages (English, Spanish native), Power Attack, *Prone Fighting*, Weapon Break

Skills: Athletics 4 (+6), Close Combat: Magma Projection 10 (+11), Expertise: Geology 7 (+10), Investigation 6 (+9), Perception 7 (+8), Ranged Combat: Magma Projection 10 (+11), Technology 4 (+7), Treatment 2 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +4, Molten Rock +11 (Ranged, Damage 11, Crit. 18-20), Molten Stream +11 (Ranged, Fortitude 21), Pyroclastic Spray — (Cone Area, Damage 11), Superheat Structure +11 (Close, Damage 11 and Fortitude DC 21 (objects only)), Unarmed, +1 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 10, Fortitude 13, Toughness 12/11*, Will 8 * Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 30 + Powers 86 + Advantages 8 + Skills 25 + Defenses 24 = 173

Complications: **Glow in the Dark:** Even while powered down, the lava within Piroclasto glows lightly. He suffers a -2 penalty to all Stealth checks and cannot benefit from partial concealment. **Motivation—Curiosity:** Piroclasto wants to learn how everything works and he thinks the best way to do that is to go out and experience everything the world has to offer. **Uncontrolled Functions:** Involuntary reflexes like sneezing, tensing, coughing and the like may release a spurt of molten lava.

The social unrest helped the Penumbra hold onto its hidden facilities and quietly prepare them for Overshad-ow's return. It also allowed them to infiltrate Overthrow teams into the Contras' ranks, so they could gain some leverage on their C.I.A. sponsors.

A conservative victory in the 1990's began a decline in violence and decommissioning of the Contras, especially as the Iran-Contra scandal marked the end of the Contras' backing. Social conditions improved very little, and another victory by the Sandinistas put Nicaragua at odds with the U.S. again, and while the situation is tense, there is no open conflict.

PIROCLASTO

The eruption in 1999 of the Cerro Negro volcano was different from previous ones in the 20th century; it was not triggered by strictly tectonic forces, but by a dimensional pulse from the N.C.C. Nexus. It also created new mouths to the volcano in addition to its main ones—one of them

CADEJO BLANCO

PL10 - 193 POINTS

STR 8 STA 12 AGL 4 DEX -3 FGT 5 INT 2 AWE 6 PRE 0

Powers: **Great Bite** (Strength-based Damage 3, Affects Insubstantial 2); **Honed Awareness** (Senses 15 (Accurate Acute and Extended 3 Smell, Communication Link: Mental, Darkvision, Detect Culpability 2, Detect Supernatural 2, Tracking: Smell 2)); **Large Supernatural Dog** (Growth 4 (Continuous), Immortality 5 (1 day), Immunity 7 (Aging, Fatigue Effects, Starvation & Thirst), Leaping 6 (500 feet), Speed 4 (32 MPH)); **Mirror Protection** (Immunity 5 (Damage Effect: Cadejo Negro's attacks, Affects Others Only, Increased Range 2 (Perception), Sustained, Limited: to good people)); **Pet Form** (Morph 1, Continuous)

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Animal Empathy, Assessment, Daze (Intimidation), Evasion, Favored Foe (Cadejo Negro), Favored Foe (Victimizers), Fearless, Improved Critical (Great Bite), Improved Grab, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Interpose, Languages (Mayan native), Move-by Action, Sidekick 23, Startle, Takedown 2

Skills: Athletics 3 (+11), Close Combat: Great Bite 4 (+9), Insight 7 (+13), Intimidation 12 (+14), Perception 8 (+14)

Offense: Initiative +4, Great Bite +9 (Close, Damage 11. Crit. 19-20), Unarmed, +5 (Close, Damage 8)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 8, Fortitude 12, Toughness 12, Will 6

Totals: Abilities 52 + Powers 75 + Advantages 40 + Skills 17 + Defenses 9 = 193

Complications: **Anchored Existence:** Cadejo Blanco depends on Mario being awake to exist. It can cling to existence for a few minutes after Mario loses consciousness, but then it disappears. **Monstrous:** Cadejo's giant hound form frightens even the bravest, and even disguised as a rather regular white mastiff, something in it unnerves others. **Motivation—Sacred Purpose:** The Cadejo must protect the innocent from harm, and must track down its brother, the Cadejo Negro. **No Hands:** As a canine, the Cadejo has no hands with which to handle and manipulate things.

directly below Elmer Murillo's feet. For a split second, the lava and Elmer shared the same dimensional coordinates, and the universe corrected the anomaly by including magma in the young volcanologist's morphic field. In practical terms, Elmer was given the ability to produce lava. It took him a couple of days to learn how to control this new ability so he didn't melt things by sneezing once he returned to civilization.

Elmer leads a double life as an assistant researcher at the National Autonomous University of Nicaragua and as the hero Piroclasto, a creature with lava for skin and a carapace of solidified volcanic rock. While he tries to keep his activities within his home country, he recently learned how to travel through magma flows, and has been adventuring throughout Central America.

CADEJO BLANCO

Mario Salgado is not who he thinks he is. He's the child of a middle-class family who has barely skirted the violence that gripped the country in the past century. While his family was not particularly affluent, they were able to give Mario a decent upbringing. It all changed one night when he was walking back from studying with friends at the local library, when a giant silver hound appeared before him. No matter how he turned, the dog was instantly in

MARIO SALGADO

PL10 • 115 POINTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 2 DEX 3 FGT 0 INT 1 AWE 1 PRE 2

Powers: **Cadejo's Favor** (Array (18 points), **Borrow Senses** (Mind Reading 9, Sensory Link, Limited to Cadejo), **AE: Heal Cadejo** (Ranged Healing 8 (Limited to Cadejos))); **Cadejo's Protection** (Enhanced Trait 18 (Parry +10, Dodge +8), Immunity 5 (Damage Effect: Cadejo Negro's attacks), Protection 6 (Subtle)); **Psychic Link** (Senses 1 (Communication Link: Cadejo))

Advantages: Defensive Roll 3, Fearless, Improved Defense, Languages 2 (English, Mayan, Spanish native), Set-up, Teamwork

Skills: Deception 5 (+7), Expertise: Popular Culture 4 (+5), Insight 7 (+8), Investigation 5 (+6), Perception 3 (+4), Persuasion 7 (+9), Stealth 8 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +2, Unarmed, +0 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 10/2*, Parry 10/0*, Fortitude 7, Toughness 10/7*, Will 9* Without Cadejo Blanco's Protection.

Totals: Abilities 22 + Powers 50 + Advantages 9 + Skills 20 + Defenses 14 = 115

Complications: **Motivation—Duty:** Mario understands Cadejo's purpose and is convinced to help fulfill it. **Unpowered:** If Cadejo Blanco goes beyond 1 mile from him, Mario loses all his powers. **Young:** Mario has the obligations of a teenage boy: school, mostly, as well as the limitations: few people take him seriously.

front of him. Mario attempted to calm the dog by talking to it... and the dog spoke back, and it spoke the truth.

Mario is actually the twin brother of María Tecum (see the **Guatemala** section), given away for adoption when the pair was born, and the dog was born to balance the deal María made with the malevolent Cadejo Negro. The white counterpart tasked Mario not only with the protection of innocents, but also with tracking down his sister and stopping her from damning her soul.

PANAMA

Panama's bridge-like shape reflect its status as a connecting hub, which has brought it prosperity and made it the third safest country in Latin America.

Centuries before the construction of the Canal, the Spanish conquerors used the isthmus to transport all the gold and goods gathered from the Pacific coastline in their colonial holdings back to the motherland, and this transit attracted pirates like Francis Drake and Henry Morgan to lay siege to Panamanian ports.

While it gained its independence from Spain shortly after the rest of the continent did, Panama would not be its own country until 1903, after more than twenty attempts to separate from Colombia (most of them failed, the rest of them revoked shortly after establishing independence). It has also suffered a few military interventions from U.S. forces under various excuses, most of them to protect American interests around the Panama Canal, but the latest to arrest dictator Manuel Noriega in 1989, after 20 years of successive military regimes, some of them brutal, others actually achieving economic and social progress. The country has enjoyed a healthy democracy ever since, and climbing quality of life figures.

SHADOW BRIDGE

The importance of Panama as a hub for transportation and travel was not lost to Overshadow and his Penumbra. Operation Inundation occupied the Canal swiftly, and used it to transport goods and troops between the Pacific and Atlantic, and between North and South America. It took the heroic efforts of Belize's Baymen to finally drive SHADOW out of Panama. Once SHADOW started using transportals, Panama's importance in their plans decreased, but it remains a priority due to the constant global traffic of people and merchandise.

To this effect, SHADOW left Panama to avoid UNISON's attention, but charged Overthrow to make a quiet presence there. The terrorists came up with a particularly good idea: they bought one of the military bases abandoned by the U.S. after the Torrijos-Carter treaty, and established Stainless Steel, Inc.

STAINLESS STEEL, INC.

Officially, this company is an international contractor for security services, but everybody knows they are a talent agency for mercenaries. It took over from the infamous School of the Americas where the U.S. military trained some of the cruelest war criminals in the history of many Latin American countries. It has a bad reputation by design, because people stop investigating after they find a single infamous name, instead of continuing to dig to find the not-so-famous Overthrow operatives who really run this place.

Stainless Steel rehabilitated the base and added an airstrip and heliport, and nobody is entirely sure how many military assets it has under its roof at any point in time. UNISON tries to keep a close watch on the company with mixed success, as it plies a "legitimate" mercenary trade with many world powers who balk at the idea of UNISON dipping its investigative noses into that business.

UNISON CENTRAL AMERICA

Panama is the only Central American country to allow UNISON to have their own bases in their territory, ceding it rights to an abandoned U.S. military base near the Canal. Due to Panama's importance to international trade and SHADOW's historical influence over Central America, UNISON keeps public administrative offices in Base Carter, but conducts their actual operations from the secret Base Santiago, disguised as a shipping company office in yet another former U.S. base. UNISON keeps a standing force of 30 operation controllers and one response regiment, and also has a small UNICORN command to keep tabs on the activity in the N.C.C. Nexus.

The Torrijos-Carter treaty included a secret clause to allow AEGIS agents to operate in Panama, but the military regimes reneged on that clause. Panama's democratic governments were reluctant to enforce it again, but reached a compromise, allowing AEGIS back into the country, but under UNISON's supervision, something that doesn't sit well with either agency.

SOUTH AMERICA

From sweltering tropical jungles to freezing glaciers, from snow-capped mountains and salt deserts to paradisaical beaches, South America is a land of diversity, both in nature as well as in population, having been formed by the miscegenation of native people, immigrants (and conquerors), and enslaved Africans. Social and economical inequalities are also rampant, resulting in a place where massive poverty dwells side by side with extreme wealth, and in which superpowers can make things better, but they are probably making it worse.

CRUCIBLE OF CONFLICT

Conflicts in Colombia and the volatile political situation of Venezuela have been fueled by enhanced mercenary units, complicating even further an already delicate situation. In addition, the country of Costa-zul has a profound negative effect on the whole status quo of the region by providing extra-normal and/or high-tech assets to any group—legal or not—with an agenda of its own.

Southern South America is more stable, with a better-structured extra-normal community and a more solid governmental framework. UNISON is on good terms with most South American agencies, including Brazil's Secretary of Special Affairs (SAE) and Argentina's National Superhuman Research Council (CONIS). However, the region has problems of its own, including social tensions that are exacerbated by extra-normal abilities, the influence of Extra-Dimensional Alien Intelligences (EDAI), and terrorism-related activities linked to extremist groups such as SHADOW.



OF COUPS AND SHADOWS

Aside from the random appearance of superhumans, like the Brazilian superhero Tempestade, who fought in the Second World War, South America has had a dearth of superhumans. This situation only started changing in the 1980s. Some say it is no coincidence this was also the time of redemocratization for the region, when the many military juntas that ruled the Southern Cone of South America with an iron fist relinquished power back to civilian authorities.

According to these conspiracy theorists, the military governments not only brutally repressed dissent among regular citizens, but also actively hunted down and

eliminated any superhuman that emerged or was active between 1960 and 1980. This persecution was so complete it effectively erased these superheroes from history.

These theories explain the witch-hunt did not originate with the generals in the juntas—it was the brainchild of Overshadow, whose then-fledgling terrorist organization, SHADOW, already had a stranglehold on all of the military dictatorships in the region. Overshadow used these repressive regimes to neutralize potential super-powered threats, orchestrating a joint campaign that spanned the whole of the Southern Cone.

Although there is some truth to this theory, it exaggerates Overshadow's influence over the military juntas. Having witnessed firsthand the problems the Allies of Freedom caused the Nazi agenda, the last thing Overshadow wanted was to have a new generation of superheroes hindering his efforts to build SHADOW.

Sensing the way the political winds were blowing in South America, Overshadow infiltrated the military governments, starting with Paraguay's, where his main base was located, and subtly spurred them to crack down on the newly appearing heroes. Since Kantor had agents in most of the countries, it was easy to get them to collaborate and exchange information. Even if the military could not eliminate the superhuman do-gooders, the pressure would prevent them from interfering with Overshadow's schemes.

The plan worked even better than Kantor could have imagined, with some countries, such as Argentina and Brazil, dedicating considerable resources to root out what they called "rebellious, communist freaks."

By the 1980s, the military governments could no longer hold power as completely as before, and SHADOW had its own problems. An increasing number of South American superheroes slipped through the ever-widening cracks in surveillance and a full-blown "age of heroes" was well underway by the end of the decade.

ARGENTINA

The largest Spanish-speaking country in the world, Argentina is named after argentum, the Latin word for silver, because the Spanish conquerors that came to the region

OPERATION GRIFFON

The military junta's decades-long covert, concentrated effort to rid South America of superheroes provides an interesting premise for a "secret history"-type series.

In this series, the characters search for and investigate the contents of the lost files of Operation Griffon (*grifón* in Spanish, *grifo* in Portuguese), the codename of the joint campaign of superhero suppression perpetrated by the Southern Cone juntas and the predecessor of the infamous Operation Condor, which did the same to regular citizens of the countries under these regimes.

These files are very hard to find and are usually under the heavy guard of sinister figures, who would rather they did not become public. Locating and acquiring one such file could be the focus of an entire adventure. Operation Griffon files contain information about superhumans, unexplained phenomena, alien tech, and anything else that would be deemed threatening and/or exploitable by the military.

The files provide leads the characters use to investigate and get to the bottom of these mysteries, resulting in the rescue of captured supers (or the revelation of their existence if they are dead, possibly leading to the creation of "legacy" heroes), discovery of new technologies or hidden civilizations, and the uncovering of unregulated scientific experiments.

Much like the Nazis, the military juntas are the ultimate villains in this series. Their cruel and brutal regime, which resulted in a death toll of tens of thousands, makes it easy to imagine that in a world like Earth-Prime, where such wonders as superpowers and magic exist, they would be capable of even further atrocities. In other words, you can blame them for any sort of insane plot you want.

Remember also that the United States provided technical support and military aid to the dictatorships, meaning American superheroes and supervillains could be embroiled in plots harkening from this dark period, especially in Iron Age games.

were looking for rumored silver mountains. They never found them, but that did not prevent the Spanish from naming almost everything after those mountains.

Sparsely populated by native people before the arrival of the Spanish in 1512, Argentina grew with the people that migrated from other settlements, becoming the Viceroyalty of the Río de La Plata in 1776. Independence came in 1810, but required eight additional years of combat to secure and was followed by decades of civil war. During this time, there are reports of a masked freedom fighter that went by the name of La Espada de Mayo (The Sword of May) helping the Argentinian forces, but he disappeared as quickly and mysteriously as he had appeared.

By the 1880s, the country was the tenth richest nation in the world, but under the control of a governing elite who used fraud to stay in power. They also encouraged a massive wave of immigration from Europe, especially from Italy and Spain, as well as a large contingent of Jewish people, making Argentina the Latin American country with the largest Jewish population.

Argentina spent the 20th century suffering from a series of economic crises and military coups that culminated with the National Reorganization Process dictatorship in 1976. It was one of the most brutal regimes in the region, responsible for around 30,000 deaths. In 1982, in a last-ditch effort to remain in power, the military launched the Falklands War. The war saw the rise of the first modern Argentinian superhero, Solar, who was initially a tool of the junta, but later rebelled against his masters and helped bring them down (use the Paragon archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, but increase PL to 11 and add 2 ranks to all powers except Immunity, limiting these extra ranks to "when in sunlight"). Today, Argentina is still suffering from the effects of another major economic crisis, this one from 2001.

Superhuman activity has steadily increased over the past 20 years, but it is still smaller than would be expected for a country its size. The current administration has created the *Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Sobrehumanas* (CONIS, the National Superhuman Research Council) to monitor the situation. Argentinian superheroes usually face opposition from supervillains with roots in the last military dictatorship or have to deal with extra-dimensional and temporal problems caused by the fractured continuum over Buenos Aires.

BUENOS AIRES

Sometimes called the "Paris of South America," Buenos Aires is home to almost three million Argentinians—13 million, if you include the greater metropolitan area. Buenos Aires is known for its European architecture and lifestyle, as well as for its proud people, the porteños. The city has seen better days, but it is still a top tourist destination.

A less well-known fact about the city is that the space-time continuum seems more fragile around Buenos Aires. Sometimes, one can see echoes, glimpses of places and people that are from elsewhere (or elsewhen). Occasionally, these apparitions become so real it's possible to interact with them. CONIS has a team studying this phenomenon, and their early conclusions point to it being related to El Crononauta.

EL CRONONAUTA

As tumultuous as Argentina's history has been, it could have been much, much worse. That is what El Crononauta says. He claims to be a time traveler dedicated to saving Argentina from a series of terrible fates, includ-

EL CRONONAUTA



ing alien invasions, nuclear annihilation, and zombie uprisings. He first appeared in September 4th, 1957, to prevent specific events that would have led to Argentina being invaded by aliens. Further appearances were always at the cusp of existential crises for the country, according to El Crononauta.

When El Crononauta appears, he is always dressed in what he calls a “time-travel uniform,” but in every appearance there’s some detail about him or his uniform that’s different, such as eye color, accent, or style of uniform. This has led some to suggest El Crononauta actually hails from a (or many) parallel dimension. Once, a female version of El Crononauta appeared, but she seemed to have the exact same memories, knowledge, and mannerisms of the male one. His usual method of action is to gather a handful of heroes and task them with a mission, while he goes off to complete another job. Although most of his appearances have been concentrated in Buenos Aires, El Crononauta has been known to show up in other places in Argentina and other nations, both in and out of South America, but always trying to protect Argentina in some way.

Most CONIS researchers suspect that El Crononauta’s many incursions have weakened the space-time continuum, since the time “echoes” started after his first visit. However, some of them believe that the dimensional barriers around the Argentinian capital are naturally thin and that is what allows the time-traveling hero to show up so often. His arrival might have triggered the echoes, but the potential for them was already there.

THE INFINITE LIBRARY

When opened with the proper key, a door primarily located in an ordinary house at 2135 Serrano Street, in Buenos Aires, grants access to the Infinite Library, an extra-dimensional repository of all the books that were or will ever be written. Its existence is a closely guarded secret only known to the highest-ranking members of Earth-Prime’s mystical community, who have placed all manner of wards to prevent ill-intentioned individuals from gaining entry. Their caution is based on the fact that the library, besides ordinary books, also holds mystical tomes of great power, as well as scientific treatises from the future.

Unfortunately, their wards were for naught, as the dimensional fracture over Buenos Aires has caused the door to “jump” around since 1957. Sometimes, it returns to its original address, but more often than not it is somewhere else in the city. Of course, getting inside the Infinite Library is only the first problem; finding the desired book is a much greater hurdle, since there is no index available. Even if a person finds the tome he, she, or it wants, getting to it may take days or even weeks. And no book can be removed from the library. Trying to do so summons the Librarians, ethereal beings that care for the library, to recover the book.

What connection, if any, Codex (see the *The United States of America*) has to the Infinite Library or the Librarians themselves is unknown. It is, however, entirely possible he

is somehow a renegade Librarian, associated with them, and/or connected to the Infinite Library.

THE FALKLAND ISLANDS

The Falklands (Malvinas to the Argentinians) are a small archipelago 300 miles off the eastern coast of southern Argentina with a population of barely 3,000 people. It would be unremarkable, except for the fact that the military junta used its claim of sovereignty over the islands (as well as South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands) to spark a war with England. The conflict only lasted two months and ended with the surrender of the Argentinian forces. The defeat was one of the major contributing factors to the end of the dictatorship.

PRONUNCIATION AND TRANSLATION GUIDE

The names of South American heroes can be difficult to pronounce or be understood by their foreign counterparts, especially if the name the hero or villain chose (or was given) is in Portuguese or one of the local native languages. Below is a list with the pronunciation and translation of the names of heroes and villains appearing in these pages.

- Águilas Negras** (AH-gee-lahs NĒ-grahs) Black Eagles
- Anhangá** (ah-eeahn-GAH) "Old soul" in Tupi
- Bandeiras** (bahn-DAY-ras) Flags
- Bloque de Búsqueda** (BLOH-kê dê BOOS-kê-dah) Search Blocs
- Boitatá** (boee-tah-TAH) "Fire snake" in Tupi
- Costazul** (cohs-tah-SOOL) Blue Coast
- Doctor Kanoche** (kah-NO-cze) Surname of a German doctor who lived in Venezuela and created an embalming fluid
- El Crononauta** (EI KRO-no-nawt-a) The Chrononaut
- El Sombrío** (EL som-BREE-o) The Shadowy One
- Exu** (ê-SHOO) the messenger *orixá*
- Fogaréu** (Fo-gah-REL) Blaze
- Gigante** (gee-GAHN-tê) Giant
- Guarda Nacional** (GWAR-dah nah-see-O-now) National Guard
- Iansã** (ee-ahn-SAHN) *orixá* of wind and lightning
- Iara** (ee-AH-rah) "Lady or mother of the water" in Tupi
- Iemanjá** (ee-ê-mahn-JAH) *orixá* of the oceans
- Kalku** (cow-KOO) Sorcerer
- Machi** (mah-CZEE) Medicine man (although the character Machi is a woman)
- Mapinguari** (mah-pin-GWAH-ree) Unknown; possibly "thing with inverted feet" in Tupi
- Membiritá** (men-bee-ree-TAH) Son of stone
- Mestre Zumbi** (mes-TRĒ zoom-BEE) Master Zumbi (a historical slave freedom fighter)
- Ogum** (o-GOOM) *orixá* of iron, smithing
- Orixá** (o-ree-SHA) a powerful spirit and divine intermediary
- Oxóssi** (o-SHAW-see) *orixá* of the hunt
- Oxum** (o-SHOOM) *orixá* of love, gold and rivers
- Sendero Luminoso** (Sen-DE-ro loo-mee-NO-so) Shining Path
- Tempestade** (Tem-pess-TA-dê) Storm
- Xangô** (shan-GO) *orixá* of thunder and fire
- Yvytu** (ee-VEE-tu) "Wind" in Guaraní

The war was also the stage for Solar's first battle, conducted against members of the British superhero team known as the Bulldogs. Nowadays, the archipelago is sometimes the target of Argentinian supervillains or jingoistic supers bent on reclaiming their nation's past glory.

BOLIVIA

Originally inhabited by a civilization called Tiwanaku, Bolivia was briefly dominated by the Incas before the arrival of the Spanish. Named after Simón Bolívar, the main leader of the Spanish American wars of independence, Bolivia's independence came in 1825, but was followed by a series of conflicts that cost the new country half its original territory, including its Pacific coast. During this time, 41,000 tons of silver were mined from the city of Potosí, making it a possible site for the legendary silver mountains the Spanish were looking for.

A coup in 1964 initiated another unstable period in Bolivia's history. Three years later, Ernesto "Che" Guevara, one of the two major figures in the Cuban revolution, who had gone to Bolivia to mount a guerrilla movement, was killed with help from America's C.I.A. It's said his ghost still wanders the place where he was executed, and time-traveling heroes identify his death as a focal point in history from which many alternate timelines branch away.

Most superheroes in Bolivia come from the native population and have mystical or mutant origins. The Cult of Supay, dedicated to the Incan god of death, is one of these heroes' main enemies. Their goal is to bring their lord and his dark realm, Uku Pacha, to Earth so he can rule all humankind. The cultists usually summon demons to carry out their plans or infuse volunteers with demonic energies and unleash them on the unsuspecting population.

BRAZIL

Named after *pau-brasil* (brazilwood, from brasa, the Latin word for ember), a native tree that became that nation's first commercial product, Brazil started out as a Portuguese colony and today is the largest country in South and Latin America, as well as the seventh-largest economy in the world.

When the Portuguese discovered it in 1500, Brazil already counted millions of native people as its inhabitants, with the Tupi being the main group. The Portuguese tried to use the indigenous people as slave labor for the booming sugarcane business, but this proved easier said than done, so the settlers switched to enslaved African people, whose trade was monopolized by Portugal. Close to four million Africans were taken to Brazil. Later immigration waves brought Europeans and Japanese. All these people brought their culture, languages, and gods to the new land.

Sugarcane trade gave way to gold mining as the colony's economic foundation when the precious metal was discovered by the *Bandeiras*, slave-hunting operations that turned into trailblazing expeditions and expanded the colonial territory. These also led to increased encounters

with supernatural beings, such as the *mapinguari* and the *boitatá*, and spirits, Anhangá and Iara being the most active. The *Bandeiras* revealed secret native lore that included herbs able to increase a person's strength (like *manaka* root), send someone's soul to the spirit world, and grant immortality, but it was mostly lost. There were also reports of a mysterious city called Z, but no one was able to locate the city in the subsequent years.

The 19th century brought independence and the rise of the Empire of Brazil. Pedro II, the emperor, was a well-known patron of the arts and sciences. He financed the work of Doctor Beneficus, a "naturalist of the extraordinary" who traveled the country with his entourage investigating scientific oddities, as well as mysterious phenomena, and may have encountered some early superhumans. Pedro II was deposed in a coup that installed the republic and ended Brazil's political and economic stability. The early republic was controlled by a corrupt and powerful elite that was ousted in 1930 by a revolution led by Getúlio Vargas, who in turn became a dictator.

Vargas sent Brazilian troops to fight in the Second World War, and one of the servicemen gained superpowers after a violent storm in Italy, where the Brazilian forces fought. Tempestade battled Nazi and Italian menaces, and had a few adventures with the Allies of Freedom. After the war, Vargas was deposed and democracy prevailed until 1964, when the military took control of the country. Redemocratization, as well as a renaissance of super-heroics, came in the mid-1980s.

SERGIO PAZ

The man who would become the Brazilian czar of superhuman affairs started his career as an Army captain in the late 1950s tasked with investigating weird happenings and strange rumors. Paz excelled at the job and actually identified and captured one of the first Brazilian superheroes in 1963. His star on the rise, Paz joined the National Information Service (S.N.I.), the military junta's intelligence agency, in 1964, where he became responsible for superhuman activity.

Paz knew superpowers were a game changer and amassed as many resources as he could to control superhumans. After redemocratization, he maneuvered himself into being appointed the head of the Secretary of Special Affairs (S.A.E.) and began an aggressive campaign to make Brazil self-sufficient in superpowered assets.

Paz takes any opportunity to increase Brazilian power. He acquires alien tech through the black market, finances secret biological and genetic research, and arrests foreign supers on flimsy accusations to study their abilities, even if only for a couple of days. Paz prefers to use the government machine and reputation attacks to discredit his opponents, but does not shy away from using a show of force. To this day, no one has been able to pin any charges of criminal misconduct on him.

Paz is 85 years old and knows he will not last forever. He has been grooming some possible replacements, but has not settled on anyone yet.

SECRETARY OF SPECIAL AFFAIRS

Despite being a secretary, the S.A.E. has ministry status. In fact, many people in the government question why a mere secretary has a larger budget than the ministries of Education and Science. Thanks to Paz, the S.A.E. has an abundance of financial resources, which it uses to maintain its bases in all of the Brazilian state capitals, coordinate superhuman operatives, and regulate superhuman activities. The secretary includes combat-trained agents specialized in superpowered warfare, intelligence analysts, and specialists in mystical matters and alien affairs.

The S.A.E. headquarters in Rio also served as a superhuman containment facility until the inauguration of the GRADE (Grupamento de Reclusão Ativa e Detenção Especial) supermax penitentiary in 2010. The secretary is on good terms with UNISON and AEGIS. It handles the official Brazilian supergroup Guarda Nacional. Its construction was controversial, because the prison is located inside a small rocky islet next to a major tourist attraction and ecological sanctuary, Ilha Grande (Big Island). GRADE has five subterranean levels and uses Brazilian versions of advanced tech like power neutralizers that were "adapted" by S.A.E. technicians. It holds almost exclusively Brazilian supervillains, but once in a while the government allows supercriminals from allied South American nations to be contained there for a limited time. For GRADE guards, use the Government Agent archetype from the Hero's Handbook for S.A.E. operatives.

RIO DE JANEIRO

A combination of natural beauty, tropical weather and friendly people earned Rio the moniker Marvelous City. Nowadays, the nickname could have another reason: the city is a hub of superpowered activity, concentrating more superheroes (and villains) than any other city in South America. It is no coincidence the S.A.E. has its headquarters in Rio, instead of Brasília.

Although the supers population is more diverse now, this was not always the case. The rise of organized crime in the late 1970s and the consequent increase in violence led to the appearance of many vigilantes, who dedicated themselves to fighting criminals and corrupt police alike. This superheroic status quo persisted through the 1980s and 1990s, making Rio of that time a perfect setting for Iron Age adventures and series. By the 2000s, the percentage of vigilantes progressively decreased, and today, traditional superheroes outnumber their more violent comrades.

GÁVEA ROCK

It is not just Rio's high population that accounts for the higher number of superhumans. Another reason for the higher rate of mutations, superpower-granting accidents, and mystical activity is Pedra da Gávea (literally Rock of the Crow's Nest). A 2,769-foot-high mountain

THE ORIXAS

The Afro-Brazilian religions, such as Umbanda and Candomblé, worship the spirits known as *orixás*. They are related to the Loa of the Voodoo, with whom they maintain a rivalry. The *orixás* are the manifestation of the creator god Olorum and live in the otherworld city of Ifé. They can manifest by “riding” their worshipers, but have been known to grant mystical powers to a few chosen. Of the many *orixás*, those most active in human affairs currently are Exu (the messenger), Iemanjá (oceans), Ogum (iron, smithing), Oxóssi (hunting), Oxum (love, gold, and rivers), Iansã (wind and lightning) and Xangô (thunder and fire).

that sits on the coast between the South and East Zones of the city, Gávea Rock has what appears to be the face of a gigantic bearded man carved on its northern side. Local legends say the carving, as well as an inscription on another side, that reads “Tyre, Phoenicia, Badezir, First-born of Jethbaal,” are the work of Phoenician explorers, but researchers dismiss these claims, saying both are the result of erosion.

The legends are partially correct: the Phoenicians are responsible for the inscription. The face is just erosion. They used the mountain to entomb Beleazar, nephew of the King of Tyre Badezir. Around 900 BCE, Beleazar found Atlantean relics and texts and brought them to Phoenicia after the sinking of the island nation. Studying the relics and texts, Beleazar was able to replicate the experiments that gave the Ultimans their cosmic powers. His experiments, coupled with his mystical might turned

Beleazar into a demigod and tyrant who oppressed his people. A group of heroes, aided by the Canaanite god Baal, was able to defeat Beleazar, but found out killing him was impossible.

Following Baal’s instructions, the group left Phoenicia and traveled all the way to what would one day become Rio, facing many dangers on the way and barely surviving the trip. At the rock, they cast powerful spells, imprisoning Beleazar inside the mountain and creating the inscription as a warning. Originally, it also said “by whose order we banish Beleazar to this tomb.” After 20 centuries, the spell weakened and powerful mystical energies started leaking into the region. It is this magical radiation that has led to the creation of more superhumans in recent decades.

Of course, the leakage also means that Beleazar might be close to escaping....

For Beleazar’s stats, use the Overlord from the *Gamemaster’s Guide*, **Chapter 3**, and increase his Flight to 12, choose Magic for his Expertise, add the Ritualist advantage as well as the Mystic Senses of the Sorcerer, later in that chapter.

IEMANJA

PL11 • 172 POINTS

STR 7 STA 4 AGL 4 DEX 2 FGT 10 INT 2 AWE 3 PRE 6

Powers: **Divine Durability** (Immunity 3 (Aging, Disease, Suffocation; Divine Drowning), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Protection 6); **Mistress of the Waters** (Array (22 points), **Blinding Spray** (Ranged Cumulative Affliction 11 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware), Limited to Vision), **AE: Command Sea Creatures** (Enhanced Presence 7, Enhanced Advantages 3 (Animal Empathy, Fascinate (Persuasion), Skill Mastery (Persuasion)), Limited to sea-life), **AE: Drown** (Ranged Cumulative Affliction 5 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Incapacitated), Concentration), **AE: Water Blast** (Ranged Damage 11), **AE: Water Weapon** (Strength-based Damage 4, Penetrating 11, Variable Descriptor (weapon shapes)), **AE: Weather Control** (Environment 11 (4 miles), Impede Movement (1 rank), Visibility (-2)); **Orixá Transformation** (Feature 1 (Quick Change)); **Strength of the Seas** (Power-lifting 2)

Advantages: Daze (Deception), Fascinate (Deception), Favored Environment: Aquatic, Ranged Attack 9, Ritualist

Skills: Athletics 4 (+11), Deception 8 (+14), Expertise: Magic 8 (+10), Expertise: Mythology 8 (+10), Intimidation 8 (+14), Persuasion 8 (+14)

Offense: Initiative +4, Blinding Spray +11 (Ranged, Cumulative Affliction 11), Drown +11 (Ranged, Cumulative Affliction 5), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 7), Water Blast +11 (Ranged, Damage 11), Water Weapon +10 (Close, Damage 11, Penetrating 11)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 10, Fortitude 9, Toughness 10, Will 11

Complications: **Identity:** In her normal identity as Sandra Santos, Iemanjá has no powers or advantages and no physical abilities greater than 1. **Motivation—Doing Good:** Iemanjá is vain and capricious, but dedicated to her job as a protector of humankind.

Totals: Abilities 76 + Powers 41 + Advantages 13 + Skills 22 + Defenses 20 = 172

GUARDA NACIONAL

Created in 1995, the Guarda Nacional is in its third incarnation. It is the premier supergroup in Brazil and is based in Rio de Janeiro. The Guarda Nacional usually deals with regional or national problems, but on occasion will fight citywide threats, especially if the targets are Rio, São Paulo, or Brasília. The current roster includes six superheroes, however, the Guarda Nacional can call on up to eight former or reserve members. Brazilian supers not affiliated with the group tend to view it with suspicion, more because of Paz and his history than any of its members.

CRUX

Army captain Paulino Bustamante is the current user of the Crux power armor and team leader. His suit is based on covert analysis of the Power Corps armor made by S.A.E. scientists. Bustamante is a by-the-book guy who trusts Paz. Use the Power Corps stats in *Threat Report*.

IEMANJA

Model Sandra Santos is the second host of Iemanjá, the *orixá* of the seas. The powerful spirit has an ongoing rivalry with Siren and decided to act as a superhero after the Loa did so. Her first host appeared in the 1960s, but after a year Iemanjá grew bored. The Brazilian heroic re-

naissance caught her attention and she chose Santos as host in the late 1990s. Iemanjá is vain and capricious, but dedicated to her job as a protector of humankind.

GIGANTE

Nilo Mayrink is a mutant able to increase his size. He is a conservative in heart and soul, supporting Paz and siding with Crux in any argument. Use the Powerhouse archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, but replace Super-Stamina and Super-Strength with Growth and related abilities.

MAPINGUARI

After accidentally running over the son of a *pajé* (medicine man), Edson de Freire was cursed to become an enraged feral creature, the *mapinguari*, who rampaged through the countryside for years. In the early 2000s, Guarda Nacional finally captured Freire and Membiritá cured his mind, if not his body. Thankful, Freire joined the group. He sometimes doubts Paz's methods, but never says anything, afraid that his boss will change him back into a monster. Use the Savage (Ape) archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide*, but raise Intellect to 0.

MESTRE ZUMBI

The deputy leader of the group, Eduardo Palheiros is a master of the Brazilian martial art *capoeira* and a "son" of Ogum, the *orixá* of iron, who blessed him with superhuman strength and the ability to turn his skin into iron. Mestre Zumbi is an outspoken critic of Paz. More often than not, he argues with Crux, but despite their differences, Mestre Zumbi always has his leader's back in the field. Use the Martial Artist archetype from the *Hero's Handbook* with the *capoeira* fighting style from the *Gamemaster's Guide*, and add Strength 7 and Sustained Protection 3.

MEMBIRITA

Trained from birth to be a *pajé*, Membiritá is a powerful Tupi *pajé*, who has battled many supernatural threats and led the Guarda Nacional to foil many of Anhangá's schemes. Membiritá doesn't fully trust Paz, but figures the Guarda Nacional does more good than evil and that is enough. For now. Use the Mystic archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*.

THE COMMANDS

The Red Phalanx was the first organized crime gang in Brazil, born from the contact between ordinary criminals and left-wing political prisoners who were incarcerated together by the military junta. It started operations in 1979, but a few years later changed its name to Comando Vermelho (Red Command) and lost its political connotation. Rival commands were founded later, such as the Comando de Fogo (Fire Command). These organizations quickly took control of the *favelas*, shantytowns that dot Rio's hills, where they conducted arms and drug



FOGARÉU

PL10 - 159 POINTS

STR 3 STA 4 AGL 3 DEX 5 FGT 6 INT 2 AWE 2 PRE 3

Powers: **Fire Blast** (Ranged Damage 10, **AE: Melt** (Ranged Weaken Toughness 10, Affects Objects Only)); **Fireproof** (Immunity 6 (fire damage, heat)); **Flame Aura** (Reaction Damage 4 (When Touched), Sustained Protection 8)

Advantages: All-out Attack, Benefit 2 (Powerful Gang Leader), Benefit 4 (Multimillionaire), Power Attack, Skill Mastery (Intimidation)

Skills: Athletics 5 (+8), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+10), Deception 3 (+6), Expertise: Criminal 8 (+10), Expertise: Law Enforcement 2 (+4), Expertise: Streetwise 7 (+9), Insight 5 (+7), Intimidation 10 (+13), Perception 5 (+7), Ranged Combat: Fire Blast 5 (+10), Stealth 5 (+8), Vehicles 2 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +3, Fire Blast +10 (Ranged, Damage 10), Flame Aura (Close, Reaction Damage 4), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 8, Toughness 12, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 51 + Advantages 9 + Skills 28 + Defenses 17 = 159

Complications: **Motivation—Greed:** Fogaréu is driven by his desire to be rich and powerful. **Violent:** Fogaréu is extremely violent and cruel.

trafficking. They were so powerful, they were the de facto rulers of the *favelas*. By the late 2000s, the government increased pressure against the gangs and was able to decrease their power.

FOGARÉU

In 1989, a Red Command soldier, nicknamed Zé Fogaréu (Joe Blaze) due to his bad temper, failed a mission and was burned alive as punishment. He did not die, acquiring fire control powers, and promptly killed his bosses, starting his own gang, the Fire Command. He soon became a force to be reckoned with, and today, his organization is the most powerful one in Rio.

Fogaréu's survival for more than twenty years in a position that usually leads to death in five is proof enough of his success. It made him one of the most feared men in Rio, but it has also taken its toll on him—Fogaréu is constantly afraid of superheroes and is always on the lookout for new superhuman soldiers. He has been known to launch preemptive strikes against heroes he suspects of having him in their sights.

ANHANGÁ

A powerful trickster spirit that protected the woods from hunters and poachers, Anhangá (Old Soul in Tupi) roamed the deep jungle and barely registered the arrival of the Portuguese. During the *Bandeiras*, however, the spirit was appalled by the destruction of nature caused by the Europeans and their massacre of native people. From then on, Anhangá went on a crusade against the Europeans, using his shapeshifting ability and control over animals and supernatural creatures to wage war.

Despite his efforts, Anhangá saw the ever-increasing encroachment of civilization upon his lands. Not one to

give up easily, the spirit searched for more power from dark sources, slowly changing into a demon of malice. (Sometimes, this new, "improved" Anhangá is called Anhanguera, Old Devil.) Today, Anhangá is a powerful foe for Brazilian heroes, always trying to destroy society and its cities in order to bring back the rule of nature. Not being a deity, Anhangá does not feel restrained by the Pact (if the gods agree, it's another issue) and will often appear on Earth to put his plans into motion, but he also makes extensive use of pawns and minions: normal, supernatural, or superhuman. Use a PL13 version of the Elder Evil archetype from *Gamemaster's Guide*, but with shapeshifting, illusion, and animal control powers.

THE LOST WORLD

Located deep in the Amazonia jungle, north of the Negro River, the gateway to the Lost World came to the attention of Brazilian authorities after reports from explorers in the 1920s. The exact location was only pinpointed in the 1940s. After two expeditions went to the "plateau" and failed to come back, the government decided to set up an observation station but otherwise leave the Lost World alone. The gateway sometimes lets things out, and these encounters account for some of the local legends about giant monsters. For more information about the Lost World, see the **Lost World** entry.

CHILE

Confined to a long, but narrow strip of land between the Andes Mountains and the Pacific Ocean, Chile (there's no consensus, but the name might come from Mapuche *chilli*, meaning "ends of the earth") is one of the most stable and prosperous countries in South America. Before the arrival of the Spanish, the Incas dominated its northern part. The Mapuche native people held the south central part of the country and successfully resisted the Incas and the Spanish, who initiated the conquest of Chile in 1540.

Chile became independent in 1818 and spent most of the century consolidating its borders. The country experienced a military dictatorship between 1924 and 1932, but the major coup came in 1973, when General Augusto Pinochet, with help from the United States, deposed President Salvador Allende. Pinochet stayed in power until 1990, when democratic rule was reestablished in Chile.

With redemocratization came a revival of the Mapuche fight for their rights. This in turn led to the appearance of a few native superhumans, both heroes and villains. The best known are twin sorcerers and bitter foes: the superheroine Machi and the supervillain Kalku, both of whom can summon and control spirits, see the future, and heal or damage others. Being a place of high volcanic and seismic activity, Chile has long had its share of trouble from the Magmin, whom the Mapuche call *Cherufe*.

Easter Island (Rapa Nui) is located 2,500 miles off the coast of Chile. It's home to the hero Tangata Manu, who was empowered by the god Makemake and can use the moai, the famous stone statues of the island, to contact his

ancestors. Chiloé Island is close to an ancient Atlantean undersea colony and sightings of the submarine inhabitants throughout the centuries have greatly influenced the island's mythology. Chiloé seems to also be the focal point of the *Caleuche*, a ghost ship who sails the nearby waters and is crewed by the souls of the drowned.

COLOMBIA

Gran Colombia was a country that emerged from the independence movement of the Viceroyalty of New Granada, a Spanish colony that encompassed much of northern South America. Colombia proper, named after Christopher Columbus, appeared when Venezuela and Ecuador left Gran Colombia in 1830, and Panama (then a part of Colombia) became independent in 1903.

More so than other nations in South America, Colombia's history has been particularly violent (it even fought in the Korean War), with one of the most bloody conflicts literally being called *La Violencia* (The Violence), a ten-year civil war starting in 1948 that claimed an estimated 200,000 lives and planted the seeds for the longest conflict in the country, the so-called low-intensity asymmetric war between the Colombian government, left-wing guerrillas, such as the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia (FARC), and right-wing paramilitary groups.

The rise of the drug cartels in the 1980s complicated matters even further, as did the escalation from conventional warfare to superhuman. All sides in the conflict employed enhanced operatives provided by either Costazul or the United States. And even traditional superheroes found it difficult not to side with one group or the other. In the 1980s and 1990s, Colombia is the Iron Age setting... deadly, morally gray, with unending cycles of violence.

In the 21st century, the Colombian government negotiated with the paramilitary groups, resulting in the demobilization of some of them. However, new gangs, called *bandas criminales*, such as *Águilas Negras* (Black Eagles), have appeared. The Colombian government has also increased military pressure, making FARC lose power and territory. The guerrilla group is still active, even though it is in peace talks with the government.

BLOQUE ZERO

Bloque de Búsqueda (Search Blocs) is the name of the Special Operations unit of the National Police of Colombia originally created in 1992 to arrest drug lord Pablo Escobar. Other Search Blocs were created in later years, with the most recent one targeted at the *Águilas Negras*. Bloque Zero is a permanent Search Bloc assembled to handle targets that are superhuman or have superhuman assistance. It is mainly comprised of Colombian supers, but there have been foreign members.

Despite official publicity, Bloque Zero is not considered a government supergroup, but rather a police tactical unit. Public (and superheroic) opinion about Bloque Zero is divided, with some calling them heroes, with others de-

nouncing the team as no better than the criminals they hunt. Recently, there have been accusations that the members of Bloque Zero may be behind some of the new paramilitary groups that have appeared.

Bloque Zero's current leader is Profeta (Prophet), a Colombian special forces soldier who lost an eye and an arm during a mission, but gained precognitive powers (and cybernetic replacements). Profeta's ability to see the future is limited to military actions he plans, but it makes fleeing Bloque Zero extremely difficult, since its leader can foresee most escape attempts. Other members of the group also have combat-oriented abilities, like Sangría, who can control other people's blood to excruciating effect.

COSTAZUL

The crystalline waters of the Atlantic Ocean and the white-sanded beaches are the inspiration for the name of the smallest South American country, Costazul (Blue Coast). Technically part of the Guianas, *costazulinos* identify mostly with the Spanish culture of their Venezuelan neighbors to the west, although they retain some British elements and customs.

Costazul emerged from territorial disputes between Great Britain and Venezuela that were solved by international arbitration in 1899, with the Costazul region being handled to Venezuela thanks to lobbying by Lucius Cabot. Independence came in 1959, when Venezuela had just gotten rid of a dictator and was starting to have problems with guerrillas. This coincided with the discovery of a large deposit of niobium in Costazul. Overexploitation and squandering of the money obtained led the small country into a major economic crisis a decade later and brought about a military coup that installed general Santiago Herrera-Carter as dictator.

With the economy in shambles, Herrera-Carter decided to cash in on the renewed wave of superheroics and opened up the country to all superhuman technological interests. Ads included "Need subjects to test your supersoldier serum? Why, we have villages full of willing subjects" and "Want to open a power armor factory? Set up shop in Costazul and enjoy tax exemption and light regulations." Of course, for Herrera-Carter, "willing" and "light" meant compliant and none, respectively. The scheme paid off in a big way, making Costazul a Mecca of superhuman science and technology, both legal and illegal.

I CAN'T FIND COSTAZUL ON THE MAP

In the grand tradition of comic universes creating new countries for villains to rule and heroes to step in and make changes that would significantly alter our world, Costazul is a fictional nation. Costazul allows the GM to tell big stories without needing to keep track of what's happening in our world and working it into the fictional universe. As a made-up country, Costazul's borders are the Essequibo estuary to the east, the Cuyuni River to the south, and Venezuela to the west (the northern part of Guyana in our world).

Some believe Herrera-Carter's inspiration wasn't spontaneous and might have been suggested by Overshadow, who at the time was engineering his superhuman suppression campaign. Many of the captured supers may have been taken to secret labs in Costazul, where their dissection fueled the enhancement technology later commercialized by the country while at the same time benefiting SHADOW with new genetic and superpower-related discoveries. Investigating heroes might find many skeletons in Costazul's closet.

Herrera-Carter suffered a stroke in 1991 and power passed to his son, Santiago Herrera-Carter Jr., known as Santy, Jr., who had studied in the United States and Europe. Sensing the changing political climate, Santy, Jr. modernized the country, or at least its capital, Puerto Paraíso; made a big show of strengthening democratic institutions, reopening the parliament and drafting a new Constitution (both of which are innocuous); and aligned himself with the new left-wing administrations that were elected in the 2000s in South America, shedding some of the right-wing dictatorship image of Costazul. Today, the country has an air of respectability that, coupled with the wide array of international interests in the nation, make it nearly impossible for any law enforcement agency to intervene in Costazul, at least not overtly.

PUERTO PARAISO

The modern, beautiful, and pleasant capital of Costazul lives up to its name: Port Paradise. Located on the coast, where the Essequibo River meets the sea, it is a major tourist destination and obligatory stop for Caribbean cruises. What tourists don't know is that it's also one of the most policed cities in the world, with a surveillance apparatus that would make North Korea jealous and includes numerous hidden cameras, robotic SWAT teams, power detectors, and power-neutralizing restraints. Santy, Jr. lives a couple miles north of Puerto Paraíso in a villa by the sea. He has a squad of enhanced mercenaries as bodyguards and a veritable army of regular security forces.

The city also holds representations of major business interests, ranging from the legal to the criminal, including Grant Conglomerates and the Power-House. Much like in Cuba, it is possible to get all sorts of enhancements in Puerto Paraíso, although the markets there tend to favor more military augmentation. High tech weapons and armors are another commodity traded in the city. All of this has made Puerto Paraíso a hub of mercenary activity. Costazul's capital is the base of operations for several companies and supplies most of the mercenary needs of South American conflicts, especially in Colombia and Venezuela. It is also the place to hire a team for assorted black ops in the region.

ECUADOR

The second country that originated from Gran Colombia in 1830, Ecuador ("equator" in Spanish) spent a good deal of its existence, from 1821 to 1998, involved in a territorial dispute with Peru. Between 1972 and 1979, the country

was ruled by a military dictatorship. Currently, President Rafael Correa rules Ecuador. Like other leftist South American statesmen, he is simultaneously admired for improving the social situation of his country and attacked for being an authoritarian and nepotist.

LOS GUARDIENES

Before colonization, Ecuador was inhabited by native peoples that were assimilated by the Incas when they arrived. The Incan goddess Mama Pacha fell in love with the land that would be Ecuador and in an effort to preserve its beauty empowered certain individuals as protectors. Those protectors change over time, but they always go by the same name: Los Guardiánes (The Guardians). Many Guardians died when the Spanish came, and the chosen of Mama Pacha almost disappeared, but her blessing has reignited in the past few decades and more nature-powered superheroes are appearing, like the plant-controlling heroine La Verdeante, (Verdant) and El Rey Búho (King Owl), who can change into a giant owl and command birds.

The main focuses of the Ecuadorian guardians are the Galápagos Islands, 575 miles west of the country, and the Amazonian rainforest. The former has suffered due to human occupation and the latter due to oil exploitation. Some Guardians try to work with the authorities in addressing these problems, but some have become radicals and resorted to violence, being branded eco-terrorists.

THE GUIANAS

The "land of many waters" in Arawak, the Guianas is a region in northeastern South America that today encompasses three territories: French Guiana, Guyana (formerly British Guiana), and Suriname. Originally populated by the Arawak and Carib people, European colonization started in the 16th century and plunged the region into a continuous conflict between the British, French, and Dutch powers. Peace came in 1814, with the subsequent division into the three territories.

Despite being in South America, Guyana and Suriname are considered Caribbean countries (French Guiana is an overseas department of France) and problems in that region may spill over. They retain cultural ties to their European founders, making these nations preferred options as hiding places for supervillains and criminals from Europe who want to lay low.

The Guiana Space Center is located in French Guiana and is used by France and Europe as a spaceport. It has been the target of alien and terrorist plots on occasion. The infamous Devil's Island penal colony (actually, a three-island complex) is also there. Though now a tourist attraction—the prison was closed in 1953—Americas Security Concerns (A.S.C.) is in final negotiations with France to turn it into a supermax penitentiary for the region, a Lockdown for South America. A.S.C. hopes it might even draw business from Brazil, the only country in the region with a prison for superhuman threats. (For more information about A.S.C. and Lockdown, see **The United States of America.**)

El Dorado, the mythical City of Gold (also known as Manoa), was supposedly located on the shores of Lake Parime, in Guyana, but neither the city nor the lake were ever found, even though Sir Walter Raleigh and Spanish conquistadors searched for them for years. The two were never found because they're in the Lost World. This second Amazonian gate is even more elusive and unstable than the "main" passage to the Lost World and, with the strengthening of the dimensional barriers in recent decades, all but gone today. However, intrepid adventures might find it and finally enter the City of Gold.

Guyana is also internationally known as the site of Jonestown, the Peoples Temple settlement where Jim Jones conducted a mass murder/suicide on November 18th, 1978. More than 900 people died that day, including 300 children, soaking the area with negative psychic energy and creating a necromantic focal point. The site can boost (+2 ranks) psionic or mystical powers used for particularly violent or cruel purposes. The mystical properties are known to world authorities, like UNISON, who monitor the location in order to dissuade villains and mystics looking to augment their powers.

PARAGUAY

Divided by the river of the same name, Paraguay (from the Guaraní language, meaning "of many varieties" and "riverine") sits in the middle of South America and has no borders with the Atlantic or Pacific oceans. The Guaraní people lived on the land for at least a thousand years before the coming of the Spanish in 1516. The colony received a large influx of Jesuits as well, tasked by the Spanish Crown to Christianize the natives so they could be taxed and governed more efficiently. During this time, the Jesuits collected a lot of the mystical knowledge of the Guaraní people, preserving it in the Vatican archives.

After independence in 1811, the country was ruled by a series of dictators, starting with Rodríguez "El Supremo" de Francia, who intended to turn the nation into a utopia, a "republic of equals," but only managed to create an isolationist dictatorship. However, it was the suicidal rule of Francisco Solano López that caused the greatest damage to Paraguay. In 1864, he started a war pitching his nation against the combined might of Argentina, Brazil, and Uruguay. The Paraguayan War (also known as the War of the Triple Alliance) resulted in the death of approximately 60% of Paraguay's population, mostly males, and the loss of territory to its enemies.

After 31 presidents in 50 years, Paraguay ended up in the hands of Alfredo Stroessner in 1954. He would spend 35 years in power, the longest dictatorship in South America. Stroessner gave sanctuary to Nazi war criminals like Josef Mengele, and it was no coincidence that Wilhelm Kantor chose to build his first SHADOW base in Paraguay. Stroessner was deposed in 1987 and in the past few years Paraguay has had the highest economic growth rate in South America.

Still, it has no superheroes. Researchers in superhuman affairs point to the Paraguayan War and Stroessner's rule as the two main reasons for this lack of superpowered

beings. Actually, there is a small superhero underground in Paraguay: Yvytu ("Wind" in Guaraní), comprised almost solely of women. They perform superheroic acts secretly because they have learned that going public usually results in death, even today. The speedster Azogue (Quicksilver), superstrong Montaña (Mountain) and the invisible superheroine Velo (Veil) are three of the main female members of Yvytu.

VALHALLA

It was only fitting that SHADOW's first ever base should be named after the Norse world of rebirth and eternal battle. Kantor chose Paraguay because the dictatorship there was already friendly to Nazis and manipulating it would be easy. While building Valhalla, Overshadow infiltrated Stroessner's administration, making sure he pointed the authorities away from his work and towards targets of his choice: superheroes.

Valhalla is built in the Triple Frontier region, where the borders of Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil meet. Its subterranean facilities are close to Ciudad del Este and secret tunnels lead to the city, to the Paraná River, and numerous locations in the countryside. Valhalla is also close to the Itaipu Dam, the second largest hydroelectric plant in the world, whose destruction would unleash chaos and cover SHADOW's retreat, if it ever became necessary.

SHADOW has its tendrils firmly planted in the local administration and economy, including the huge smuggling trade that has bloomed in the region. Some U.S. agencies consider the region an important source of terrorist financing due to the large Arab community. Ironically, SHADOW uses this to cover its own existence from the ever-vigilant AEGIS. They know this is a dangerous game and so make sure not to conduct overt operations in the region.

VALHALLA

HQ • 24 POINTS

Size: Gargantuan • **Toughness:** 16 • **Features:** Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Concealed 2 (DC 25), Defense Systems, Deathtraps, Hangar, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System, Workshop

FAFNIR

In its early days, Overshadow did not want superheroes interfering with his budding organization, so he devised a SHADOW division whose sole purpose was to eliminate them, or at least greatly hinder their efforts. Called Forced Annihilation of Foes through Neutralizing Infiltration Resources (FAFNIR), it started operations by infiltrating Stroessner's administration and later that of other Southern Cone countries. FAFNIR spurred the creation of initiatives to identify and hunt superheroes in all those nations. It was a great success, especially in Paraguay, where its structure was so solid it persists to this day, while in other countries it no longer has much power.

The network of field agents, infiltrators, spies, and the logistical support that makes up FAFNIR is almost independent from SHADOW and runs smoothly despite any crisis

that SHADOW might experience. FAFNIR is the reason there are no public superheroes in Paraguay today. Their current goal is to identify members of Yvytu and eliminate them, but the underground movement is proving tougher than expected to track down.

PERU

Home to a series of ancient civilizations, including the largest one in pre-Columbian America, the Inca Empire, Peru (the name of a Panamanian ruler the Spanish used to christen their new acquisition) had its share of economic and governmental turmoil, like its South American neighbors, although it demonstrated more stability.

The Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro led the conquest of the Inca Empire in 1532. After independence in 1821, Peru briefly united with Bolivia, experienced a short period of stability, and went through economic and political crises that lasted well into the 20th century. The Peruvian military dictatorship ran from 1968 to 1975, being followed by a period of redemocratization. This process was marked by a violent internal conflict with leftist guerrilla groups *Sendero Luminoso* (Shining Path) and the Túpac Amaru Revolutionary Movement that has resulted in 70,000 deaths so far.

Psionic supers comprise the majority of Peruvian superhumans. With the exception of Viracocha in the Lost World, Incan gods seem to have lost interest in the descendants of their people and this may account for the small percentage of mystical superhumans in Peru. Cu-

riously, one of the most recent and popular superheroes in the country is Churi-Inti, who wears a battlesuit of alien design and has a secret underground base in Machu Picchu.

THE VALCUN AND THE PARACAS

Two thousand years ago, one of the first species seeded by the Preservers from human stock made its way back to Earth. The Valcun spent several days in orbit investigating the mother world, but a malfunction in the ship's drive forced the crew to crash land in the Peruvian mountains. With the help of their psionic powers, they used the remains of their ship to build an underground base at the crash site. Concluding their best chance to survive was to reach the coast, the Valcun left one of their group at the base and departed.

They were welcomed by the Paracas, the people that lived in Peru at the time, who were fascinated by (among other things) the elongated skulls of the newcomers. The Valcun and the Paracas intermarried, with the former influencing the latter's culture. The Paracas Candelabra geoglyph at Pisco Bay is actually a Valcun symbol (they are also the influence behind the Nazca lines). The Valcun were long lived, but not immortal, and in time the original group passed away, taking the knowledge of their origins with them. No one went back to the base, which entered hibernation.

The main legacy of the Valcun is their DNA, which is responsible for the higher proportion of mentalists in Peru. Approximately five percent of the current Peruvian population (1.5 million people) has Valcun genetic sequences in their genome—and a much smaller percentage with psionic powers.

MACHU PICCHU

An estate built for the Inca emperor Pachacuti, Machu Picchu ("old peak" in Quechua) was rediscovered in 1911. Located 50 miles northwest of Cusco, the "lost city of the Incas" is a popular tourist attraction. What the tourists don't know is that they are on top of the Valcun base. The site for the city was chosen not only because of the "sacred geography", but also because the architects had Valcun DNA and experienced visions caused by their proximity to the base. The base is completely isolated from the city above, with entry only possible through a teleportal. The base artificial intelligence periodically scans Machu Picchu looking for Valcuns.

CHURI INTI

Acting on a dare from his friends, Pedro Reyes hid during a trip to Machu Picchu in order to spend the night there. Cold, alone, and scared, Reyes was regretting the bet when the base AI scanned his higher-than-usual amount of Valcun DNA and teleported him to the base. After his initial shock, the teenager explored the facility and understood he was in an alien base. Reyes found a Valcun battlesuit (complete with elongated helmet) and

CHURI-INTI

PL10 • 174 POINTS

STR 8 STA 10 AGL 6 DEX 8 FGT 8 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 0

Powers: **Mindlink to Valcun AI** (Senses 1 (Communication Link)); **Teleport Link** (Feature 1 (Quick Change)); **Valcun Battlesuit** (Removable (-35 points), **Battle Computer** (Enhanced Advantages 4 (Close Attack 4), Enhanced Agility 6, Enhanced Dexterity 6, Enhanced Dodge 2, Enhanced Fighting 6), **Exoskeleton** (Enhanced Stamina 10, Enhanced Strength 8, Impervious Toughness 10), **Life Support System** (Immunity 10 (Life Support)), **Psionic Shield** (Enhanced Impervious Will 9), **Sensors** (Senses 16 (Accurate Radio Extended 3 (radar), Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Infravision, Acute Analytical Detect 2: Valcun DNA Extended 3 (mental), Time Sense, Ultra-Hearing)), **Telekinetic Blasters** (Ranged Damage 12), **Telekinetic Flight** (Flight 8 (500 MPH)))

Advantages: *Close Attack 4*, *Equipment 4*, *Luck*, *Minion 4* (Valcun AI), *Second Chance* (Mental Damage Effects), *Second Chance* (Mind Control Effects), *Taunt*

Skills: Athletics 2 (+10), Deception 5 (+5), Expertise: Valcun 1 (+1), Insight 4 (+5), Perception 5 (+6), Stealth 5 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +6, Telekinetic Blast +8 (Ranged, Damage 12), Unarmed +12 (Close, Damage 8)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 2, Toughness 11, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 10 + Powers 141 + Advantages 12 + Skills 11 + Defenses 0 = 174

Complications: **Motivation—Thrills:** Reyes is a teenager with an alien battlesuit. Although he cares for those he helps, his main motivation so far is adventure. **Clueless:** Reyes has no idea of the full capabilities of either the battlesuit or the base.

decided to become a superhero. Remembering a class about Incan mythology, he chose the codename Churi-Inti, the Son of the Sun, and became the new superheroic sensation of Peru.

Reyes does not know the full capabilities of the battlesuit or the base, and his stats reflect what he can currently accomplish with it. The AI only speaks Valcun, but is able to communicate through images thanks to its psychotronic circuits. It will take a while for Reyes to discover more features of both the armor and the base. As it is, the base can tap Earth's satellite network to monitor regions of the globe and teleport Reyes anywhere within 1,000 miles. It also repairs the battlesuit, which stays at the base when not in use. Reyes can summon it to his location through the teleportal in case of trouble. His Valcun DNA gives Reyes impressive resistance against mental attacks.

URUGUAY

The third-smallest country in Earth-Prime's South America, Uruguay's (which supposedly means "river of painted birds" in Guaraní) colonization only started in the 17th century, thanks to the natives' resistance and an absence of precious metals. Its independence movement started in 1811, but the future country was invaded by Portuguese troops in 1821 and true independence from the Empire of Brazil would only come four years later. Despite this, Uruguay remained a pawn of the other major powers of South America throughout the century, namely Argentina and Brazil.

Uruguay had the usual political and economic problems of other South American nations in the 20th century, including a military dictatorship that lasted from 1973 to 1985. After a recession in the late 1990s, Uruguay's economy recovered. Today, it is one of the most prosperous and liberal countries in the region, having approved several laws legalizing abortion, same-sex marriage, and marijuana use and production.

This legislative progressiveness extends to superheroes, with Uruguay displaying the most modern laws concerning superhumans, which seamlessly integrate superheroes with the judicial system and grants these heroes the same benefits that their American counterparts have for the most part.

This suits Uruguay's premier hero, El Sombrío (The Shadowy One), since he is a post-operative transsexual. Although out in his secret identity as TV producer Júlío Contreras, he has not revealed his gender identity as El Sombrío, uncertain if Uruguayan society is ready to accept it. Use the Energy Controller archetype for his traits, with the Obscure, Snare, and Energy (Shadow) Form options from the Quickstart tables.

VENEZUELA

The third country to emerge from Gran Colombia in 1830, Venezuela (either "little Venice" or the name of a local tribe, Veneciuela) went through the same troubled period

VALCUN AI

60 POINTS
STR - STA - AGL 0 DEX - FGT 0 INT 5 AWE 5 PRE 2
Advantages: Eidetic Memory

Skill: Expertise: Valcun 10 (+15), Perception 5 (+10), Technology 5 (+10)

Powers: Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects); **Detect Valcun DNA** (Senses 5 (Detect: Valcun DNA (Ranged, Extended 3))); **Mindlink to Pedro Reyes** (Senses 1 (Communication Link))

Defense: Dodge 0, Parry 0, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 12, Will 12

Totals: Abilities -6 + Powers 36 +Advantages 1 + Skills 10 + Defenses 19 = 60

VALCUN BASE

HQ • 18 POINTS
Size: Medium • **Toughness:** 14 • **Features:** Communications, Concealed 3 (+20 to Perception), Power System, Security System 3 (DC 30), Teleport 10 (4 miles; Accurate, Extended (1,000 miles)), Sealed, Self-Repairing 2, Workshop

as its neighbors in the 19th and 20th centuries. The discovery of oil deposits in Lake Maracaibo in 1914 gave a major boost to the Venezuelan economy that lasted until the 1980s, when oil prices plummeted. The following economic crisis sparked a political one that led to the Caracazo riots in 1989, two unsuccessful coups in 1992, and the impeachment of the president in 1993.

In 1998, ex-lieutenant coronel Hugo Chávez, the leader of one of the 1992 coups, was elected president, starting his socialist reform project, the Bolivarian Revolution. A controversial figure, Chávez either implemented social welfare programs, reduced inequality, and fought corruption, or enacted populist policies, ruined the economy, and favored his associates. Chávez's three presidential terms increasingly polarized Venezuelan society and the local superhero community was swept up in it.

Early on in his first administration, Chávez created the superheroic poster boy for his revolution, El Bolivariano. Through him, the government strongly advised Venezuelan supers to register and work with it. In time, non-cooperating superhumans were branded as enemies of the people or agents of the United States/capitalism, while official supers performed missions such as helping FARC in Colombia. Mandatory registration of superhumans was approved by a small margin in a 2011 referendum, crystallizing the same kind of divide among superheroes that was in effect in the general populace. Today, official supers all belong to the government-backed team Los Libertadores (The Liberators), El Bolivariano is the honorary leader, but the real leader is the spectral fire manipulator Fuego Fatuo (Will-o'-the-wisp).

Chávez passed away in 2013 and the forces he set in motion are coming to a violent head. His successor, Néstor Carmona, was a low-level advisor whose meteoric rise has most people scratching their heads. Rumors say he's a secret superhuman who used his abilities to climb to power and then dispose of Chávez, but others claim he's actually Chávez in a new body, courtesy of Cuba's



EL BOLIVARIANO

advanced medicine. The fact is that Carmona has continued his predecessor's political platform and unconfirmed reports state Carmona has also cracked down on unregistered supers.

EL BOLIVARIANO

While driving a tanker truck for Venezuela's state oil company, PDVSA, Raúl Sepúlveda happened upon an attack by supervillain Doctor Kanoche. The criminal's mummified servants caused Sepúlveda to crash, but he walked out of the wreck unhurt and super-strong. Filled with power and a sense of justice, Sepúlveda defeated the villain and his servants and also saved their victims, just as the authorities and press were arriving.

Promoted as a hero of the people, Sepúlveda was recruited by Hugo Chávez's administration and gained a superheroic identity: El Bolivariano. While the new hero did perform superheroic acts, like fighting supervillains, his main purpose was as a publicity tool. (There are accusations that some of his fights were set up by the government to make him look good.) El Bolivariano's face is plastered all over the country on posters and pamphlets. He also has a weekly TV spot targeted at children.

Sepúlveda is a good man and a true believer of the Bolivarian Revolution. For him, Chávez was a great leader whose ideas are changing Venezuela for the better. Sepúlveda thinks the opposition is manipulating the people into resisting the changes Chávez started and Carmona is

EL BOLIVARIANO

PLT1 • 168 POINTS

STR 8 STA 8 AGL 2 DEX 4 FGT 8 INT 0 AWE 2 PRE 4

Powers: **Constitution of Idealism** (Regeneration 1); **Impulse of Righteousness** (Leaping 10 (1 mile)); **Shield of Equality** (Immunity 6 (Cold, Critical Hits, Disease, Heat, Poison), Protection 6, Impervious Toughness 14); **Strength of Justice** (Enhanced Strength 5, Limited to saving or defending innocents)

Advantages: All-out Attack, Chokehold, Close Attack, Diehard, Fast Grab, Fearless, Great Endurance, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative, Inspire 2, Interpose, Takedown, Ultimate Effort (Toughness)

Skills: Athletics 7 (+15), Deception 4 (+8), Insight 5 (+7), Intimidation 5 (+9), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 6 (+10), Stealth 5 (+7), Vehicles 6 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +6, Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 8/13*) * Only when saving or defending innocents.

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 12, Toughness 14, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 72 + Powers 42 + Advantages 14 + Skills 22 + Defenses 18 = 168

Complications: **Motivation—Doing Good:** El Bolivariano's heart is in the right place; he is a true hero. **Believer:** El Bolivariano trusts Chávez and his revolution completely.

continuing. He will fight if necessary to protect the government's project, but El Bolivariano will never hurt his brethren, even if they are misguided. This doesn't mean he won't fight non-aligned supers, though, because he considers them a threat not only to the population, but also to themselves.



GREETINGS, DIRECTOR MERRIWETHER
YOU ARE CLEARED FOR RED+ ACCESS
THERE ARE 2 ACTIVE ALERTS
CONDITION IS **YELLOW**

WORLDVIEW



CONNECTION TO
GLOBAL THREAT
DATABASE SECURE.
ACCESS LEVEL **RED**

SEARCH: EUROPEAN THEATER

NEWEST DATABASE ADDITIONS/UPDATES

TAP THE COUNTRY BELOW TO ACCESS THE LATEST DATA AND REPORTS

UPDATE

**CASE
#5364/8A**

THE **MENACE**
LABORATORY
IN COLOGNE
HAS BEEN
NUETRALIZED BY
JOINT **UNISON/**
AEGIS ACTION.

GOOD WORK,
PEOPLE!



EUROPE

- NORTHERN
- CENTRAL
- WESTERN
- EASTERN

TAP HERE TO RETURN TO GLOBAL OVERVIEW



NORTHERN EUROPE

Including some of the most important—both culturally and historically—countries in the Western hemisphere, this portion of Europe comprises Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Ireland, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom. Given its role on the world stage, one might think only the United Kingdom contained anything of interest to the rest of Earth-Prime, but each country plays its own unique part and any one of them could act as an interesting new backdrop for a globe-spanning M&M series.

Sharing, as they do, a similar climate, some rough, but beautiful terrain, and a rustic sensibility, the Scandinavian countries are often conceived of as green meadows and mountainsides populated by gorgeous Vikings. However, each nation has its own distinct character, whether it's the Danes' rich intellectual and artistic heritage, Finnish egalitarianism and self-sufficiency, Norwegian farming culture, the many provinces of Sweden, each of which with their own unique cultures, or any of the other facets of these countries that set them apart from one another.

Whereas England has a long, robust history with super-powered heroes and villains, most of the other countries in this region work to make themselves significant with regards to superbeings in other ways. Despite a long history with magic and myth, this part of the world is home to some of the most advanced scientific organizations in the world. This dichotomy might seem contradictory, but people here embrace their past while pursuing their future, knowing that either could hold the key to a better world.

THE SCANDINAVIAN COUNTRIES

The Scandinavian countries of Northern Europe share a common history closely linked with the Norse pantheon. In earlier centuries their influence was felt over the entire land and the barrier between Asgard and Earth barely existed. Trolls wandered the peaks of snowy mountains, while dwarves toiled in the forges below them. The gods themselves commanded their warriors on the battlefields and the valkyrie collected the souls of the fallen. All this ended with the creation of

the Pact. Determined to see humanity free itself from being merely playthings of the gods, the Master Mage Simon Magus called upon ancient forces and created a binding spell that would change the very nature of the cosmos. Any godly entity would no longer be able walk the Earth unless called upon by humans themselves for fear of destroying all of reality, and while this stopped them from having any direct control, they left behind the means to contact their followers in the forms of talismans and touchstones. With the gods banished, most mystical creatures also decided to return to their home realms but the odd exception decided to stay, too fond of Earth to leave. Most have long since died out, hunted by man, or isolated so far from civilization they they're rarely seen by anyone.

With magic removed, fewer super-powered individuals appeared in the area and it wasn't until the global resurgence during the 1930s and 40s that there was anyone who could be considered a costumed hero. As with most nations, World War Two brought these heroes to the fore but as the Nazi war machine rolled across Northern Europe, few of them survived occupation. With almost any chance of heroic legacies removed, every threat in the years since that was not big enough to catch the attention of the Freedom League, or other globe-spanning heroes, has been dealt with by local police, UNISON or more rarely the NATO SWORD teams. It's possible the authorities will soon find themselves outmatched first by the incursion of SHADOW into the region and secondly from a pan-European group of villains that go by the name of Menace.



DENMARK

Almost all of the Scandinavian countries have been looking for a way to address the unbalance caused by a lack of local superhumans. Denmark took a very direct approach financing the Lund Life Sciences laboratories in hope of a solution rather than relying on UNISON or other agencies should problems arise. Because of this, Denmark is the smallest contributor to the financing of the SWORD (Special Western Operations for Recon and Defense) super group set up by NATO, deciding instead that Lund's research should be the priority. (For more on SWORD see **Western Europe.**)

LUND LIFE SCIENCES (LUND BIOVIDENSKAB)

Lund Life Sciences in Copenhagen is one of the most advanced biological laboratory facilities in Europe and has devoted the last decade to the study of the genetic makeup of super-powered individuals. A huge database has been built up over the years, which is likely larger than anyone actually realises, as Lund's agents travel the globe in search of genetic samples and are not averse to gaining them through illicit means. The reason for this is a simple one; they plan on creating their own *superhelt*, or superheroes, in order to safeguard the country.

In 1939 the Nazis signed a ten-year non-aggression pact with Denmark which they promptly broke the following year. They rode into the country demanding the Danish government surrender and immediately turn over all its super-powered individuals; otherwise it would begin bombing Copenhagen. A small force of the Danish army aided by several supers attempted to resist the occupation but they fell quickly to the Nazis' superior numbers and their *Übersoldaten* commander Johann Meinhoff. Within hours the Danish government capitulated to the occupying force and allowed the Nazis to take control. Most Danish paranormals left alive surrendered as commanded and were never seen again. The few who remained free, died fighting as members of the resistance in the following years.

In the decades after the war, very few Danish paranormals made themselves known, and those that did were more villainous than heroic. While UNISON and local police were able to handle a majority of cases, the Danish government decided their lack of *superhelt* could not be allowed to continue. They made a deal with Anders Lund, the country's leading geneticist, to shift the focus of his research from curing illnesses to the theory of a "super-gene." So far the research has been going well, but it hasn't resulted in any super-powered beings, much to the disappointment of Lund and the government and—unknown to them—more nefarious organisations. Both Vanguard and SHADOW have taken an interest in Lund's research in the hopes of finding a reliable way to add super powers to their agents and clones, or gain access to their database, which would offer a library of power types and their genetic templates. A third group has also been keeping an eye on Lund's progress; the Labyrinth. The criminal organisation has been monitoring the entire situation since it began and has considered offering the Danish government their services. They would of course include their usual brainwashing to the process in order to gain agents in Northern Europe, and with it, its untapped potential.

FINLAND

Finland weathered a unique threat during WWII. It fought two conflicts against the Russians and one against Nazi Germany which, combined, all but wiped out its small superhuman population. After the war Finland adopted an official policy of neutrality before finally joining the U.N. The government of Finland is apparently content with the current state of

A NEW MENACE?

A group of villains who may have connections with Menace, or even be members of the group with connections and operations all over Europe, have been operating in the northern portion of the E.U. Each of the members have names derived from Scandinavian folklore:

- **Elverpige:** An almost supernaturally beautiful woman with mind control powers that easily enthrall members of the opposite sex.
- **Dragur:** A brilliant scientist that once worked for ASTRO Labs before stealing a suit that grants both invisibility and phasing powers.
- **Troll:** A refugee from the separation of Asgard from Midgard, or Earth. He recently awoke from a centuries-long slumber and developed an interest in Norwegian black metal music.
- **Mara:** A vicious woman with dream-altering and nightmare-based powers. She once held an entire town under her sway and forced the inhabitants to kill one another for her own amusement.

PRONUNCIATION AND TRANSLATION GUIDE

Some of Northern Europe speaks English, but most of the countries have different native languages, some of which can be difficult for foreign readers to pronounce and understand. Below is a list of names and words used in this entry along with their pronunciation and meaning

Kantele (*kan-tell-ey*): A stringed instrument similar to a zither or harp.

Manteis (*man-tay-iss*): An Irish diviner or seer.

Skjaldmeyjar (*skald-may-jar*): Shieldmaiden.

Väinämöinen (*vay-nai-moy-nen*) a hero from the Finnish national epic Kalevala, *väinä* means stream pool.

Biovidenskab (*be-o-vid-skab-ey*)

affairs in the E.U., despite the problems that plague some of the other member countries. Thus, they allow UNISON to deal with any problems that arise in the region. Soon, however, Finland will face two dangerous threats and a third that could prove to be its downfall or salvation.

THE HELSINKI BRAIN

Although tensions between Finland and Russia date back to their fight for independence in 1917, they truly escalated during the Winter War of 1939. The latter conflict lasted just two years but fueled feelings of resentment between the two countries that last to this day, not helped in any way by recent developments.

During the late 1940s, Finland was plagued by a series of UFO sightings that lingered over Helsinki for several consecutive nights before ending abruptly when one of the craft apparently crashed into nearby wilderness after being hit by an artillery barrage. Unknown to the witnesses, these ships belonged to a small group of Ruluans who had come to Earth in search of either a safe haven from the Grue-Lor Republic conflict that ravaged their world, or possibly find aid in their battle against those same forces. With the destruction of their ship, the other Ruluans



IKU-TURSO

decided to retreat to the stars, not wanting to start a fight with yet another race of people.

The Finnish government recovered the heavily damaged starship and took it to a group of large warehouses where they promptly set about learning what they could. For the next twenty years the ship was studied, with the most important discovery being that of the ship's computer core. Scientists gradually managed to reactivate it and, although a lot of information stored upon it had been lost, they did integrate it with systems of their own and use it as a basis for a semi-autonomous machine that's main directive was to monitor the Russians. The situation lasted until the breakup of the U.S.S.R. in 1991 when the project was deemed too expensive and unnecessary to continue. The "Helsinki Brain" was deactivated and mothballed, and the warehouses where it is homed abandoned.

The Brain didn't die that day. Its internal power supply was so advanced that even without external help it would remain active for over a hundred years, but it needed time to build a charge large enough to bring itself back online. That happened three years ago. What the Brain found was a vastly different world than the one it had last been instructed to watch over, so it set about doing that which it did best, gather information. Reactivating all means of communication and linking itself to the Internet, which had barely existed when the Brain was first active, it gradually found its way into the systems of UNISON, AEGIS, and even SHADOW, and began to play each one against the other, all seemingly for its own unknown agenda. Since then it diverted funds from all three agencies, bought itself some maintenance robots to handle repairs, and began the task of acquiring nuclear codes from its former Russian enemies. It didn't do any of this, however, until it systematically removed all reference to itself from any databank it encountered. Every agency is now aware of this mysterious fourth player in the region, but has no idea what its aims or objectives are.

IKU-TURSO, THE BEAST OF THE BALTIC

Long before the creation of the Pact the great beast Iku-Turso swam the waters of the Baltic Sea terrorizing all who sailed there. A disease-ridden creature often described as a cross between an octopus and a walrus, it's immense size and strength paled in comparison with the ease in which it could cause sickness in any living creature. Schools of fish sickened merely by being in it's presence, their bodies so twisted by illness that local fishermen soon began to starve for fear of eating their flesh. Iku-Turso's corruption continued for such a time that the grandchildren of those that first encountered the beast grew old in fear of it. Then one day... it disappeared. The Fishermen continued to be wary but eventually the name Iku-Turso fell into myth, it's terrors confined to tales meant to scare children.

Two months ago scientists were puzzled by the sudden appearance of dead and diseased sea life washing up on the shores with no explanation as to what had caused it. They didn't have to wait long for an answer as Iku-Turso

rose once again from the ocean, destroying a cruise ship and causing the deaths of over three thousand people on board. Unsure of how to deal with such an immense threat to the safety of its people, the Finnish government shut down all activity within their waters for the following week until an offer of help was made from a fairly unlikely source. Grímur Johannesen, an experienced whaler from the Faroe Islands, agreed to lead a group of monster hunters and track down the beast using the most up-to-date technology in pursuit of his prey. Apart from a few sightings, Johannesen has been unsuccessful, but he has noted the creature displays a far greater intelligence than legends of the beast indicate—or that something or someone is manipulating the creature's actions.

LOST, BUT SOON FOUND?

There are a great many tales of the Finnish god Väinämöinen. Appearing as a simply dressed man with a flowing white beard, it is said he was the wisest of the immortals, the personification of order, and his voice was so magical that he could charm the very sea. Regarded as the "eternal bard," he wandered the lands dispensing wisdom to those he met and playing a kantele forged from the jawbone of an immense pike. It is said when the time came for the gods to leave, he sang for a boat made of copper, it's very form drawn from the earth itself, and he set sail from the mortal realms vowing he would return when his wisdom and might would once again be needed. To ensure this, he dropped his great sword into the ocean, allowing the course of the tides to decide where and when it would be found, but always providing a link back to the Earth for him.

Somewhere, buried in the sands along the shorelines of Finland, the sword lies buried waiting to be found. Its blade is said to shine as bright as the sun, with an edge so sharp nothing could resist it.

ICELAND

As the only NATO member that doesn't have their own standing army and because of the sudden upsurge of supernatural activity in nearby countries, the Icelandic government has considered hiring their own team of supers. Their leadership has even considered the possibility of contacting the Power Corps to gauge their interest in taking on the role or setting up a government-sponsored "franchise." These discussions have reached a stalemate, however, and the decision has been put off because politicians suggest SWORD should be able to handle any situation that arises. In addition, the expense and unpredictability around the country creating its own super-powered force makes it an even more difficult political proposition, even for the most hawkish supporters.

NEW DIGITAL WORLDS

New Digital Worlds is responsible for three of the world's most popular MMO's (War Beyond the Stars, Mythic World 2, and Pixie Town Adventures) and has a fan base of millions

VAINAMOINEN'S GREATSWORD

Väinämöinen's Greatsword is the perfect origin item to introduce a new hero or villain to the region. The wielder gains the powers and the listed complication. Suggested stats are as follows, but the GM or player should feel free to adjust these powers as needed to fit their series.

VAINAMOINEN'S GREATSWORD

62 POINTS

(Removable (-15 points)) **Blessing of Väinämöinen** (Protection 8); **Dazzling Blade** (Ranged Cumulative Affliction 6 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Visually Impaired, Visually Disabled, Visually Unaware), Limited to Visual senses, **AE:** Environment 3 (Light (Bright), Radius: 120 feet); **Greatsword** (Strength-based Damage 4, Penetrating 4); **Strength and Skill of Väinämöinen** (Enhanced Advantages 4 (Close Attack 4), Enhanced Awareness 4, Enhanced Fighting 4, Enhanced Stamina 6, Enhanced Strength 8)

Complications: Power Loss: All the powers granted by Väinämöinen's Greatsword to its wielder disappear if they are separated for more than a minute.

logging onto its servers every day. Two months ago one of the programmers, Annika Arnadóttir, began to notice that during server downtimes additional code had apparently been added to the games she or her fellow programmers had no knowledge of. Further investigation found that the code had been directing seemingly random players to an external server but that the firewalls there were so sophisticated it was impossible to discover just what they stored.

Assuming it was a security breach she reported it to her supervisor at NDW, but all trace of the incursion had disappeared. Annika couldn't let it go. She asked around the game forums and fan sites to see if the players themselves had any idea what was going on and she found a few who mentioned a set of new puzzles added to the games around the same time she had discovered the breach. Each player had been invited to these new sections by a character called "Motherboard" (that name really rankled the MW2 players as it didn't fit the setting) and after solving a few logic-based puzzles they were promptly returned to their original location in the game world.

Then news of the hacking was reported. A few multi-national conglomerates had had their new security systems breached, each one utilizing a new logic-based encryption. Had someone been using the game and its players to break these codes? What did this mean for the other companies that had used this new security system? Annika isn't sure, but is keen to find out.

THE END OF AN ERA

In 1986 the tensions between the USSR and USA seemed to be finally coming to an end. The last decade saw the conflict between the two nations escalate to such a point that war seemed inevitable, but turned around and a second series of peace talks were organized in Reykjavik. For two days everything went to plan until the entire conference was disrupted by the appearance of a hulking cyborg proclaiming his name to be Cold War and he was there to stop the Russians from bowing to its US oppressors. Using his ice

powers he ravaged the buildings security, attacking both American and Russian agents, before being brought down by Centurion who had been monitoring the conference.

Both presidents managed to get away unharmed, but the talks were in a shambles and both returned to their homelands even more cynical than before. Investigating the cyborg further, AEGIS managed to uncover its connection to a Russian black ops project from the 1970s. The project had been closed down before activation and its creation was put into cryogenic stasis. Little more was learned, not even the name of the man who had been the subject of the augmentation process, nor how nor when the creature had managed to break free from its prison. All that was certain, was it must have had help getting to Iceland, if nothing else. Damaged, seemingly beyond repair, the Russians immediately requested the return of their countryman and he promptly disappeared, buried under codenames and paperwork.

The talks between the two nations resumed a year later and over the next decade agreements were made ending a conflict that had defined an era. But somewhere in a long forgotten room, Cold War lies in wait.

THE WITCHES OF HELKA

In the windswept wastes of Iceland stands the Helka Volcano, active since the 1100s and even as recently as 2000, it is again on the verge of eruption. If the fear of this imminent disaster wasn't already enough for the people of Iceland to contemplate, folklore has long said that the volcano is guarded by a coven of witches and somewhere in its fiery depths lies a gateway to hell. The tales refer to an original group of witches, long since dead, that guarded the volcano and its gateway for fear of what was on the other side. All of them had been brought to the volcano by visions that had plagued their dreams for years before. They lived in that desolate wasteland until old age and illness took them. With every eruption, they feared the arrival of something dark and evil, but it never came to pass while they lived.

After they passed, the site lay unguarded for centuries, it's hidden dangers long forgotten, but recently the secret of the volcano was finally rediscovered by cultists of the Eightfold Web and they've moved to Helka. The portal wasn't a gateway to hell, it took travellers anywhere they wished if they knew the way. The cultists used it to open a way to Verecia, the parallel Earth containing Freedom's Reach so they could unite two aspects of the spider god, Raknis, from Earth, and Rakna, from Verecia). With its mind on both sides of the dimensional divide working towards the same goal it was easy for spider god to send agents to Helka volcano and Hell's Forge in anticipation of the next eruption—which is when the link between the two worlds was weakest. That time is imminent and Raknis' scheme to swarm first Earth-prime with his monstrous followers, and then Freedom Reach with technologically superior ones is on the verge of fruition. Unfortunately for Raknis, something it didn't prepare for may disrupt the plan. Ghostly apparitions have been spotted in the area, described by all who have seen them to be the witches of legend, each one calling for help to combat a foe they can no longer overcome in their weakened state.

NORWAY

As the only Scandinavian country to have a long-established native super, Norwegians consider themselves incredibly fortunate. Skjaldmeyjar has managed to overcome every adversary since establishing herself as the country's protector during WWII and because of this, Norway's dealings with both UNISON and SWORD has been minimal. Even now they are unaware that Skjaldmeyjar's very presence has brought a significant danger to their shores as one of the world's most dangerous organisations has set its sights on her.

SKJALDMEYJAR

When Odin called for warriors to aid him in his battles against the frost giants, Grim Haraldsen was one of the first to answer. Devoted to the one-eyed god, he fought in the wastes of Jötunheimr for three full years before returning with tales of valor that enraptured his entire clan. Barely months later, the call to arms came again and Grim followed, but this time with a heavy heart as he left his now pregnant wife behind. He did not fare as well in his battles and he was struck down. Even as the lifeblood drained from his body, his faith never wavered. Calling to the Allfather, he begged not to save his own life, for he had died a warrior's death, but to aid his unborn child. As the last breath escaped his body, he heard a whispered, "It is done."

Aesa Grimsdotter's life was always a charmed one and by the time she could hold a sword she already exhibited skills greater than any boy twice her age. By her sixteenth winter, Aesa had already established herself as an equal to any warrior in the clan, but she was eager to prove herself capable of even more. Setting off to hunt by herself, she became lost in a snowstorm that started without warning, and for two hours she huddled behind some rocks as the cold bit at her flesh. Stopping as quickly as it started, the blizzard eased and Aesa found herself greeted by two ravens circling overhead. Somehow she knew that they were trying to tell her something and when they flew away from her, she knew they were trying to lead her somewhere and it was her destiny to follow.

For two more hours she trudged through the fallen snow before finding the ravens pecking at what appeared to be a small stone box half buried in the ground. Prying it open she found a hammer, its metal gleaming unnaturally in the sun. As she picked it up she felt a surge of power jolt through her body, she grew more muscular and she gained knowledge of powers she had gained, she finally knew who she was, Odin's Shieldmaiden.

From that day onward, Aesa's life was different. She threw herself into her new role, and even after the gods retreated to their own plane, she continued to praise their name in battle. In the 1st century she fought against the Romans, in the 8th century she lead raids on London, but after fighting in the Norwegian civil war of 1130 C.E. she found that with her clan long gone, she no longer knew if the country she once loved truly existed anymore. Deciding she would be better suited living alone, she withdraw

to a small cabin in the mountains, vowing to spend the rest of her life there.

That changed in 1940 as the Nazi war machine rolled across Europe, when Norway faced invasion—even after declaring itself neutral. Travelling to Oslo, Aesa offered her services to the government and for two months she proved her worth fighting alongside the resistance, but by June it seemed inevitable the Nazis would win and she was asked to escort King Haakon VII and several officials as they escaped to London, England, a place she had last seen 800 years prior. The operation was a success, and while the exiles helped organize the resistance against the Nazis' now-collaborative Norwegian government, Aesa, under the name Skjaldmeyjar, teamed up with the Allies of Freedom, Britannia, and several others to help defend the UK, saving the life of Winston Churchill on at least two occasions.

After the war, Aesa returned to Norway and inspired by her allied friends, continued her heroic career fighting against the forces of SHADOW, particularly Ragnarok, who she saw as a dark reflection of herself. The fight continues to this day, with Ragnarok's obsession with Aesa greater than ever. SHADOW built a second European base of operations on Soroya Island several years ago, and Ragnarok convinced Overshadow to allow him to run it. Naming it Hammerheart, he oversees SHADOW's plans for Europe, but his secondary motivation is to bring Skjaldmeyjar down, even if it takes all the forces he has on hand to do so.

SWEDEN

Sweden is one of two Scandinavian countries that is not a member of NATO, so officially SWORD does not perform any missions within its borders. While the inland seems content with the situation, Sweden petitioned for the largest UNISON Headquarters in the region to be built here, driven by a desire from coastal regions. Sweden has always managed to keep on top of paranormal problems using mundane means or by hiring specialists. However, looming extraterrestrial influences threaten its security. In addition, recent UNISON losses could point to a much larger security concern for the country.

PURPLE HAZE

A new narcotic has found its way onto the streets Stockholm going by the name of purple haze, a thick, viscous liquid that grants seemingly random powers moments after it is consumed. It is thought to be a derivative of zoom and max, which are found predominantly in Freedom City. Its real origins are slightly more complex.

Recent events in Emerald City have brought the Earth under the scrutiny of the galactic community in general, but a small faction of the Stellar Khanate decided to play a more active role. They arrived on Earth a few months ago with the intention of expanding their criminal empire by selling a new concoction which provided humans with a fantastic high, a burst of super powers, and was also highly addictive.

SKJALDMEYJAR

PL12 • 204 POINTS

STR 10 **STA** 8 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 8 **INT** 0 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 4

Powers: **Hammer of the Gods** (Strength-based Damage 3 (Removable (-1 point))); **Heimdall's Gift** (Senses 1 (Extended Hearing)); **Iðunn's Gift** (Immunity 1 (Aging)); **Odin's Gift** (Protection 6); **Swiftess of the Valkyrie** (Flight 6 (120 MPH)); **Thor's Blessing** (**Call Lightning** (Ranged Damage 12, Indirect 1 (from above)), **Lightning Resistance** (Immunity 5 (Electrical damage)), **Summon Storm** (Environment 12 (8 miles, Cold, Wind, Visibility (-2)))

Advantages: Assessment, Close Attack 3, Improved Initiative, Leadership

Skills: Athletics 5 (+15), Expertise: Norse Mythology 8 (+8), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 2 (+6), Perception 8 (+10), Ranged Combat: Call Lightning 5 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +7, Call Lightning +6 (Ranged, Damage 8), Hammer of the Gods +11 (Close, Damage 13), Unarmed +11 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 10, Fortitude 12, Toughness 14, Will 8

Power Points: Abilities 76 + Powers 88 + Advantages 6 + Skills 17 + Defenses 17 = 204

Complications: **Motivation—Patriotism:** Skjaldmeyjar is a fervent believer in her country and its people and will do everything in her power to defend them. This isn't necessarily a loyalty to any one government, rather a belief of what is best for the people themselves. **Enemy:** Skjaldmeyjar has drawn the ire of SHADOW and Ragnarok.

Unknown to the members of the Khanate, one of their members is a Grue infiltrator with an agenda of his own. The drug works as intended, but because of the changes the infiltrator made, it has side effect that creates a low-level psychic link to the Grue Meta-mind. After taking the drug four or five times, the user finds their dreams plagued with images of a strange, alien being (the Meta-mind), its "voice" whispers to them in strange words and images. After ten or so uses the connection is so intense it is almost as strong as that of a normal Grue drone. The addicts become human-drones and lay in wait as sleeper agents until activated by the Meta-mind. Unfortunately for the Grue and their victims, the initial psychic connection with such a vast alien mind drives almost half of the users to madness or suicide. The Grue plan to correct this problem as soon as they can, but further testing is required and the Khanate members have started to notice they're losing repeat customers than they anticipated. Local police are aware of this new drug and its ability to give users super powers, but as of yet have no idea as to the source of the drug, nor have they managed to acquire a sample.

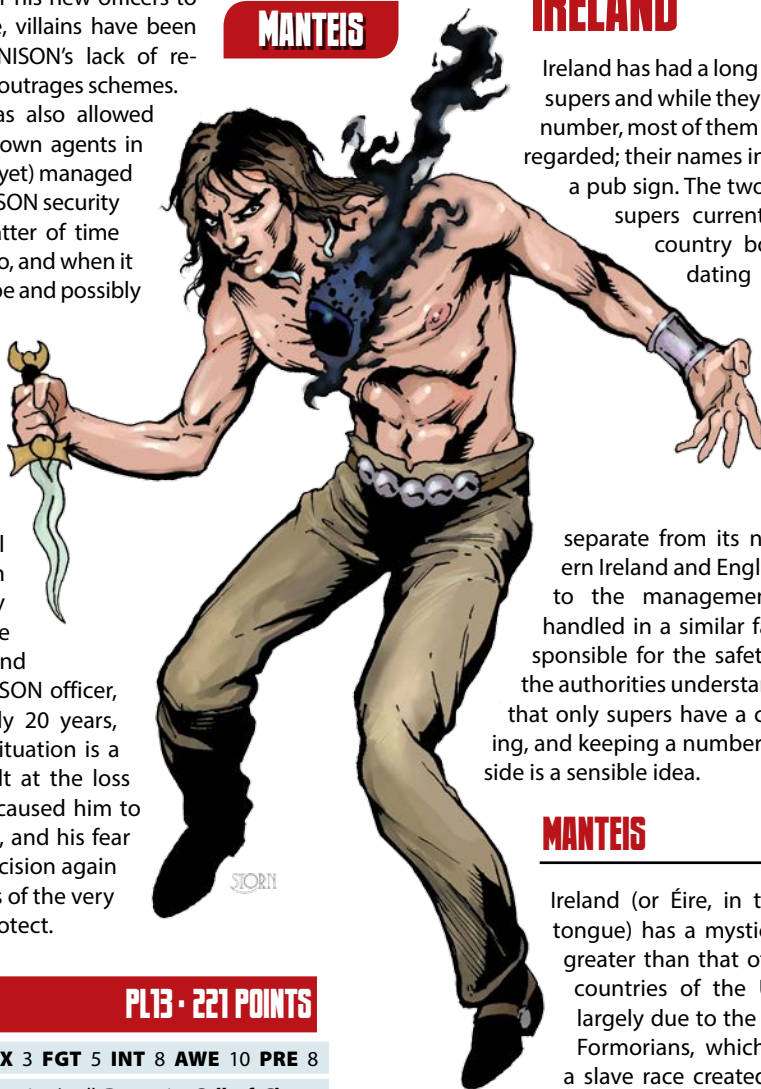
UNISON HEADQUARTERS, STOCKHOLM

As UNISON's largest base in Northern Europe, the Stockholm headquarters should be in much better condition than it is. Currently manned by Major Allen Haglund and a skeleton crew, the base is responsible for co-ordinating almost every mission that takes place in the area. The current state of affairs is due to a series of massive losses the base suffered at the hands of the villain team known as Menace, and then when a dimensional tear swallowed an entire village as well as all the agents sent to investigate it.

With Hagland waiting for his new officers to be assigned to the base, villains have been taking advantage of UNISON's lack of resources by staging more outrages schemes. This hole in security has also allowed SHADOW to plant their own agents in UNISON, but none have (yet) managed to gain access to the UNISON security network. It is only a matter of time before one is able to do so, and when it happens, Northern Europe and possibly the world may have to suffer the consequences.

The Stockholm headquarters is one of the first places PCs should visit if they need to liaise with local UNISON forces or gain information about any villains that operate in the region. Hagland himself is a veteran UNISON officer, having served for nearly 20 years, but the base's current situation is a serious burden. His guilt at the loss of so many agents has caused him to question his judgement, and his fear of making the wrong decision again could endanger the lives of the very people he is sworn to protect.

MANTEIS



IRELAND

Ireland has had a long history with their supers and while they have been few in number, most of them have been highly regarded; their names inscribed on many a pub sign. The two most significant supers currently active in the country both have origins dating back to prehistory, one wishes to defend his country, one wishes to enslave it. While the Irish government is entirely separate from its neighbors, Northern Ireland and England, its approach to the management of supers is handled in a similar fashion. Being responsible for the safety of the country the authorities understands dangers exist that only supers have a chance of defeating, and keeping a number of them on their side is a sensible idea.

MANTEIS

Ireland (or Éire, in the modern Irish tongue) has a mystical dynasty even greater than that of its neighboring countries of the United Kingdom largely due to the influences of the Formorians, which are remnants of a slave race created by the Serpent People, and the Tuatha Dé Danann, survivors of the once great city of Atlantis. While the Formorians managed to bring superior Lemurian technology with them when they escaped their Serpent People masters, a number of them became masters of dark, chaotic magic, creating artifacts and talismans of their very own.

In 33 C.E., a minor mage, Cormac Mac Eogan, heard rumors that ancient items of power existed and devoted his life to recovering and studying them. For the next decade, Cormac searched the green fields of Ireland and managed to find three artifacts: a dagger with an enchanted blade, a torc of invisibility, and a large black gem that burnt with a black fire and blessed him with immortality once it was embedded in his chest.

In 43 C.E., something new drew Cormac's attention. The invading Roman forces told tales of a woman called Britannia, with abilities beyond those of normal mortals, who had fought on their side during recent battle against a clan of Celtic berserkers. Cormac immediately set out for Britain to see just who this woman was and, more importantly, how he could use his magic to steal her power. It took him two months to track her to a Roman encamp-

MANTEIS

PL13 • 221 POINTS

STR 3 **STA** 2 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 5 **INT** 8 **AWE** 10 **PRE** 8

Powers: **Magic** (Array (28 points), all Dynamic, **Call of Chaos** (Ranged Damage 14 (magic), **AE: Grip of Fear** (Ranged Affliction 14 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Stunned, Paralyzed)), **AE: Illusion** (Illusion 5, all sense types), **AE: Lead the Weak** (Burst Area 2 (60 feet) Continuous Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled), **AE: Sense Magic** (Detect Magic 2, Awareness, Analytical, Extended 3), **AE: Teleport** (Teleport 9 (2 miles), Accurate); **Dagger of Woe** (Strength-based Damage 4, Penetrating 4, linked to Weaken Magic 8, Broad (magical traits)); **Gem of Black Flame** (Immunity 11 (Aging, Life Support)); **Runic Tattoos of Defense** (Protection 14); **Torc of the Unseen** (Concealment 4, all visual senses, Removable (-2 points))

Advantages: Contacts, Favored Foe (Magic Wielders), Ritualist

Skills: Close Combat: Small Blades 7 (+12), Expertise: Irish History 7 (+15), Expertise: Magic 10 (+18), Insight 3 (+13), Investigation 2 (+10), Perception 2 (+12), Persuasion 6 (+14), Ranged Combat: Magic Array 9 (+12), Stealth 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +2, Call of Chaos +12 (Ranged, Damage 14), Dagger of Woe +12 (Close, Damage 7 linked to Weaken Magic 8), Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 10, Toughness 16, Will 16

Power Points: Abilities 82 + Powers 84 + Advantages 3 + Skills 25 + Defenses 27 = 221

Complications: **Motivation—Power:** Manteis is obsessed with obtaining the powers of Britannia as well as other mystical knowledge. **Power Loss:** Manteis cannot use his Magic array if he is unable to speak and make gestures.

ment in Colchester and used his torc's invisibility spell to sneak in on her as she lay sleeping. Cormac's enchanted blade struck home, but the containment spell he'd hoped to trap her power with wasn't strong enough to capture her energies as she died. Instead they dissipated into the very earth itself.

Cormac was distraught, and fled the camp as quickly as he could. He returned to his home cursing his failure but harboring a new obsession that would plague him for several hundred years. Studying the phenomena that apparently granted Britannia her powers, magic seemingly drawn from the very land itself, Cormac waited, certain it would happen again. He crafted a stasis spell that would revive him as soon as the magical energy was detected again and he retreated far underground where he lay undisturbed until 1840.

A new Britannia had risen, Cormac was revived and he proceeded to harry her over the next decade. He integrated himself into the criminal underworld of London in order to gain any allies and advantages he could. Taking the name Manteis, a term once used to describe Irish diviners and seers, he was spoken of only in hushed tones.

In 1851, victory once again slipped through Manteis' fingers as Britannia II was killed saving the life of Queen Victoria from a Prussian airship attack. Her magical energy faded long before he could reach her. Manteis didn't have to wait long for another chance at Britannia's power as a third woman, Anne Pennington, gained the abilities during the Blitz in the early days of World War II. This time fate conspired against Manteis as Pennington travelled the world fighting the Nazi's with the Allies of Freedom. Their paths crossed only a handful of times before Britannia's powers faded. Manteis theorised that Pennington was the first woman to outlive the duration of the granted powers.

In 1993 the Terminus invasion of Freedom City gave Manteis an idea; if he could provide a big enough threat, then he may be able to draw out a new Britannia. Soon thereafter the press started reporting on seemingly random crop circles appearing all over the British countryside, but it wasn't until a few weeks later that their true purpose came to light as mystical markings in a giant



THOMAS RHYMER

PL6 - 110 POINTS

STR 0 STA 1 AGL 1 DEX 2 FGT 3 INT 2 AWE 2 PRE 4

Powers: **The Second Sight** (Senses 6 (Acute: Awareness, Awareness: Magic, Precognition; Uncontrolled (on Precognition only)))

Advantages: Artificer, Attractive, Beginner's Luck, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Fascinate (Deception), Languages (Gaelic, English native), Luck (Edit Scene), Luck (Improve Roll), Readied Rituals 4, Ritualist, Ultimate Effort (Deception checks), Well-informed

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+5), Deception 8 (+12), Expertise: Magic 10 (+12), Expertise: Streetwise 8 (+10), Insight 8 (+10), Intimidation 4 (+8), Investigation 8 (+10), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 6 (+10), Sleight of Hand 4 (+6), Stealth 8 (+9)

Offense: Initiative +1, Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 9, Parry 8, Fortitude 4, Toughness 3/1*, Will 8 *Without Defensive Roll.

Power Points: Abilities 30 + Powers 4 + Advantages 18 + Skills 36 + Defenses 22 = 110

Complications: **Fae:** Rhymer is fae-touched, making him a wandering, rootless, visionary (and mystic troublemaker). **Motivation—Responsibility:** Thomas feels a great responsibility to use his gifts for the good of others as much as he can.

country-wide summoning spell. Once completed the sky cracked open and an other-dimensional horror slipped through. Unfortunately for Manteis, Britain's heroes were able to handle the threat without the Britannia power... or the magic somehow "knew" it wasn't needed. Unsuccessful once again, Manteis returned to his brooding. Recently a new woman has taken up the Britannia name, Margaret Collins, and Manteis is once again plotting against her, waiting in the shadows for the best time to strike.

THOMAS RHYMER

Thomas Rhymer grew up in war-torn Belfast, Ireland. The seventh and youngest child of a large Catholic family, Thomas was always clever, but also wild and frequently in trouble with the authorities. His grandmother told him he possessed the second sight, a birthright of his family line, but Thomas did his level

THOMAS RHYMER

best to ignore his occasional unusual visions and insights. By the time he was a teenager, Thomas left home to join a rock band called the Stone Muses and tour Europe. He also started using drugs and drinking heavily at parties and shows.

Towards the end of the nearly yearlong tour, Thomas had a recurring vision of the death of his friend and bandmate Leo Matterly. He did his best to ignore this vision, and then to blot it out with drug- and alcohol-use. Unfortunately, Rhymer's wild partying, and that of his bandmates, led to the vision coming true; during a fierce argument between Thomas and Leo, the band guitarist fell from a seventh story hotel balcony to his death.

The police ruled the death an accident, even though Thomas claimed it was his fault. He admitted himself to a psychiatric hospital and attempted to get clean, but terrible visions continued to plague him. Therapy and anti-psychotic medications helped to quell the visions for a time, but upon his release, Thomas found himself drifting through the world like a ghost, disowned by his family and ostracized by his former friends. He ended up living on the streets of Belfast and, once his money ran out, so too did his regular medications. The visions returned, with awareness of... things moving in the shadows, just out of sight.

It was Beltane Eve when Thomas, half-stumbling through a dark alley, heard the jingling of harness bells. The woman in the dark limousine that pulled up along the street was the most beautiful he'd ever seen. He stepped into the car as if in a dream, and what passed that night was a whirlwind of sensations and visions. The woman told Thomas

she was the Queen of Faerie, and she had chosen him to receive a special blessing. After what seemed an endless night of revelry, Thomas Rhymer woke up in the same alley a changed man.

Since that time, Rhymer has not only been able to control his second sight, but he has also immersed himself in learning arcane lore and using his gifts to deal with the hidden world of the occult. Although he's not a mage at the level of masters like Adrian Eldrich, Thomas Rhymer is a force to be reckoned with in arcane circles. He's famed—infamous, really—for his ability to show up when and where he's needed and to use a combination of cunning, knowledge, and sheer determination to put all the pieces in place to solve the problem. He's not conventional, and he's not polite company by any means, but he gets the job done. Still, Thomas Rhymer's gifts are just as often curses, as he must deal with his visions of what is to come and his endless wanderlust, driving him from place to place, never staying too long anywhere. His home is the open road, and his "village" is all of humanity, for as long as they need him.

MACROTH: CHAMPION OF DANU

Sean MacRoth always had what others would say was a hard life, but Sean always assumed that everyone's life was like his, bleak and lonely. Passed from one foster home to the next, Sean never felt like he belonged anywhere he was sent. Always the outsider, he kept to himself and rarely talked to the other children in the families he was placed. In his late teens he started mixing with the wrong crowd, children with stories similar to his own who



hadn't found their place in the world. He spent more and more time on the streets than with in his foster homes and he gradually became known to the local police as something of a troublemaker.

Five years ago Sean's foster parents decided they'd had enough of the visits from the police at one in the morning and signed him up for an adventure holiday as a way to get him away from the kids who had lead him astray. He spent days hiking, kayaking, and generally taking in nature. Even though he wouldn't have admitted it at the time, Sean had finally found something that he loved. As the holiday drew to a close the group travelled to Burren National Park to go spelunking in the caverns that led deep underground. Even as Sean was lowered into the darkness he could sense something was off, and when his harness cracked and fell to the stone floor, it almost felt right. As he hit the floor it gave way and opened into a larger cavern that hadn't been seen by human eyes for centuries. As he fell unconscious his last sight was of a statue on the far side of the cave, it was a robed woman, just over two meters tall, and he was sure it smiled at him.

When Sean came to, he felt sensation returning to his limbs, but as he glanced down he didn't see his old self, but a body hewn from stone itself. Before he had another thought, he heard a whisper seemingly from the statue, "Behold your new form. I am Danu. Goddess of the Earth and I have saved your life. In exchange you shall become my champion and defend the lands of the Tuatha Dé Danann and the world itself from all threats." As the whisper faded, another voice shouted down at him from high above and asked if he was okay. He glanced down at himself again and saw he was his old self again. Unsure of what else to do, he called back and, with help, crawled out of the cavern and back to the surface.

Since then Sean has found that he can call upon the power of Danu to become a man of stone with a moment's thought. He's also gone back to where he fell, but hasn't been able to find the cave he was in nor the statue he was sure he saw. Sean's not sure if he hallucinated the whole thing or if what he saw was true. Whatever the truth is, as threats have arisen, he has found a place for himself as the protector of his country and the world.

UNITED KINGDOM

Mystical energy once ran through the very land of the United Kingdom and even though they has long since faded, their influence is responsible for the origins of a great many heroes and villains. Since the 1940s, the United Kingdom has had the largest population of "powers" (in the local parlance) in the whole of Europe. Spared a majority of the atrocities during the war years the U.K. now benefits from several legacies of its own as well as those of its allies, most of them from America. The general opinion of powers is similar to how America views its own heroes, but recently a series of protests have been made comparing them to uncontrolled weapons of mass destruction.

MACROTH

PL12 • 189 POINTS

STR 10 STA 9 AGL 0 DEX 0 FGT 7 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 0

Powers: **Healing Earth** (Regeneration 5, Source: Earth and Stone); **Immoble** (Immunity 10 (Being Moved), Limited: Must be in contact with earth); **Meld with Stone** (Teleport 12 (16 miles), Accurate, Extended (4,000 miles), Medium: Earth and Stone); **Quaking Stomp** (Burst Area Affliction 10 (Resisted and Overcome by Dodge; Dazed and Vulnerable, Stunned and Prone), Extra Condition, Limited Degree, Limited: Targets must be on the ground); **Stone Form** (Enhanced Fighting 3, Enhanced Stamina 3, Enhanced Strength 4, Growth 4 (Continuous), Immunity 21 (Aging, Electrical Effects, Life Support), Impervious Toughness 8, Impervious Protection 7 (Noticeable: Rocky appearance)); **Stone Hammer** (Strength-based Damage 4, Easily Removable (-2 points))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Close Attack 3, Diehard, Improved Critical (Stone Hammer), Improved Smash

Skills: Athletics 6 (+16), Insight 4 (+5), Intimidation 10 (+12), Perception 6 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +0, Stone Hammer +10 (Close, Damage 14, Crit. 19-20), Quaking Stomp — (Burst Area Affliction 10, Dodge DC 20), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 8, Fortitude 14, Toughness 16, Will 8

Power Points: Abilities 18 + Powers 128 + Advantages 7 + Skills 13 + Defenses 23 = 189

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** MacRoth is the Champion of Danu and is indebted to her for restoring his life. He strives to further her cause any way he can. This includes obvious threats, but recently MacRoth has taken an interest in more environmental issues. **Power Loss:** MacRoth spends some of his time in his normal form, in which he has no powers, but he can activate them immediately with a thought. In his normal form he has Str 2, Sta 2, Fgt 4.

THE MINISTRY OF POWERS

The Ministry of Powers was formed in 1969 in an attempt to try and keep a check on all the powers who called the U.K. home. Built on the foundations of the Homeland Defence Initiative (H.D.I) from the 1940s in which a loose coalition between British Intelligence and powers rallied together to help stop enemy incursion onto British soil. The Initiative was highly successful, managing to foil several assassination attempts on key political figures, as well as smashing spy rings and stopping sabotage attempts. Once the war ended those powers not killed either retired or returned to their regular routine as crime fighters while the H.D.I.'s role dwindled and its attention turned to domestic affairs.

Throughout the 1950s and '60s new powers gradually appeared but they didn't have the ties to the government their forbearers did. Instead, they dealt with local police or UNIFORCE (the precursor to UNISON). In 1969, after UNIFORCE managed to stop a Malfidian plot in a Bedfordshire quarry with the help of a pair of mysterious time travellers called the Associates, the government realized that the safety of the country could rely on the whims of a handful of individuals, so the people in charged created a force that would answer solely to them.

The first point of order was to create the Ministry of Powers which would deal with all superhuman matters within the country. It started by creating a database of

every Power in the country and used this knowledge to recruit for the first government-sponsored team, the Bulldogs. Not long afterwards the Ministry was contacted by the Blake Institute, a well-regarded technology think-tank, with plans for a super-prison that could handle Powered criminals. The government quickly agreed to the Institute's proposal and construction soon began near the Oakhampton Army Base in Dartmoor, Devon. The Blake Institute supplied the Ministry with advanced technology, such as the Goliath I power suit to guard the prison, a modernized version of which continues to do so even today.

Throughout the decades the Ministry and numerous iterations of the Bulldogs have managed to thwart threats to the country. The current line up is under command of Brigadier Douglas Courtney and consisting of the heroes Defender, Gargantu-Anne (Annabelle Chang, growth powers) Pulsar (Captain Nathan Spencer, cosmic energy manipulation), Azure Star (Nikki Summers, super-powered martial artist) and Project Kay (Kay Chambers, the consciousness of a critically injured girl housed in the body of a robot).

GLASTONBURY TOR

This large hill in Glastonbury, Sommerset has long been associated with the legends of King Arthur and Camelot. In fact, some of those connections are true. In the final days of Camelot, a deal struck by Earth's Master Mage at the time, Merlin, urged the Fae of Avalon to take the fallen body of King Arthur to their realm in an attempt to heal him in preparation for his return during the country's greatest hour of need. The Tor was the location of the last few stable portals to the Faerie realms and its lingering influence continued to seep across the dimensional boundaries even after the portals had faltered.

Over the course of the following centuries, tales about the "people under the hill" circulated in the taverns of the area and in 1590 a curious man called William Shakespeare sought out the origin of those stories as an inspiration for one of his plays. Over a few nights during mid-summer, images of Avalon danced through his dreams and upon returning home, he put quill to paper. His ensuing tale further reinforcing the link between worlds.

In recent times, others, including Thomas Rymer, have heard the call of the Tor and strange lights and other phenomena have been reported all over the area. Could it be the Fae of Avalon are eager to return... or that Arthur himself stands ready to repel an upcoming threat to the lands he once called home?

STONEHENGE

The true origins of this stone circle found in the vast openness of Salisbury Plain are only guessed at by most. It is commonly believed the stones date to around 2600 BCE and that they were built on a previously-used shrine, but one group of mystics knows their true purpose. The group, called as the Brotherhood of the Stones, know the henge is a focal point of several ley lines and that the energy has the potential to open a gateway to the

realm of Ghorummaz, the dragon within the Earth. For the past two years the Brotherhood's Earth-mages have woven an intricate spell around the stones, but its effects have only now started to show. Minor disruptions in the ley lines have started to appear, their energy subtly ebbing and surging, but not enough to alarm any of Britain's mystic community. It's only a matter of time before someone feels something is not as it should be, whether that is too late to stop the Brotherhood's plot is difficult to say.

THE BLAKE INSTITUTE

The Blake Institute was formed in the early 1960s from an amalgamation of various defense companies and technological whiz kids all brought together under one roof by scientist Daniel Blake. As a developer of cutting-edge technology, the Institute has been a key partner to the Ministry of Powers since day one. It has been responsible for construction of the country's only super-prison as well as almost every device or weapon the U.K. uses to handle its super-powered population. Blake's gruff and condescending attitude made him fairly unpopular amongst his fellow scientists, but when he retired as head of the institute at the age of 70, he happily handed control over to his granddaughter, Isabella, who was one of the few scientists he considered his equal. Isabella exhibits the genius of her grandfather, but with a warm and friendly personality. Fellow scientists often joke that she is almost too perfect and can't help but wonder if her grandfather didn't have some kind of nefarious hand in her development. Their joke isn't far from the truth.

Daniel Blake is in fact a time traveller from soon after the great cataclysm of 2112. He managed to cobble together a one way time-jump device that allowed him to journey into the past, specifically to November 1963. In his mind, the purpose for the jump was clear; he had to either prevent the crisis from happening or, at least, save Britain from its ravages. He brought with him a database of technological designs from one hundred years in the future, then gathered together the members of what would become the Blake Institute in order to kickstart Britain's technological advancement ahead of its time. He knew how long he had to avert the future he came from and as he grew older, he realised he would be long dead before his mission would succeed... or fail. With that in mind, he used genetic manipulation techniques he'd brought with him (derived from the DNAscent process) to "improve" his granddaughter, Isabella. Improved as she was, he was certain he had an heir that could continue his work. In addition, he steered her into the study of various sciences and allowed her to head her first research and development team at the age of only nineteen before finally revealing her place in his plan. Since then, Isabella has had access to the vault beneath the Blake Institute and the secret database Blake brought with him from the future.

The Institute itself has become one massive time paradox. Founded by a time traveller and based around technology far ahead of its time. Its very existence has an effect on the stability of the current timeline. The Associates can sense

that something is very wrong and the Institute is largely responsible for the fluidity of time itself in this era, but so far they have not been able to track the cause back to the Institute.

BRITANNIA

Anne Pennington was invested during the Blitz with the power of the Spirit of Britain, giving her the mantle of Britannia, Defender of the Isles. She operated in Britain and Europe during the Second World War, helping protect London and other vital sites as well as engaging German super-soldiers in battle. Eldrich once implied Britannia and Lady Liberty's powers stemmed from a similar source, although, as usual, the Master Mage declined to elaborate. Although she lost the power of Britannia decades ago, Anne Pennington remains surprisingly vital, the grand-dame of the British super-set.

Margaret Collins was finishing medical school in London when a terrorist attack struck the city's Underground system. Heedless of her own safety, Margaret responded to help people injured in the attack. While providing first-aid for a victim, she was caught in a partial tunnel collapse. Blacking out, Margaret had a vision of a shining, regal woman who praised her bravery and told her Britain needed a woman like her. She offered Margaret the opportunity to aid her country and her people, and she accepted.

In a flash of golden light, Margaret Collins was transformed, becoming the latest incarnation of Britannia, Defender of the Isles, Lioness of Britain. She easily heaved tons of rubble off of her and brought victims of the attack to safety, assisting with rescue and triage efforts. Naturally, the media immediately picked up on the appearance of a new Britannia and the story quickly spread around the world. The terrorist who staged the attack made another attempt and, this time, Britannia was able to thwart it and capture many of them.

In the time since her empowerment, Margaret has started working at a hospital in London. She has kept her identity secret, but quickly drew the attention of British authorities, like the Ministry of Powers, as well as elements of the superhuman commu-



BRITANNIA

BRITANNIA

PL11 • 179 POINTS

STR 11 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 8 INT 2 AWE 2 PRE 4

Powers: **Invulnerable** (Protection 10); **Light of Albion** (array; **Blinding Beam** (Ranged Cumulative Affliction 11 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Visually Impaired, Visually Disabled, Visually Unaware), Limited to Vision only), **AE: Healing Light** (Healing 11), **AE: Light Blast** (Ranged Damage 11, light, mystic), **AE: Shielding Light** (Line Area Deflect 11); **Soar the Skies** (Flight 7 (250 MPH)); **Spirit of Britain** (Enhanced Abilities 16 (Fighting 6, Strength 10), Enhanced Defenses 14 (Dodge 6, Fortitude 6, Will 2), Enhanced Advantages 10 (Ranged Attack 9; Quick Change into costume)

Advantages: Great Endurance, Inspire, Ranged Attack 9

Skills: Athletics 3 (+14), Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+11), Expertise: Current Events 2 (+4), Expertise: History 4 (+6), Expertise: Physician 6 (+8), Insight 8 (+10), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 8 (+12), Treatment 8 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +2, Blinding Beam +11 (Ranged, Cumulative Affliction 11, Dodge/Fort. DC 21), Light Blast +11 (Ranged, Damage 11), Unarmed +11 (Close, Damage 11)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 10, Toughness 12, Will 12

Power Points: Abilities 34 + Powers 105 + Advantages 2 + Skills 24 + Defenses 14 = 179

Complications: Motivation—Responsibility: Having taken the mantle of Britannia, Margaret feel responsible to use her powers for the good of her nation and people.

nity. Mrs. Pennington reached out to her and has become a friend and mentor, telling Margaret some of what she can expect as the new Britannia. The Ministry would naturally prefer Britannia working under their aegis, but she prefers to remain independent for the time being. Adrian Eldrich and other members of Earth's mystical community are well aware of Britannia's return, and Eldrich, Rhymer, and others believe it portends an increased need for such mystic guardians as she. From their brief encounters, Britannia considers Thomas Rhymer both infuriating and strangely attractive, although she wouldn't tell *him* that right now.

For her part, Margaret Collins juggles her medical studies to become a full-fledged doctor, her duties as Britain's mystical guardian, learning about her powers and responsibilities, and occasional attempts to have a personal life. If the increasing number of super-powered threats in Great Britain is any indication, she's going to have her hands full for some time.

THE MEDITERRANEAN

The cradle of Western Civilization, the lands surrounding the waters of the Mediterranean Sea have shifted from the center of the known world to a part of a much larger one. Many are places of upheaval and sometimes violent change, as well as home to ancient conflicts that still play out in the shadows and secret places, away from the unknowing eyes of most of their people.

ALBANIA

North of Greece and across the Strait of Otranto—separating the Adriatic and Ionian Seas—from Italy to the west lies Albania. The modern Republic of Albania formed in 1991 from the former Socialist People's Republic of Albania, which existed under Communist rule since 1944. Prior to that, Albania was invaded by Italy in 1939, becoming a Nazi protectorate in 1943. It originally declared independence in 1912, following the collapse of the Ottoman Empire.

Proclaimed an “atheist state” during the rule of Communism, Albania saw the destruction of numerous mosques and Islamic libraries and the conversion of religious establishments into community centers and other facilities. Present-day Albania has a majority of Muslims, and a significant minority of Christians, mostly Catholic and Eastern Orthodox, while about a quarter of the population identifies with a minority religion, or none at all.

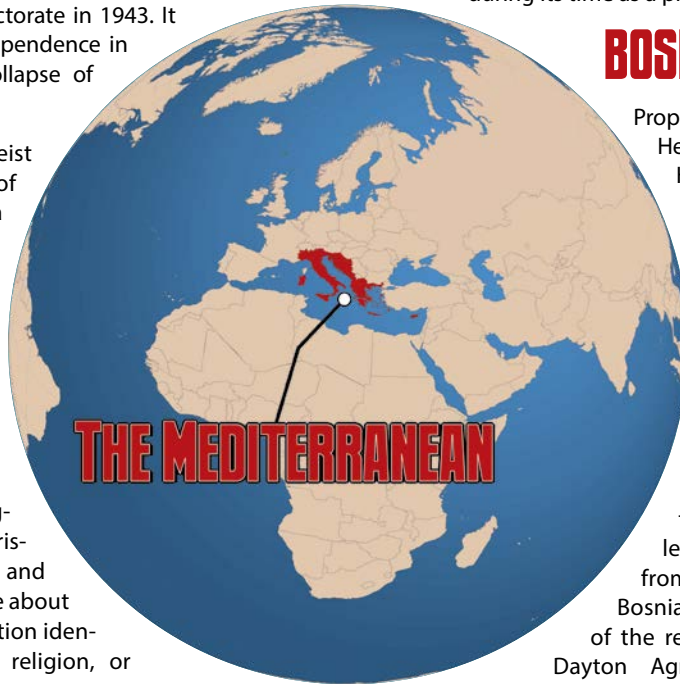
The country's economy increasingly relies on tourism around Albania's extensive beaches and natural wilderness areas. A closed, state-run economy for decades, Albania faces challenges in adapting to become an open, market-driven economy. One of those challenges is the growth in smuggling, particularly illegal drugs, and human trafficking, particularly Albanian women and children lured into servitude with the promise of opportunity abroad.

THE ALBANIAN EAGLE

A point of pride for Albanians has been the recent activities of the man known as *Shqipanja Shqiptarë*, or the “Albanian Eagle,” after the country's national symbol. He's a young man, dressed in a flight jacket emblazoned with the golden eagle of Albania and wearing a golden helm to conceal his identity. Like his namesake he can fly, surrounded by

a glowing golden aura in the shape of outstretched feathered wings when he does so. The Albanian Eagle's aura also appears to protect him from harm, as bullets have bounced off it. He can fly fast enough to break the sound barrier, an effect he has used to his own advantage, performing flybys that send opponents tumbling like ten-pins, or creating small sonic booms powerful enough to stun them.

He has said that he was “born with the Republic,” which some have taken to mean in the same year the modern Albanian state was founded (putting him in his early 20s), although others have speculated there may be a deeper meaning. The American *Ghost Sightings* blog set off a minor flame-war when it noted a similarity between the powers and motif of the Albanian Eagle and the Nazi super-soldier the Red Eagle, known to have visited Albania during its time as a protectorate in 1943.



BOSNIA

Properly known as Bosnia and Herzegovina (or Bosnia-Herzegovina), this nation on the Balkan Peninsula is still informally known as “Bosnia.” It was a part of the Socialist Republic of Yugoslavia from the end of the Second World War until the collapse and break-up of the Soviet Union.

The subsequent disintegration of Yugoslavia led to the Bosnian War from 1992 to 1995, between Bosniak and Serb elements of the region. It ended with the Dayton Agreement between the presidents of Croatia, Serbia, and Bosnia and Herzegovina, which established the current borders and structures of the nation. Since then, Bosnia has faced the challenge of rebuilding badly damaged infrastructure and modernizing a formerly socialist economy, dealing with high unemployment and civil unrest related to its economic problems.

The capital city of Sarajevo played host to the 1984 Winter Olympic Games and remains a popular tourist attraction. Bosnia features numerous historic and natural attractions, including Islamic and Eastern Orthodox sites, deep river canyons, mountain lakes, and old growth forests.

THE BOSNIAN PYRAMIDS

A particular archaeological oddity of Bosnia is found near the town of Visoko, northwest of Sarajevo. Known as “the Bosnian Pyramids,” they consist of a cluster of hills that

THE ALBANIAN EAGLE

PL9 -135 POINTS

STR 3 STA 1 AGL 3 DEX 2 FGT 4 INT 0 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Eagle's Aegis** (Sustained Impervious Protection 10); **Soar Like an Eagle** (Flight 9 (1,000 MPH)); **Super-Sonic Stunts** (Array: **Flattening Wake** (Line Area Affliction 9; Resisted by Dodge; Dazed, Prone; Instant Recovery, Reaction (flyby), Limited to Flight Path), **AE: Sonic Boom** (Burst Area Affliction 9; Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated))

Advantages: Agile Feint, Beginner's Luck, Defensive Attack, Favored Environment (Aerial), Interpose, Language (English, Albanian native), Move-by Action

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+9), Athletics 4 (+7), Close Combat 4 (+8), Insight 4 (+6), Intimidation 4 (+6), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 2 (+4)

Offense: Initiative +3, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 9, Toughness 11, Will 9

Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 57 + Advantages 7 + Skills 15 + Defenses 22 = 135

Complications: Motivation – Responsibility

some archaeologists have declared the largest pyramid structures on Earth.

The five identified pyramids have been named (in order from largest to smallest), The Pyramid of the Sun, the Pyramid of the Moon, the Pyramid of the Dragon, the Pyramid of the Earth, and the Pyramid of Love. Although referred to as "pyramids," they appear as large, pyramid-shaped hills overlooking Visoko. Their validity as archaeological sites has been in dispute for years, since evidence is both scant and often contradictory, suggesting the pyramids were built thousands of years before any known human civilization.

In fact, the Bosnian Pyramids are the remnants of an ancient Preserver site in the region, perhaps similar to Mount Kilimanjaro, and there are unexcavated tunnels and chambers beneath the hillsides. The site was either partially dismantled, or incomplete and abandoned, but still contains sufficient samples of Preserver technology to be of great interest, not just on Earth, but to other factions in the galaxy.

CROATIA

East across the Adriatic Sea from Italy is the Republic of Croatia, the crossroads of Central Europe and the Mediterranean. Once a part of the former Yugoslavia, Croatia declared independence in 1991, fighting a four-year war against Yugoslavian forces to establish itself as a democratic republic after decades of communist rule (and Nazi occupation prior to that).

Present-day Croatia is a popular tourist destination, particularly to those from Germany, Slovenia, Austria, and the Czech Republic. The country has more than a thousand small islands along its Adriatic coastline, and protected beaches and nature preserves.

Unfortunately, Croatia's location and heavy tourist traffic also make it a way-point for Central Asian heroin and



ALBANIAN EAGLE

South American cocaine making their way into Europe, along with other forms of smuggling.

LAVANDA

Criminals in Croatia have a new concern in the form of Lavanda, a local superhero. Robed, cloaked, and hooded in cloth of her namesake color, lavender, the mysterious woman appears out of thin air to capture criminals, stop crimes in progress, and to offer aid and assistance to those in need.

She appears to have considerable mental powers, including telepathy, telekinesis, and her signature teleportation, all of which leave the lingering scent of lavender flowers in the air. She may also be precognitive or clairvoyant, given her knack for showing up in the right place at the right time. While she has been most active in the Croatian city of Split, Lavanda has appeared all over the country, although she has not operated outside of Croatia as yet. (For game stats, use the **Psionic** archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, but substitute Teleport for Flight.)

CYPRUS

The Republic of Cyprus is the third largest and third most populous of the islands of the Mediterranean. After a long history as a possession of various nations and civilizations along the Mediterranean Sea, Cyprus gained its independence in 1960.

Unfortunately, in 1974 a Greek nationalist coup attempted to overthrow the local government and unify Cyprus with the Greek mainland. This led the Turkish army to invade and partition the northern third of the island. Although a cease-fire agreement was reached, the Turks refused to surrender the territory they had taken. Tens of thousands of Greek and Turkish Cypriots were displaced from their homes on either side of the demarcation, and the partitioning of Cyprus remains an ongoing diplomatic conflict, with United Nations and European Union negotiators attempting to resolve the dispute.

Cyprus is famed in myth as the “birthplace” of the Greek goddess Aphrodite, where she first set foot on the shore after rising out of the foam of the sea. This and a long history of Greek culture tie Cyprus to the powers of the Olympians (see **Mount Olympus** under **Greece**, following). Indeed, there is a Mount Olympus on Cyprus as well, but distinct from the better known Mt. Olympus of Greece.

Cyprus is also home to the *Hala Sultan Tekke*, the Mosque of Umm Haram, one of the holiest sites of Sunni Islam, built during the island’s time as part of the greater Ottoman Empire.

Terrorist organizations like Overthrow have sought to manipulate ultra-nationalist movements on both sides of the Cypriot divide for their own ends. UNISON keeps observers on-hand to monitor the UN buffer zone between the disputed partitions of the island nation.

GIBRALTAR

A tiny British Overseas Territory, Gibraltar is just under seven square kilometers at the southern tip of the Iberian peninsula, neighboring Spain. It is dominated by its namesake landmark, the Rock of Gibraltar, from the Arabic *Jabal Tariq*, or “Mountain of Tariq,” a limestone edifice rising some 426 meters (1,398 feet) above sea level. It was previously known as Mons Calpe, one of the Pillars of Hercules, flanking the passage to the Mediterranean Sea.

Gibraltar has been a British possession for centuries, originally a vital naval base, although its importance has diminished considerably in recent decades. Its people are British citizens, although Spain also asserts a claim to the territory, an occasional point of contention in Anglo-Spanish relations. The local culture is a unique mix of English and Spanish, with elements of Moroccan, Arabic, and other cultures, and many speak *Llanito*, a vernacular unique to Gibraltar, that mixes English and Spanish, along with other loan-words. Gibraltans often refer to themselves as Llanitos.

The Rock of Gibraltar holds the ruins of an ancient Arab fortress, and is honeycombed with tunnels, some initially cut in the 1700s, and expanded upon during the Second World War as part of Gibraltar’s use as a naval base and fortress. It was a test-bed for “Project: Tin Soldier,” a prototype robotic soldier, sealed for decades in a secret chamber in one of the unused tunnels.

Presently, most of the Rock is set aside as a nature preserve, home to the unique species of wild Barbary macaques, the so-called “Apes of Gibraltar.” Local legend has it that if the

apes ever all depart Gibraltar, so will the British. Professor Jackanapes (see the *Threat Report* sourcebook) once sought to test this story with an arcane ritual, but Britannia and Matador put a stop to it. Jackanapes claimed the Rock was a potential power-spot for certain kinds of magic. In fact, his incomplete ritual stirred up a vortex of elemental power that lies dormant, waiting to potentially empower someone with a measure of the Rock’s legendary immovability.

SPIRIT OF GIBRALTAR

TEMPLATE • 30 POINTS

Powers: Growth 10, Impervious Toughness 10

GREECE

The legacy of Greece’s ancient civilization—and gods—is felt throughout present-day Earth-Prime. The ancient world was a time when the gods more freely interfered in mortal affairs, and both monsters and mortal (or semi-divine) heroes of their making existed.

Modern Greece is quite some distance from its mythic past, however. While the ancient sites and monuments are preserved as much as possible, Greece struggles with the challenges of the present, with a depressed economy and substantial national debt creating civil and public unrest.

Although it has millennia of history, the modern Greek state formed in 1830 following a war of independence from the Ottoman Empire. Greece experienced a number of upheavals, including monarchies imposed by the great powers of Europe, before becoming the modern Hellenic Republic. Centuries of rule by the Ottoman Empire followed by independence and a later Greek-Turkish war has led to unease between Greece and Turkey, manifested in the ongoing dispute over Cyprus (previously).

Modern Greece has the largest portion of the world’s total merchant fleet (some 16%) and shipping is a major industry. Wealthy Greek business magnate Constantine Urallos, owner of Delphic Industries, got his start in shipping, and still controls a substantial fleet.

In recent years, the Greek government has been investing in education and technological development, although both are now suffering from the economic crisis along with the rest of the nation.

PROFESSOR CHIRON

Anyone who knew young Georges Kairos would never have expected an academic life for him, as he was a wild young man from a poor family, prone to getting into trouble. That changed when his older sister was killed in a tragic accident. Georges enlisted in the Greek military where he displayed a remarkable technical aptitude and a talent for engineering. Unfortunately, he had barely finished his basic training before being sent off to a conflict in the Middle East, where he lost both legs to a land mine.

After recovery and rehabilitation, Kairos threw himself into his studies. A combination of military benefits and scholarships allowed him to earn advanced degrees in engineering, and he focused on bionics, cybernetics, and

PROFESSOR CHIRON

PL9 • 163 POINTS

STR 7 STA 1 AGL 0 DEX 3 FGT 3 INT 7 AWE 2 PRE 1

Powers: **Equine Harness** (Removable, -16 points): Enhanced Strength 6, Immunity 10 (Life Support), Leaping 3 (60 feet), Movement 1 (Sure-footed), Protection 9, Speed 5 (60 MPH), **Weapon Pods** (Cumulative Ranged Affliction 9; Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated; Variable Descriptor (non-lethal weapons))

Advantages: Connected, Eidetic Memory, Inventor, Languages 2 (English, Latin, Greek native), Move-by Action, Teamwork, Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 3 (+10), Close Combat: Unarmed 5 (+8), Expertise: Science 8 (+15), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 4 (+5), Investigation 4 (+11), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+5), Ranged Combat: Weapon Pods 6 (+9), Technology 8 (+15), Treatment 2 (+9), Vehicles 2 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +0, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 7), Weapon Pods +9 (Ranged, Affliction 9, Fort. DC 19)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 8, Toughness 10, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 62 + Advantages 8 + Skills 29 + Defenses 28 = 163

Complications: **Motivation – Doing Good.** **Disability:** Prof. Chiron is paraplegic and cannot walk without his harness.

robotics. Rather than focusing on traditional efforts to create replacement cybernetic limbs, Dr. Kairos looked to other models, particularly an equine body-frame capable of containing additional support structures. His prototype earned him the nickname “Professor Chiron,” after the mythic centaur teacher of heroes.

When Kairos learned that, as a part of his funding, the military was looking into battlefield applications of his research, he was infuriated. When budget cuts looked to force the closure of the project, with all research turned over to the military, he acted. He locked the prototype’s cybernetic control systems to his own nervous system, preventing anyone else from using it, and concealed all of his research.

After some time operating as the armored “Professor Chiron,” he earned such respect from the public that the government and military chose to settle with Dr. Kairos, rather than create further public ill-will by prosecuting him. He now splits his time between scientific research and using his technology to investigate and protect the people of Greece and Europe from a variety of threats.

MOUNT OLYMPUS

The tallest mountain in Greece has long been associated with its pantheon of gods, its mist-shrouded peak said to be their home. Indeed, “pantheon” literally means “home or temple of all of the gods.” In truth, although the Greek gods did walk the slopes of Olympus, their true home exists on an other-dimensional plane, most easily accessible near Mytikas, the highest peak of Mt. Olympus. In the Golden Age of Ancient Greece, the portal between Mytikas and the true Olympus opened freely, but the formation of the Pact between the Master Mage Simon Magus and the magical, otherworldly powers, restricted the gods’ travels to the mortal sphere.

MOUNT OLYMPUS



CENTER OF THE MAZE

The Mediterranean is the origin of several of the characters described in the *Freedom City* sourcebook, particularly the heroic inventor Daedalus and his foes Talos, Taurus the Minotaur, and the sorceress Medea. All of these immortals have walked the Earth for over two thousand years and, although they have largely left their original homes and cultures behind, they still have roots buried deep within the region, and potential reasons to return here.

Taurus, in particular, maintains ties with his ancient homeland: The Labyrinth extends its twisting corridors into the halls of power throughout Europe and Asia Minor, and Taurus' lieutenant Constantine Urallos is a wealthy and powerful figure in his native Greece.

Zeus still reigns as king of the gods, his wife Hera at his side. Of the Olympians, the ones who now most often interact with mortals are Hermes and Hades. Hermes, messenger and herald of the gods, carries Zeus' decrees to those mortals still willing to listen. A trickster by nature, Hermes sometimes finds ways to slip away from Olympus and have fun in the mortal world. He has, for example, challenged superhuman speedsters to land races in the past, or set himself up with the life of a mortal celebrity in order to enjoy all of the pleasures the human world has to offer.

On the other hand, Hades, the dark lord of Tartarus, simmers with resentment towards the restrictions placed upon him, first by his younger brother Zeus, and later by the Pact and the presumptuous mortals who dare challenge the gods themselves. Hades has long sought to overcome the Pact and extend his power over the Earth, thwarted by various heroes, particularly the immortal inventor Daedalus and his Freedom League allies (see *Freedom City* for details).

Unknown to the other Olympians, Eris, the goddess of discord, also has her hand in mortal affairs, having focused her attention on the chaos and potential discord in Emerald City following the Silver Storm. (See the *Threat Report* sourcebook for details.)

OLYMPIANS

The Olympians share the traits given in the Olympian template, although some have additional ranks of Immortality and Immunity, and may have Regeneration as well. They commonly each have a divine array based around the Olympian's portfolio or area of interest, such as Dionysus' role as god of wine and ecstasy, or Hestia's as goddess of the hearth. See the full write-ups of Hades and Eris for examples (see *Freedom City* and *Threat Report*, respectively).

OLYMPIAN

TEMPLATE • 69 POINTS

Powers: Comprehend 4 (Languages; Read, Speak, Understand and Understood), Enhanced Stamina 10, Enhanced Strength 10, Immorality 5 (one day), Immunity 11 (Aging, Life Support)

CRETE

One of the largest of the Greek Islands, the isle of Crete was once center of the Minoan civilization. It also sits at the center of the origin of one of Earth-Prime's most famous heroes, and one of its most sinister villains.

King Minos, who gave his name to the civilization he ruled, became a patron of the inventor Daedalus, employing

him to create an inescapable labyrinth to imprison the Minotaur, the monstrous offspring of Minos' wife, sent as a curse by the gods for their displeasure with Minos' disrespect. King Minos then imprisoned Daedalus and his son Icarus to keep them from telling the secrets of the labyrinth to anyone. Daedalus crafted wings that allowed them to escape, but Icarus failed to heed his father's warnings and fell into the sea and drowned.

The Greek hero Theseus later ventured into the labyrinth and slew the Minotaur, but the creature was raised from death by Hades, god of the underworld, to serve as his instrument in the mortal world under the name Taurus. See the *Freedom City* sourcebook for details on Daedalus, Taurus, and the Labyrinth, the organization he founded and named after his former prison.

Both Daedalus and Taurus have taken steps over the centuries to conceal information about the ancient Minoan civilization of their time in order to keep it from becoming too widely known. The Labyrinth, in particular, maintains a close watch on the isle of Crete and any historical or archaeological projects going on there.

ITALY

The modern Italian Republic, *Repubblica italiana*, claims an ancient heritage as a center of the Western world for centuries, influencing politics, religion, art, culture, technology, philosophy, and exploration. The city of Rome became the center of a great empire that controlled much of the known world at its height before crumbling and falling prey to invaders.

Italian civilization declined during the Dark Ages, preserved almost solely in the strongholds of the Catholic Church, before flowering again during the Renaissance. The Italian states produced some of the world's greatest scholars and artists, while Italian explorers discovered routes to the Far East and the New World, ushering in the Age of Discovery.

A unified Kingdom of Italy quickly industrialized at the end of the 19th and into the early 20th century, expanding Italian territory and influence, but a reversal of economic fortunes led to the rise of a fascist government, which allied with Germany and Japan as part of the Axis Powers during World War II. The modern Italian Republic was founded in 1946 after the war's end, becoming a part of the European Economic Community and later the European Union.

STELLA D'ARGENTO

PL11 • 152 POINTS

STR 0 STA 2 AGL 3 DEX 3 FGT 3 INT 1 AWE 1 PRE 3

Powers: Flight 10 (2,000 MPH); **Force Field** (Sustained Protection 10); Immunity 10 (Light Effects); **Solar Sustenance** (Immunity 2 (Sleep, Starvation & Thirst, Source: Light)); **Starlight** (Array (24 points): **Blinding Aura** (Cumulative Perception Area Affliction 6; Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware; Limited to Vision), **AE: Blinding Beam** (Ranged Cumulative Affliction 12; Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware; Limited to Vision), **AE: Healing Light** (Healing 12), **AE: Illuminate** (Environment 12 (light, 8 mile radius)), **AE: Light Blast** (Ranged Damage 12))

Advantages: Evasion, Inspire 2, Power Attack, Ranged Attack 3

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+9), Close Combat: 5 (+8), Expertise: Astronomy 4 (+5), Insight 6 (+7), Perception 6 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+7), Ranged Combat: Starlight 4 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +3, Light Blast +10 (Ranged, Damage 12), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 8, Fortitude 9, Toughness 12, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 32 + Powers 69 + Advantages 7 + Skills 16 + Defenses 28 = 152

Complications: **Motivation – Doing Good. Power Loss:** Stella's powers fade at a rate of about 1 rank per 20 minutes when she is not exposed to daylight or starlight.

STELLA D'ARGENTO

Chiara d'Angelo loved to wish on the stars as a little girl, and studied them as she grew older, with her telescope as her most prized possession and stories of astronomers like Galileo and Cassini in mind. It was no surprise to her family that Chiara chose to attend university to study astronomy and astrophysics.

Watching meteor showers was a favorite summer pastime, but Chiara was thrilled when she actually witnessed a small meteorite impact in the countryside nearby! Rushing to investigate, she found more than she expected: the glowing "star fragment" imbued her with its silvery-white light and vanished. Chiara almost chalked the strange experience up to a dream until she discovered she somehow possessed light-generating powers!

When a political protest at the university turned violent, she used her powers to help, and established herself as *Stella d'Argento*, the Silver Star, sometimes called the "Star of Italy" in the press. The masked "Stella" is the darling of the Italian media and, thus far, no one suspects bookish and bespectacled Chiara d'Angelo is the glamorous, glowing heroine.

THE CARBONARI

Ilario Magoni, alias Duca Nefando (Duke Nefarious), forged disparate Italian criminal and ultra-nationalist factions into the Carbonari, seeking a new *il Risorgimento* or Resurgence. Whereas the original was a 19th Century movement for a united Italy, Nefando's secret society wanted "Italy for Italians," with an ouster of foreigners and immigrants, and an end to relations with the European Union.

The heroes of Italy and that selfsame Union eventually brought Duca Nefando to justice for his crimes. Too danger-

DUCA NEFANDO

PL14 • 230 POINTS

STR 14 STA 2 AGL 0 DEX 1 FGT 10 INT 3 AWE 2 PRE 3

Powers: **Earth Mastery** (Array (28 points): **Earth Blast** (Ranged Damage 14), **AE: Earth Moving** (Perception Ranged Move Object 14, Limited to Earth, up to 400 tons), **AE: Earthquake** (Burst Area Affliction 9; Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed and Vulnerable, Stunned and Prone; Area 2 (60 ft.), Extra Condition, Secondary Effect, Limited Degree, Limited to Along the Ground), **AE: Earthworks** (Create Earthen Objects 14), **AE: Stone Grip** (Ranged Affliction 14; Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized; Extra Condition, Limited Degree), **AE: Tunneling** (Burrowing 13, 500 MPH)); **AE: Stone Form** (Enhanced Strength 12, Immunity 10 (Life Support), Impervious Protection 12 (Activation: Free Action))

Advantages: Connected, Contacts, Inspire, Languages 2 (English, Latin, Italian native), Leadership, Minions 10 (Carbonari thugs), Power Attack, Ranged Attack 4, Takedown, Well-informed

Skills: Deception 8 (+11), Expertise: History 6 (+9), Expertise: Politics 6 (+9), Expertise: Tactics 8 (+11), Insight 10 (+12), Intimidation 6 (+9), Investigation 8 (+11), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 10 (+13), Ranged Combat: Earth Mastery 5 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +0, Earth Blast +10 (Ranged, Damage 14), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 14)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 12, Fortitude 13, Toughness 14, Will 12

Totals: Abilities 46 + Powers 91 + Advantages 23 + Skills 37 + Defenses 33 = 230

Complications: **Honor:** Duca Nefando has a personal code of honor and a romantic view of battle. **Motivation – Power:** Duca Nefando believes he possesses power in order to justly rule, and seeks greater power to fulfill his ambitions.

ous to imprison in Europe, the EU arranged to send him to the American "Lockdown" facility (see **The United States of America**), where Magoni languished and his power-base at home weakened without his leadership.

Eventually, Duke Nefarious overcame the power-dampening measures of the American prison and used his earth-shaping powers to escape. Authorities believe he has made his way back home to assumed control of the remnants of his organization once again, dreaming of the greater glory of Italia with himself as a new Emperor. They expect war to break out amongst the criminal gangs and fringe political factions as old lines are redrawn and old scores are settled.

DUCA NEFANDO

Duca Nefando can control earth and rock ("the bedrock of Italia") at will, blasting foes with dirt and stone, and shifting hundreds of tons of rock with no more than a gesture. He can also transform into "living stone" with tremendous strength, resistance to injury, and immunity to most mortal concerns. He considers himself a gentleman and honorable warrior, and prefers face-to-face combat with an equally chivalrous foe.

LA VEDOVA

A name spoken only in cautious whispers is that of *La Vedova*, "The Widow," the most feared and mysterious figure of the Italian underworld. She controls the most powerful crime families in the country, and throughout much of the



Mediterranean and Europe, but her identity is a closely-guarded secret. Those few who have seen her can only describe a slim figure dressed entirely in black, wearing gloves and a dark mourning veil, surrounded by bodyguards.

Stories and rumors about her multiply in the telling, claiming La Vedova is an ambitious “black widow” who married her way into the most powerful crime families, gaining influence before her husbands suffered mysterious “accidents.” Some link her with the fascist spy known as La Vedova during the 1930s and ‘40s, or perhaps her daughter or granddaughter. Others suggest that she is everything from an immortal vampire to a powerful fate-weaving witch—certainly inspiring superstitious fear in others. A few even suggest La Vedova may not be a woman at all, but a man using the guide of “The Widow,” or something far stranger, such as a shapeshifter, alien, or android. For occult conspiracy theorists, thematic similarities between La Vedova and the co-leader of the spider-cult of the Eightfold Web (see *Threat Report*) do not go unnoticed.

Whatever her true nature, La Vedova is the most powerful and influential criminal in the Italian underworld, her web of influence and connections stretching world-wide. She has occasionally found it useful to leave trails of “bread crumbs” to lead heroes and authorities like UNISON to the doors of her rivals to cut back on competition. That may now include Duca Nefando and his Carbonari, the latest threat to her influence.

VATICAN CITY

The *Stato della Città del Vaticano*, or Vatican City State, is the smallest recognized independent state in both area (about 110 acres) and population (just under a thousand

at any given time). It is also one of the few remaining absolute monarchies, with the Bishop of Rome, the Pope of the Catholic Church, as head of state. Vatican City is the seat and sovereign territory of the Holy See (*Sancta Sedes*) of the Catholic Church.

The current status of Vatican City was established in 1929 by the Lateran Treaty between the Holy See and the Kingdom of Italy, establishing it as a separate and sovereign state. The walled grounds of the Vatican contain some of the most historic and holy sites in Catholicism, including Saint Peter’s Basilica, St. Peter’s Square, the Apostolic Palace, and the Sistine Chapel. More than half of its territory is occupied by gardens established during the Renaissance, some of which were originally orchards and vineyards.

THE ORDER OF ST. CYPRIAN

Although the Catholic hierarchy plays down the matter of all-too-real demons—and diverse otherworldly evils—it does maintain the practice of exorcism to safeguard against them. In secret, it actually does a great deal more, and has for centuries, through the Order of St. Cyprian, patron saint of sorcery.

Cyprian of Antioch was himself a sorcerer, supposedly a practitioner of the darkest arts, prior to his conversion to Catholicism some time in the third century. In truth, while Cyprian did turn away from the most evil temptations of the occult, he remained a masterful wizard, and followed in the footsteps of Master Mage Simon Magus in helping to protect the world from dangers from beyond.

The Order that bears his name has functioned secretly within the Church hierarchy at least since the time of the Inquisition in Europe, when they fought true occult

A DOCTRINE OF POWERS

Theology is a somewhat more lively field on Earth-Prime, where various mythological deities are not only real, but still find ways to involve themselves in mortal affairs, in spite of the ages-old Pact that limits such interference. While one might think that genuine deities (and related figures like *loa* and *orixias*) walking amongst mortals would be a blow to monotheistic institutions like the Catholic Church, that could not be further from the truth. There remain just as many devout Catholics, as well as other Christians and adherents to monotheist faiths like Judaism and Islam, on Earth-Prime as their are on our own world.

There is, naturally, considerable theological debate about supernatural forces and beings, and their place in the natural order, as well as on the existence and nature of God Himself. Generally speaking, official Catholic Church doctrine has held since the 20th century that the “deities” which have shown themselves to humanity are, at worst, frauds and deceivers, using mythology to confuse and dupe people, which is sometimes the case. At best, these beings may have once been worshipped by ancient civilizations, and may be still by some but, although they are acknowledged as “gods,” they are *not* God the Creator. They do not have His omnipotence nor omniscience and their powers, although sometimes vast, are limited. The notion is actually supported by *loa* such as the superheroine Siren, who acknowledged a distant, vast, and virtually unknowable Creator.

Indeed, this arrangement allows liberal monotheists to suggest that perhaps the “lesser gods” are themselves creations of the One True God, and that they serve some purpose in His design. Exactly what that purpose might be remains a mystery, but most theories talk about matters of faith and free will, and the importance of multiple paths to truth, as well as choices to validate human freedom.

Earth-Prime mystics do have experience with a force or power they alternately call the Light or the Logos (“the Word”), also known as the Voice or the Presence: a pure, undifferentiated divine “energy” that exists on the very boundaries of reality, “prismatically” forming various emanations that are themselves tremendously powerful supernatural beings. The Light may well be what some humans refer to as “God” but, if that is the case, there is no definitive proof—only expressions of human faith.

terrors, before the witch-hunts were co-opted for political purposes and ran out of control. Cyprian monks and nuns (the Order includes both) are guardians of the Vatican’s extensive occult library and collection of artifacts (one of the largest in the world) and continue to practice magic in secret, in order to wield its power against invaders from hellish netherworlds and those humans who would misuse it. Of particular concern to the Order is the identity of Earth’s future Master Mage, and ensuring that the role does not fall into the wrong hands, since that would mean all of reality descending into chaos.

The current Grand Master of the Order of St. Cyprian is Mathieu Lundi, a French priest and occultist with many years of experience as an exorcist, monster hunter, and scholar.

FATHER LUNDI

In most Earth-Prime series, the Order is primarily composed of scholars with considerable Expertise: Magic skill and possibly the Artificer and Ritualist advantages. (see the *Gadget Guides* sourcebook for additional ritual options). Full-fledged sorcerers are relatively rare. In a *Supernatural Handbook* series, the Order of St. Cyprian could be allies or rivals of ARCADE, while in a more magic-focused M&M series, they might have more spell-casters amongst their ranks.

THE ORDER OF ST. DRAUSINUS

Unbeknownst to the world at large, Vatican City also has the highest per capita population of superhumans in the world, largely due to the influence of the secret Order of St. Drausinus. It is the creation of Father Martin Sylvestre, a French priest and member of the French Resistance during the Second World War, who inexplicably gained virtual invulnerability after praying at the shrine of St. Drausinus,

FATHER LUNDI

PL6 • 105 POINTS

STR 0 **STA** 2 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 6 **INT** 2 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 3

Equipment: Choose up to 10 points of equipment

Advantages: Artificer, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 2, Languages 4 (English, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, and up to four others, French native), Luck, Ranged Attack 4, Readied Rituals 3*, Ritualist, Well-informed *See the **Rituals** Appendix of *Gadget Guides*.

Skills: Deception 6 (+9), Expertise: Magic 10 (+12), Expertise: Religion 10 (+12), Insight 8 (+10), Intimidation 2 (+5), Investigation 8 (+10), Perception 6 (+8), Persuasion 6 (+9), Stealth 6 (+6), Treatment 6 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +0, Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 0) or weapon attack

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 5, Toughness 4/2**, Will 7
**Without Defensive Roll bonus

Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 0 + Advantages 21 + Skills 34 + Defenses 16 = 105

Complications: Motivation – Responsibility.

the patron saint of champions and the invincible. Unlike many of the more colorful heroes of the 1940s, Father Sylvestre kept his powers secret, using them to aid the resistance, and “faking” his own death on multiple occasions.

After the war, Father Sylvestre prayed for guidance and chose to disclose the existence and origin of his powers to his religious superiors. The unusual nature of the case drew the attention of the Vatican, allowing Sylvestre to offer a proposal: Surely the guidance of St. Drausinus was a sign, and there might well be other members of the community of the faithful who would develop strange new powers or abilities in the future. If so, then the Mother Church had a responsibility to seek out those people and give them moral guidance.

FATHER HUAMAN

PL6 - 105 POINTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 3 INT 2 AWE 4 PRE 2

Powers: **Empathy** (Senses 3 (Detect Emotion, Ranged, Acute)); **Lie Detection** (Enhanced Insight 4, Limited to Detecting Deception); **Power Detection** (Senses 11 (Detect Powers, Accurate, Acute, Analytical, Extended 5 (x100,000)))

Equipment: Choose up to 10 points of equipment

Advantages: Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 2, Languages 2 (English, Latin, Spanish native), Ranged Attack 4, Well-informed

Skills: Close Combat 2 (+5), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Religion 10 (+12), Expertise: Super Powers 10 (+12), Insight 8 (+12/+16 vs. Deception), Investigation 8 (+10), Perception 6 (+10), Persuasion 6 (+8), Stealth 4 (+5), Treatment 2 (+4)

Offense: Initiative +1, Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 1) or by weapon

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 4, Toughness 4/2*, Will 8
*Without Defensive Roll bonus

Totals: Abilities 32 + Powers 15 + Advantages 13 + Skills 31 + Defenses 14 = 105

Complications: Motivation – Responsibility.

So it was that the Pope himself invested Father Sylvestre with the authority to create a secret *schola* to find, teach, and train super-powered Catholics, the Order of St. Drausinus. In the decades since, the Order has done just that, covertly finding and contacting those of the faithful blessed with miraculous powers, and helping to guide them in the responsible and Christian use of those gifts. Some of the Order's students entered religious orders, and few ever became costumed vigilantes—much less criminals—although there are numerous urban legends of mysterious miracle-workers aiding those in need in places around the world.

Father Sylvestre ably navigated the treacherous waters of Church politics, particularly keeping his Order out of the hands of those who would seek to exploit it, and those who placed their trust in it. He maintained the mission of the Order was one of responsibility and mercy, not opportunism or indoctrination.

Still, his legendary invulnerability did not extend to the ravages of time, and the founder of the Order passed away more than a decade ago. Father Sylvestre's successor as head of the Order is Father Emilio Huamán, a psychic "sensitive" originally from Peru. His extrasensory powers allowed him to help detect and locate potential students of the Order for many years as Father Sylvestre's trusted aide.

MACEDONIA

Republika Makedonija, the Republic of Macedonia, occupies the northwestern third of the former region of Macedonia to the north of Greece. It seceded from the disintegrating Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in 1991, after having been a part of that nation since 1944.

Officially, the name of the nation is in dispute, as both Greece and ethnic Macedonians (descended from the region) oppose its use without a qualifier, such as "Northern Macedonia," to distinguish the current nation from the

overall ethnic and historical region. The United Nations uses the official designation "the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia" to refer to the nation until the dispute can be settled.

The ancient kingdom of Macedonia is famous as the birthplace of Alexander the Great, the son of King Phillip II of Macedon. This status sometimes draws the attention of super-criminals obsessed with the legendary and historical exploits of Alexander, who could claim to have conquered the whole of the known world in his time. Thus far, schemes to find some historic or mystical connection to Alexander's birthright or power in Macedonia have proven unsuccessful.

Modern Macedonia has struggled since independence and the transition from the socialist Yugoslavian economy to a market-based structure. It faces substantial poverty and unemployment, although relatively little unrest. The region was destabilized briefly by the Kosovo War in 1999, when hundreds of thousands of Albanian refugees flooded across the border (see **Albania**, previously). Albanian nationalists in Macedonia briefly took up arms seeking autonomy or independence for heavily Albanian areas of Macedonia.

MALTA

The Republic of Malta, *Repubblika ta'Malta* locally, is made up of seven Mediterranean islands with a total area of some 316 square kilometers, making it one of the smallest and most densely populated countries in the world. At less than a square kilometer, its capital, Valletta, is also the smallest in the European Union.

Malta has a long history as a valuable port for trade and naval vessels, dating back to ancient Phoenician, Greek, and Roman traders to its relatively modern role as a naval base for the United Kingdom.

Malta also has a long history as a Catholic stronghold. Charles V, Holy Roman Emperor, granted Malta to the Knights Hospitalier in 1530 and the order, also known as the "Knights of Malta" ruled the islands for over two hundred years, until their ouster by the forces of Napoleon Bonaparte in 1798.

Following a Maltese rebellion just a few years later, Malta became a British possession, and played an important role as a naval base on British trade routes and during the Second World War. The nation achieved independence from the UK in 1964 and the modern republic was formed ten years later.

Unscrupulous treasure hunters and super-criminals are sometimes drawn to Malta by the potential for lost Hospitalier artifacts (some gathered from the Middle East and other sites across the ancient world), as well as by the mystic potential of ancient Neolithic sites on the islands.

Fortunately, Malta has its own protector. Known as "The Knight of Malta" or simply "the Knight," the mysterious figure is clad in the ghostly, glowing armor and tabard of a Hospitalier, wielding a similarly shining shield and sword. The armor and shield are supernaturally tough and the Knight's

sword can cleave through ordinary materials. Sometimes, the Knight appears mounted on a ghostly, glowing horse able to gallop through the air.

In truth, the Knight is not any one person, but a kind of supernatural energy or presence that occupies different Maltese citizens as hosts, granting them particular powers and an innate sense of what needs to be done with them. Thus far, the Knight has always chosen well (assuming it is a choice at all): Everyone who has wielded its power has proven worthy, and it has been a life-changing experience for many of them.

Some of these “New Knights of Malta” remain quietly in touch with each other, and have sworn both to keep the true nature of the Knight a secret, and to assist whoever wields the Knight’s power in times of need.



KNIGHT OF MALTA

THE KNIGHT OF MALTA

TEMPLATE · 55 POINTS

Powers: **Ghost Armor** (Impervious Protection 10, Feature 1 (Conceals Identity)), **Ghost Shield** (Enhanced Dodge 2, Enhanced Parry 2), **Ghost Sword** (Penetrating Damage 10, Accurate 5), **Phantom Steed** (Flight 5 (60 MPH), Platform)

MONTENEGRO

Sandwiched between Bosnia and Albania along the Adriatic Sea, Montenegro (from the archaic Italian for “Black Mountain”) was part of the former Yugoslavia, and remained a part of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia with Serbia after the dissolution of the Socialist Federal Republic in 1991.

The tensions of the Bosnian and Serbian wars from 1991 to 1995 led to increasing distance between Montenegro and Serbia until the alliance was dissolved by referendum in 2006, leaving Montenegro an independent nation. In 2011, the Montenegrin parliament acted to partially restore the royal family that had been deposed and exiled in 1918. The current head of the House of Petrović-Njegoš is Crown Prince Nicholas II.

The most famous citizen of Montenegro in the superhero community is Maurice Beloch, who lives in an unassuming house outside of the capital, Podgorica. A fairly athletic and adventurous man in his youth, Beloch rarely ever

leaves his home these days, at least in part because of his now considerable girth, and the fact that any exertion tires him easily.

Still, his mind remains as sharp as ever, and he retains his reputation as one of the world’s greatest detectives. He trained both Callie Summers and Elliot Allen (AKA Elite), the second and third Ravens, in the art of detection, and remains an ally and confidante. Mr. Beloch consults with local, national, and international police and heroes, provided they are willing to do so over the phone or to visit his home.

For Beloch’s game traits, use the Police Chief from the *Hero’s Handbook*, but without the Athletics skill. Increase his Intellect to 8 and give him 12 ranks in Insight, Investigation, and Perception. He also has the At a Glance and Brilliant Deduction powers from the **Talent Powers** of *Power Profiles*.

SLOVENIA

Slovenia, north of Croatia, is the meeting point for four major geographic features: the Alps, the Dinaric Alps, the Pannonian Plain, and the Mediterranean, making the nation a crossroads of cultural and trade routes in southeastern Europe.

Slovenia was also a part of the Socialist Federal Republic of Yugoslavia in the decades following the Second World War, gaining independence in 1991 and transitioning to a parliamentary republic and open market economy. It has a comparatively low population density; some 60% of the nation is covered by forest, and it features dense river networks. Karst topography is named for the Karst Plateau in Slovenia, where water has eroded carbonate bedrock, creating networks of caverns and underground river ways.

The combination low human population density, coupled with extensive natural terrain and river networks may contribute to the number of sightings recorded by UNICORN, the UNISON Special Command responsible for “reality incursions.” Experts believe some wilderness areas of Slovenia interface with the interdimensional realm known as “Faerie,” inhabited by supernatural beings. The most recent report is of a blue-skinned “ice queen” named Bora appearing to visitors to the Slovenian Alps.

WESTERN EUROPE

The laws, culture, history, and geography of Western Europe are quite varied, and each country within that area is ethnically diverse. This goes beyond the simple effects of international immigration, and extends far back into the region's history. Areas like Basque country, Catalonia, and Corsica all have a strong regional identity, even within their respective nations. On top of this, every country has communities of foreign nationals and descendants of the former colonies that show "melting pot" is not just an American dish.

All countries of Western Europe (and Central Europe, see that *Atlas of Earth-Prime* entry) are signatories to the international treaties that allow UNISON to operate within their borders, and most European capitals have a UNISON office or assigned representative. Thus far, only Spain and Portugal have allowed UNISON agents to operate solo. In all other countries, agents must have support from the local authorities.

For independent heroes, things vary widely from city to city. Heroes can turn to an information network called the European Coordinated Heroes Organization (ECHO) for help understanding regional legal differences.

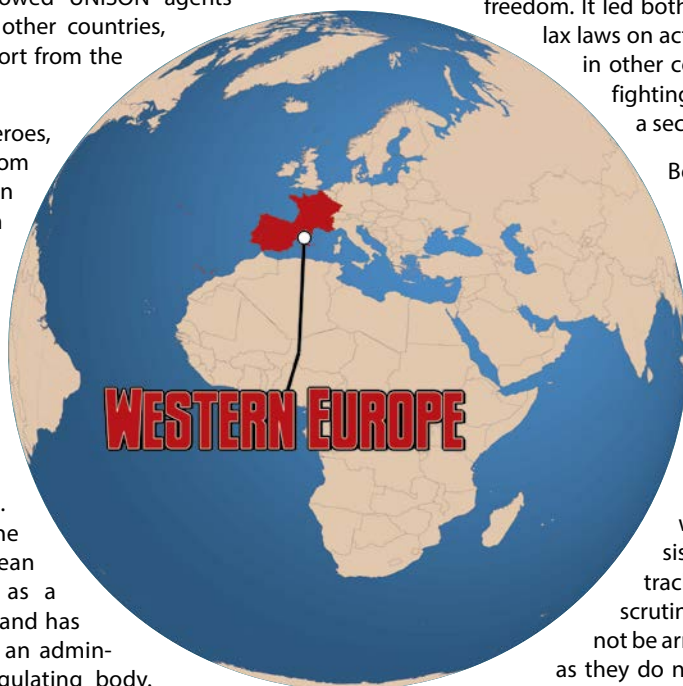
The European Union has nothing like an official superhero team. The reason lies in the very nature of European Union, which started as a solely economic entity and has since transformed into an administrative union and regulating body. It has never included a military or police component. The legal and logistical problems inherent in a pan-European superhero team have always kept such a project from reaching fruition. During each major crisis—such as the second invasion of the Basque Country by the dragon Sugaar (see later in this entry) and the Amsterdam Ascent (see the **Central Europe** entry)—the various European teams have proven they can work together when needed.

ECHO is present and ensures the transmission of information related to paranormal threats everywhere in Europe, using local informants to relay messages to heroes around the continent in times of need. Monitored by the European Union and NATO, the initiative also includes joint training sessions and exercises as well as regular information meetings. Due to these meetings, a number of European heroes are at least familiar with each other.

SPAIN & PORTUGAL

Unlike the brotherly relationship between Austria and Germany, Spain and Portugal are more akin to rival twin brothers. Both were global powers with overseas colonial empires from the time of the Renaissance until the 20th century. Both knew harsh dictatorships beginning in the 1930s (Franco and Salazar, respectively). Both remained neutral during the World War II (though Portugal leased its Azores bases to the Allies and was thereby instrumental in the success of the Battle of North Atlantic whilst Spain was sympathetic to the Axis powers), and both knew the taste of freedom in the mid-1970s (with the death of Franco and the Carnation Revolution, respectively). After 45 years of harsh dictatorial rule, revolution gave way to a surge of freedom. It led both countries to adopt very lax laws on activities that are penalized in other countries, including crime fighting and the maintenance of a secret identity.

Being a vigilante in the peninsula is quite easy, even for foreign heroes. Only local heroes with a record of property damage (or worse, civilian casualties) are likely to have problems with the local authorities. Foreign heroes, as long as they have a good reputation, will be provided some assistance. Those with a bad track record will be highly scrutinized, but will probably not be arrested on the spot as long as they do not do anything blatantly illegal in the country.



A LAND OF HEROES

Long ago, in the Atlantean era, the Vascones people, later called the Basques, emerged, speaking a language unlike any other in the region. Their origin remained a mystery for thousands of years. In the 12th century, Amadis of Gaula, a "Knight from the Stars," fought for justice while armed with a green sword of light. In the 19th century, a Portuguese freedom fighter named Dama de Ouros (the Queen of Diamonds) helped the people of Lisbon fight the French during the Peninsula War.

While Spain and Portugal remained mostly neutral in World War II, each was in awe of the Axis and Allied superbeings. At least one faction within the Spanish government traded safe passage to Latin America for members of the Thule Society in exchange for occult



secrets. In 1960, this mystical knowledge led to the rise of Manuel Salas de Cabrera, a faithful follower of Franco, as the host of a Dakini, an extraterrestrial energy life form he found in India. Salas de Cabrera became El Águila de Fuego (the Fire Eagle), first superhero of the Peninsula and protector of Spain until his dismissal in 1975. In Portugal, the government started a secret program—O Quinto Império (the Fifth Empire)—to obtain or create super-soldiers, but the program was cancelled without success due to economic troubles. Rumors say the program remained active until the 2000s as an underground criminal cartel led by a mysterious mastermind called O Encoberto (the Hidden One), but there is nothing to put proof to these rumors.

During Franco's and Salazar's dictatorships, any superhuman activity not sponsored by the government was strictly prohibited. The coming of democracy, however, resulted in the rise of superhuman activity in the Peninsula. The swashbuckling crime fighter Rosa Mosqueta (Wild Rose) fought Tubarão Negro (Dark Shark) in Lisbon, and in Madrid the villains el Monóculo (the Monocle, who claimed to come from an alternate 19th century) and el Máscara de Plata (the Silver Mask, a killer cyborg armed with retractable claws) fought each other for control of the criminal underworld. The first Spanish super-team, los Invencibles, started in 1986, but the whole team was killed in Freedom City during the Terminus Invasion of 1993. The most serious threat Spain had ever known resurfaced in 1997, when the great dragon Sugaar appeared in Bilbao to reclaim his old Basque domain. The ancient wyrm was driven back into Faerie by Máximo (the future Ajax, see later in this entry) and the other-

worldly being called Sandalphon (see following). Sugaar has returned several times to plague the Basque country, stopped by los Nuevos Invencibles and by the Spanish/Portuguese duo known as Espada (Sword) and Escudo (Shield).

EL ÁGUILA DE SANGRE

In 1975, Manuel Salas de Cabrera, el Águila de Fuego, reluctantly retired at the request of King Juan-Carlos. For years, the patriot watched as successive governments slowly erased the legacy of Franco, turning Spain into another soulless and godless nation under the pretense of "freedom." The aging hero passed his frustrations and disappointments to his grandson, Pablo. One fateful day in 2005 on which the old man saw Spain legalize same-sex marriage, he decided that society had gone too far. Too old to take action himself, he summoned his grandson and told him of his duty to Spain, and of his legacy. Once sure Pablo would heed this calling, Manuel made him the new host of the Dakini. Christening his grandson el Águila de Sangre, Pablo rose as the Blood Eagle, new redeemer of Spain.

Since then, el Águila de Sangre has targeted separatist terrorist groups, left-wing political parties, human rights militants, and organized crime. He has also sunk boats full of illegal immigrants in the Mediterranean and attacked the British military base in Gibraltar at least twice in his misguided quest to return to a different time.

El Águila de Sangre uses the Energy Controller archetype, with the addition of 5 alternate effects to his Energy

WESTERN AND CENTRAL EUROPEAN ORGANIZED CRIME

If you're running a street level or Iron Age series, assume organized crime in this part of the world is as ethnically diverse as it is in the United States, but as a whole they are all much less likely to embrace open violence than in the Americas. Italian and Sicilian Mafias are present across the continent along with the Eastern European mafiyas (which are relative newcomers). Regional differences are numerous:

- North African crime organizations are much more influential in the region.
- The Colombian cartels have a long history in Spain, but not elsewhere.
- Germany, Denmark, and Netherlands are the only countries in Europe with a strong subculture of biker gangs.
- France has the historically strong Corsican mafia and Germany the Turkish and Lebanese mafia.
- Asian crime organizations, like Yakuza, are almost unheard of on this part of the continent, but small units of the Chinese Triads have been reported, mostly dealing in prostitution.

There is no true "crime-ridden" city, but a mild culture of corruption exists in some parts of Spain, Portugal, and southern France. Places with the worst reputation for crime in Western Europe are Galicia, the Costa Del Sol, Marseilles, the northern suburbs of Paris, the Berlin district of Neukölln, Hamburg, and Liege. Strangely, places where it is legal to smoke pot—like Amsterdam or Brussels—are quite safe. White-collar crime, such as money laundering, also occurs in financial capitals and tax havens like Frankfurt, Zurich, and Liechtenstein.

Control array to reflect the versatility of his powers. In addition, raise his Presence to 4 and add the skills Expertise: Politics 4 and Intimidation 8.

SANDALPHON

The name Sandalphon comes from syn- ("together") and adelphos ("brother"). During the 12th century, the wizard Arcalaus, nemesis of the knight Amadis, was able to summon Appolyon, Angel of destruction. Overpowered by the mighty demon, the knight asked three mystics—one each from the traditions of Christianity, Judaism, and Islam—to perform a last ditch counter-ritual. Their efforts summoned a mighty protective angel, the Sandalphon, who banished the demon back to Hell. Impressed by the power of their assembled faiths, the mystics decided to create a secret cabal and keep themselves ready to face any mystical existential threat. The group's descendants have invoked the ritual of the Sandalphon only a half dozen times since, but each was instrumental in defeating an apocalyptic threat.

The Sandalphon is a powerful being. It uses the Elemental archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide*, which a few alterations. First, increase Strength to 14, then add Close Attack 6, and add the skill Expertise: Religion 14.

ESPADA & ESCUDO

One of the first Star Knights crash-landed on Earth 800 years ago after an epic battle with a cosmic evil. Stranded on this primitive planet with no way to repair his equipment or contact Mentor, he chose to fight for justice on this world and became the famed "knight of the green sword," Amadis of Gaula. Over time, he married an Earth woman, had children, and eventually passed peacefully in his old age. Worried that his armor and weapons might fall into the wrong hands, Amadis willed that his family bury him in a secret tomb in the Sierra de Gredos Mountains.

Centuries later, in 2006, a young archaeologist discovered Amadis's tomb. Amazed by the strange armor and

weapons, Dr. Beatriz Arroyo quickly deduced that her discovery was not archaeological, but technological. She brought her treasure to her ex-boyfriend, Nuño Da Cunha, a Portuguese nanotechnologist. Attempting repairs, the two young scientists unwittingly sent a signal into space, drawing unwanted attention from a Grue scoutship that recognized the energy signature of the Star Knight technology. Eager to get their hands on such precious items, the Grue attacked. Fortunately, the signal also brought Earth's Star Knight, Maria Montoya. With the help of Arroyo and Da Cunha, the Grue were thwarted and Star Knight, impressed by the courage of the pair, asked Mentor to allow them to keep Amadis's armor for themselves. Mentor agreed and provided them with power suits and specialized equipment. Beatriz, armed with a laser sword, became Espada (Sword), and Nuño, equipped with a force field generator, became Escudo (Shield).

Both Espada and Escudo use the Battlesuit archetype. However, Espada's Damage effect lacks range, to reflect that it's a sword. Her advantages are Accurate Attack, Close Attack 4, Improved Critical (Energy Sword), Improved Initiative, and Precise Attack (Close, Concealment). For Escudo, replace the Ranged Damage effect with Move Object 12, and add AE: Deflect 12. Also, remove the Accurate Attack advantage.

EL LATIGAZO AND EL VIOLONISTA

In 2009, Eduardo Mosqueira and Pablo Blanch were minions of MENACE. They were involved in a plan to bomb the Madrid Assembly, their plot foiled by Espada and Escudo. Mosqueira lost both hands and was severely burned during the battle, while Blanch had his right arm severed at the shoulder. MENACE, not wanting to waste useful soldiers, opted to rebuild the pair as cyborg operatives. Mosqueira became Whiplash, whose cybernetics give him enhanced strength, reflexes, tactical analysis, and hands equipped with electric whips. Blanch became the Fiddler, had his arm replaced by a pincer (reminiscent of a fiddler crab's claw) with a sonic blast emitter. The pair have been the personal nemeses of Espada and Escudo ever since.



Both el Latigazo and el Violonista use the Weapon Master archetype. El Latigazo has the Fast and Urban Acrobat options and his whip is a power instead of equipment (but has the same effects) and **Sub-dermal Armor** (Impervious Protection 5). El Violonista has the Blocking option, **Sub-dermal Armor** (Impervious Protection 5), **Pincer** (Strength-based Damage 5 (Penetrating 5)) with **AE: Sonic Emitter** (Cone Area Damage 5).

THE FIERY SUGAAR

A long time ago, when the first buildings of Atlantis were still wooden huts, Sugaar arose: one of the mightiest wyrms the faerie dimension had ever seen. The cool, mountainous region was already settled by tribes of Jentilaks (giants) and elves, and the humans living there were a primitive but peaceful lot. They accepted Sugaar as their lord and he blessed them with knowledge. They adopted his language, draconic, and mixed it with words from the giant and elven tongues to form the mysterious Basque language that challenges linguists to this day. He taught them how to craft metal, stone, and wood. He was their one and true god: Draa'Herensugaar'Oï, who they called Sugaar. For eons, he guided his followers, looked after them, and protected them.

Then a stranger came to him. Her name was Mari. She was one of the wisest magicians of famed Atlantis, and immortal like him. She came to him to find allies in the Atlanteans' crusade against the Serpent people of Lemuria. Sugaar had no interest in the petty quarrels of lesser beings and rebuffed her. Still, he was intrigued by

SUGAAR

PL13 • 230 POINTS

STR 12 STA 12 AGL 0 DEX 0 FGT 10 INT 5 AWE 6 PRE 8

Powers: **Bite** (Strength-based Damage 3, Penetrating 3); **Claws** (Strength-based Damage 2, Split); **Dragon Breath** (Cone Area Damage 13); **Dragon Resistances** (Immunity 14 (Fire Damage, Cold, Disease, Heat, Poison, Pressure, Radiation, Sleep, Starvation and Thirst, Vacuum)); **Dragon Senses** (Senses 4 (Acute Smell, Detect: Magic Awareness, Infravision, Tracking (Smell))); **Dragonhide** (Impervious Protection 8, Innate); **Huge Dragon** (Growth 12, Permanent; Enhanced Strength 2, Only for Lifting (total lifting Str 14 (400 tons))); **Otherworldly** (Movement 1 (Dimensional—Faerie realms to Earth-Prime)); **Tail** (Strength-based Damage 2, Extra Limb (Tail); Improved Trip instead of Improved Grab), Reach 2 (10 ft.)); **Wings** (Flight 6 (120 MPH), Wings)

Advantages: All-out Attack, Animal Empathy, Benefit 3 (Draconic lord of the Faerie), Benefit 5 (Billionaire), Daze (Intimidation), Diehard, Fearless, *Improved Trip*, Languages 4 (Basque, Elven, Giant, Draconic, French, Spanish), Leadership, Minion 5, Power Attack, Ritualist

Skills: Athletics 4 (+16), Close Combat: Claws 2 (+12), Expertise: Magic 8 (+13), Insight 4 (+10), Intimidation 4 (+18), Perception 4 (+10), Persuasion 6 (+14), Stealth 0 (-12)

Offense: Initiative +0, Dragon Breath — (Close, Cone Area Damage 13), Bite +10 (Close, Damage 15, Penetrating 3), Claws +12 (Close, Damage 14, Split), Tail +10 (Close, Damage 14, Reach 10 ft.)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 14, Toughness 20, Will 12

Totals: Abilities 58 + Powers 109 + Advantages 25 + Skills 16 + Defenses 22 = 230 (Growth adjustments included in stats.)

Complications: **Motivation—Power:** Sugaar wants to reestablish his kingdom on Earth and rule over his subjects. **Monstrous:** Sugaar is a giant dragon from out of myth. **Mythic Weakness:** Just as Sugaar was summoned by magic, he can be banished back to the faerie realms with the correct ritual.

this human woman of such power, so he asked her to stay and entertain him with tales of Atlantis. She complied, hoping she could win him over, and for weeks she told him the stories of her world. Something blossomed between the giant reptile and the humanoid woman. He took her as a consort of sorts, a revered goddess of rain and weather. However, her home was in great danger, and so she had to leave after she was unable to convince Sugaar to help. The next time he heard of Atlantis, was when he learned it—and all of its defenders—had sunk beneath the sea.

To his astonishment, the old wyrm grew melancholy at losing Mari. Bored and depressed, Sugaar retired to his old lair in the depths of the faerie mountains, and let himself fall into endless torpor. Over time, his dreams grew troubled. A disturbing harmonic reached his mind. A kind of song...the same kind of magic his long-lost consort had used. He woke and immediately followed the strange call through the dimensions.

His wings lifted him into the skies above a strange city of stone and glass, full of frightened humans. An even stranger temple rose below him, calling him as a moth to flame. He soon found the call's origin: a gathering of human sorcerers. They explained to the mighty wyrm that they found books about him from ancient Atlantis, books written by the magician Mari. For years they had tried to reach him. Finally they used occult architecture to create a dimensional beacon (something they called the Guggenheim Museum) and called him to do their bidding.

A puff of his fiery breath taught them what he thought of that and a flap of his wings scattered their ashes to the winds as Sugaar the Fiery rose up to reclaim his domain.

SUGAAR'S DOMAIN TODAY

Sugaar has come to understand how much the world changed since the time of his reign. Still, he is eager to reestablish his old domain. His pride was deeply wounded when Ajax (then known as Máximo) defeated him upon his first appearance. He cannot accept that a human bested him, nor that his former Basque servants have forgotten him. The magic that the cabal wove into the structure of the Guggenheim Museum exerts a subtle influence on his mind, and while it cannot control him, it does call him to return to Earth.

The ancient wyrm has tried to coerce separatist Basque groups to his side, but being ruled by a reptilian overlord doesn't exactly fit with

their political agenda. He also attempted to invade the Basque country by force, but his army of giants, Cyclops, and elves was repelled thanks to ECHO, SWORD, and los Nuevos Invencibles. Most recently, he tried to create his own human pantheon to rule by proxy, but this scheme failed thanks to los Nuevos Invencibles. Three members of the pantheon remain: one is the separatist Basque terrorist Harritasun; another is the former "Heiress of Sugaar," now known as the international spy-thief Sugar Babe; and the last turned against Sugaar to become the cold-controlling heroine Nevasca.

MADRID

Madrid is the capital, cultural heart, and economic center of Spain, as well as the major economic center of southern Europe, eclipsing even Rome. As such, it is also the major center of superhuman activity in the peninsula. Los Nuevos Invencibles are based here, as were their predecessors. The team occupies a building they own in the center of the city from which they operate across all of Spain. The solo hero el Matador has been offered membership several times but has repeatedly declined, choosing to plague the Madrid criminal world and the Labyrinth by himself.

The main supervillain in the area is (now-elderly) el Monóculo, who still controls a sizable part of the city's underworld. In recent months, the city has faced a mob war between el Monóculo and a pair of supervillains: Estrella (Star, an energy controller) and el Enamorado (the Lover, a psychic). After a recent fight with los Nuevos Invencibles, the villains hinted that they belong to an organization called the Major Arcana whose members are all named after tarot cards.

So far there's no proof the Major Arcana actually exist and it's possible Estrella and en Enamorado made up the name to trick or impress the heroes. If true, it suggests a villain group of unprecedented size—22 members—with a wide range of powers!

EL MONÓCULO

Now past 70, Alejandro Pozuelo feels like a relic. Originating on an alternate Earth where technology knew its golden age in the 1870s (a world which has since been destroyed by the Terminus), el Monóculo (The Monocle) earns his *nom de guerre* from his bulky "steam-powered" cybernetic eye-lens. His cybernetics provide enhanced visual senses, but his main advantages come from his weird,



EL MONÓCULO

alternate-world technology. Over the years, he has built a small personal army outfitted with “steam-powered” laser rifles and other anachronistic items. Thwarted several times by los Nuevos Invencibles and el Matador, el Monóculo now must face a new threat to his underworld empire, a new group calling itself the Major Arcana (see previously).

EL MATADOR

During a trip to the United States in 2000, the young Rodrigo del Prado was unlucky enough to be “selected” by the Labyrinth. He managed to escape his tormentors, but not before being subjected to the horrid DNAscent process. Luckily, he was blessed with increased speed, agility, and reflexes. On the run and harassed by Labyrinth minions, Rodrigo fought back and began to disrupt their operations. The inexperienced youngster was ultimately no match for the highly trained forces of the Labyrinth and soon found himself cornered in a Madrid alley. He was saved by a strange mystic who told Rodrigo that she wanted to help him in his crusade. The woman gave him a magical cloak, granting him the ability to teleport himself and others. With this new ability to escape his tormentors, el Matador soon became the scourge of the Labyrinth and the Spanish criminal underworld.

El Matador is a seasoned hero that uses the Martial Artist archetype, but with Strength, Stamina, and Dexterity at 6 ranks each. Leave his Dodge and Parry at 13 each and increase his Toughness to 10. He also uses a sword (Strength-based Damage 3, easily removable) and his **Cloak** (Teleport 4 (500 feet), Accurate, Change Direction, Turnabout, Removable). With these adjustments, he’s a PL 12 hero with an attack bonus of +13 with his sword, which deals 9 damage.

LOS NUEVOS INVENCIBLES

The second group called los Invencibles, or more accurately los Nuevos Invencibles, formed in 2002 during Sugaar’s second attempted conquest of Basque country, nine years after the demise of their predecessors. Once the dragon and his army were repelled, the heroes decided to work as a team since no Spanish super-team existed at the time. They settled in Madrid in a government-sponsored building and have protected Spain from crime and other threats ever since.

EL ABANDERADO & LA MENINA

Cristobal Jimenez became el Abanderado (The Standard Bearer) when he and his sister Lola (The Maid of Honor) were irradiated by a mysterious pre-Colombian artifact during a MENACE attack on a Madrid museum. The two siblings used their newfound powers to dispose of the villains and quickly became the official superheroes of Spain. Later, tired of political struggles, the pair went freelance, but managed to maintain good relations with the government. Their relationships proved useful when the siblings asked for support when creating the los Nuevos Invencibles.

EL MONÓCULO

PL11 - 211 POINTS

STR 0 STA 1 AGL 1 DEX 4 FGT 4 INT 9 AWE 5 PRE 4

Powers: **Clockwork Eye** (Senses 12 (Visual: Analytical, Extended 2 (x100), Infravision, Microscopic Vision 2 (cell-size), Counters All Concealment), Removable); **Phlogiston Field** (Sustained Impervious Toughness 14, Removable); **Quick-Thinking** (Quickness 4, Limited to mental tasks); **Steam-powered Jet Pack** (Flight 6 (120 MPH), Removable); **Steampunk Gadgets** (Variable 6 (30 points of gadgets), Slow; Must be changed at his lab)

Advantages: Beginner’s Luck, Benefit 4 (Multi-millionaire), Benefit 3 (Underworld Figure), Connected, Contacts, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 5, Improved Initiative, Improvised Tools, Inspire 3, Inventor, Languages 4 (English, German, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Fumusian native), Ranged Attack 6, Skill Mastery (Technology), Well-informed

Equipment: Cell phone (smartphone), multi-tool, fine manor (HQ)

HEADQUARTERS: FINE MANOR - 18 POINTS

Size: Huge **Toughness:** 10 **Features:** Computer, Defense System, Garage, Grounds, Gym, Infirmary, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 2 (DC 30), Workshop

Skills: Expertise: Criminal Mastermind 6 (+15), Expertise: Engineering 5 (+14), Expertise: Science 6 (+15), Insight 5 (+10), Investigation 4 (+13), Perception 2 (+7), Persuasion 3 (+7), Stealth 4 (+5), Technology 6 (+15), Vehicles 5 (+9)

Offense: Initiative +5, Laser Rifle +10 (Ranged, Damage 12), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 6, Toughness 15, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 56 + Powers 81 + Advantages 34 + Skills 23 + Defenses 17 = 211

Complications: Motivation—Recognition: El Monóculo wants to be recognized as a genius... and as a major underworld figure. He enjoys the money and privilege that come with his position, but honor and respect is what he desires more than anything. **Disability:** El Monóculo is a nearly 80-year-old man and sometimes he feels his age. **Honor:** Despite being a villain, El Monóculo likes to think he is a gentleman who does not take unfair advantages. **Prejudice:** El Monóculo’s signature cybernetic eye and unusual style often gets strange reactions. **Outworlder:** Although he’s been on Earth-Prime for a while, El Monóculo is originally from the world of Fumus, an “Earth” similar to, but not quite like it.

The siblings are both paragons; for El Abanderado, raise his Intellect to 2, add Investigation 4, and his Expertise is Archaeologist. For La Menina, raise Dexterity to 3, add Athletics 4, and her Expertise is Technology.

IMAGO

Horacio Cuellar is a mutant gifted with the ability to transform his body into living psionic energy. He is the team psychic and telekinetic. Cuellar had a normal life until he was robbed and beaten in an alley. Lying bloody on the ground, Cuellar’s powers activated and he found himself floating outside his body. He scared off his attackers, using his abilities with little control or finesse, then took his injured body to the hospital. After recovering, he operated as a solo hero before meeting la Menina and being recruited into los Nuevos Invencibles.

Imago uses the Energy Controller archetype. The alternate powers for his Energy Control are **Telekinesis** (Move Object 10, Accurate 4), **Telepathy** (Mind Reading 12), **Phantasms**

(Illusion 6 (All Senses, Limited to one subject). He also has the complication **Weakness**: Imago leaves his inanimate body behind every time he shifts to his psychic form.

NEVASCA (OR BLIZZARD)

Initially reluctant to integrate with a government-sponsored team, the cold-powered Carmen Arenales finally agreed, rebelling against her former draconic master, Sugaar.

Nevasca uses the Energy Controller archetype and has powers with the cold/ice descriptors. Her flight has the Platform flaw. Her alternate effects include **Ice Constructs** (Continuous Create 8, Innate), **Cold Snap** (Environment 8 (Extreme Cold)).

GRIFO (OR GRIFFIN)

Grifo was once Sharidar Trevo, a young idealist from the Aerie of the avian race. Unlike others of his kind, Sharidar was curious about the outside world, so he set out to travel and explore. He chanced upon and saved the life of a polar explorer, but the pair were captured by and experimented on by the Labyrinth. Sharidar's avian features were enhanced and he gained the ability to transform into a clawed human-eagle hybrid. He joined the heroes of los Nuevos Invencibles during their fight against Sugaar and became a close ally and friend to the group.

Grifo uses the Warrior archetype with the **Wind-Riding** and **Super-Senses** options, as well as **Claws and Beak** (Strength-based Damage 2).

LISBON

The Portuguese capital is divided between its old charming districts and its modern business centers. Lisbon is also the largest and closest port on the European side of the Atlantic, and its role as a center of trade also makes it attractive to smugglers.

The Lisbon underworld is ruled by an alliance of three crime lords known as los Tres Grandes, or the Big Three: Laurissilva, a woman able to psionically control plants; Raid, a wisecracking but deadly mercenary; and Rumor, a man able to turn himself and others invisible.

Those villains are harassed by Cachorro Maluco (Mad Dog), a staff-using adept of the *jogo do pau* martial art. Mad Dog received his magical fighting staff from a secretive mystic figure called Urganda a Desconhecida (Urganda the Unknown). The story goes that Urganda is also the individual who gave el Matador his cloak, and that she may be related to Picatrix (see following). Whatever the truth may be, the mystic is skilled at avoiding attention.

URGANDA THE UNKNOWN AND PICATRIX

In the 12th century, the lost Star Knight Amadis (see **Espada and Escudo**, earlier in this entry) had many adventures. Some of these involved the evil wizard Arcalaus and his nemesis, the magician Urganda. Late that century, a fight between Arcalaus and Urganda created a magical explosion which projected them through time,



MONACO

Monaco is not a French city, but a sovereign city-state and monarchy along the coast of the Mediterranean; however its government is aligned with French political, military, and economic interests by treaty. It is a well-known tax haven and jet set destination, and is also one of the strongholds of both the Labyrinth and MENACE due to its very repressive laws on superhuman activity. The head of the Labyrinth in Monaco, a superhumanly intelligent gadgeteer called le Numéro Un (the Number One), oversees their operations there. Operating from an underwater base somewhere off the coast of Monaco, the Labyrinth has also been able to use the principality to smuggle goods and even foreign supervillains in and out of France. Since the Monegasque police closely watch the city itself, the Labyrinth conducts most of their operations from that base and only handles the affairs they must on the surface, such as money laundering and inland smuggling.

On dry land, the city and its famous casinos have seen regular visits from various superhumans attracted to big money and style. The Countess Carat, when she was active, and more recently, Larceny Inc., Façade, the Magpie, and Faster Pussycat all spend time in the city.

forcing them into the year 1995. After a period of adjustment, Arcalaus maintained his evil ways, but adopted the fashions of this new time period and christened himself Picatrix after a grimoire from his time. Rather than operating publicly, Urganda chose to indirectly affect events, supporting heroes in their fight for justice as she did in her own time. The pair have continued their war with one another, but mostly operating behind the scenes, like chessmasters playing heroes against villains to further their ends.

Both Urganda and Picatrix are experienced mystics, each with up to ten alternate effects in their Magic array. Urganda also possesses the Artificer advantage which she uses to create magical items, such as the Matador's cloak.

BARCELONA

Barcelona is 2,300 years old and yet one of the trendiest cities in Europe, often seen as a vacation city due to its beautiful beaches and thriving nightlife. It is also one of the richest trade capitals on the continent. As such, it has attracted many unwelcomed visitors. MENACE tried to ransom the city during the 1992 Olympics, but was thwarted by el Cartaginés, a new hero who claimed to receive his powers from the spirit of Hamilcar Barca, founder of the city.

Although the city has seen several super-battles over the years, the most famous metahuman in the area is neither hero nor villain. Alonso Risueño was blessed with the ability to use kinetic energy (more precisely sonic vibrations) to power psychic abilities like emotion control and mental attacks. First a popular party animal and then a talented DJ, Alonso realized he had powers when, on a job in Freedom City, he was hit by a sonic blast from the Maestro and instinctively retaliated with a psychic bolt. The Freedom League helped him develop his powers, after which he returned to Spain.

Today DJ SoundForce is one of the highest paid DJs in the world. His parties are consistently sold out at least six months in advance. People are aware that the emotions they feel are induced by his powers, but partygoers attend of their own free will. The authorities have noticed that recreational drug use is remarkably low at DJ SoundForce's parties, so they tend to leave him alone.

FRANCE & MONACO

France has known its share of heroes since the time of Roman conquest. Starting with the druids and their pupil, the famed Lancelot du Lac of Arthurian legend, the list also includes Joan of Arc—the first and only incarnation of the spirit of France—and Nostradamus, the master mage of the 16th century. France has also seen a number of villains, like the cursed LeBlanc family (whose progenitor Henri “Lupus” LeBlanc visited Freedom City in the 1690s) and the draconic enchantress Melusine.

The first true modern superhero appeared in 1935, when the police inspector Jean-Michel Aumont was captured by a party of serpent folk while investigating a series of crimes in Paris. In the catacombs deep beneath the city, they removed his eyes and replaced them with those of a Morlock. Day-blind but armed with a darkness-generating device, Aumont became the Nyctalope, scourge of crime in Paris. He was followed by Belphegor, “The Phantom of the Louvre,” whose fear-inducing mask inspired terror in the hearts of criminals.

The German occupation saw the rise of powered resistance fighters like the Reynard Rogue and Guillotine, as well as powered Vichy collaborators like the wolfman Isengrim (Pierre-André Leblanc, then the recipient of the Leblanc wolf curse). Belphegor also sided with the occupiers, although it is not known if he was turned, blackmailed, or even replaced. Each is now part of French history: the Reynard Rogue (Amelie Dutemps) was killed in Utska; the Nyctalope and Belphegor killed each other in a gunfight during the Paris liberation; and Isengrim was captured by the Allies, sentenced to death in the post-war trials, and executed by a firing squad using silver bullets.

COLORFUL HEROES

For the two decades following World War II, France was mostly void of powers because the majority of them were killed during the conflict. In 1961, the brutal invasion of Paris by SHADOW reminded the French government that superheroes were a luxury they couldn't afford to be without, and the first French super-soldier program was initiated. This led to the creation of the Tricolor in 1965, a mutant whose abilities allow him to switch between

three sets of electromagnetic powers: blue (lightning), white (light), and red (fire). The Tricolor served his country until 1968, when he was dishonorably discharged without explanation. The public soon learned the Tricolor was dismissed because he refused to stand against protesters during the demonstrations and general strikes of May, 1968. This information led to massive public support for the hero, and the Tricolor declared himself free from the government, who retaliated by making it mandatory for powered operatives to be supported by either a local or national administration. Defying the law, the Tricolor remained active until the late 1970s, making his interactions with the government notoriously tense. The powers-regulating law softened in the eighties after the Tricolor retired. The changes allowed unions, associations, and private corporations to support heroes provided they also take responsibility for any resulting property damage (or worse, civilian casualties).

The amended law encouraged a new generation of heroes and villains. A woman claiming to be the enchantress Melusine appeared in 1987 and battled a hero named the Zouave (who's since retired). In 1993, two French heroes, la Rose Rouge (the Red Rose) and Rorqual, fought and died in Freedom City during the Terminus invasion. This time also saw the creation of the first French superteam—la Brigade Fantastique (the Fantastic Brigade)—led by the late crime fighter Docteur Justice.

DEEP UNDER: THE YS CRISIS

In 2003, a team of archeologists discovered the sunken city of Ys off the coast of Brittany and brought a few pieces of Atlantean “artwork” back to the surface. These scientists did not know this Atlantean colony had been destroyed because of its corrupt leaders—worshippers of the Nameless Ones—and that some of the artifacts they recovered were cursed. When one of the items was unwittingly activated by the unscrupulous French diplomat Alexandre Taillard de Würms, he was transformed into a strange, aquatic creature (the future Frog Prince, now a member of the Fables). When the Sea King became aware Ys had been discovered, he immediately sent a small army of Atlantean forces to occupy and protect the sunken city from scavengers. The French government was unhappy with that outcome and relations have been tense between the nations for years. Ys is still

under Atlantean control, and the Atlanteans continue to search for artifacts and secure the ruins. A few “eldritch incidents” have spread chaos on the French Atlantic coast, like the near-destruction of the city of Lorient by a sea monster in 2009. The French—who derogatorily call Atlanteans “les poiscaille” (“the fishies”)—seek to regain control of the city as they feel they should oversee such a clear danger to their people. Atlanteans see surface people as children playing with powers that humanity was never meant to know, let alone use.

France, in its role on the U.N. Security Council, has made trouble for Atlantis and thrown up roadblocks to it gaining status as a U.N. country. Unless Atlantis somehow makes peace with France, it's entirely possible it will never join the U.N. fully. Unfortunately, Atlantis is unwilling to cede any of its underwater territory to surface dwellers, partially due to it being the French and partially because of the precedent it would set. For now, the two nations remain chilly toward one another, to say the least.

PARIS

Beautiful sights aside, the City of Light has also been a place of crime and vice, from the Apache gangs of the 1910s to modern suburban youth gangs. The northern suburbs of Paris, or the “Nuef-Trois” (nine-three) as they are called (la Courneuve, Saint-Denis, Saint-Ouen), are the least safe due to high gang activity, but crime is not limited to the suburbs. Large organizations, like the Labyrinth, don't operate in the slums, but they have locations in the main business areas, like the futuristic western area of la Défense. Supervillains, like the art thief Magpie who sometimes operates here, prefer the tourist areas filled with museums, art, and riches.

Crime in the 1970s and '80s saw the rise of villainous figures like the misshapen Quasimodo, a Morlock who was later revealed to be the same individual whose eyes were switched with Nyctalope (see previously). Quasimodo's organization, the Cathedral, was the scourge of Paris and the nemesis of the Tricolor. Quasimodo was killed when he was buried alive in the Catacombs in 1985. His favorite pet, the orichalcum gynoid Esmeralda, was subsequently deactivated by the Red Rose a few years later. The current criminal masters of Paris are the drug lord le Furet (the Ferret) and his rival, the stylish dandy known

MARSEILLE

For most French citizens, Marseille is seen as the most corrupt city in the nation. Its position on the Mediterranean Sea and its proximity to Italy and Maghreb has made this otherwise beautiful and ancient city a virtual freeway for illicit trafficking. After World War II, the main underworld crime families who sided with the resistance were granted informal immunity. This arrangement lasted until the crime lord nicknamed Fredo le Fada (Crazy Fred) made the mistake of killing a policeman. The revenge killing of Fredo by an unidentified vigilante triggered a bloody gang war, which in turn forced the police to attempt a purge of the underworld. But it was too late for that. Criminals prospered in the city for years and infiltrated the city's leadership. Conventional police operations would never clean up years of corruption and criminal culture.

Today, the Marseille mafia is still very influential, coming from the old Corsican and Italian families and the northern districts gangs. The reptilian monster called Tarasque works for the Marseille mafia. The shapeshifting crime lord Roi Carnaval (King Carnival, secretly one of Façade's identities (see *Threat Report* for more information)) also operates in Marseille from time to time.

as BCBG. Both men are normal humans, but they often employ paranormals like the femme fatale Vénéneuse (Venomous), the mad psychic Docteur Bizarre, or the scythe-wielding cyborg Ankou to deal with other super-beings.

FREERUNNER

In every major city in the world there are places where no child should have to grow up. The Paris suburbs of la Courneuve, Aubervilliers, and Clichy-sous-bois are such places. Drug dealers, carjackers, and con men were omnipresent in the world Said Allouche and his friends, Toufik and Karim Achir, grew up in. All three wanted a better life and had no intention of joining the local gangs. They chose sport as their way out, eventually becoming experts in parkour, vert skating, urban move, and, more conventionally, soccer.

One day, Said discovered that local gang members had tried to recruit his kid brother as a pusher. Said did not take it well. He and his friends “discussed” their disapproval with the thugs and things quickly escalated into a fight. The police, mistaking the fight for a gang feud,

intervened and arrested Said and his friends after a wild chase through the city. After being released, the three youngsters were contacted by an old French-African man (the retired hero, Zouave (see the Colorful Heroes section earlier in this entry)). The stranger had been impressed by their skills, and wanted to make an offer. They would receive enough money to pay for their studies and support their families in exchange for using their athletic skills to fight crime in their home city. The three agreed. Equipped with the high tech gear provided by their benefactor, the three share the identity of Freerunner and protect the northern suburbs from crime and vice.

Since Freerunner is not a registered hero, he is hunted by police and criminals alike. The deep distrust for authorities that comes from their juvenile arrests only makes matters worse. They feel the same about registered heroes, whom they see as super-powered attention hounds with little interest in people with real needs, an attitude that registered heroes (especially la Brigade Fantastique) don't appreciate. As a result of all these factors, Freerunner has sour relations with nearly everyone in the heroic community (and some of the public), despite the good the trio does.

FREERUNNER

PL10 • 155 POINTS

STR 4 STA 5 AGL 6 DEX 6 FGT 12 INT 0 AWE 3 PRE 2

Powers: **Cyber-skates** (Speed 5 (60 MPH), Quirk: Hard surfaces only); **AE: Jump Boosters** (Leaping 3 (60 feet), Removable); **Parkour Expert** (Movement 5 (Safe Fall, Sure-footed, Swinging, Wall-crawling 2; Limited: Urban areas only)); **Shock Tonfa** (Damage 4 (Easily Removable, Split))

Advantages: Agile Feint, Contacts, Defensive Roll 3, Equipment 6, Evasion 2, Favored Environment (Urban), Grabbing Finesse, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative 2, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Languages 2 (Arabic, English, French native), Move-by Action, Redirect, Uncanny Dodge, Well-informed

Equipment: Commink, night vision goggles, rebreather, toolkit (basic), **Utility Belt** (Array;

Boomerangs (Strength-based Damage 1, Reach 4 (20 ft.)), **AE: Flash-Bangs** (Ranged Burst Area Affliction 3 (Resisted by Fort.; Visual and Auditory Impaired, Disabled, Unaware)), **AE: Sleep Gas Pellets** (Cloud Area Affliction 4 (Resisted by Fort.; Dazed, Stunned, Asleep)), **AE: Smoke Pellets** (Cloud Area Concealment Attack 4 (All Visual Senses))

SUBWAY STATION HQ • 11 POINTS

Size: Medium; **Toughness:** 12; **Features:** Concealed 4 (DC 25), Power System, Workshop

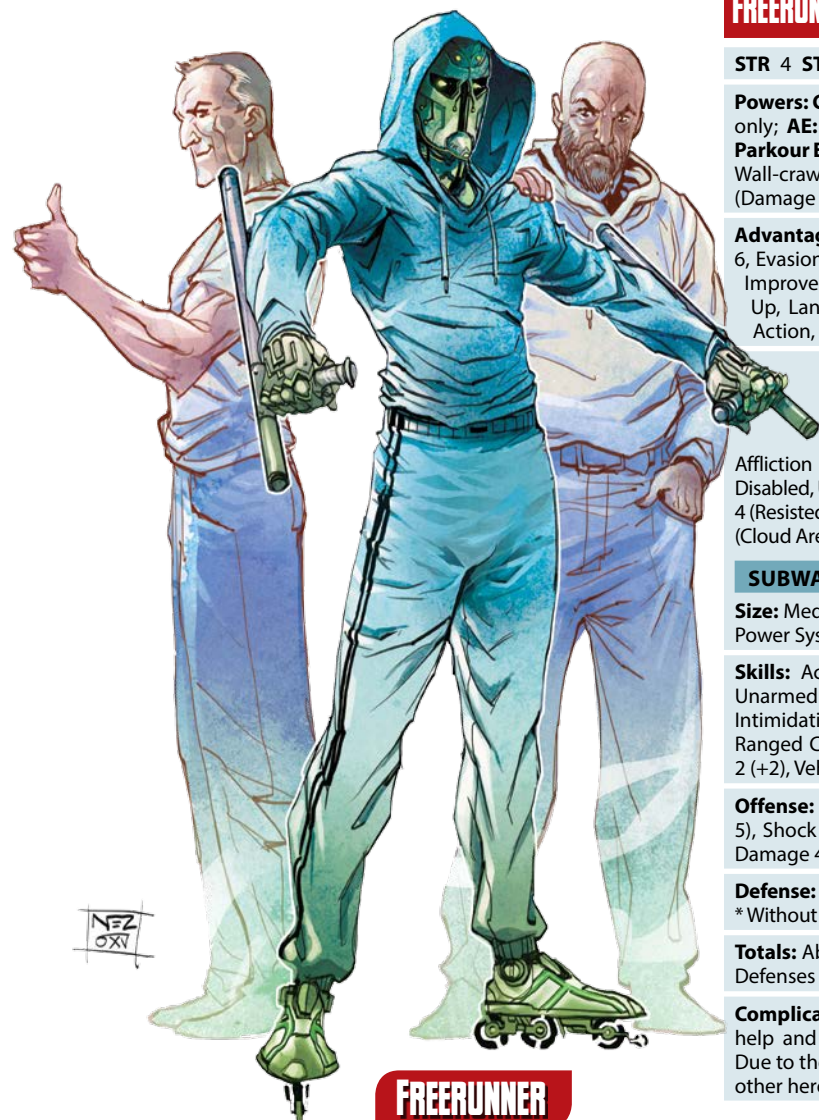
Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+14), Athletics 6 (+9), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+16), Expertise: Urban Move 4 (+4), Insight 2 (+5), Intimidation 4 (+6), Investigation 4 (+4), Perception 4 (+7), Ranged Combat: Thrown 6 (+12), Stealth 6 (+12), Technology 2 (+2), Vehicles 2 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +14, Boomerangs +12 (Ranged, Damage 5), Shock Tonfa +12 (Close, Damage 8), Unarmed +16 (Close, Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 8, Toughness 8/4*, Will 8
* Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 76 + Powers 12 + Advantages 26 + Skills 26 + Defenses 15 = 155

Complications: **Motivation—Justice:** Freerunner seeks to help and bring justice to the suburbs of Paris. **Reputation:** Due to their tempers, Freerunner has bad relations with all the other heroes in France.



FREERUNNER

LA BRIGADE FANTASTIQUE



LA BRIGADE FANTASTIQUE

The government-sponsored team la Brigade Fantastique operates in Paris, actively opposing the criminal element there, but also deals with national and international threats to their country. The members of the team include the telekinetic Marianne, the gun-wielding Baroud (Last Stand), the gadgeteer Arsenal, and the re-activated Esmeralda.

MARIANNE

Genevieve Henart is the third superhero to hold the name of Marianne. The other two were a wind-controller in the mid-eighties and a super-strong powerhouse who retired in 2007 due to an unexpected pregnancy. As Marianne, she is the symbol of France and the French people, the very representation of the Republic... and she hates every bit of it. Nothing fated Genevieve to become a patriotic hero; she was a skilled police inspector when a failed operation against a MENACE base activated her latent telekinetic powers. Since the previous Marianne had just retired, she was immediately pressured by her superiors and the government to take up the mantle. After a good deal of resistance, Genevieve finally complied and joined la Brigade. Since then, the serious, no-nonsense former policewoman has done a professional job, but she hates the exposure and the needless social niceties inherent to her role. She is taking more and more time off from her social duties and her superiors fear it's only a matter of time before she slams the door and leaves the country with no patriotic symbol.

Marianne uses the Psychic archetype, but replace the Telepathy power set with a **TK Blast** (Ranged Damage 10),

raise her Stamina, Agility, and Intellect each to 3 and her Fighting to 5.

BAROUD

When you grow up in Corsica, you learn not to cross the wrong people: the separatist groups, the old family clans, or the mafia. Julien Castelloni did anyway. The young policeman thwarted a bombing in downtown Ajaccio and caused the untimely demise of an influential separatist leader. With only two options—leave the island or always watch over his shoulder—Julien chose the former and enrolled in the Foreign Legion. What happened after is known only to Julien himself: an overseas mission in French Polynesia on the site of a past nuclear test transformed him into a super-soldier gifted with enhanced physical attributes and the ability to absorb kinetic energy and magnify it. Now named Baroud, Julien was assigned to la Brigade soon after his transformation.

Baroud uses the Weapon Master archetype with the **Healing Factor** and **Gun** options. Raise his Strength and his Stamina to 6 and his Fighting to 8.

ARSENAL

A scientist who accidentally merged with an “abstract dimensional singularity” during an experiment gone haywire, François Bonnotte has the ability to create spatial singularities near himself, allowing him to miniaturize items as long as they remain near his body. He became a registered, non-active power within the CNRS (the largest governmental research organization in France), but Fran-

çois was soon drafted into la Brigade as Arsenal, a science and tech expert. Aware of his lack of firepower when compared to his more gifted (and experienced) teammates, François designed a series of weapons and utility items that he keeps miniaturized until needed, affording him a personal armory hidden within his costume.

Arsenal uses the Gadgeteer archetype. His power to keep miniaturized gear on his body is reflected with 4 ranks of Feature. His blaster has two additional alternate effects: **Stun Ray** (Ranged Affliction 12 (Resisted and Overcome by Fort; Dazed, Stunned, Paralyzed) and **Repulsor** (Move Object 12, Limited to away from Arsenal).

ESMERALDA

An intelligent robot created by Lemurian science and powered by alchemical magic, Esmeralda was the all-purpose lackey of the Morlock Quasimodo. He found the android within a Paris catacomb in the 1930s. It took decades for him to fully repair the robot, but when he did, she became his obedient servitor for most of the 1970s and '80s. After Quasimodo's death, Esmeralda remained buried and inert in the catacombs until Talos found and reactivated her. During a conflict with la Brigade, trapped under rubble with Arsenal, she became intrigued by the hero, because he treated her like a person and not a weapon or technological curiosity. She decided to defect from the Foundry and explore the concepts of humanity and freedom.

Esmeralda uses the Construct archetype with the **Undead Revenant** option. Replace the skills Technology and Vehicles with Expertise: Magic and Expertise: Alchemy.

OTHER FRENCH HEROES & VILLAINS

There are other forces of science and sorcery operating for both good and ill in France. Here are just a few.

ANKOU

Working as a scientist for criminal organizations can bring you some interesting opportunities. In 1995, Claude Le Bihan's superiors at SHADOW brought him the remains of an advanced omegadrome that had been salvaged and smuggled out of Freedom City. He studied the alien technology for more than a decade, until the day his son Ronan became the victim of a car crash. Unbeknownst to SHADOW, Le Bihan decided to use the technology to rebuild his quadriplegic and brain-dead son. But the shock of his rebirth and new form was too much for the teenager. He killed his father and rampaged across Brittany before being arrested by la Brigade Fantastique. Since then, he has alternated between periods of rampage and incarceration, only partially regaining his sanity. As long as an employer can provide him the opportunity to use his energy scythe, any job is fine for Ankou, the cybernetic personification of death.

CRO-MAGNON THE CAVEMAN

Glaciologist and polar explorer Sébastien Chaballe lived a normal life, until he became hopelessly lost while explor-

ANKOU

PL10 • 160 POINTS

STR 11 **STA** — **AGL** 3 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 9 **INT** 5 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 2

Powers: **Armored** (Protection 11, Impervious 6); **Propulsors** (Flight 6 (120 MPH)); **Scythe** (Easily Removable; Damage 10, Penetrating 10, **AE: Energy Blast:** Ranged Damage 10); **Unliving** (Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects))

Advantages: Eidetic Memory, Ranged Attack 5

Skills: Investigation 2 (+7), Perception 5 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+6), Technology 5 (+10), Vehicles 2 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +3, Scythe +9 (Close, Damage 10, Penetrating 10), Energy Blast +8 (Ranged, Damage 10), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 11)

Defense: Dodge 9, Parry 9, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 11, Will 9

Totals: Abilities 90 + Powers 72 + Advantages 6 + Skills 9 + Defense 13 = 160

Complications: **Motivation—Insane:** Ankou's mind was broken when he died and was resurrected as a cyborg. He believes he is an incarnation of death and wishes to give his gift to everyone. **Enemy:** La Brigade Fantastique is always on the lookout for Ankou when he's on the loose. **Power Loss:** As a cyborg, Ankou's powers can be disabled relatively easily when he's incapacitated.

CRO-MAGNON

PL10 • 155 POINTS

STR 10 **STA** 10 **AGL** 1 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 6 **INT** 5 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 1

Powers: **Leaping** (Leaping 10 (1 mile)); **Shockwave** (Burst Area Damage 10, Limited: Both Cro-Magnon and targets must be in contact with the same surface, **AE: Groundstrike:** Burst Area Affliction 10 (Resisted by Fortitude; Vulnerable, Defenseless), Instant Recovery, Limited Degree, Limited: Both Cro-Magnon and targets must be in contact with the same surface); **Super-Stamina** (Enhanced Stamina 8, Immunity 12 (Cold and Heat Damage, Fatigue, Pressure), Impervious Toughness 10); **Super-Strength** (Enhanced Strength 6, plus Enhanced Strength 4, Limited to Lifting (*lifting Str 14*; 400 tons))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Power Attack, Ultimate Effort (Toughness check)

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+8), Expertise: Polar Explorer 6 (+11), Expertise: Scientist 6 (+11), Insight 5 (+6), Intimidation 7 (+8), Perception 5 (+6), Ranged Combat: Throw 7 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +1, Throw +8 (Ranged, Damage 10), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 10, Toughness 10, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 75 + Advantages 3 + Skills 19 + Defense 16 = 155

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** Cro-Magnon feels it is his responsibility to use his abilities to help others. He's especially motivated to counter Labyrinth activities when he suspects them. **Enemy:** Appearing as a large ape-man, Cro-Magnon looks remarkable and draws attention.

ing the arctic. Strangely, and thankfully, he was rescued by an Avian wanderer named Sharidar Trevo, but before the Avian could return Chabelle to safety, the Labyrinth captured the pair to use them in a "devolution" experiment. Sharidar was mutated into a hybrid of raptor and man (and became el Grifo of los Invencibles), while Chabelle was transformed into a hulking super-strong ape-man, but retained his human intelligence. Dubbed Cro-Magnon by the media, Chabelle became one of the most well-known scientists in the country while also acting as the arch nemesis of the Labyrinth in France. Sponsored

by the NCSR, Cro-Magnon is based in the alpine town of Grenoble and mostly operates in southeastern France.

MELUSINE

The woman known as Melusine was “born” several thousand years ago in a vat on the lost continent of Lemuria, a failed attempt to hybridize human and Lemurian DNA. Melusine is a misshapen, draconic woman with a natural affinity for magic. Unstable, she was required to spend lengthy periods of hibernation in a special bio-crypt. After sporadic periods of activity in Arthurian times and the Middle Ages, Melusine awoke in the 1980s to become one of the main menaces in mainland France, seeking to create her personal queendom.

Melusine uses the Sorcerer archetype from the *Game-master's Guide* with the addition of complications for being physically Unstable, requiring long stays in her bio-crypt, and Misshapen, which causes revulsion in others.

TARASQUE

Since her awakening, Melusine has attempted to take over France many times. One of these required the transformation of certain people into human-reptilian hybrids like her. The most spectacular success is the mafia enforcer Florian Langlade, now known as Tarasque. Far more violent than intelligent, the seven-foot-tall, hulking, reptilian brute has clashed several times with French heroes and is one of the most wanted criminals in the country.

Tarasque has two identities, one as a large, strong (slightly superhuman) man, and the other as the super-powerful Tarasque. It takes him a round to turn into Tarasque, during which he increases in size, adds hundreds of pounds to his frame, and grows a spiky carapace and tail.

TARASQUE

PL13 - 202 POINTS

STR 15 STA 15 AGL 2 DEX 0 FGT 9 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 2

Powers: **Hulking Reptilian Form** (Alternate Form (Standard action to change forms), **Tunneling** (Burrowing 6 (4MPH), Penetrating), **Combat Tricks** ((Array of Strength Alternate Effects), **AE: Foot Stomp** (Burst Area Damage 7), **AE: Shockwave** (Burst Area Affliction 13 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed and Vulnerable, Stunned and Prone), Extra Condition, Limited Degree, Limited to targets on the ground), **AE: Thunderclap** (Burst Area Affliction 7 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Stunned), Extra Condition, Limited Degree)), **Enhanced Fighting** 3, **Enhanced Stamina** 7, **Enhanced Strength** 7, **Enhanced Trait** 10 (Fortitude +3, Intimidation +9, Athletics +1, Close Attack 2), **Growth** 2 (Permanent), **Immovable** (Immunity 10 (Being Moved), Sustained), **Armored Form** (Impervious Toughness 15), **Super-leaping** (Leaping 7 (Stacks with Leaping 3, total 10 (1 mile)), Regeneration 1 (Stacks with Regeneration, total 2), Tail (Extra Limbs)); **Supernaturally Powerful** (Immunity 10 (Life Support), Leaping 3 (60 feet), Impervious Protection 3, Regeneration 1, Senses 2 (Darkvision), Speed 3 (16 MPH))

Advantages: Benefit 1 (Former mafia enforcer), Benefit 2 (Independently Wealthy), Close Attack 2, Daze (Intimidation), Diehard, Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Improved Initiative, Languages 4 (French, Italian native), Startle, Takedown 2, Ultimate Effort (Toughness checks)

Skills: Athletics 3 (+19), Deception 3 (+5), Expertise: Mafia Enforcer 6 (+6), Intimidation 6 (+18), Perception 3 (+4), Persuasion 3 (+5), Ranged Combat: Throw 8 (+8), Vehicles 5 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +6, Unarmed +11 (Close, Damage 15 or alternate effects), Throw +8 (Close, Damage 15)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 8, Fortitude 18, Toughness 18, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 46 + Powers 114 + Advantages 13 + Skills 9 + Defenses 11 = 202

Complications: **Motivation—Recognition:** Tarasque revels in the power he has and wants to be appropriately respected and feared. **Enemy:** Tarasque is wanted by the authorities, including many European heroes. **Identity:** Tarasque has to keep his identity a secret or risk being apprehended. **Prejudice:** In his reptilian form, Tarasque is a large, scary monster. **Bully:** No matter his form, Tarasque is a bully and enjoys lording his strength over others. **Reputation:** Tarasque is well-known as a violent monster with a penchant for destruction.



TARASQUE

CENTRAL EUROPE

the countries of Central Europe has been the battlefield of the continent for most of its long history. Despite that, there is history and culture aplenty. From monasteries to castles, narrow cobblestone streets to grand plazas, soaring cathedrals to world-class museums, this region of the European continent holds a special place in the hearts of most of the Western world.

In many ways, Central Europe is similar to Western Europe with its unique cultures, laws, history, and geography. The people from some of the regions have their own distinct cultures that stand apart from the rest of the country. Rather than being regarded as backward, these areas are destinations that offer a glimpse of how different cultures can develop over the course of history.

The Central European countries have all signed treaties that allow UNISON to operate within their borders, and most of their capitals have UNISON offices or local representatives. All of these countries require UNISON agents to operate with the support of the local authorities and only operate on their own in secret. As in Western Europe, heroes in the region can get help from the European Coordinated Heroes Organization (ECHO).

BELGIUM & EUROPEAN ORGANIZATIONS

Belgium is a paradox. Its geographic location has made it “the battlefield of Europe” for more than 300 years, and the century-long linguistic quarrel between the French-speaking Walloons and the Dutch-speaking Flemish make the country difficult to govern. Yet today the country is considered one of the political centers of Europe: Brussels plays host to a number of international organizations and is rivaled only by Geneva.

Modern Belgian paranormal history starts in the 1940s when the Greek goddess Harmonia “allowed” Jacques Greindl, a Belgian resistance fighter, to find the legendary Ring of Gyges in order to oppose her sister, the goddess of strife, Eris (see *Threat Report*). The ring gave him the ability to turn invisible and cast realistic illusions. So empowered, Greindl became Commander Nemo, scourge of the Nazis in Belgium. Nemo enjoyed good relations with the Allies of Freedom but refused to be part of the team in order to maintain his independence. In truth, Commander Nemo had no time, as he was busy fighting an underground

war against Eris and her followers, who thrived in the chaos of the war. What happened to Nemo after the war is unknown. He was not at Ustka (see the **Eastern Europe** entry) and was not heard from after 1945.

DRAWING A SWORD

In 1961, SHADOW launched Operation Inundation and was able to seize several national capitals, including London, Berlin, and Paris. London was quickly liberated by English heroes, and Paris was freed in a matter of days by the French army and NATO troops, but Berlin had to be liberated with the help of Warsaw Pact super-operatives.

This did not please the Western nations of NATO, who felt humiliated by the whole turn of events. With the Berlin crisis later that same year, the high command of NATO understood that it needed its own superhuman response force. It could not rely on American super-teams or UNISON for a global response (since the USSR has veto power in the UN Security Council) and the European Economic Community was still an administrative entity with no real concept of common military operations.

The NATO Military Committee initiated the Special Western Operations for Reconnaissance and Defense (SWORD) directive, mixing teams of superhumans and trained specialists for specific operations in Western and Central Europe and overseas European territories.

In 1966, NATO high command moved to Belgium, as did SWORD headquarters. Since then, the composition of SWORD has changed many times in response to crises like the second Operation Inundation of 1979, the Grue and Terminus Invasions, and other super-menaces. In 1992, an agreement was signed between the European Union and NATO, allowing SWORD to operate in all EU nations (even those not part of NATO) provided the organization contributes to the protection of the union.

SWORD operations in Europe mostly involve putting down SHADOW and OVERTHROW cells, thwarting MENACE (see under Austria, later in this entry) operations, fighting mundane and super-powered terrorism, and occasionally assisting police agencies like Europol in their investigations of super-crimes. SWORD is composed of four “teams,”



COUNTESS CARAT

PL7 - 162 POINTS

STR 0 STA 2 AGL 5 DEX 6 FGT 5 INT 3 AWE 3 PRE 6

Advantages: Attractive, Benefit (Alternate Identity), Benefit 2 (Socialite), Benefit 4 (Multi-millionaire), Equipment 5, Close Attack 2, Connected, Contacts, Daze (Deception), Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 4, Equipment 3, Evasion 2, Fascinate 2 (Deception, Persuasion), Grappling Finesse, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative 2, Languages 2 (English, German, Japanese, Spanish, French native), Luck 2, Redirect, Second Chance (Triggering traps and alarms), Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery (Technology), Taunt, Uncanny Dodge, Well-informed.

Equipment: Cell Phone (Smartphone), flashlight, multi-tool, night vision goggles, 2 knives (+1 Damage, Crit. 19-20), pepper spray

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+13), Athletics 6 (+6), Deception 8 (+14), Expertise: Business 4 (+7), Expertise: Criminal 11 (+14), Expertise: High Society 7 (+10), Insight 8 (+11), Investigation 4 (+7), Perception 4 (+7), Persuasion 8 (+14), Ranged Combat: Blowgun 2 (+8), Sleight of Hand 8 (+14), Stealth 8 (+13), Technology 2 (+5), Vehicles 2 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +12, Blowgun +8 (Ranged, Damage 0), Knives +8 (Close, Damage 1, Crit. 19-20), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 6, Toughness 6/2*, Will 8 * Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 60 + Powers 0 + Advantages 42 + Skills 45 + Defenses 15 = 162

Complications: **Motivation—Thrills:** Countess Carat cannot imagine herself retired; she has to commit crimes for the thrill of it, even if they are performed by proxies. **Identity:** Countess Carat cares about her wealthy socialite lifestyle. She protects her identity and lifestyle at any cost.

each including two to four super-powered operatives, ten highly trained specialists (some trained by AEGIS), and twenty to thirty support operatives.

- **Team Caliburn:** The front liners and the heavy hitters.
- **Team Tizona:** The urban guerrilla specialists. Team Tizona is deployed whenever operations take place in a major city or heavily populated area. It is also charged with protecting the European Parliament in Brussels.
- **Team Balmung:** The extreme environment specialists. Team Balmung has been deployed in places like the Arctic, subterranean caves, and deep sea Atlantean outposts.
- **Team Thyrus:** The relief and rescue team. Mostly composed of field medics, it specializes in disaster response and other emergencies where civilian casualties are expected.

COUNTESS
CARAT

For many, SWORD is the European AEGIS. The organization also benefits from very good relations with its American counterpart, UNISON, and ECHO. These agencies have even created an exchange program that allows heroes to swap locations for a while.

DIAMONDS ARE A WOMAN'S BEST FRIENDS

The presence of SWORD has made Belgium—Brussels in particular—a rather safe place. The city was targeted in the second SHADOW Inundation in 1979, but the threat was quickly quashed. And while MENACE has periodically tried to take hostages, kidnap relatives of the powerful, and blackmail members of the European Parliament, the resulting super-battles have been well handled by SWORD teams.

This doesn't mean that the rest of Belgium is free of super-crime and superheroes. The city of Liege can be quite dangerous, but its residents can count on the mysterious vigilante Nemo to harass criminals and bring them to justice. It is not known whether the current Nemo is related to the Golden Age hero Commander Nemo, but witnesses claim to have seen him turn invisible.

Beautiful Antwerp, Belgium's second largest city, is the European capital of diamond trade. It should not be surprising that it is the also the birthplace and home of one of the most feared jewel thieves in the world: the famed Countess Carat.

COUNTESS CARAT

Talia Zettersberg has always lusted after the finer things in life. Be it gourmet food, *haute couture*, or exotic cars, nothing but the best is good enough.

Talia's criminal career began in her exclusive Swiss high school, where she would freely "borrow" her classmates' things and revel in the thrill. By her teens, she had graduated to pick-pocketing and grifting while also managing to marry Antwerp's most eligible bachelor and heir to a chain of jewelry stores along the way.

While the marriage lasted barely a month, it began Talia's love affair with jewelry.

She traveled the world, working under the name Countess Carat, wherever the wealthy and their

jewelry congregated. Her travels took her to such places as Hong Kong, Tokyo, Istanbul, and Washington, D.C. In the 1980s, she ventured into Freedom City and crossed paths with several of the most famous heroes there, including the Raven.

Thirty years later, Countess Carat has gained experience and wisdom, moving from thrill-seeking thief to seasoned criminal mastermind and mobster. She now controls a large part of the diamond trade in Europe, both illegal and legal. She's never been caught, but she's beginning to feel the weight of her years. She has not personally performed a burglary for nearly half a decade, and she knows her skills are fading. She has considered doing one last heist, but the risk of being caught is too great. Instead, she is recruiting and training gifted, promising young girls. Next year, she plans to task each of her pupils, whom she calls Facets, with the theft of one famous diamond as a final exam. The winner will inherit the Countess Carat name.

GERMANY

The Second World War...the rise of the Third Reich...it adheres to Germany.

Even though the war ended 70 years ago and most of the people living today were not even born at the time, Germans still serve as good villains (and quite often, Nazi villains) in Hollywood and the comics. Yes, Germans are seen as methodical, composed, and organized, all traits that scream "criminal mastermind" to many authors. But Germans, as far as national stereotypes go, are much more complex, and heroes must be aware that Germany has changed a lot since WWII. It has become ethnically diverse, with thriving Turkish, Spanish, Lebanese, and Italian communities, to name only a few. Politically, it is one of the harshest countries regarding apologists of Nazism and war crimes.

A LITTLE HISTORY

Although German history is filled with famous heroes and rogues like the dragonslayer Siegfried, the modern superhuman history of Germany begins in the 1930s with attempts by the Nazis and the Thule Society to gather occult knowledge and further their Aryan cause. Among them, three ambitious young men rose through the ranks of the Nazi party: Wilhelm Kantor, Jürgen Reinhold, and the scheming Joscha Von Weldensteyck. Each was tasked to explore the world and return with arcane lore and treasures for the Society's coffers. Kantor was assigned to Africa and found the ancient city of Seti-Ab in the sands of Libya. Reinhold was assigned to Northern Europe and found Ultima Thule (although this knowledge was erased from his mind). Von Weldensteyck found nothing but mostly insignificant artifacts in Asia Minor.

With the mighty Übermensch, the devious Doctor Geistmann, and the mystic Crimson Mask, the cadre soon formed the foundation of Nazi Germany's superhuman forces. At first unchecked by opposing superbeings, the Übersoldaten soon had to deal with the Allies of Freedom

abroad and with White Rose and White Thorn and the mysterious Austrian jester Kasperle at home.

For several years, super-humans of the Axis and the Allies fought each other. By 1945, it had become clear to everyone, including the champions of the Nazi Party, that Germany was losing the war. After the fall of Berlin, the Allies immediately tried to arrest the super-powered minions of the Axis, though many managed to escape. Kantor and Reinhold fled to South America. Madame Blitz surrendered to the Americans, and the Valkyrie, stunned by the loss of her powers, was captured the Soviets. For the next ten years, Allied powers relentlessly pursued any trace of superhuman activity in Germany and Austria, frightened that one day the powers of the Axis might re-surface and start a third world war. The coming of the Killer Kaiser in 1950 only confirmed these fears, and, during the 1960s, any trace of superhuman activity in Germany was swiftly and harshly suppressed by occupying powers or by the German authorities themselves, who outlawed any paranormal activity.

In 1972, during one of its most grandiose schemes, SHADOW took hostage all of the Olympics teams in Munich, forcing the German authorities to execute a desperate assault, leading to the death of many innocents. This incident finally forced the German government to reconsider their "no superhuman" policy and new freedoms were slowly granted to costumed crime fighters, primarily to counter the paranormal super-teams of the Warsaw Pact and provide additional support in case of another such crisis. The first official West German (BRD) super-team, the Bundesguard (Federal Guard) was created in 1980, immediately followed by its East German (DDR) counterpart, the Volksgeist. The two soon became rivals and enemies.

In 1989, the Berlin wall fell and Germany began reunification. The Volksgeist was disbanded, but its leader, Direktor X, destroyed all files in the Stasi (East Germany's Ministry for State Security) archives relating to his team. Most of its members retired or went into hiding. Direktor X himself was captured put on trial for alleged crimes committed while working for the East German secret services. The Bundesguard, having lost its rival, began to fade as the Cold War waned and SWORD emerged to fight super-crime.

Reunification did bring new problems. In the former East Germany, crime rates grew. OVERTHROW appeared: a new terrorist group claiming that the fall of the Wall was not a triumph of capitalism but a harbinger of a new future. First limited to Germany, the threat of OVERTHROW grew quickly and remains one of the most serious menaces in the western world of today.

In 2002, Stuttgart was nearly destroyed by an invasion of extra-dimensional demons. Rumors claimed that the Thule Society had re-emerged, but this was never proven. Heroes from across Europe rushed to the rescue and drove the fiends back to Hell. This was the signal for the Bundesguard to reform, just in time to fight new dangers like the cyborg biker gang Dirty Party (Dreckete Partie) and the mercenary society known as the Fables.

“ICH BIN EIN UBER-BERLINER”

Berlin today is the political, economic, and cultural center of Germany. The city has its rivals—Hamburg and Frankfurt for economics, and Cologne for culture—but in the heart of all Germans it remains their capital. Like Germany, it is still divided into West (modern, liberal with a touch of hippie) and East (bulky socialist architecture with a lot of buildings currently under demolition for renovation and rebuilding).

Berlin is the home of the Bundesguard, but the city also relies on the crime fighting duo of der Röter Adler (the second Red Eagle, who claims to have no relation to the first) and der Schwarzer Bär (the Black Bear) since the larger team operates throughout the country. Rumored to be supported by a group of radio amateurs and field informants, der Röter Adler and der Schwarzer Bär often clash with their arch-enemies, the bloodthirsty crime lord, Yatagan (named for a type of Turkish sword), and

DRECKETE PARTIE CYBORG PL7/MR8 · 118 POINTS

STR 7 STA 6 AGL 1 DEX 2 FGT 4 INT 0 AWE -1 PRE 2

Powers: **Cybernetic Implants (Cybereyes** (Senses 5 (Darkvision, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Rapid (Visual))); **Cyberlegs** (Compartments (Feature), Leaping 2 (30 feet), Speed 4 (30 MPH)); **Cyberlimbs** (Enhanced Strength 5); **Cybernetic Enhancements** (Enhanced Stamina 4); **Finger Blades** (Strength-based Damage 1, Improved Critical); **Skillware** (Enhanced Skills 3 (Technology +4, Perception +2), Enhanced Advantages 15 (All-out Attack, Close Attack 2, Eidetic Memory, Fearless, Improved Initiative 2, Languages 3 (Dutch, English, French, Italian), Ranged Attack 5); **Subdermal Armor** (Impervious Protection 2))

Advantages: *All-out Attack, Close Attack 2, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 6, Fearless, Improved Initiative 2, Languages 3 (Dutch, English, French, Italian, German native), Ranged Attack 5*

Equipment: Cell phone (smartphone), sunglasses (+5 to sight-based Affliction effects), multi-tool, heavy pistol (Ranged Damage 4), knife (Strength-based Damage 1, Crit. 19-20), motorcycle

Skills: Athletics 5 (+12), Expertise: Criminal Biker 6 (+6), Intimidation 6 (+8), *Perception 4 (+5)*, Ranged Combat: Guns 2 (+4), Stealth 4 (+5), *Technology 5 (+9)*, Vehicles 8 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +9, Finger Blades +6 (Close, Damage 8), Pistol +9 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 7)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 8, Toughness 8, Will 4

Totals: Abilities 24 + Powers 53 + Advantages 6 + Skills 20 + Defenses 14 = 118

Complications: **Motivation—Thrills and Power:** The motivation of individual members may vary, but for the most part, the members of the Dreckete Partie are bullies who thrive on conflict. **Cyberpsychosis:** The more cybernetic parts the gang members have, the less human they become. This affects their ability to relate to people severely. **Enemy:** The gang is wanted by national and international law enforcement agencies. **Power Loss:** The cybernetics each member possesses may be relatively easily deactivated after they're incapacitated or no longer resisting. **Reputation:** The Dreckete Partie is known as a dangerous and chaotic motorcycle gang. **Weakness:** Failsafe's built into the members' cybernetic parts make them vulnerable to machine-controlling powers. Members affected by such powers suffer a -5 penalty to resistance checks against their effects.

his henchman Toxin Tom, or the flying thief Herr Uhu (Mister Owl).

HAMBURG

The second largest city in Germany is also one of the least safe in the country. To the dismay of the locals, it is the home of the Dreckete Partie, a gang of cyborg bikers who gained their cybertechnology from MENACE for the sole purpose of spreading mayhem and chaos in Germany.

The gang has fought the Bundesguard several times and has ended up in jail almost as often. Their benefactors keep helping free them and the gang remains one of the most serious threats in Northern Germany today.

Typical cyborg members of the Dreckete Partie are presented here. The leaders are normal characters and the Gamemaster should feel free to add a power or ability to make them distinctive, such as making one a construct, giving another a monomolecular whip, another a chest-blaster or a taser-hand, and so on. The rank-and-file members use the same statblock, but don't have any unique powers or abilities and are minions (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 8**). When they aren't using their powers overtly, gang members appear mostly human, but their cybernetics were designed for power, not subtlety, so observers can spot them with a Perception or Insight check (DC 10).

MUNICH

Munich is the third largest city of Germany, as well as the richest. The economic heart of southern Germany, it is also one of the safest places to live on the continent. It would seem strange indeed if the shadow war plaguing this Bavarian capital were to be revealed to the public. This unseen war is actually a conflict taking place inside SHADOW. Since 1989, the terrorist organization OVERTHROW has used the Baader University for Political Studies as headquarters, in close proximity to Labyrinth's Stauffen-Mann Media conglomerate, led by Heinrich Stauffen. While Taurus and Dominic Ashe enjoy a rather positive “business-like” relationship at a higher level, the same is not true for their ground troops. To make matters worse, their leaders cannot even order a truce without blowing their covers as members of the SHADOW network to their unsuspecting troops.

So far, both organizations have been very careful to keep this struggle discreet, since any incident would draw unwanted attention to the city and their operations. But it would take just a tiny spark (perhaps a new team of heroes visiting the city?) for the conflict to escalate to full-scale war.

GERMAN HEROES AND VILLAINS

Germany has a long history of heroes and villains. To much of the rest of the world, it seems like Germany benefited from more than its fair share, but conflict seems to breed superbeings and Germany has certainly caused and suffered a lot of conflict. Whether talking about the battle-

THE BUNDESGUARD BATTLES THE FABLES



fields of World War II or the tense decades dominated by the Cold War, Germany has always had paranormals to fight for its people. Even today, the country is host to a number of groups, teams, and solo heroes and villains.

THE BUNDESGUARD

The Bundeguard is the principle superhero team in Germany, as well as the largest. Usually based in Berlin, the team operates everywhere in the country and has even been known to travel across Europe for serious crises, such as the Amsterdam Ascent in 2004. The team also maintains good relations with other European heroes (teams and solo heroes alike). Team members include the following heroes.

BARYON

Despite his young age, Henning Holzschuh is the current team leader. Henning gained his nuclear powers after being irradiated in the womb by contaminants from the Chernobyl disaster (or so it is believed). A no-nonsense former Luftwaffe pilot, he often flies the team's plane. Baryon uses the Energy Controller archetype. He uses nuclear energy and has 8 ranks of Expertise: Military Commander.

MAGLEV

Andi Fröhlich is a veteran hero and, as a result, often the *de facto* field leader. The magnetic armored hero appeared for the first time in 2002 during the demonic invasion of Stuttgart and immediately proved himself fit for the role.

He has been on the team since, but always rejects proposals of official leadership. Maglev uses the Battlesuit archetype, but add Flight at 12 ranks and Move Object 12 as an alternate power for his **Servo-Motors**.

QUARTZ

Nedim Kavur is one of the few active German-born Turkish heroes and is very proud to be part of the Bundeguard. A calm and composed young man, he is able to transform into a crystalline powerhouse. He is the strong man of the team. Quartz uses the Powerhouse archetype, but he doesn't have the leaping power and all his other superhuman powers are in an Alternate Form.

OSTARA

Clarissa Behnke is the daughter of Sonja Behnke, a.k.a. Elmsfauer (see Elmsfauer in **The Volksgest**, following). Clarissa is a practicing wiccan; she claims her powers come from the ancient pagan spirit whose name she's taken as her own. Ostar uses the Energy Controller archetype and controls light. She has 4 ranks in Expertise: Paganism.

RATSEL (OR THE ENIGMA)

Jutta Brandauer keeps her identity secret even from her teammates. She started as a crime-fighting psychic in her home city of Hamburg and joined the Guard hoping their connections would make her fight against crime easier. It has produced mixed results since she is often out of town with the team. Rätsel uses the Psychic archetype with all the telepathic options.

THE VOLKSGEIST

The Volksgeist were the official (and only) super-team of the DDR. Disbanded in 1990, its members have met a number of different fates. Direktor X erased all records of his team from the Stasi archives and most of the members went into hiding.

DIREKTOR X

Bernd Brucker was not only the leader of the Volksgeist: secretly, even to his team, he was also the terrifying Stasi interrogator dubbed Beichtvater (Confessor). After the fall, Brucker was sentenced to a jail term of ten years, but not before hiding various materials taken from the Stasi archives. Freed after serving his sentence, Brucker claims to have reformed and currently lives as a children's book author. He is, of course, under heavy scrutiny from intelligence agencies and superheroes. He sometimes helps his watchers despite the distrust they all have for him. His powers allow him to control nervous systems, so he's able to inflict pain or pleasure with a thought and can even control the bodies of his targets against their will.

ELMSFAUER

Sonja Behnke gained her powers from a strange electrical phenomenon during a rainstorm and was drafted into the Volksgeist. After the fall of the Berlin Wall, she retired from her superhero career and relocated to Cologne to raise her daughter. She returned to duty during an attempt by OVERTHROW to assassinate the federal chancellor in 2007, and is currently the resident heroine of Cologne.

EISENWACHTER (OR THE IRON WATCHMAN)

Andi Fröhlich left his armor behind at the fall of the Berlin Wall and retired to a successful career as an engineer. Worried about the rise of threats like OVERTHROW and MENACE, he designed a totally new battlesuit and field tested it during the demonic invasion of Stuttgart. Today he is known as Maglev. Not even his old teammates are aware that Andi was once part of the Volksgeist, and he has no desire to tell them.

FANGSCHREKE

Trained in People's Republic of China in swordfighting and Praying Mantis Kung-fu as part of an exchange program, Jana Korten became soon the most efficient assassin of East Germany. She disappeared without explanation after the team disbanded. A woman called Ghost Mantis, matching her description and using her trademark sickle swords, has since been reported in southeastern Asia. Working for Dr. Sin's organization, Fangschreke is apparently still active—and youthful—today.

DER ROTER ADLER UND DER SCHWARZER BÄR

During the Cold War, after the Berlin Wall was built, Heinz Stubenburg and his wife tried to sneak into West Germany from East Berlin. Heinz was lucky; his wife was not. Heinz

became the vigilante Schwarzer Adler (Black Eagle), operating on both sides of the wall in order to fight crime, counter spies from the East, and help East Germans escape to the West.

In 1988, in his fifties and feeling less needed after the start of the perestroika, the Black Eagle finally retired and remarried. In 2003, after an OVERTHROW bombing that claimed his new wife among its victims, Heinz recruited a young man who had lost his parents during the same event to become the new protector of the city of Berlin. The young man, Konrad Prinz became der Rötter Adler (the Red Eagle) to honor Heinz's former identity. With support from Stubenburg and his small organization of informants and contacts inside the police and local government, der Rötter Adler soon became the new scourge of the city's criminals. In 2010, after Stubenburg died from a heart attack, the Red Eagle recruited a former college athlete as a sidekick. Paul Mohr, a young mutant gifted with super strength, became der Schwarzer Bär (the Black Bear), second protector of Berlin.

Der Rötter Adler uses the Rook's character sheet included in the Hero's Handbook or in Emerald City. Der Schwarzer Bär uses the Powerhouse archetype, but decrease Strength by 3 ranks and increase Fighting by 3 ranks.

THE FABLES

The Fable Gang, one of the largest supervillain teams in Europe, operates primarily as a mercenary company. The team started in 2004 when the Snow Queen, aided by an unknown benefactor dubbed the Storyteller (actually Direktor X in a new identity (see **The Volksgeist**, earlier in this entry), executed a prison break for the release of Helmut Leblanc and his wife Carola. Helmut, driven by his lycanthropic curse, had committed a series of murders in Dusseldorf. His wife, a former army marksman, had attempted to cover them up.

Dubbing the pair the Big Bad Wolf and Red Hood, the Snow Queen also teamed up with Andreas Niehaus, a former OVERTHROW engineer who received the former Iron Watchman's armor from the Storyteller. With Niehaus as the Tin Soldier, the team began to operate as mercenaries in Europe.

Over the years, the gang accepted new members: the Frog Prince (Alexandre Taillard de Würms, a former French diplomat turned into a Deep One by an Atlantean artifact), Godfather Death (Gino Bazzatti, a non-powered Italian crime-boss), Rapunzel (Nirida Shyr, a lunar refugee whose weird telekinetic powers manifest as strange hair-like tendrils of psionic force), the Wild Man (an exiled Morlock, feral and devilishly cunning mutant), Thumbelina, the Mermaid, and others.

The new members are usually reluctant to use identities based on children stories, but a pact struck between the Snow Queen and the Winter Court fairies requires member of the teams to use easily-identifiable "archetypes" in order to benefit from extraordinarily good luck. Most of the team members don't believe this, but they've been quite successful and the money is good. Goofy names seem a small price to pay.

The team operates from an abandoned asylum near Dresden, formerly used by the Stasi as a clandestine interrogation facility. It has since been converted into a operations center. The above-ground installations include living quarters and recreational areas, while the underground complex provides communications, technological, and scientific facilities.

The team usually finds contracts through the Storyteller (who then contacts the team from his/her own hiding place) or underworld contacts provided by the Frog Prince or Godfather Death.

They've talked about joining forces with the Looking Glass Gang (see *Threat Report*), but the Snow Queen is unwilling to let White Rabbit lead the combined group because he doesn't seem to care about making money, and White Rabbit won't allow Snow Queen to lead because she has no sense of fun and is so materialistic. Regardless, the two talk from time to time, which sometimes leads to them working together and sometimes sets them at odds.

AUSTRIA

With similar history, culture, and language, Austria is often seen as Germany's little brother. It is a relatively safe place, which is at odds with the fact that the country gave birth to the Golden Age villains Nosferatu and Wilhelm Kantor, among others. The only major super-battles here occurred in the late 1970s when the Maestro (see *Freedom City*) temporarily settled here in search of Mozart's lost symphonies. He clashed with the sonic-powered heroine

Singschwan (Song Swan) in Salzburg and Vienna, but quickly returned to America.

The country's peacefulness is commonly attributed to the presence of the UNISON garrison in the United Nations Office in Vienna. However, the truth of the matter is that Austria's tranquility can be attributed to the presence of two great evils, one ancient and one more modern.

In 1938, the Thule Society sent Joscha Von Weldensteyck to Asia Minor to search for artifacts. Although he claimed to have found nothing, in truth Von Weldensteyck discovered the Great Ark, potentially the inspiration for the Biblical ark of Noah. The Ark is an extra-dimensional storage device full of biological and technological samples gathered by the Preservers. Von Weldensteyck eliminated his team to keep his discovery to himself, blaming the hazards of their mission for their deaths. He then returned to Germany and found a power struggle already in progress between Wilhelm Kantor and the Übermensch. The archaeologist knew he couldn't oppose either faction regardless of the outcome, so he hid the Ark in the Austrian Alps and waited.

After the Reich fell, Von Weldensteyck took some followers to Austria and retreated into the Ark. Over the years, in the strange extradimensional space, Weldensteyck and his team studied Preserver technology. They emerged 30 years later, in 1977. None of them had aged a day since entering the Ark, but the world had changed considerably. After familiarizing himself with this new world, Von Weldensteyck realized the dreams of the Thule Society ultimately amounted to nothing.



MENACE & THE DRECKETE PARTY MEET IN THE ARK

Instead of pursuing the dead goals of the Thule Society, Von Weldensteyck decided he would complete the work the Preservers began. Combined with Nazi ideals of eugenics, Von Weldensteyck believed by using the Preservers' knowledge, he could combine the best aspects of all creatures on Earth to create the ultimate race—beginning with himself and his followers. From there, it was only natural that he and his new race would take control of the lesser beings populating the planet. He founded the Multi-Eugenic Network for Acquiring Control of Earth, or MENACE, a force for "evolution through struggle."

His hybrid apex-human followers have infiltrated institutions and the underworld. They sell technology they've derived from the Preservers' artifacts to criminals and super-villains. In order to keep their technological advantage, MENACE keeps an eye on mundane scientific research. Whenever necessary, MENACE agents steal or sabotage research projects that might bring unwanted breakthroughs.

Von Weldensteyck, now known as Master Menace, runs the organization. To the outside world, MENACE is an organization that provides high-tech weapons and experimental treatments to anyone who can meet their price. Their true purpose, however, is to provide criminal organizations and rogue governments with "tools to promote evolution through struggle." In addition, when someone approaches the organization looking for something more exotic, Master Menace is happy to "lift" them out of humanity and into his new race... whatever form that might take for that subject.

Master Menace used political manipulation and pressure to get the U.N. to choose Vienna as its fourth worldwide office. With bribes and blackmail, several of his followers were nominated to high-level positions on the U.N. staff in Vienna. Master Menace knows that one day heroes will challenge him, but he maintains a stable of unsuspecting fall guys (who actually think they are members of MENACE) and creates supervillains (like the Dreckete Partie (see earlier in this entry)) to keep the authorities busy and spread as much conflict as possible.

Most of the world believes MENACE has been defeated and dismantled at least four times in the last twenty years. Each time a new group has taken up the name. The current, public incarnation of MENACE includes the Dreckete Partie (see earlier in this entry), a biker gang employed by Master Menace as enforcers and eventual fall guys. Master Menace himself spends most of his time in the Ark, experimenting, researching, collecting information, and planning.

THE ARK

HQ • 27 POINTS

Size: Minuscule/Awesome • **Toughness:** 18 • **Features:** Communications, Computer, Dual Size, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Laboratory, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Sealed, Secret, Security System x2 (DC 25), Self-repairing, Teleport (Portal), Temporal Limbo x5 (1/64th outside time), Workshop

The Ark resembles a pod or capsule just a few yards long on the outside, but is much larger inside, including a

complex of rooms, corridors, and laboratories. Due to its strange properties, Master Menace and his staff do not age while in the Ark. Von Weldensteyck, born more than 100 years ago, is physically only in his 40s. The Ark is currently hidden in a warehouse in downtown Vienna. Thanks to his understanding of it, Master Menace and his minions can open dimensional doorways to it from all around the city as needed.

INNSBRUCK

Centuries ago, Austria became home to a refugee from ancient Greece: the satyr Marsyas. Marsyas barely escaped from Olympus with his life after being caught trafficking with demons. The corrupted satyr settled in the mountains of Tyrol, giving birth to the legends of Krampus, the punisher of bad children. Soon, the satyr met the man-bull Taurus who brought the demonic fey into his Zodiac Cabal as the Capricorn. For centuries, the satyr was the loyal companion to Taurus, corrupting and subverting humans like the Knights Templar (who called him Baphomet) for the glory of the Zodiac. Marsyas met his fate during the 18th century at the hand of Daedalus, who scattered the ashes of the satyr on a swath of ground near Innsbrück. Two centuries later, the vampiric count Varney Orloff accidentally found the resting place of Marsyas when he sensed evil energy radiate from the ground.

Orloff called in the Thule Society, which quickly seized the opportunity to acquire more power. They built a secret concentration camp at the precise spot of Marsyas's death. For years, the Society sacrificed hundreds of innocents there, feeding the corruption in the soil with their suffering and using the dark energies to power their own unholy rituals. As the war drew to a close, the staff dismantled the camp and went into hiding, leaving the site abandoned and undetected for 60 years.

Recently, a mysterious mystic only known as der Hexenmeister reoccupied the derelict site. Hoping to resurrect "Krampus," the sorcerer performed some rituals and discovered that the sacrifice of evil souls was actually more efficient than sacrificing innocents. In order to acquire sacrifices, he started abducting (and sacrificing) some of the most prominent members of the Austrian criminal underworld. Local heroes and the mob are all are trying to figure out what's going on, but Marsyas has already gained sentience and will be resurrected soon. Der Hexenmeister believes he will control the demon, but Marsyas has other plans.

THE NETHERLANDS

Depending on whom you ask, the Netherlands is either a land of freedom and plenty, or a modern Sodom and Gomorrah where one may smoke pot and visit the prostitutes of the famed Red Light District. Visitors should be aware of a couple pieces of information: first, a large portion of the country is fairly conservative. Second, Dutch legislation has restricted activities like pot smoking to only Dutch nationals in recent years, and has taken

other initiatives (some under pressure from the European Union) to address prostitution and recreational drugs. It remains one of the most freethinking countries on the continent, but is not so different from Belgium or Portugal in its policies.

Due to the size of the country, the Dutch superhuman scene is rather small, being limited to Ajax and a handful of other heroes and villains (except Ondersdam, see following). This doesn't mean the country hasn't had its share of the supernatural, including Bernard Fokke, the cursed captain of the Flying Dutchman in the 18th century, and the famous vampire hunter Abraham Van Helsing in the 1890s.

World War II didn't produce superhumans in the Netherlands like it did in other countries, but a few heroes like Jakob Van Helsing, grandson of the famous Abraham, battled the vampiric minions of the Nosferatu and even Dracula himself on more than one occasion.

For most of the second half of the 20th century, the country saw no superhuman activity. This changed with the appearance of the paragon Ajax (named not for the mythological character but for Amsterdam's main soccer club, for which the ancient hero is the mascot) and by the 2004 event called the Amsterdam Ascent. Today, paranormal activity is quite high in Amsterdam (although not at the same level as New York, Freedom City, or even London) but mostly hidden from the public eye. Similar activity is almost nonexistent anywhere else in the country.

AMSTERDAM, VENICE OF THE NORTH

The postcard picture of Amsterdam is well known: an old, incredibly dense city with canals, bike paths, and tramways where no sane person dares to drive a car, inhabited by the most tolerant people on the planet. Although the people are very open, the city has changed a bit since the Ascent took place ten years ago. Unknown to most of the population, 20% of the city's residents are non-human.

Amsterdam's origins are fuzzy. It apparently grew from a small village near a dam on the Amstel River. The area was still at the bottom of an unnamed bay on the Rhine delta thousands of years ago when Atlanteans built a mystically-camouflaged underground aquatic complex on the site for use as a base of operations for the North Sea and an outpost for subterranean explorations.

As the Atlantean-Lemurian war progressed, a party of Atlantean survivalists took up residence in the hidden outpost, planning to use it as a refuge in case of a Lemurian victory. This faction expanded the complex to an arcology capable of housing several thousand residents, complete with water-recycling technology and food production facilities.

Unfortunately, Morlocks found and invaded the city a few years after its completion and the Atlanteans were forced to evacuate and destroy the base by collapsing the underwater entrance after filling the tunnels with toxic gas. The Morlocks retreated and sealed the tunnels to escape

the fumes. Sealed from both sides and disguised by powerful magicks, the underground city was forgotten by all and left abandoned for thousands of years. In that time, humans reclaimed the land above the complex from the sea and settled in a small village right above the forsaken city.

In the 1980s, Jerris Trent, the man who would become the Terra-King, began his rise to power. He repeatedly subjugated, absorbed, or destroyed the tribes of Sub-Terrans and Morlocks. But every war has its refugees, and several tribes of fleeing Sub-Terran people fell under the sway of a charismatic Morlock mutant: the future Wild Man of the Fable Gang (see earlier in this entry) had learned of the Atlantean complex from ancient writings. A clever tactician, he knew the potential of such a location. Leading his followers on a long, frustrating search, he eventually found the abandoned city, where the Morlock king organized a thriving community of several thousand followers with the ultimate purpose of overthrowing the Terra-King. He even used Atlantean technology to genetically alter some of his fellow Morlocks and Sub-Terrans, making them more intelligent and less prone to react with violence. The Wild Man, aware of the existence of the human city above, instructed his people to create hidden passages into Amsterdam. These paths and tunnels served as a way to acquire resources and as escape routes.

The Terra-King finally grew tired of skirmishes with the Wild Man's followers and after allowing a number of his followers to be captured in hopes of one escaping to give him the location of his enemy's base, he was able to plan his attack. Terra-King launched a massive assault on the ancient Atlantean hide-out. Outnumbered, the Wild Man ordered his followers to take the only remaining option, fleeing to the surface with instructions to seize power from the humans.

Amsterdam found itself invaded by thousands of Sub-Terran and Morlock refugees, some hostile and others only seeking escape. Ajax intervened, and SWORD, the Bundesguard, and the Brigade Fantastique were called in as reinforcements. Despite the chaos, Ajax was able to figure out what was going on and prevent wholesale slaughter across the city. The heroes defeated and locked up the Wild Man (who shortly escaped and joined the Fables) and stopped the attack of the Terra-King. The Sub-Terrans and Morlocks, uncomfortable with living aboveground, mostly returned to their hidden city. Most likely because of the powerful spells concealing the subterranean outpost, the people of Amsterdam believed the Ascent was resolved with few long-term effects. This, however, was not the case.

Ajax understood all too well what it was to be an outcast (see Ajax for more information), and decided to help the hapless subterranean civilians start new lives and peacefully exist below Amsterdam and the people who knew nothing of the new city under their feet. Ajax helped them establish their own realm, called "Ondersdam," which is ruled jointly by some of the more intelligent and advanced members of both races, with input and guidance by Ajax.

AJAX

PL13 · 234 POINTS

STR 15 STA 15 AGL 4 DEX 2 FGT 8 INT 4 AWE 2 PRE 3

Powers: **Cosmic Energy Channeling Armor** (Removable; **Cosmic Blast** (Ranged Damage 12), **Enhanced Abilities** (Enhanced Fighting 3, Enhanced Stamina 5, Enhanced Strength 5), **Flight Booster** (Flight 6 (Stacks with Flight 4; total Flight 10 (2,000 MPH)), **Immortality Circuit** (Immunity 1 (Aging)), **Improved Invulnerability** (Impervious Toughness 12, Regeneration 2); **Cosmic Flight** (Flight 4 (30 MPH)); **Ultiman Invulnerability** (Enhanced Stamina 8, Enhanced Strength 8, Immunity 11 (Life Support, Starvation and Thirst)); **Ultiman Psionics** (Comprehend 2 (Languages; Speak, Understand All), Mind Reading 2)

Advantages: Benefit (Alderman), Chokehold, Close Attack 3, Connected, Diehard, Fearless, Improved Grab, Inspire 2, Interpose, Languages 4 (Arabic, English, French, German, Russian, Spanish, Dutch native), Luck 2, Power Attack

Skills: Expertise: Art 2 (+6), Expertise: Geography 4 (+8), Expertise: History 4 (+8), Expertise: Philosophy 4 (+8), Expertise: Politics 6 (+10), Expertise: Tactics 6 (+10), Insight 8 (+10), Investigation 4 (+8), Perception 9 (+11), Persuasion 7 (+10), Ranged Combat: Cosmic Blast 8 (+10), Technology 8 (+12)

Offense: Initiative +4, Cosmic Blast +10 (Ranged, Damage 12), Unarmed +11 (Close, Damage 15)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 11, Fortitude 15, Toughness 15, Will 11

Totals: Abilities 48 + Powers 113 + Advantages 19 + Skills 35 + Defenses 19 = 234

Complications: **Identity:** Ajax maintains his secret identity as a social worker, but he finds he has less and less time to dedicate to it. **Motivation—Acceptance:** In secret, Ajax longs to be accepted somewhere for what he truly is. He has always felt like a fish out of water no matter where he goes. **Responsibility:** Ajax feels responsible for the people in Amsterdam, human or otherwise.

Note: Without his Cosmic Energy Channeling Armor to properly regulate and direct his innate cosmic energy, Ajax's Strength and Stamina drop to 10, Fighting drops to 5, he only has Flight 4, and doesn't have his Cosmic Blast. These things combine to make him only PL 11.

Over the past decade, by virtue of this agreement and under the tutelage of Ajax, Amsterdam has become something like a superpowered Casablanca to those in-the-know. Citizens underground and above generally do not mix, but there is a small amount of back-and-forth between the two cities. On the surface, low-powered mutants have started their own community, while conspiracy theorists who believe the Ascent was covered up in order

to hide... something come to test their theories. Some of these are scientists driven by rumors to investigate whatever technology or artifacts are hidden below the city. The rulers of Atlantis, who are aware of Ondersdam, are afraid of others getting their hands on Atlantean technology and have petitioned to open a small "embassy" nearby in a facility on the bottom of the lake named the IJsselmeer.

While Ondersdam is part of Amsterdam and vice versa, they are also their own entities. Most people in Amsterdam know their city has changed since the Ascent, but the changes have only made the city more interesting, with strange sightings and rumors of a hidden world existing "alongside" Amsterdam. The citizens of Ondersdam, have as little contact with the city above as possible. They prefer to stay in their "city below" unless they need something only found aboveground. There are a few people (including some in the criminal underworld) from Amsterdam who have established connections with people in the city below, but to the average citizen, Ondersdam is unknown.

Ajax protects both cities and tries to keep both communities satisfied while simultaneously keeping crime and smuggling under control.

Ajax also serves as an alderman on the city council of Amsterdam (in his heroic identity) and helps with day-to-day problems in the city. Slingerklok and Dulle Griet (see following) help him on a regular basis, so often that the three have been nicknamed de Nacht Wacht (the Night Watch, after the famous Rembrandt painting) by the Dutch media.

AJAX

The year was 1943. The Nazis were everywhere in the Netherlands, including the Amsterdam *Kommandantur*, celebrating one of their victories with Dutch collaborators. With a bag full of papers stolen from the Nazis carefully hidden under her evening gown, Bloeme had yet to fulfill the remaining part of her mission: sneaking out of the party and delivering the documents to the Dutch Resistance. Every exit from the hotel was heavily guarded, but perhaps there was a way.... this tall muscular Nazi officer called Der Übermensch. A smile, a wink, some seductive talk, and soon the big blond was escorting her to his car. The mission was a success.

The story should have stopped there, but morning sickness a few weeks later told Bloeme



AJAX

that it was far from over. The brief encounter required for her escape had resulted in pregnancy. Nine months later, Jan Witteveen was born “of unknown father.” But Jan was not a normal kid: he was stronger and tougher than any other child, and soon he displayed the disturbing ability to “guess” what other people were thinking. Believing himself a mutant, the young Jan was devastated years later when his mother finally told him the truth of his birth. While he sought and found his biological father, Superior was less than willing to accept him. His father harshly rejected Jan, calling him a hindrance and potential weakness he wouldn’t allow himself.

Superior telepathically instructed his son to seek Ultima Thule, the city of his people (because he did not want to see the youngster wander unchecked). The Ultimen welcomed him as a lost relative, and for many years Jan studied the culture and technology of the hidden city. He even built a suit of armor that allowed him to harness the cosmic power inside him.

As the years passed, Jan noticed he was not seen as a normal member of the race. People were kind, but talked down to him because of his relatively minor powers. Finally, during a dispute where harsh words were exchanged, someone called him “the half-blood son of a traitor.” Hurt deeply, Jan decided to leave the city and wander the world to find his true place. For most of the 1980s and ‘90s, Jan drifted from location to location, often living a normal life, but sometimes adopting a heroic identity. In Canada he was known as the Prime Ranger. In Argentina, el Caballero Andante. In New Zealand, Cosmic Spirit. And in Spain, Maximo, the identity in which he had a hand in defeating the dragon Sugaar. After his mother passed away, he returned to Amsterdam and took the name Ajax. The Amsterdam Ascent forced him to assume the position of mediator and peacekeeper, which he maintains today.

Ajax appears to be a tall blond man in his thirties. He possesses most of the physical attributes of the classic Ultiman, but lacks their cosmic energy control. He must rely on his costume to channel his inner energy to better effect.

SLINGERKLOK

Elmer van den Borre had just completed the pentagram to summon Casriel, Angel of Saturn and guardian of the Rivers of Time, when the authorities knocked at his door. In the year 1654, the colony of Nieuw Amsterdam was far from a haven for sorcerers like him. All he wanted was to travel one month backwards in time and save the love of his life who had drowned in a tragic accident. Until that day, he had always refrained from using time magic. The militia had spotted him buying components for the ritual, but the great spirit was already summoned and awaiting van den Borre’s request when the men rushed in to stop him. The next thing Elmer knew, he was in an immense city of stone, noise, repulsive fumes, and strangely dressed people. He was accosted and then chased by men in blue uniforms and fought back with spells that panicked witnesses and caught the attention of a superhero. After the

altercation, Elmer realized he wasn’t 35 days in the past but 350 years in the future, in the same town, now called New York.

Lost in a city where almost no one spoke his native language and unable to travel back to his own time, Elmer returned to the Netherlands and, at Ajax’s request, helped with the Ondersdam situation. Elmer adopted a costumed identity as Slingerklok (Pendulum), the town’s mystical expert.

Slingerklok uses the Mystic archetype; however, add Detect 2 (space-time disturbances, radius) and Comprehend 4 (Objects 2, Spirits 2), plus, as one of his array’s alternate effects, add Summon 6 (Active, Controlled).

DULLE GRIET

Coming from a long line of vampire hunters, Margreet Van Helsing learned how to stake a bloodsucker before her first driving lesson. Her ancestor Abraham had hunted and fought Dracula across Europe and her grandfather Jakob had destroyed countless minions of the Nosferatu before being killed in the line of duty in South America in the 1960s. Her father Hendrik hunted Dracula after the Lord of Vampires resurfaced.

In retaliation, the vampire turned Hendrik’s young siblings Hannes and Gerda into the undead monsters later known as Hansel and Gretel of the Fable Gang (see earlier in this entry). The pair were finally put to rest at the cost of Hendrik’s life. Since then, Margreet has sworn to stake Dracula, relentlessly hunting any supernatural threat around the world, even earning the nickname of Dulle Griet (Mad Meg) in the Dutch occult world.

Dulle Griet uses an arsenal of mystical weapons gathered by her family over the years, ranging from stakes and blessed guns to holy water grenades.

Dulle Griet uses the Crime Fighter archetype. She has Expertise: Occult and Expertise: Magic both at 8 ranks. She also has 10 additional points of magic-related equipment (holy water, silver bullets, and so on). As a Feature, all her attacks have the Holy or Magic descriptor, due to blessings and rituals she performs over her equipment.

SWITZERLAND

Banks, mountains, neutrality, and chocolate create a simplistic caricature of Switzerland, but there is much more to the country. Many international institutions have their offices in Geneva, and Switzerland is one of the most militaristic countries in the world. A majority of its young men are conscripted and undergo military training. Militia members keep personal weapons at home as part of their military obligations, so Switzerland has one of the highest gun ownership rates in the world. Switzerland is also a country of science and research and is the home of CERN (European Council for Nuclear Research), which operates the largest particle accelerator in the world, the Large Hadron Collider, near the French border.

Despite a couple of major hostage crises in Geneva in the 1990s (an attack on the UN office by OVERTHROW

and an attempted plane hijacking by the Power Corps), Switzerland exhibits almost no paranormal activity. The Oath Fellowship (Eidgenossenschaft), the country's only super-team, was formed in the 1980s, but disbanded due to inactivity after only a few months, its three members returning to civilian life. In terms of superhuman activity, the country is eerily quiet. There are no local superheroes and there are no supervillains, not even the occasional visiting foreigner, despite the country being one of the richest in the world. Most of the Swiss attribute this tranquility to the efficiency of their police, the presence of the UNISON Garrison in Geneva, and, to a lesser extent, the existence of private militias employed by Swiss corporations.

The truth is far more unsavory. It is well known that the Nazis once hid a large part of their stolen gold in the Swiss banks protected by the legendary secrecy and neutrality of Switzerland. When Wilhelm Kantor fled Germany after World War II, he used this money to finance the creation and operation of SHADOW. That organization is only one of the criminal organizations secretly using Switzerland as a place to consolidate power and money. The various mafias, OVERTHROW, rogue states and their petty dictators, criminal masterminds... none of them is dumb enough to draw attention or cause trouble here. The criminal underworld came to a consensus that is still in effect today: "Leave Switzerland alone or face retribution." Most of the criminal operations taking place in Switzerland are conducted the old-fashioned way: in expensive suits. No noisy super-battle has occurred in the Swiss Alps in decades.

While the agreement in the underworld to leave Switzerland alone explains the lack of super-criminals in the country, it is still odd the country lacks any superheroes. Yet Switzerland hasn't attracted any heroes as permanent residents or defenders. The reason for that is the Labyrinth.

ENTER THE LABYRINTH

From his lair near Zurich, Taurus controls his "organization," and the last thing he wants is to dodge heroes flying above his home. It is estimated that Taurus controls or can exert pressure on almost 30% of the Swiss economy through infiltrated agents, dummy corporations, proxies, favors, and so on. The Labyrinth has agents scattered throughout the country. Most are informants reporting any unusual activity (economic or otherwise). If superhuman activity is suspected, Taurus sends a team of special investigators. If the problem is confirmed, it is dealt with discreetly and efficiently. The old bull is extremely careful with these operations. Any mistake could bring unwelcome attention to his base.

In the late 1540s, while disguised as a normal person, the man-bull met the seer Nostradamus in Venice. The immortal was intrigued by the predictions of the astrologer who

claimed that a time would come when economics would be the true power in the world, surpassing royalty and politics. Nostradamus also foresaw the coming of beings whose great power dwarfed even the heroes of ancient times. Stealing a book of the man's prophecies, Taurus abandoned his vendetta against Daedalus and used the cryptic quatrains contained in the book to take over the world from behind the scenes. The man-bull schemed and plotted over the next four centuries, creating cults and secret societies devoted to him—such as the Illuminati and the Carbonari—and infiltrating others—such as the Freemasons and the Thule Society. He accumulated vast wealth and influence. In the 1910s, Taurus finally settled at his current home in Switzerland, overseeing the small country's rise to financial power.

In the 1930s, Europe saw the rise of the first modern superheroes. Taurus understood that the age of heroes Nostradamus told him about was beginning. He also understood very clearly that he had to control such beings, direct them, and even create them if needed. The first two he recruited became the German agent Doppelganger and the French vigilante Belphegor (see the **Western Europe** entry). When France surrendered, Taurus simply ordered Belphegor to switch sides and join the Axis. The Allied powers won the war, but Taurus was still in an excellent position: Europe was mostly empty of super-beings and he had plenty of time and resources to extend the Labyrinth internationally.

Today, the Labyrinth has influence in almost every part of the world, especially the United States. Taurus still keeps a close eye on Western Europe, however, due to his Zurich base. He has agents and allies in every country. He trades with the Morlocks and Serpent People in Ondersdam. He has infiltrated organizations like NATO and the UN. He has even infiltrated some European hero teams to stay ahead of any initiative against the Labyrinth. (Who exactly is on Taurus's payroll is up to the GM. The most likely candidates are Baroud from la Brigade Fantastique, Rätsel of the Bundesguard, Cro-Magnon, and Grifo.)

The conflict with OVERTHROW in Munich is annoying to Taurus, but manageable. So are most of the superhero teams on the continent. The worst enemy of the Labyrinth, however, is MENACE. The two organizations look similar as they both rely on misdirection and conspiracies, but their goals are opposite each other. MENACE wants to obliterate modern society and rebuild something new from the ashes. The Labyrinth wants to subvert—but maintain—the system to its own ends. The Labyrinth has no use for unchecked bands of ravaging super-beings, and MENACE has no room for a rival in its schemes for world conquest. So far the conflict has remained covert, but matters could easily escalate into a full underworld war.

For a more complete look on the Labyrinth, see *Freedom City*.

EASTERN EUROPE

It's hard to say what part of the region is "Eastern Europe." Does it include the non-Slavic Baltics, Finland, Hungary, or Romania? Or the Czech Republic, which was part of Germanic culture for centuries? The most commonly accepted definition is simply "the European part of the former Soviet Bloc", excluding Russia, Ukraine, Belarus, and East Germany. Belarus is for all intents and purposes firmly part of Russia's sphere of influence, while Ukraine is seeking to define itself with mixed results.

The history of this region is as rich and complex as Western Europe's. It was WWII and the subsequent Soviet occupation that shaped the current "superhero scene" in this part of the world, not ancient heroes and medieval kings. Here are the bloodlands—places where WWII was not a just war, but a terrible butchery. On Earth-Prime the war was more colorful and vivid than on Earth—but it was at least as vile and despicable.

Eastern Europe is host to tyrannies, extreme poverty, mobs, and violence, all of which combine every few years to transform parts of the region into apocalyptic nightmares. Eastern Europe has sometimes been described as "Third World aspiring to be First World." On the one hand, visiting American or Western heroes can expect relatively modern infrastructure like healthcare and public transportation system as well as the rapid westernization of the area. On the other, blatant shortcomings like corruption, organized crime, bureaucracy, and Western culture supplanting the local culture, as well as acceptance of bigotry and fanaticism, make life hard for superheroes expecting European standards. Due to poverty and history there are fewer heroes here—but a lot of problems requiring heroes.

THE BARONY OF VOLKAVIA

The Barony of Volkavia is a small country that exemplifies the chaotic turmoil in Eastern Europe during much of its history. It has been a playground of various empires, but it has recently emerged from that history as a fully independent state.

The first mentions of this territory as an independent region come from manuscripts of Orthodox monks, mentioning "Volkhvia, land of witches, where pagans dwell among the pious." A couple of centuries later, invaded by

the infamous Vlad Tepes, it became a part of Transylvania, and later, Hungary. At that time, it was famously called "the most cursed domain in a cursed kingdom," but this didn't stop the Ottoman empire from absorbing it. Eventually Volkavia came under the rule of the Austro-Hungarian crown as a semi-independent barony. The new baron was Paul Sternberg, a powerful warlock who wanted even more power. He wanted to build a lasting legacy, so he gathered a host of wizards, witches, and other sorcerers, to serve as protectors and advisors for his daughter. He never mastered enough of the magical arts to grant himself immortality, but he wanted to ensure a bright future for his only child, Natasha Sternberg von Volkavia.

Natasha was smart, beautiful, and ambitious. When her father died, she took her rightful place as leader of Volkavia. As the empires crumbled, she installed herself as the monarch of a newly-emerged, independent Volkavia.

After a couple of years, she stepped down, and allowed the fascist National Movement to run the government—though in reality she ran the country from behind the scenes, preferring to transfer all the blame and responsibility to pro-Nazi puppets. Eventually, Volkavia joined World War II as an Axis state. This made the small nation an enemy of the Allies, particularly the Russian army.

After the war, the state was in ruins—the previous leaders were dead or escaped in the chase, the economy was in shambles, and various ethnic groups were at each other's throats. One of Russia's frontline heroes, Bogatyr, worked relentlessly to maintain a semblance of peace, dispatching horrors created by the Academy of Set's students. In the end he and the baroness made a pact: Baroness von Volkavia was allowed to remain the power behind the public leaders, provided that the country joined the Soviet bloc as a puppet republic. The Soviets ignored the Academy of Set—in their Communist, rational utopia, magic was meaningless.

After the Autumn of Nations in 1989, when the rest of Eastern Europe overthrew the Soviet system, sometimes violently, sometimes peacefully, Volkavia remained Communist. The Volkavian Communist Party remained in power, governed by yet another of the baroness's puppets, until the late 1990s. The baroness, her life magically extended, eventually claimed leadership of the country publicly, posing as her own granddaughter, mi-





BARONESS VON VOLKAVIA

raculously returning to her motherland after years hidden in exile. She formed a new government and Volkavia took a firmly pro-Western course.

BARONESS NATASHA VON VOLKAVIA PL10 • 241 POINTS

STR 0 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 3 FGT 1 INT 6 AWE 3 PRE 5

Powers: **Adept of Illusion** (Illusion 4, Affects Sound and Sight, Area); **Mistress of Summoning** (Summoning 8, Heroic, Horde, Multiple Minions 2 (four 120-point minions), Responsive*, Variable type (spirits), Activation (standard action)); **Ritual of Immortality** (Immunity 1(Aging))

Equipment: Light pistol (Ranged Damage 3), smartphone

Advantages: Attractive 2, Benefit 1 (Diplomatic Immunity), Benefit 3 (Multi-millionaire), Benefit 3 (Cipher), Benefit 3 (Status (ruler of a small country)), Equipment 2, Fascinate (Deception), Minion 6 (90 power points), Ritualist.

Skills: Deception 7 (+14), Expertise: Magic 8 (+14), Insight 3 (+7), Intimidation 6 (+13), Investigation 4 (+10), Perception 2 (+6), Persuasion 6 (+13), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+8), Sleight of Hand 6 (+10), Technology 1 (+7), Vehicles 3 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +2, Light Pistol +8 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 8, Toughness 4 Will 12

Totals: Abilities 58 + Powers 111 + Advantages 23 + Skills 25 + Defenses 24 = 241

Complications: **Motivation—Greed:** She can never have enough power, knowledge, or magic. **Entitlement:** She believes she is owed her place in the world and that Volkavia, at the very least, is *her* country. **Hatred:** The Baroness hates children; perhaps they remind her that she's ancient? **Power Loss:** The Baroness can't cast spells if muted and immobilized.

* Responsive allows her to command her summoned minions with a free action. (See *Power Profiles*.)

Most of the nation's governmental responsibilities are handled by Prime Minister Alexandru Kreplach. He appeared from nowhere in 2003 and created the Patriotic Volkavian party. Since then, he's been re-elected twice with an astounding 95% of the vote. Kreplach is a figurehead, handling the day-to-day running of Volkavia, but ultimately answering to Baroness Natasha, who he claims to be independent from, but slavishly worships in private.

BARONESS NATASHA VON VOLKAVIA

This impressive, imposing, and apparently young woman is in fact over two hundred years old. A descendant of an old family of warlocks, she discovered ways to prolong her youth and beauty. She's probably the person most responsible for Volkavia's current state as a backward, crime-ridden country limping into the modern day. For most of the country's modern history, she's ruled it in various forms—as the distant noble ruler before WWII, fascist manipulator during the war, people's commissar during Soviet times, and now as the long lost, but restored monarch and friend of the people.

Natasha was born into privilege, and she believes it is her right to rule for as long as she is able, which is centuries in her case. She cares little about the common people of Volkavia—they exist only to fulfill her commands. She's set up a system of puppet rulers, and most common Volkavians think she's just a figurehead doing a decent job representing the country abroad. She's a specialist in summoning demonic and elemental creatures from beyond the veil, and is interested mostly in magical experimentation and living the high life as a rich international socialite with a weakness for sports cars.

She resents SHADOW, though the organization would like to establish a power base in Eastern Europe and recruit her to their side... and gain access to the Academy of Set. She rebuffs their overtures, preferring instead to live comfortably rather than risk her rule, and possibly her life, in yet another failed scheme to take over the world.

THE ACADEMY OF SET

The dark magicians have to come from somewhere. Some dark wizards and insane warlocks are self-taught, but the Academy of Set has a long legacy of bringing forth talented mages. Founded by a former baron of Volkavia, it has little connection to ancient Egypt—Napoleon's adventures in the land of pharaohs had excited the imagination of the aristocracy throughout Europe. The Academy's intent was to divulge the arts considered "forbidden" by Earth-Prime's Master Mage, and aid the bloodline of the baron in cementing his power over the region. The adepts are now recruited from the ranks of rich European occultists. In general, they're taught loyalty to the baroness, but as long as they oppose the current Master Mage and any heroes allied with him, they're given mostly free rein—though some organizations and masterminds can always use the Academy as a source of magical backup-for-hire. Such mercenary work is actually a major export of Volkavia, cleverly hidden by the baroness.

Initially it was placed in the ruins of an orthodox monastery destroyed by Turks; subsequently, it was moved to an abandoned palace, and most recently into an abandoned post-Soviet factory complex. Deep past the layers of peeling of paint, and dusty and dirty corridors, you can reach clean and quite well-maintained rooms and classrooms adorned with cryptic occult symbols. At any given time, there are one or two teachers (Crimson Mask and/or Baroness Natasha), three to five students of some ability (PL 6–8), and twice as many dabblers (PL 3–5, often civilians with the Ritualist advantage).

Player characters might be connected to the Academy in multiple ways. In general, the people working there don't think of themselves as immoral, just amoral. A heroic character might have actually been educated at the Academy. The members could make interesting allies, not just sources for enemies or other challenges.

POLAND

In Poland there's a legend of a sleeping knight who awakens whenever the country is in need. He reportedly fought off Mongol hordes in the 13th century, protected the Catholic sanctuaries from Swedes in the 1600s, and more over the years. He always wore black armor, and eventually when he reappeared in 1905 during numerous revolutions, he was simply called Ostatni Rycerz, or the Last Knight.

Despite Poland facing what turned out to be the greatest threat in her history—allied Nazi and Soviet armies—the Knight failed to awaken. The few Poles who had faith in

him lost it seemingly forever when he failed to appear. The Knight was in fact captured before he could awaken by Hans Graumach, who later became the Nazi super-soldier known as Die Eule ("The Owl"). As a gesture of friendship and good will, the knight was transferred to Stalin's infamous science city of Atomgrad-2, where it was determined that he was a sort of spirit of the nation, emerging only when Poland needed him. Both for ideological reasons and scientific curiosity, they killed the host of the Last Knight and stored his armor in Mongolia, miles from Polish soil. After Stalin's death, the exact location of the armor was purged from Atomgrad's records and is lost and officially considered destroyed.

If the Soviets' goal was to literally keep the Polish people's spirit down, they apparently failed. Poles often rebelled against Communism, eventually organizing the first free election in the Soviet Bloc. On the other hand, there were a few bloody uprisings and certainly no other Polish superhero has appeared since. Any villains in the country are either handled by the police, military, UNISON, or by the visiting Lithuanian hero Iron Wolf (see later in this entry).

While no Pole would openly admit that his or her country needs heroes, particularly foreign ones, sometimes a situation might become too much to handle. A visiting team of American heroes might be offered a state (or even EU) sponsorship, complete with headquarters, some fairly decent gear, and, unfortunately, a couple of recurring enemies, like the European or the Dragon of Wawel Hill. Heroes with any kind of Polish ancestry could quickly become media darlings.

The Knight could manifest again, either as a hero or as a villain, twisted by Soviet super-science. The Knight's armor grants the wearer a set of basic effects (Removable, 45 points) that the player or GM may add to if they wish.

The Last Knight's appearances were all before the age of heroes—so he has only ever fought conventional foes. Depending on the need of the country, the powers might drastically change—if in your series Europe is threatened

KNIGHT'S ARMOR

47 POINTS

(Removable, –12 points)

Mystic Armor (Protection 10, Enhanced Strength 6, Enhanced Fighting 6) • 34 points

Defender of the People (Enhanced Advantages 8 (Defensive Attack, Diehard, Fearless, Improved Critical 2 (Swords), Power Attack, Takedown, Uncanny Dodge) • 8 points

Veteran's Knowledge (Enhanced Skills 4 (Athletics 2 (+4 ranks), Close Combat: Swords 2 (+4 ranks)) • 4 points

Mystic Sword (Strength-based Damage 3, Penetrating 10) • 13 points

Complications: In addition to the above abilities, the Knight's Armor also gives the wearer the following complications: **Motivation—Patriotism:** The Knight represents the people of Poland and takes the role of protector seriously. **Hatred:** The Knight is possessed of strong feelings of hatred toward any national foe of Poland. **Memory Loss:** The person taking on the mantle of the Knight slowly loses his or her memories and sense of self as the Knight fully takes control.

by an alien invasion, the armor might bestow Flight and Immunity (Life Support). The knight might also change with the times, receiving Enhanced Technology, Communication with computers, and Comprehend machines if sentient machines are going to be a major threat.

THE EUROPEAN

In Eastern Europe even the noblest of ideas (perhaps especially these) are inevitably corrupted and drawn into the service of cruelty and madness. While the inhabitants of Eastern Europe are generally fairly positive about joining the European Union, Ernest Unkowski has taken it to the extreme. Ernest was born in Gdansk, a major port on the Baltic Sea. His father was a sailor, and he visited Freedom City during the years in which Communism crumbled. When he returned home, he inspired his son with tales of heroes who fought for causes they believed in. Ernest's father was a staunch Polish patriot and fervent believer in democracy and a pro-Western course for Poland.

His son inherited his belief in democracy and human rights, but not his patriotism. He's seen much of "Europe" and the West through the lens of



THE EUROPEAN

TV and his father's fantastic tales, growing more and more dissatisfied with the harsh realities of unemployment, starvation, and widespread corruption. He became more and more obsessed with European federalism, seeing it as a cure to all the local ills, and when Poland finally joined European Union he began to take matters into his own hands. Rumors of the harsh training regimen at Claremont Academy inspired him to devote more and more time to perfect his own physical and mental abilities.

Ernest became a self-professed champion of European unity and universal brotherhood. Sadly, despite his claims, he is really just a violent terrorist. He has an irrational hatred of patriotism of all kinds and does everything to destroy its manifestations. He attacks celebrations of national holidays, heads of state, and any hero with a patriotic motif, often with lethal results. The EU and other pan-European organizations condemn him unanimously.

THE USTKA AMBUSH: A BLAST FROM THE PAST

Ustka is now a fairly popular seaside resort in Poland, but it used to be a German city in Pomerania.

Among the heroic community, it's best known for the infamous Ustka ambush, where William Kantor, later known as Over-

shadow, wanted to end the threat of rogue superhumans in Europe. Most heroes operating in Europe were lured to Ustka in December 1941, where Nacht-Krieger and other Übersoldaten were waiting. It's perhaps appropriate that it was the Czechoslovak Romani, Polish Jewish Golem, and a French fighter that fell to the German onslaught, while the remnants escaped to found the Allies of Freedom.

Nacht-Krieger rejoiced in killing Mehire and Guillotine and destroyed Golemeth when he was weakened by his struggle with Schwarzpanzer (Black Panther). The remaining heroes distracted the Nazis, freed the hostages, and, partly in honor of the fallen comrades, decided to go on working together. The rest is history.

Most of the Übersoldaten survived the confrontation to clash with the Allies of Freedom more than once in the following years. Germans also retained control of Ustka. After the battle the bodies of the dead heroes were transported to Germany for scientific study, while Schwarzpanzer received a hero's funeral, buried with much fanfare in a specially prepared monument (though in secret he was actually sacrificed to empower Nacht-Krieger). When the Red Army liberated Pomerania a

THE EUROPEAN

PL8 • 142 POINTS

STR 5 STA 4 AGL 5 DEX 5 FGT 8 INT 3 AWE 1 PRE 4

Equipment: Eurosuit (Protection 2, Subtle), Visor (Senses 3 (Darkvision, Extended vision)), Motorcycle, Assault Rifle (Ranged Multiattack Damage 5), Frag Grenades (Ranged Burst Area Damage 5), Smartphone, Multi-tool

Advantages: All-out Attack, Chokehold, Close Attack 2, Evasion 2, Equipment 10, Favored Foe (Patriotic heroes), Languages 6 (All languages of the European Union), Power Attack, Ranged Attack 5

Skills: Athletics 5 (+10), Deception 4 (+8), Expertise: Demolitions 7 (+10), Insight 4 (+5), Intimidation 8 (+12), Investigation 7 (+10), Perception 4 (+5), Persuasion 6 (+10), Stealth 8 (+13), Technology 5 (+8), Treatment 2 (+5), Vehicles 2 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +5, Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 5), Assault Rifle +10 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 5), Grenade — (Ranged, Burst Area Damage 5, Dodge DC 15).

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Toughness 6, Fortitude 8, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 70 + Powers 0 + Advantages 23 + Skills 31 + Defenses 18 = 142

Complications: **Motivation—Patriotism:** Unkowski firmly believes himself to be a champion of a noble cause. He will unify Europe, regardless of how many people he will have to kill. **Reputation:** The European is a wanted terrorist.

couple of years later, they exhumed his body and sent it to Atomgrad-2 for studies of their own.

While the Allies of Freedom have been honored with a massive monument in France, their fallen comrades didn't receive similar treatment. They're forgotten even in their own home countries. After the fall of Communism, there were plans to put a monument in Ustka, but due to budgetary constraints, it was changed to a commemorative plaque that was defaced with crude anti-Semitic graffiti two weeks after it was installed.

GOLEMETH

When the Warsaw Ghetto was being formed, rabbi Leon Kohn toiled day and night to ensure protection of his children and friends. Much like the legendary rabbi Loew of Prague, he created a golem to protect the Jews from aggressors. Rabbi Kohn knew that God punished his predecessor for daring to create life, and so he made a deal and gave his life so his creation could have a soul. The new Golem was his own person, with his own chance of life and death and was called Golemeth by his new wards to make him distinct from the Golem. Golemeth tried to protect all Jews, he attacked the trains that transported Jews, and killed German soldiers and local collaborators when he could. In the end, he was one of the few beings that genuinely terrified Johann Meinhoff—the infamous Nacht-Krieger.

Golemeth was somehow killed in Ustka during the war. His body wasn't discovered after the war—it's unlikely that after his death, the Ahnenerbe Institute, a Nazi group organized to research the history of the Aryan race, would wish to study "Jewish subhuman magic." Perhaps his body was totally destroyed. Rabbi Kohn's younger son and daughter died in concentration camps, but his oldest son Dawid survived and emigrated to Israel in 1968. It's unknown whether he retained any of his father's mystical secrets or talents, but recently a new hero has emerged in Israel called Golemancer. It's unknown if there is any connection between Golemancer and the Kohn family.

Golemeth uses the Construct archetype. Spend the Options points on Leaping 5, Growth 4, and Awareness 3.

MARIHIME

Marko Himiš was a Slovak Romani. He was a poet, mystic, teacher, and self-educated activist. In Czechoslovak cultural circles he was a quite well known and semi-legendary figure. He applied to the University of Vienna, but was rejected for political reasons—as a "Gypsy" he was not wanted in Hitler's Austria. Himiš was torn between the need to preserve his people's culture and need for "civilization," and that was enough for many of his fellow Romani to brand him as an outcast, or Marihime, meaning "Unclean." From the time he was labeled Marihime by his people, he became forever unclean and caused anything he touched to rot and decay. Unfazed by his apparent curse, he swore to use it to assist the helpless in Czechoslovakia, and when Slovakia became a Nazi puppet state he fought back against the hated Nazi enemy.

Marko was a talented man and many Czechoslovak writers remember him fondly. Like other heroes, he was forgotten in his homeland after the war and shunned by his own people.

Marihime had a wide variety of skills and learned how to fight over the course of his career. His main power was a curse of decay that manifested as a crippling and weakening disease when he touched humans and a slow decay of inanimate objects (Affliction 8 (Resisted by Fortitude, targets are Dazed, Exhausted, and eventually Incapacitated), Permanent Linked to Progressive Weaken 8, Affects objects, Permanent). He was not immune to his own powers and wore thick gloves (that took some time to decay) to avoid sickening himself and others unintentionally.

GUILLOTINE

While his allies remain forgotten mostly for racist reasons, Etienne Robespierre (no relation to the French politician from the French Revolution, though he was immensely proud of the name) was forgotten because of his political leanings. That, and the fact that he was unhinged, probably as a result of surviving WWI in front line foxholes.

Etienne was a dedicated member of the Communist party of France, with a decidedly republican streak. Before WWI he was somewhere between a nightmarish assassin and folk hero—he usually threatened the rich with knives, and even snuck into their bedrooms to do so. Before the war, he (probably) hadn't killed anyone, but he claimed his blades were made from the very guillotine that decapitated King Louis XVI. When the Germans invaded, Robespierre realized his true purpose: to strike at the rich, who were responsible for the Vichy betrayal of the French people and all the world's ills. He refused to assist DeGaulle's resistance move-

EASTERN EUROPE: IS IT REALLY THAT BAD?

The image of Eastern Europe presented here is clearly a bit over the top. Most of the region is now in the European Union and enjoys a comparable (and in some cases higher!) standard of living as in the West. It wasn't even as bad in the early 1990s; nevertheless, Russian vampire mafiyas, superpowered drug smugglers, or people who'd do anything to avoid poverty and unemployment are more interesting and appropriate for Earth-Prime.

There are actually very few stereotypes for non-Jewish, non-Russian Eastern Europeans in comics, including the following classics: the Slavic Brute—vengeful, racist, and anti-Semitic monster driven by emotions; the seductive Femme Fatale who might have a heart of gold; the cunning Spy; the Nazi/Communist dictator; and about the only heroic one: the Brave Defector. Oh, and Dracula. Most of them are fit only for a Silver Age game, with a black-and-white feel, but they can be updated with modern twists.

Here's some information of interest to those unfamiliar with the region: many Eastern Europeans prefer to describe their own region as Central Europe, which also encompasses Germany and Austria—Eastern Europe is perceived as Orthodox, using Cyrillic Script and Slavic. Very few people actually wanted to live under Communism—Hungary and Romania were occupied Axis states, Czechs and Slovaks remained fervently pro-democratic, and Poles were staunchly religious.

ment and began his own crusade (allied with Red Fox) to decapitate as many German officers as possible.

Considering his tactics, it's not surprising he isn't fondly remembered in France. After his death, his knives were returned to France after they were found in Wewelsburg castle—no one has dared use them since. Their exact location currently is unknown.

Guillotine uses the Assassin archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide*, but remove most of high-tech gear, and lower his PL to 8. His knives bestow Strength-based Damage 3 (Penetrating 3), Enhanced Advantage (All-out Attack, Favored Foe (the rich (anyone with 2 or more ranks of the Wealth benefit)), Improved Critical 4 (Knives)) for 11 points.

ROMANIA

Romania's claims to fame are three bloodthirsty monsters: Dracula, Crimson Mask, and Ceaucescu. As the homeland to such creatures, it's understandable why people from Eastern Europe seem dour to Westerners. The country experienced a native fascist regime called the Iron Guard, people who were deemed too extreme by the Nazis, and then after World War II, suffered under the brutal Communist occupation. It was one of the few countries in the region to overthrow Communism violently, and is now one of the poorest.

BUCHAREST

The capital of Romania is in many ways a typical post-Communist metropolis, an insane mix of poor urban planning and surprisingly decent infrastructure. Bucharest probably started as a fortress of the infamous Vlad the Impaler, and with time grew into a large town. It's not old by Eastern European standards—the major development started in the middle of the 19th century.

The most visible feature of Bucharest is its old Communist architecture—the most obvious example of which is the People's Palace, the largest parliament building in the world, reflecting Ceaucescu's insane ambitions. It hosts dozens of offices, government buildings, and even more unusual laboratories, and it's all too easy to get lost in the labyrinth of grey, soul-crushing corridors. Reportedly, there are some custodians and guards who never even leave the Palace.

Bucharest, like most of Eastern Europe, has problems with organized crime. The local police were unprepared for the amount of crime after the fall of Communism, and the Russian and local mobs quickly moved in to corner new markets. The mobs are partially protected by a shadowy organization calling itself the Old Guard. Another major threat to local heroes like Romanipen is the infamous Crimson Mask. The Crimson Mask is a vampire, but unlike Dracula, who has forsaken his human heritage, Crimson Mask periodically returns to his motherland.

Romania has a significant problem with juvenile crime, which the authorities assume is a result of social changes and adults emigrating, leaving their children to fend for

themselves, but whatever the cause, the Hoarda Sălbatică (Savage Horde) led by twelve year old Adrian Dragan, calling himself Șef Șefi (boss of all the bosses), is one of the most feared organizations in the city. They go beyond simple teenage delinquency, often dealing drugs, extorting money, and organizing heists. Dragan uses the Crime Lord archetype, though tailored to his age.

ROMANIPEN

Being a gypsy in Romania is one of the worst fates one can endure in the modern day. The antiziganism (anti-Gypsyism) is quite bad in Eastern Europe. Mihaela "Diamantka" Ignat has been beaten and forced to beg and steal both by the *gadjo* (non-Romanipen) Romanians and by her own people. Once she discovered her musical talent, she made a fair amount of money, and started a foundation to help the Romani people.

Faced with persecution she decided to remind Europe about the presence of the Roma and their tragic existence. She rediscovered the nearly-forgotten hero Marihime, and decided to follow in his footsteps. She does not know that her grandmother blessed her (and sacrificed her own life to do so) with luck and coordination. Romanipen (Romani Code) now defends the rights of all minorities in south-eastern Europe.

Romanipen uses the Crime Fighter (Sentinel) archetype. She mostly gets by with luck and contacts rather than any detective work—but she learns more about being a hero every day.

DRACULA

Dracula was transformed not by a mere Romani, but by an Urma (a "gypsy fairy," one obsessed with power and night). Vlad, betrayed by his own brother and corrupt Hungarians, willingly rejected all that is good and holy for dominion over blood and darkness. He became not just a vampire, but a vampire lord. He ruled—in various guises—over many lands in Eastern Europe, establishing his vampiric dynasty and seducing multiple brides. In the 19th century, he set his eyes on Europe and on America, even briefly visiting Freedom City. In more recent times, he's crossed paths with many superheroes. Though it might appear that they've destroyed him, he always comes back.

Dracula is a rare combination of skilled politician and sadistic butcher. At this point he cares little about nationalistic quarrels—all mortals are cattle to him, whether Turkish, Romanian, Hungarian, or from lands farther away. He retains a certain degree of honor, and a weakness for beautiful women, but he remains a cruel medieval warlord at heart. He enjoys torturing people physically and mentally, for the sheer pleasure of crushing them and for the taste of their blood once they can no longer endure his attentions. One of his favorite mental tortures is finding good and noble people and breaking them slowly, often by converting the ones closest to them into vampires. Unlike some other vampire lords, Dracula likes to create spawn; if they survive, good for them, if they turn against him, he destroys them.

MORE ABOUT DRACULA

The backstory of the most famous Transylvanian can be found in *Threat Report*. The information included here supplements it.

Dracula is aware he is a pop-culture celebrity. It flatters him and reinforces his feeling of superiority. Dracula views most European vampires as his subjects, regardless of whether they are even aware of his existence.

Contrary to Bram Stoker's tale, Dracula has no "tragic love." He does, however, enjoy meeting young women. There is even a possibility they remain mortal after encounters with him. Dracula leaves forgotten "brides" in his trail, both in the Old and the New World. Some of them are reborn to unlife, especially if they're evil—or innocent—enough. One such dark lady that Dracula fancied was the original Raven's flame, Lenore, though she had been a vampire before their encounter.

DRACULA AND THE BATHORY FAMILY

Dracula had few friends in life and even fewer after death. One of his closest confidantes was Stephen V Báthory, his nominal lord. The two shared a unique friendship, and after Dracula's transformation it did not waver. Perhaps these two bonded over impaling and torturing Turks, or over their unholy magic. Báthory was a skilled sorcerer, having learned his craft somewhere in what's now Volhovia. Together, the two wove great plans, hoping to unite Central Europe against the pagans and Western enemies, all in service to darkness.

Eventually Báthory was betrayed and killed by Alexandru Movila, a minor sorcerer who served Báthory. Dracula rewarded Movila as a traitor deserves, but using his mystical powers and sheer willpower, Movila managed to stave off death, and now roams the world as a vile magician called Crimson Mask.

Dracula took a personal interest in the Báthory family. (In fact, it was due to Dracula's machinations that another Stephen Báthory became King of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth). Dracula was later impressed by the sadism and cruelty of young Ersebet Báthory, eventually transforming her into a vampiric queen. She was stronger than Dracula thought possible and was one of the few women to defy and leave him. Nevertheless the Báthory family has always had at least one branch in both Germany and Russia. Dracula watches them all, and intervenes to "assist" them in whichever bloodthirsty way he feels most appropriate.

BLOOD TYPES

Dracula's bloodline represents just one kind of vampire found on Earth-Prime. Various cultures have had their own blood-drinking monstrosities. From the Filipino Aswang to the Nahuatl Tlaciques, vile creatures hid in the shadows, ready to kill. Many Slavic cultures did not distinguish between vampires and werewolves; they were bestial monsters that hunted in the darkness and destroyed the living.



A DHAMPIR AT WORK

DHAMPIR**TEMPLATE - 41 POINTS****STR 5 STA 4 AWE 2 PRE 2****Powers: Inhuman Senses** (Senses 5 (Accurate Hearing , Danger Sense, Vampiric Awareness (sight-based), Infravision); **Vampiric Feeding** (Regeneration 5 (Source (blood)), Immunity 1 (Aging; Limited to Half Effect))**Enhanced Advantages:** Fascinate (Intimidation), Favored Foe (Vampires), Tracking, **Enhanced Skills:** Expertise: Occult 1 (+2 ranks), Intimidation 2 (+4 ranks), Stealth 2 (+2 ranks)**Suggested Complications: Prejudice:** The dhampir “feels wrong” to normal humans, who may notice the dhampir lacks a shadow. **Weakness:** The dhampir is sensitive to sunlight and has a -2 penalty to all actions in direct sunlight.**Totals:** Abilities 26 + Powers 7 + Advantages 3 + Skills 5 + Defenses 0 = 41

The various vampire myths GMs *could* use in their series are too numerous to go over in detail, but here are some ideas on how to provide variety and spice up the Vampire template from the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

UPIR

Upir is your basic blood drinker. Unlike the popular image of “Blood Count” or “Blood Countess,” most vampires weren’t aristocrats. An upir is a regular person who wasn’t properly buried (or couldn’t have been—suicides, heretics, murderers, unbaptized children, for example), and as such was a good target for demonic possession. A dark spirit replaced the weak and frayed soul of the possessed, and it came back to life hungering for blood. In the Middle East they’re called ghuls. Upirs use Zombie stats, but have an additional bite attack: Bite +1 (Close, Damage 3, Weaken Stamina 3).

LILIMS

Lilims are supposedly descendants of Lilith, the queen of demons. They’re far older than Dracula, but in many respect similar to Western vampires. They have at least one rank of the Attractive advantage, and instead of the Form of Mist and Spider-Climb powers possessed by vampires, they can sprout bat or bird wings (Flight 8, Wings, Subtle). Some might have talons for feet, or the ability to Shapeshift into a bird-like creature.

NOSFERATU

Nosferatu, literally “plague carrier,” are creepy, deformed monstrosities. They retain most of their human intellect, but few ambitions beside survival. Apart from a Weakening attack they have also an Affliction that spreads contagious disease. Some of a nosferatu’s victims might become upirs or nosferatu even without being bitten.

MORBANS

Morbians are a unique case—they’re a nocturnal race that draws much of their sustenance from blood, but any hunter wielding religious icons is in for a surprise since they’re unaffected by such things. Morbians are humanoid, long-fanged aliens from the dark planet Morb, who fled from Star Khan to Earth. They’re not actively nefarious,

but they see humans as the most susceptible prey—after all, Morbians are a dying race and they need to feed once a week. They have limited psionic powers and they draw energy not only from blood but also from their victims’ pain. Though nocturnal, daylight does not harm them.

DHAMPIR

The **Dhampir**, or half-vampire, is another unusual variety of vampire. On Earth-Prime, dhampir are relatively rare, but they can be created a number of different ways. Offspring from an undead vampire and a mortal is highly unlikely, but thanks to a ritual, divine or infernal intervention, or the power of love (in the right sort of game), it can happen. Dhampirism can even be *induced* via effects similar to sympathetic magic—if your father becomes a vampire in your lifetime, you might find yourself changing as well, though no one ever bit you. A mortal infused with vampiric blood or a dark curse can also become a dhampir—or even a full-fledged vampire! Finally, there’s a possibility that a vampire drain is incomplete or goes wrong in some way.

CZECH REPUBLIC, SLOVAKIA, & HUNGARY

The Czech Republic is probably the most Western country in the region. Before WWII it resisted the plague of fascism and authoritarianism that rolled through Europe, and Czechs and Slovaks split peacefully, mostly over the presence of a hyphen in the name of the country. That doesn’t mean that the country is a paradise; the pollution is quite dangerous and the crime rate is growing. Slovakia is still underdeveloped, and often ignored by villains. In Hungary, on the other hand, nationalism seems to be on the rise.

PRAGUE

The picturesque, medieval city of Prague is well known to tourists and all sorts of travelers, including heroes and villains. Prague’s importance as a center of diplomacy and espionage sometimes can overshadow the fact that it’s a city with two million residents... with an occasionally bloody history. It has been a major seat of power, stage for rebellions and occupations, and now it’s returned as a major European city.

Prague was once a seat of power for Rudolf the Second, a Holy Roman Emperor crazy about alchemy, astrology, and necromancy (all considered fairly scientific at the time). Rudolf invited various magicians and wizards to his court—two of whom were the infamous John Dee and Edward Kelly, who reportedly communicated with angels and seraphs, and were able to lock their essences in crystals and gems. Sadly, they produced neither Philosopher’s Stone nor Elixir of Life, and so Rudolf was forced to break Kelly’s legs and order Dee killed.

Rudolf also employed other practitioners of magic. Most failed projects ended up in his extensive collection. Today a strange reminder of the emperor’s obsession with the

THERE'S NO PLACE LIKE PRAGUE

Prague is a major European city, and a fairly cosmopolitan one for Eastern Europe. It's a good base for heroes who'd like to cover the entire region and not depend on Russia's infrastructure and good will.

A series set in Prague would probably involve more mystical problems and solutions, which would mesh well with the Bohemian, medieval atmosphere of the city. Bank heists would be replaced by attacks on museums or cultural artifacts, and narrow, sometimes cobblestoned streets would make chases and captures even more exciting.

supernatural is the Golden Lane in Prague, which houses an alchemist's lab, supposedly recreated using the notes in Dee's diaries.

One of the mystics that owed their knowledge to Emperor Rudolf's curiosity was Honza (John) Krisov, professor at the University of Prague, student of the occult, one of the last members of ancient Order of Light, and a minor talent in his own right. When the Nazis rose to power in Germany, Honza was visiting his close friend Helmut Shaal to inquire about the unusual talents of his children. And on the fateful Kristallnacht, the Nazi's attacked him and his family. Their powers weren't enough to protect them, but he gave his life in a ritual that awakened the powers of the Light-bearers within his family. Krisov still exists... in a way. Sophie sometimes claimed that she heard his wise advice. In fact, Krisov was transformed into some kind of "light ghost." He still exists, but he needs a strong purpose to latch onto in order to grant his host powers.

Prague avoided extensive damage in World War II. During the Cold War it experienced Russian and Polish tanks rolling into the city to stop it from deviating from Moscow's doctrine of "socialism with a human face." The WWII veteran and Czech hero Pěrák (The Springman) came out of semi-retirement to play cruel tricks on the invaders and inspire the populace. Despite his success, he was eventually killed in the middle of Prague's Wenceslas Square in 1968.

THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

While Eastern Europe lacked the technological and magical tradition to create heroes before WWII, they nevertheless had their share of masked adventurers fighting the good fight during WWII. The Czech Pěrák and Polish Last Knight fought their own battles until they joined forces to stand against the Nazi aggression.

Unlike Western heroes, they did not get to live the dream. Most of them never saw freedom. After Nazi occupation, there came decades of Soviet oppression. Ignoring the political differences between the heroes and the new governments, Communism was against super-powered people on principle. In a system that promised equality, superheroes were seen as aberrations. Most powered individuals were drafted into the service of the state (or the entire Soviet Bloc) and resistance automatically qualified you as a traitor and supervillain, or worse, a guinea pig in inhuman experiments.

On the other hand, superpowers were useful. With time, the policy toward super-beings changed (especially outside the Soviet Union proper), but it still boiled down to: join the nearest stat-sponsored superhero team or

spend the rest of your life in jail. Within the Soviet Union, prison time was often spent in hard labor—this way the state could still make use of the superhuman's powers until he or she died of exhaustion. It's said that some *superzek* still toil away in hidden camps in Siberia or Mongolia, powering long forgotten machinery, near-insane from exhaustion and lack of human contact.

Of course, many superhumans joined up simply because they wanted to—it gave them an opportunity to rise above the masses (and earned them privileges), or to serve their nation. Some honestly believed in the Communist cause. Such heroes of the People were serving multiple duties as propaganda and special ops agents, and sometimes they assisted the troops in very difficult operations abroad—where they often clashed with American heroes.

For super-beings who had no interest in getting into any sort of trouble there was another exit—to abstain from using their powers altogether. This option was chosen by many, but because they never entered the public arena, it's difficult to estimate how many that may have been; however, there were a number of these "sleepers."

SLEEPERS

Sleepers were superpowered people who decided to never use their powers. This was difficult for people whose powers were "always on," or disfiguring in some way, but most such folks coped as best they could. Sleepers were almost unknown in the Americas and very rare in Western Europe, but were more common in Eastern Europe and Asia.

For many Westerners it might seem strange to avoid using such wondrous powers, but no power means no responsibility, no supervillains targeting you, and no alienation from the rest of society. In Eastern Europe, standing out was simply a way of becoming an easy target. Eventually, though, many sleepers were tempted at least once in their lifetime to abandon their oath. Many researchers claim that abstaining from using powers isn't good for you—causing unusual side effects and powers triggering at the least convenient moment.

The number of sleepers dropped in the nineties. The reason for this was twofold. First, the collapse of Communism brought cultural changes literally overnight; if you wanted to be a hero, you could do it freely. However, the number of powered people dropped overall, thanks to the Terminus Invasion. A lot of people who'd bottled up their amazing powers for their entire lives gave their all fighting the Omegadrones for the first and last time. This in turn inspired many remaining sleepers to come into the

open. Still, many people preferred to hide their powers and live in peace.

Gamemasters may wish to start a series in which the PCs are sleepers, but familiar with one another. In such a series, most PCs have complications related to civilian life and operating out of the public eye.

THE OLD GUARD

When the end of Communism was imminent, a group of KGB, Securitate, Stasi, and other secret police agents as well as “unconventional” (mad) scientists and People’s Guard superheroes got together. Not one of them actually believed in the system; they all knew that it was just a way to keep the little people under control. Together, they created a criminal organization to maintain their power and social position. It continues to this day.

The founders of the Old Guard are now respected business people and politicians. They run a massive conspiracy, cooperating with mafiyas, governments, and OVERTHROW. One of their goals is to lay hands on Soviet research sites and projects whenever possible. Unfortunately, the old Soviet Science Cities are either “officially closed” or state run and beyond the Old Guard’s reach. Though rumors persist that the Old Guard has people in the highest echelons of Russian government, they still struggle to regain as much power as they used to hold.

Some members of the Old Guard used to actually create superhumans and still have useful bits of knowledge that occasionally results in a new superhuman. Gregor Malakov, also known as Koschei the Deathless (see *Emerald City*), actively opposes the Old Guard. He’s one of their most fervent adversaries, and has worked with both the Chamber and Western heroes to prevent the Old Guard from moving into American territory. The Old Guard doesn’t know who or what Koschei is, but they want to expand westward and would like to remove him—preferably using intermediaries.

IRON WOLF

Iron Wolf is one of the youngest and keenest European superheroes. Born and raised in Vilnius, the old capital of Lithuania, Mykolos Karalius was a thinking patriot, and a firm believer in Lithuanian sovereignty. Though he isn’t old enough to remember the Soviet Union, he remembers the chaos and



IRON WOLF

IRON WOLF

PL10 • 165 POINTS

STR 6 STA 6 AGL 3 DEX 6 FGT 12 INT 4 AWE 2 PRE 3

Powers: **Courage of Gediminas** (Enhanced Impervious Will 8, Enhanced Advantage (Fearless)); **Cunning of Jogailo** (Enhanced Intellect 3); **Ferocity of Traidenis** (Enhanced Stamina 4, Immunity 10 (Life Support), Enhanced Advantage 3 (Defensive Roll 2, Diehard)); **Genius of Sobieskis** (Enhanced Advantage 5 (Assessment, Inspire 3, Leadership)); **Might of Mindaugas** (Enhanced Strength 4, Power-Lifting 4 (total lifting Str 10));

Advantages: *Assessment, Close Attack 2, Defensive Roll 4, Diehard, Evasion 2, Fearless, Inspire 3, Leadership, Luck 2,*

Skills: Acrobatics 12 (+15), Athletics 8 (+14), Expertise: Basketball 5 (+9), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 2 (+5), Investigation 4 (+8), Perception 3 (+5), Persuasion 4 (+7), Stealth 4 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +3, Unarmed +14 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 10, Toughness 8/6*, Will 10 *Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 62 + Powers 59 + Advantages 7 + Skills 24 + Defenses 13 = 165

Complications: **Identity:** Mykolos Karalius, basketball player for BC Vilnius. He’s a semi-public figure, a strong candidate for the national team, which can sometimes cause complications.

Motivation—Doing Good: Iron Wolf is a genuinely good and decent person who tries to do the right thing and be an example for his country. **Motivation—Patriotism:** Iron Wolf puts Lithuania first, but he has a soft spot for the entire region. He doesn’t hate Russians, Germans, or Poles; he simply rejoices in his country’s traditions and identity.

anarchy after it fell. As a teenager he never looked for trouble, but was sometimes grabbed and beaten by the police when they couldn’t catch the thugs and hooligans who were causing trouble in the area.

When he was 17, he was nearly killed trying to defend an old man assaulted by other teenagers.

Luckily for him, the old man was a *vaidila*—a pagan priest. He helped the boy recover in return for helping him and summoned the spirits of the medieval kings of Lithuania to grant Mykolos the powers of these rulers. Now, he possesses the might of Mindaugas, the courage of Gediminas, the ferocity of Traidenis, the cunning of Jogailo, and the tactical genius of Sobieskis.

Iron Wolf is proudly patriotic, rejecting blind nationalism and internationalism. He sees patriotism as a source of solace and hope in hard times, rather than a cause of wars and conflicts, and claims to stand for every Lithuanian, whether Polish, Russian, German, or Jewish.



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CONDITION IS **YELLOW**

WORLDVIEW



CONNECTION TO
GLOBAL THREAT
DATABASE SECURE.
ACCESS LEVEL **RED**

SEARCH: AFRICA THEATER

NEWEST DATABASE ADDITIONS/UPDATES

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UPDATE

CASE #1725/2

LABYRINTH
CONFIRMED
AS SOURCE OF
ENERGY WEAPONS
INTERDICTED
7/6/2016.

**DAKANESE
INTELLIGENCE**
LIAISON HAS BEEN
BRIEFED.



**THE
MIDDLE
EAST**

- NORTHERN
- WESTERN
- SUB-SAHARAN

AFRICA

TAP HERE TO RETURN TO GLOBAL OVERVIEW



THE MIDDLE EAST

Ancient cradle of civilization, the modern Middle East is a hotbed of geopolitical conflict between nations and cultures, driven by ancient disputes and fueled by modern competition over resources, particularly the rich petroleum deposits of the region.

Ancient spiritual and mystical forces collide with modern culture and technology, and even alien or extradimensional advances in creating some of the Middle East's local superhumans.

ARMENIA

A small landlocked nation in the southern Caucasus Mountains, between the Black and Caspian Seas, Armenia is located between Georgia, Azerbaijan, Iran, and Turkey. Mount Ararat, long associated with Armenia (and part of their national emblem) is now located in present-day Turkey. As with other nation-states in the Caucasus region, Armenia was once part of the Soviet Union, gaining its independence in 1990, but the nation has a long history, extending back to the founding of the first Kingdom of Armenia in 600 BC.

AZERBAIJAN

A Caucasus crossroads nation, Azerbaijan is located on the western shores of the Caspian Sea, between Russia, Georgia, Armenia, and Iran. When it declared independence in 1918, Azerbaijan became the first Muslim majority secular democratic republic, although that was short-lived as the nation was absorbed into the Soviet Union in 1920

and did not declare independence again until 1991. Its capitol, Baku, is located on the southern side of a peninsula extending into the Caspian Sea on the nation's eastern side.

AL HAYIK

While the humble Baku home of the man known as Al Hayik ("the Weaver") escapes the notice of most, he is known to the world's mystical community as the inheritor of a long line of masters of working magic literally into the very fibers of woven carpets and tapestries. Al Hayik is the title held by the current Master Weaver, a role that has passed down through family lines, although occasionally it has been passed by adoption and apprenticeship as well, when Allah willed it.

Al Hayik lives a simple life of study, prayer, and the practicing of his art, rarely turning out a finished work with magical properties. Indeed, most of his fine carpets and woven works are entirely mundane, although of the finest quality imaginable. His home is safeguarded by several rugs and carpets that act as magical wards and can even animate to serve and protect their master, and Al Hayik possesses at least one flying carpet as well. The mystic weaver was a good friend to Master Mage Adrian Eldritch (whose sanctum held several examples of his work).

ASHIQ

Asad al-Ashiq did not know the Soviet Azerbaijan of his parents and grandparents, born not long before independence. He grew up listening to his grandparents' tales of



THE MID-EAST POWDER KEG

Supervillain plots in the comics sometimes revolve around the volatility of the Middle East, with all-out war awaiting the right provocation, and nations poised to make pre-emptive strikes against their enemies at the slightest sign of trouble. The same can happen in your own *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* game.

What initially appear to be terrorist or politically-motivated schemes can turn out to be a smokescreen for a villain looking to stir up trouble and possibly provoke a war for other reasons. This can range from simple war-profiteering and an opportunity to sell weapons to both (or all) sides to a plan to trigger an all-out world war leading to the destruction of humanity, a suitable plan for inhuman villains like Cerebrus Rex from *Threat Report* or Scion from *Emerald City*, to name a couple.

Of course, that doesn't exclude truly politically-motivated threats arising or operating in the Middle East, which can create difficulties for superheroes looking to stop supervillains but also doing their best to stay out of sectarian and political conflicts.

Azerbaijani history and culture, and listening to his grandfather play the *baglama*, a traditional Azerbaijani stringed instrument. From the time he could walk, Asad proved such a prodigy with the *baglama* his family was amazed. With his musical talents and beautiful singing voice, Asad hoped to win a scholarship to a conservatory to study music, but while he was an adolescent, the true nature of his talents became known.

Monsters and evil spirits stalked Asad and he learned that he had the potential to become a true Ashiq, a shamanistic master of mystical music. His mentor, an aging Ashiq, helped to save Asad's life, and to fake his death, both to throw enemies off the trail and to keep his family safe. For years, Asad—now with only the surname “al-Ashiq”—learned from his master before the old man passed on, leaving his fine *baglama* in his student's hands.

Ashiq uses magic woven by his music to combat mystical threats and to help people where and when he can, although he still faces enemies who would see him destroyed to prevent him from fulfilling the potential of becoming the greatest of his line ever known.

BAHRAIN

The nation of Bahrain is a small archipelago of islands in the Persian Gulf, near Saudi Arabia. Its largest land mass is Bahrain Island, some 34 miles long and 11 miles wide, connected to Saudi Arabia by the King Fahd Causeway. Over ninety percent of the land claimed by Bahrain is desert, with a tiny percentage of arable land; dust storms, further desertification, and coastal erosion remain ongoing problems.

In recent years, inspired by the activism of the Arab Spring, Bahrain's Shia Muslim majority began protesting against the minority Sunni controlled government, leading to crackdowns and police actions and continued unrest.

THE GAZA STRIP

The Gaza Strip is an area of just over 140 square miles along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea bordering Egypt and Israel. It is recognized as belonging to the State of Palestine, part of the territories it claims in the region, including the West Bank. The Gaza Strip was occupied by Israel until 2005, and the Israeli state maintains strong external influence over the region through control over air, sea, and land routes, nearly all utilities and vital services, and claiming the authority to re-enter Gaza with a military force at will.

Gaza, and particularly the northern region of Gaza City, is overcrowded, with a population of nearly 2 million Palestinians, primarily Sunni Muslims. Since an anti-Israeli organization linked with terrorism has come to power in the Gaza Strip, the area has been blockaded by Israel and Egypt to contain any potential violence and terrorist strikes against the neighboring nations. According to some, this blockade has turned the Gaza Strip into a “giant prison camp” controlled militarily by Israel.

ASHIQ

PL9 • 131 POINTS

STR 0 STA 0 AGL 2 DEX 4 FGT 4 INT 0 AWE 2 PRE 5

Powers: **Enchanting Performance** (Auditory Perception Area Affliction 9, Resisted and Overcome by Will; Selective, Variable Condition (all degrees); Alternate Effect: Nullify Magic 9, Auditory Perception Area, Broad, Selective, Simultaneous)

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Contacts, Defensive Roll 4, Fascinate (Expertise: Musician), Inspire 2

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+6), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+6), Deception 4 (+9), Expertise: Musician 8 (+13), Insight 6 (+8), Perception 4 (+6), Persuasion 4 (+9), Sleight of Hand 2 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +2, Enchanting Performance (Close, Perception Area Affliction 9, Will DC 19), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 8, Fortitude 7, Toughness 4/0, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 46 + Advantages 9 + Skills 17 + Defenses 25 = 131

ASH'ABAH

“No one dies. Not here, not now,” says the mysterious figure known in the Gaza Strip as Ash'Abah, “The Ghost.” Garbed in dark, flowing clothing and a concealing head-scarf that shows only a pair of faintly glowing eyes, Ash'Abah is a feminine figure who mysteriously appears at sites of trouble in Gaza, just as mysteriously vanishing after preventing anyone from coming to harm. Israeli authorities consider her a criminal, perhaps even a terrorist, although she has only interfered with Israeli personnel, never done any permanent harm, much less killed anyone. While most would think Ash'Abah the hero of everyone in Gaza, she has lost support by protecting Israelis from harm as much as Palestinians or anyone else. To people with little hope, however, Ash'Abah represents someone who is on the side of life and peace. Rumors abound as to her true identity and mission, including stories of superhuman agility, unarmed combat skill, and apparent immunity from harm. Some aggressors taken down by Ash'Abah report losing consciousness and vague gaps in their memories, which could be due to some esoteric skill or power. In M&M game terms, Ash'Abah is a Crime Fighter archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, with no equipment, but with the Hide in Plain Sight advantage and an Insubstantial 4 (Incorporeal) power.

GEORGIA

On the eastern shore of the Black Sea, the Republic of Georgia is a former Soviet and Russian state that most recently gained its independent following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. It has since become a democratic republic, working towards greater involvement with the European community.

Georgia is noteworthy as the site of the ancient kingdom of Colchis, where Jason and the crew of the *Argo* journeyed in search of the legendary Golden Fleece. When Medea, princess of Colchis, fell in love with the hero Jason, she helped him to obtain the fleece and leave Colchis with it. Furious at Jason's decision to marry another woman for political reasons, the sorceress Medea murdered her paragon's new bride and her own children by him before fleeing, leaving Jason a broken man. The immortal sorcer-

THE SKIES OF TEHRAN



ess became a foe of many heroes over the centuries, particularly her fellow immortal, the inventor Daedalus.

HERE THERE BE DRAGONS

In recent years Medea (see *Freedom City*) has found few reasons to return to her ancient homeland, although she does have at least one underground lair carved out beneath the Caucasus Mountains. She returned there to obtain some of the teeth of the dragon that once guarded the Golden Fleece in the Grove of Ares, since sowing them in the earth in conjunction with a magical ritual could create an army of warriors. She has hinted that other caches of dragon teeth, dragon eggs, and other magical artifacts may still lie hidden in the mountains in Georgia. This ancient connection with dragons may be related to the centuries long association of St. George the Dragon-slayer with the nation of Georgia.

IRAN

The Islamic Republic of Iran is one of the strongest political powers in the Middle East. The site of the ancient Persian civilization, Iran has a long and influential history in the region, regularly characterized by wars and conflicts with the nations of the Middle East, Europe, and Asia (such as Russia).

In 1979, an Islamic revolution overthrew the Shah of Iran and instituted a new constitution and a theocratic government, officially making Iran an Islamic Republic. Not long thereafter, a group of Iranian student radicals seized the American embassy in Tehran, holding its staff and per-

sonnel hostage, demanding the exiled Shah return to face trial (and probable execution). The following year, neighboring Iraq launched an invasion, leading to the nearly nine year Iran-Iraq War.

Since the fall of Iraq to American coalition forces, Iran has emerged as the most influential Islamic state in the region, opposed to Israel and exerting influence with surrounding nations. In particular, the possibility of Iran developing nuclear weapons has been a serious concern, leading to international economic sanctions and extended talks to negotiate an agreement for the nation to maintain a peaceful nuclear energy program, while at the same time assuring the global community that the same resources will not be used for weapons research and development.

AZIZ

Iran's most prominent and public superhero, the armored Aziz, is truly "old-school" in that he (most presume Aziz is a man) maintains a secret identity. Indeed, given the full-body suit of power armor he wears, there's even speculation that Aziz is actually an alien, a robot, or even a woman! The electronically filtered voice that speaks from within the armor gives no clues.

In truth, Aziz is Tariq Hamidi, a young Iranian man with technopathic powers that have enabled him to cobble together his battlesuit and keep it operational. Although Tariq has a mechanical engineering degree, he's not the brilliant inventor many think Aziz must be; his powers allow him to make intuitive leaps and even psychokinetically refashion existing technology, given time.

KAHINA THE SEER

The most mysterious figure in the superhuman community of the Middle East—one that keeps its secrets close—is known as “Kahina the Seer,” although she herself is never seen. Indeed, no one knows for certain that “Kahina” is actually a woman, although her name and her electronically disguised voice suggest that is the case.

Kahina is a brilliant computer hacker, information specialist, and technician who came to prominence during the Arab Spring, assisting protesters in gaining and maintaining access to the Internet and passing news and information into and out of nations that attempted to shut down the spread of the movement and its protests. All efforts by the governments and media of the world to track down her true identity or whereabouts have been unsuccessful, although Kahina herself claims to be “a citizen of the region, and of the world.”

Kahina serves as a resource, sounding-board, and occasionally go-between for the heroes of the Middle East region and, on occasion, the rest of the world. She has made it clear that, although she is willing to expose corruption and criminal activity, she will not be a party to violent protests, *coups d'état*, or terrorism, nor will she work directly for a governmental body or agency. Kahina provides those parties she's willing to assist with encrypted and secure means of contacting her, and can serve the Gamemaster as a useful story hook and resource, as well as a means of involving foreign heroes in adventures in the region, or connecting them with the locals, as Kahina's willingness to vouch for them can overcome a great deal of mistrust.

Exactly who (or even what) Kahina might be is left up to the GM to decide as best suits the setting and series.

Western nations are concerned Aziz might be a technological genius willing to aid or advance the Iranian weapons program, and the Supreme Leader would like to see this happen, but the truth is that Tariq is a reformer and wants only to help people with his abilities. He has steadfastly refused any government “patronage” and operates on his own. For the time being, he's far too popular with public for the government to interfere with him directly, but the existence of such a free agent remains a concern.

Recently, Aziz has interacted and worked a great deal with the mysterious Kahina and is even becoming infatuated with her, although Tariq doesn't know if Kahina is truly a woman (or even human) any more than most people know the same about him.

Aziz has the abilities of the Battlesuit archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, with the exception that his Improvised Tools, Inventor, and Second Chance advantages are actually Enhanced Advantage effects due to his technopathic powers.

IRAQ

Home to one of the ancient cradles of human civilization, between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, the modern nation of Iraq is a war-torn and troubled region. It emerged as an independent nation in the late 1950s, following the overthrow of a British-established monarchy from decades earlier. The Arab Socialist Ba'ath Party controlled Iraq from 1968 until 2003.

During the Ba'athist regime, Iraq aggressively invaded a number of nations in the region, leading to the Iran-Iraq War in the 1980s, and the 1990 Gulf War with U.N. forces led by the United States, after Iraq invaded neighboring Kuwait. In 2003, the United States and its allies invaded under the pretext that Iraq had failed to abandon its weapons of mass destruction, as required by United Nations resolutions, and toppled the Iraqi government. A multi-party parliamentary system was installed and elections held in 2005, although the new government

has faced continued challenges from insurgents and the potential for open civil war, exacerbated by ongoing conflict in Syria and other parts of the Middle East.

DESERT WARFARE

Iraq has been a theater of war and site of military service for soldiers from around the world in recent years, particularly Americans and their allies, along with Middle East insurgents working with any number of factions inside and outside of Iraq. The crucible of desert warfare has hardened a number of soldiers and produced paramilitary mercenaries working for different groups. Military service in this part of the world may well be a part of the background of any para-military or former military characters.

AGENTS OF MASS DESTRUCTION

The presence of weapons of mass destruction in Iraq, other than those accounted for by the United Nations, has never been confirmed, but rumors persist of all manner of weapons researched, created, and secretly stockpiled before the toppling of the Ba'athist government, and potentially hidden, moved, or stolen since then. The world intelligence community keeps a close eye on the possibility of such weapons being discovered and either moved out of Iraqi territory or used within it.

In addition to various types of nuclear, biological, and (particularly) chemical weapons, rumors persist about top secret Iraqi research into “AMDs” or “agents of mass destruction,” namely artificially-induced superhumans. Most such rumors involve brutal programs where political prisoners or military “volunteers” were exposed to chemical agents and other dangers in a futile effort to trigger mutations or the development of super-powers, with the results of their failures disposed of or hidden in mass graves. Still, some believe these experiments may have seen some success, leading to the creation of super-agents who later escaped and remain at large.

THE PEACOCK ANGEL

Northern Iraq is home to the minority Yazidi population, a Kurdish religious sect. They are monotheists who believe God entrusted Creation to a heptad of seven archangels, the greatest of which is Tawuse Melek, or “the Peacock Angel.” Commanded to bow to God’s newest creation, Adam (mankind), Tawuse Melek refused, being a primary creation of God’s own radiance. For this, God exalted him above all other angels. Because of the similarities between this and stories of Shaytan, Iblis, or Lucifer as a fallen angel (who also refused God’s command to bow before Adam), some Christians and Muslims consider Yazidi’s “devil worshippers,” and persecute them.

Yazidi folklore about their descent solely from Adam (and not Eve) through a kind of miraculous cloning and of the Peacock Angel as “lord of the Earth” leads some scholars to inquire about potential otherworldly intervention in the past, either alien or mystical (see **The Djinn & the Blood of the Nephilim** sidebar).



ISRAEL

The State of Israel (*Medinat Yisrael*) is a Jewish Democratic nation along the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea, bordering Egypt, Lebanon, and Jordan. Israel was established by the United Nations adoption of the Partition Plan for Mandatory Palestine in 1947, creating a new Jewish state in the region, and placing part of the disputed territory of Jerusalem under UN control.

Since its official creation in 1948, Israel has been in conflict with the neighboring majority Islamic states, sometimes resulting in open warfare, such as the Arab-Israeli War (1948), the Six Day War (1967), and the Yom Kippur War (1973), other times in low-level conflicts and terrorist attacks. Many Middle Eastern nations refuse to recognize the legitimacy of Israel, and have sworn to reclaim all of its territory. Only Egypt and Jordan have signed peace treaties with Israel, and even relations with those nations remain on shaky ground.

Israel is a heavily militarized nation, strongly exerting its right to use force to defend itself and its interests in the region. Service in the Israeli Defense Forces is mandatory for both men and women from ages 18–21, except for ethnic Arabs and those engaged in religious studies.

It is widely believed, although not officially confirmed, that Israel has nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons in its arsenal, and the nation is not a signatory to non-proliferation treaties. The Israeli government skirts the edges of an “open secret” regarding its arsenal, which may also include some superhuman or even supernatural resources in contravention of international standards and accords. The belief that these weapons exist—and the potential for a retaliatory strike using them—does as much to deter open aggression against Israel as their actual existence.

DR. TZADDIK

Benyamin Kohn entered rabbinical studies at a young age, feeling a true calling. He discovered things far stranger than he imagined when an encounter with a dybbuk (a vengeful spirit) possessing hosts to carry out murders, opened Kohn to his own mystic potential and heritage. Although tradition forbade the study of the kabbalah for a young, unmarried and untested rabbi, Benyamin pressed on with his studies, uncovering greater dangers, from ghosts to demons and worse dwelling beyond the all too thin veil separating this world from many others. Although he operated in secret for many years, the legendary “Dr. Tzaddik” became known throughout Israel and amongst mystics around the world. He also came to the attention of the Israeli authorities, who consult him from time to time. Dr. Tzaddik has made it clear that his skills and knowledge are in service to the Most High and humanity, not any one nation, and his government has chosen to respect this, for now. Dr. Tzaddik uses the Mystic archetype from the *Hero’s Handbook* with Healing Hand, Magical Blast, Mystic Bindings, and Pierce the Veil spells, amongst others.

THE DJINN & THE BLOOD OF THE NEPHILIM

The Middle East (and northern Africa) are home to many mystical phenomena, but two in particular are common enough to be sources of superhumans in the region: the mysterious and otherworldly djinn, and the Nephilim, the descendants of the offspring of humans and “fallen” angels.

THE DJINN

Referred to in the Qur’an as “creatures of smokeless fire,” the djinn are powerful otherworldly beings, similar to elementals and fey spirits but more on the order of deities with regards to their powers. Indeed, many stories of the djinn grant them powers far beyond those of all but the most omnipotent of gods, capable of reordering reality to grant wishes.

A true djinn might wield the plot device level powers of an Imp archetype (from **Chapter 3** of the *M&M Gamemaster’s Guide*), particularly the Player of Games or Trickster, while a mortal with a djinn ally is typically a Jumped-Up Nobody archetype (from the same chapter) who draws power from the djinn rather than an Item of Power (although the Nobody’s Item of Power might actually be something that *controls* the djinn, such as a magic oil lamp or ring). Such power in the wrong hands could re-define the entire concept of “weapons of mass destruction.”

At the Gamemaster’s discretion, the djinn might have mortal descendants from mating with humans in the past, much like the Nephilim (following) or could even be the “fallen angels” spoken of in the origins of the Nephilim.

THE NEPHILIM

The Book of Genesis in the Bible says: “There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bore children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.”

This passage refers to the Grigori, also known as the Watchers, angels set to teach and watch over humanity that fell in love with their charges and mated with them and, in so doing, fell from grace. Their offspring, possessing both human and divine qualities, were the Nephilim, both magnificent and monstrous by turns, becoming ancient heroes and “men (and women) of renown.”

The potential of the Nephilim bloodline has been passed down through human descendants. In most, it is too weak, latent, or never in the presence of sufficient mystic power to activate it in any way, other than perhaps the occasional noteworthy, but still quite human, talent or “gift.” A rare few have the right combination of bloodline and circumstances, perhaps even including astrological conditions of birth, to “activate” the potential of their divine heritage.

In the modern world, many take Nephilim to be mutants or the results of strange, empowering accidents (since that is often what triggers their abilities) but Nephilim are not genetic mutants, and their true nature is detectable to mystics who know what the look for: an intermingling of the divine power of the Light with the human spirit and body.

GOLEMETH

Dr. Tzaddik’s work has led to rumors and stories in Israel of the mysterious “Golemancer,” a magician capable of creating life. There’s some truth to it, as Dr. Tzaddik has begun to explore the achievement of his great-grandfather, Rabbi Leon Kohn, in creating the heroic Golemeth, defender of the Jewish people during World War II. The Israeli government obtained the remains of Golemeth (killed at Ustka during the war, along with other heroes) and have entrusted them to Dr. Tzaddik to study, and possibly restore. The good doctor is not prepared to make the supreme sacrifice of his ancestor in creating life, nor does he wish to blaspheme against the Most High, so he proceeds with caution, well aware that the key element in the restoration of Golemeth may be the sacrifice of a willing soul.

JORDAN

The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan is a constitutional monarchy located between Israel and Saudi Arabia. It formed from the Emirate of Transjordan, founded in 1922, and gaining independence in 1946. It is named for the Jordan River, which forms the nation’s western border.

Although Jordan joined Egypt and Syria in the Six-Day War against Israel and with the Arab League Nations in the Yom Kippur War, it entered into separate peace negotiations with Israel in 1991 and a peace treaty between the two nations was signed in 1994.

The King of Jordan, Abdullah II, is a democratic reformer who has worked to improve the nation’s economy, further the Israeli-Palestinian peace process, and strengthen ties with the Western world. He has made women’s rights an important part of his legacy. In spite of moving Jordan towards democracy, King Abdullah II has also expanded his own powers in response to unrest in the region.

PETRA

Known as *Al-Bastra* in Arabic, Petra (Greek for “rock”) is an ancient archeological site in south-western Jordan. It is located deep in a mountain valley, with the main approach through a long and narrow gorge. The ruins in the valley are over two thousand years old, dated around 300 BCE, and include many elaborate tombs. Petra was declared a World Heritage Site by the United Nations in 1985, and efforts have been made to protect and preserve it while also allowing for archeological study and exploration. UNISON also reviews reports and information on Petra for any possible signs of para-

normal activity, or evidence of otherworldly artifacts or intervention.

KUWAIT

The small nation of Kuwait, on the edge of the Persian Gulf bordering Iraq and Saudi Arabia, had a history as a successful port until a series of economic blockades in the early 20th Century devastated its economy. Kuwait found new prosperity when large oil reserves were discovered there, leading to the so-called "Golden Era" and making it into a nation with one of the highest per-capita incomes in the world.

Kuwait's oil resources and location made it a target for invasion by Iraq in 1991, leading to the first Gulf War, where a U.S.-led international coalition fought to drive the Iraqi military out of Kuwait. The retreating Iraqis adopted a scorched earth policy, setting Kuwaiti oil fields on fire. The nation is still recovering from its losses during the Gulf War and recent political instability has further complicated matters.

Kuwait became the site of the first significant U.S. led military actions in the Middle East in the late 20th Century, and began many of the rumors concerning Iraqi military experiments in the creation of superhumans. Popular conspiracy theories suggest the invasion of Kuwait was motivated by something other than (or in addition to) the rich oil fields, such as a rare mineralogical or archeological resource hidden somewhere in the small nation. Theories vary as to whether or not the Iraqi invaders found what they were looking for and, if so, what became of it.

LEBANON

One of the most war-torn nations of a war-torn region, the Lebanese Republic is situated on the eastern shores of the Mediterranean Sea north of Israel, bordered by Syria to the east and north. Much of Lebanon's violent conflict is internal, the result of a long and terrible civil war. Prior to 1975, it was a prosperous and fairly neutral nation, known for agriculture, commerce, and finance.

A large population of Palestinian refugees fled to Lebanon after being displaced from Israel. The Palestine Liberation Organization, after being ousted from Jordan, likewise relocated to Lebanon. By 1975, violent conflict broke out between sectarian factions, including the PLO and Christian and Muslim militias. Syrian forces were called upon by the Lebanese government to aid in peace-keeping, drawing the military of the Arab League into the conflict.

PLO attacks on Israel from Lebanon led to an Israeli invasion, and a siege of the capitol city of Beirut. International forces attempted to supervise a withdrawal of PLO forces, but were hampered by ongoing conflicts and a series of devastating bombings.

OMAN

The Sultanate of Oman is a small Persian Gulf state on the Arabian Peninsula. An absolute monarchy ruled by its Sultan, Oman was once a powerful empire in the region, exerting considerable influence due to its strategically important location and a rival to European sea-faring nations like Portugal. Its influence declined considerably in the 20th Century.

Unlike many Middle Eastern and Persian Gulf nations, Oman's oil resources are fairly modest, as are its interests in oil extraction and export. It has sought to expand and diversify its economy, particularly in the areas of infrastructure and tourism. Omani society is strongly tribal and religious, with Islam as the majority religion. Most other religions are practiced by foreigners living and working in the country.

With no system of governmental checks and balances, and all authority invested in the Sultan, there is no freedom of speech or the press in Oman and criticism of the government or the Sultan are illegal. The nation has a checkered human rights record, at best, with various accusations of arrests and detention without cause, and torture employed on prisoners and dissidents.

THE UNSEEN IMAM

The Unseen Imam is a legendary figure in Oman, a robed and cloaked holy man whose face is never seen, who is rarely seen at all, in fact, but whose presence is sometimes felt, or who intervenes in times of great peril or importance. Over the years, a number of people in Oman describe how a mysterious man has saved them from disaster, ranging from pulling them from burning buildings to offering a vital word of advice or warning at just the right time. The legend has grown to the point of the Unseen Imam becoming a kind of "folk saint," with prayers asking Allah to send him to aid or intervene. The Sultanate officially denies the existence of the Imam, and public exhortation or spreading of the legend is cause for arrest and imprisonment or flogging. Some believe the Unseen Imam may be associated with Al-Kidhr in Saudi Arabia or Ash'Abha in Gaza, but neither individual has ever confirmed such speculation.

THE KHANJAR OF VENGEANCE

A traditional type of curved ceremonial knife, the Khanjar of Vengeance is an occult item of terrible power. If someone holding the weapon swears an oath of vengeance against an enemy, the *khanjar* becomes mystically linked to that wielder and fills them with the power to carry out their oath, while also keeping the fires of the wielder's anger hot. The wielder of the *khanjar* gains the abilities of the Warrior archetype from the *Hero's Handbook* with the Fast and Leaping abilities and the Weapon Warrior option, but also gains the Complication Vengeful and Obsessed with the Khanjar, as unable to let go of the weapon as they are to let go of

their need for revenge. The Khanjar of Vengeance cut a bloody trail through parts of the Middle East in the last century. It is currently in the custody of a wealthy private collector in Oman who is unaware of its true properties, but others in the world still are, and may take an interest in the weapon.

QATAR

Like Oman, the State of Qatar is an absolute monarchy, under the rule of its Emir. The ruling family has been in place since the 19th Century, although Qatar only gained its independence (from the Ottoman Empire, and then Britain) in 1971. The formation of the Qatar General Petroleum Corporation to manage the country's considerable oil and natural gas resources saw Qatar grow in wealth in influence in the region.

Qatar occupies a peninsula on the Persian Gulf, with Saudi Arabia as its sole neighbor by land, separated by a narrow strait from the island nation of Bahrain. Like Saudi Arabia, Qatar is a conservative Muslim nation where Sharia law forms the basis of most of the country's legislation. There is no legislature, and the members of the Council of Ministers serve at the pleasure of the Emir. While there has been slight progress in women's rights and other areas, Qatar remains staunchly conservative in most areas.

The vast majority of Qatar's population is made up of foreign workers: some 1.5 million out of a total population of 1.8 million. These foreign workers often have few rights and are subjected to conditions of enforced servitude, with beatings, withholding of wages, and other punishments overlooked or permitted by the authorities. Labor unions and similar organizations are prohibited.

Qatar is also noteworthy as the home of the Al Jazeera Media Network (AJMN) conglomerate, which was founded in the mid-1990s and is controlled by the Qatari royal family.

SAUDI ARABIA

The Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, named for founder Ibn Saud and its ruling House of Saud, is also known as "the Land of Haramayn" (the Two Holy Places), as it contains the two holiest sites in Islam: Mecca and Medina. This places Saudi Arabia firmly at the center of the Arab and Islamic world.

The nation is the world's largest producer and exporter of crude oil, the focus of Saudi Arabia's economy and the source of its wealth, and that of its royal family. In spite of its economic prosperity, Saudi Arabia is an authoritarian regime with an absolute monarchy and the enforcement of Sharia law, which affects even the king, according to royal decree. Political parties are banned, and most political influence comes from local tribal sheikhs and a traditional tribal process of petitioning the king for an audience. In spite of ongoing pressures for modernization, Saudi society and government has been resistant and slow to change.

THE NINETY-NINE NAMES

The Prophet Muhammad (blessings be upon him and peace) invoked Allah (God) by many names. The ninety-nine most common of these have become codified in Islamic tradition as representing deep and sacred mysteries.

In the Earth-Prime Universe, the Ninety-Nine may also reflect facets of the supreme godhead known as the Light and the Logos. In particular, aspects of the divine power which could invest themselves in mortal beings, or in the manifest agents of Allah.

A portion of the Ninety-Nine Names is provided here. Gamemasters are free to use these as inspiration for additional Muslim characters (or even non-Muslims chosen or invested with divine power, for the will of Allah is often mysterious) as well as cosmic beings, some of which might be emissaries of Allah, others merely confused for such and named accordingly, perhaps adopting names from a human culture.

Note that in proper Islamic usage, none but Allah may use these titles with Al- (the) in front of them. A mortal might be called Batin (Hidden) but only Allah is Al-Batin (The Unmanifest One).

- **Al-'Ahad:** The One, Indivisible
- **Al-Badi:** The Incomparable, Beautiful
- **Al-Barr:** The Good, Beneficent
- **Al-Basir:** The All-Seeing
- **Al-Baqi:** The Immutable, Everlasting
- **Al-Bari:** The Evolver, Maker
- **Al-Basit:** The Extender, Expander
- **Al-Ba'ith:** The Resurrector
- **Al-Batin:** The Hidden, Unmanifest
- **Al-Fattah:** The Opener
- **Al-Ghani:** The Rich, Independent
- **Al-Hadi:** The Guide
- **Al-Jabbar:** The Compeller, Irresistible
- **Al-Jami:** The Unifier, Gatherer
- **Al-Khafid:** The Abaser, Humiliator
- **Al-Khaliq:** The Creator
- **Al-Latif:** The Gentle, Subtly Kind
- **Al-Malik:** The King, Sovereign
- **Al-Matin:** The Steadfast
- **Al-Muhaymin:** The Controller
- **Al-Mujib:** The Answerer
- **Al-Mumit:** The Bringer of Death
- **Al-Muntaqim:** The Avenger
- **Al-Muqaddim:** The Expediter
- **Al-Mutakabbir:** The Supreme
- **Al-Mu'akhhir:** The Delayer, Who Puts Far Away
- **Al-Mu'min:** The Granter of Security
- **Al-Mu'id:** The Restorer
- **Al-Muhyi:** The Giver of Life
- **Al-Muhsi:** The Accounter, Numberer of All
- **Al-Musawwir:** The Fashioner, Shaper, Designer
- **Al-Mani:** The Withholder, Shielder, Defender
- **Al-Qawi:** The Strong
- **Al-Wajid:** The Perceiver, Finder
- **Al-'Aziz:** The Invulnerable, Honorable
- **Al-Hakam:** The Judge, Arbitrator
- **Al-Haqq:** The Truth
- **Ash-Sami:** The All-Hearing

Religious authorities have a strong role in the enforcement of law and order. Its judges and legal advocates are Islamic religious scholars, and the nation has religious police, Mutaween, who travel in small groups to enforce laws ranging from dietary and sexual restrictions to proper dress codes. Physical and capital punishment are common, and Mutaween can administer public beatings for infractions instead of (or before) hauling the accused before a judge. Executions of criminals are common.

IRAM OF THE PILLARS

Chapter 89 of the *Qur'an* asks: "Have you not considered how your Lord dealt with Iram, who had lofty pillars, the likes of whom had never been created in the lands...?" For centuries the legendary "Iram of the Pillars" has become known as the "Atlantis of the Sands," rumored buried somewhere in the Rub' al-Khali, the "Empty Quarter" of the Saudi desert. Many archeologists on Earth-Prime believe Iram exists. The site is also of interest to those seeking ancient and forbidden occult secrets. SHADOW, in particular, has mounted expeditions and followed leads to find and unearth Iram in order to loot any lore or treasures it might contain.

AL FALKUNAR

PL8 • 191 POINTS

STR 2 STA 2 AGL 3 DEX 3 FGT 8 INT 5 AWE 1 PRE 3

Powers: **Robotic Raptors** (Summon 5, Controlled, Horde, Mental Link, Multiple Minions 4 (16 raptors), Responsive, Self-Powered), **Sky-Wing** (Flight 5 (60 MPH), Affects Others, Platform)

Equipment: Sword, smartphone

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Beginner's Luck, Benefit 4 (Saudi royalty), Connected, Contacts, Defensive roll 4, Equipment, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Improvised Weapon, Inventor, Move-by Action, Precise Attack (Close, Concealment), Quick Draw, Takedown

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+9), Athletics 6 (+8), Insight 4 (+5), Intimidation 2 (+5), Investigation 4 (+9), Perception 6 (+7), Ranged Combat: Throwing 4 (+7), Stealth 2 (+5), Technology 8 (+13), Vehicles 6 (+9)

Offense: Initiative +7, Sword +8 (Close, Damage 5, Crit. 19–20), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 8, Toughness 6/2, Will 7

Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 71 + Advantages 21 + Skills 24 + Defenses 21 = 191

ROBOT RAPTOR

PL5/MR5 • 72 POINTS

STR -2 STA — AGL 6 DEX 0 FGT 6 INT 0 AWE 3 PRE —

Powers: **Claws** (Damage 1), **Eyes of the Hawk** (Senses 4 (Extended Vision 2, Infravision, Low-light Vision), Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects), **Small** (Shrinking 8, Permanent, Innate), **Wings** (Flight 5, Wings)

Advantages: Move-by Action

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+10), Perception 4 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +6, Claws +6 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 0, Will Immune

Totals: Abilities 10 + Powers 57 + Advantages 1 + Skills 4 + Defenses 0 = 72

If Iram truly exists, more recent failures to locate it suggest the ancient city is not merely buried beneath the sands, but also cloaked or hidden in some way by magic or advanced technology. It may be contained within a pocket dimension connected to the tunnels of Sub-Terra, or on a dimensional fold or fault line like other hidden places on Earth-Prime, including Utopia Isle and Shambala Vale.

DESERT WASP

The most public Saudi superhuman is also the most infamous, as he is both a criminal and willing exile from his homeland. Zaid Rahman was a troubled teen who had several brushes with the religious police even before his powers manifested. His family was grateful of the opportunity for Zaid to attend the Claremont Academy in the United States, and Zaid was grateful to escape, since life abroad finally allowed him to accept his growing awareness of his homosexuality. Once out of Saudi Arabia, Zaid adopted the code-name "Desert Wasp" and graduated Claremont with honors, making fast friends and, eventually, coming out and applying for asylum in the United States.

Zaid has remained a devout Muslim (in his view). Coupled with his sexuality and nationality, he has been a target for bigots on numerous fronts, including the sinister spirit known as Knightfire (see *Freedom City*). He lives and operates out of Detroit in the United States, but his high-speed flight allows Desert Wasp to visit many places in the world. He has been accused of using his super-sonic flight to secretly aid other LGBT people in escaping persecution in the Middle East but, to date, no proof has arisen.

Desert Wasp has the abilities of the Speedster archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, except with Flight rather than Speed and without the Run On Water or Run Up Walls abilities (which are superfluous for him anyway).

AL FALKUNAR

A younger member of the Saudi Royal Family, Faisal al Saud could have made a career for himself as a brilliant engineer, given his technical talents, but his heart is drawn to adventure and excitement more than mere technical challenges. Using a combination of his wealth, influence, and skills, Faisal constructed a number of devices, particularly his trademark robotic raptors, to become *Al Falkunar*, "The Falconer," a dashing figure spotted in the skies and on the rooftops of Riyadh.

Faisal's activities are an open secret amongst his family, which permits them as he is a popular figure at home. For his part, Al Falkunar has begun to learn that being a hero is different from playing at one, and it remains to be seen how long before his actions become a concern to his conservative relations, and their government.

AL-KIDHR

In the emptiness of the Saudi desert stands a mysterious tower, seemingly immune to the environment and the passage of time, and not always in the place where it was

last seen. Those able to find and enter this tower discover a maze of passageways, leading into the presence of a dark-eyed Arab clad in a green robe and mantle, known only as Al-Kidhr, "The Green Man" or "Verdant One." Often, he abides in a lush garden courtyard with bubbling fountains somewhere in the depths of the tower, seemingly in a place beyond space and time.

Al-Kidhr is "a magician of no small talent" and aids his visitors in finding solutions to their problems, not all of which are mystical in nature. He also deals with arcane threats to the Arabian Peninsula and beyond. Some in mystic circles believe Al-Kidhr is a potential candidate for the next Master Mage but wonder, if he is suited, why he has not attained that title already. The Verdant One has nothing to say on the matter other than "It shall be as Allah wills." Choose spells and abilities for Al-Kidhr as suits the story and the series, but he should be at least the equivalent of a PL12 version of the Mystic archetype from the *Hero's Handbook* (add +2 ranks to most powers, attack, and defense abilities).

THE STAR-SHIEKH

He arrives standing upon an anti-gravity platform, clad in a fine *thawb* and *keffiyeh* like an Arab sheikh, but black as night, shot through and accented in silver. His skin is pearlescent gray and his neat beard pure white. In perfect Arabic, he describes himself as a "Star-Sheikh," come from a distant world to bargain as a peer with the King of the most noble land of Saudi Arabia, offering advanced technology in exchange for a substantial portion of the kingdom's petroleum resources.

Naturally, the world community is deeply concerned, both by the possibility of losing vast amounts of oil to an extraterrestrial and also of the Saudis gaining access to alien technology. The world holds its breath as delicate negotiations look to prevent what could turn into an all-out war or preemptive strike against the Star-Sheikh, the Saudis, or both while the stocks and commodities markets plunge wildly out of control.

The so-called Star-Sheikh is playing his own game. He is a renegade Zultasian warlord from the Stellar Imperium, one who has previously challenged the Star-Khan. He has no interest in Earth's oil reserves (worthless to his civilization) but is instead after something buried deep underground in those same petroleum deposits, such as an ancient Preserver artifact or other item of power. He has no intention of honoring any bargain with human primitives, and is simply buying time to locate his prize, unless the heroes can stop him.

The Star-Sheikh has the abilities of the Overlord archetype from the *M&M Gamemaster's Guide*, all of his powers granted by advanced Imperium technology.

SYRIA

Up until recently one of the most stable Middle Eastern nations, the Syrian Arab Republic is now one of the most troubled, faced with an ongoing internal conflict between rebel factions and the government.



Modern Syria was established after World War I as a French mandate, encompassing a portion of the former Ottoman-controlled territory between Turkey, Iraq, Lebanon, and Jordan. A coup in 1961 led to rule by the Ba'athist Party and an ongoing "state of emergency" lasting nearly fifty years, suspending nearly all constitutional rights and placing supreme power in the hands of the President.

In 2011, a series of peaceful protests inspired by the Arab Spring provoked a violent government crackdown, sparking military defections and the formation of an armed resistance against the government. This led to a full-fledged civil war as other factions—including various sectarian militias, Hezbollah, and the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL)—entered the fighting. The conflict has resulted in hundreds of thousands of casualties, widespread disease and devastation, and millions of refugees fleeing Syria for other parts of the world, particularly Europe.

The combination of ongoing military conflict, porous borders, and terrorism have lured criminals and mercenaries to war-torn Syria as well. International agencies like UNISON are working to prevent illegal arms and technologies from crossing the border, as well as stopping criminals looking to smuggle goods out of the country, including archeological artifacts or technologies (possibly acquired from clandestine meetings in the country).

TURKEY

Turkey is a nation struggling between its long history as an Islamic state and the center of the once-great Ottoman Empire and its modern desire to exist as a secular nation (albeit one with a large religious population) and a part of the European Union, containing many of the nation's former rivals.

The modern Republic of Turkey was founded in 1922, following an armed rebellion led by Mustafa Kemal Pasha to expel the occupying forces of the Allies from World War I. The new government declared Ankara its capitol and proceeded to set up a new constitution intended to formally end the Caliphate and reform Turkey as a secular and democratic state. Mustafa Kemal became the new nation's first president and the parliament bestowed upon him the honorific *Atatürk*—"Father of the Turks."

Since the start of the Cold War, Turkey has allied itself with America and the Western world, becoming a member of NATO and the European Economic Community (precursor to the European Union). Since 2005, Turkey has been in negotiations to formally join the European Union, but there have been stumbling blocks, including economic and cultural issues, and concern over the potential extent of Turkey's influence within the EU as a member state.

Turkey's most powerful superhuman is Kargaşa ("Chaos"), a criminal extortionist possessed of the power of a rampant earth elemental, who has blackmailed the government with threats of earthquakes and other natural

disasters. His powers are similar to those of Italy's Duca Nefando (see **The Mediterranean**).

Other known Turkish superhumans include Zihin Kiz ("Mind Girl" – PL9 Psychic archetype), a Lor halfbreed with awakened psionic powers; Dağ ("Mountain" – PL10 Powerhouse archetype), empowered by the same elemental energies as Kargaşa; Hayvan Kral ("Animal King" – PL8 Shapeshifter archetype) able to assume different animal forms, and Kadin Avci ("The Huntress" – PL10 Weapon Master), a mysterious vigilante with super-senses wielding a bow, with a moon-goddess motif.

THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES

Located at the mouth of the Persian Gulf, the UAE is a federation of seven emirates, each ruled by an emir as absolute monarch. Together, these seven form a Federal Supreme Council, which selects one of their number as President of the federation. A powerful oil-producing nation, the UAE has been criticized for its human rights record, particularly the harsh requirements of Sharia law, much like neighboring Saudi Arabia.

Although the UAE have no known citizen superhumans, they are famous (or infamous) for hiring super-powered mercenaries and other "advisors" and "consultants" on an as-needed basis, often with little concern for their legal status in other parts of the world. Rumor has it that individual monarchs of the Emirates also invest in potential sources of private superhuman soldiers, or items of power they might claim for themselves, although without any significant success thus far.

THE WEST BANK

Land along the western bank of the River Jordan and the Dead Sea has been occupied by Israel since the Six-Day War in 1967. The United Nations recognizes part of the West Bank territories as belonging to the Palestinian people, and consider them "occupied territories," while Israel maintains military and civilian control over the entire region. This has led to ongoing international disputes about the legality of Israeli settlement in the West Bank, making it a significant source of conflict in the region. Ironically, the West Bank contains some of the holiest sites in the Middle East, including Jericho, Bethlehem, Ramallah, and part of Jerusalem.

YEMEN

The Republic of Yemen, on the southern end of the Arabian Peninsula, is a nation in political turmoil, its government and leadership in dispute. A former delicate alliance between the president, the army, and factions under the influence of Saudi Arabia has become a series of rebellions and "glorious revolutions" threatening both Saudi and U.S. interests in the region, as well as creating uncertainty for the Yemeni people. The U.N. efforts to broker an agreement has thus far not been successful. UNISON works to ensure outside criminal and superhuman factions do not attempt to take advantage of the Yemeni conflict.

NORTH AFRICA

When people speak of “North Africa” they usually mean Saharan Africa, though some people exclude some nations in the region and instead include them with the Middle East. For the purposes of this Atlas, North Africa is considered to be all of Saharan Africa along the northern coast and the region typically referred to as “West Africa.”

While Africa is a place well-known for its wildlife and political problems, they are mostly touched on here as they relate to supervillains, superheroes, strange phenomena, and similar topics. There is however, a wealth of excellent material, both online and off, available on the various cultures and nations of Africa. Gamemasters taking their series to Africa can definitely benefit from at least a quick survey of whichever regions their heroes visit.

EGYPT

A land with a rich history, Egypt is a place of modern intrigues and ancient mysteries. Recent political upheavals have made it a hotbed of political and intelligence activity, with agents of SHADOW, UNISON, and other groups fighting a covert war for the region. Currently SHADOW has the upper hand, having long-established cells and secret bases in Cairo, Alexandria, and other Egyptian cities.

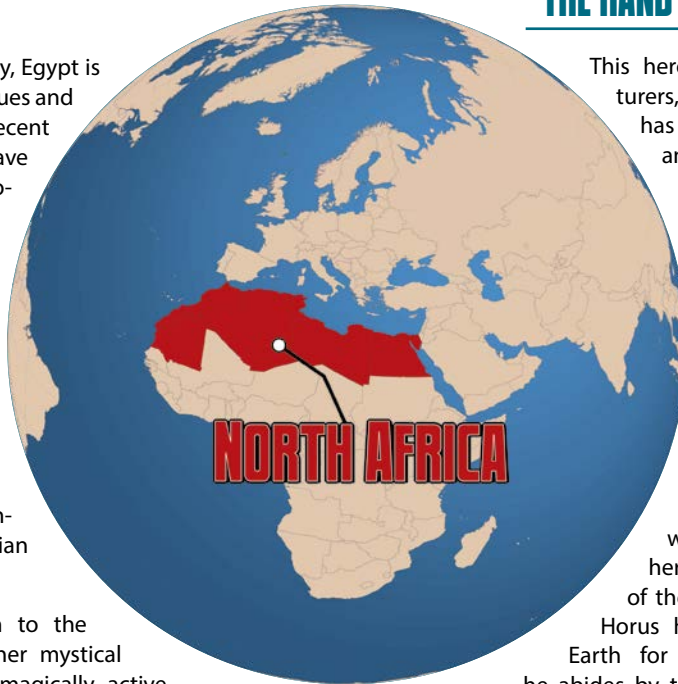
Due to its connection to the Egyptian gods and other mystical forces, Egypt is more magically active than many nations. Many heroes and villains

who draw their power from Egyptian artifacts or mysticism, such as Scarab or Overshadow, often find themselves drawn back to this country to seek some ancient secret or oppose some recently unearthed threat. Though many of the tombs of the Pharaohs have been looted or hold only mundane treasures, the desert still hides various tombs and temples holding powerful magical items or unholy monsters.

Though many modern Egyptians are Muslims, with a notable minority of Coptic Christians, many cults worshipping the Egyptian gods exist in secret. Four cults in particular hold major influence in Egypt’s mystical underground: the Hand of Horus, the Dark Cult of Anubis, the Scions of Sobek, and the Coils of Apep.

THE HAND OF HORUS

This heroic collection of adventurers, scholars, and mystics has existed in one form or another for centuries. More of a secret society of like-minded individuals than a traditional cult, the Hand of Horus is devoted to serving justice and taking revenge on those who exploit the weak and harm the innocent. In the past the group has worked with Horus the Avenger, their patron who was active as a superhero during the latter part of the 20th century. However, Horus has not been active on Earth for several years, because he abides by the rules of the Pact put in place by Simon Magus to limit the presence



A LAND OF MANY TONGUES

Africa is a vast continent with numerous cultures and languages. These range from very commonly spoken languages like English and French, to relatively widespread ones like Swahili and Portuguese, to local or obscure dialects like Akans and Wolof. There is no “African” language, and in some cases the differences between two tribal dialects is at least as great between two European or Asian languages.

However, though each of these is a unique and fully realized language, purchasing them for a hero or villain, however appropriate, may be seen as penalizing a character for coming from a culture whose language is rarely spoken outside its own region. For example, taking Languages 3 would enable a character to speak the native tongues of several European nations, but the same expenditure wouldn’t even get that character all the languages spoken in Nigeria.

If this is a concern, GMs may wish to give player characters two local or obscure languages for every selection under the normal use of the Languages advantage. So a character with Languages 1 might speak French or German or some other common tongue, or two lesser known or used languages, like Wolof and Tswana. It’s up to GMs to decide what constitutes an “uncommon” language, but with regards to characters from North Africa, languages associated with specific tribes or ethnic groups, or that aren’t spread across several nations qualify for the two-for-one cost.

of the gods on Earth-Prime. Horus does, however, work through intermediaries relatively frequently.

The Hand of Horus is constantly besieged by the other three cults, who all share goals opposed to the Hand of Horus and have connections to SHADOW, who occasionally aid them in trying to eliminate Horus' followers. They survive through skill and secrecy, but many of the order have fallen to these foes over the decades.

THE DARK CULT OF ANUBIS

A perversion of traditional Egyptian worship of the death-god Anubis, this blood cult is led by the Black Anubis, a supervillain who has fought against the White Lions of Dakana in the past. The incarnation of the Egyptian death god Anubis from an alternate Earth, Black Anubis has taken over the cult to grow his power base. Once a more traditional supervillain, he now hopes to use treachery, indirect methods, and corruption where more direct methods have failed in the past. To aid in his deceptions, Black Anubis often uses his Ritualist advantage to cast enchantments masking his true, jackal-headed, form. He has

BLACK ANUBIS

PLT2 • 231 POINTS

STR 7 STA 5 AGL 4 DEX 5 FGT 8 INT 2 AWE 0 PRE 0

Powers: **Dark Flight** (Flight 7 (250 MPH); **Darkness Control** (Dynamic Array (30 points), **Shadow Shroud** (Burst Area 2 (60 feet) Concealment Attack 6, All Visual), **AE: Consuming Darkness** (Ranged Weaken Stamina 14, Resisted by Fortitude), **AE: Darkness Constructs** (Movable Create 10), **AE: Draining Darkness** (Ranged Affliction 14 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Incapacitated)), **AE: Midnight Blast** (Ranged Damage 14), **AE: Shadow Bonds** (Ranged Cumulative Affliction 10 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile), Extra Condition, Limited Degree), **AE: Summon Night** (Environment 14 (30 miles; -5 Visibility)); **Godlike** (Immortality 2 (1 week), Immunity 16 (Aging, Darkness Damage, Life Support), Protection 5, Senses 2 (Darkvision)); **Was Scepter** (Strength-based Damage 5, Penetrating 5, Accurate (Easily Removable))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Artificer, Assessment, Diehard, Fearless, Improved Initiative, Languages (English, Egyptian native), Power Attack, Ranged Attack 5, Ritualist, Startle

Skills: Deception 8 (+8), Expertise: Magic 12 (+14), Insight 10 (+10), Intimidation 10 (+10), Perception 8 (+8), Persuasion 6 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +8, Midnight Blast +10 (Ranged, Damage 14), Shadow Bonds +10 (Ranged, Cumulative Affliction 10, Dodge DC 20), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 7), Was Scepter +10 (Close, Damage 12, Penetrating 5)

Defense: Dodge 14, Parry 14, Fortitude 10, Toughness 10, Will 14

Totals: Abilities 62 + Powers 92 + Advantages 15 + Skills 26 + Defenses 35 = 231

Complications: Motivation—Power: Black Anubis is devoted to growing the power of himself and the Cult of Anubis through spreading fear and death. **Bloodthirsty:** Black Anubis is out for blood and often loses himself in combat. **Identity:** Black Anubis has created a false identity for himself and, so far, is intent on keeping it safe in order to advance his plans. **Mythic Weakness:** Because he's from another dimension, Black Anubis can be banished from Earth-Prime's universe with the right incantations and rituals. **Prejudice:** Black Anubis is a black-skinned humanoid with the leering head of a jackal. His appearance elicits fear in many who see him.

created for himself the false identity of Nasr Mubarak, an Egyptian importer, philanthropist, and respected member of the international business community. He despises having to hide his true form and adopt human niceties, but he only does both for as little time as possible and even while disguised he can domineering and abusive.

SCIIONS OF SOBEK

A splinter group of SHADOW, the Scions of Sobek are best known for their participation in the deaths of the first Scarab and the hero Brainstorm. Since then, the cult has been weakened by internal power struggles and external attacks from various forces. Recently, the cult has rejoined its parent group and now functions as a specialized subgroup within SHADOW's larger structure.

THE COILS OF APEP

A society of assassins devoted to the spread of evil and chaos, the Coils of Apep worship the Egyptian serpent god of chaos, Apep. In recent years, the cult has come under the influence of the Serpent People and the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign, who have convinced the bulk of the cult that they are the "chosen of Apep." There might be some truth to this, as some believe Apep is simply one incarnation of the Unspeakable One, the dark god of the Brotherhood. In any event, the Brotherhood uses the members of the Coils as assassins, infiltrators, and even suicide troops upon occasion.

Use the Ninja statistics from the *Gamemaster's Guide* (see **Chapter 3** of that book), for Coils of Apep assassins, but with weapons and equipment with an Egyptian theme instead of Japanese, and change Expertise: Ninja Lore to Expertise: Cult Lore.

LIBYA

Slowly recovering from their recent revolution in the early 2010s, Libya has worked hard to achieve stability. The new government faces many challenges, and the fledgling status of the current administration makes it particularly vulnerable to destabilization from insurgents, coup attempts, and organizations like SHADOW. Recently, to help protect the nation and its people, the Libyan government has begun recruiting numerous superhumans to bolster their regular military and law enforcement ranks. Some of these superhumans are native Libyans, though a few super-powered mercenaries have been recruited as well. Notable among these recruits are Gibli, a young Bedouin speedster who takes his name from the desert winds, and Griff Noire (Black Claw), an aging French-Algerian mercenary with a checkered past seeking a paycheck and protection from old enemies. The Gamemaster is free to add any other characters to the roster of the Libyan team.

Gibli uses the Speedster archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**), adding the following Advantages: Language 1 (English, Arabic native), Evasion, Throwing Mastery 2, and Improved Trip. Replace Expertise and Technology with Expertise: Survival 8 (+8) and Stealth 4 (+8).

TANIT BATTLES BLACK ANUBIS



Griffe Noir uses the Weapons Master archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**), with the **Crippling Strike** and **Urban Acrobat** powers, **Sword** for equipment (actually claws, but using the same statistics), and dropping the motorcycle. Add the following Advantages: Accurate Attack, Contacts, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Languages 2 (English, Arabic, French native), Move-by Attack, Takedown, and Weapon Break. Choose Mercenary for Expertise 6 (+6).

ALGERIA

A nation with a rich history that stretches back to Phoenicia and Carthage, Algeria is a relatively wealthy and stable nation made even safer by the presence of one of the more powerful superheroes in the region. Tanit, Punic goddess of war, healing, and fertility, is not always in agreement with the goals of the modern government and its politicians, but she is sworn to protect their people. Her current avatar is Lina Yacine, a young artist who was saved from a vicious attack when Tanit chose Lina as her mortal agent. Naming herself after the goddess who saved her, Lina is now a superhumanly powerful demi-god whose mind and soul are a mix of human and divine. Tanit is friendly with most of the superheroes in the region, and has a modest fan following in Europe and North America due to various high-profile heroics in recent years. She also protects nearby Tunisia and other regions with equal vigor, because they were once part of the Phoenician and Carthaginian civilizations.

Tanit uses the Paragon archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**), but add 2 to all Attributes, add the powers

Mystic Senses (Senses 3 (Mystic, Darkvision)), **Blessings of Tanit** (Healing 8 (Stabilize)), and **Divine Avatar** (Immunity (Aging), Immortality 4), **Divine Voice** (Comprehend 3 (Speak, Understand, Read all)). Add the following Advantages: All-out Attack, Attractive, Evasion, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative 2, Move-by Action, and Takedown. For skills, choose Expertise: Magic and add Expertise: Theology 6 (+8), Intimidation 6 (+9), and Treatment 4 (+6). Tanit's PL is 12.

TUNISIA

After a recent revolution, Tunisia is emerging to be a growing force in tourism and development in the region. Echoing the construction of the Sports City project, an entire city centered around a collection of professional sports academies and stadiums, the government has recently revealed plans for a "Super City" as well. This will be an ultra-modern, urban metropolis with multiple businesses, embassies, and facilities dedicated to anything and everything superhuman-related. From training academies to research facilities, the project is the brainchild of popular native hero Atlas, whose wealth and technical brilliance drives the project. Atlas has reached out to heroes, scientists, and officials around the world in an effort to make his dream project successful, though only time will tell how it ends up. American industrialist Maximilian Mars is among the many foreign investors to throw their support behind the project; his company is funding numerous research facilities and he has donated various advanced technologies to the training academy.

THE SECRET OF GALLU

Gallu's reason for operating the prison is left open for GMs to define. However, it is likely frightening and terrible. Here are some suggestions:

- Gallu is an advanced scout for an alien invasion. The aliens are studying superhumans so they can give powers to their soldiers. The Grue are the best candidate for this sort of plan, though it could be any number of aliens, including a race previously unknown.
- Gallu is a servant of Omega who once ran one of the harshest prisons in the Terminus. He is biding his time and studying Earth's superhumans until his master calls him home or decides to use him in some new and terrible way.
- Gallu's powers work in some sort of extremely long-term way. He can permanently acquire a superhuman's abilities, but he must regularly drain them for years to do so. The prison is simply the best way for him to accomplish this, and once he has enough power he will move on to other endeavors, perhaps including conquest and mass destruction.
- Gallu enjoys hurting people. He's a sadist who is content to torture and torment, especially those who are usually so powerful. There's nothing anyone can offer him to make him stop; his hellish prison is his own personal heaven.
- Gallu doesn't just take his name from an ancient Mesopotamian demon—he is one. Draining the lifeforce of the inmates is part of a demonic pact with some even greater power, and those who are trapped in his prison will eventually become demonic servitors for a great elder evil.

Gallu uses the Mimic Villain archetype (see *Gamemaster's Guide*, **Chapter 3**). Increase his Intellect, Awareness, and Presence to 3. Add the following skills: Deception 5 (+8), Expertise: Interrogation 10 (+13), Expertise: Warden 10 (+13), Intimidation 5 (+8), and Perception 5 (+8). Increase **Mimic**: Variable to 30 and add a linked **Neutralize** 15 Power Effect with Continuous Duration that affects all non-training or tech-based Powers, Advantages, Skills, and Abilities with the Quirk that it requires periodic proximity to the target or it begins to fade. Feel free to add any Powers, Abilities, or Skills that Gallu has drained from current inmates when he is encountered. He should typically be given powers that make him a potent and versatile threat at PL15. If he is an alien or demon, adjust his statistics to account for these origins.

The city is scheduled to be completed in mid-2016, though many apartments and facilities are already completed and some early superhuman-related research has already begun in completed sections. Atlas is currently interviewing candidates for a chief administrator and various high-level security and research positions.

Atlas uses the Battlesuit archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**). Increase Intellect to 9. Add the skills: Expertise: Business 5 (+14), Expertise: Engineer 10 (+19), and Expertise: Science 5 (+14). Add the advantages: Benefit 5 (Billionaire), Eidetic Memory, Language 3 (English, French, Italian, Latin, Arabic native).

MOROCCO

Famous for its scenic vistas and rich culture, Morocco is a hotbed of tourist activity, both mundane and superhuman. As part of a variety of social and political reforms under the current ruler, King Mohammed VI, Morocco offers a "conditional neutrality" to various superhumans seeking temporary asylum. Under this agreement, superhumans possessing a special visa issued by Morocco can operate within the borders of the nation sans government interference, even if they are wanted by the authorities of other nations with which Morocco usually has extradition treaties. These visas are of a very limited length and can be withdrawn at the discretion of the crown, but they do allow individuals to meet, negotiate, or simply vacation in peace. Though usually employed by supervillains, clandestine meetings between superheroes are not unheard of. The price of these special visas is high, making them a profitable part of Morocco's burgeoning "super tourism" industry.

Resorts and clubs that cater to superhumans, their allies, and agents have become popular in recent years. The oldest and most notable among these is L'Americain, a club whose origins date back to WWII, when it was used as the clandestine meeting place of various spies and anti-Axis super-soldiers. L'Americain's owner, who only goes by the name Blaine, is rumored to be one such super-soldier himself, though others point out the middle-aged man is too young to have fought the Nazis. For his part, Blaine has nothing to say about these rumors.

TAZAMAMART

In stark contrast to the brighter aspects of the nation, the former political prison Tazamamart in the southern Atlas Mountains has been repurposed and updated to serve an exclusive clientele. Now a secret and privately run prison, it has been converted to house superhuman prisoners. The facility's harsh, inhumane conditions made it a human rights nightmare before it was originally shut down in 1991. Even today, if an inmate can bypass the defensive systems and escape, they still have to contend with harsh desert for miles in all directions. The desert and the prison's walls are only a small part of what keeps Tazamamart's prisoners there; the main incentive is the presence of the Gallu.

The warden and operator of Tazamamart, Gallu is a powerful superhuman with the ability to drain the superhuman abilities of nearly any target. Unless a power is derived through physical training or technology, Gallu can steal it and use it as his own. Gallu must maintain semi-regular contact with his victims to keep their powers, which he does through "personal sessions" with each prisoner that involve beatings, psychological torment, and other abuses. It is unknown who Gallu was before taking over the prison, or why with his powers he seems content to serve as warden in a remote prison. Gallu's name is taken from Mesopotamian myths of demonic ghouls that dwell in the underworld. No one knows his real name.

The prison's inmates are a selection of some of the most dangerous or politically embarrassing prisoners from various nations around the world. Truthfully, for the right

price one can incarcerate anyone here for any amount of time, regardless of status or guilt. Few who have been incarcerated here leave, and those who do often emerge more violent and dangerous than when they entered. Prisoners are sometimes even sold (living or dead) for experimentation to various interested groups.

WESTERN SAHARA

A disputed territory with a history of unrest and conflicts, this sparsely populated region is an ideal place for various villain or superhuman terrorist groups to operate largely unchecked. With a barren, difficult landscape and little population away from the coastal fishing communities, there isn't much to stop groups like SHADOW or various superhuman-backed criminal syndicates from using the area for weapons development, bio-weapons testing, human trafficking, and other crimes. As the local Sahrawi tribes are largely nomadic and often at odds with the Moroccan government that claims to officially control the region, locals are at times captured by such groups for test subjects and labor. Often ethnic or other minorities are targeted, and it is from one such group the region gets its sole current active superhero, Kahina.

A member of the dark-skinned Haratin people, Kahina was created by a criminal syndicate trying to augment and refine the DNAscent human augmentation process. Many of Kahina's people had been killed being subjected to these tests by the time she gained her powers and used them to destroy her captors. Kahina has since become the unofficial protector of the region, focusing on stopping human rights abuses, championing the civil rights of the Haratin and other minorities, and shutting down various criminal operations which prey on the people in the region. In 2013 she worked with members of the Freedom League on a case that brought members of that famed super team to the region, but she rejected their offer of membership in favor of remaining to protect her people and home.

Kahina uses the Warrior archetype with the **Fast** option (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**). Add **Super-Senses** (Senses 4 (Extended Hearing, Extended Vision, Low-light Vision, Ultra-hearing)) and **Armored Skin** (Impervious Toughness 10). Add the following advantages: Defensive Attack, Evasion, Favored Environment (Desert), Improved Disarm, Languages 2 (Arabic, English, Berber native), Skill Mastery (Perception), Tracking, and Uncanny Dodge. For skills, increase Perception and Insight to 10 (+14) and choose History as her Expertise.

MAURITANIA

Still suffering from major unrest and tension from a 2008 coup that replaced the old government, Mauritania's long-running problems with slavery, human trafficking, human rights violations, and other problems make life very difficult for much of the nation's populace. In the past, a modest number of local superheroes sought to improve things, but ideological conflicts and pushback from authoritative forces in the government led to the outlawing of all but officially licensed government superhumans in 2010. Since then, several costumed heroes have retired or left the country, leaving only a handful behind to form an under-

CORRUPTION AND PROBLEMS IN AFRICA

The common media perception of Africa is that it is choking on corruption and strife. Watch any film or TV show on the topic and the impression is that every official, cop, and businessperson is on the take and that the whole continent is doomed. This is a fiction, and one with some uncomfortable racism to back it up. Like anywhere else, there are many moral, professional, and upstanding bureaucrats, politicians, police officers, and soldiers, but it's not those people who grab headlines or fire up emotions.

However, to say there is no corruption in any African nation is to do a disservice to the organizations and people who work very hard to fight a very real problem. Foreign corporate interests, local ethnic conflicts, political maneuvering, powerful criminal groups, and other forces can and do, at times, undermine various local governments. This sort of corruption exists, but it's not everywhere and doesn't happen all the time. In other words, your average African nation has the same problem with corruption as any nation elsewhere in the world. In cases where it's pronounced, it's due to conditions, such as poverty or unresolved historical conflicts, or exacerbated by some criminal, political, or financial force. Most importantly, there's no "common corruption" throughout Africa. Each nation and region has its own problems, challenges, and issues. Sure, Mauritania, Morocco, and Western Sahara all share issues with discrimination against darker-skinned Arabs (the Haratin, like the heroic Kahina mentioned here). However, that's not the same as conflicts in Eastern or Southern Africa, and not every local who encounters these problems turns a blind eye due to greed or other flaws. In short, Africans are not savages or evil, they are ordinary people in difficult, sometimes very difficult, environments trying their best to survive, keep themselves and their families safe, and get ahead in the world.

GMs don't need to focus on these problems in their games if they don't want to, and some real-life problems aren't well-suited subject matter for leisure time gaming. It's okay to fight the supervillains or stop one particular threat and move on to the next adventure. However, if you have corruption and dirty politics enter into your games, remember that the PCs won't be the only people trying to clean things up or make things better. They're just the most important ones in your game.

ground group led by Antarah, a masked hero who gains his powers from a mystic gem first used by the Arab folk hero and warrior-poet from whom he takes his name. Antarah is particularly concerned with shutting down the slave trade in his nation, though his reasons are unknown to the public.

Antarah uses the Martial Artist archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**) with the following changes: Increase PL to 11. Increase Stamina, Strength, Intellect, and Presence by 2. Add Daze (Persuasion), Fascinate (Expertise: Poet), Languages 2 (English, French, Arabic native), and Leadership to advantages. Add Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Poet 10 (+12), and Persuasion 8 (+10) to skills. Also add **Complications: Power Loss**: Antarah needs his amulet to turn into his powered form. Without it he is an ex-slave named Kadar Taya. **Motivation—Doing Good**: Antarah, in his normal identity, is an ex-slave who suffered abuse before escaping. He works tirelessly to save others who have been enslaved and bring their salvors to justice.

WEST AFRICA

The fifteen nations that make up what is commonly known as West African range from tiny Togo to larger nations like Nigeria and Mali. While various cultural commonalities cross national borders, each nation has its own problems, culture, and identity. As members of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), they seek to cooperate to provide stable trade, economic opportunities, and development. Civil wars, terrorism, rebellions, and corruption in various member nations make this difficult, but these efforts are aided by numerous West African governments, foreign aid organizations, and, since 1996, a coalition of superhumans loosely affiliated with ECOWAS and its member governments.

Given the prevalence of English, French, and Portuguese as official languages among the regions of this nation, many superhumans who adopt alter egos name themselves in these languages. However, it is not unheard of for a superhuman with strong ties to a particular ethnic group or culture to take his name from this heritage. These names often have mystic or mythological significance, though it's no more common for superhumans in West Africa to have such origins as anywhere else.

CHAMPIONS OF WEST AFRICA

The most cohesive superheroic organization in western Africa is the assemblage of heroes known as the Champions of West Africa. Formed in late 1996, and known often simply as the Champions or the CWA, this group of superheroes is made up of various member nations of ECOWAS and the occasional expatriate hero from abroad. The group spends most of its time in actions akin to their peers elsewhere in the world: foiling criminals, stopping disasters, and dealing with a variety of super-powered threats. In addition, the group tries to keep the actions of various terrorist groups and warlords under control, many of whom have recruited or hired their own superhumans over the years—in some cases to specifically oppose the Champions.

The complex problems of violence, unrest, and corruption that regularly erupt over some parts of the region fuel similar outbursts of superhuman violence in various parts of West Africa, particularly during civil wars and

other upheavals. The targeting of many heroes' families by extreme groups has led most members of the CWA to keep their identities secret.

Though ideally the team would like to have at least one member from each state in the region, various political disagreements and other problems have resulted in a reduction in CWA membership. An ideological dispute over the importance of sovereignty of the regional states versus direct intervention by the team in various situations, particularly those that involve violence against minorities, children, and women, resulted in a split in the Champions. In late 2013, several members of the team left to either go solo or join other groups with a more proactive stance. The current roster of the team includes the following heroes.

EXEMPLAR

Agyenim Annan, the Ghanaian national hero who sees his nation as a model for stability and progress in the region. Possesses great integrity and courage, but can be a bit overbearing. His name is a traditional Akan name that means "great divine one." He is super-strong, tough, and able to leap great distances.

JALI

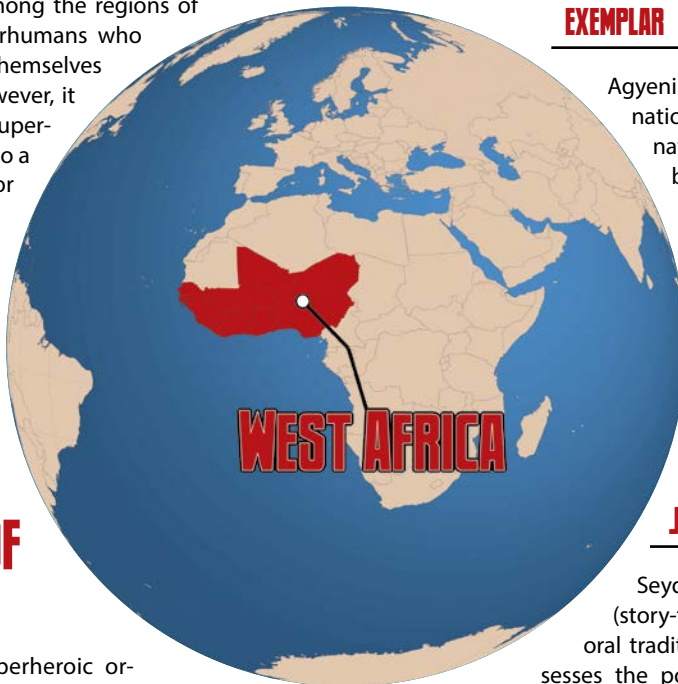
Seydou Truore, a mystic *griot* (story-teller and historian) from Mali who possesses the power to summon representations of various legendary heroes and mythical beasts by singing. He claims to stay with the group based on a vision of some future calamity they will need to oppose together.

GENOME

John Jackson, an idealistic Liberian superhuman with the power to duplicate the natural abilities of living organisms, including animals, aliens, and mutants. He is unsure of the origin of his abilities.

MAITRE AIMANT

Ismael Boka, a mutant hero from the Ivory Coast possessing power over magnetism. He and Jali are a couple, which keeps Maitre Aimant on the team despite some personal misgivings about its effectiveness. His name is French for "Master Magnet."




**THE CHAMPIONS
OF WEST AFRICA**

THE FUTURIST

Fama Mendy, a Gambian super-genius, deeply concerned with education and civil rights, whose cautious nature and ability to see numerous possible outcomes of each action have caused her to reject more proactive measures.

FANTASMA

Daphne Barros, mistress of invisibility and illusion from Cape Verde. She is as much an entertainer as a superhero and sticks with the CWA because they allow her to do good while still advancing her career.

NIGERIA

Many of the current problems and political realities of modern Nigeria can be traced to the specters of colonialism and the ideological split between the southern coastal and northern inland regions. To the south, secular governments and urban development contrast strongly with the rural landscape peppered with small villages that dominates much of the north. This wilderness is home to various threats, including separatist, terrorist, and revolutionary groups. These organizations engage in various attacks on the government and populace, often kidnapping or killing those who seek education, religious freedom, or anything else a particular extremist group has deemed a threat. In reality, most of

JOINING THE CHAMPIONS

The Champions of West Africa are always looking for more members, especially from nations not already represented on the team. They are generally friendly with other heroes and welcome them with open arms because such visits are rare and the team is happy to make connections with others they can call on when needed.

these groups are nothing more than thugs with an ideology. They are dangerous, sometimes extremely so, but they have about as much in common with other citizens who nominally share their views as a T-Rex does with a sea gull.

The most dangerous of these extremist groups are led or backed by superhumans. Chief among these is King Claw, the leader of the Righteous Fire extremist group. Righteous Fire are more a cult of personality than anything else, following their leader's twisted ideology which speaks of the decadence of Western culture, the importance of traditional values, and the need for strong leadership to prepare for a coming war that will consume the world in a great uprising they call "the Righteous Fire." The group borrows its core ideals from various radical fundamentalist sects (both Muslim and Christian) but its members are more interested in promoting themselves to power than anything else.

THE MAN OR THE MAGIC?

While it is implied that the mysterious gauntlet that bonded with King Claw makes him and his followers fanatical and crazy, this might not be the case. It's entirely possible that being granted superhuman powers by the gauntlet drove him mad with power, and there's nothing corrupting about the object itself. If true, then Righteous Fire is just a product of bigotry and fanaticism backed up by one man's desire for power. This means that finding a way to destroy or remove Claw's gauntlet will only weaken the group's power, but will do nothing to reduce its resolve.

The origin of King Claw's gauntlet is left a mystery intentionally. It could be a magical artifact, an ancient Preserver control device, part of a larger suit of armor, or something altogether different. Other similar items could exist, leading to the creation of more villains in the same strain as King Claw.

KING CLAW

PL11 • 198 POINTS

STR 6 STA 6 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 10 INT 1 AWE 1 PRE 4

Powers: **Bio-adaptation** (Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects), Limited to effects he has experienced at least once); **Claw** (Strength-based Damage 6, Feature: Attacks count as Unarmed, Penetrating 6); **Death Touch** (Grab-based Cumulative Affliction 12 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Transformed (Dying))); **Gauntlet Augmentation** (Enhanced Traits 36 (Fighting 5, Presence 3, Stamina 5, Strength 5)); **Mark of the Claw** (Senses 2 (Tracking 2 (Mental), Quirk: Only those who have been affected by Death Touch)); **Transfer Life Force** (Healing 6, Free Action, Persistent, Restorative, Limited: Only works in the 3 rounds after using Death Touch successfully)

Equipment: Heavy Pistol (Ranged Damage 4)

Advantages: Chokehold, Defensive Roll 3, Equipment 2, Fascinate (Intimidation), Fast Grab, Improved Critical 2 (Claw), Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Inspire 3, Languages 2 (Arabic, English native), Leadership, Power Attack, Ranged Attack 4

Skills: Athletics 4 (+10), Deception 2 (+6), Expertise: Military 6 (+7), Expertise: Terrorist 9 (+10), Intimidation 8 (+12), Perception 5 (+6), Persuasion 4 (+8), Ranged Combat: Guns 6 (+8), Stealth 4 (+6), Vehicles 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +2, Claw +10 (Close, Damage 12, Crit. 18-20), Death Touch +10 (Close, Grab-based Cumulative Affliction 12, DC 22 Fort.), Heavy Pistol +12 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 13, Parry 13, Fortitude 8, Toughness 9/6*, Will 11
*Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 28 + Powers 81 + Advantages 22 + Skills 26 + Defenses 26 = 198

Complications: **Motivation—Nihilist:** King Claw is one of those men who just wants to watch the world burn, a desire he dresses up with fanatical fervor and fundamentalist ideologies.

Power Loss: The claw bonded to his right hand gives King Claw all his powers, and should it be removed he loses them.

KING CLAW AND RIGHTEOUS FIRE

Thomas Eze was a deserter from the Nigerian military who found ruins of the ancient Nok people of West Africa. Looking for a place to hide out, he crawled behind a shattered obelisk and found a skeleton entombed within. On the skeleton's hand was strange, clawed gauntlet crafted of what looked like iron. Thinking he'd perhaps found a valuable artifact, Eze removed the gauntlet and, on a whim, put it on. In a flash of blinding light and with a burst of searing pain, the gauntlet bonded to his flesh. Eze passed out, and when he awoke he found himself forever changed. Possessed of great power and an inner fire that could only be quenched by violence and carnage, he became the

flamboyantly titled King Claw and founded the terrorist militant cult, Righteous Fire.

Through the gauntlet King Claw possesses potent superhuman powers, including the ability to drain a target's life force and transfer it to himself and others. Furthermore, this power the gauntlet grants seems to bring out the worst in him. His minor prejudices, political preferences, and views on social issues have been amplified to fanatical levels. He is unstable, erratic, and utterly terrifying. He rules Righteous Fire with a mix of raw power and mad charisma. Eze's extreme nature means that only the crazy and the desperate join him, but it also means that everyone in the group is willing to kill or die by his command. In fact, it seems that the longer one spends with him, the more fanatical and blindly loyal one becomes to him.

For the other members of Righteous Fire, use the statistics for Militants or Soldiers provided in the *Hero's Handbook*. King Claw is seeking young superhumans to bolster his ranks, but as of yet has not recruited any, due largely to the efforts of Mr. Twist (see later in this entry), a former member of the Champions of West Africa.

MR. TWIST AND THE REFUGE

Once an esteemed member of the Champions of West Africa, Mr. Twist left the group after a very intense disagreement with other members over what constituted "appropriate" force and methods when dealing with various extremist and terrorist groups in the region. Twist favored a more proactive approach, especially with groups who targeted or attempted to recruit children to their cause. Where many of his teammates cautioned that care must be taken to respect the sovereignty of local governments and insisted the CWA must support, but not circumvent, local authorities, Twist was unwilling to wait for official sanction or approvals to carry out missions and pass judgment. Leaving the group, he began a personal crusade to rescue and protect innocents menaced by various local militant groups regardless of their ideology. He even targeted some corrupt local officials, which earned him outlaw status in many nations of West African, including his native Nigeria. Despite this, many *citizens* of his homeland and other nations view Twist as a sort of folk hero, a roguish outlaw who works to protect the young and weak regardless of borders or bureaucracy. Though primarily focused in West Africa, he has been known to appear all over the continent and some surrounding areas, rescuing would-be child soldiers from local warlords or freeing slaves abducted by underground syndicates.

MR. TWIST

A former member of the Champions of West Africa, Mr. Twist is very secretive when it comes to his origins and background. It is known he was once a soldier or revolutionary and that he carries several scars from that period of his life, both physical and emotional. He served as CWA's chief transport expert and second-in-command until his desire for increased proactive action with regards to kidnapping and salvery resulted in his leaving the team.

Mr. Twist's powers all center around spatial manipulation. He can bridge great distances with a step, transport a foe miles away, even teleport things into or out of a target to cause injury. His powers include spatial awareness that makes him hyper-aware of his immediate surroundings. He's a skilled tactician and has become a good teacher

since founding the Refuge. He carries a cane to help with a mild limp, but just as often uses it as a weapon.

THE REFUGE

At first, Mr. Twist's efforts were dramatic, but limited in scope. He could rescue countless innocents with his powers, but soon realized many he helped had nowhere to go. This changed when he discovered the Refuge. Originally a derelict alien spacecraft deep in the Sambisa Forest, the wilderness around the Refuge is ironically home to many of the extremist groups Mr. Twist works against. Though the ship long since lost its ability to fly, its engines still function enough to power its other essential systems, including its cloaking device and security systems. He began bringing those he rescued to the ship, which was quickly dubbed the Refuge. Now close to a thousand people live there. The population is largely young, though some older refugees

MR. TWIST		PLT1 - 204 POINTS													
STR	1	STA	2	AGL	3	DEX	3	FGT	6	INT	4	AWE	4	PRE	4
<p>Powers: Quick Twist (Reaction Teleport 2 (120 feet), Change Direction, Change Velocity)); Spatial Awareness (Senses 4 (Accurate: Mental, Radius: Mental, Ranged: Mental)); Spatial Shifts (Enhanced Traits 12 (Dodge 6, Parry 6), Enhanced Advantages 15 (Defensive Roll 6, Evasion 2, Hide in Plain Sight, Instant Up, Interpose, Redirect, Set-up 2, Uncanny Dodge)); Spatial Twisting (Array (33 points), Extended Spatial Twist (Extended Teleport 12 (4,000 miles), Change Direction, Change Velocity, Increased Mass 7 (3 tons), Limited to Extended), AE: Spatial Twist (Teleport 13 (30 miles), Change Direction, Change Velocity, Increased Mass 4 (800 lbs.), Turnabout), AE: Twist Attack (Ranged Damage 11, Resisted by Fortitude), AE: Twist Other (Ranged Teleport Attack 10 (4 miles), Increased Mass 3 (400 lbs.)), AE: Twist Perceptions (Burst Area Cumulative Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware)))</p> <p>Equipment: Cane (Club (Strength-based Damage 2), commlink, the Refuge (see later in this entry))</p> <p>Advantages: Assessment, Connected, Defensive Attack, <i>Defensive Roll 6</i>, Equipment 6, <i>Evasion 2</i>, Extraordinary Effort, <i>Hide in Plain Sight</i>, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, <i>Instant Up</i>, <i>Interpose</i>, Languages 3 (French, Hausa, Portuguese, Yoruba, English native), Leadership, <i>Redirect</i>, <i>Set-up 2</i>, <i>Uncanny Dodge</i></p> <p>Skills: Acrobatics 3 (+6), Athletics 3 (+4), Deception 6 (+10), Expertise: Revolutionary 2 (+6), Expertise: Teacher 6 (+10), Insight 4 (+8), Intimidation 2 (+6), Investigation 2 (+6), Perception 8 (+12), Persuasion 4 (+8), Ranged Combat: Spatial Twisting 8 (+11), Stealth 3 (+6), Technology 4 (+8), Treatment 2 (+6), Vehicles 3 (+6)</p> <p>Offense: Initiative +7, Cane +6 (Close, Damage 3), Twist Attack +11 (Ranged, Damage 11, Res. by Fort.), Twist Other +11 (Ranged, Teleport Attack 10, Res. by Dodge), Twist Perceptions +11 (Close, Cumulative Burst Area Affliction 11, Res. by Fort.), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 1)</p> <p>Defense: Dodge 14/8*, Parry 14/8*, Fortitude 8, Toughness 8/2**, Will 14*Without Spatial Shifts power. *Without Defensive Roll (or powers).</p> <p>Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 80 + Advantages 17 + Skills 30 + Defenses 23 = 204</p> <p>Complications: Motivation—Responsibility: Mr. Twist feels a deep responsibility to help those hurt by war and violence, especially children. Power Loss: If teleported by another, Mr. Twist's powers short out and don't work for 1 round per rank of Teleport used. If he is transported by Space Travel that is defined as a long distance teleport, he loses access to his powers for a full hour.</p>															

MR. TWIST



THE ORIGIN OF THE REFUGE

The exact origin of the alien spacecraft now known as the Refuge is left undetermined. It could be a Preserver ship, or a Lor or Grue warship that crashed on Earth long ago. It might even be from a race that no one is aware has visited Earth, or a vessel from another dimension that somehow crashed in Africa.

Likewise, the fate of the ship's crew is left undetermined. They likely died in the crash, but they could have been murdered by some predator that snuck aboard their ship and now dwells nearby, used their super-science to infiltrate and interbreed with local tribes, or fled to some hidden location elsewhere on Earth.

serve as teachers and caretakers. As various warlords, criminals, and villains across Africa often attempt to abduct and recruit young superhumans for their own purposes, the Refuge also has a significant population of superhumans, nearly ten percent of all its inhabitants. Most of these superhumans are young and some have minor or underdeveloped abilities, but others are more capable and powerful. A handful of the super-powered youngsters have begun to work with Mr. Twist on his missions to save others, and their various superhuman abilities have added to the safety, secrecy, and self-sufficiency of the Refuge.

Given the nature of Mr. Twist's powers and the Refuge's cloaking field, even most of those who live there cannot locate it unaided. This adds to security, though with the Refuge taking on more and more inhabitants, it will soon become necessary to expand living space, increase supplies, or find new homes for at least some of its inhabitants. Despite increasingly cramped conditions, all but the most temporary of visitors remain in the Refuge. The ship's impressive technology and the abilities and skills of some of its more extraordinary residents make the Refuge a very pleasant place to live. Unless their home is discovered by their enemies or the original owner of the ship one day returns for it, it's unlikely the Refuge is going anywhere.

THE REFUGE

HQ • 25 POINTS

Size: Gargantuan • **Toughness:** 14 • **Features:** Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Concealed 2 (+15 DC), Defense System, Fire Prevention System, Hangar, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Laboratory, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 2 (DC 25), Workshop

Note: The Refuge's engines, life support, and larger weapons and defenses are damaged and likely beyond the ability of most Earth engineers to repair. If fixed, the ship would be capable of interstellar travel with a trained crew.

NIGER

Extremely impoverished, with a history of regular political and government upheaval, Niger has it worse than many of its neighbors. A recent coup and new elections give hope for the future, but famine, drought, lack of education, and other issues make moving forward difficult. After realizing her efforts in the international supers community were doing little to aid her homeland, former Champions of West Africa member Fase Shaidan ("Iron Devil") left the

group to return home. It is said she is considering running for political office and currently operates a number of free clinics in the poorest areas of Niger in cooperation with Doctors Without Borders.

Fase Shaidan uses the Powerhouse archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**). Increase Presence and Intellect by 2. Choose "Politics" for her Expertise, add Treatment 6 (+8), Persuasion 2 (+4) and Expertise: Medicine 5 (+8) to her skills. Add Languages 2 (English, French, Hausa native) and Defensive Attack to her advantages.

SENEGAL

Despite various serious socioeconomic issues, Senegal boasts relative stability. The government's dedicated efforts to root out corruption are aided by a handful of sympathetic heroes and law enforcement experts. Most notable among these is Ombre Rouge ("Red Shadow"), formerly of the Champions of West Africa. Ombre Rouge left the CWA because she felt the team's approach kept her from cleaning up things at a local level, which is how she prefers to work. Operating out of the capital city of Dakar, she is primarily focused on large scale criminal operations, and has made many enemies of native and foreign interests who conduct illegal operations in her country.

Ombre Rouge is largely apolitical, but she is aware of how damaging rebellion and unrest can be to the people of a nation. She's developed a unique reputation with various dissident and revolutionary groups; she protects and even sometimes aids those who attempt peaceful solutions and only resorts to violence in the most extreme circumstances. By contrast, she treats more violent rebel groups as no better than the criminals she predominantly fights. This has resulted in unfair accusations by some rebel groups that the hero is just a government flunky, when in fact she's devoted to serving the people (not the government) and bringing them peace and justice.

Recently, Ombre Rouge has noticed increased weapons smuggling through her nation and has begun to uncover a conspiracy of officials, criminals, and foreign nationals using Senegal as a major exit and entry point for arms sales in the region. The identity of the mastermind behind these operations is currently unknown, but whomever it is often uses trained superhuman operatives to protect their business interests and eliminate problems. Thus far, attempts to stop Ombre Rouge have failed utterly, but neither has the hero succeeded in shutting these criminal operations down completely.

Ombre Rouge uses the Crime Fighter archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**). Change "Boomerangs" to "Throwing Irons" but keep her statistics the same. Add **Hi-Powered Machine Pistol** (Ranged Damage 4, Multiattack) • 1 point to her **Utility Belt**. She also uses an additional 14 points of Equipment that varies with the needs of her current objectives. Drop the Ranged Combat Skill and add Ranged Attack 10 to advantages. Add All-out Attack, Benefit 1 (Well-off), Defensive Attack, Hide in Plain Sight, Languages 3 (Arabic, English, Hausa, Wolof, French native), Move-by Action, Power Attack, Skill Mastery (Stealth), Takedown, and Well-Informed to her advantages.

SIERRA LEONE

After a decade of bloody civil war in the late 20th century, Sierra Leone is still pulling itself back together. The nation's security and stability are improving, aided in part by foreign investment, a large diamond mining industry that is improving its conditions and management, and rich natural resources. The abundant resources and overworked law enforcement make the nation's industries a target for supervillains seeking to seize diamonds or rare metals to fund their plans. During the Sierra Leone civil war, some costumed criminals from abroad even set up conflict or "blood" diamond operations to exploit the populace, but these have since been shut down or driven underground. However, those trying times for the nation did help establish one of its most controversial figures, Brodha Renbo ("Brother Rainbow").

The son of a British supervillain who set up his own conflict diamond syndicate in the 1990s, Brodha Renbo is a mixed race Sierra Leone native in his late teens. He recently made the news by helping the authorities prevent or shut down attempts by European and American supervillains to rob or exploit various industries. However, Brodha Renbo's critics note his family background and claim the young man is simply protecting his family's interests and plans to seize various operations for himself. A recent interview on national radio where he called for other Sierra Leone superhumans to join him is seen as further evidence of his schemes by both his supporters and detractors alike.

BRODHA RENBO

PL10 • 136 POINTS

STR 1/11 STA 2 AGL 4 DEX 2 FGT 6 INT 1 AWE 1 PRE 3

Powers: **Auras of Power** (Dynamic Array (24 points), **Blue Aura** (Ranged Damage 12 (Force)), **AE: Green Aura** (Healing 8, Restorative), **AE: Indigo Aura** (Insubstantial 4 (Incorporeal), Precise, Subtle), **AE: Orange Aura** (Flight 12 (8,000 MPH)), **AE: Red Aura** (Enhanced Strength 12), **AE: Violet Aura** (Enhanced Advantage 4 (Improved Initiative 4), Quickness 10, Speed 10 (2,000 MPH)), **AE: Yellow Aura** (Reaction Damage 6, (Heat; When touched)); **Protective Aura** (Sustained Impervious Protection 10)

Advantages: Benefit (Well-off), Benefit (Son of Simon Spectrum), Defensive Attack, Extraordinary Effort, Languages 1 (English, Krio native)

Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+6), Athletics 3 (+4), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+8), Deception 1 (+4), Expertise: Pop Culture 2 (+3), Perception 5 (+6), Persuasion 1 (+4), Ranged Combat: Blue Aura 6 (+8), Stealth 2 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +4 (+20 with Yellow Aura), Blue Aura +8 (Ranged, Damage 12), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 1/11*)

*With Red Aura active.

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 10, Toughness 12, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 40 + Powers 56 + Advantages 5 + Skills 12 + Defenses 23 = 136

Complications: **Dark Moments:** Between bullying and abuse as a child at the hands of his father and watching many suffer in poverty, Brodha Renbo sometimes wonders if his dad didn't have the right idea about people being inherently corrupt, violent, and irredeemable. This at times causes him to doubt his role as a hero or pushes him to use force to solve problems. **Motivation—Legacy:** Brodha Renbo is trying to distinguish himself from his villainous father. **Sins of the Father:** Brodha Renbo's villainous parentage makes him the focus of much distrust and suspicion.

BRODHA RENBO

Simon Nichols III is the son of Simon Nichols, Jr., a.k.a. Simon Spectrum, a mystical British supervillain who could project various colored auras that each had a different effect. Brodha Renbo's father, after a series of embarrassing defeats in his native England, fled the U.K. and found himself in Sierra Leone during its civil war. First joining up with and then replacing a local warlord, the elder Simon was a powerful figure in local diamond smuggling and arms dealing until the early 21st century, when he was driven into exile by the new government. He left behind his son and mistress. When the boy's own powers manifested in his mid-teens, he became Brodha Renbo. The younger Simon is a charming and friendly young man who is slowly winning over a populace leery of him, due to his father's reputation and actions.

Simon Spectrum uses Brodha Renbo's statistics, but increase his PL to 11 as well as his Dodge, Parry, and Will Defenses and Close and Ranged Combat Skills all by 2. Add Benefit 3 (Millionaire) and Power Attack to his advantages. Add Expertise: Criminal 8 (+9) and Intimidation 5 (+8) to his skills.



BRODHA RENBO

SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA

Often when people think of Africa, they actually are thinking of various locations in Sub-Saharan Africa, the area that is mostly covered here. This entry deals with the regions of Sub-Saharan Africa typically thought of as South and East Africa.

While many regional issues, problems, and some notable wildlife are discussed in this entry, the primary focus of this entry is on the super-powered individuals and strange phenomena that exist in this region of Earth-Prime.

AROUND THE HORN

Somalia, Djibouti, Eritrea, and Ethiopia form the area of East Africa known historically as the "Horn." All four nations have their share of problems, including drought and various political and social crises.

SOMALIA

Somalia has been home to more than its share of strife due to rebellion, insurrection, and piracy off its shores in recent decades. Economically, despite government instability, the nation is surprisingly robust due to numerous ports, sea trade, and local industries, but these problems still pose a danger to life and property. Recent efforts by local and international authorities have helped reduce piracy and stabilize the country, but these efforts are still ongoing, so what effect they will have in the long run is unknown. The presence of mostly low-powered superhumans among various pirates and extremist groups makes things more difficult, requiring the authorities to call upon local and international costumed heroes to deal with particularly dangerous situations.

Somalia has a few superheroes of its own, most notably Coldiid, a mysterious figure who takes his name from a wise warrior who shunned violence and sought peaceful resolutions to conflicts. Less pacifistic than his namesake, the hooded hero is still notable for his devotion to using only nonlethal weapons, seemingly of his own design, to apprehend pirates, criminals, and other threats.

Coldiid uses the Weapon Master archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*, with the **Gadget**, and **Urban Acrobatic** options. Select **Sword** for weapon (actually electrified fighting batons that can be joined together to form a staff).

Add the advantages Assessment, All-out Attack, Defensive Attack, Languages 2 (English, Arabic, Somali native), Take-down, and Taunt. All his weapon-based power effects and gadgets have the **Quirk**: Cannot inflict lethal damage.

DJIBOUTI

A small nation with a fairly prosperous trade-based economy, Djibouti is largely overlooked in the region save by various foreign investors. Some organizations like SHADOW are rumored to run dummy shipping companies out of the nation and AEGIS has a cell of agents in deep cover trying to root out exactly who and what is going on.

ERITREA & ETHIOPIA

Still locked in a struggle over disputed land since their war at the start of the 21st century, these nations are among the two poorest in the world. While at odds politically, both nations struggle with famine in various regions, civil rights abuses, corruption, and poverty. There is little of interest to supervillains and criminal organizations, making it a relatively quiet place in the superhuman community.

Some tribal cultures and communities in southern Ethiopia until recently practice *mingi*, the killing of deformed or mutated individuals under the idea they were cursed. This practice was mostly banned in recent years, but some extremists still seek to identify and kill mutant children in particular, fearing their powers are a manifestation of evil spirits. Several near-victims of this violent practice have been saved by Mr. Twist over the years (see the **West Africa** entry). These extremists, dubbed "The Mingi" by a confused Western journalist, are often praised by but largely unaffiliated with various anti-mutant groups worldwide.

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

Known simultaneously for its lush game preserves and wildlife and trouble with poaching and the near extinction of various species, Kenya is a study in opposites. Inhabited since the dawn of human history, the nation struggles with tensions between ancient traditions, relics of colonization, and the race for modernization. Compared to many of its neighbors, the nation is fairly stable,



but corruption is ubiquitous. Numerous ethnic groups are found in notable numbers within the nation's borders, creating both conflict and diversity. Tourism and overseas investment, mostly from China, helps the economy, but complicates efforts to reduce illegal hunting and smuggling operations. The result is a complex and culturally rich nation with a variety of problems.

Poaching is a serious problem in Kenya and the various criminals who engage in it often think nothing of murdering game wardens, officials, and bystanders who get in the way of their operations. The ivory trade and "medicinal" ingredients harvested from other animals are major financial motivators to break Kenya's many anti-poaching laws and edicts. A large number of officials and citizens are complicit in these activities, which makes stopping these practices very difficult. Pressures from rich tourists and foreign markets seeking ivory and other goods create even more difficulties. Some wildlife-oriented superheroes such as Bwana Tembo ("Lord Elephant") and Nirkana the Night Hunter work tirelessly alongside Kenyan game wardens and police to stop poaching, but it's a difficult struggle. Still, as Kenya's photography safari and other non-hunting based tourism grow in popularity and profit, efforts to eliminate poaching gain support.

Bwana Tembo is a former game warden granted great strength and mystic powers by an ancient elephant god. For his statistics, use the Warrior archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*. Increase Strength and Stamina by 2 each and increase PL to 11. Add Senses 4 (Mystic Awareness, Danger Sense, Counters Illusion), Speed 2, and Comprehend 6 (Understand Animals, Speak to Animals, Communicate Spirits) instead of the listed power options. Add the advantages: Languages 2 (KiKiswahili, Bantu), and select All-out Attack, Animal Empathy, Fearless, and Improved Critical (Unarmed).

Nirkana the Night Hunter is a former mercenary turned safari guide whose family was murdered by poachers. Taking the Massai name meaning "born of night," he now wages a one-man war against poachers, murders, and criminals. For Nirkana the Night Hunter, use the Weapon Master archetype from *Hero's Handbook*. Take the **Daggers** option (actually an arsenal of small melee and ranged weapons consisting of knives, throwing irons, and a revolver) and reduce Parry by 2 and PL to 9. Select Accurate Attack, Assessment, Power Attack, and Takedown from advantages, then add the advantages Tracking and Languages 4 (numerous African dialects, French, and Portuguese). Select **Urban Acrobat** and **Crippling Strike** options for powers.

GHOSTS OF TSAVO

Near the meeting of the Tsavo and Athi Rivers in western Kenya, there is a site in the Tsavo region the history of which is drenched in blood. Once along the old slave trade pathways, it eventually became the site of British efforts to build a railroad across Africa. In 1898, a pair of man-eating lions attacked and killed over a hundred workers and other victims in the region before they were killed by Col. John Paterson, the Irish engineer tasked with

HOW NOT TO GAME IN AFRICA

There is a real tendency for comics, books, and movies to sell Africa and Africans (especially black Africans) short. Clichés, oversimplification, and other generalizations lead to some often well-meaning, but offensive stereotypes. In other cases, viable portrayals become so overused they come off as white-washed representations of the continent as a whole.

This doesn't mean a GM or player can't use what they've seen in a film or read in a comic when running a series or character in or from Africa, however. A lot of that material is fine in the context of a large and more diverse setting. It's okay to have proud warrior heroes or animal-spirit-fueled mystics—these characters are seen in all cultures. But if that's *all* you have for your African characters? That's a bigger problem... and not just because it's stereotypical, but because it's boring.

Political issues and social ills need similar balance. Yes, there are warlords, revolution, corruption, and the like in various parts of the continent, but it's not everywhere. This is pointed out here not to be preachy, but because treating a continent the size of Africa as the same everywhere is more unrealistic than giant-robot apes and dinosaur men wearing jetpacks. And it will likely weaken any series that does more than a flyover of the continent.

The same goes for using (or rather, overusing) certain political or social ills as plot devices. It could be very satisfying to liberate child soldiers or aid an oppressed minority group, but it becomes a lot less fun, and possibly offensive, if that's all Africa is used for in a series. Again, it's fine to take down corrupt warlords and save people, heroes should be doing that. Just make sure you aren't ruining the fun by making things boring, repetitive, or potentially offensive.

If nothing else, check out Binyavanga Wainaina's essay "How to Write About Africa", a satirical piece full of intentionally bad advice, clichés, and other things to be avoided. It has been published in numerous locations online, including *Granta* and *the Guardian*. It's a short read and well worth the time. Actor Djimon Hounsou also did a video in which he reads the essay. The video is arguably even more effective and entertaining, plus takes just over three minutes to watch. You can find it online at Youtube and other similar sites under the title "How Not to Write about Africa."

building a bridge for the railroad. Some locals believed these two lions, unmated males who hunted in pairs and often didn't even bother to eat their kills, were evil spirits or demons. Paterson and his fellow Europeans laughed off these claims. They really should have listened too the legends.

The Tsavo man-eaters were physically lions, but the beasts were spirits driven to madness and murder. They were instilled with a love of endless slaughter by the violence and suffering of the people suffering due to slavery, imperialism, inter-tribal conflicts, and other tragedies. Whether the spirits were once ghosts of mortals, animal, nature spirits, or something else entirely, is unknown. However, by the time they began their reign of terror in 19th century Kenya, they were powerful and relentlessly malevolent ghosts.

THE TSAVO BATTLE ASKARI, INC.



When Paterson killed the lions the spirits bound to them were dispersed, but not destroyed. At times over the next century, the spirits returned to possess the living in various places, each time taking over humans whose souls were weakened by madness, greed, sin, or evil. The spirits grow in power with each possession; all the blood they spill on their rampages makes them ever stronger and shortens the time needed before they can once again possess the living. As they've become more powerful, they've learned to twist, warp, and transform their hosts into a terrifying mix of man and beast. These monsters are now known simply as the Tsavo, which means "slaughter" in the Kamba language. They don't always appear in Kenya, or even Africa, but they are tied to the place of their "birth," and it is likely they cannot be truly destroyed unless someone can discover a way to purify the part of the region where they first began their murderous existence.

Note that the renegade shaman and foe of the White Lions of Dakana, Ghostmane, draws his power from these same corrupt spirits. He often seeks to work with the Tsavo's current physical incarnations, serving as both guide for their blood-crazed hosts and servant to the dark spirits which possess them.

THE TSAVO

The Tsavo both use master statistics for the **Savage** archetype from the *Gamemaster's Guide*. Add the **Cat Animal** traits, increase Fighting and Intellect by 2, and PL to 11. They have a Power Loss complication representing the fact that they can only affect the physical world by possessing a host, usually someone who has done great violence or evil. The Tsavo's ability to return by possessing another

host isn't covered as a power but instead is a plot device to be used as necessary.

GHOSTMANE

Ghostmane uses the **Mystic** archetype from the *Hero Handbook*. Add Languages 2 (Bantu, KiKiswahili) and Daze (Intimidation). His alternate effects for his spellcasting include **Evil Eye** (Perception Affliction 8 (Resisted by Will; Impaired, Disabled, Paralyzed)), **Ghost Form** (Insubstantial 4 (Incorporeal)), **Call Minor Spirit** (Summon 4, Active, Heroic, Broad (Spirits)), **Shadow Walk** (Teleport 8 (1 mile), Medium (Shadows), Portal), and **Ghost Rot** (Perception Weaken Toughness 8, Resisted by Will).

UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA

Relatively stable and with civil relations with other countries in eastern and southern Africa, Tanzania boasts incredible linguistic and cultural diversity, with over one hundred languages spoken within its borders. This diversity sometimes leads to ethnic conflicts and human rights issues, but nothing on the scale of the ethnic conflicts in some other countries. Though most commonly known for the wildlife that roam its Serengeti Plain, it is also a nation with a rich culture.

The nation also includes Zanzibar, a semi-independent island off the coast. Its capital, Zanzibar City, is an active trade hub and headquarters of Askari, Inc., a successful "hero-for-hire" business that serves clients in the region. Though technically mercenaries, the superhumans who work for Askari, Inc. hold to a strict code of conduct and will not take contracts with known criminals, terrorists,

or villains. They have a lasting rivalry with the Exchange, a conflict that occasionally results in physical confrontations between operatives of each group.

ASKARI, INC.

Based out of Zanzibar, Askari, Inc. works across Eastern Africa, and occasionally beyond, to provide superhuman assistance for a reasonable fee. Founded by Whitestone and Dragonhand, former mercenaries turned superheroes, Askari seeks to distinguish itself from the Exchange and big multinational mercenary firms like Brande Management. They do so by selling loyal, skilled superhuman services to clients with the understanding that they will not be used for criminal or unethical endeavors. Askari also lends out superhuman employees to assist local authorities and private citizens for free, or at greatly reduced fees, for worthy causes. This is part of Askari, Inc.'s forward-thinking methodology: if they can help improve the region, everyone benefits. While Whitestone and Dragonhand leave much of the regular "hero-for-hire" jobs to their employees these days, they still occasionally take to the field for important jobs.

An albino himself, Whitestone is very concerned with the killing of those with his condition in Tanzania and other nations by those seeking to harvest their bodies for use in dark magic rituals. He provides protection to various sanctuaries for persecuted albinos at no cost. His partner Dragonhand is a Tanzanian son of a diplomat who was trained by the famed Master Lee of Freedom City before returning home to his native country.

Other regular members of Askari, Inc. include the "Sisters of Shadow," a duo consisting of Mellony Squire, an ex-Scotland Yard detective and UK expatriate with a demonic hand, and her regular partner Chandra Singh, a half-Indian half-Bantu martial artist and mistress of the sword. In addition, the group employs various young mutants, mystics, and other superhumans seeking to make a living while still helping people.

WHITESTONE

Whitestone uses the Powerhouse archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*. Increase Intellect and Presence to 2. Select Business for his unspecified Expertise skill. Add the skills Expertise: Mercenary 4 (+6) and Persuasion 4 (+6). Add the advantages Languages 1 (Bantu, English native), Leadership, and Takedown, and the **Complication—Prejudice**: Whitestone is an albino, causing people to sometimes be taken aback by his appearance. Some extremists believe he is a servant of evil supernatural forces.

DRAGONHAND

Dragonhand uses the Martial Artist archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*. Increase Intellect to 1 and Awareness to 3. Add Penetrating 4 and Multiattack to his Strength damage effects. Select Business for his unspecified Expertise skill. Add the advantages Contacts and Inspire 1, and the **Complication—Honorable**: Dragonhand has a strict code of honor.

DANGEROUS HOT SPOTS

The following nations, spread across eastern and southern Africa, share many of the problems outsiders wrongly associate with all of Africa: poverty, violent rebels who make use of terror tactics and child soldiers, and widespread corruption. While many within these countries seek to improve conditions, they often find themselves blocked at every turn by corrupt officials and violent militants.

REPUBLIC OF UGANDA

One of the nations most commonly associated with ethnic and religious-based conflicts involving child soldiers, Uganda is an extremely troubled country where extremism and corruption intersect to cause considerable suffering. Many Ugandan warlords and extremists seek out young superhumans to use in their battles against rival militant groups, and pay high bounties for such individuals, even though their lifespan once they enter the conflict isn't long because of opposing supersoldiers and because they're targeted by enemies first. However, due to the actions of various humanitarian organizations and some heroes, many such superhumans are saved from this fate. These rescue efforts are deemed both humanitarian and practical, as battles between child super-soldiers make violent conflicts in Uganda even worse.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Known as Zaire for much of its history, the Democratic Republic of the Congo arose out of the civil war that destabilized the region and caused Zaire to be restructured under a new name and government. However, conditions have improved little since the worst of the fighting. Corruption, violence, attacks on various minority or disenfranchised groups, disease, famine, and other problems plague the nation and its people. Intervention from the United Nations and other foreign aid have increased stability only marginally, and the nation has a long road ahead of it before it can improve conditions for its populace.

The constant strife and serious problems of this nation make it simultaneously attractive and unattractive to superhumans. Militants and mercenaries can easily use their powers to make money or increase their influence in areas where stability is low, but these same individuals must work very hard to keep what they take. Metahumans and anyone else with superpowers often find themselves marked for recruitment, kidnapping, or elimination by various groups. Some superheroes associated with the United Nations have occasionally been assigned to help with aid efforts, but thus far no one has been permanently assigned to the nation. To date, the only regular high-profile superheroes in the region are the Chui Bwana (see SASHA, later in this entry) and the trio known as Les Sapeurs (see the next page), who are headquartered in the capital of the Republic of the Congo.

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Not to be confused with the Democratic Republic of the Congo to the east, this nation, like many in the area, is engaged in the slow process of recovering from civil war. Progress has been a mix of promising and troubling. Human rights issues involving slavery of the local pygmy population is only now being addressed, but both this problem and general political corruption are still known issues.

Recently, the government has considered hiring superhuman operatives to help improve conditions, repair infrastructure, and make the nation more attractive to foreign investment. This measure has drawn a mix of praise and condemnation; some believe it could be a cost effective and dramatic solution to existing problems, while others believe that such a group would become a tool of corrupt officials or extremists and lead to even bigger problems.

LES SAPEURS

Les Sapeurs hail from a peculiar Congolese subculture known as Le Sape. The name is actually an acronym of Société des Ambianceurs et des Personnes Élégantes (The Society of Ambiance-Makers and Elegant People). Affecting the manners and dress of European “dandies,” the followers of this mix of social-and-fashion movement see it as a method of resistance against the prejudices and assumptions often leveled at Africans..

With their fancy suits and outrageous focus on manners and style, Les Sapeurs might seem a bit silly to some; however, their decision to cling to the ideals of “proper refined gentlemen” has pushed them to protect the weak and promote education and cultural development. Flashy, strange, and always impeccably dressed, the group has gained a small Internet following they use to increase awareness and support worldwide for fixing problems at home.

Les Sapeurs operate in both the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo. Their headquarters is located in Brazzaville, the home of the Le Sape movement. The group spends much of their time in the DRC due to its larger size and problems. The group’s members are as follows:

- **Monsieur Modele**, their leader who possesses great strength and near invulnerability
- **Monsieur Atomique**, a charming youth who has radiation powers
- **Monsieur Machiner**, a skilled inventor and their eldest member

Various unpowered members of Le Sape help the group with information and other assistance when possible.

For members of the Les Sapeurs, use archetypes from the *Heroes Handbook*, adding 6 ranks of the Expertise: Fashion skill as well as the Teamwork, Languages 2 (French, Bantu), and Contacts advantages to each hero.

Monsieur Modele uses the Paragon archetype. Increase his Intellect and Presence by 2 each and give him the Leadership advantage. Monsieur Atomique uses the

Energy Controller archetype with the radiation descriptor. Monsieur Machiner uses the Gadgeteer archetype. His devices are built into his suit and fancy cane.

REPUBLIC OF ANGOLA

Though riding an economic upswing since the 1990s, the increase in resources has not come with a proportionate improvement in the living conditions of the populace. Prolonged periods of civil war, human rights abuses, poverty, and other problems have meant the nation rates very low on the list of developing nations. The current regime takes an authoritarian stance and there are rumors of shadowy cabals running things behind the scenes. In truth, there is a notable SHADOW cell operating in the capital of Luanda that has made some deals with corrupt officials in the government, but they are far from being in control of the whole nation.

REPUBLIC OF RWANDA

Infamous for the genocide of Tutsis and various moderate Hutu peoples by an extremist Hutu majority in the 1990s, times have changed for Rwanda in recent years. While efforts are still underway, and further improvements can be made, both the country and international community have worked hard to improve conditions in Rwanda. Aiding in these efforts are various humanitarian organizations, including several which employ the services of staff or volunteer superhumans to help with projects. Various members of SASHA (see later in this entry) assist with these efforts when they can, and even foreign superheroes such as the Freedom League have lent assistance on occasion.

REPUBLIC OF BURUNDI

A place of ethnic violence and militant extremism in the recent past, the Republic of Burundi has managed, like its neighbor Rwanda, is beginning down the slow road to recovery. Unfortunately, past strife has left the nation exceedingly poor. This reality limits the superhuman population in the nation severely, as many with exceptional abilities who might be able to assist in rebuilding the nation are lured away by foreign offers of more money, better living conditions, and increased fame. Some expatriate superhumans have returned with refugee groups in recent years, but thus far they haven’t made much of an impact on the overall state of the nation or its people.

DAKANA

Deep in Sub-Saharan Africa, protected by dense jungles, ancient mysticism and advanced technology go hand-in-hand in the nation of Dakana. It is one of the richest and most advanced nations on Earth, made so by controlled sale of advanced technologies and the nation’s one unique resource, daka crystals. These diamond-like gems with incredible energy conduction, redirection, and storage capabilities are among of the most expensive and prized substances on the planet. The Dakanans guard their stocks of the mineral closely, and smugglers and thieves of the crystals are dealt with harshly.

Dakana's cities and settlements seem deceptively simple to outsiders, most buildings beautiful, but primitive, such as stone temples, strongholds, and similar dwellings. Many regular citizens live in rustic huts apparently made of local woods, however, nearly every building in the nation hides high-tech appliances, security, and defense systems. Each adult citizen is trained in advanced defensive techniques and a mix of medical skills and shamanic herbalism capable of near-magical feats. Nearly everyone in the nation is in exceptional physical condition. While Dakana is well-hidden and naturally defensible, it is its trained citizenry, advanced technology, and tribal mysticism that protects it from outside threats. Well, these things, and the White Lions of Dakana.

THE WHITE LIONS OF DAKANA

A hereditary role given to the chosen protector of Dakana, the mantle of the White Lion has been in the Dakanan royal family for over two thousand years. The most recent holder of the title is Tafari, who inherited the role from her father, King M'balla. Tafari is the second White Lion to operate extensively outside her nation, her father serving with the Freedom League of the 1970s. As he grew older and needed to spend more time with Dakana's diplomatic concerns, M'balla surrendered the role of White Lion to his rightful successor. Tafari won the

title in a series of trials, beating out Baako, her older half-brother. Baako was furious at being "passed over" for the honor of being the next White Lion and fled in disgrace. He resurfaced later as the Red Hyena, power-mad leader of a heretical blood-cult the leadership of which has long sought the Dakanan throne. Whether Baako was always a member of the cult or joined after losing to his half-sister is unknown, but he is a great threat to Dakana and, should he ever take the throne, the world.

WHITE LIONESS

Princess Tafari was never particularly favored by her father or the Dakanan people as the next in line for the throne. Though an excellent student and talented athlete, her youthful antics and affinity for Western culture caused some to question her commitment to Dakana, its culture, and its people. In truth, she took part in the trials to determine her father's successor as White Lion mostly out of pride and boredom. However, since winning the mantle she has grown into the role, becoming more serious and responsible. She still enjoys Western music and fashion, but she has come to appreciate the culture and history of her people more than ever before. Her father, once skeptical of her suitability, has come to regard Tafari as a worthy successor and he is her chief confidant and advisor.

WHITE LIONESS

PL11 • 211 POINTS

STR 4 STA 4 AGL 7 DEX 3 FGT 14 INT 3 AWE 4 PRE 3

Powers: **Catlike Senses** (Senses 5 (Analytical Smell, Danger Sense (Smell), Low-light Vision, Tracking (Smell), Ultra-hearing); **Dakanan Costume** ((Removable): **Armored Weave** (Impervious Toughness 6, Protection 2), **Commlink and HUD** (Feature 2), **Energized Claws** (Strength-based Damage 4, Penetrating 4, Dangerous 2, Movement 1 (Wall-crawling), **Sealed Systems** (Immunity 5 (Environmental Conditions: All), **Stealth Field** (Concealment 4, All Visual Senses, Blending), **Swingline** (Movement 2 (Safe Fall, Swinging)))

Advantages: Agile Feint, Benefit 2 (Princess of Dakana), Connected, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Evasion 2, Favored Environment (Jungle), Fearless, Great Endurance, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Languages 3 (Bantu, English, French, Kiswahili, Dakanan native), Leadership, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Takedown, Tracking, Uncanny Dodge

Skills: Acrobatics 11 (+18), Athletics 6 (+10), Deception 3 (+6), Expertise: History 3 (+8), Expertise: Pop Culture 2 (+7), Expertise: Science 5 (+10), Expertise: Theology and Philosophy 3 (+8), Insight 4 (+8), Intimidation 5 (+8), Investigation 3 (+8), Perception 12 (+16), Persuasion 3 (+6), Sleight of Hand 2 (+5), Stealth 11 (+18), Technology 5 (+10), Treatment 3 (+8), Vehicles 7 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +11, Claws +14 (Close, Damage 8, Penetrating 4, Crit. 18-20), Unarmed, +14 (Close, Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 14, Parry 14, Fortitude 9, Toughness 8/6*, Will 11*Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 88 + Powers 33 + Advantages 27 + Skills 44 + Defenses 19 = 211

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** White Lioness is motivated by living up to her family's legacy and serving the people of Dakana. **Enemy:** Unfortunately, White Lioness's brother, Red Hyena, hates her for "stealing" his birthright.



WHITE LIONESS

RED HYENA

PL11 · 202 POINTS

STR 6 STA 6 AGL 6 DEX 3 FGT 11 INT 2 AWE 2 PRE 3

Powers: **Blessing of the Hyena God** (Enhanced Trait 24 (Agility 4, Strength 4, Stamina 4), Regeneration 2, Speed 2 (8 MPH)); **Enchanted Costume** ((Removable): **Claws** (Strength-based Damage 2, **Mystic Mask** (Concealment 4 (All Aural Senses, All Olfactory Senses), Concealment 4 (All Visual Senses; Limited to Machines)), **Protective Cloth** (Immunity 7 (Disease, Environmental Conditions: All, Poison), Impervious Toughness 6)); **Heightened Senses** (Senses 6 (Acute (Smell), Danger Sense (Mystic), Darkvision, Tracking (Smell), Ultra-hearing))

Advantages: Agile Feint, All-out Attack, Assessment, Benefit 2 (Leader of Hyena Cult), Close Attack 3, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Evasion, Improved Defense, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Inspire 2, Languages 3 (Bantu, English, Portuguese, Kiswahili, Dakanan native), Move-by Action, Power Attack, Ranged Attack 5, Ritualist, Takedown 2

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+12), Athletics 6 (+12), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+13), Deception 5 (+8), Expertise: History 4 (+6), Expertise: Magic 6 (+8), Expertise: Theology and Philosophy 6 (+8), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 7 (+10), Investigation 3 (+5), Perception 10 (+12), Stealth 8 (+14), Technology 3 (+4)

Offense: Initiative +10, Claws +14 (Close, Damage 8), Unarmed, +16 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 14, Parry 14, Fortitude 11, Toughness 8/6*, Will 11*Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 56 + Advantages 31 + Skills 36 + Defenses 25 = 202

Complications: Motivation—Power: Red Hyena is furious about being passed over for the Dakanan throne and seeks to use the Cult of the Hyena to seize control of his homeland or achieve some similarly lofty position. **Hatred:** Red Hyena hates his sister, White Lioness, for “stealing” his rightful role. **Ashamed:** Red Hyena is horribly embarrassed at losing the throne and the role of the White Lion to his sister.

RED HYENA

Prince Baako of Dakana was raised as the favored son of Dakana. He was handsome, athletic, and passionate about protecting his people. Unfortunately, he was also arrogant and presumed he would take over for his father when the time came. When he lost to his sister in the trials to determine the next White Lion, he was furious and ashamed. Rather than supporting his sister in her new role, he left in a rage only to later surface as the Red Hyena, mystically-empowered leader of an outlawed blood-cult dedicated to taking over Dakana, Africa, and ultimately the world.

REPUBLIC OF BOTSWANA

An economically and politically stable nation in south-central Africa, Botswana boasts the headquarters of the South African Super Hero Alliance. The nation has benefited greatly from the increased attention the superteam brings, which, combined with diverse wildlife and other attractions, has made Botswana a popular destination for tourists.

The nation's premiere superhero, Prime Detective, is notable for her relative lack of combat abilities. Her vast array of superhuman senses and her incredible detective skills more than make up for her lack of flashy powers. Her

PRIME DETECTIVE

PL8 · 158 POINTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 5 FGT 7 INT 6 AWE 6 PRE 2

Powers: **Superhuman Senses (Enhanced Trait 16** (Dodge 5, Parry 5), **Enhanced Advantages 8** (Precise Attack (Close and Ranged; Cover and Concealment), Second Chance (Ambushes), Set-up, Speed of Thought, Uncanny Dodge), **Senses 16** (Acute Olfactory, Analytical (Hearing), Counters Illusion (Sight), Danger Sense (Hearing), Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Infravision, Low-light Vision, Microscopic Vision, Postcognition (Limited: Crime scenes and clues), Time Sense, Tracking (Sight), Ultravision))

Equipment: Collapsible rod (Strength-based Damage 2, Concealable), heavy pistol (Ranged Damage 4), undercover shirt (Protection 2)

Advantages: Assessment, Beginner's Luck, Contacts, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 2, Improved Aim, Languages 3 (English, French, Portuguese, Kiswahili, Tswana native), Leadership, *Precise Attack (Ranged, Cover and Concealment)*, *Second Chance (Ambushes)*, Seize Initiative, *Set-up*, Skill Mastery (Investigation), *Speed of Thought*, Ultimate Effort (Investigation checks), *Uncanny Dodge*

Skills: Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Law Enforcement 6 (+12), Insight 9 (+15), Intimidation 2 (+4), Investigation 12 (+18), Perception 12 (+18), Persuasion 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Guns 7 (+12), Stealth 5 (+7), Vehicles 4 (+9)

Offense: Init +6, Collapsible Rod +7 (Close, Damage 3), Heavy Pistol +12 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 6, Toughness 4, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 62 + Powers 34 + Advantages 15 + Skills 34 + Defenses 13 = 158

Complications: Motivation—Justice: Prime Detective seeks to bring criminals and wrongdoers to justice for their crimes. **Relationship:** Prime Detective is married and has two children.

abilities have made her the chief tactician for SASHA, as well as the subject of a popular series of novels and comic books loosely based on her real-life cases.

Botswana is also home to one of the more unusual superhumans in all of Africa. Hellscreamer is a musician from the nation's surprisingly robust death metal scene. Clad in black leather, chains, and spikes, this frightening anti-hero is a stark contrast to what most expect to find among the Sub-Saharan African superhuman community.

PRIME DETECTIVE

Kagiso Batawana was the child of a Botswanan police chief and a doctor. Showing great mental acuity at a young age, her natural inquisitiveness was augmented when her mutant powers manifested in her teens. Now a stout mother of two in her forties, Kagiso splits her time between her family and her role as Prime Detective, Africa's Greatest Sleuth. She has earned this nickname a dozen times over on various adventures and she is easily among the world's foremost investigators.

HELLSCREAMER

Murdered by a rival, death-metal musician Kgosi “King Screamer” Bamalete was offered a second chance at life by agreeing to become an agent of supernatural retribution, punishing the wicked for their crimes. Now an unforgiving

HELLSCREAMER

PL11 • 202 POINTS

STR 7 STA — AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 7 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 4

Powers: **Infernal Senses** (Senses 7 (Danger Sense (Mystic), Darkvision, Ranged Detect Sin 2, Tracking 2 (Detect Sin)), **Sonic Flight** (Flight 7 (250 MPH), **The Voice of Hell** ((Array, 33 points), **AE: Infernal Whispers** (Perception Range Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Stunned, Incapacitated), Sense-dependent: Hearing), **AE: Screams of the Abyss** (Cone Area Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Variable Condition (All) includes Cumulative), Sense-dependent: Hearing), **AE: Songs of the Damned** (Line Area Damage 11, Secondary Effect)), **Undead** (Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects), Impervious Protection 10, Regeneration 5), **Wicked Talons** (Strength-based Damage 2, Feature: Counts as Unarmed, Impressive (+2 bonus to Intimidate))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Daze (Intimidation), Improved Smash, Interpose, Languages 1 (English, Tswana native), Move-by Action, Startle

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 6 (+13), Expertise: Magic 3 (+4), Expertise: Music 5 (+6), Insight 4 (+6), Intimidation 12 (+16/+18*), Perception 5 (+7), Stealth 3 (+4) *With Wicked Talons bonus.

Offense: Init +1, Infernal Whispers — (Perception Ranged, Affliction 11, Sense-dependent (Hearing)), Screams of the Abyss — (Close, Cone Area Affliction 11, Sense-dependent (Hearing)), Songs of the Damned — (Close, Line Area Damage 11, Secondary Effect), Unarmed +13 (Close, Damage 7), Wicked Talons +13 (Close, Damage 9)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 10, Will 11

Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 115 + Advantages 7 + Skills 19 + Defenses 25 = 202

Complications: **Motivation—Vengeance:** Hellscreamer is driven to punish the wicked, no matter what. **Dark Pact:** Hellscreamer's powers and existence are connected to the deal he made with sinister supernatural forces. If he abandons his mission, he risks losing his powers and his life.

revenant, he battles criminals, cultists, and demons across Sub-Saharan Africa. His harsh methods often put him at odds with other superhumans, though he has teamed up with various supernatural heroes in the past when their goals aligned.

The identity of the entity that resurrected Hellscreamer and gave him superhuman abilities is currently a mystery. It could be a demon, forgotten god, or powerful mystical hero or villain. So far the anti-hero hasn't been called on by his patron to do anything except punish the guilty; time will tell if this remains the case.

REPUBLIC OF MALAWI

A small, underdeveloped nation, Malawi's lot has been gradually improving in recent years. However, much work in improving the nation's overall health and economy is still needed, making it a prime candidate for assistance both internally and externally. Many of the efforts to improve both the image and reality of life in Malawi are aided by their only notable superhero, Mphamvu (see the **SASHA** sidebar in this entry). The hero's unimpeachable moral character has made him an exemplar to natives and foreigners alike, with the hero gaining a small, but enthusiastic fanbase among southern and central African immigrant communities worldwide.

PRIME DETECTIVE
& HELLSCREAMER

A LAND OF EVEN MORE TONGUES

As mentioned in the *North Africa* entry, Africa is a continent with numerous cultures and languages. These range from very commonly spoken languages like English and French, to widespread, if not omnipresent, ones like Kiswahili and Portuguese, to local or obscure dialects like Akans and Wolof. There is no “African” language, and in some cases the differences between two tribal dialects is at least as great as between two European or Asian languages. This holds just as true for South Africa, the Congo, and elsewhere as it does for Nigeria and Morocco.

However, though each of these is their own unique and fully realized language, spending points to purchase obscure languages that would be sensible for a character to have (given his or her culture or background) might be seen as penalizing a character for speaking a language that won't be encountered very often. Whereas a player could spend 3 points on Languages and be able to speak the native tongues of many European Union nations, the same expenditure wouldn't even get a character all eleven official languages of the Republic of South Africa, to say nothing of countless tribal dialects and variations.

If this is a concern in a group, GMs can consider giving characters two more local or obscure languages for every selection under the normal use of the Languages advantage. So a character with 1 rank in Languages might speak French or German or some other common tongue, the same character could speak two lesser known languages, like Swazi and Tswana. It's up to GMs to decide what constitutes an “uncommon” language, but with regards to characters from Sub-Saharan Africa, it's a good rule of thumb that most languages associated with particular tribes and ethnic groups in the region, and who are not spread across several nations, would qualify.

The hero has been offered membership in international superteams in the past, but has politely rejected such offers so he can stay closer to home.

Mphamvu uses the Paragon archetype in the *Hero's Handbook*, with the following changes: add 1 to Intellect, Presence, and Awareness. Choose “Law Enforcement” for his Expertise. Add Close Attack 4, Languages 1 (Chichewa, English native), Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Inspire 2, and Take-down to advantages. Reduce his Enhanced Strength to 8 and drop the extra Strength for lifting. Remove Flight and Add Speed 2 to Super-Speed. Add the power **Invulnerability** (Immunity 80 (All Toughness), Limited to Half-Effect).

REPUBLIC OF ZIMBABWE

A proud nation with a long and varied history, the 20th Century was not kind to Zimbabwe in many respects. Human rights abuses, rebellion, and corruption inform how much of the world views the nation. Conditions in the country are improving steadily, as they are in many other nations in the region, but it's a slow, gradual process. Recently, efforts to improve the nation's economy and technological infrastructure have been aided by their representative in SASHA, Zingizi (see the **SASHA** sidebar in this entry), and a number of talented young engineers and technicians the heroine has recruited to work with her on “Project Hive” (see following). This project has gained

public support from citizens and politicians alike, though some within the government seek to sabotage Zingizi's efforts for fear they will transform the young woman into a political rival.

PROJECT HIVE

Project Hive is Zingizi's private institution with the stated goal of using technology to increase stability and the quality of life in Zimbabwe and the rest of Southern and Eastern Africa. Project Hive is slowly, but definitely, improving agriculture, industry, and education, primarily by providing advanced technology for, and improving communications between, charities, schools, hospitals, and government agencies. Zingizi has designed the program as many individuals and organizations working together for the good of all, though her success is drawing the ire of SHADOW, corrupt local officials, warlords, and other forces who profit from oppressing the populace.

Zingizi uses the Battlesuit archetype from the *Hero's Handbook*. Choose Engineering as her Expertise and add Language 3 (Chewa, Kalanga, French, Tswana, English native), Eidetic Memory, and Improved Initiative to advantages. Drop the Battlesuit's Enhanced Strength to 10 and add a Summon power that allows her to command a number of insect-themed robots specially designed for the needs of her particular mission.

REPUBLIC OF MOZAMBIQUE

Mozambique's efforts to improve itself have yielded serious results while still being hindered by various internal problems, including troubling financial and human rights issues. Seeking to capitalize on tourism and natural resources that have made the nation a modest success story in terms of economic growth, Mozambique has turned to foreign investment in a big way. Unfortunately, this has brought not only positive and infrastructure-building corporations to the country, but also shell-companies run by organizations like SHADOW and Dr. Sin's criminal empire. The corruption nurtured by these nefarious influences keeps Mozambique's modest number of low-powered superhumans busy while reducing the effectiveness of local law enforcement. If criminal forces can be kept from interfering with progress, conditions may be allowed to improve.

REPUBLIC OF MADAGASCAR

Known for its exotic wildlife and island climate, Madagascar has only a handful of superhumans. Its most well-known and popular is Vahiny (see the **SASHA** sidebar in this entry). A longstanding member of SASHA, Vahiny is an extraterrestrial warrior who has adopted the country as his own. While initially stranded on Earth, the alien hero has since had multiple opportunities to leave Earth but elects to stay out of loyalty and love for his new homeland. The people of Madagascar have taken a very strong liking to Vahiny, accepting him as one of their own.

In addition to Vahiny, there are a few other costumed crime fighters in the country, most notably the Kidabo-

THE EXCHANGE

A number of supervillain mercenaries hail from, or operate in, South Africa due to opportunities created by political instability and profiteering. For the right price, warlords and would-be dictators can hire one or more unscrupulous superhumans to augment their conventional forces. While various heroes locally and abroad try to control and discourage this practice, there are simply too many factions and special interests to prevent the practice. Most villains seeking work in the region are part of the Exchange, a loose coalition of brokers, recruiters, and criminals who make their living through “finders’ fees” for providing super-powered muscle to interested parties.

Mercenaries can be hired singly or in bulk, with various individuals and groups specializing in different types of operations. For example, the Caes de Diamente (Diamond Dogs) are a group of low-powered thugs who work protection and enforcement for various illicit diamond syndicates throughout Angola and elsewhere in the region, while Artemis, a former protégé of famed Orion the Hunter (see *Freedom City*), only takes solo assassination and abduction contracts.

In addition to supplying willing super-powered operatives for various clients, in recent years the Exchange has begun branching out into the trafficking of superhumans or those with superhuman potential. Some subjects are sold for experimentation, while others are brainwashed, or otherwise controlled, and used as super-soldiers for their buyers. The Exchange recently reached out to similar organizations around the world, seeking to form a global network for the buying, selling, and trading of superhuman resources, voluntary or otherwise.

Although there’s little (or no) proof, the Exchange has worked with Brande Management on the continent, both as a source for hired muscle and to locate potential agents. Considering the two organizations offer similar services and the Exchange could grow to be a threat to Brande profits in Africa, they may come into conflict sooner rather than later.

lahy (“Young Men”). Taking their name from the practitioners of the martial art *moraingy*, of which they are all masters, this group of a half dozen masked youths mostly deals with street crime. Despite their traditional name, the group has two female members, which is very non-traditional. The Kidabolahy’s master is known only as Nahoda (“Old Man” or “Captain”) and is a retired masked crime fighter from the 1960s. The Kidabolahy are all unpowered martial artists between PL 7 and PL 9.

Vahiny uses the Powerhouse archetype from the *Hero’s Handbook*. Increase his Intellect and Presence by 1, and his Expertise is “Galactic Lore.” Drop his Leaping, Shockwave, and Groundstrike powers and add the following Powers:

Psychic Translation (Comprehend 3 (Speak, Understand, and Read)), **Infra-Eyes** (Ranged Damage 11, Accurate 4, Senses 1 (Infravision)), **Flying** (Flight 8 (500 MPH)), and **Infra-Shift** (Insubstantial 3 (Energy), Linked to Concealment 2 (sight)).

AEPYORNIS ISLAND

An uncharted mist-covered island somewhere off the coast of Madagascar, at a glance this island seems abandoned and uninhabited. In truth, while technically no humans live there, the island is home to a secret colony of mutant Avians. Whether through outside experimentation or drastic physical mutation, the Aepyornians barely resemble their bird-man kin. Instead they are huge, bird-headed, flightless, and hulking creatures. Despite being voracious carnivores, many of the Aepyornians are isolationist and peaceful, the exceptions being Prince Phorus, who is also known as Terror Bird, and a small group of like-minded followers. Terror Bird seeks to conquer parts of Africa, with the end goal of using the local humans as both slaves and food. To date he has been stopped by heroes from nearby regions. He has recently heard of and reached out to

Black Vulture (see *Threat Report*) and seeks a terrifying avian alliance between the two flesh-eating bird-men.

TERROR BIRD

A member of the Aepyorian royal family, Prince Phorus Id-Roc is an outcast, exile, and rebel. He seeks to overthrow the current king, his uncle Titanis. To this end he



TERROR BIRD

PLT1 - 160 POINTS

STR 10 STA 10 AGL 2 DEX 0 FGT 8 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Avian Speed** (Leaping 4 (120 feet), Speed 5 (60 MPH)), **Beak and Talons** (Strength-based Damage 2, Penetrating 2), **Large** (Growth 4, Innate, Permanent), **Terrifying Shriek** (Perception Area Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Stunned, Paralyzed), Sense-dependent (Hearing)), **Thick Hide** (Impervious Toughness 4)

Advantages: All-out Attack, Benefit (Prince of the Aepyorians), Close Attack 2, Equipment 3, Improved Critical (Beak and Talons), Improved Smash, Leadership, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Skill Mastery (Intimidation), Startle

Skills: Athletics 6 (+16), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+10), Intimidation 10 (+14), Perception 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Throw 8 (+8), Stealth 2 (+0)

Offense: Initiative +2, Beak and Talons +10 (Close, Damage 12, Crit. 19-20), Terrifying Shriek — (Close, Perception Area Affliction 11), Throw +8 (Ranged, Damage 10), Unarmed +12 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 14, Toughness 10, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 48 + Advantages 14 + Skills 16 + Defenses 28 = 160

Complications: **Motivation—Conquest:** Terror Bird seeks to rule his people and conquer as much of the human world as he can. **Exiled:** Terror Bird has been cast out by his own people for his warlike and aggressive nature. **Prejudice:** As a giant, carnivorous bird-man, Terror Bird is subject to fear and discrimination outside his own race.

seeks powerful weapons and allies in the outside world and is willing to trade his own assistance in various villainous enterprises to acquire them. Terror Bird has the mutant ability to generate a shriek that causes instinctive fear in most creatures and he is exceptionally strong, even for one of his kind. While his ambition often outstrips his cunning, he isn't stupid and is quite adept at bullying others into getting what he wants.

THE VALLEY OF QUEEN AYESHA

Hidden by ancient magic, the Valley of She is the kingdom of the fabled Queen Ayesha, an immortal sorceress, monarch, and sometimes conqueror. A sworn foe of the royal family of Dakana, Ayesha claims some ancient feud with the rulers of that kingdom. The origins of this conflict are lost to history, but several generations of White Lions have battled the immortal. Ayesha is beautiful and able to prolong her life indefinitely by feeding off the adoration of her followers. She also possesses some knowledge of the mystic arts, though her power is nowhere near that of Eldrich and his peers. Still, with a secret nation sworn to live and die at her command, she is a potent threat in those rare times she ventures outside her kingdom.

Ayesha's own immortality and the cost of maintaining it keeps her in check. She cannot expose her kingdom for long to the world without risking losing the adoration of her people, and while it is possible that expanding her influence might grant her even more power, she is reluctant to risk what she has in order to explore this possibility.

AYESHA

PL10 - 167 POINTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 3 INT 3 AWE 4 PRE 8

Powers: **Living Goddess** (Immortality 2 (1 week), Immunity 2 (Aging, Disease)), **Mystic Powers** (Array, 30 points), **AE: "Obey Me!"** (Cumulative Perception Area Affliction 10 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled), Sense-dependent: Hearing), **AE: Fire Sight** (Remote Sensing 15 (Visual Senses, 120 miles), Subtle, **Quirk:** Requires flames to look into (but not at target location)), **AE: Mystic Bolts** (Ranged Damage 10, Resisted by Will), **Mystic Wards** (Sustained Protection 8)

Advantages: Attractive 2, Benefit 2 (Queen of the Hidden Valley), Fascinate (Deception), Fascinate (Persuasion), Languages 5 (Arabic, Bantu, Dakanan, English, Greek, Hebrew, Latin, Persian, Portuguese, Kiswahili native), Ritualist, Skill Mastery (Deception), Skill Mastery (Persuasion)

Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+3), Athletics 2 (+3), Deception 8 (+16), Expertise: History 5 (+8), Expertise: Magic 5 (+8), Insight 4 (+8), Intimidation 4 (+12), Investigation 3 (+6), Perception 6 (+10), Persuasion 8 (+16), Ranged Combat: Mystic Bolts 9 (+10), Stealth 3 (+4), Treatment 3 (+6)

Offense: Init +1, "Obey Me!" — (Close, Perception Area Cumulative Affliction 10, Sense-dependent (Hearing)), Mystic Bolts +10 (Ranged, Damage 10, Resisted by Will), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 6, Toughness 10, Will 14

Totals: Abilities 46 + Powers 46 + Advantages 14 + Skills 31 + Defenses 30 = 167

Complications: **Motivation—Power:** Ayesha desires to be worshipped as the living goddess she believes herself to be. Any who defy her earn her lasting enmity. **Power Loss:** Ayesha must periodically renew her immortality with a ritual requiring special mystical components. If she doesn't perform the ritual, she begins to age rapidly and may die.

REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

Sparsely populated, Namibia is a fairly modern nation with a serious focus on transportation. This focus is echoed in its superhuman community, which has several superhumans with flight, teleportation, and other transportation based abilities who have come together to form Mongoose Protective Transport. This superhuman transport company does brisk business moving and protecting people and sensitive materials throughout the region. MPT has recently been targeted by Brande Management, but thus far the organization has avoided being put out of business. The organization's name comes from their founder, Pius "Mongoose" Level. Level is a former costumed speedster who now mostly operates the business since age and health problems have robbed him of much of his speed.

REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

Though once a hotbed of covert SHADOW activity and other problems during Apartheid, since the African Nation Congress took over in the early 1990s, the Republic of South Africa has become more hostile to such influences. This reduction of influence is both due to the actions of post-Apartheid superheroes and various government officials. Chief among South Africa's superhumans are the metahuman brothers, Aardebroer and Vuurbroer (see the **South African Super Hero Alliance** section, on the next page).

SOUTH AFRICAN SUPER HERO ALLIANCE (SASHA)

The South African Super Hero Alliance is a multicultural, multiracial group of superhumans operating with loose enforcement powers amidst the fifteen member nations of the South African Development Community (SADC). After the Republic of South Africa joined the SADC in 1994, the nation sought approval of the other member nations to fund, staff, and empower a group of native metahumans to help protect the people of South Africa from threats and crises. SASHA was formed in 1997, and has been working to protect the region ever since.

Headquartered out of Gabrone, Botswana, the group has a rotating roster of over twenty heroes with at least one for each member nation in the SADC. Team members receive a modest stipend and other perks, though all are selected for their altruism, integrity, and willingness to promote the dream of a safer, more unified Africa. Critics claim SASHA is the first stage of a plan to place the whole of the southern part of the continent under one supers-backed regime, but there is no evidence of this. In fact, efforts to remain apolitical, concentration on member-nation sovereignty, and encouragement of diplomatic solutions whenever possible, mean the group occasionally draws ire for not doing enough to deal with unrest, border wars, and other problems.

Despite various problems and occasional bureaucratic limitations, SASHA is as generally well regarded in southern Africa as they are relatively unknown elsewhere. Chief among their members is Aardebroer (Earth Brother) and Vuurbroer (Fire Brother), two brothers from the Republic of South Africa who wield two of the fabled Jewels of Elemental Power in the form of matching rings. Their relationship often comes as a surprise to those meeting them as Aardebroer is white Dutch Afrikaans and Vuurbroer is the Zulu-descended African son of a prominent African National Congress member. The two are childhood friends and members of SASHA since its founding, having grown from idealistic teens to veteran heroes over nearly two decades.

There isn't enough space to list the statistics for every member of SASHA, and room is intentionally left for individual GMs to flesh out some of the roster as they see fit. However, in addition to Aardebroer and Vuurbroer the following members are currently active with SASHA:

PRIME DETECTIVE

Botswana's mutant super-sleuth who possesses a number of superhuman senses she uses to solve mysteries. She is considered one of the greatest investigators in the world.

SOL SOLDADO (SUN SOLDIER)

Solar-powered Angolan who can channel the sun's rays into strength, a protective field, and other effects. A former child soldier before gaining his powers, he is devoted to stopping the exploitation of children. This crusade sometimes brings him into conflict with various political interests.

CHUI BWANA (LEOPARD LORD)

Former Congolese football star who was kidnapped and transformed into a humanoid leopard by SHADOW geneticists. Immensely popular in his native country despite his bestial appearance, he is captain of the All-African Superhuman Football Team, which plays exhibition and charity matches with similar teams worldwide. He has no connection with the Leopard King, a villain from the 1960s who once fought the White Lions of Dakana.

MPHAMVU (STALWART)

Malawai hero who goes by the Chichewa translation of his first name, Stalwart. A distant cousin of the current president of Malawai, he is a patriot and widely considered one of the most upstanding and incorruptible members of SASHA. He gained his powers of low-level superhuman strength and near invulnerability while he was a young man working as a policeman trying to stop illegal dumping of chemicals inside his nation's borders.

VAHINY (GUEST OR STRANGER)

Vahiny is a mighty, alien warrior who can fly and shoot "Infra-beams" from his eyes. His ship crashed off the coast of Madagascar years ago and he hasn't been able to return home... though not for lack of opportunities. He has adopted the nation and its people as his own and uses his powers and technology to protect them.

ZINGIZI (BEE OR CARPENTER BEE)

Zingizi takes her name from a species of bee common in Zimbabwe. She is a super-genius who uses her insect-themed powersuit and helper robots to protect her country. She is still inexperienced, but has already found a place in SASHA due to her technological skills.

Of course, all is not perfect in South Africa. Corruption, violent crime, modern versions of old tribal rivalries, poverty, drought, and other issues have plagued the nation over the years. The country and various smaller neighbors, such as Lesotho, often have to rely on superhumans to assist their overworked and understaffed law

enforcement agencies. Even mercenaries from the Exchange are sometimes employed to supplement official forces. Despite efforts to only select individuals from the Exchange who have sterling records and reputations, working with them occasionally creates more problems than it solves.

VUURBROER

PL11 - 167 POINTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 2 DEX 3 FGT 8 INT 5 AWE 1 PRE 3

Powers: **Ring of Fire** ((Removable): **Fire Field** (Reaction Damage 6 (When touched), Precise), **Fire Flight** (Flight 7 (250 MPH)), **Fire Powers** ((Array, 22 points): **Heat Wave** (Cone Area Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Exhausted, Incapacitated), **AE: Douse Fire Powers** (Burst Area Weaken 11 (Resisted by Fortitude), Broad: Fire/Fire Powers, Distracting), **AE: Fire Blast** (Burst Area Damage 11), **AE: Fire Bolt** (Ranged Damage 11)), **Fireproof** (Immunity 10 (Fire effects)), **Mental Link** (Senses 1 (Communication Link: Other Elemental Ring users)), **Mystic Field** (Sustained Toughness 9))

Advantages: Benefit (Well-off), Eidetic Memory, Improved Initiative, Languages 3 (Bantu, English, French, Latin, Afrikaans native), Move-by Action

Skills: Athletics 2 (+3), Expertise: Medicine 5 (+10), Expertise: Politics 1 (+6), Insight 4 (+5), Investigation 2 (+7), Perception 4 (+5), Persuasion 2 (+5), Ranged Combat: Fire Powers 8 (+11), Technology 1 (+6), Treatment 5 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +6, Earth Bolt +11 (Ranged, Damage 11), Fire Blast — (Close, Burst Area Damage 11), Fire Field — (Close, Reaction Damage 6), Heat Wave — (Close, Cone Area Affliction 11), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 10, Toughness 10, Will 12

Totals: Abilities 38 + Powers 67 + Advantages 7 + Skills 17 + Defenses 39 = 167

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** Vuurbroer is motivated by his oath as a doctor and the values of his family to help the people of his nation and any others in need. **Relationship:** With his family, especially his brother Aardebroer.

AARDEBROER & VUURBROER

Martin Govender lost his birth parents to extremist violence during the final days of Apartheid in South Africa. He was saved by a prominent member of the African National Congress, who in a move that surprised both critics and supporters took the young white boy into his home and raised him alongside his own son, Dajon. Over the years Martin and Dajon became very close, a bond which was only strengthened when the boys found a small box containing two of the legendary Rings of Elemental Power while exploring an old, unused archeological dig site. Not knowing what they were, Martin and Dajon each put on a ring and were granted power over earth and fire respectively. They became the costumed superheroes Aardebroer and Vuurbroer, with the cautious, but conditional blessing of their father, who insisted the boys be tutored by older heroes in the newly formed South African Super Hero Alliance. Now among the most experienced members of the team, the pair are as close as ever and still work tirelessly to protect their homeland.

Martin is an attractive blond white South African man in his late 30s. He has trained as a soldier, though he's never actively served in the military beyond his capacity as an official government superhero. He is very popular among

AARDEBROER

PL11 - 156 POINTS

STR 6/14* STA 6/14* AGL 1 DEX 3 FGT 8 INT 2 AWE 2 PRE 3

Powers: **Ring of Earth** ((Removable): **Armored Skin** (Impervious Toughness 6), **Earthen Platform** (Flight 6 (120 MPH), Platform), **Earth Powers** ((Array, 22 points): **Earth Shaping** (Create 11, Continuous, Limited: Requires equivalent volume of raw earth/stone, **AE: Earth Wave** (Cone Area Damage 11), **AE: Ground Pound** (Burst Area 3 (120 ft.) Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Dodge; Dazed, Prone), Limited: Target must be touching ground, Limited Degree, **AE: Terrakinesis** (Damaging Move Object 11 (50 tons), Limited Material: Earth)), **Mental Link** (Senses 1 (Communication Link: Other Elemental Ring users)), **Mountainous Might** ((Growth 8, Impervious Toughness 8), **AE: Sand Form** (Insustantial 2 (Gaseous), Progressive, Subtle)) **Strength of the Earth** (Enhanced Strength 5, Enhanced Stamina 5), **Tunneling** (Burrowing 11 (120 MPH))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Benefit (Well-off), Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Languages 2 (Bantu, English, Afrikaans native), Power Attack

Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+3), Athletics 4 (+10/+18*), Expertise: Military 6 (+8), Insight 2 (+4), Intimidation 5 (+8/+12*), Investigation 2 (+4), Perception 5 (+7), Ranged Combat: Terrakinesis 8 (+11), Stealth 3 (+4/-4*), Vehicles 3 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +1, Earth Wave — (Close, Cone Area Damage 11), Ground Pound — (Close, Burst Area Affliction 11), Terrakinesis +11 (Ranged, Damaging Move Object 11), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 6/14*)

Defense: Dodge 12/8*, Parry 12/8*, Fortitude 6/14*, Toughness 6/14*, Will 8 *With Growth active.

Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 66 + Advantages 7 + Skills 20 + Defenses 21 = 156

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** Aardebroer is motivated by the values and sense of civic responsibility to his nation and people instilled in him by his adopted family. **Relationship:** With his adopted family, especially his brother Vuurbroer.

South Africans of all races for his tireless defense of their nation. Dajon is a very dark-skinned South African who has only narrowly avoided following in his father's footsteps as a politician, having served a brief term as a member of the African National Congress. He has a medical degree and is a skilled and compassionate physician. Both brothers are incredibly close, a bond strengthened by the mental link their mystic rings provides.

LESOTHO AND SWAZILAND

Small nations near the Republic of South Africa, both Lesotho and Swaziland are closely tied to their larger neighbor. Neither has any active costumed superheroes or villains, though there are a few superhumans with minor powers who work in entertainment, health services, and wildlife conservation. Most notable of these is Swaziland's Sophie Ngwana, a mutant empath working with the nation's program to protect the rhino and other endangered species. Ngwana's popularity and passion for protecting wildlife has made her a target of poaching syndicates and smugglers, but so far she has survived multiple attempts on her life.



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- EAST
- SOUTH

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RUSSIA & CENTRAL ASIA

Central Asia is a realm of mystery to most Westerners, a region shrouded in secrecy, which existed for years behind the Iron Curtain and is emerging onto the world stage in faltering steps. This doesn't mean nothing's going on in Russia and the "Five Stans." It just means the rich tapestry of dramas goes mostly-unheard-of by the rest of the world.

THE RUINS OF EMPIRE

Though the United Soviet Socialist Republic (U.S.S.R.) is more than two decades dead, its influence remains strong throughout the region. Cold War-era support for dictators is responsible for much of the present-day terrorism and instability in the region, as is the Soviet policy of transplanting populations to unfamiliar areas. Experimental science, military bases, and stranger secrets were common in the outlying Socialist Republics as well as in the motherland itself, all of which added to the environment of fear, paranoia, and, interestingly, nationalism that drew citizens together.

When the Soviet Union fell, the ensuing power vacuum was filled with violent, ruthless leaders, resulting in decades of harmful policies and deadly consequences all over the region. Despots and criminals ruled, terrorist cells formed in response to global conflicts, and true peace has been difficult to pin down. Many of the people in Central Asia still bear mental and physical scars from this time. Recent reform movements have begun to nudge these nations toward political and economic progress, but they still have a long road ahead.

THE BOILING POT

The United States is sometimes called a "melting pot" because multiple cultures blend together in its towns and cities. Central Asia is better described as a "boiling pot" because groups were transplanted involuntarily and kept under the pressure of dictatorships for decades. Ethnic, religious, and tribal conflicts are as common as they are raw. They lurk just under the surface of many political and day-to-day aspects of life. Despite the fact that most people over 25 speak Russian, the region's political and ethnic divisions remain an obstacle. Even so, the people of Central Asia tend to be exuberant and optimistic. They view the 21st century as Asia's century, and are happy to be here to see it happen.

RUSSIA

Mother Russia is very big, and very old. Though she has embraced a variety of political structures over her history, she has remained steadfastly and distinctly Russian. She is home to stoic people who hold deeply-felt passions possibly because of how little they express themselves. Super-beings from Russia often encompass both sides of this national personality: tough, hardened warriors who do their utmost in the name of a particular cause or ideal.

Though Russia claims to be a democracy, it is in fact an oligarchy run by the rampantly corrupt. This might seem a perfect breeding ground for super villains, but this isn't the case. Super-beings born or created in Russia end up good or evil at about the same ratio as the rest of the world.

Russia's sheer size and diversity of people makes the country difficult to encapsulate in a single document. What follows are a few examples of the heroism, passion, and oddity that make Russia of Earth-Prime what it is.

THE PEOPLES' GUARD

Like most other things in the Soviet Era, the Peoples' Guard was more about appearances than actual effectiveness. Instead, it was a propaganda team of mid-level, barely effective superheroes. They toured the Eastern Bloc to drum up patriotism and intimidate softer Western powers with their collective might. Touted as paragons of Soviet success gifted with incredible powers, the Peoples' Guard were actually on the weaker end of the super-powered scale (PL 8 at their peak).

This bothered them little during the Cold War, since their handlers assured them all other supers worldwide were no more powerful than they. When the Berlin Wall fell and the U.S.S.R. became Russia once again, all seven members received a sudden dose of reality. For two of them, it was a fatal dose when they were killed in conflict with more powerful super-criminals.

Of the five survivors, two disappeared from public view. Kapitan Proton drank himself to death in Kamchatka, while Tovarisch runs a flower shop in Moscow. Molotok and Serc saw the rising corruption and danger in their homeland and answered the call. After two years secretly operating



in Nepal (see **South Asia**), they returned better prepared to take on the arch- and super-criminals of modern Russia. Today, they work against violence and criminality both within and without the new Russian power structure, trusting their celebrity status to grant them protection others might not enjoy. The last member Noch Ved'm, a descendant of one of the female pilots of World War II called the Night Witches, is an active hero in Moscow and the surrounding area. She operates solo and spends her time patrolling the skies, looking for trouble.

Their training has granted Molotok and Serc new powers and skills in addition to honing their abilities with the powers and skills they already possessed. Molotok uses the Powerhouse archetype and Serc uses the Weapon Master archetype (see *Mutants & Masterminds Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**) and fights with a pair of curved knives. Both have the Teamwork advantage and a penchant for teaming up on evildoers in combat. Noch Ved'm uses the Energy Controller archetype (see *Mutants & Masterminds Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**) with green magical fire as the descriptor.

Reduce her to PL 9 by decreasing her Energy Control to 10 ranks and Force Field to 8 ranks.

BOGATYR

Bogaty, named for the folk hero knights of Russian stories, was a cosmically-powerful superhero who represented the U.S.S.R. during the Cold War. He fought a war of ideologies against his American counterpart, the Centurion, with wits and fists throughout the 1950s and 1960s. It's a closely held secret that his activities in space caused the breakdown that initiated the Apollo 13 emergency.

When Bogatyr retired at the close of the Cold War, he left a vacuum of superheroism much like the Soviet government left a vacuum in the areas of infrastructure and regulation. Recently, his daughter has risen to fill the hole he left. She uses a similarly flag-themed costume and the name Bogatyr II. Though she currently restricts her activities to the wilder corners of Russia, her online fan base is large and continues to grow. There are numerous chat rooms dedicated to speculating on when she will stop rescuing stranded truckers and take her father's place on the international stage.

Bogatyr II attempts to end conflicts before they begin, but uses the time she spends discussing



BOGATYR

BOGATYR II

PL13 · 213 POINTS

STR 12 STA 10 AGL 8 DEX 6 FGT 8 INT 5 AWE 6 PRE 4

Powers: **Invulnerability** (Protection 6, Impervious Toughness 10); **Russian Fortitude** (Immunity 10 (Life Support)); **Supersonic Flight** (Flight 10 (2,000 MPH), **AE:** **Space Flight** (Movement (Space Flight 1)))

Advantages: Assessment, Beginner's Luck, Benefit (Daughter of Bogatyr), Diehard, Fast Grab, Improved Grab, Languages 2 (English, Mandarin, Russian native), Luck 3, Redirect

Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+10), Athletics 6 (+18), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+12), Expertise: Russian Geography & Weather 6 (+11), Expertise: Survival 6 (+11), Insight 6 (+12), Perception 8 (+14), Persuasion 6 (+10), Ranged Combat: Thrown 4 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +8, Unarmed +12 (Close, Damage 12), Throw +10 (Ranged, Damage 12)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 14, Toughness 16, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 118 + Powers 47 + Advantages 12 + Skills 24 + Defense 12 = 213

Complications: Motivation—Woman of the People:

Bogatyr II believes in the Communist rhetoric of power to the people and equality for all.

She is dismayed to see Russia abandon these values. She may be naïve to think it was ever truly different, but this does not change her views.

Chip Off the Old

Block: Nothing is more important to Bogatyr II than living up to the legend of her father, the original Bogatyr.

Conflicted: One of the reasons Bogatyr II stays on the fringes of the nation is because she is a lesbian and dislikes the current administration's stance on gay rights. Her sexuality makes her a target of discrimination and hatred from hardliners in society and government.

matters with perpetrators to use Assessment, so she has a good idea of what her potential foe is capable. Once combat starts, she is a no-nonsense combatant and concentrates on a single opponent until he or she drops, then uses that person as a thrown weapon against other enemies, especially if they have superpowers.

CHERNOBYL AND DER UNTERKREMLIN

The city at Chernobyl housed the facility's staff and their families before the 1986 accident rendered the entire area unsafe for the next 20,000 years or so. Everybody knows that part of the history of Chernobyl; what they don't know is that Chernobyl was overseen by German "brain drain" immigrant Dr. Klaus Teufel, a gadgeteer who

used the name Kollektivnogo Razuma (Hive Mind). His lair, named Der UnterKremlin, was a highly fortified and protected fortress, hidden in the earth beneath the city's observation wheel.

Kollektivnogo Razuma did not evacuate after the disaster, and has not been heard from since. Nobody knows if he died or is alive underground pursuing his experiments. Two Soviet, one United Nations, and one UNISON team have attempted to find out in the years since the disaster, but in addition to the ambient danger in the area, the lair is trapped so heavily each group retreated without determining the exact state of affairs.

DER UNTERKREMLIN

Der UnterKremlin occupies at least ten subterranean levels filled with security systems, death traps, and robot guards. The third incursion team found substan-

tial changes made since the blueprints were approved in Moscow, so nobody knows its full complement or size. Superheroes entering Der UnterKremlin to locate Kollektivnogo Razuma or to find some artifact of his genius must come fully prepared for the fight of their lives—and with some way to enter the lab, which has been effectively sealed up for years. Based on the failure of previous incursion teams, the guardians of this complex are appropriate for a series of *at least* PL 12.

KOLLEKTIVNOGO RAZUMA

Kollektivnogo Razuma uses the Robot archetype (see the *Gamemaster's Guide*, **Chapter 3**) with the addition of the Mad Scientist archetype's (also in the *Gamemaster's Guide*) skills and advantages.

THE TUNGUSKA TUNNELS

What was officially determined to be a meteor strike, and named by conspiracy theorists as a UFO crash, is more bizarre than anyone imagines. The 1908 Tunguska Blast was not the result of something *colliding with* the earth, but rather an explosion of energy *from within* the earth.

The crater, which is heavily guarded by Spetznaz commandos, uncovered a large cavern complex with many passages connecting to the Temporal Tunnels (see **South Asia**). Experts who have studied the anomaly theorize it originated either from an asteroid impact in the distant past or from a cataclysmic war in an unknown future and a portion of that energy passed through the tunnels to cause the explosion in 1908. What other energies may have unknowingly been released with the explosion can only be guessed at.

The Temporal Tunnels are one reason Bogatyr II (previously) remains in the wild Russian east. She is aware of the landmark and its potential for abuse. She remains in the area so she can respond if a super villain attempts to abuse the Tunnels.

THE OLD WAYS

As with all other parts of the world, the legends of old Russia are the stories of super-beings from earlier ages. Some of those beings are still alive, waiting in seclusion for their time to come again.

RASPUTIN

Rasputin, the hedonistic and near-immortal master manipulator of pre-revolution Russia, is in fact immortal. After faking his death in 1916 after a series of attacks, he spent his time subtly influencing the forces that controlled Russia. This century, he works with the super-rich oligarchs of the new Russian capitalism, steering the nation toward ... a goal known only to Rasputin. Only a few even suspect his existence, and none know his true identity.

Rasputin is a Rakshasa (see **South Asia**), a demon of Indian legend who came to Russia during the 16th century. Unlike others of his kind, he isn't completely evil. Everything he

DER UNTERKREMLIN

HQ - 25 POINTS

Size: Colossal • **Toughness:** 14 • **Features:** Computer, Concealed 3 (+20 DC), Deathtraps, Defense System, Holding Cells, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Power System, Sealed, Security System 2 (DC 25), Self-Repairing, Workshop

RASPUTIN

PL10 - 269 POINTS

STR 6 **STA** 6 **AGL** 4 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 6 **INT** 6 **AWE** 6 **PRE** 6

Powers: **Claws** (Strength-based Damage 4, Penetrating 6, Split); **Demonic Flesh** (Immunity 80 (Toughness effects), Limit: Not vs. magic); **Detect Thoughts** (Effortless Mind Reading 5, Limited to Surface Thoughts); **Limited Magical Immunity** (Immunity 20 (Magic spell effects of 6 or fewer ranks)); **Otherworldly** (Immunity 3 (Aging, Disease, Poison)); **Shapeshifting** (Morph 2 (Humanoid forms), Continuous); **Telekinetic Hand** (Move Object 1, Precise, Subtle, Limit: Effective STR -1 (25 lbs.))

Advantages: Artificer, Benefit 5 (Readied Rituals*), Benefit 5 (Multiple established identities), Benefit 4 (Cipher), Benefit 5 (Longtime political operator), Benefit 4 (Multi-millionaire), Close Attack 4, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Improved Initiative, Languages 4 (Arabic, English, Mandarin, Romanian, Russian, Turkish, Infernal native), Ritualist, Skill Mastery (Deception), Trance, Well-informed

Skills: Deception 8 (+14), Expertise: History 6 (+12), Expertise: Magic 8 (+14), Expertise: Politics 8 (+14), Insight 8 (+14), Perception 2 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +8, Claws +10 (Close, Damage 10, Penetrating 5, Split), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 8, Toughness Immune/8/6**, Will 12 ** Immune to non-magical Toughness effects, 8 otherwise, 6 without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 84 + Powers 99 + Advantages 42 + Skills 22 + Defense 22 = 269

Complications: **Complications:** **Motivation—Impending Doom:** Rasputin believes the Rakshasas of Pakistan are on the path to global—if not universal—destruction. All of his plans center around stopping them. **Identity:** Rasputin keeps his identity as a demonic Rakshasa hidden from everyone. **Wheels Within Wheels:** Rasputin will never choose a simple plan when a more complicated one is available.

* **Readied Rituals** are in *Gadget Guides*. Rituals Rasputin might have prepared include Banishment, Dispel Magic, Veil, and other appropriate effects.

has done in Russia, including murders and manipulation, he has done to build a society capable of resisting his brethren to the south. His plans have not panned out as well as he had hoped, due in large part to the fact that he overestimated the predictability of the Russian people. He remains optimistic that his plans will succeed and continues his campaign against his evil kinsmen.

BABA YAGA

Baba Yaga, the grandmother of witches, still haunts the wilderness though the spread of technology has pushed her far to the east. As her beloved forest disappears a bit at a time with each year that passes, she becomes more bitter and evil. Whereas in the past she's been known as a neutral or even grandmotherly figure, now she's more likely to punish those she find in "her" parts of the world. She finds more and more "naughty children" in the form of developers, loggers, and oil workers to lure into her hut for punishment and eventual consumption.

Baba Yaga's hut is famous in folklore, literature, and music. The Hut—no larger on the outside than a rude peasant's hovel—is a sprawling complex of interconnected rooms that may go on forever. The Hut walks on a pair of gigantic chicken legs to transport Baba Yaga across the Russian countryside. It's possible the Hut has exits to other worlds, which may look the same as Earth-Prime or utterly different.

AFGHANISTAN

Afghanistan was first invaded by Darius I of Babylonia around 500 BCE and has spent most of the 2,600 years since being either invaded or marched through by armies intent on invading somewhere else. After the most recent conflict between fundamentalist and U.S. forces, its independent government is still new and weak. Life outside the capital unfolds largely uninfluenced by the will of the state. Indeed, many of the shepherds and farmers in the furthest reaches of this mountainous nation live as they have since Roman times.

Superhumans in Afghanistan tend to be younger, since heroes and villains who stood out during the decades of conflict didn't survive long. Those who are active now tend to be as polarized as their mundane counterparts. Some consider themselves holy warriors for one brand of political or religious ideology or another. Others work diligently in the name of peace, or simply to make a buck in the chaos that surrounds them.

THE FLAMING SWORD

The Flaming Sword is an example of one of these extremists, a villain who believes the end times are upon the Earth and who wants nothing more than to hasten their arrival. An infernal engine of destruction, he has captured the attention of both UNISON and SHADOW ... though some members in SHADOW view him as so dangerous that they might step back and allow UNISON to capture or destroy him. The Flaming Sword uses the Energy Controller archetype (see *Mutants & Masterminds Hero's Hand-*

BABA YAGA

PL14 • 476 POINTS

STR 6 STA 8 AGL 4 DEX 4 FGT 6 INT 8 AWE 12 PRE 9

Powers: **Flying Mortar** (Removable, Indestructible, Flight 7 (250 MPH)); **Immortal** (Immortality 1, Immunity 13 (Aging, Alteration Effects, Disease, Cold, Fatigue Effects)); **Ironskin Fetish** (Removable, Strength-based Damage 4, Accurate 3, Penetrating 10; Impervious Protection 5); **Pestle** (Easily Removable, Indestructible, Strength-based Damage 4, Accurate 3, Weapon Break, Improved Critical, Reach, Improved Smash); **Shield Spell** (Sustained Impervious Protection 5, Stacks with Ironskin Fetish); **Witch Hexes** (Array (75 points)); **Confounding Illusions** (Illusion 15, All Senses (32,000 cft.)), **AE: Evil Eye** (Ranged Progressive Affliction 12 (Resisted by Will), Variable Condition (All)), **AE: Hex Blast** (Ranged Damage 16, Resisted by Will, Penetrating 10, Split); **Winter Witch** (Selective Environment 15 (60 miles), Activation (Standard Action), Cold (Extreme), Impede Movement (2 ranks), Visibility (-5))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Artificer, Assessment, Benefit 3 (Old god), Benefit 5 (Treasure and Magical Resources), Benefit 10 (Readied Rituals*), Daze (Intimidation), Extraordinary Effort, Fascinate (Intimidation), Favored Environment (The Dancing Hut), Great Endurance, Improved Initiative, Languages 5 (Croatian, Czech, Old Czech, Polish, Romanian, Russian, Serbian, Slovenian, Ukranian, Old Russian native), Power Attack, Ritualist, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery (Expertise: Magic), Startle, Takedown 2, Taunt, Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 4 (+10), Deception 6 (+15), Expertise: Magic 12 (+20), Expertise: Outer Realms 7 (+15), Expertise: Russian Folklore 7 (+15), Intimidation 5 (+14), Ranged Combat: Witch Hexes 8 (+12), Stealth 9 (+13)

Offense: Initiative +8, Evil Eye +12 (Ranged, Progressive Affliction 12, Will DC 22, Variable Condition (All)), Hex Blast +12 (Ranged, Damage 16, Resisted by Will, Penetrating 10, Split), Pestle +12 (Close, Damage 10, Reach (5 ft.), Crit. 19-20), Ironskin Fetish +12 (Close, Damage 10, Penetrating 10)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 12, Toughness 18, Will 16

Totals: Abilities 114 + Powers 247 + Advantages 68 + Skills 29 + Defense 18 = 476

Complications: Monstrous: Though human, Baba Yaga is a twisted, old crone, corrupted by magic and a long, long life. **Motivation—Grandmother of Witches:** Baba Yaga lives to protect the wilds, live in balance with nature, and instruct children on the proper way to live. **Power Loss:** Baba Yaga can't use her hexes if she can't speak or move her hands and arms. **Reputation:** Baba Yaga is known to be a witch—and not a very nice one, although there are stories of her being helpful to some. Few people who meet and recognize Baba Yaga will react with anything but overwhelming fear.

* **Readied Rituals** are in *Gadget Guides*. Rituals Baba Yaga might have prepared include Banishment, Cure, Curse, Dispel Magic, Guise, Scrying, Sending, Veil, and others that seem appropriate.

THE DANCING HUT

HQ • 23 POINTS

Size: Small/Colossal • **Toughness:** 14 • **Features:** Concealed (+10 DC), Dual Size, Holding Cells, Intelligent (INT 1 AWE 2, PRE 2), Isolated, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Movable, Power System, Security System 3 (Requires Expertise: Magic check to overcome, DC 30), Self-Repairing 2, Teleport Lock, Workshop; **Powers:** **Baba Yaga's Conveyance** (Movement 4 (Dimensional 2 (Magical or Slavic-related), Sure-footed 2)), **Chicken Legs** (Speed 4 (30 MPH))

book, Chapter 2) and controls fire, including alternate effects such as a Fireball (Ranged Burst Area), a Flaming Sword (Close Damage with Penetrating), and Firestorm (Cloud Area Damage).

KAZAKHSTAN

The largest land-locked nation in the world and the biggest of the “Five Stans” of Central Asia, Kazakhstan is a land of broad, sweeping steppes. Its people are widely scattered and wildly different, ranging from the descendants of Mongols who rode through the plains as part of the Golden Horde, to displaced and disenfranchised populations from all over Eastern Europe. People are generally honest, but insular, and have not yet learned to trust strangers after decades of fear and paranoia.

Kazakhstan was also the favored site for Soviet super-science too experimental or dangerous to conduct in Russia itself (a fact which, considering the sorts of things that happened in Russia, is more than a little terrifying). The arid grasslands and deserts are peppered with the remains of these projects: abandoned laboratories, villages of third-generation mutants, and blackened craters where buildings and labs once stood.

Slicksand is one artifact of Soviet experimentation in the region: patches of desert sand that swirl greasily and eagerly pull under any unfortunate who steps into a patch of it. Those devoured usually perish, but if one emerges alive, he or she almost always acquires some sort of super power or special ability. These are almost never worth more than a few power points, but over the decades countless youths and desperate adults have risked their lives to acquire this small advantage—even though many die and others come out deformed or otherwise changed. In such an inhospitable land, even the smallest power or

enhanced ability could make a big difference for a family or individual looking for an edge.

THE FOUR HORSEMEN

Leftover from Kazakhstan's age of Russian experimentation is a quartet of super-soldiers given abilities inspired by the Mongol tribes that once roamed the region. These powers make them physically powerful and able to withstand living and traveling in the steppes. Dubbed the “Four Horsemen,” they saw action in Afghanistan, Central America, and Southeast Asia before they were left without an employer. They eventually settled down in their country of origin. Since returning, they have used their powers to help stabilize Kazakhstan and defend it from the more dangerous elements of nearby nations.

All four of the horsemen survived the same experimentation and graduated from the same training programs, so their skills and abilities are very similar. Use the following statistics for all four Horsemen, modified as directed in the description of each Horseman, following. This unaltered statblock can also be used for any unknown survivors of the program you might want to insert into your series.

Horsemen super-soldiers are tall and thin, but very strong. All were trained as special ops soldiers to serve the needs of the U.S.S.R. during the Cold War. What motivates them now varies from individual to individual. They are the only known survivors of the program, but other Horsemen, or other products of the program, could be scattered across the globe.



The Four Horsemen live together in an old warehouse in Astana, reliving old memories and doing what they can to keep life safe in Kazakhstan. It's not much of a headquarters, but the water runs most of the time and the locals give plenty of warning when danger approaches. Each uses the Horseman Super-Soldier stats plus a few personal characteristics covered in the individual descriptions presented here.

MNOGO

Mnogo ("Plenty") is the largest of the Horsemen and was team leader when they operated during the Cold War. He technically outranks his teammates, but the group has grown into a more democratic organization since their "retirement." Increase STR, STA, and FGT to 8, increase Fortitude to 9, and Toughness to 8. Mnogo is PL 8. **Complications: Motivation—Keep the Group Together:** Mnogo is aware how ragged and tired his team is, and of what Zhizn might do without the team to guide him. **Soviet Mistrust:** After seeing friends die because his handlers lied, Mnogo is *extremely* distrustful of anybody in power or authority.

MIR

Mir ("Peace") favors hunting and sniper rifles over all other weapons, and serves as the team's scout. Of all the Horsemen, he remains the most passionate and is usually the one who motivates the rest to do something besides drink tea and play chess in their warehouse. Increase DEX to 5, INT to 1 and AWE to 4, add exchange his assault rifle for a sniper rifle. Mir is PL 8. **Complications: Motivation—The Neverending Crusade:** Just because he's no longer fighting for the proletariat and Soviet Union doesn't excuse Mir from the fight. He is always ready to engage evil, or quietly encourage good, whenever he seen an opportunity. **Fair Fighter:** Mir considers himself a chivalrous knight, and will not take unfair advantage before or during combat.

ZDOROVYE

Zdorovye ("Health") looks the most like a normal human, though he is still tall and thin. He is the team's face during operations. If there is press to talk with, or a stranger to interface with, it's his job to do it ... if the others can get him to stop drinking long enough to do it well. Increase PRE to 4, add Deception 4 (+8), increase Perception to 8 (+10), and Persuasion to (+10). **Complications: Motivation—Forgetting:** The glory he once had, and the lives he saw lost, haunt Zdorovye. No matter what he's doing, he spends most of his energy finding ways to flee from or drown his memories. **Drowning His Sorrows:** Zdorovye spends as much time as he can drunk. Whether he's drunk enough to negatively impact his abilities is up to the GM.

ZHIZN

Zhizn ("Life") was the most cynical and dangerous of the Horsemen from the beginning, and remains a sneaky, criminally-minded man to this day. Only his loyalty to his

HORSEMEN SUPER-SOLDIERS PL7 • 147 • POINTS

STR 6 STA 7 AGL 3 DEX 3 FGT 7 INT 0 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: Super-Soldier (Immunity 4 (Disease, Heat, Radiation, Poison); Immunity 8 (Aging, Fatigue effects, Sleep, Starvation & Thirst), Limited to Half Effect); Leaping 3 (60 feet); Movement 2 (Sure-footed 2); Senses 8 (Danger Sense (Auditory), Direction Sense, Extended Auditory, Extended Visual, Infravision, Low-light Vision, Tracking (Visual), Ultra-hearing); Speed 5 (60 MPH)

Equipment: Assault rifle (Ranged Multiattack Damage 5), cell phone (smartphone), headquarters (abandoned warehouse), heavy pistol (Ranged Damage 4)

Advantages: All-out Attack, Animal Empathy, Close Attack, Equipment 6, Fearless, Great Endurance, Improved Grab, Improved Initiative, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Languages 2 (Russian, Spanish, Kazakh native), Power Attack, Set-up 2, Takedown, Teamwork

Skills: Athletics 4 (+10), Expertise: Military 8 (+8), Expertise: Tactics 8 (+8), Insight 6 (+8), Perception 6 (+8), Ranged Combat: Firearms 6 (+9), Stealth 5 (+8), Treatment 5 (+5), Vehicles 2 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +7, Heavy Pistol +9 (Ranged, Damage 4), Assault Rifle +9 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 5), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 7, Toughness 7, Will 7

Totals: Abilities 60 + Powers 28 + Advantages 22 + Skills 28 + Defense 9 = 147

Complications: Glory Days: The Horsemen Super-Soldiers were once part of elite units with special training and impressive support. They now live in poverty. This impacted individual Horsemen in different ways, but it impacts them all.

ABANDONED WAREHOUSE HQ • 10 POINTS

Size: Medium • **Toughness:** 8 • **Features:** Communications, Computer, Concealed (+10 DC), Garage, Gym, Living Space, Power System, Security System 1 (DC 20)

teammates, who have opted to be heroes, keeps him on the straight and narrow. Left unsupervised, he is comfortable with acts and methods the others would be unwilling to participate in or allow. Increase STA and FGT to 8, add the Diehard advantage, add Deception 4 (+6), Stealth 8 (+11), Vehicles 4 (+7), and increase Toughness to 8. Zhizn is PL 8. **Complications: Motivation—Survival:** Zhizn takes his name seriously, and will do anything to survive. This includes using dirty tricks in combat, manipulating potential allies, or even secretly amassing money to make survival easier. **Double Agent:** To better his chances of survival, Zhizn feeds information to SHADOW just often enough to keep a door open for defection if circumstances demand it.

THE ARAL SEA

Once a center of commerce and community, the Aral Sea spent the Soviet era as a dumping ground for toxic waste and the irrigation source for all the surrounding fields. As the water levels drained from over-irrigation and rising global temperatures, it left behind a barren wasteland of grounded ships and toxin-laced soils. When the winds rise over these newly-revealed lands, the air fills with poisonous dust.

THE MUTANT MONSTERS OF THE ARAL SEA

Rapid mutation from the various chemicals of the Aral dustbowl have caused horrible mutations in the plants and animals of the region, just as much as they have with the human populations. Some species have died out completely, but others have survived, corrupted by the toxins polluting the area. Gamemasters can use this region as the origin for mutated beasts, twisted monsters, and other strange creatures that are otherwise unknown on Earth-Prime. Examples of such creatures include giant rats, bloodthirsty vines, acid-spewing wild dogs, large flesh-eating bats, or anything else you might want. The corrupting influence could also provide a good excuse to convert some fantasy monsters to *Mutants & Masterminds* for your heroes to face off against.

Rates of cancer from these windborne toxins are higher than average as far away as southern Kyrgyzstan. Most people in the area have lived there for generations, and the land remains their home despite the danger the dust storms pose. Many of the residents in the area are mutated—with horrible birth defects or wondrous superpowers.

Not many superhumans, even locals, can do much with the area. The toxins spread too unpredictably for villains to exploit, and the problem is too huge for even the most dedicated hero. Pozhiratel, who is immune to the toxins and is able to convert them to rich soil, is an exception to this rule, but even he's beginning to feel the strain of taking on such a huge job.

POZHIRATEL

Pozhiratel (Devourer) began life as Pyotr Fouzhein and went to college to become an environmental scientist. His goal was to work for oil companies to make a good living while protecting the wilds of Central Asia. While working as an intern during his last year of graduate school, he became lost in a dust storm on the edge of the Aral Sea. Three days later, he emerged with most of his

skin abraded from his body by the ripping sands. He survived the experience and discovered soon after that he'd gained extraordinary endurance and strange powers from the contaminants that plague the area.

After recovering, Pozhiratel returned to the Aral Sea to personally begin decontaminating it with his powers. When he absorbs the toxins, he gains great strength and can fire strange blasts of energy, both of which fade after a few hours. He has already transformed more than a million cubic feet of dirt and water into safe materials, but is growing frustrated with how quickly local corporations continue to ruin the area. His personality grows darker and more violent with each new toxic "spill," and some have speculated that acting as a filter for so many toxins may be poisoning his mind and spirit.

KYRGYZSTAN

Of all the nations in Central Asia, Kyrgyzstan is the safest and most stable. As the Soviet Union collapsed, Kyrgyzstan was the poorest Soviet Socialist Republic, the one with the fewest resources, and thus suffered the least interference from Russia. Over the intervening decades, new sources of stability emerged, including the alien super-being known as Oculus.

Oculus is a powerful being on par with Bogatyr and the Centurion, but, unlike them, Oculus does not play a role on the world stage. When he arrived on Earth, he fell in love with a Kyrgyzstani woman and joined her family. He has remained in the country even after the death of his wife, and uses his power to maintain order and defeat criminals in his adopted homeland. Despite polite pressure from UNISON and enormous bribe offers from SHADOW, he steadfastly refuses to get involved in the larger concerns of the world.

Super-beings in Kyrgyzstan live in Oculus' shadow. Many try to live up to his example of contributing to their local community as well as to the safety and stability of Kyrgyzstan overall. A few, like Bak, the former national hero of Kyrgyzstan, are jealous of Oculus and work to thwart him in any way they can.

OCULUS

Oculus was born in a distant galaxy, a member of the Elzanni, a race genetically engineered into beings of incredible power and beauty. When he was old enough, Oculus was sent to Earth to find and protect the recently-discovered descendants of a long lost member of his race. When

POZHIRATEL

PL7 • 120 POINTS

STR 6/2* **STA** 9 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 2 **FGT** 5 **INT** 0 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 0

Powers: **Absorb Toxins** (Transform 8 (200 lbs.; Contaminated materials to uncontaminated)); **Resilient Body** (Immunity 15 (Cold, Disease, Heat, Poison, Radiation, Chemical Effects)); **Toxic Strength** (Enhanced Strength 4, Source: Absorb Toxins); **Withering Blast** (Ranged Damage 8, Source: Absorb Toxins)

Advantages: Benefit 3 (Millionaire), Benefit 2 (Hero of the Aral Sea), Diehard, Great Endurance

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+8), Expertise: Chemistry 6 (+6), Expertise: Environmental Science 6 (+6), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 6 (+6), Investigation 5 (+5), Perception 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Withering Blast 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +8, Withering Blast +6 (Ranged, Damage 8), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 6/2*) * Without Toxic Strength.

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 9, Toughness 9, Will 5

Totals: Abilities 44 + Powers 43 + Advantages 7 + Skills 20 + Defense 6 = 120

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** As the only being capable of cleaning the toxins that plague his nation, Pozhiratel is driven to do so. He thinks of nothing else. **Getting Angrier by the Minute:** Pozhiratel is aware that people are still polluting the Aral Sea region at a rate faster than he can clean up. He is beginning to seriously consider more direct action against the polluters, and may begin doing so soon.

OCULUS & BAK HAVE A "CHAT"



his ship was close, he found the subjects of his mission, a Kyrgyzstani family named Dobirov. Even as his ship was destroyed by agents of the Stellar Khanate for passing through their space, Oculus managed to flee in an escape pod. Landing near his charges, Oculus befriended the Dobirovs and shortly thereafter fell in love with Katarina Dobirov, the family's eldest daughter. The pair married but, before the newlyweds could celebrate their first anniversary together, Katarina was accidentally killed in an explosion arranged by corrupt members of the Kyrgyzstani army who feared Oculus and what he was capable of. He now lives in the grip of grief and guilt from that tragedy, but he has adopted the Dobirov family and protecting them is his goal in life, now more than ever. Oculus operates as a hero in the area surrounding the Dobirov family—and given his speed, that includes most of the country—and he's incredibly effective, but due to his depression, he rarely engages with people, even if they're reporters or the people he saves. It might be possible to rouse him from his current, depressive state to truly become a hero to the people, but that hasn't happened yet.

BAK

Bak (Tank) is a native of Kyrgyzstan who served as its national hero until Oculus arrived. Now that he's in Oculus' shadow, he has grown bitter and turned on his country, becoming hateful and dejected, having turned to crime and terrorism to teach his countrymen the error of turning their backs on him. Direct confrontations with Oculus have been almost comically one-sided—and not in Bak's favor—and Bak has turned his attention to finding out if his arch-rival has a weakness he can exploit.

OCULUS

PL12 • 291 POINTS

STR 11 STA 10 AGL 8 DEX 8 FGT 11 INT 8 AWE 10 PRE 6

Powers: **Blinding Speed** (Enhanced Advantage 4 (Improved Initiative 4); Immunity 40 (Attacks resisted by Parry, Subtle 2, Concentration Duration); Quickness 6; Speed 8 (500 MPH)); **Cosmic Senses** (Senses 25 (Accurate Acute Extended 5 Auditory, Darkvision, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Vision Penetrates Concealment, Extended 5 Visual, Ultra-hearing)); **Teleport** (Teleport 8 (1 mile), Accurate, Extended (250 miles))

Advantages: Assessment, Attractive, Eidetic Memory, Evasion 2, Interpose, Languages 3 (Kyrgyz, Uzbek, Russian, Elzanni native), Precise Attack 4 (Close, Ranged; Cover, Concealment), Takedown 2, Uncanny Dodge, Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 4 (+15), Expertise: Astronomy 6 (+14), Expertise: Kyrgyzstani Culture 2 (+10), Insight 6 (+16), Investigation 4 (+12), Perception 6 (+16), Persuasion 4 (+10), Ranged Combat: Throw 3 (+11), Technology 6 (+14), Treatment 2 (+10), Vehicles 2 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +24, Throw +11 (Ranged, Damage 11), Unarmed +11 (Close, Damage 11)

Defense: Dodge 14, Parry Immune, Fortitude 10, Toughness 10, Will 14

Totals: Abilities 144 + Powers 97 + Advantages 17 + Skills 23 + Defense 10 = 291

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** The Dobirov family's well-being is Oculus' driving motivator. Even his contributions to Kyrgyzstan happen only because they benefit the Dobirovs. **Heartbroken:** Oculus is in the grip of a clinical depression from the death of his wife. He rouses rarely, and only long enough to complete a task for the Dobirovs.

Bak uses the Powerhouse archetype (see *Mutants & Masterminds Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**), reduced to PL 9 by dropping all Abilities except INT by 1 and his Enhanced Strength only for lifting by 1 rank.

TAJIKISTAN

The region that is now Tajikistan has been a vassal state pretty much consistently since the Persians invaded in the 5th century BCE. Weakened by every empire since that's put its boot on the country's neck, it remains among the poorest of developed nations. Since gaining independence, continued economic strain has come from internal strife. Revolutions, riots, coups, and unrest are regular occurrences as different ethnic or interest groups make their individual bids for power to the detriment of all the others.

Almost every uprising centers around a moderately super-powered leader. Gifted with special powers, some feel obligated to stand up and serve their people. Those people adopt the powered leader as a symbol to rally around and march forth in an attempt to overthrow the current rulers. Many of the superhumans thrust to the forefront of these revolutions are unwilling victims of the time, while some are opportunistic villains who use their legions of followers to further their own nefarious plans.

VOLKADAV

The most recent troublemaker is Volkodav (Wolfhound), a true believer in the power of the oligarchy. He embraces his powers, which include mind reading and enhanced persuasion, to convince people of the "one true way" to organize a successful country. Though he currently only speaks and writes online about his beliefs, it's only a matter of time before he begins to gather people to his side and make his move. Far from being a super-

VOLKADAV

PL10 • 244 POINTS

STR 1 STA 4 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 2 INT 4 AWE 6 PRE 8

Powers: **Mental Blast** (Ranged Damage 10, Resisted by Will, Accurate 4); **Mind Control** (Burst Area 4 (250 feet) Cumulative Concentration Affliction 5 (Resisted by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled), Insidious, Instant Recovery, Subtle); **Mind's Eye** (Senses 6 (Radius Accurate Acute Detect 2 Mental)); **Telekinesis** (Damaging Move Object 8 (6 tons), Accurate 5); **Tendrils of the Mind** (Communication 3 (Mental); Enhanced Traits 24 (Dodge +10, Parry +10, Defensive Roll 4); Mind Reading 5)

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Attractive 2, Benefit 2 (Rising political star), Connected, Contacts, *Defensive Roll* 4, Fascinate (Persuasion), Languages 3 (English, Persian, Russian, Tajiki native), Leadership, Trance, Well-informed

Skills: Deception 6 (+14), Expertise: Economics 6 (+10), Insight 8 (+14), Intimidation 6 (+14), Perception 4 (+10), Persuasion 8 (+16)

Offense: Initiative +2, Mind Blast +10 (Ranged, Damage 10, Will DC 25), Telekinesis +12 (Ranged, Damage 8), Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 6, Toughness 8/4*, Will 14 * Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 58 + Powers 143 + Advantages 14 + Skills 19 + Defense 10 = 244

Complications: **Motivation—Patriotism:** Volkodav is driven to do right by his country (and himself). He read too much Ayn Rand and is a true believer in unfettered capitalism as the key to a better Tajikistan. **Naïve Idealist:** As a young "true believer," Volkodav is easily swayed by arguments that play to the core beliefs of his ideology, regardless of the reasonableness or factuality of those arguments.

hero, Volkodav is also not quite a villain; he seems to truly believe his rhetoric and might even be a force for good in this long-destabilized region—even if many in the West would disagree wholeheartedly with his methods.

TURKMENISTAN

A realm of blistering deserts and inhospitable mountains, Turkmenistan remains a backwater even by the standards of the region. This is probably why Saparmurat Niyazov managed to rise to dangerous and tragically comical levels of power between 1991 and his death in 2006. His antics as a leader in the country included, but were not limited to, renaming months after his family, rearranging the Turkmen alphabet, and requiring by law that students could only graduate from high school if they could prove they had read a book he wrote.

These sound like the antics of a supervillain with a sense of humor—and they are! The supervillain in this story is the spirit known as Prizrak Smekh (Laughing Ghost), who possessed Niyazov shortly after he came to power and enacted all of the strange and totalitarian edicts for which Niyazov is known. Since Niyazov's death, Prizrak Smekh is loose again and wanders in its ghostly form in search of another suitable host. Prizrak Smekh has considered possessing Oculus in nearby Kyrgyzstan, but is unsure it is powerful enough to control the eccentric paragon.

During the Niyazov regime, native superhumans had to either hide or flee the country, because it was well known that the jealous despot would have any extraordinary beings killed—including normal humans with natural talents that could make them stand out on the world stage. It's been less than a decade since his insanity ceased, and so far only a handful of gifted children have appeared. It will be close to another decade before any of them reach the age to join the adult super-being community.

PRIZRAK SKEKH

Little is known of Prizrak Skekh, and none suspect its existence. It is a powerful supernatural creature: invisible, incorporeal, lacking all physical abilities, and possessing an insane intellect. The ability that most defines Prizrak Skekh is that it can possess and control a living being completely. That effect is at least equal to a Cumulative Continuous Affliction 12 (Resisted by Will; Dazed, Compelled, Controlled), although if someone manages to resist the effect, he or she is immune forever after.

Prizrak Skekh's motivations are a mystery. It appears to enjoy absurdity, chaos, and confusion. Why it has limited its attentions to Turkmenistan is unknown, but it's possible the spirit is tied to the region.

UZBEKISTAN

The Silk Road, an ancient trade route that crossed through Asia, Africa, and Europe, ran through Uzbekistan, leaving cities and trade centers along its route. The ruins of these

cities still dot the landscape, sometimes standing empty and other times serving as anchors for settlements. In the 20th century, the network of roads and cities served as a way to move and bivouac troops, which further established the old routes. In the present-day, oil and gas pipelines have had the same effect on the region.

Millennia after the first travelers crossed her, Uzbekistan still acts as a roadway for goods traveling to and from distant lands. As a result, it's more cosmopolitan than neighboring countries—for all the good and bad that brings. People are more accepting, but crime is rampant. SHADOW has a strong presence here because it's able to use the nation as a hub for communication, travel, espionage, and as a recruiting ground.

Although their agents are throughout the region, SHADOW's largest base in Uzbekistan rests at the edge of the Chechak oil fields. In case the base there is ever discovered, they've set up demolitions to create a controlled explosion so they can use the resulting gas fire to cover their escape. They also maintain a secret communications monitoring base, codenamed Avatar, that analyzes global trends and specifically looks for areas ripe for exploitation.

SHADOW watches the local super-powered population closely and subtly manipulates their early life experiences to make them open to working for radical organizations, such as itself. They are not above murdering families and burning schoolhouses to achieve this goal, and so far this practice has resulted in a significant number of extraordinary beings joining their ranks and the ranks of other terrorist organizations. Those superheroes who hail from Uzbekistan tend to have *unusually* tragic histories.

UNISON suspects a SHADOW presence here, but has not pinpointed its headquarters yet. Delphi, UNISON's agent in the region, has been in country for a year looking for SHADOW. She plays a cat-and-mouse game online and in the physical world using her ability to meld with the country's data infrastructure in an attempt to locate the SHADOW base.

DELPHI

Born Rebecca Coltraine in Silicon Valley in the United States, Delphi's powers first manifested when she was attacked, while talking on her cell phone, by drunken members of a gang one dark night in San Francisco. Instinctively, she teleported through the phone and appeared in the living room of the friend to whom



DELPHI

PL5 · 248 POINTS

STR 0 STA 1 AGL 2 DEX 3 FGT 2 INT 5 AWE 4 PRE 1

Powers: **Data Form** (Alternate Form (Standard Action); Communication 5 (Radio, Anywhere on Earth); Comprehend 12 (Machines/Electronics, 10 extra ranks); Immunity 13 (Aging, Critical Hits, Life Support); Insubstantial 3 (Energy); Remote Sensing 7, Subtle, Medium: Electrical Sensors (Visual and Auditory; Half-mile range); Senses 22, Source: Electrical Sensors (Analytical Auditory, Analytical Visual, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Extended Auditory 3, Extended Visual 3, Infravision, Low-light Vision, Microscopic Vision 4, Radio, Time Sense, Ultra-hearing, Ultravision); Teleport 12 (16 miles), Accurate, Extended (4,000 miles), Medium: Communications (Systems)

Equipment: Cell phone x2 (smartphones), computer, flashlight, GPS receiver, light pistol (Ranged Damage 3), mini-tracers x5, multi-tool, taser (Ranged Affliction 5 (Resisted by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated)), toolkit, undercover shirt (Protection 2, subtle)

Advantages: Benefit 2 (2 alternate identities), Benefit 3 (Cipher), Benefit (Diplomatic Immunity), Benefit 3 (Security Clearance), Benefit 3 (Government secret agent), Benefit (Well-off), Connected, Contacts, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 7, Languages 4 (Arabic, German, Hebrew, Russian, Uzbek, English native), Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery (Expertise: Computer Hacker), Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 5 (+5), Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+5), Deception 7 (+8), Expertise: The Internet 7 (+12), Expertise: Computer Hacking 10 (+15), Expertise: Trecraft 5 (+10), Insight 6 (+10), Investigation 5 (+10), Perception 4 (+8), Persuasion 7 (+8), Ranged Combat: Firearms 4 (+7), Sleight of Hand 5 (+8), Stealth 6 (+8), Technology 7 (+12), Vehicles 5 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +2, Light Pistol +7 (Ranged, Damage 3), Taser +3 (Ranged, Affliction 5, Fort. DC 15), Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 4, Toughness 3, Will 6

Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 128 + Advantages 30 + Skills 43 + Defense 11 = 248

Complications: Motivation—Challenge Accepted: Delphi took her current assignment because it looked hard. She is motivated most by what is most difficult to accomplish. **Undercover Peril:** SHADOW knows there is a UNISON agent in Uzbekistan, and hunts her actively. Were they to identify Delphi, her life would rapidly become uncomfortably interesting.

DELPHI

she'd been talking. UNISON discovered her while she was trying to hack into their mainframes just before her 17th birthday. Rather than put her in prison, they recognized her potential and recruited her.

Delphi's mission in Uzbekistan is her fourth deep cover assignment with UNISON, which she accepted because of the challenge. She maintains a cover identity as a freelance data analyst working with oil and gas concerns, and spends her free time traveling the data lanes of the region looking for a hub large enough to be SHADOW's listening post.

EAST ASIA

East Asia is a sweeping expanse of varied terrain stretching from the southern borders of Russia to the islands just north of Australia, home to one-third of the world's population. Its tumultuous history of conquest and colonization left it with political boundaries bearing little resemblance to the cultures inhabiting the land. It's among the most diverse and divided areas in the world, and its super-beings reflect this.

THE TRIPLE-EDGED SWORD

For the past half-century, most supers from East Asia have their origins in one of three sources. In the north, industrial and military pollution—including radiation from Japan and Russia—has mutated people. Within China, an artifact called “the Shard” is used by the government to reshape and control the super-powered landscape. Further south, the ruins of lost civilizations, not all of them human, grant magical and alien powers to a fortunate and unfortunate few.

Just as three factors provide the source of many of East Asia's super powers, three cultural anchors pull on the people of every country in the region. At the center is China, whose ancient culture and immense emigrating population influence mundane and super populations at every level of society. Religion—mainly Buddhist, Hindu, and Muslim—also affects daily life even in the nominally atheist China. Finally, Western culture is present everywhere in the form of colonial buildings, ads for Coca-Cola and popular entertainment. These three influences blend throughout the area in interesting, sometimes explosive, ways.



Despite these similarities, this vast region can be subdivided into three areas. The Old Guard, including China, Japan, Korea, Mongolia, and the Philippines, is the most economically advanced. Southeast Asia is less wealthy but growing quickly as a hub for tourism and manufacturing, and includes Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. Furthest south is Asian Oceania, a string of nations that includes Indonesia, Malaysia, Brunei, Papua New Guinea, Singapore, and Timor-Leste.

THE OLD GUARD

Most of these nations were stable and established when East met West in the 16th century. Where other East Asian nations were colonized, these were dealt with as (unequal) trading partners. For this reason, the northernmost countries of East Asia have a stronger and longer sense of national identity, even after interactions with the West did much to compromise it.

CHINA

China is an ancient land of millennia-old traditions, languages, and identity, with myths and legends suggesting it had many super-beings throughout its history. Tales of the *wuxia* clans, of enchanted items, and of the Eight Taoist Immortals all have the feel of modern superhumans. It's clear the Middle Kingdom produced at least its share of exceptional individuals over the centuries.

China, however, has been lacking its share of super-beings since at least the 1960s. Only the elite of the Central Commission know why, though a few individuals outside of China suspect something close to the truth. Rumors claim the nation is executing super-beings to support the Party line that all Chinese are born equal,

THE RISING TIDE

After what can only be called troubled times during the 19th and 20th centuries, most of East Asia is experiencing a surge of economic prosperity and political reform accompanied by a sense of potential and of *becoming*. From China's slow rise to become the next global superpower to the massive technological and manufacturing booms in Malaysia and Singapore, things are looking up for this once underachieving region.

Superheroes and supervillains alike in East Asia reflect this feeling. Patriotic crusaders stand for their nation's identity rather than mimicking the supers of the West, while plotting masterminds work to usurp the wealth and influence of Europe and North America. As the balances of the world stage shift toward the Eastern Hemisphere, it's possible these nations will be the center of the next age of super-heroism.

and to prevent cults of personality that seem to spring up around successful super-beings from compromising loyalty to the government. The truth is even more bizarre.

THE CENTRAL POWER COLLECTIVE

The Central Power Collective (or the Collective) is an independent organization that grew out of a conspiracy within the Central Military Committee, and operates without oversight so as to not be influenced by the government. The Collective has a nearly unlimited budget acquired by hiding costs within other projects and uses it to monitor the population for super-beings. When it finds one, Collective forces bring that person to their headquarters in Shanghai where he or she is subjected to an alien artifact known as “*gai Sui-piàn*”, or “the Shard”.

The Shard was discovered in the mass confiscations of art and artifacts during the Cultural Revolution. Found in the basement of a library, it was barely rescued from the burning which awaited the rest of the library’s collection. It is a jagged piece of unidentified metal about three-and-a-half feet long, blue, and cold as ice, but lacking any sort of obvious power source. It glows faintly when touched.

Its origins are a mystery even to those who know how to wield it, which is restricted to a small number of handlers who have been chosen for their loyalty and disciplined nature. Contact with the Shard is limited to these few handlers on penalty of death. Each handler attunes him or herself to the Shard the first time they touch it. Afterwards they are able to activate the Shard as long as they are in physical contact with it.

When brought into contact with a super-powered being and activated, the Shard drains those super powers in a process a Collective Director dubbed “flatlining.” The victim is rendered mundane, able to return to life as a normal member of Chinese society. The Shard also absorbs the former superhuman’s memories of their powers, which keeps the existence of the Shard secret, but has resulted in a number of very confused ex-superhumans—some of whom may be looking for answers to the holes in their memories.

The Shard can, when directed by a handler, grant anyone any of the powers it has drained. The subject can use that power until it is revoked by a handler, which can happen even if the subject isn’t in contact with the Shard. There is apparently no upper limit to the number of powers the Shard can absorb or grant, but a single person can be given a maximum of six powers at any one time (without exploding messily within 60 seconds).

Members of the Collective and (the very small number of) others who know of the Shard’s existence may petition in writing, with a series of follow-up interviews, to receive a power for a few days or up to a year at a time if the need is determined to be worthwhile and important to the well being of the country—political pressure or bribes can speed this process or corrupt it. Typically these agents keep their power long enough to accomplish a mission, then return to normal life with the thanks of the Collective. Agents assigned to specific missions are usually well-



THE CHINA THAT IS NOT CHINA

Several areas of East Asia are ethnically Chinese, but politically separate for one reason or another. Largely, they follow China's lead and remain subject to the influence of the Central Power Collective, but each has its own flavor.

HONG KONG

Hong Kong is the most Western-influenced of all Chinese territories, despite having been officially part of China since 1997. Super-beings flourished in the metropolis until 2000, when the Collective covertly cracked down on them.

MACAU

Macau, the Monaco of East Asia, is a gambling destination controlled by Triads. The Collective's reach is strong here, but some vigilantes without enough power for the Collective to be concerned with manage to escape its attention and fight the crime syndicates in this independent city's casinos and alleys.

TAIWAN

Taiwan has a strange status as an independent nation unrecognized by China, which insists it is still part of the mother country. The Collective's agents are present, but not as powerful as on the mainland. Thus, Taiwan has the largest population of superhumans in the entire region.

PALAWAN ISLANDS

The Palawan Islands are a tiny chain in the Pacific with multiple nations claiming them, but none maintaining a strong presence. They form the western border of the Sulu Sea, and are plagued by piracy. The tiny population has no known native superheroes, but may have contributed a super-powered villain or three to the pirates' forces.

TIBET

Tibet is politically Chinese, but ethnically and religiously separate from China. This mountain nation has a long history of arcane beings, and others with alien origins. A clandestine network helps to facilitate the movement of native Tibetan superhumans and those who come through from China, moving them across the Himalayas into Nepal or Bhutan to avoid their capture by the Collective. The Yeti is a member of this "overhill railroad," a hulking bruiser who keeps Chinese forces at bay while the younger, weaker super-beings make their escape.

trained and may have been given powers by the Shard multiple times in the past.

Although some superhumans have their own powers and operate independently of the Collective, they must always be on guard against them. Due to the Collective's influence, no independent supers stand out in China. It is, for the most part, a nation of equals, though some—from time to time when the need and interests of the Collective dictate—become temporarily more equal than others.

Powers that have been absorbed by the Shard and often lent to approved agents include a wide range of abilities, some of which are a single power with no other special abilities, while others are suites of powers that fit within a given concept. There are a number of powers, such as telepathy, mind control, and other mental effects, that are almost never granted to agents. Because the Shard has absorbed powers from many people, it has access to a wide variety of abilities, but it's the simple, straightforward powers that are requested and granted most often. Examples of typical powers given to agents are presented here:

Aquatic Adaptation (Aquatic) (Enhanced Abilities 8 (Stamina 4, Strength 4), Immunity 3 (Cold, Drowning, Pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Protection 2, Senses 1 (Low-light Vision); **Dolphin Leap** (Leaping 4 (120 feet), Limited to Leaping from Water); **Swimming** (Swimming 8 (120 MPH)))

Force Ram (Ranged Damage 10, Accurate 2, **AE:** Line Area Damage 10)

Force Field (Sustained Impervious Protection 10, Subtle, **AE:** **Force Wall** (Create 6, Impervious, Subtle))

Ghost Form (Insubstantial 4 (Incorporeal), Precise, Linked to Flight 1 (4 MPH))

Flaming Form (Fire Blast) (Ranged Damage 8, Secondary Effect); **Flame Aura** (Reaction Damage 4, Linked to Environment 1 (30 ft.; Bright Light) and Protection 5); **Heat/Cold Resistance** (Immunity 2 (Cold, Heat))

Inhuman Recovery (Regeneration 5 (Every other round), Persistent)

Invisibility (Concealment 4 (All Visual Senses))

Rotting Touch (Weaken Toughness 8, Affects Objects, Secondary Effect, Linked to Damage 8, Secondary Effect)

Shapeshifting (Morph 2 (Humanoid forms), Linked to Mimic Voices (Feature 1), Linked to **Armored Body** (Protection 4, Visible), **Natural Weapons** (Strength-based Damage 2))

Sub-sonic Flight (Flight 8 (500 MPH))

Super-Senses (Accurate Extended 2 Auditory, Danger Sense, Infravision, Tracking (Infravision), Ultra-hearing)

Super-Speed (Enhanced Advantages 6 (Defensive Roll 4, Improved Initiative 6), Enhanced Traits 14 (Dodge 7, Parry 7), Multiattack Damage 3, Quickness 6, Speed 8 (500 MPH))

Super-Strength (Enhanced Stamina 7, Enhanced Strength 7, Leaping 5 (250 feet))

Teleportal (Teleport 6 (1,800 feet), Accurate, Portal)

It doesn't happen every time, but a number of people who've been given powers by way of the Shard have reported remembering things they'd never experienced. In some cases this has allowed them to use their powers more efficiently, while in others it has caused disorienting flashbacks. Whenever someone is granted powers by the Shard, they may gain the following complication:

Complication: Implanted Memories: The character gained great powers, but also gained memories which may prove to be distracting, contradictory, or even debilitating. These new memories usually activate when in similar situations to the original memory or when under stress.

YETI

PLT1 - 176 POINTS

STR 12 STA 12 AGL 5 DEX 0 FGT 7 INT 0 AWE 6 PRE 3

Powers: **Beast of Himalaya** (Burrowing 3 (0.5 MPH), Limited: Through snow/ice; Growth 3, Innate, Permanent; Immunity 10 (Cold effects); Impervious Toughness 8; Leaping 6 (500 feet); Regeneration 2 (Every five rounds); Speed 3 (16 MPH)); **Snow Stalker** (Concealment 4 (All Visual), Blending, Limited: Only in snow/ice, Passive; Movement 4 (Environmental Adaptation (Snow/Ice), Sure-footed 2, Wall-crawling), Senses 6 (Acute Olfactory, Extended Olfactory 3, Low-light Vision, Tracking (Olfactory))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Animal Empathy, Diehard, Favored Environment (Snow/ice covered), Great Endurance, Language (Mandarin, Tibetan native), Takedown 2, Ultimate Effort (Toughness check)

Skills: Athletics 4 (+16), Expertise: Himalaya 8 (+8), Intimidation 4 (+8), Perception 6 (+12), Ranged Combat: Throwing 8 (+8), Stealth 11 (+13)

Offense: Initiative +5, Throwing +8 (Ranged, Damage 12), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 12)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 12, Toughness 12, Will 9 Stats include modifications for Growth.

Totals: Abilities 78 + Powers 54 + Advantages 9 + Skills 22 + Defense 13 = 176

Complications: Motivation—Freedom

Fighter: Yeti has taken on the duty of protecting superhumans and other refugees fleeing occupied Tibet and gladly risks his life to fulfill it. **Enemy:** Duiyu Lieren hunts escaped superhumans in Bhutan and has made the Yeti his personal favorite quarry. (Duiyu Lieren appears in **South Asia** in the Bhutan entry.) **Not a Coward!:** Because of mistakes in his past, Yeti cannot engage in any act he would consider cowardly.



YETI

YETI

Yeti may be the last of his kind, the first of a new species, or an alien. He remembers nothing of his origin except for being found and cared for by the monks at a temple high up the slopes of K2, the second highest mountain in the world. Yeti stands nine feet tall with a 600-pound body covered in mottled white fur.

When the Chinese came to Tibet in force, Yeti fled the noise of battle and is forever haunted by the deaths he failed to prevent. Since then, he has waged a one-creature guerilla war on the Chinese occupational forces in Tibet.

He was recently contacted by some of the monks who cared for him. They told him how super-beings like Yeti were being hunted in China and urged him to help some escape. Yeti has guided several groups through mountain paths known only to him. He enjoys the fact that his rescue work also gives him the opportunity to fight Chinese troops. He continues to provide safe passage for super-beings looking to escape China. He spends his off hours exploring the Himalayas in search of clues to his identity or signs of others like him.

JAPAN

Japan has more superhumans than anywhere else in Asia, and someone walking around in Tokyo might think there are even more there than in the United States. This is in part because of Japan's unique nuclear history; the bombings that ended World War II are responsible for the birth of a high proportion of paranormals due to either direct exposure to radiation or because members of their family were exposed. In addition, the Japanese *idoru* culture, a trend of following celebrities with an almost religious, fanatic zeal, makes superhumans media darlings, so they seem to be everywhere. Superheroes who are "big in Japan" are omnipresent, with their faces on billboards and t-shirts, their symbols on everything from bumper stickers to underwear, and thick crowds of identically-dressed teens waiting at the airport every time they arrive.

Japan is also home to one of the largest populations of gadget-using heroes and villains in Asia, owing to the na-

tion's technological hegemony during the 20th century and cultural affinity for weird science. The nation also breeds a specialized super unique to the Land of the Rising Sun: the Fan Vigilante. These are usually lower-powered (PL 4 to 6) heroes who train and dress to imitate the actions of "real" superheroes they admire. Many of these vigilantes meet tragic ends, but a few learn and grow until they are true non-powered heroes in their own right ... with their own adoring fan base.

THE YAKUZA

Japan's infamous underground crime syndicate has holdings and interests throughout the nation's industry and government, with most of their income derived from legitimate interests bought with money from their illegal activities.

In recent years, UNISON has noticed the Yakuza are recruiting young people with powers. Their targets aren't the splashy powerhouses and fighting types favored by gangsters in Europe and America. Instead, the Yakuza recruits those with subtle powers like computer control, telepathy, and telekinesis. They don't want people who can wreck a building, but rather talents who can read thumb drives or decrypt financial records with the power of the mind.

So far, the Yakuza has yet to (visibly) deploy any of their new recruits. UNISON is observing the situation closely, and preparing for the crisis it might create. If necessary, they may have to respond with powered agents of their own, such as Delphi (see **Central Asia**).

THE SPRINTER

Miwako Mizumi earned a small degree of celebrity in her teenage years as the world *kendo* champion across all age brackets. In college, she moved from *kendo* to *aikido*—an unarmed style which stresses nonviolence. During those years, she also became part of the superhero fan culture

THE SPRINTER

PL6 • 98 POINTS

STR 2 STA 3 AGL 4 DEX 3 FGT 4 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Blurring Attack** (Selective Multiattack on Strength 2, Counts as unarmed); **Super-Sprinting** (Speed 4 (30 MPH))

Advantages: Close Attack 4, Evasion, Improved Initiative 2, Move-by Action

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+10), Athletics 6 (+8), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+6), Expertise: Tokyo 7 (+8), Insight 3 (+5), Investigation 4 (+5), Perception 3 (+5), Persuasion 3 (+5), Sleight of Hand 4 (+7), Stealth 4 (+8), Treatment 4 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +12, Blurring Attack +10 (Close, Selective Multiattack Damage 2), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 9, Parry 9, Fortitude 5, Toughness 3, Will 6

Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 9 + Advantages 8 + Skills 23 + Defense 16 = 98

Complications: **Motivation—Fandom:** The Sprinter got into the superhero business to be like her speedster idol Crimson Comet, and guides her actions according to what she thinks her hero might do. **Code of Honor:** Sprinter is an Aikido student, and does not kill under any circumstances.

of Tokyo and especially admired the British speedster Crimson Comet. While getting her Ph.D. in neuropsychology, she volunteered for an experimental performance-enhancing surgery that resulted in her gaining exceptional—if barely superhuman—running speed. When she realized she could pair this with her martial arts training, she decided to fight crime and become a hero like her idol. A smart and skilled fighter, she has survived a few years on the streets and begun to accumulate a fan following of her own.

Tokyo is not known to be teeming with street crime, so Sprinter spends much of her time stopping fights and helping drunks stagger home safely. She has recently begun investigating the Yakuza, however, so her life is more interesting and dangerous than ever before.

KAIJU ISLAND

Among the Kuril Islands between Japan and Russia's Kamchatka Peninsula lies a barren stretch of mountainous land shrouded in fog about the size of Long Island. Enormous, brutal *things* rule this place: the kaiju. UNISON has been aware of the island since 1976, but expeditions mounted to clear it of these living natural catastrophes have always failed to eradicate them.

In 1983, an international task force began researching the option of nuking Kaiju Island, but the feasibility study team discovered something that both stopped the plan and gave them valuable insight into the island's nature. Kaiju Island is a thin space between Earth-Prime and another world or dimension.

No matter how many kaiju are killed, and how many superhumans perish in the fight, new kaiju always appear through the gateway to their dimension. Because of this, UNISON has opted to sit back and observe rather than "deal with" the island. They keep a team ready at all times to intercept any kaiju wandering toward a population center, but don't mount attacks on the island anymore. The risks simply outweigh the rewards.

ADVENTURES TO THE ISLAND

Even with UNISON keeping their hands off Kaiju Island, superhumans in the know occasionally visit. Gadgeteers and sorcerers investigate the thin space in search of arcane or technological secrets. Thrill-seekers visit for the challenge of facing off with one of these behemoths, and in the past year alone, UNISON has chased away two film crews seeking to record kaiju fighting one another.

Anybody visiting the island notices the gravity is different than normal (it's about 0.75G) at the shoreline and continuing across the entire island. The effect of this is unnerving, and anyone who isn't used to it suffers a -2 to all checks for the first 24 hours on the island.

The thin space linking the island to the kaiju dimension is not a single position, but rather a general effect spanning the entire land mass. The island appears to be beautiful, but at any moment a kaiju might drift into existence

YIN AND YANG

For the past five years, somebody has been posting videos online of a pair of young men—one dressed all in black, the other all in white—crossing the DMZ from South to North Korea and posing on buildings and public monuments there. Some forays are a few hours long, but one series made in 2013 shows them moving through the nation for more than a month.

Little is known of the duo, who bill themselves as “Yin” and “Yang,” except that one appears to be a speedster and the other a gadgeteer. Their goals, identities, and level of power remain a mystery, but they are actively sought by North Korean forces.

and start wandering the island, exploring, looking for a mate, or hunting. The extradimensional rift leading from the island to wherever the kaiju come from is weaker, but anybody wandering the island runs the risk of being pulled out of this reality. There is no record of anyone lost in this way ever returning.

KOREA

The independent nation of Korea dates back more than two thousand years to the Silla dynasties, but its more recent history has been overshadowed by China, Japan, the Soviet Union, and the United States. Since the close of the Korean War in 1953, this influence of the other nations and the division of the country has only grown more pronounced.

NORTH KOREA

As with so many other aspects of this mysterious and isolated nation, the status of superhumans in North Korea is dark and grim. No known supers hail from North Korea. Rumors suggest the ruling family captures supers early to prevent the rise of a star who could threaten the regime. Optimists suggest they are indoctrinated to act as (thoroughly brainwashed) covert super-agents for the State. Pessimists suspect their fate is much grimmer.

SOUTH KOREA

South Korea has few superhumans, and most of them are working with the military or in government. Some in the know speculate China subjects them to the Shard (see previously), either with or without the permission of the Korean national government.

Despite the long-standing history of antagonism between the two nations, the most visible of South Korea's super-heroes have an active and enthusiastic following in Japan.

MONGOLIA

Once upon a time, Mongolia ruled the largest empire in the history of the world. Today, it's an economic and cultural backwater stuck between Russia and China. Like an older sibling who lets the younger children of the family fight, Mongolia remains serene at the eye of the storm. It's an older, quieter power in many ways like Great Britain: a people who have enjoyed their time in the sun and are content to leave the heavy lifting to newer nations.

People rarely hear about Mongolian super-beings, but not hearing about them doesn't mean they don't exist. Most live quiet lives aiding their communities as best they can. Like their nation and people as a whole, they leave the rest of the world to the rest of the world and simply tend to their homes.

THE PHILIPPINES

Of all the nations of East Asia that suffered multiple invasions, none have come near experiencing the brutal history of the Philippines. After trading imperial hands for half a century, the people are ethnically Asian, religiously Catholic, and speak languages that include Spanish, English, Filipino, or (mainly) Tagalog. Through it all, they have maintained both an identity as a nation and the individual identities of over 120 indigenous tribes that occupy the 7,000 islands of this Pacific nation.

Super-powered Filipinos are as diverse as the country's population, ranging from mutants who live in the jungles of remote islands to gadgeteers in Manila who work with advanced science and technology. Some go on to global success and fame, while others labor quietly, protecting the people who raised them and the country they call home.

Life in the Philippines is largely defined by conflict. Conflict between cultural ideals, between the past and the present, between different tribes, and between ordinary citizens and the threats posed by crime and poverty—not to mention the difficulties of dealing with the inconsistencies of the local power grid. Both heroes and villains from this nation are tough, being survivors who fought to make it through their childhoods and lived to fight on as adults.

Makamulto Tabak (Ghostly Blade) is a well-known hero in the Philippines. He's a vigilante trained in the national sport and martial art of the country, *arnis*, also known as *escrima*. He uses an enchanted blade handed down from one worthy carrier to the next. In addition to being a weapon, the sword grants the wielder the ability to become ghostlike, which he uses to avoid and set himself up to make attacks. He is mostly concerned with taking care of street crime in the Philippines, but often steps in to deal with super-criminals and supernatural events that threaten his country. Makamulto Tabak is highly trained, physically fit, and a master of his art. Makamulto Tabak is a PL 8 martial artist with Insubstantial 4 (Incorporeal; Subtle) granted by his blade.

THE TERROR OF THE DEEP

One of the most popular theories at UNISON says the pirates of the Sulu Sea are being kept active to disrupt shipping and exploration in the Sulu Sea because there's something important at the bottom of it. Ideas as to what it might be range from Atlantean technologies, to a crashed spaceship, or some eldritch horror from beyond space and time. A subgenre of these theories deals with the relationship between the pirates and whatever is on the ocean floor. Do the pirates do what they do to obscure recovery efforts by some supervillain? Or is a benevolent hand using them to keep the curious away and prevent the discovery of something dangerous?

PIRATES OF THE SULU SEA

By far the largest conflict in the modern Philippines is between the forces of law and the pirates of the Sulu Sea. More than 100 different groups of oceangoing bandits prey on shipping and travelers in the waters between the Southwest Philippines and the tip of East Indonesia. Some pirate crews are politically motivated. Some are religious extremists. Others are just criminals out to make a buck.

One pirate crew, operating with a fleet of six captured vessels, including a Malaysian coast guard cutter, is led by Ojos Rojos (Red Eye), a speedster who uses his water-running and wall-running abilities to board a target ship while its crew is focusing on the pirate vessels under his command. Once aboard, he uses his speed to overwhelm security before his men even fire a shot. Ojos Rojos wears regular clothing to make it easier for him to enter a ship undiscovered.

OJOS ROJOS

PL8 • 127 POINTS

STR 2 **STA** 1 **AGL** 4 **DEX** 3 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 0 **PRE** 2

Powers: **Fast Attack** (Strength-based Multiattack Damage 3, Selective on 5 Damage (includes STR), **AE:** Strength-based Damage 3, Burst Area and Selective on 5 Damage (includes STR)); **Fast Defense** (Enhanced Dodge 8, Enhanced Parry 8); **Run on Water** (Movement 1 (Water Walking), Limited to while moving); **Run Up Walls** (Movement 2 (Wall-crawling 2), Limited to while moving); **Super-Speed** (Enhanced Initiative 3, Quickness 6, Speed 9 (1,000 MPH))

Advantages: Defensive Roll 3, *Improved Initiative* 3, Instant Up, Move-By Action

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+8), Athletics 8 (+10), Close Combat: Unarmed 6 (+10), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Pirate Leader 6 (+6), Perception 8 (+8), Ranged Combat: Throw 6 (+9), Stealth 4 (+8), Vehicles 4 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +16, Fast Attack +10 (Close, Multiattack Damage 5, or Burst Area Damage 5), Throw +9 (Ranged, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 8, Toughness 4/1*, Will 8 *Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 32 + Powers 49 + Advantages 5 + Skills 26 + Defense 15 = 127

Complications: **Motivation—Greed:** Ojos Rojos is motivated by money, pleasure, and power. **Enemy:** Marine security forces and the militaries of multiple nations are after Ojos Rojos and his band of pirates. **Bloodthirsty:** Ojos Rojos is a dangerous man, willing to do anything to stay in power and make people fear him.

Unlike the pirates of the Somali coast, the Sulu Sea pirates are highly organized, well-equipped, and accompanied by a handful of low-to-middle-powered super-criminals. To those watching, it's obvious someone very smart and motivated is funding and supporting these brutal outlaws. UNISON has no leads as to who, or to what end, so theories are all they have at the moment.

SOUTHEAST ASIA

A region of archaeological, cultural and political ruins, Southeast Asia has long been one of the hottest hotspots for trouble on the planet. Despite this, there is an optimism throughout the region which breeds some of the most altruistic and courageous heroes on the planet.

THE BROKEN TRIANGLE

Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam share neither language nor a unifying political identity, but all have common roots in the Khmer civilization. Perhaps more importantly, they share a common history of hardship in the recent past. For the last century, the rise of petty, even villainous, rulers has stalled socioeconomic progress in each of these jungle nations.

War tore Vietnam apart from within for two decades, and rulership by a Communist regime stifled growth and free thought for another thirty. In Cambodia, the mass-murdering Pol Pot presided over a reign of terror that stands as a low point even among the works of the most depraved villains. In 1945, a Communist government installed in Laos executed or imprisoned, for "reeducation," tens of thousands. The nation of Myanmar (formerly Burma) has only recently relaxed strict and vicious social constraints on its populace.

This series of overbearing governments and conflicts has left the area struggling, unable to make the progress other regions in East Asia have enjoyed. Governments remain unstable. Drugs and corruption are rampant. Life is difficult, but a few superheroes have emerged to fight for a better tomorrow.

THE SUPREME TEAM

A loose confederation of heroes from Myanmar (Burma), Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, they operate alone or in pairs, fighting local crime and rescuing individuals from the hardships of life in the region. A few times each year, they coordinate their efforts to take down a drug cartel, bandit army, or corrupt official. Rumors they are behind the recent changes in Myanmar haven't been confirmed.

Membership in the Supreme Team is informal, with individual heroes joining and leaving all the time. A few of the more prominent members include the following.

STALKING PANTHER

The Stalking Panther is a former guerilla fighter from Laos who stalks the jungles in a black-and-green costume.



THE SUPREME TEAM IN ACTION

The Stalking Panther uses the Warrior archetype (see *Mutants & Masterminds Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**) with these traits: Leaping 3 (60 feet), Senses 4 (Danger Sense, Infravision, Tracking (Infravision)), Speed 3 (16 MPH), Favored Environment (Jungle), Improved Critical (Unarmed), Language (Vietnamese, Laotian native), Skill Mastery (Stealth), but is reduced to PL 8 by reducing STR, STA, AGL, FGT, and Will by 2 each.

KHMER BLANC

Khmer Blanc wears a shining white battlesuit she found when the floor of a ruined temple collapsed beneath her. With her new powers, she works in Laos and Cambodia to stop the drug trafficking in and through those countries. Khmer Blanc uses the Battlesuit archetype (see *Mutants & Masterminds Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**) with the Force Beams changed out for Auto-blasters (Ranged Multiattack Damage 8).

BRICKBAT

Brickbat named himself after the truncheons used by riot police in Laos where he was arrested and subjected to experiments intended to make him a loyal soldier of the state. He is obsessed with rooting out governmental corruption throughout the region. Use the Powerhouse archetype (see *Mutants & Masterminds Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**) reduced to PL 8 by reducing STR and STA to 8 each, reducing his Shockwave and Groundstrike to 8 ranks, his Leaping to 6 ranks, and reducing his Fortitude and Toughness to 10 each.

THE SHADOW FROM THE PAST

Human failings are not the only factor keeping the Broken Triangle in its depressed state. The ruins of Angkor Wat, Bagan, and Ayutthaya are human shrines built atop remnants of one of the ancient kingdoms of the Serpent People. Though this evil race of ophidian humanoids was long past its prime when humanity rose to prominence in the region, the Serpents' influence lingers. A few surviving degenerate clans lurk in the jungles and cities, subtly resisting the progress and urbanization that drove their kind from their position as rulers of early humans. They are a constant menace, but never come into the light, so not even the most informed government or superhero knows they actually exist or of what they're capable.

Occasionally, ancient Serpent People technology or DNA finds its way into the human population. Of the supers in the Broken Triangle, many owe their powers to incredible technologies or alien blood in their veins. Others are magicians who have successfully combed the ruins for knowledge mankind has forgotten or never knew in the first place.

THE OPHIDIAN MAGUS

When Chadley Smythe-Livingston was "shovel-bumming" as an undergraduate in archaeology, he discovered a scroll that would change his life. It included a handful of simple incantations and clues to stores of other magical knowledge throughout Southeast Asia, India, and some Pacific islands. This began his obsession with finding

THE OPHIDIAN MAGUS

PL10 • 161 POINTS

STR 0 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 2 FGT 3 INT 9 AWE 6 PRE 5

Powers: **Master of the Arcane** (Array; **Venom Blast** (Ranged Damage 10, Accurate, Secondary Effect 5), **AE: Coils of the Serpent** (Ranged Affliction 12 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Hindered and Impaired, Defenseless and Immobile), Extra Condition, Limited Degree)); **Serpent Tainted** (Immunity (Poison), Regeneration 1 (Every 10 rounds), Senses 4 (Darkvision, Detect 2 (Magic))); **Shalithars' Mantle** (Removable; Protection 6 and Impervious Protection 4, Stacks with Protection 6, Unreliable (Die roll 11+))

Advantages: Benefit 10 (Readied Rituals*), Fearless, Ritualist, Skill Mastery (Expertise: Magic), Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 5 (+5), Deception 7 (+12), Expertise: Archaeology 6 (+15), Expertise: Magic 6 (+15), Insight 6 (+12), Intimidation 3 (+8), Investigation 3 (+12), Perception 4 (+10), Persuasion 6 (+11), Ranged Combat: Master of the Arcane 6 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +1, Coils of the Serpent +8 (Ranged, Affliction 12, Will DC 22), Venom Blast +10 (Ranged, Damage 10, Secondary Effect 5), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 8, Toughness 8/12**, Will 12 ** 4 Toughness is Unreliable, only works on a roll of 11 or higher each attack.

Totals: Abilities 56 + Powers 41 + Advantages 14 + Skills 26 + Defense 24 = 161

Complications: Motivation—

Master the Arcane: The Ophidian Magus' life goal is to accumulate as much arcane knowledge as possible.

Identity: The Ophidian Magus maintains an alter ego as Professor Chadley Smythe-Livingston and has a full-time job as a professor.

* **Readied Rituals** are in *Gadget Guides*. Rituals the Ophidian Magus might have prepared include Banishment, Cure, Curse, Dispel Magic, Guise, Scrying, Sending, Veil, and others that seem appropriate.

these places, which saw him through a Ph.D. and professorial career while spending his off time seeking and mastering arcane knowledge as the Ophidian Magus.

Ophidian Magus wears Shalithars' Mantle, a magical cape and cowl he found in his travels made from an enormous serpent. He is absolutely immoral and cares only about his quest for magical knowledge. He knows no loyalty to those who can't directly assist his efforts, and it's possible for him to be an ally one week and an adversary the next.

THAILAND

Though it has shared many of the same horrors as the rest of the countries of Southeast Asia, Thailand has long maintained an independent identity through a combination of strategic alliances and a deep connection to its state religion and royal family. Despite one coup after another looking to secure control of the country's worldly resources, the Buddhist monarchy has endured and kept its place. Thailand remains the Land of Smiles, the Land of the Buddha, the Land of the Ghosts.

Almost everyone in Thailand believes in ghosts. It's an enduring aspect of their culture that combines popular beliefs with stories about the ghosts from local folklore. Ghosts may not be encountered every day, but locals never go long without seeing signs of them. In fact, ghosts are listed as a common cause of auto accidents on police reports, and even cynical Westerners report encounters with spirits in the night. Some Thai paranormals claim to

host spirits that grant them their powers. Some may even be right.

One such superhero is Maemd Hiw (pronounced MAYehm-awd Hiew, literally translated as The Hungry Witch), a being who can pass through walls and freeze people with her gaze. She works against organized crime in Bangkok, especially those involved in trafficking children. Some have said she is too quick to judge and execute those she finds guilty, but she has never responded to these questions or accusations ... she just moves on to her next target.

MAEMD HIW

The spirit known as Maemd Hiw used to live life as a teen-aged girl, but she was murdered by human traffickers and her soul remained on Earth-Prime. Now she wanders Bangkok searching out traffickers as her victims. When she finds them, she freezes them with supernatural cold and leaves them frozen, terrified, or dead.



THE OPHIDIAN MAGUS

She hunts Bangkok at night, passing through walls and lurking invisibly until she spots her targets. Those who follow her work, including Detective Somkid Aromdee, have noticed she becomes less discriminating with each passing season. At first her victims were upper-echelon crime bosses caught in the act of buying and selling people, but she now hunts street-level pimps and even their customers. Whether this is because Maemd Hiw is losing her identity and reason, or because she has a plan, is unknown, but it's definitely making things difficult for anyone who traffics in flesh.

ASIAN OCEANIA

The peninsula that is Malaysia and the islands to its south form a distinct region from mainland Asia, typified by more diverse and mixed populations and pockets of developing communities that have not yet been exposed to modern technology.

MALAYSIA

One of the greatest melting pots of the world, Malaysia is home to ethnic Malays who live alongside people of Indian and Chinese ancestry whose families have been there for centuries. These people blend with more recent Thai and Indonesian transplants along with Western expats both new and from the days of empire to create an interesting culture. By world standards, these diverse groups get along well even during the hottest summers in the biggest cities. Malaysia is, in a word, mellow.

Superhumans in Malaysia tend to be lower-powered, with the bigger players leaving this relaxed backwater for the “big leagues” in Singapore, Japan, or the West. Those who remain patrol city streets for local crime or the central jungle for poachers and other eco-criminals. If a threat too large for the locals to handle emerges, the local heroes don't hesitate to call in help from Singapore.

SINGAPORE

The economic anchor of Southeast Asia, Singapore is one of the wealthiest cities in the world. It's ruled by a benevolent sultan who keeps the city clean and orderly using tactics that are fairly progressive by the region's standards. The trains run on time. The streets are safe and spotless. Street-crusading vigilantes rarely stay in Singapore long: there's nothing for them to do.

This independent city-state of six million serves as a communications, technology, and transportation hub connecting Australia, Oceania, and Southeast Asia to Europe, India, and the Americas. Because of this, it's where many supers congregate—or at least lay over—*en route* to missions in those regions. Outside of Japan, it's the most likely place for somebody to have a random meeting with multiple heroes or villains.

Singaporean supers are often wealthy scions of local magnates, using their wealth to become gadgeteers or to train their skills to near superhuman levels. Most who join the world stage are at first surprised by how chaotic and dangerous places outside Singapore can be. Those

MAEMD HIW

PL10 • 184 POINTS

STR 0 STA — AGL 6 DEX 6 FGT 4 INT 4 AWE 6 PRE 6

Powers: **Enervating Gaze** (Ranged Damage 10 (Cold), Affects Corporeal 10, Diminished Range 3 (20/50/100 feet), Incurable, Quirk 2: Must be visible to use); **Ghostly** (**Ghost Walk** (Flight 2 (8 MPH), Limit: Only while Insubstantial), **Immaterial** (Protection 5), **Insubstantial** (Insubstantial 4 (Incorporeal), Innate, Precise), **Invisibility** (Concealment 10 (All Senses), Innate, Noticeable (Chilling aura)), **Undead** (Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects)))

Advantages: Daze (Intimidation), Favored Foe (Human Traffickers), Fearless, Startle

Skills: Intimidation 10 (+16), Investigation 2 (+6), Perception 6 (+12), Ranged Combat: Enervating Gaze 4 (+10), Stealth 4 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +6, Enervating Gaze +10 (Ranged, Damage 10, Affects Corporeal 10, Incurable, Diminished Range (20/50/100)), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude Immune, Toughness 5, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 109 + Advantages 4 + Skills 13 + Defense 4 = 184

Complications: **Motivation—Revenge:** Maemd Hiw is obsessed with getting revenge on human traffickers, especially those who peddle women and children. **Silent:** Maemd Hiw is apparently mute. While it's possible she can speak, no one has ever heard her. **Obsessive Hunter:** Maemd Hiw enjoys seeing the fear on her quarry's face. She sometimes toys with them like a cat with a mouse—and has lost prey as a result.

MALAYSIAN SUPERS

Superheroes who remain in Malaysia tend to become local celebrities. The only Malaysian heroes that stand out tend to have bizarrely specialized powers.

Curry Man appears to be completely normal other than possessing an immunity to capsaicin (the chemical responsible for the “heat” in peppers and chiles), which he discovered accidentally while protesting in his youth. He uses his power to tour Malaysia's chili-eating contests to raise money for charity.

The Songbird can sing a single note which renders several cubic feet of concrete (and only concrete) to dust from a range of no more than three feet. She lives in Malacca and works in construction cleanup.

Both of these heroes are exceptional only in how *unexceptional* they are. Both have simple powers that amount to 1-point features, and only a handful of skills; even so, they are popular in Malaysia and do a lot of good.

who survive this rude awakening can combine their abilities with their money to become true forces in the superheroic world.

INTERDROME

Dr. Nicholas Ping made his fortune in communications tech and has lately begun building a data and information hub meant specifically for supers who want to trade knowledge. He has named it—and his gadgeteering alter-ego—Interdrome, and intends to make it the biggest and best social media network for superheroes—with hopes of

INTERDROME

PL8 • 166 POINTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 3 DEX 3 FGT 3 INT 12 AWE 5 PRE 4

Powers: **Cryptoglasses** (Removable; Enhanced Advantage 21 (Assessment, Close Attack 5, Defensive Roll 3, Eidetic Memory, Improved Critical 4 (Energy Packet Pistol), Improved Critical 4 (Unarmed), Precise Attack (Ranged; Cover), Ranged Attack 5)); **Energy Packet Pistol** (Easily Removable; Ranged Damage 4); **Field Transportation Device** (Removable; **Transporter Blink** (Sustained Enhanced Advantage 3 (Defensive Roll 3), Sustained Enhanced Defenses 12 (Dodge 6, Parry 6)), **Transporter** (Teleport 4 (500 feet), Increased Mass (100 lbs.), Turnabout))

Equipment: Cell phone (smartphone), computer, headquarters (The Interdrome), toolkit

Advantages: *Assessment*, Benefit 2 (CEO), Benefit 5 (Billionaire), *Close Attack 5*, *Connected*, *Defensive Roll 3*, *Eidetic Memory*, *Equipment 6*, *Improved Critical 4 (Energy Packet Pistol)*, *Improved Critical 4 (Unarmed)*, *Inventor*, *Jack-of-all-trades*, *Languages 4* (Arabic, English, French, Japanese, Korean, Mandarin, Russian, Tamil, Malay native), *Precise Attack (Ranged; Cover)*, *Ranged Attack 5*, *Skill Mastery (Expertise: Science)*, *Skill Mastery (Technology)*, *Speed of Thought**, *Well-informed*

Skills: *Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+7)*, *Expertise: Business 4 (+16)*, *Expertise: Current Events 4 (+16)*, *Expertise: Science 6 (+18)*, *Insight 8 (+13)*, *Perception 4 (+9)*, *Persuasion 8 (+12)*, *Ranged Combat: Energy Packet Pistol 4 (+7)*, *Technology 6 (+18)*

Offense: *Initiative +12*, *Energy Packet Pistol +12* (Ranged, Damage 4, Crit. 16-20), *Unarmed +12* (Close, Damage 1, Crit. 16-20)

Defense: *Dodge 12/5***, *Parry 12/5***, *Fortitude 5*, *Toughness 4/1**, *Will 8*
** Without Transporter Blink active.

Totals: Abilities 64 + Powers 43 + Advantages 24 + Skills 24 + Defense 11 = 166

Complications: Motivation—

Responsibility: Interdrome has been very fortunate and feels called to serve people as a way of paying back his good fortune. **Too Focused:** Interdrome can focus on a task or goal so intently that he misses important pieces of information. **Responsibility:** As the CEO of a global corporation, Interdrome is pulled in many directions.

* **Speed of Thought:** the character uses INT when calculating Initiative instead of AGL.

eclipsing USNet's TroubAlert system (see *Emerald City*, **Chapter 3**, under **The Media**). The end product will include social chatting, global positioning, and a shared database of information to help superheroes the world over better organize their fight against crime and other dangers.

UNISON is completely in favor of the project, though they leave the design and funding in the hands of the eccentric billionaire. He has promised to make the entire network free for any superheroes who have demonstrated a history of using their powers for good.

INTERDROME



Although Interdrome's heart is in the right place, he is so intent on his goal he hasn't paid as much attention as he should to where his technology comes from. SHADOW has provided some bugged hardware which, if it is installed, could grant them real-time access to the entire network once it goes live. So far, neither Interdrome nor UNISON have any clue of this danger.

Nicholas Ping was born to a billionaire oil magnate, enrolled in the best schools, and encouraged to indulge his childhood fascination with science and technology. He had his first multi-million-dollar patent before his 12th birthday and graduated with dual Ph.D.s in business and engineering by the age of 15. His genius and experience, guided by his father, grew Ping Industries into a technological powerhouse with facilities on all seven continents. (The Antarctic base is a weather station, but Ping is adamant it still counts.)

Ping grew up aware of the great advantages his upbringing gave him, and of how easily his gifts might have been squandered had he been born to a struggling family in the developing world. His company spends hundreds of millions annually finding and granting scholarships to gifted, disadvantaged children, but Ping does not feel it's enough. For the past ten years, he has turned his R&D division toward aiding superheroes in coordinating efforts and developing advanced technologies. His newest innovation—Interdrome—has superheroes and the press talking about it, despite that fact that it won't launch for a couple of years.

Ping does not fight crime himself, but he still outfits himself in gadgets that make it possible for him to participate in combat, at least a little. He has neither the physical ability nor the training to survive long in a real super-powered fight, but he is happy to do as much good as possible with his money and his genius, helping others to answer the call safely, successfully, and more efficiently than he can.

The Interdrome headquarters occupies a small island on the outskirts of Singapore. The sprawling facility is both an operating technology company and a base of operations for Interdrome's "crime-fighting" operations.

THE INTERDROME

HQ • 26 POINTS

Size: Gargantuan • **Toughness:** 10 • **Features:** Communications, Computer, Defense System, Dock, Fire Prevention System, Garage, Grounds (Colossal), Gym, Hangar, Infirmary, Isolated, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 3 (DC 30), Workshop

THE EAST INDIES ISLANDS

The islands between Southeast Asia and Australia are divided into several nations, carved out in the aftermath of World War II and the subsequent fall of the European colonial economies. Despite the arbitrary territorial divisions imposed on them, the nations remain culturally similar. Each is home to populations of indigenous tribes still living close to their old traditions, while modern cities full of businesspeople live and work nearby. Uniting both extremes are the thick jungle and heavy tropical weather, which define the rhythm of life throughout the islands.

In general, life in these nations is closer to nature than elsewhere in East Asia. Indonesia, the largest and most modern of these countries, once lost a ruin the size of a small city for more than one hundred years because the jungle overgrew it and people forgot it was there. Things are more primitive in these jungle nations, and in many ways more dangerous.

Superhumans in this region trend toward natural, animal-like powers and include more shape-shifters than other parts of the world. Ancient ruins scattered throughout the islands hold technological and arcane secrets that sometimes grant super powers, some of which come from the remnants of the kingdoms of the Serpent People (see previously). Because so much of this region is insular, few of its super-beings venture into the larger world.

INDONESIA

Major cities, such as the metropolis of Jakarta with its population of 10 million, are scattered thinly across islands filled with aggressively-growing jungle that threatens to swallow Indonesia's urban oases like a rising tide.

Life here is guided by tradition and the day-to-day need to survive. For urbanites, this means making a living despite widespread poverty. In the jungle, it means finding food and fighting the elements just as it has for thousands of years. Superhumans from Indonesia use their powers to make this struggle easier, and often blur the line between hero and villain in order to save lives.

EASTERN MALAYSIA

Although politically part of peninsular Malaysia (see previously), the people of this area are culturally closer to the conservative, rural heart of Indonesia than to their more cosmopolitan countrymen. Life here is the same struggle for survival found in Indonesia, and the region's few superhumans have more in common with Indonesian "heroes" than those from Malaysia.

BRUNEI

A resort paradise ruled by a wealthy sultan and built atop a small ocean of oil, Brunei is home to some of the oldest surviving rainforests on the planet, and tourism is Brunei's second-largest industry because of this. Although natural-born superheroes are rare here, several members of the royal family have pooled their wealth and resources to purchase devices and equipment to create gimmick- or

ORANG-UTAN

PL10 • 197 POINTS

STR 2 STA 2 AGL 3 DEX 2 FGT 5 INT 3 AWE 4 PRE 4

Powers: **Metamorphic Healing** (Healing 10, Limited: Self only, Persistent); **Shapeshifting** (Continuous Morph 3 (Mammals), Linked to Continuous Variable 9 (45 points), Move Action, Limit: Mammals only)

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Benefit 2 (Cipher), Evasion, Improved Initiative, Takedown

Skills: Acrobatics 7 (+10), Athletics 6 (+8), Close Combat: Unarmed 7 (+12), Expertise: Ecology 4 (+7), Expertise: Papua New Guinea 4 (+7), Expertise: Survival 8 (+11), Insight 5 (+9), Intimidation 4 (+8), Investigation 5 (+8), Perception 6 (+10), Stealth 5 (+8)

Offense: Initiative +7, Unarmed/Natural Weapons +12 (Close, Damage 2 or more depending on shape)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 5, Toughness 2, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 50 + Powers 101 + Advantages 6 + Skills 31 + Defense 9 = 197

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** Orang-Utan wants to preserve nature in general, and the rainforests of his home in particular. **Enemy:** Orang-Utan has earned the enmity of corporations and individuals who prey on the lands he protects. **A Bit Out There:** Decades spent mostly in the company of animals has made him socially peculiar.

gadget-using heroes. Most use their advanced technology to build bigger, better sports cars, but if a true threat to the safety of Brunei were to emerge, the royals stand ready to apply their genius and fortune to saving the day.

PAPUA NEW GUINEA & TIMOR-LESTE

Deep in the eastern jungles of Indonesia are two developing nations on the less fortunate sides of colonial boundaries. Both nations are long on jungle, short on technology, and rife with political corruption, local unrest, and exploitation by global corporations. Lucky supers born in these places move on to the world at large. The unlucky test their abilities against the wrong people and are never heard from again.

ORANG-UTAN

Lawa Wame grew up in Papua New Guinea playing in old growth canopy jungle so thick he couldn't see the sun. On his 13th birthday he stumbled across a clear-cutting operation. The destruction drove him deep into the rainforest for three months before he returned to his tribe. An elder, seeing in him the seeds of greatness, led him through ancient rituals that gave him the power to assume the form of any mammal he wished.

Taking on the name Orang-Utan, he used his new powers to fight the growing deforestation and pollution threatening his home. In human form, he investigates development in the region to find the sources of corruption and destruction, then uses his powers to infiltrate these facilities and cause maximum havoc. His favored shape is his namesake, which he spends as much time in as in his human form. Orang-Utan's raids have shown a sense of humor; three hired guards were subjected to drug tests after reporting an attack by a polar bear on a truck carrying toxic waste bound for illegal disposal in a local river.

SOUTH ASIA

Superhumans from South Asia come from a variety of backgrounds and run the gamut of super-powered origins. Mystics follow paths with earthly and alien origins, teaching new generations secrets as old as humanity. India produces metahumans out of simple mathematical certainty given its massive population, while the technological and economic centers in the region produce gadget-using heroes and villains. As with most other parts of the world, those in the know find strange truths behind old myths, legends and religions; The entities that inspired them remain active today in many cases.

Some of the cities and valleys of South Asia are home to cultures older than entire nations in Europe, older even than settlements in China. History runs deep here, underscoring every facet of life, but with that history come rifts and dangers that run just as deep.

RIFTS IN SPACE

Ancient alliances and grudges combine with modern wars and artifacts of colonization to divide South Asia into political entities which bear little resemblance to the ethnic and religious beliefs of the people. On one end of the spectrum, Nepal and Bhutan share religion, culture, and some dialects, yet remain separate political entities. On the other, India alone is home to over 100 languages and ethnicities despite being a single, unified nation.

Such rifts spawn a special class of politically-minded superhero who works for unity between nations or between separate groups living under the same flag. It also creates villains willing to do harm in the name of a single ethnic group. Many such villains began their careers thinking themselves heroes—and some of them continue to even after no one else does.

RIFTS IN TIME

For reasons not yet fully understood by any organization or entity, many of the oldest buildings, temples, and grottos near the Himalayas have deep connections to earlier times in history. These connections sometimes solidify to form gates to, or shadows of, ancient spaces. Those who know how to use them can travel to earlier epochs, sometimes to before mankind ruled the Earth, and even to other worlds (see **The Lost World**).

The mystic traditions of South Asia are often related to these links with the past, so the master practitioners of a magical line can return to less technological times to further their studies. Alien origins are also often tied to these temporal rifts, via journeys into cultures and cities built by pre-human hands.

THE TEMPORAL TUNNELS

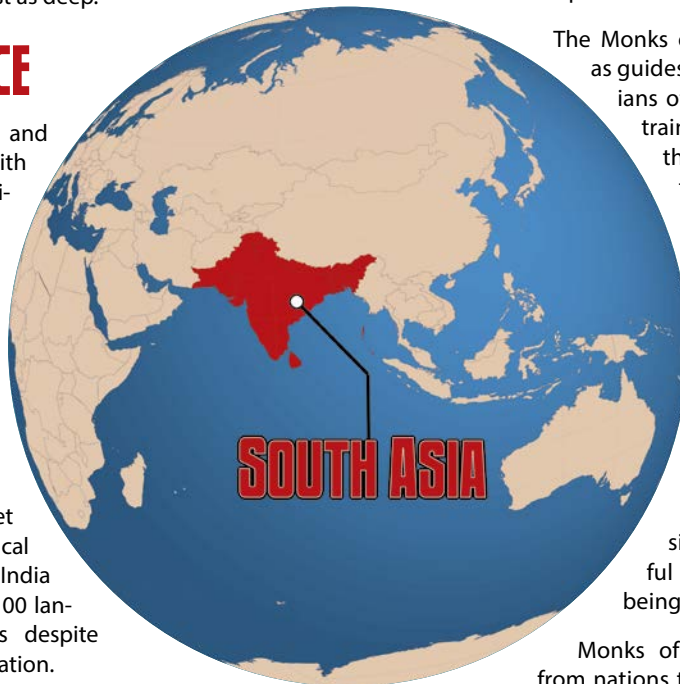
Certain temples and ruins throughout South Asia include subterranean passages that connect to a network of catacombs that reach across space and even time. Twelve steps in the tunnel beneath the Taj Majal leads to a door in a temple in Bhutan. One hundred steps down a passage in that same temple leads to Nepal in 800 BCE.

The Monks of the Fourth Age serve as guides, researchers, and guardians of the catacombs and are trained in their layout and the rules of frictionless travel through space and time. Most aren't truly superhuman, merely scholars who have spent their lives studying and adding to maps of this four-dimensional labyrinth. However, decades of such study and experience leave their mark and most are significantly more powerful than an average human being.

Monks of the Fourth Age come from nations the world over, but most originate from South Asia, especially India, Nepal, and Bhutan. To carry the title of Brother Monk requires years of training after already being strong enough to pass rigorous entry trials. A typical Monk of the Fourth Age is a low-level (PL 6 to 8) superhuman in his own right.

RIFTS IN CULTURE

Religious life is important throughout South Asia, with the people divided largely into two faiths: Hindu and Islam. Buddhism runs a distant but influential third. National borders and ethnic identities often fall along these lines. Atop this cultural divide lies a second rift of modern and Westernized culture versus older, Eastern traditions. Many of the younger people across South Asian nations rail against the old ways in favor of secular, Western ideas of opportunity and equality.



Religiously-inspired superheroes are more common here than anywhere else. Most of these supers present themselves as champions of the ideals of one particular sect, however the oldest religions have inspired a few who act as avatars of ancient gods. Most of these heroes and villains know they are superpowered humans taking on a representational persona, but a few claim to be the gods themselves, back on Earth to fulfill a divine mission.

HANUMAN

Martin Patil began life as a small, scrawny baby and grew into a small, scrawny man. While working in a Delhi library, he found an ancient tome in the basement. He practiced the martial arts and the rituals described within it and became the being that calls itself Hanuman, the Monkey God. Patil isn't certain that he has new knowledge, or if the new knowledge now possesses him, but he knows his incredible fighting skills and dexterity come at the cost of an irresistible urge to cause trouble.

Hanuman's practical jokes range from the simple and annoying (like the time he sabotaged all the buses in Bombay to break down at the same time during morning rush hour) to terrifyingly bizarre (like taking the Bangladeshi city council hostage and demanding three tons of

bananas delivered to a local zoo). He is not above fighting his way through police and other superheroes to escape and prank another day, but focuses on his ability to evade, disarm, and defend rather than his offensive martial arts.

BANGLADESH

Bangladesh has been wracked by war, corruption and a series of natural catastrophes that has sent other nations into total collapse. Through it all, the Bangladeshi remain a hopeful people who live up to the promises they've made to the rest of the world. As an example of how seriously they take their promises, for half a century, this impoverished country has been one of the largest contributors of peacekeeping forces to the United Nations.

The country produces a larger number of non-powered superheroes than any other country of its size. UNISON first noticed this trend in 2003, and has been making discrete inquiries ever since to find both promising new recruits and some explanation for the trend toward vigilantism and heroism. SHADOW has also noticed, and is paying a more sinister form of attention, hoping to recruit more agents for mundane assassinations and other covert missions.

BANGLADESH FOR BANGLADESHIS

A political and social movement focused on the "super-resilience" of the local population, called "Bangladesh for Bangladeshis" encourages the people to be proud of their above-average abilities and contributions. Like most decentralized organizations, its individual members hold a spectrum

HANUMAN

PL10 • 239 POINTS

STR 5 STA 6 AGL 8 DEX 6 FGT 13 INT 2 AWE 5 PRE 4

Powers: **Masterful Chi Perception** (Senses 5 (Acute Ranged Detect Life, Danger Sense)); **Monkey Leap** (Leaping 3 (60 feet), Movement 5 (Sure-footed 2, Swinging, Trackless (Visual), Wall-crawling)); **Perfect Defense** (Immunity 40 (Attacks targeting Parry), Reflect, Redirect, Subtle 2, Sustained)

Equipment: Club (staff; Strength-based Damage 2)

Advantages: Equipment, Improved Disarm, Instant Up, Language 1 (English, Hindi native), Move-by Action, Redirect, Taunt

Skills: Acrobatics 6 (+14), Athletics 6 (+11), Deception 4 (+8), Expertise: Religion 6 (+8), Insight 6 (+11), Perception 5 (+10), Ranged Combat: Throw 3 (+9), Sleight of Hand 6 (+12), Stealth 6 (+14)

Offense: Initiative +8, Staff +13 (Close, Damage 7), Unarmed +13 (Close, Damage 5)

Defense: Dodge 13, Parry Immune/13*, Fortitude 8, Toughness 6, Will 8 * Without Perfect Defense.

Totals: Abilities 98 + Powers 100 + Advantages 7 + Skills 24 - Defense 10 = 239

Complications: Motivation—Mischievous and Chaos:

Hanuman revels in the chaos he leaves in his wake, the greater the chaos or more powerful the confounded, the better.

Obsession: Hanuman is obsessed with pranks. He is driven to cause trouble, set up dangerous (even deadly) practical jokes, and generally annoy and inconvenience as many people as possible. **Will Not Kill:** Hanuman is not willing to kill any living being, though he will stand idly by and allow an unfortunate to die.



THE TEMPLE OF DOORS

Located deep within Bhutan's Jigme Dorji National Park, the Temple of Doors is the largest nexus of Temporal Tunnels (see previously) discovered so far. The Temple itself is built around a central chamber, larger inside than out, lined with over 1,000 doors of various shapes, sizes, and materials. Some are little more than a cave entrance with a pile of stones in front, while others are carefully constructed entryways of unknown materials. It is said that the right door can take a traveler to any place or any time in the multiverse, while the wrong door can lose a man for millennia.

The Monks of the Fourth Age (see previously) headquarter here, guarding the doors and their secrets. Petitioning for access or their help takes months or even years, but they are very careful about who gains access to the Tunnels. Only the elite of the Monks live at the Temple, and their ranks include powerful mystics. No attempted raid has ever succeeded against the Temple.

DUIYU LIEREN

PL11 - 201 POINTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 3 FGT 5 INT 5 AWE 8 PRE 4

Powers: **Magic Spells** (Array; **Enervating Ray** (Broad Simultaneous Ranged Weaken 8 (Resisted by Fortitude), Physical Abilities), **AE: Fiery Bolt** (Ranged Damage 11), **AE: Restraining Ribbons** (Ranged Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Hindered and Immobile, Defenseless and Immobile), Extra Condition, Limited Degree)); **Nullification Aura (Anti-Magic Aura** (Broad Simultaneous Sustained Burst Area Nullify 8, Magic effects, Reduced Range: Close), **Entropic Field** (Sustained Protection 12); **Second Sight** (Senses 4 (Analytical, Extended (-1/100 feet), Radius Mystic Awareness))

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Chokehold, Close Attack 5, Fast Grab, Fearless, Language 3 (English, Mandarin, Nepali, Tibetan, Dzongkha native), Power Attack, Ultimate Effort (Will checks), Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 4 (+5), Expertise: Temporal Tunnel Navigation 6 (+11), Insight 4 (+12), Investigation 6 (+11), Perception 2 (+10), Ranged Combat: Magic Spells 8 (+11), Treatment 2 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +1, Fiery Bolt +11 (Ranged, Damage 11), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 8, Toughness 14, Will 14

Totals: Abilities 58 + Powers 90 + Advantages 15 + Skills 16 + Defense 22 = 201

Complications: **Motivation—Patriotism:** Duiyu Lieren is a true-believing patriot in the Chinese government and the Communist philosophy. He will do anything to protect the interests of his homeland. **Enemy:** The Yeti (see **East Asia**) is Duiyu's arch-enemy. They have clashed more than twenty times, neither getting the upper hand. He isn't eager to encounter the Yeti again, but he will do whatever he needs in order to fulfill his mission. **Enemy:** The Central Power Collective (see **East Asia**) is aware of Duiyu Lieren, but the Shard is unable to take his magical powers. Still, they dislike the fact that he operates outside their control and may do something about him. **Power Loss:** As a spellcaster, Duiyu Lieren must be able to speak and move his hands to use his Magic Spells.

of ideologies that match its core ethos. The better angels work to alleviate poverty and suffering within the nation by applying the drive, spirit, and abilities of their country-people. The darker side of the movement trends towards racism and warmongering disturbingly similar to that of Germany in the 1930s.

THE BLUE DEVA

The Blue Deva was born to wealth as Nilufar Rahman. Raised to help those less fortunate, he took his parents' example to heart and built a battlesuit using his genius

and the resources he was born into. He crusades against major crimes, especially drug and human trafficking, and uses his social connections to present himself as Bangladesh's superhero representative on the world stage. As a popular and visible member of Bangladesh for Bangladeshis, he tries to lead by example with his message of kindness, empowerment and responsibility. The Blue Deva uses the Battlesuit archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 3**) at PL 9, which is achieved by reducing all of his abilities and offensive powers by 1.

NAZMUN MILUN

Nazmun Milun won an international beauty contest for the first time at age six. Now in her 20s, she has mastered the mind control powers she used unconsciously as a child and operates openly under her real name. She believes Bangladeshis are superior to other South Asians, and agitates to lead a nationalist movement. When speaking to crowds, she blames India and the West for Bangladesh's ongoing poverty and "second-class status" among nations. She has no official status in the leadership of Bangladesh for Bangladeshis, but has amassed a sizeable following. Nazmun Milun uses the Psychic archetype with the Mind Control power, reduce her FGT to 0 and AWE to 4, increase PRE to 7).

BHUTAN

Despite legends, traditions, and architecture that indicate a distinct Bhutanese culture dating back millennia, little is known of the country's history prior to the 1600s. This less-traveled Himalayan country is steeped in magic and produces mystics of surprising quality. It is an insular nation with insular people and superhumans. Rather than join the world stage, its magicians plot and scheme against one another for power within Bhutan itself. It is said there are no superheroes or supervillains in Bhutan, but rather superhumans doing good and evil (mostly) to one another.

The one exception to this is Yeti and the "Overhill Railroad" with which he's associated (see **East Asia**) that offers refuge and guidance for supers fleeing China. A cadre of magicians and other supers cooperate to keep the refugees moving to safety, often using the Temporal Tunnels (see previously) common in the country to facilitate their escape. Working against them in secret is a being known as Duiyu Lieren (The Hunter), a mystic who uses the traditional magic of Bhutan to find these fleeing supers and return them to China.

INDIA

There is no “one India.” A landmass of nearly three million square kilometers (about one-third the size of the United States and three times the size of neighboring Pakistan), it is home to two thousand ethnic groups, over a dozen religious sects, four distinct biomes, and more than 100 languages and dialects. Its immense population, ancient culture, and economic importance combine to make it the anchor of South Asia. Not all of India’s neighbors are friendly, but they all understand the country’s importance in the region.

CASTE & CULTURE

A unique feature about many superhumans in India is how they fit into the nation’s millennia-old caste system. Some superhumans, especially supervillains, consider themselves an “overcaste” with even the lowest-powered superhuman ranking above the highest member of the Brahmin caste. Others consider superpowers to be irrelevant to caste, and that even a powerful member of the untouchable caste should remain in his or her station. Many younger superhumans reject the caste system altogether and live their lives ignoring it as much as possible.

RAJA & THE LABORER

Nothing illustrates this complex and often bewildering array of opinions like the rivalry between Hari and Russell Prikash. These, twins with identical superpowers at birth, were born to a low caste. Hari studied hard and remained in his caste, doing good where permitted under the name the Laborer. Russell took the name Raja and rejected the caste system to seek wealth by whatever means available. With both nearing their 50th birthdays, Hari has spent his life foiling Russell’s plans while living within the caste of his birth. Though both largely ignore anything but one another, each has amassed a following who view him as the embodiment of a political ideal.

The Laborer and Raja are PL 8 Paragons, with STR 8 and STA 8. Each has the other as an Enemy complication. Raja has Motivation—Greed and the Laborer has the Motivation—Doing Good.

BANDHANA CITY

“Bandhana” is Hindi for “Nexus” and this metropolis of 6 million people lives up to its name. Located where the Hugli branch of the Ganges River meets the Indian Ocean, it grew from relatively humble roots into a technology hub as Western companies moved manufacturing, customer service, and other business functions to India. A cadre of wealthy high-tech-using heroes attracted other heroes and soon Bandhana boasted the largest population of super heroes and supervillains in South Asia. It attracts superhumans from rival cities like Mumbai and Kolkata and the numbers continue to grow.

Most cities in India have ancient buildings and crumbling infrastructure due to their centuries-long existence. By contrast, most of Bandhana was built during the 21st century. Its towers of glass and steel, surrounded by modern apartments and homes, make it look more like a city in the United States than what one would expect to find in Southeast Asia. Attitudes are also very progressive in comparison to the rest of India. The tech boom attracted younger people with attitudes influenced by Western culture, which has made pizza as popular as curry for lunch.

With prosperity comes crime. Regular organized crime in Bandhana victimizes both local businesses and worldwide targets via various online scams. Super-criminals stalk the night or operate boldly on the Internet. Fortunately, with super-criminals comes superheroes determined to stop them. Four young superheroes named Instant Karma fight crime with a sense of humor and a political statement meant for India and the world.

INSTANT KARMA

While some costumed crusaders prefer to operate in secret, Instant Karma loves attention. They mug for cameras, hold press conferences, and dispense their justice in as flashy and memorable a way as possible. A recent bank robbery they foiled ended with masked master of mayhem the Black Hole stripped nude, painted pink and duct-taped to the inside face of the bank’s vault door.

Although the early 20-something members of Instant Karma often seem to be kids just having a good time, they are also political activists. Each member is named after one of the five major classes of traditional Hinduism, and by working together they consciously, intentionally send the message that it’s time to leave behind those old and discriminatory ways. They say as much on their Twitter feed regularly.

SHUDRA

Shudra is five feet tall and almost as wide, with a shiny bald pate over Bangladeshi features. He hails from Dhaka, born under the name Asman bin Josef, and crossed the border to find work as a bouncer in the growing metropolis of Bandhana City. Shortly after arriving, he met Peter Ahmet and the two began fighting crime together. Instant Karma grew around the two founders. He took the name Shudra and donned a crimson bodysuit emblazoned with the face of a dragon, which is never intact at the end of a fight. The press has noticed that he seems to be trying a new battle cry with each conflict and they are sure to report on them.

Shudra uses the unmodified Powerhouse archetype (see *Hero’s Handbook*, **Chapter 3**). His complications are: **Motivation—Recognition:** He comes from a long line of police and soldiers. He wants to make his family proud. **Thinks He’s Stupid:** Shudra isn’t stupid, but he’s sensitive about his intelligence. He often tries to sound smarter than he is, which is never successful.



INSTANT KARMA IN ACTION

BRAHMIN

Born Peter Ahmet, Brahmin had a childhood of private schools and rugby. He attended college in the United States on an athletic scholarship, and befriended a brilliant, young inventor there. His friend died of brain cancer before graduation, but gave his prototype battlesuit to Peter before he passed, because he trusted him to do the right thing with it. When Peter returned to India with the suit, he soon saw the need for a new superhero in the country's newest city.

He met Shudra (see Shudra, previously) during his second night on patrol and the pair teamed up to form the core of what would become Instant Karma. Brahmin is short, stocky, and dark, but never shows his face in public. While in his armor, his voice sounds more mechanical and slightly musical.

KSHATRIYA

Hattay Moksri's first competitive experience was in a children's Muay Thai program in her birth country of Thailand. She fought at the international level and added Judo and Brazilian Jiu-Jitsu to her repertoire before leaving Thailand to train in Malaysia, the Philippines, Vietnam, and India. She lives to train and compete, and only began using her skills in silat, krabi krabong, durga, and kali after moving to Bandhana to compete in its underground cage-fighting circuit.

When she refused to throw a fight, she incurred the wrath of the local mob. Her first encounter with them

was so colorfully one-sided that she received attention from the press and was contacted by Instant Karma the next day. She joined the team half for the challenge and half to have some people with super-powers at her back when the mob returned. Standing nearly six feet tall, leanly muscled, costumed in flowing blue pants, and a thin Kevlar vest, Kshatriya is strikingly beautiful even with knife scars on her cheek. She doesn't talk to the press, but Instant Karma makes sure she's featured prominently in film or photos.

VAISHYA

With his exotic good looks and muscular body, Prander The doesn't look like a computer hacker, but his skills at manipulating data are almost as good as his social media stream says they are. His origin story is surprisingly simple: he grew up in a middle-class home playing with computers, got a tech degree, and found he had a real talent for computer and physical security. When it came time to find a job, he saw what Instant Karma was up to and convinced them to bring him into the fold. One form-fitting Kevlar three-piece suit later, he was breaking into the bad guys' data and spoofing their security systems with the rest of the team. Despite his puissant skill and attractiveness, he is very shy.

THE UNTOUCHABLE

If the Untouchable has a name or other identity, no one knows it. He's of average size, build, and appearance despite his impressive powers. As a member of Instant Karma, he wears dungarees and a light jacket over a

KSHATRIYA

PL9 · 148 POINTS

STR 3 STA 3 AGL 5 DEX 5 FGT 7 INT 1 AWE 1 PRE 2

Powers: **Avoid Attack** (Deflect 14, Reduced Range (Close)); **Crippling Strike** (Affliction 7 (Resisted by Dodge and Overcome by Fortitude; Hindered and Impaired, Disabled and Immobile), Counts as Unarmed, Extra Condition, Inaccurate 2, Limited Degree); **Martial Arts Mastery** (Up to 5 Strength/Damage is Multiattack, Usable with Kukri Knives); **Trained Athlete** (Leaping 1 (15 feet), Speed 2 (8 MPH), Swimming 2 (2 MPH))

Equipment: Kukri knives (Strength-based Damage 2)

Advantages: Attractive, Close Attack 6, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll, Equipment, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Improve Initiative, Improved Smash, Language 3 (Filipino, Hindi, Malaysian, Vietnamese, Thai native), Quick Draw, Takedown 2

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+13), Athletics 8 (+11), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+9), Expertise: Martial Arts 8 (+9), Intimidation 4 (+6), Perception 8 (+9), Stealth 8 (+13)

Offense: Initiative +9, Crippling Strike +11 (Close, Affliction 7, Dodge/Fort DC 17), Kukri Knives +13 (Close, Multiattack Damage 5), Unarmed +15 (Close, Multiattack Damage 3)

Defense: Dodge 14, Parry 14, Fortitude 8, Toughness 4/3*, Will 8 * Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 23 + Advantages 20 + Skills 23 + Defense 28 = 148

Complications: **Motivation—Thrills:** Kshatriya has trained and competed her entire life and lives for the thrill of the fight, and the new skills gained by surviving a challenging combat. **Enemy:** Local organized crime is after Kshatriya after a humiliating defeat at her hands. The Bandhana mob would like nothing better than to pay her back. **Memorable:** Kshatriya is gorgeous and marked with numerous scars. She is easy to recognize in or out of costume.

BRAHMIN

PL8 · 154 POINTS

STR 9 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 4 FGT 7 INT 4 AWE 2 PRE 0

Powers: **Power Armor** (Removable; **Armor** (Impervious Protection 6), **Boot Jets** (Flight 7 (250 MPH)); **Communicator** (Radio Communication 3 (small nation)); **Machine Guns** (Ranged Multiattack Damage 6); **Sealed Systems** (Immunity 10 (Life Support)); **Sensors** (Senses 4 (Darkvision, Direction Sense, Time Sense)); **Strength Booster** (Enhanced Strength 8); **Tactical Computer** (Enhanced Advantage 2 (Improved Initiative 2), Enhanced Dodge 4, Enhanced Fighting 4)

Advantages: All-out Attack, *Improve Initiative 2*, Language 3 (Bengali, English, Tamil, Urdu, Hindi native), Ranged Attack 3, Skill Mastery (Perception)

Skills: Expertise: Business 5 (+9), Insight 5 (+7), Perception 5 (+7), Persuasion 8 (+8), Ranged Combat: Machine Guns 3 (+7), Technology 4 (+8), Vehicles 2 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +9, Machine Guns +10 (Ranged, Multiattack Damage 6), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 9)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 8, Toughness 8, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 80 + Advantages 8 + Skills 16 + Defense 16 = 154

Complications: **Motivation—Doing Good:** Brahmin is a good guy, willing to do whatever it takes to help others. **Honor:** Brahmin believes in fair play and living up to the highest of ideals. He won't take advantage of others, including in combat, and always thinks the best of people.

VAISHYA

PL9 · 198 POINTS

STR 4 STA 4 AGL 5 DEX 5 FGT 7 INT 5 AWE 5 PRE 4

Powers: **All the Latest Gadgets** (Variable 2 (10 points), Move action, Gadgets are all Easily Removable); **Flash-Bang Grenades** (Removable; Ranged Burst Area Affliction 5 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed and Impaired, Disabled and Stunned), Affects Auditory and Visual senses, Extra Condition, Limited Degree, Unreliable (5 uses)); **Grapple Gun** (Easily Removable; Movement 2 (Safe Fall, Swinging)); **Protective Suit** (Protection 3, Subtle); **Universal Bluetooth** (Radio Communication 4 (Worldwide), Comprehend 2 (Machines/Electronics))

Equipment: Collapsible rod (Strength-based Damage 2, Subtle), taser (Ranged Affliction 5 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated), cell phone (smartphone), computer, earplugs, flash goggles, flashlight, GPS receiver, mini-tracer, multi-tool, oxygen mask, toolkit

Advantages: Assessment, Attractive, Benefit 4 (Multi-millionaire), Close Attack 5, Equipment, Hide in Plain Sight, Jack-of-all-trades, Language 3 (English, Tamil, Hindi native), Quick Draw, Ranged Attack 5, Skill Mastery (Expertise: Hacking), Skill Mastery (Stealth), Ultimate Effort (Perception), Uncanny Dodge, Well-informed

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+9), Athletics 4 (+8), Expertise: Hacking 8 (+13), Insight 6 (+11), Investigation 6 (+11), Perception 6 (+11), Stealth 8 (+13), Technology 8 (+13), Vehicles 6 (+11)

Offense: Initiative +5, Collapsible Rod +12 (Close, Damage 6), Flash-Bang Grenades — (Ranged, Burst Area Affliction 5, Fort DC 15), Taser +10 (Ranged, Affliction 5, Fort DC 15), Unarmed +12 (Close, Multiattack Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 11, Fortitude 8, Toughness 7, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 78 + Powers 43 + Advantages 32 + Skills 28 + Defense 17 = 198

Complications: **Motivation—Thrills:** Vaishya likes to break into places he doesn't belong, taking on criminals, and helping others ... just for the thrill of it. **Curious:** Vaishya is unendingly curious. He loves a mystery and he will pursue any unanswered questions.

THE UNTOUCHABLE

PL8 · 118 POINTS

STR 8 STA 11 AGL 3 DEX 1 FGT 4 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 1

Powers: **Indestructible Body** (Immunity 14 (Cold, Critical Hits, Disease, Heat, Fatigue Effects, Poison, Pressure, Radiation, Vacuum); Immunity 4 (Sleep, Starvation and Thirst, Suffocation (All)), Limited to Half Effect; Impervious Toughness 11; Regeneration 1 (Every 10 rounds), Persistent); **Leaping** (Leaping 4 (120 feet))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Benefit 2 (Cipher), Close Attack 4, *Diehard*, Language 3 (Urdu, Hindi native), Power Attack, Takedown, Ultimate Effort (Toughness checks)

Skills: Athletics 6 (+14), Expertise: Streetwise 6 (+6), Perception 4 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +3, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 8)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 11, Toughness 11, Will 5

Totals: Abilities 58 + Powers 35 + Advantages 10 + Skills 8 + Defense 7 = 118

Complications: **Motivation—Doing Good:** The Untouchable loves Bandhana City with all his heart and fights to do the right thing for his city and its inhabitants. **Secret:** The Untouchable didn't always use his powers for good purposes and is ashamed of the decisions he made in his youth.

simple cotton t-shirt. His pockets are stuffed with tools ranging from spray paint to duct tape. The Untouchable is the public voice of Instant Karma, for the simple reason that he likes being interviewed more than any of his teammates. He has a serious demeanor, but his ideas are the most flamboyant and hilarious compared to the other members of the group.

MALDIVES

This tiny island nation is a tourist attraction for the wealthy from India, Southeast Asia, and the West. Although it covers approximately 35,000 square miles of ocean, its 1,192 tiny islands have only 116 square miles of land. It is an isolated, sheltered backwater.

This isolation combined with the presence of many wealthy tourists make the Maldives a popular target for supervillains and mundane criminals. It's a perfect location to take hostages for ransom, or to find juicy targets for blackmail or extortion. The police force is underfunded and superheroes are too far away to foil even a second-string villain.

THE MAPS

In 2004, the major resorts of the Maldives approved a solution: the Maldives Autonomous Police Superheroes (MAPS), a small private police force of super-powered mercenaries paid for by the resorts and other wealthy islanders. It operates with the full support of the Maldives government. MAPS' first encounter with a supervillain attack in 2005 left two members dead, but the attackers driven off. MAPS leaves street crime to the regular police and stays on call in the island paradise to deal with major threats. Because of their presence, no such threat has appeared since 2011.

Membership in MAPS fluctuates as staff comes and goes with some frequency. Its roster runs the gamut from clear-eyed world travelers to broken-down second-stringers or fugitives trying to make a place in the world. MAPS members tend not to be as heroically motivated as heroes in other super-groups. Being mercenaries, they work to make a living first, followed (maybe) by other causes.

The current membership of MAPS includes the following (but GMs can change or expand membership as desired).

JOHNNY DELTA

Johnny Delta is the current captain of the team. Johnny is 28 years old and more enthusiastic than experienced. He is naïve, but acts as the team's conscience as well as being a decent leader. Johnny Delta uses the Paragon archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**), but add the skills Expertise: Law 4 and Treatment 4.

SHIMMER

Shimmer, an alcoholic, 60-year old speedster who recognizes this is her last chance to do something good with her life. Shimmer uses the Speedster archetype (see *Hero's*

Handbook, **Chapter 2**), but is PL 8. Reduce her Dodge and Parry to 12, Defensive Roll to 2, which reduces her total Toughness to 4. Change her Super-Speed power to: Enhanced Initiative 3, Quickness 6, Speed 10 (2,000 MPH).

CRASH

Crash is a middle-aged powerhouse from Volkavia (see: **Eastern Europe**) who may or may not be wanted for crimes in his home country. Crash uses the Powerhouse archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**).

SPEED READER

Speed Reader is a graduate student with some budding psychic abilities. She uses the Psychic archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**), reduced to PL 6 by lowering her Telekinesis to Move Object 6 with Accurate 2, her Telekinetic Field to Protection 8, Impervious, Sustained, and then changing her defenses to Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 4, Toughness 8, and Will 8.

NEPAL

Nepal is famous for its position on the southern slopes of the Himalayas, but its lower reaches include thick jungles and lush farmlands that have been home to inhabitants for millennia. Life here is more relaxed and closer to nature than the more modernized parts of South Asia. The people live in harmony with the rhythm of the seasons—both the natural passage of seasons and the ebb and flow of tourism.

Supers from Nepal also lean toward the natural: mutants, natural shape shifters, and mystics rather than aliens, battlesuits, or gadgeteers. Nepal's military is considered among the best in the region and a Nepalese veteran can find work as a security guard as far away as Pakistan or Singapore. Superheroes from Nepal often follow a similar path, trading on the stolid reputation of Nepalese fighters to establish a reputation in a more populated area.

Superheroes who remain in Nepal spend less time fighting crime—the area doesn't attract many criminals beyond the regular pickpockets targeting wealthy Western tourists—and more time perfecting their abilities. More than one "super dojo" offers training to the super-powered from all over the world who are willing to sign on to live and study on-site for a year and a day. Many of the superheroes in these training halls arrive in Nepal at the end of the "over-hill railroad" see **East Asia**). Duiyu Lieren (see later in this entry) hunts Nepal for these rogue super-beings, but the trained defenders of the area are powerful enough to keep him from being very effective.

THE OATHKEEPER

The Oathkeeper began life like many other Nepalese superheroes. His talents for manipulating time were discovered early and he was taken to a mountain hall to train and refine them. When he returned home at the age of 15, he found his village had been destroyed by a ram-paging team of supervillains who had met, trained at,

THE OATHKEEPER FACES DOWN A THREAT



and betrayed a different training hall. Since that time, he has been on a mission to execute any supervillains who were trained in Nepal. He travels the Earth in saffron and crimson robes with an iron chain around his neck.

In recent years, a being who looks almost identical to the Oathkeeper has been murdering low- and medium-powered super-types more indiscriminately. The Oathkeeper has tried unsuccessfully to hunt this being, spoken of in whispers as the Oathbreaker. Since the Oathkeeper is such an accomplished hunter, some speculate that he only fails because the Oathkeeper and the Oathbreaker are one and the same.

PAKISTAN

Pakistan has long had troubles with corruption, poverty, and violence beyond even what's typical for countries in its troubled area. As an example, a recent Prime Minister's husband was arrested for robbing a bank by chaining a bomb to an innocent bystander and forcing him to commit the crime. He was pardoned by his wife and escaped without sentence. This wasn't a supervillain, but a regular person exemplifying the corruption present in the nation.

It would be easy to blame human frailty and political instability for this state of affairs, but the truth is darker and more terrifying. Since long before Pakistan existed as a modern nation-state, a family of rakshasa has held power, controlling the public leaders of the country. To serve

THE OATHKEEPER

PL12 • 227 POINTS

STR 2 STA 4 AGL 6 DEX 5 FGT 5 INT 4 AWE 5 PRE 2

Powers: **Aging Ray** (Ranged Damage 13, Resisted by Fortitude, Incurable, Diminished Range 2 (65/130/325 feet)); **Rewrite Time** (Luck Control 3 (Force Re-roll, Negate Luck, Spend On Other)); **Scan Time Waves** (Remote Sensing 14 (60 miles), Visual and Auditory); **Slow Time Dodge** (Enhanced Traits 22 (Dodge 8, Parry 8, Defensive Roll 4, Ultimate Effort (Fortitude checks), Ultimate Effort (Toughness checks)))

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Daze (Intimidation), *Defensive Roll 4*, Fearless, Precise Attack (Ranged; Cover), *Ultimate Effort (Fortitude checks)*, *Ultimate Effort (Toughness checks)*

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 5 (+10), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Temporal Tunnel Navigation 6 (+10), Insight 5 (+10), Intimidation 8 (+10), Investigation 4 (+8), Perception 6 (+11), Persuasion 4 (+6), Ranged Combat: Aging Ray 6 (+11), Stealth 5 (+11), Vehicles 2 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +6, Aging Ray +11 (Ranged, Damage 13, Fort DC 28, Incurable, Range 65/130/325 feet), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 16, Parry 16, Fortitude 8, Toughness 8/4*, Will 13 * Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 66 + Powers 111 + Advantages 4 + Skills 29 + Defense 17 = 227

Complications: **Motivation—Vengeance:** The Oathkeeper seeks to vent his rage on any villains he finds because he can't get revenge on the ones who killed his family and friends. **Identity:** The Oathkeeper maintains a secret identity in order to protect his friends from villains who might seek revenge on him. **Obsession:** The Oathkeeper is obsessed with finding the Oathbreaker and finding out how they're connected.

their own interests, the rakshasa manipulate events in the nation, keeping the general populace impoverished and neighboring countries nervous.

DEMONS IN THE SHADOWS

Rakshasa are ancient demons who have existed in South Asia since the time of the Serpent Kingdoms to the east. They are shapeshifters with subtle and mystical powers. Though their goals are alien to humankind, they appear to appreciate and covet wealth and comfort. Only a few people even suspect their presence in Pakistan and none know the true reach of their power. Their manipulations in the area keep superheroes chasing after the symptoms of their influence, not the true causes ... or the rakshasa themselves.

RAKSHASAS

The natural form of an individual rakshasa varies greatly, but they are all roughly humanoid and most bear bestial characteristics like tusks, horns, or tiger fur. Each stands approximately seven feet tall and can weigh 400 pounds. A rakshasa can take the form of an attractive human being of its same gender at will. Though they can look like any kind of human they like, they aren't able to imitate specific individuals and most choose one or two forms they assume most of the time. Many rakshasa are magicians, psychics, or gifted with other supernatural powers and can grow to become quite powerful.

TYPICAL RAKSHASA

PL8 • 206 POINTS

STR 6 STA 6 AGL 4 DEX 2 FGT 6 INT 5 AWE 5 PRE 5

Powers: **Claws** (Strength-based Damage 2, Penetrating 4, Split); **Demonic Flesh** (Immunity 80 (Toughness effects), Limit: Not vs. magic); **Detect Thoughts** (Effortless Mind Reading 3, Limited to Surface Thoughts); **Limited Magical Immunity** (Immunity 20 (Magic spell effects of 6 or fewer ranks)); **Otherworldly** (Immunity 3 (Aging, Disease, Poison)); **Shapeshifting** (Morph 2 (Humanoid forms), Continuous)

Advantages: Assessment, Benefit 3 (Readied Rituals*), Benefit 2 (Cipher), Benefit 2 (Independently Wealthy), Close Attack 2, Connected, Defensive Roll 2, Languages 4 (Arabic, English, Mandarin, Russian, Infernal native), Ritualist, Skill Mastery (Deception)

Skills: Deception 5 (+10), Expertise: Magic 5 (+10), Insight 5 (+10), Perception 2 (+7), Persuasion 5 (+10)

Offense: Initiative +4, Claws +8 (Close, Damage 8, Penetrating 4, Split), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 6, Toughness Immune/8/6**, Will 10 ** Immune to non-magical Toughness effects, 8 otherwise, 6 without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 78 + Powers 88 + Advantages 18 + Skills 11 + Defense 11 = 206

Complications: **Complications: Motivation—Power:** Rakshasa are always looking to accrue more power for themselves. **Monstrous:** In their natural form, rakshasa look like humans with bestial characteristics of some sort. **Secret Keepers:** Rakshasa are intensely secretive about their plans and go to great lengths to conceal them.

* **Readied Rituals** are in *Gadget Guides*. Rituals rakshasa might have prepared include Banishment, Dispel Magic, and Veil.

One exceptional rakshasa moved north into Russia and now works to keep influence of the other rakshasa from spreading. That rakshasa is most famously known as Rasputin (see **East Asia**), but no one knows his ultimate goals or why he seems to be protecting Russia—they're aware of his machinations at all.

SRI LANKA

A small and independent island nation just past the southern tip of India, Sri Lanka is sometimes mistakenly regarded as a "suburb" or adjunct to India, but this isn't so. It's predominantly Buddhist, ruled by a powerful executive branch, and generally has a higher standard of living than its neighbor.

Life in Sri Lanka is safe and routine, kept so by the strict controls of the generally benevolent despots of the executive branch. A couple of decades ago, conflict between that branch and the people led to years of violence, but the relationship has become more peaceful and led to an improved standard of living for those nearer the bottom of the economic spectrum.

There are about as many supers *from* Sri Lanka as would be expected for their population, but very few supers *in* Sri Lanka. The low rate of crime leaves heroes little to do and a small cadre of "superheroes" loyal to the executive branch exert pressure for others to leave. The exceptions are those who work with the criminal organization housed at the Beacon facility just off its coast, which has an uneasy, but stable, non-aggression pact with the executive branch.

THE BEACON

Twenty miles south of the southernmost tip of Sri Lanka is an atoll, a tiny, single semi-circular island in international waters. What appear to be tribal huts on the beaches are actually well-built wooden guard buildings connected to an undersea base.

The Watchtower Group maintains this base in secret, monitoring shipping and communications throughout the Indian Ocean. The brainchild of the super-genius known as Third Eye, this secretive think tank mines the data it collects for profitable insights. An astonishing amount of the world's shipping passes through these waters, and for a mind like Third Eye's, it's as good as insider trading. Watchtower is not above sending its soldiers on missions of sabotage or piracy to change those patterns if Third Eye believes the changes will be profitable.

The Beacon facility hosts approximately 100 elite minions of the Watchtower Group, split between mercenary soldiers, hackers, and technicians. Besides Third Eye, the brother-and-sister team of Thor and Vivian Jarlsson, known as Ursa Major and Ursa Minor, are the only super-beings regularly on base.

Watchtower is unusual in that while the group commits major crimes and causes human suffering, Third Eye has also reached out anonymously to superheroes when

THIRD EYE

PL11 • 236 POINTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 2 INT 12 AWE 12 PRE 5

Powers: **Disconcerting Accuracy** (Feature: Predict small outcomes of events or conversations); **Lightning Calculator** (Quickness 5, Mental Tasks); **Perfect Insight** (Continuous Mind Reading 7, Effortless, Must be able to see targets, Limited to Surface Thoughts, Quirk: Doesn't actually read minds); **Predict Future Events** (Senses 4 (Precognition), Distracting, Limit: Takes minutes or hours of time); **Predictive Defense** (Enhanced Traits 40 (Dodge 12, Parry 12, Defensive Roll 5, Evasion, Improved Defense, Luck 5, Second Chance (Perception checks), Second Chance (Traps), Ultimate Effort (Fortitude checks), Ultimate Effort (Toughness checks)); **Predictive Offense** (Enhanced Traits 23 (All-out Attack, Close Attack 11, Ranged Attack 11))

Equipment: Cell phone (smartphone), computer, headquarters (The Beacon)

Advantages: *All-out Attack*, *Assessment*, *Benefit 2* (Criminal Mastermind), *Benefit 4* (Multimillionaire), *Close Attack 11*, *Fascinate* (Expertise: Information Theory), *Defensive Roll 5*, *Equipment 7*, *Evasion*, *Improved Defense*, *Inspire 3*, *Languages 5* (Arabic, English, French, German, Hindi, Japanese, Latin, Mandarin, Marathi native), *Leadership*, *Luck 5*, *Ranged Attack 11*, *Second Chance* (Perception checks), *Second Chance* (Traps), *Speed of Thought**, *Ultimate Effort* (Fortitude checks), *Ultimate Effort* (Toughness checks), *Well-informed*

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+5), Expertise: Current Events 5 (+17), Expertise: Economics 9 (+21), Expertise: Information Theory 9 (+21), Expertise: Politics 8 (+20), Insight 6 (+18), Investigation 6 (+18), Perception 6 (+18), Persuasion 6 (+11), Ranged Combat: Firearms 3 (+5), Technology 4 (+16), Treatment 2 (+14), Vehicles 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +12, Unarmed +16 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 16, Parry 16, Fortitude 6, Toughness 6/1**, Will 14 ** Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 74 + Powers 88 + Advantages 27 + Skills 36 + Defense 11 = 236

Complications: Motivation—Keeping Score: Because of his powers, life is dull for Third Eye. To stave off boredom, he uses his wealth and the number of lives he saves or causes the death of as a way of keeping score. **Disdains Violence:** Although Third Eye has no problems sending minions to commit violence, he considers fisticuffs and gunplay beneath his station, even though he's capable of using his powers to fight very effectively. He will leave a foe at death's door or allow himself to be captured rather than personally commit a violent act.

* **Speed of Thought:** the character uses INT when calculating Initiative instead of AGL.

the patterns he sees indicates a truly horrific act of terrorism or other supervillainy. Warnings from Third Eye are always accurate and usually arrive days before the second-best analysts in the world are aware something *might* be going on.

THIRD EYE

Third Eye was born Sрни Obeysekere, the genius son of two college professors based in Mumbai. He graduated from Cambridge University at the age of 10 and made his first billion as an "advisor" for hedge fund managers before he was old enough to drive. Accumulating wealth has been his only goal and he has few scruples to limit

URSA MAJOR & URSA MINOR

PL10 • 150 POINTS

STR 9 STA 9 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 6 INT 0 AWE 3 PRE 3

Powers: **Bear's Stance** (Immunity 10 (Being Moved), Sustained); **Claws** (Strength-based Damage 3); **Thick Hide** (Impervious Toughness 11, Protection 4)

Equipment: Heavy pistol (Ranged Damage 4), hold-out pistol (Ranged Damage 2), cell phone (smartphone)

Advantages: Both have: *Animal Empathy*, *Close Attack 2*, *Equipment 3*, *Improved Grab*, *Improved Hold*, *Languages 3* (English, Bokmål, Hindi, Norwegian native), *Set-up*, *Teamwork*; Ursa Major has: *Chokehold*; Ursa Minor has: *Improved Initiative*

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+6), Athletics 4 (+15), Expertise: Security 8 (+8), Intimidation 6 (+9), Investigation 6 (+6), Perception 6 (+9), Ranged Combat: Firearms 10 (+12), Stealth 5 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +2 Major/+6 Minor, Claws +8 (Close, Damage 12), Heavy Pistol +12 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 9)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 13, Toughness 13, Will 7

Totals: Abilities 68 + Powers 28 + Advantages 14 + Skills 26 + Defense 14 = 150

Complications: Motivation—Loyalty to Third Eye: The young man Ursa Major and Ursa Minor knew in college has, as Third Eye, saved the twins from lives of poverty and despair. They will follow his orders to the death. **Relationship:** The pair do almost everything as a team, and their cooperation in and out of combat is a trademark. Neither would ever leave the other in jeopardy and they always watch out for each other.

THE BEACON

HQ • 32 POINTS

Size: Gargantuan • **Toughness:** 12 • **Features:** Communications, Computer, Concealed 3 (), Defense System, Dock, Fire Prevention System, Garage, Grounds (Colossal), Gym, Hangar, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Isolated, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 4 (DC 35), Workshop

his options for doing so. When his parents died in a plane crash while on an around-the-world trip, he adopted the blank white mask and gunmetal grey lab coat that has become his trademark. Creating the Beacon and Watchtower Group are the next steps in his global campaign to become the wealthiest man in the world.

URSA MAJOR AND URSA MINOR

Norwegian twins, Thor and Vivian Jarlsson met Third Eye when he was still Sрни Obeysekere, an 8-year-old genius studying economics and math at Cambridge. They befriended and protected him, and eventually let him in on the secret of their totemic powers. When Sрни decided to go "Full Evil Genius" he called on them to continue protecting him—for a lot of money.

The two have identical powers and similar appearances. Each stands just under six feet tall and have average, if slightly hardy builds. They wear their shaggy black hair long and wear black bodysuits under thick, black greatcoats no matter the temperature. Though not evil by nature, their loyalty to Third Eye is such that there is nothing they wouldn't do for him.

AUSTRALASIA

The area known as Australasia covers Australia, New Zealand, New Guinea, New Caledonia, Fiji, and several other smaller islands. Australia, New Zealand, and New Guinea are all fragments of the ancient supercontinent of Gondwana, and still bear traces of this ancestry today, while Australia was also connected to the sunken continent of Lemuria. All three land masses have been separated from the other continents and each other for millions of years, which has led to the evolution of the unique flora and fauna for which the area is famous.

Australasia has been inhabited by aboriginal populations for thousands of years, and has only been colonized by others for the last two hundred years or so. This has had a vast impact on the culture of the area, ranging from acceptance and treaty with aboriginal natives, to all-out war and, unfortunately, even genocide.

AUSTRALIA

Australia is comprised of two islands making a single nation. Divided into five states and two territories, it is a constitutional monarchy governed by a parliamentary democracy and led by a Prime Minister. While the nation technically still holds allegiance to the Queen of Britain through a Governor General, it is in fact an independent nation that operates with little to no interference from England.

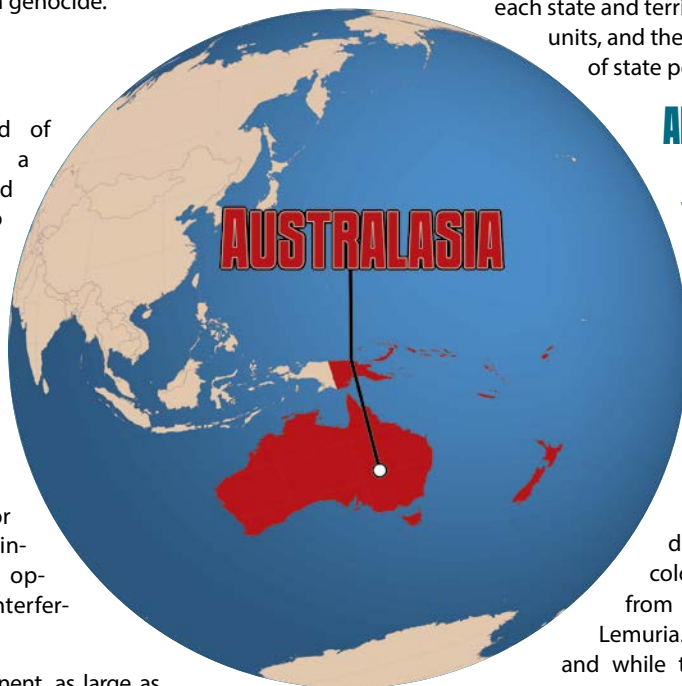
Australia is a large continent, as large as North America. The size of the landmass gives rise to a diverse climate and ecology. The flattest and driest continent, Australia has the oldest and least fertile soils; desert or semi-arid land commonly known as the outback makes up the largest proportion of land. It has the lowest population density in the world, with the largest proportion of the population living along the temperate south-eastern coastline.

Initially the city of Melbourne was the nation's capital, but due to contention with the State Government of Sydney, the capital was shifted to Federal City in 1927.

Australia consists of six states (New South Wales, Queensland, South Australia, Tasmania, and Victoria) and two territories (Australian Capital Territory and Northern Territory). Each state is independently governed by State Parliaments, while the territories are governed by Executive Committees. The Federal Government governs the nation as a whole.

Australia has a history of roving bands of criminals called bushrangers. In many cases, bushrangers have become idolized in modern literature and folklore. Admittedly, many of the early bushrangers were driven to crime by an overly oppressive colonial government, which made them popular outlaw figures. Modern-day villains such as the Kelly Gang, Black Ranger, and Colonial Boy have latched on to these ideas and see themselves as the inheritors of the bushranger "legacy."

A major federal crime-fighting initiative was launched in the early 1990s in a bid to stem increasing supervillain activity. Known as Special Power-Armored Tactical Agent (SPARTA) teams, each state and territory has at least two units of these highly trained men and women and their advanced suits of power armor. While a federal initiative, each state and territory must fund their own units, and they come under the control of state police authorities.



ABORIGINAL NATIONS

For at least 45,000 years before European settlement, Australia was populated by indigenous peoples, having arrived on the island via land bridges and short sea-crossings during the last ice age. When they arrived, they discovered a land that was colonized by Serpent People from the sunken continent of Lemuria. Open warfare ensued, and while the Serpent People had access to greater technology, the Aboriginals were far more numerous and had a natural connection to the other-dimensional realm known as the Dreamtime. Eventually, the Serpent People were driven underground at Kalkajaka (the Black Mountain). Aboriginal myth tells of a tunnel leading directly to the Serpent People's refuge deep underground and that they wait there, plotting their revenge against the thieves who stole their land.

With nothing left to obstruct them, the Aboriginal people gradually spread across the land and formed many individual tribal nations. Primarily a hunter-gatherer society, Australian Aboriginals relied on a complex oral tradition and a spirituality based on reverence for their ancestors, the land, and the Dreamtime. While they are often thought of as one people, Australian Aboriginals are highly diverse and differentiated with individual languages, cultures, and beliefs.

WARRANGINA

Approximately 35,000 years ago, the Aboriginals of the Kimberley area were visited by aliens. The aliens, called the Wandjina by the local tribes, were thought to be creator gods. The Wandjina scouts discovered that the Kimberley Region was rich in a rare element called ultranium, which they used to power their technology.

Recruiting the Kimberley tribes as a workforce, the Wandjina used them as miners, servants, assistants, and, in some cases, lovers. Abruptly, the Wandjina abandoned Earth and their settlement, leaving behind some of their advanced technology. Forced to fend for themselves, their Aboriginal servants used Wandjina technology to found the city of Warrangina.

Located deep in the Kimberley Ranges in Western Australia, Warrangina is a combination of futuristic technology and ancient traditions, towering buildings and grass humpies. The hereditary leader of Warrangina is a young man named Namatjiri Yingari, the "Sky Brother." His word is law, though he relies on the wisdom of a council of tribal elders to help him make sound decisions that abide with tradition and expectation.

Warrangina was unknown to the outside world until the advent of World War II, when an expedition was sent by Hitler to investigate rumors of the advanced city. The Nazi's were repelled by the Sky Brother of the day. The Sky Elder went on to assist the Australian government during the war, having been dubbed "Wandjina" by the press, and retired to Warrangina at the conclusion of the war. Relations between Warrangina and the rest of Australia remained distant until the early 1990s, when the current Wandjina joined Australia's premier superhero team, the Southern Stars.

Warrangina is a world leader in innovation, sharing a limited amount of its advanced technology with Australia, though the government would like to have access to much more. The city's main export is ultranium, which is provided to only a few countries as an energy source.

While Warrangina is considered a separate and sovereign nation, Wandjina tries to work closely with the Australian government to ensure that their relationship remains friendly.

WANDJINA

Namatjiri Yingari was sent to study at the National Federal University by his father in a bid to more closely tie Warrangina with modern Australia. His education came abruptly to an end when his father died unexpectedly, and Namatjiri was forced to take on the mantle of the Sky Brother. Namatjiri remained in Warrangina until the early 1990s, when SHADOW launched an attempt to steal the nation's ultranium reserves. Realizing he could not defend the city alone, Namatjiri donned the costume of his grandfather and as Wandjina sought the assistance of the Southern Stars. Together they foiled SHADOW's scheme.

In gratitude, Wandjina funded a headquarters for the Southern Stars and continues to provide them with ad-

WANDJINA

PLT1 - 243 POINTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 3 DEX 3 FGT 3 INT 5 AWE 5 PRE 7

Equipment: **Southern Stars Identocard** (Easily Removable, Feature 4 (Access to Southern Stars Headquarters and Vehicles, Camera, Eidetic Memory, Tracking Transponder), Communication 4 (Radio, Subtle), Senses 2 (Radio, Time Sense, Tracking (Identocard Transponder)); **Wandjina Weather Suit** (Removable, **Energy-Diffusing Armor** (Protection 7); **Life Support Aura** (Immunity 10 (Life Support)); **Lightning Blast** (Ranged Damage 11); **Weather Control Array (Air Control)** (Burst Area 3 (120-foot radius) Move Object 11, Dynamic), **AE: Cold Weather** (Environment 11 (4 miles, Extreme Cold), Dynamic), **AE: Fog Banks** (Environment 11 (4 miles, Visibility -5), Dynamic), **AE: Hot Weather** (Environment 11 (4 miles, Extreme Heat), Dynamic), **AE: Precipitation** (Environment 11 (4 miles, Impede Movement 2), Dynamic), **AE: Wind Blast** (Move Object 11)); **Wind Riding** (Flight 6 (120 MPH))

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Benefit 4 (Tribal Leader of Warrangina), Benefit 1 (Possesses Wandjina DNA), Favored Environment (Aerial), Languages 3 (English, German, Japanese, Warrangina native), Leadership

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+7), Expertise: Aliens 4 (+9), Expertise: Science 8 (+13), Insight 8 (+13), Intimidation 4 (+11), Investigation 8 (+13), Perception 6 (+11), Persuasion 4 (+11), Ranged Combat: Wandjina Weather Suit 8 (+11) Stealth 4 (+7), Technology 8 (+13), Vehicles 8 (+11)

Offense: Initiative +3, Lightning Blast +11 (Ranged, Damage 11), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 13, Parry 13, Fortitude 8, Toughness 9, Will 9

Totals: Abilities 58 + Powers 107 + Advantages 11 + Skills 37 + Defenses 30 = 243

Complications: Motivation—Responsibility: Wandjina is the leader of Warrangina. There are times when his tribal duties can interfere with his responsibilities as a Southern Star, but he has vowed to serve however he can. **Fame:** As a well-known superhero and political figure, Wandjina often draws the attention of the media and curious bystanders.

vanced technology, vehicles, and other equipment. Wandjina is one of the most active members of the team, leaving the administration of Warrangina in the custody of the tribal elders.

All of Wandjina's powers come from the suit built with alien Wandjina technology. While the suit can be removed, anyone who wishes to utilize its powers must possess some amount of Wandjina DNA.

FEDERAL CITY

Federal City is the most populous city in Australia, exceeding 7 million residents, and is located inland in the northern end of the Australian Capital Territory (ACT). Due to its location and importance, the city attracts a large number of commuters from local towns and communities, swelling its population during business hours to well over 8 million.

The site was chosen as a compromise between rival cities Sydney and Melbourne, and unlike all other cities in the nation is unique in that it is an entirely planned city outside of any state. The design features many geometric shapes, such as circles, hexagons, and squares, and surrounds Lake Kentaurides, named after the husband

FEDERAL CITY OR CANBERRA?

The fictional metropolis of Federal City has taken the place of the real-world city of Canberra, with which it shares many traits. However, Federal City is larger, more populous, and is easily altered to fit well into your series.

and wife city architects. Influenced by the “garden city movement” of the era, Federal City features many parks, gardens, and natural bushlands.

The growth of the city was hindered by both World Wars and the Great Depression, but rapidly grew once further development was championed by Prime Minister Robert Menzies and declared the home of the superhero, Blue Ensign. In the 1980s and 1990s, the city also became host to the Southern Stars. Shortly thereafter, the time-displaced Impossible 5 arrived, heralding the modern age of heroes in Australia.

Federal City is a busy metropolis featuring state-of-the-art technology and civil services. The city boasts many examples of public art, both locally produced and gifts from other nations. The central business district, Federal Centre, features towering skyscrapers, parks, and shopping malls. A monorail services Federal Centre, along with multiple bus routes and taxi services. Bullet trains provide transport to Sydney in less than an hour and to Melbourne in less than 3 hours.

As the nation’s capital, Federal City hosts many social and cultural institutions of national significance, such as the Australian War Memorial, National Federal University, Australian Institute of Sport, National Federal Gallery, National Federal Museum, the Southern Star Museum, and the National Federal Library. The Australian Army’s officer corps are trained at the Royal Military College, Roan-troon, and the Australian Defence Force Academy is also located in the city.

A hub of superhuman activity, Federal City boasts many resident heroes and villains. While this makes Federal City an exciting place to live, it also makes it dangerous. With such a reputation, the city attracts numerous tourists eager to catch a glimpse of Blue Ensign, the Southern Stars, the Impossible 5, or any number of other super-powered beings.

As well as a large superhuman population, Federal City is also the location of a major SHADOW cell and a UNISON base. Unfortunately, UNISON’s actions are seriously curtailed in Australia due to restrictions imposed by the Australian government. Major Amanda Wellington-Smyth, the regional director of UNISON, finds her agency acting in more of an advisory role than a true wielder of authority.

BLUE ENSIGN

David Duncan is the fourth man to bear the Blue Ensign name. The first was Doug Duncan, David’s great grandfather, who was granted his superpowers during World War II through the Australian government’s secret initiative, the Paragon Project. All subsequent Blue Ensigns have been descendants of the original—the only individuals that the Paragon Project works on. The procedure con-



BLUE ENSIGN

sists of exhaustive physical and combat training, and a pill known only as PP-33, which endows the imbiber with enormous strength, speed, and sensory powers. The drug must be taken daily or the recipient suffers painful withdrawal symptoms that ultimately lead to his or her death.

David, the current Blue Ensign, is proud to carry on the legacy, but he finds his position to be unfulfilling; he spends most of his time acting as a body guard for the Prime Minister and as a mouthpiece in support of Australian policies. These activities do not meet his expectations of what a hero should be or do. He has worked alongside the Southern Stars and would rather be free to join the team on a permanent basis. If not for his reliance on PP-33, he would happily push aside his government-enforced restraints. The government knows David is unhappy, and they use the secret of his homosexuality to help keep him obedient.

This wouldn't be a great threat except that David has publicly opposed homosexuality and marriage equality in accordance with government policy. He has styled himself as a playboy bachelor to hide his true desires, but it eats away at his conscience, and he is coming to hate himself for living a lie.

THE SOUTHERN STARS

Originally founded in WWII, the Southern Stars assisted the war effort on both the home front and abroad. They continued as an active team after the war but were forced to disband in the mid-1960s by a paranoid government who feared they had Communist leanings. The team remained disbanded until the early 1980s when a group of young heroes gathered to fend off an alien menace. They remained together for almost a decade, but was disbanded shortly after their headquarters was bombed, resulting in the deaths of several of their members. The remaining team members reformed briefly in the early 1990s to address King Ormor the Aquarian's attack. A few short months later, Australia became embroiled in the Terminus Invasion, with a beachhead having formed in Federal City. This convinced the Southern Stars of their need to remain together to face threats ordinary forces couldn't defeat.

During the intervening years, a number of heroes from Australia and abroad have joined the ranks of the Southern Stars. The team has a charter that allows fielding a maximum of seven heroes as active members at any one time, but members are held on reserve basis and are ready to be called to the frontline at a moment's notice if needed.

The team is headquartered at Star Mansion in Federal Centre. The land upon which the headquarters is built is sovereign Warrangina land, provided for the team by Wandjina, as is their headquarters.

DEADEYE THE HUNTSMAN

Born blind, Olympic archery gold medalist Jeremy Heck's hearing was highly developed, allowing him to substi-

BLUE ENSIGN

PL12 • 189 POINTS

STR 14 STA 10 AGL 6 DEX 4 FGT 5 INT 1 AWE 3 PRE 4

Powers: **Enhanced Senses** (Senses 10 (Extended Sight 3 (x1,000), Extended Hearing 3 (x1,000), Microscopic Vision 2 (Cell-sized), Ultra-hearing, Ultravision)); **Impervious Skin** (Impervious Protection 4, Impervious Toughness 10); **Power-Lifting** (Enhanced Strength 4, Limited to lifting; *lifting Str 18: 6 ktons*); **Resilience** (Immunity 8 (Cold, Heat, Pressure, Fatigue Effects)); **Super-Enhanced Movement** (Leaping 8 (1800 feet), **AE:** Speed 8 (500 MPH))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Attractive, Benefit 2 (Security Clearance: Military Rank), Close Attack 5, Connected, Extraordinary Effort, Inspire 2, Interpose, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Takedown 2, Ultimate Effort (Toughness checks)

Skills: Athletics 4 (+18), Expertise: Soldier 4 (+5), Expertise: Tactics 3 (+4), Intimidation 2 (+6), Perception 2 (+5), Vehicles 2 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +6, Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 14)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 14, Toughness 14, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 94 + Powers 49 + Advantages 19 + Skills 9 + Defenses 18 = 189

Complications: **Motivation--Patriotism:** Blue Ensign is strongly patriotic and believes in the Australian ideals of mateship, freedom, and a fair go for everyone. Sometimes he finds his duties to be in conflict with his ideals. **Duty:** Blue Ensign is a member of the Australian Defence Force and an employee of the Australian government. He is duty bound to serve them. **Fame:** Blue Ensign is well known and has no secret identity. No matter where he goes, he is quickly surrounded by adoring fans and media. **Power Loss:** Blue Ensign must take a PP-33 pill every 24 hours or lose all his powers. In addition, all his physical abilities are reduced to 3. He normally keeps a 7-day supply on him. The drug is issued to him by the Australian government. **Secret:** Blue Ensign is gay and fears that his sexual preference will be discovered by the public. The Australian government are aware of his preferences and are not above using his fears of discovery against him. **Weakness:** Being without the PP-33 drug for more than 24 hours causes Blue Ensign to experience withdrawal symptoms. He immediately becomes Fatigued. He must make a Fort save at DC 20 every 24 hours or become Exhausted, Unconscious, and then Dying. If he succeeds at five Fort checks, he has successfully eradicated the drug from his system.

tute it for sight in almost every circumstance. He was able to discern size, shape, distance, even relative speeds based on the way sound propagated and warped around objects.

A happy-go-lucky man, Jeremy is quick with a joke or a taunt. He enjoys a drink with mates and loves his sports, especially Australian Rules Football. While he loves Australian Spirit like no other, he strongly dislikes Blue Ensign, and the two clash on almost any subject.

Deadeye uses the Weapon Master archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**) and uses the **Bow** option and **Super-Hearing** with the following adjustments: Senses 6 (Accurate, Acute, Analytical, and Extended Hearing, Distance Sense).

THE AUSTRALIAN SPIRIT

Sharon Duncan is a great, great, granddaughter of the original Blue Ensign, and second cousin of the current Blue Ensign. Like her cousin, she was recruited by the Australian government as a potential recipient of the

AUSTRALIAN SPIRIT

PL11 • 175 POINTS

STR 4 STA 3 AGL 6 DEX 4 FGT 10 INT 1 AWE 5 PRE 8

Powers: Spirit Form (Air Walking (Flight 1 (4 MPH) linked to Intangibility (Insubstantial 4 (Incorporeal), Precise); Martial Arts (Strength-based Damage 2)**Equipment:** Southern Stars Identocard (Feature 4 (Access to Southern Stars Headquarters and Vehicles, Camera, Eidetic Memory, Tracking Transponder); **Communication 4** (Radio, Area, Subtle (encrypted); **Senses 2** (Radio, Time Sense, Tracking (identocard transponder)))**Advantages:** Accurate Attack, Agile Feint, All-out Attack, Attractive, Close Attack 6, Connected, Defensive Roll 5, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Instant Up, Leadership, Move-by Action, Prone Fighting, Takedown, Teamwork**Skills:** Acrobatics 6 (+12), Athletics 4 (+8), Expertise: Military 4 (+5), Expertise: Tactics 12 (+13), Insight 4 (+9), Intimidation 2 (+10), Perception 4 (+9), Persuasion 2 (+10), Vehicles 2 (+6)**Offense:** Initiative +11, Unarmed +16 (Close, Damage 4), Martial Arts +16 (Close, Damage 6)**Defense:** Dodge 13, Parry 13, Fortitude 10, Toughness 8/3*, Will 8 * Without Defensive Roll.**Totals:** Abilities 82 + Powers 23 + Advantages 30 + Skills 20 + Defenses 20 = 175**Complications:** **Motivation—Responsibility:** Australian Spirit takes her powers and position seriously and feels she should use them to help others. **Identity:** Australian Spirit closely guards her secret identity, only revealing it to those she trusts the most. **Relationship:** Australian Spirit is in an intimate relationship with fellow Southern Star teammate, Deadeye.

Paragon Project, though she failed the testing process due to an allergic reaction to the drug. However, due to exposure to the process, she gained the ability to become insubstantial.

Joining the Southern Stars, Sharon's training, personality, and tactical skills quickly led to her being voted the team's leader, a position she has held for some time.

Sharon is a confident and strong woman. She uses her position to champion women's rights, and is actively opposed to any form of discrimination based on gender, race, ability, or sexuality. She has also formed an intimate relationship with Deadeye.

DWARF STAR

David Wong is of Chinese decent, tracing his ancestry back to the original immigrants who arrived in Australia during the Great Gold Rush. David married Alice (see Red Giant, following) shortly after graduating and joined her at ASTRO Labs where an accident involving an experimental singularity generator changed everything; he was imbued with the abilities to shrink to almost microscopic size, fly, and fire energy blasts. Donning a costume he became the superhero known as Dwarf Star. Unlike Alice, David wasn't emotionally altered by the accident, but he does like the changes that have occurred in his wife. The accident has proven to be a bonus to their marriage, and he enjoys the benefits that being a public super-powered couple have afforded them.

NUADA SILVERARM

Patricia McPherson was a highly respected archaeologist with NFU. Her research led her to seek out the tomb of the legendary Celtic king of the Tuatha, Nuada Silverarm. After discovering the tomb, a freak accident left her trapped beneath tons of rock, severing her left arm at the shoulder. Dazed and bleeding, Patricia found a relic in the ruins and felt compelled to place it, a silver arm against the ragged remains of her shoulder. Without knowing why, she placed her right fist into the palm of the relic and shouted, "Airgetlam!" With a blinding flash of light, Patricia was transformed into Nuada Silverarm.

Patricia and Nuada share the same body, but their minds are quite separate, and the dominant mind is that which belongs to the current body. The submissive mind can communicate with the dominant mind, often making it appear as if Nuada or Patricia is arguing or in a discussion with nobody. In times of great stress, the submissive mind can occasionally overcome the dominant mind, leading to what appears to be out of character behavior.

Patricia is a rather slight, attractive woman of Irish decent with red hair, fair skin, and grey eyes. She wears glasses and keeps her hair in a bun and in this form, the arm looks and feels like a normal organic arm. She finds Nuada to be a boor, and doesn't like transforming into him, as he often refuses to transform back. Patricia often has to apologize for Nuada's excesses.

The arm, a product of both magic and technology, increases Nuada's strength, endurance, and resistances to superhuman levels. Nuada also possesses the legendary sword, Claiomh Solais, which is surrounded by a field of energy, allowing it to cut through anything, including magic, illusions, dimensional barriers, and solid matter.

RED GIANT

Alice Wong, a brilliant scientist at ASTRO Labs, was developing, along with her husband David (see Dwarf Star, previously), a singularity-based power generation system. Their work was proceeding well when an accident caused a prototype generator to explode. Instead of killing them, the Wongs were endowed with super powers.

Alice gained the abilities to grow to immense size and to increase her personal gravitic field, allowing her to draw objects towards her. The accident also left her emotionally changed. Once a gentle woman, shy and reserved, she is now outgoing and exuberant. She revels in her powers, and loves using them. She maintains a height of 7'; even out of costume, and has no qualms with being a public figure.

YOWIE

Karl McGavin was a reporter with the *Federation Star*, a prominent Australian newspaper headquartered in Federal City. He specialized in reports about superhuman activity, and prided himself in being able to present a "man on the street" point of view. It was during one of his on-the-spot reports that he found himself in the wrong place at the wrong time; he was caught in a magical backlash as a villain



THE SOUTHERN STARS & WANDJINA

named the Shout summoned a spirit from the Dreamtime, fusing his essence with that of a legendary cryptid known as a yowie, which is similar to a yeti or sasquach.

Reshaped into the form of the “mythical” yowie, he has long, shaggy brown fur, short walrus-like tusks, phenomenal strength, endurance, resistance to injury, and the ability to breath underwater. While his body has changed, Karl is still a gentle, inquiring soul. Karl continues to write for the *Federation Star*, taking full advantage of his position with the Southern Stars to get his stories.

LORDS OF MISRULE

The Lords of Misrule have always been a thorn in the side of the Southern Stars, opposing everything the heroes stand for. There have been nine different versions of the team, with the original formed during World War II by the Black Baron. The current incarnation was brought together by the Shout.

THE SHOUT

The Shout claims he learned his powers from an Aboriginal clever man (similar to a shaman), whom he killed once he got what he wanted. Nobody knows if these claims are true, but the Shout is best described as an evil man, one who seeks to cause chaos and disorder wherever he goes. All of his powers are magical in nature, drawing on the mystical energy of the Dreamtime channeled through his voice. Unfortunately, this power brings a curse as well, as the Shout is no longer able to talk without his power activating unpredictably. The Shout wears no costume. His clothes are those of a bedraggled homeless man. He has

long unkempt hair, a shaggy beard, and dirt-encrusted skin. The Shout uses the Sorcerer archetype (see *Game-master’s Guide*, **Chapter 3**).

BATTLE AXE

Olympia Imoni was always a big girl, teased and bullied mercilessly at school for her size. The final straw came when she was physically abused by a group of teenage boys who led her to believe they liked her. In desperation, she cried out to the gods of her forebears for assistance, and Hera, the ancient Greek goddess of women, answered her plea. Olympia was gifted with the heritage of the Amazons of myth: great strength, an imposing physique, great beauty, and astounding combat skills. In addition, she was presented with the magical axe “Trogon Andres,” created by the blacksmith god Hephaestus.

Battle Axe is an imposing woman. She is powerfully built with short brown hair and deep blue eyes. She harbors an abhorrence for men, especially those who oppress or abuse women, but she is generally ruthless and hateful. Battle Axe uses the Warrior archetype (see *Hero’s Handbook*, **Chapter 2**) with the **Wind Riding** and **Weapon Warrior** options.

BLACK BUSHRANGER

The Black Bushranger’s background is a mystery. What is known about him is that he stole an experimental robot horse from ASTRO Labs and uses an electrically charged whip and a pair of revolvers that shoot energy blasts. His crimes mainly involve robbery, often on a grand scale, and while he styles himself a “gentleman bushranger,” he is in fact a heartless criminal.

NEW LEMURIA

When the Serpent People of Australia fled the surface world (see **Sub-Terra**), they entered a subterranean world underneath the Australasian tectonic plate. A vast series of caverns proved to be habitable, and they built a city called New Lemuria. In the ages that have passed, many of the Serpent People have forgotten the surface world and are quite content to live their lives peacefully.

Prince Sharistak, the eldest son of the Sorcerer-King Enik, is not so content. He hates that his father encourages peaceful relations with subterranean cultures like Sub-Terra and others. Sharistak yearns for the Serpent People to be feared and rule both the subterranean and surface worlds. He is secretly followed by a large group of like-minded brethren.

The Serpent People of New Lemuria bear a different appearance to others of their species. They have thin but wide-set mouths and large round black eyes that are very sensitive to bright light. Green scales cover most of their muscular body with yellow belly scales. Their tails are vestigial, and their heads are adorned by three to nine small horns, which dictates their place in society. Their hands and feet bear wickedly sharp claws that make effective weapons.

The Black Bushranger wears a Zorro-style mask, akubra hat, kerchief, shirt, trousers, riding boots, fingerless gloves, and stockman's coat, all in black. His robot horse is chromed with glowing red eyes and rocket pods jutting from its sides.

DOCTOR GORGON

A brilliant chemist working at FNU, Doctor Gorgon believed that the formulas used by Renaissance alchemists may have had some merit. When he brought his theories to the attention of his peers at a conference, he was laughed out of the building. Vowing to exact his revenge, he performed his own experiments and discovered that with the application of certain rays he was able to instantly calcify organic matter. Creating a gun he called his Medusa Ray, Doctor Gorgon first used it on the very people who laughed at him. They aren't laughing at him now. Nobody laughs at Doctor Gorgon now.

Doctor Gorgon is a small man with a bald head and watery blue eyes. Thin and wiry, he wears thick goggles, a 1920s style lab coat, and long black rubber gloves and boots. The Medusa Ray looks like a 1960s ray gun. Doctor Gorgon uses the Mad Scientist archetype (see *Gamemaster's Guide*, **Chapter 3**) with the addition of Ranged Attack 3, his **Medusa Ray** (Ranged Progressive Affliction 15 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Hindered and Impaired, Disabled and Immobile, Transformed), Extra Condition), which raises him to PL 12.

DROP BEAR

Originally a normal koala, Drop Bear was caught in a road accident involving a truck carrying toxic waste. Bathed in burning mutagenic chemicals, the marsupial was trans-

formed into an intelligent towering psychopath. His hatred for humanity knows almost no bounds, and if not for the powers of the Shout, there would be no controlling him.

Standing 7'5" tall and weighing 955 lbs., Drop Bear is a true monster. He uses his large claws with glee and is always the first into combat. Drop Bear uses the Savage archetype (see *Gamemaster's Guide*, **Chapter 3**) with the **Bear** powers in addition to those listed on the archetype itself.

SHE-QUOLL

Named for the quoll, a carnivorous marsupial found in Australia, New Guinea, and Tasmania, She-Quoll is a cat burglar who carries on the thieving legacy of her father and grandfather. She is primarily motivated by greed, though she also wishes to uphold the family name as a reliable criminal for hire. Like her forebears, she has trained from a young age in martial arts and acrobatics so that she can be the best cat burglar in the city. She sees being a member of the Lords of Misrule as a way of enhancing her reputation even further.

She-Quoll hides her identity behind a brown domino mask that sports short quoll-like ears. Brown gloves sport climbing claws that double as weapons, and a medium length cybernetic tail aids her balance and acrobatics. She-Quoll uses the Martial Artist archetype (see *Gamemaster's Guide*, **Chapter 3**) along with equipment as needed.

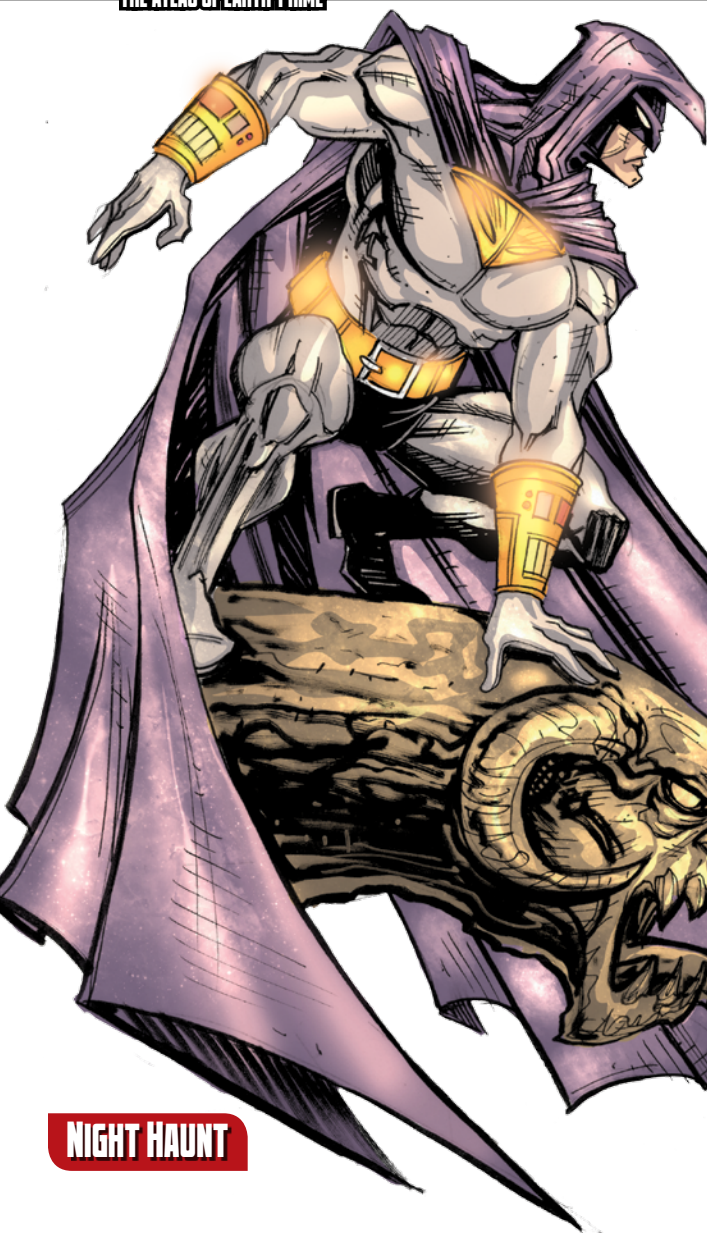
SYDNEY

Sydney, located on Australia's southeast coast on the Tasman Sea, was the site of first British settlement in 1788 and has grown into the nation's second largest population center. The city is built on hills around one of the world's largest harbors, Port Jackson, and is surrounded by national parks. Sydney is well known for the Harbour Bridge and the Sydney Opera House, both of which are situated on Sydney Harbour.

A major draw to the city is its annual Gay Pride Festival, the highlights of which are numerous dance parties, art exhibitions, a fair, and a large politically motivated pride parade.

While on the surface Sydney appears to be a law-abiding city, it is haunted by its penal origins and has a dark and seedy underground. Little can hide the large red-light district, King's Cross, or the pandemic-like drug problem prevalent in the western suburbs. To make matters worse, Sydney is plagued by a large number of crime syndicates, supervillains, and ne'er-do-wells. SHADOW has a strong influence in most of the larger cartels in the city, and a Chinese Tong secretly controlled by Doctor Sin (see *Threat Report*) opposes them. In addition, several heavily armed and mobile Vietnamese gangs pose a serious threat along with smaller gangs of Lebanese, Tongan, and Samoan extraction.

A city of this size would expect to be home to a large number of superheroes, but is largely protected by just one, Nighthaunt, along with his two teen sidekicks, Night-boy and Hauntgirl.



NIGHT HAUNT

NIGHTHAUNT

Owen Lowe's life was going well: a beautiful wife, a young son, and a good job in a special taskforce investigating international threats, including SHADOW, with the Sydney Police Force. Owen was dismayed to discover some of his fellow officers were dispensing vigilante justice, killing criminals and altering evidence to cover their involvement. Owen informed his colleagues that he was reporting their actions. That night, Owen's colleagues killed his wife and son and shot him in the head. Regaining consciousness, Owen found the murder weapon in his hand and the sound of police sirens approaching. Fleeing the scene, Owen vowed vengeance on those who had ruined his life. Stealing into the police evidence room that night, Owen procured a belt created by SHADOW that allowed him to fly and become invisible, as well as a pair of utility gauntlets, and created the identity of Nighthaunt.

Unable to clear his name, Nighthaunt brought those responsible for the deaths of his family to justice for other crimes. Nighthaunt continued his battle for justice, facing

NIGHTHAUNT

PL10 • 212 POINTS

STR 3 STA 4 AGL 6 DEX 6 FGT 12 INT 2 AWE 6 PRE 8

Powers: **Ghost Belt** (Removable; Concealment 4 (Invisible; All Visual Senses), Flight 6 (120 MPH); **Nighthaunt Costume** (Removable; Protection 2, Senses 4 (Darkvision, Infravision, Radio)); **Utility Gauntlets** (Removable; **Communicator** (Communication 3 (Radio)), **AE: Dazzle** (Cumulative Cone Area Affliction 6 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware), Limited to Visual senses), **AE: Cutting Torch** (Damage 1 Linked to Weaken 1, Affects Toughness, Resisted by Fortitude, Affects Objects), **AE: Exploding Haunt Stars** (Ranged Burst Area Damage 4), **AE: Fear Pellets** (Ranged Cloud Area Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Impaired, Disabled, Paralyzed)), **AE: Haunt Stars** (Strength-based Ranged Multiattack Damage 1 plus Range and Multiattack on Str 3)); **Flashlight** (Feature 1); **Mini-Tracers** (Feature 1); **Swing Line** (Movement 1 (Swinging))

Equipment: **Headquarters:** Abandoned Warehouse (**Size:** Medium **Toughness:** 8 **Features:** Communications, Computer, Concealed, Garage, Gym, Living Space, Power System, Security System)

Advantages: Agile Feint, Assessment, Daze (Intimidation), Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 2, Power Attack, Precise Attack (Ranged; Concealment), Skill Mastery (Stealth), Startle, Takedown, Ultimate Effort (Investigation checks), Uncanny Dodge

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+14), Athletics 8 (+11), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+14), Deception 8 (+16), Expertise: Current Events 4 (+6), Expertise: Police Officer 4 (+6), Expertise: Streetwise 8 (+10), Insight 8 (+14), Intimidation 10 (+18), Investigation 10 (+12), Perception 8 (+14), Ranged Combat: Utility Gauntlets 8 (+14), Sleight of Hand 4 (+10), Stealth 10 (+16), Technology 2 (+4), Vehicles 4 (+10)

Offense: +6 Initiative, Haunt Stars +14 (Ranged, Multiattack, Damage 4), Unarmed +14 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 8, Toughness 8/6*, Will 8* Without Defensive Roll.

Totals: Abilities 94 + Powers 38 + Advantages 15 + Skills 53 + Defenses 12 = 212

Complications: **Motivation—Justice:** Nighthaunt is determined to see justice done. He particularly loathes police corruption and will do whatever it takes to bring the perpetrators to justice. **Identity:** Nighthaunt keeps his identity secret. **Reputation:** Nighthaunt is wanted by the police and is seen as a dangerous vigilante.

villains like Bower Bird, Crime Model, Mentus the Mind Master, and many others.

BOWER BIRD

Bower Bird is fascinated by the color blue. All his crimes revolve around this obsession. Despite his criminal ways, he doesn't think of himself as a bad person at all. On rare occasion he has even worked side-by-side with Nighthaunt in foiling the schemes of other villains. Bower Bird is attracted to Nighthaunt, and has flirted with Nighthaunt openly. Bower Bird uses the Crime Fighter archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**).

CRIME MODEL

Crime Model's crimes all involve the beauty industry in some manner, and she insists on having minions record all her capers, which she then sends copies of to news services for broadcast. She desires to be the most famous "model" in the world, no matter how low she has to stoop to get there.

Crime Model is 6'1 and weighs 720 lbs. with outlandishly colored hair, which is always in a beehive. She wears outrageous make-up and revealing, figure-hugging costumes. She frequently uses an acid gun in her crimes, but she is also remarkably strong and is not afraid to get into a fist fight. She has a number of adoring minions who accompany her everywhere, taking photos and shooting film. Crime Model uses the Psycho archetype (see *Gamemaster's Guide*, **Chapter 3**) and is obsessed with the modeling industry and modeling in general. Add the skill Ranged Combat: Guns 7 (+10) and her **Acid Gun** (Ranged Weaken Toughness 8, Affects Objects, Linked to Ranged Damage 8, Secondary Effect on 4 ranks of each, Diminished Range 3 (15/40/80) on each).

MENTUS THE MIND MASTER

One of Omega's lieutenants, he was left behind after the conclusion of the last Terminus War. A hate-filled monster of a "man," Mentus intends on making a comfortable life for himself here on Earth-Prime. His powers of mind reading, mind control, and illusion generation assist him greatly with his goals. Many of his crimes involve mind-controlled innocents forced to do his bidding, and he has created a powerful criminal organization with himself at its head. Mentus uses the Mastermind archetype (see *Gamemaster's Guide*, **Chapter 3**) with the addition of numerous resources and minions.

MELBOURNE

Founded in 1835 by free settlers, Melbourne is situated on Port Phillip Bay on the southern coast of Australia. Gold was discovered in 1851, leading to the Victorian Gold Rush. This discovery encouraged further immigration by the Irish, Germans, and Chinese to the rapidly growing town and made it the wealthiest and second largest city in the world by 1880. Criminal activity exploded, bringing about the appearance of Australia's first masked mystery men. In 1954, an event of civil unrest by gold miners known as the Eureka Rebellion led to important changes in laws that contributed to the formation of a democratic government.

Today, Melbourne is the third most populous city in Australia and is known as an international cultural and arts hub, as well as a multicultural melting pot. A strong café lifestyle permeates the city and its people take pride in the large number of parks and gardens that surround the central business district and outlying urban areas. The atmosphere in Melbourne is one of sedate contentment, and the people are known for their friendly nature.

Unlike Sydney, Melbourne's criminal element is not as ostentatious, but it still exists. Organized crime is present in

smaller numbers and Melbourne has a smaller supervillain population. Villains such as Madam Redback, the Kelly Gang, and Yellow Dragon call Melbourne home, while the heroic Sunhawk, Young Gilgamesh, and his companion, the giant lion Enkidu, find themselves facing these and many other villains.

THE KELLY GANG

The Kelly Gang is a group of eight villains wearing high-tech versions of the bushranger Ned Kelly's armor. Nobody knows if the gang consists of eight individuals, robots controlled by one, or even a villain capable of duplication. They don't always all appear at the same time, but the other members of the gang never seem to be far away. The Kelly Gang specializes in bank robberies primarily, but are not averse to other heists that look to turn a tidy profit.

The armor the Kelly Gang uses is tall, heavy, and dull grey in color. It increases the wearer's strength and running to superhuman levels, is bullet proof, and can fire energy blasts from the palms of the hands. The helmet is bucket-shaped with a single, wide viewport which provides the wearer with enhanced vision. Use the Power Corps (see *Threat Report*) to represent members of the Kelly Gang.

MADAM REDBACK

Madame Redback is the woman who controls the SHADOW cell in Melbourne. A powerful, egocentric personality, she is obsessed with spiders and has molded SHADOW into the image of her beloved arachnids. She is without powers, but surrounds herself with powered spider-themed villains. Her rank and file agents are known as Wolf Spiders, her lieutenants are called Huntsmen, and an elite power-armored corps are referred to as Funnelwebs. She has influenced many organizations in Melbourne and beyond, both legal and criminal. Madam Redback plans on bringing all of the Australian SHADOW cells under her sway. Once that's completed, she will make a strike at Overshadow himself, luring him into her web with her beauty and appeal, only to kill him and assume his role. Madam Redback has conceals her face, so nobody knows who she is or what she looks like. Madame Redback uses the Crime Lord archetype (see *Gamemaster's Guide*, **Chapter 3**), but has less obvious gadgets the duplicate the effects of the **Walking Stick**. In addition, lower her STR to 0.

SUNHAWK

A common feature in the skies above Melbourne, the Aboriginal Sunhawk draws his power directly from solar rays. He has a pair of feathered wings that can sprout or retract from his shoulder blades and can fire solar energy blasts from his fists. He wears a blue costume with gold inserts, a bird motif mask, and a cowl. He is a hero and is a positive representative of the Aboriginal community and actively combats the negative image that has grown around his people. Sunhawk uses the Energy Controller archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**).

YELLOW DRAGON

Yellow Dragon leads a large criminal Vietnamese gang in Melbourne, the Dragons, who are deeply involved in human trafficking, drugs, and weapon smuggling. The gang is almost unrivaled in the larger metropolitan area of Melbourne, but smaller gangs from the outer suburbs do control some territory. Yellow Dragon intends on seeing them destroyed or absorbed into the Dragons. Yellow Dragon is a powerful, superhuman martial artist with astounding speed and the ability to generate energy around his hands that he calls his "dragon fist." Yellow Dragon uses the Martial Artist archetype (see *Gamemaster's Guide*, **Chapter 3**) with the addition of his **Dragon Fist** (Strength-based Damage 6, Inaccurate 3).

YOUNG GILGAMESH AND ENKIDU

Young Gilgamesh is a powerful, young man with superhuman strength, endurance, reactions, and resistance to injury. His deep voice is easily recognizable, and he strikes an imposing figure with his long black hair, beard, hairy chest, and Sumerian kilt. He wears a pair of ornate armbands from which he draws his power. His constant companion is a giant saber-toothed lion that is remarkably intelligent and possesses super-strength, resistances, eyes-beams, and a roar that can shatter walls. Young Gilgamesh uses the Powerhouse archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**) with Enkidu as a PL 7 Sidekick.

THE DREAMTIME

The Dreamtime is a dimension beyond time and space where the past, present, and future all coexist at the same time. The Dreamtime exists parallel to and contiguous with the Earth-Prime dimension, and can act as a gateway to other dimensions "farther" away. Australian Aboriginals believe that the Dreamtime and Earth-Prime separated when the first Europeans arrived.

The Dreamtime is home to many varied spirits, some worshipped by Aboriginals, others feared as monsters or the distributors of justice. Many spirits take the form of human/animal chimeras, while others are giant versions of living or extinct creatures. In many cases, natural Australian landmarks are the physical embodiment of Dreamtime beings. There is some argument that the Dreamtime may actually be an exaggerated view of the Lost World (see **The Lost World**). Other theories suggest that the Dreamtime and the Lost World are very closely-connected dimensions, allowing individuals to easily cross between them.

The Dreamtime can be accessed through dreams, altered states of consciousness, special rituals, specific sacred sites, or death, and is considered the place where an individual's spirit rests before reincarnation. Some suspected entry points to the Dreamtime follow.

HANGING ROCK

Hanging Rock is a significant Aboriginal sacred site known by shamans as a point where the Dreamtime merges

with the Earth-Prime. Every several decades, the barrier between Hanging Rock and the Dreamtime fades briefly. The Rock takes on a confusing maze-like quality and trails lead into the Dreamtime. Any travelers in the area at the time are unlikely to find their way out again.

ULURU

Also known as Ayres Rock, Uluru is a single massive sandstone formation in the Northern Territory located in the Kata Tjuta National Park and is sacred to the Aboriginal people of the area. Aboriginal myths tell that the fissures in the rock were caused by two tribes of warring snake people. Other stories tell how during sunset on Midwinter's eve, when the moon is full and Sirius is the brightest star in the sky, certain fissures no longer lead into dead ends, but instead deposit travelers into the Dreamtime. On such nights, creatures and spirits from the Dreamtime are able to find their way to Earth-Prime.

KALKAJAKA

Located in Northern Queensland, Kalkajaka is a mountain of large black granite boulders. The local Aboriginal tribes dread this place, as their stories tell of a great final battle that occurred there and dire consequences for any who dare to approach the sacred site. The boulders are stacked loosely, creating thousands of narrow tunnels that wind their way deep into the mountain. Most lead to dead ends, but some lead deep underground, or to the Dreamtime or the Lost World.

Rumors of a feline creature known as the Queensland Tiger, which is said to haunt the area, are also true; a huge Thylacoleo (marsupial lion) mutated by the Serpent People using both science and magic, it protects the entrance to its underground sanctuary, stalking the area invisibly and becoming visible just before attacking.

NEW ZEALAND

New Zealand, otherwise known as Aotearoa by the indigenous Maori population, is comprised of two main island masses, the North island (Te Ika-a-Māui) and the South Island (Te Waipounamu) as well as numerous smaller islands. It is located 900 miles from the east coast of Australia across the Tasman Sea. The islands are located on the edge of a tectonic plate, lending them a rugged mountainous landscape, active volcanoes, and a tendency for earthquakes.

WELLINGTON

The site for Wellington was selected for its natural beauty, central location, and natural harbor. As New Zealand's political center, Wellington houses Parliament, the head offices of all government ministries and departments, and the bulk of the foreign diplomatic missions. It is an important center of the film and theatre industry. It is also the location of Te Papa Tongarewa (the Museum of New Zealand), the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra, the Royal New Zealand Ballet, Museum of Wellington

City & Sea, and the biennial New Zealand International Arts Festival.

As in other areas of Australasia, organized crime is present here, but largely focused on the creation and distribution of drugs, rigged sports events, and an underground super-powered fight club that draws both local and international villains, and even some heroes wanting to try their luck in the ring.

Two heroes that call Wellington home are Kupe and Sea Sprite. They generally work independently, but are not averse to working together if necessary. They find themselves dealing largely with low-powered supervillains hired by organized crime. Both heroes are reserve members of the Southern Stars.

KUPE

Kupe is a Maori hero who takes his name from the mythical warrior who created Aotearoa. His powers come from his connection to New Zealand and include super-strength, resistance to injury, and control of earthquakes and mini

volcanoes. His temper mirrors the fury of the elements he manipulates, leading to all sorts of trouble. While his intentions are good, he can get carried away, often making matters worse.

Kupe is a very large, muscular man. His long black hair is usually worn tied back and his eyes are brown-black. He has tribal tattoos on his face, chest, and arms and his eyes and tattoos both glow a pale green when he uses his powers. Kupe uses the Powerhouse archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**), but his **Shockwave** and **Groundstrike** effects are both the result of his earth control powers.

SEA SPRITE

Abandoned at birth and discovered by a fisherman, Sea Sprite has no idea of her origins, but would desperately like to find out. Sweet and rather naïve, she exhibits many abilities similar to the people of Atlantis and Amphitritis, though neither city lays any claim to her. In fact, they find her appearance disturbing, as her yellow eyes and silver hair are a sign of great evil in their cultures.

Sea Sprite is a teenage girl of approximately 16 years. Her fingers and toes are webbed and her costume consists of a simple green one-piece bathing suit that has a light scale motif adorning it. She can breathe underwater, has enhanced strength and endurance, and communicate with marine animals. She can also shapeshift into any marine animal she can think of, though she is unable to make her altered form smaller and all forms are colored various shades of silver. Sea Sprite uses the Shapeshifter archetype (see *Hero's Handbook*, **Chapter 2**) with the **Aquatic** option from the Warrior Archetype and the addition of **Communication Limited** to working on aquatic animals and the *Shapeshift* effect limited as noted above.

NEW GUINEA

New Guinea is the second largest island in the world, located to north of the Australian mainland. It has a tropical environment and enjoys plenty of rainfall, making it a garden of rainforests and vegetation-covered mountains. New Guinea was first inhabited 40,000 years ago by people who arrived via land bridges and short sea voyages during the last ice age. A second group of people are estimated



KUPE

to have arrived approximately 3,500 years ago, possibly originating in Taiwan. These two groups have indulged in warfare and tribal raiding for thousands of years and have fractured into over a thousand different groups and languages. Head hunting and cannibalization were frequently practiced.

The Spanish and Portuguese first discovered New Guinea in the 16th century, but it was quickly colonized by the Dutch in the west, Germans in the north, and British in the south. During World War II, the island saw invasion and occupation by Japanese forces and became a key battlefield in the South Pacific Theatre. Eventually, the island was split into two separate nations. New Guinea lies to the west, which is separated into two Indonesian provinces: West Papua with its capital at Manokwari and Papua with its capital at Jayapura. To the east lies Papua New Guinea, which was originally governed by Australia and is divided into four regions: Papua, the Highlands, Momsa, and the Islands. Papua New Guinea was granted full independence by Australia in 1970 with its capital at Port Moresby.

Despite a long history of habitation, New Guinea is still largely geographically and culturally unexplored, and holds many secrets. Most of the 7 million inhabitants still live in a traditional manner, with only 10% of the population living in urban areas. New Guinea is situated in the area known as the Ring of Fire and has several active volcanoes. It is frequently subjected to earthquakes and accompanying tsunamis. A race of "lavamen" are rumored to dwell in the caldera of an undersea volcano in the area.

The economy of New Guinea is based on rich natural resources, including mining and fossil fuels, the majority of which are excavated by the Australian-owned company OSP Mining and Petroleum. OSP has shown little regard for the damage that has been caused by its operations, and is often the target of ecological groups seeking to put an end to their destructive methods.

PORT MORESBY

Port Moresby is located on the shores of the Gulf of Papua, on the southeast coast of the Papuan Peninsula, making it a prime target for Japanese invasion during WWII to block off Australia's access to Southeast Asia and the Americas. The location saw significant action from both Australian and Japanese super-powered combatants. By 1942, the port became the staging ground for thousands of troops as the last remaining Allied bastion on the island.

After the war, the city came under the administration of the Australian government and became the focal point for public expansion. In 1975, Port Moresby became the capital of Papua New Guinea with an independent government. New public buildings were built while the older ones left from Australian administration were left derelict. Many of these buildings still stand, and are used by local gangs as headquarters and safe houses.

Port Moresby has no resident heroes, but is plagued by a number of low-powered villains that are attempting to run their own operations.

THE OCEANS

Australasia is surrounded by the Indian and Pacific oceans, and is separated from Asia by the Arufura and Timor Seas, with the Coral Sea to the north-east and the Tasman Sea between Australia and New Zealand. The waters in this area are relatively shallow, and have deposits of oil and large populations of marine life, including great white sharks, humpback whales, and sea lions.

AMPHITRITIS

Located in the Coral Sea between New Guinea and Australia is the sunken city of Amphitritis, named for the Greek ocean goddess and wife of Poseidon, Amphitrite. Originally a colony of Atlantis, Amphitritis is an independent city that maintains good diplomatic relations with its siring city, despite bad blood between their monarchs.

The people of Amphitritis are physically similar to Atlanteans, but culturally they are quite different; a war-like and aggressive people, they maintain a culture of gladiatorial arenas, trial by combat, and an aggressively xenophobic point of view. Boasting a relatively high level of technology as well as a magical heritage, the city is ruled by King Ormor, who is assisted in his duties by a council of democratically elected senators.

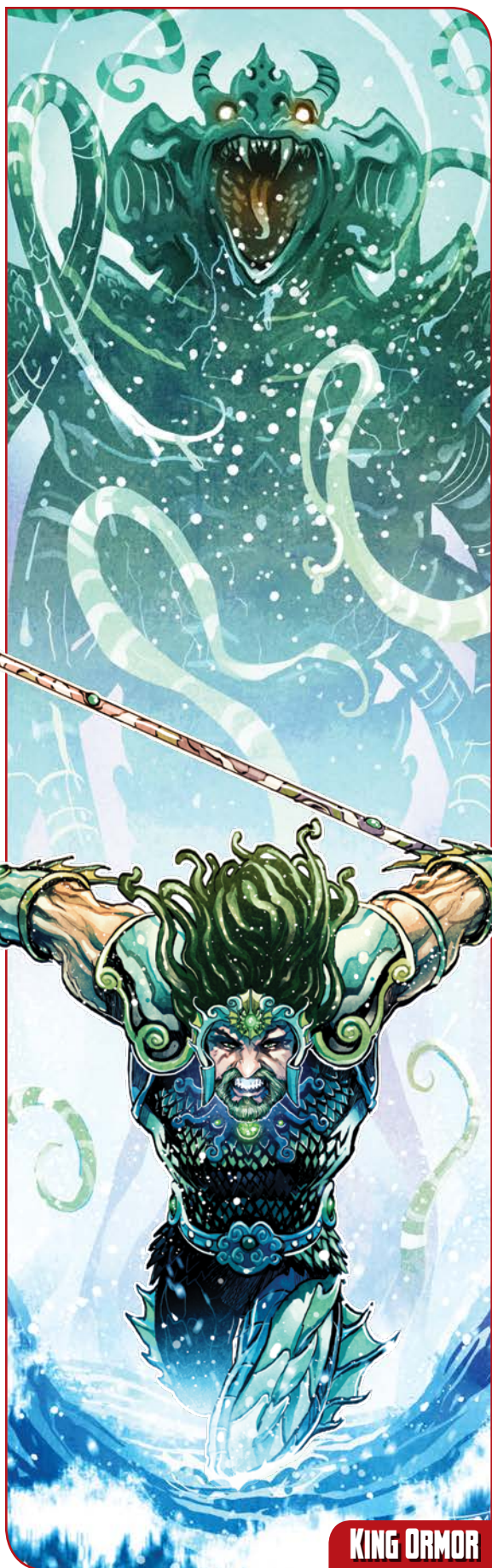
The Amphitriteans were content to remain hidden from the surface world, but their isolationism was ended suddenly in the 1990s by an oil drilling operation. Believing that his city was under attack by the surface dwelling "barbarians," King Ormor declared war and destroyed the oil rig, killing the men who were working on board. Not content to end his attack there, Ormor then led a force to the shores of Australia where he was confronted by the Australian superhero team the Southern Stars. While the Southern Stars were able to defeat Ormor and his army, relations between Australia and Amphitritis are at best strained, and at worst openly hostile.

KING ORMOR THE AQUARIAN

Ormor, King of Amphitritis, claims direct descent from the Greek Titan named Oceanus. He attained the throne not just due to his noble blood, but by proving his worthiness as a warrior in gladiatorial combats in the blood arenas of Amphitritis, just like all the previous kings. His place as king is only supported by the senate while he can prove he is capable of holding the throne, and any sign of weakness could lead to a challenge from any noble brave enough to call him out.

Therefore, Ormor was quick to retaliate when Amphitritis was threatened by an oil rig operation that damaged the city and killed several of his people. He and a small force of soldiers destroyed the rig and killed all the workers. The Australian military quickly responded, prompting Ormor to declare war on the surface dwellers and lead a large army to Federal City. The Southern Stars were able to end the hostilities, but Ormor was unsatisfied with the resultant treaty.

Wishing to learn more about the surface dwellers, Ormor became a member of the Southern Stars, proving himself



KING ORMOR

KING ORMOR THE AQUARIAN

PLT2 • 253 POINTS

STR 11 STA 9 AGL 5 DEX 3 FGT 9 INT 2 AWE 3 PRE 3

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (Cold, Pressure, Suffocation (Drowning)), Movement 1 (Aquatic), Protection 4, Senses 1 (Low-light Vision), Swimming 10 (500 MPH)); **Heritage of Poseidon (Tsunami)** (Ranged Cone Area 4 (500 feet) Damage 10, Limited to large bodies of water) **AE: Earthquake** (Ranged Burst Area 2 (60 feet) Affliction 12 (Resisted by Dodge; Vulnerable, Defenseless), Instant Recovery, Limited Degree) linked to Ranged Burst Area 2 (60 feet) Damage 12, both Limited to objects affixed to the ground); **Trident of the Titans** (Easily Removable; **Trident** (Strength-based Damage 4, Reach, Improved Critical, Weapon Bind, Weapon Break); **Call Large Aquatic Animals** (Summon 8 (Horde, Mental Link, Multiple Minions 2 (four 120-point minions), Type (General): Marine Life, Limited to in or near water), **AE: Call Aquatic Animals** (Summon 5 (Horde, Mental Link, Multiple Minions 4 (sixteen 75-point minions), Type (General): Marine Life, Limited to in or near water; **AE: Call Sea Monster** (Summon 11 (Heroic, Mental Link, Type (General): Sea Monster, Limited to in or near water))

Advantages: All-out Attack, Benefit 3 (King of Amphitritis), Benefit 4 (Multi-millionaire), Favored Environment (Aquatic), *Improved Critical (Trident of the Titans)*, Improved Initiative, Languages (English, Amphitritean native), Power Attack, *Weapon Bind, Weapon Break*

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+9), Athletics 4 (+15), Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+13), Expertise: Amphitritean Lore 6 (+8), Insight 6 (+9), Intimidation 7 (+10), Perception 5 (+8), Ranged Combat: Throw 6 (+9), Vehicles 4 (+7)

Offense: Initiative +9, Unarmed +13 (Close, Damage 11), Trident of the Titans +9 (Close, Damage 15, Crit. 19-20)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 11, Fortitude 12, Toughness 13, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 90 + Powers 112 + Advantages 12 + Skills 23 + Defenses 16 = 253

Complications: **Motivation—Responsibility:** As King of Amphitritis, Ormor must attend to his kingdom and people. **Temper:** Ormor is known for his quick temper, especially when his people or the sea are endangered. **Weakness:** Ormor dehydrates when out of water for an extended period of time, becoming impaired, disabled, and finally incapacitated before dying over the course of a single day. Immersion in water immediately removes all accumulated conditions.

to be an effective if somewhat rash hero. Despite his time with the team, Ormor found surface dwellers difficult to understand, so he eventually left the team and returned to Amphitritis.

Ormor is an unforgiving man, seeing pollution and deprivations wrought on the seas as a personal attack against his people. He has often petitioned Sea King and the rulers of other Atlantean colonies to declare full-scale war on the surface, but so far his demands have failed to move the other leaders. This hasn't stopped him from waging his own wars though, and he is often striking out on personal vendettas at the "surface-dwelling barbarians."

He has numerous superpowers that lend credence to his claim of Titan ancestry, including his ability to control water, create earthquakes, and carry the Trident of the Titans, which allows Ormor to summon and control marine life, including huge aquatic monsters.



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ANTARCTICA



ATLANTIS



SUB-TERRA



THE LOST WORLD

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ANTARCTICA

At the southern pole of the Earth lies the ice-covered seventh continent, belonging to no one nation or government, one of the world's last frontiers. Ancient and often dangerous secrets are buried beneath its glaciers and hidden in mountain valleys, making Antarctica a place of mystery and adventure.

NO-MAN'S LAND

Even on Earth-Prime, the Antarctic continent is sparsely populated, particularly when it comes to human life. A few thousand people live in Antarctica, mostly temporarily in scientific outposts, or in a few secret facilities.

Antarctica is a condominium, an international territory where the fifty signatories to the Antarctic Treaty System share sovereignty. The treaty bans all military activity and operations, mining and mineral exploitation, and nuclear testing or waste disposal, and supports scientific research and protection of the Antarctic ecozone. The signatories to the treaty share responsibility to police and enforce its terms.

The status of superhuman activity in Antarctica remains a somewhat vague point of international law, and tends to be overlooked, so long as it does not violate any of the treaty's explicit bans, particularly involving military activity or damage to the ecozone. This parallels international discussions and agreements regarding the use of superhumans as military assets and particularly "agents of mass destruction" (AMDs).

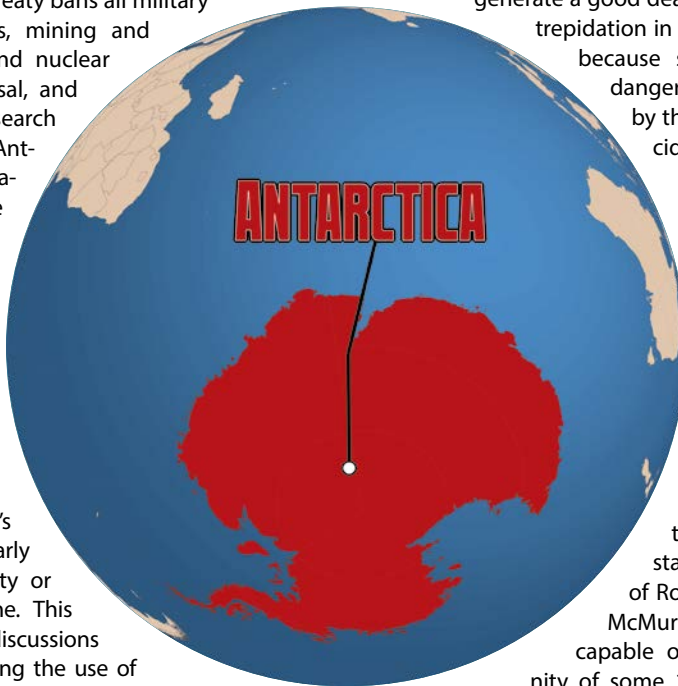
Some like to darkly jest that Antarctica is the only place on Earth where UNISON is the most effective law enforcement organization, but the UN organization's status means it is most commonly able to operate in Antarctica without excessive red tape (or, at least, no more red tape than it is normally used to). UNISON forces act as first responders to unusual or potentially hazardous events on the Antarctic continent.

SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

Most of the people in Antarctica are there to perform scientific research for one or more of the nations of the Antarctic Treaty System or the United Nations, and there are various small scientific research stations, primarily on the coast, with easy access both by sea and air.

Scientific research in Antarctica includes (among other things) studying the ecozone and its weather, geology, geography, and native animal and plant life. Studies on global warming and the depletion of the ozone layer are also priority projects, and climate research often uses data from core samples of Antarctic ice to study changes in the Earth's climate over millions of years. Astrophysicists and astronomers use the near complete lack of light pollution and the thin atmosphere of the Antarctic interior to study the stars and phenomena like cosmic background radiation.

Scientific research opportunities in the Antarctic often extend beyond the conventional, particularly given discoveries of ancient artifacts and other mysterious items beneath the deep glacial layers (see **Cold Storage**, following, for details). Such mysterious discoveries usually generate a good deal of both excitement and trepidation in the scientific community, because studying them is often dangerous, and highly regulated by the authorities to avoid accidents.



MCMURDO STATION

The largest permanent research facility in Antarctica is McMurdo Station, controlled and operated by the United States government. Established in the 1950s, the station is on the south tip of Ross Island on the shore of McMurdo Sound. The station is capable of supporting a community of some 1200 residents, although its regular population is often smaller, depending on ongoing projects. McMurdo Station is about two miles from the smaller Scott Base, a New Zealand science station.

McMurdo Station operated Antarctica's first and only nuclear reactor from 1962 until 1972, when safety and environmental concerns led to the decommissioning of the reactor. Since then, the station has relied upon more conventional diesel fuel generators and renewables like solar energy for power generation.

McMurdo Station is unofficially known as a means for AEGIS to operate in Antarctica, and the American organization typically assigns a few agents on surveillance at the station to keep an eye out for dangerous artifacts or unusual activity. "Ice station duty" is normally thought of as a punishment for most AEGIS agents, and odds are at least one or two of those assigned to the station have dis-



ciplinary problems or a need to “cool off” for a month or two down near the South Pole. Research staff at McMurdo tends to resent the presence of often bored AEGIS agents looking over their shoulders all of the time, although they have been grateful for them on the few occasions when they’ve been needed to deal with some danger recovered from the depths of the Antarctic ice.

PROJECT: DEFROST

The international research project code-named “Project: Defrost” studies a secret underground installation in the interior of Antarctica containing advanced technological equipment. The facility primarily contained a “doomsday weapon” used by an Atlantean warlord in an effort to melt all of the Antarctic ice and inundate the coastal areas of Earth. Fortunately, the device was disabled before it could do any permanent damage.

The technology of the facility may be ancient Atlantean or Lemurian, as it is a similar mix of “hard” technology and magic-focusing crystalline power sources and materials. (see **Atlantis** for details). This makes deciphering the devices there a difficult process, even more so because there is precious little by way of writing or symbols to translate, and much (or even all) of the equipment may be keyed to certain genetic or telepathic triggers. Researchers are engaged in a painstaking and comprehensive survey of the entire facility and an inventory of its contents, and are under strict orders to avoid activating anything without a clear sense of what it does.

UNISON keeps security on Project: Defrost tight to avoid any possible attempt to steal information or technology from the facility. In spite of the tempting target practically on their doorstep, SHADOW has refrained from any attempt to raid the Project: Defrost installation, out of concern of exposing the relative nearness of Nifelheim (see the following).

A CHILLY RECEPTION

With the exception of protected habitats, one challenge faced by visitors to Antarctica is the extreme cold weather and vast expanses of ice and snow with no shelter or signs of civilization. Antarctica is the coldest, driest, and windiest continent on Earth, a vast frozen desert.

In general, the Antarctic environment is intense cold, necessitating a Fortitude resistance check once per 10 minutes, starting at DC 10 and increasing by +1 per previous check. Failure earns the character a level of fatigue. Incapacitated characters become dying after failing a Fortitude resistance check against the cold.

A snowstorm, high winds, and similar weather creates conditions of extreme cold, requiring a Fortitude resistance check every minute of exposure. Characters with Immunity to cold environments automatically succeed on these checks and don’t have to worry about the icy conditions, while protective cold-weather gear can lessen the time between checks (such as treating extreme cold as just intense or regular cold), provide a circumstance bonus on the Fortitude check, or both.

ADVENTURES IN ANTARCTICA

If you need an isolated, out-of-the-way setting on Earth-Prime for your *Mutants & Masterminds* series, Antarctica is a good candidate. It's an excellent place for lost cities, hidden civilizations, alien outposts, or other things that need to stay hidden beneath a mile of glacial ice in a vast desert virtually no one visits. Just some of the adventures using Antarctica as a setting include the following:

ICE STATION NOWHERE

An accident—perhaps an attempt to pursue SHADOW or Foundry agents through a teleportal—strands the heroes inside of a deep crevasse in the depths of Antarctica during a fierce storm. The conditions of the accident may injure some of the heroes, or affect some of their powers, especially technological or energy-based abilities. The heroes have to survive the harsh conditions, figure out where they are, and how to get safely back home. They might also have to deal with villains tracking them down to finish them off.

THE LOST CITY

Antarctic explorers have discovered the ruins of an ancient city hidden in the Antarctic mountains, and word of the discovery has leaked out too quickly for the world's governments and intelligence agencies to cover it up. Now UNISON and the United Nations wants to take custody of the site and allow careful and measured scientific research, but there are other factions eager to loot the place for anything valuable it might contain, and the heroes are asked to provide extra security. What does the city contain, and who built (and later abandoned) it? Possibilities include the Preservers, ancient Atlanteans, Serpent People, Sub-Terrans, the Ultimals, or other alien visitors to Earth, to name a few.

VISITATION

The Antarctic may be “neutral ground” for visiting aliens to arrive on Earth, so when a vast ship appears, hovering over the frozen interior of the continent, there's a scramble to ready Earth's defenses and to send a diplomatic mission to meet the visitors. Although they claim to be peaceful, they turn out to be anything but, broadcasting a “carrier signal” intended to brainwash humanity. The real reason their ship arrived in Antarctica was to take advantage of the ozone gap over the continent to receive a clear signal from their relay on the edge of Earth's solar system. If the heroes can cut off the broadcast, the aliens are not much of a threat but, until then, they have to deal with the whole of humanity being turned against them!

The cold conditions may also affect certain characters' complications, such as a vulnerability to cold temperatures or power loss triggered by the cold. At the Game-master's discretion it can cause further complications involving machinery freezing and seizing up, particularly if it happens to strand the heroes in the Antarctic, forcing them to get along on their own.

NIFELHEIM

Deep beneath the eternal ice fields of Antarctica, far from any human habitation, lies Nifelheim, the secret headquarters of SHADOW. Named for the land of eternal ice in Norse mythology, Nifelheim serves as the most secret and central base of the sinister organization. While SHADOW maintains bases all around the world, Nifelheim is kept carefully hidden. It is here that SHADOW grows and trains new clone soldiers for its ranks, and here where Overshadow retreats after a defeat or setback to hatch new plots for world-domination.

The main complex is like a small city beneath the Antarctic ice. Only small, concealed entrances open onto

the snow-covered surface. The main means of getting in or out of the facility is via teleportal, linked to hidden SHADOW bases and safehouses around the world. This prevents SHADOW agents from being easily tracked and allows them to move freely behind the scenes. The teleportals also provide Nifelheim with the ability to receive shipments of weapons and technology directly from the Foundry. Teleportals from other SHADOW bases are programmed to erase the location of Nifelheim after each use, and trapped to self-destruct if unauthorized users attempt to reach the secret base through them.

Nifelheim is crewed by thousands of SHADOW troopers and equipped with clone banks capable of producing thousands more. It also has research facilities and a high-tech prison for holding captured superheroes, although prisoners are not routinely brought to Nifelheim.

Although Antarctica is high on law-enforcement's list of suspected locations for a secret SHADOW base, there has never been a confirmed breach of Nifelheim's security nor the revelation of its location. Searching the entire continent is a fruitless task, even with satellite imaging and other technology, given how well-concealed the underground base is. Learning Nifelheim's location, much less gaining access to it, would be a coup of the first order for an organization like AEGIS or UNISON, although ironically the ban on military operations in Antarctica would make it difficult to mount an assault on Nifelheim without international repercussions.

NIFELHEIM

HQ • 29 PTS

Size: Awesome • **Toughness:** 20 • **Features:** Combat Simulator, Communications, Computer, Concealed 3 (+20 DC), Defense System, Fire Prevention System, Gym, Hangar, Holding Cells, Infirmary (and Clone Lab), Isolated, Laboratory, Living Space, Power (Teleport, Affects Others), Power System, Security System 2 (DC 25), Workshop

Overshadow has taken precautions in the event that his enemies do storm Nifelheim. Once the base's secrecy is compromised, its usefulness to SHADOW is considerably lessened. The installation has a self-destruct system, placing its geothermal power system on overload with the assistance of more conventional explosives. It is capable of destroying the entire base (and much of the surrounding area) in the equivalent of a massive volcanic eruption, ideally after Overshadow has escaped via teleportal or by transferring his consciousness to a new clone, of course.

THE ICE PEOPLE

Deep in the interior mountains of Antarctica lie underground passages many thousands of years old. These passageways contain the ruins of an ancient humanoid civilization along with a number of survivors.

Over ten thousand years ago, alien genetic technology modified a group of humans to survive in extreme cold temperatures, also stimulating a latent cryokinetic ability to lower temperatures and an extended hibernation capability. This offshoot of humanity became known as the "Ice People" to the inhabitants of ancient civilizations like Atlantis, and may have inspired any number of human myths and legends about ice- and snow-dwelling supernatural beings.

After the retreat of the great glaciers at the end of the last glacial period, the Ice People fled north and south, following the frozen climate, until they eventually settled, and then began to fall into "the Great Sleep," a deep state of suspended animation, in which their life functions were suspended and their bodies preserved by the cold.

One Ice Person, named Gela-Ziir, was accidentally discovered buried in ice in the Arctic Circle. Initially believed to be a well-preserved corpse, he was taken for study and defrosted, which restored him to a confused state of consciousness. Gela-Ziir—or "Glacier" as he became known in the media—claims to be a prince of the Ice People, and seeks to find and restore them, certain they have slumbered too long, and concerned that human tampering with the environment will soon spell the end of his race, if polar ice caps continue to melt at an alarming rate.



GLACIER

PL12 • 157 POINTS

STR 7 STA 3 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 5 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 2

Powers: **Cold Control** (**Cold Blast** (Ranged Affliction 12 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Incapacitated)), **AE: Cold Projection** (Environment 12 (16 mile radius; extreme cold)), **AE: Ice Binding** (Cumulative Ranged Affliction 8 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized), Extra Condition, Limited Degree), **AE: Ice Blast** (Ranged Damage 12), **AE: Ice Shapes** (Create 12), **AE: Ice Slick** (Ranged Burst Area Affliction 8 (Resisted and Overcome by Dodge; Hindered and Vulnerable), Defenseless and Prone), Extra Condition, Limited Degree); **Ice Armor** (Protection 10); **Ice Slides** (Flight 2 (8 MPH), Platform); **Immune to Cold** (Immunity 10 (Cold effects))

Advantages: Favored Environment (Extreme Cold), Improved Critical (Ice Blast), Language (English, Ice Person native), Power Attack

Skills: Athletics 6 (+13), Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+8), Expertise: Magic 4 (+6), Insight 4 (+5), Intimidation 8 (+10), Investigation 4 (+6), Perception 6 (+7), Ranged Combat: Cold Control 7 (+9), Technology 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +2, Cold Blast +9 (Ranged, Affliction 12, Fortitude DC 22), Ice Binding +9 (Ranged, Affliction 8, Durable DC 18), Ice Blast +9 (Ranged, Damage 12, Crit. 19–20), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 7)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 10, Toughness 13, Will 12

Totals: Abilities 48 + Powers 51 + Advantages 4 + Skills 23 + Defenses 31 = 157

Complications: **Motivation** — **Responsibility:** Glacier believes he is the prince of the Ice People and responsible for returning them to the world, and ensuring they have a world to return to, when they awaken from their long hibernation. **Weakness:** Glacier takes an extra degree of effect from heat and heat-based attacks.

GLACIER

Gela-Ziir is not sure about anything: His memories, his identity, his heritage, or his purpose. Nevertheless, he pursues all of those things with single-minded zeal. He thinks that he is a prince of a tribe, clan, or community of Ice People, and that his people entered a deep "cold sleep" during the warming of the Earth, one intended to last until the next great glacial period covered the world in ice once again. Awakened prematurely, Gela-Ziir remains confused about many things: The lost site of his people was not where he recalled. He is unclear about the details of his own life prior to the Great Sleep; images and memories are dream-like, fragmentary, and often contradictory.

GLACIER

ICE PERSON

TEMPLATE - 41 POINTS

Abilities: Stamina +2, Strength +4

Powers: **Cold Control** (**Cold Blast** (Ranged Affliction 6 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Incapacitated)), **AE: Cold Projection** (Environment 6 (1800 foot radius; extreme cold)), **AE: Ice Shapes** (Create 6), **AE: Ice Slick** (Ranged Burst Area Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Dodge; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Prone), Extra Condition, Limited Degree)); **Ice Armor** (Protection 4); **Immune to Cold** (Immunity 10 (Cold effects))

Complications: **Weakness:** Ice People takes an extra degree of effect from heat and heat-based attacks.

Totals: Abilities 12 + Powers 29 = 41

ICE PERSON SURVIVOR

PL6 - 76 POINTS

STR 5 STA 2 AGL 0 DEX 1 FGT 4 INT 0 AWE 0 PRE 0

Powers: **Cold Control** (**Cold Blast** (Ranged Affliction 6 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Incapacitated)), **AE: Cold Projection** (Environment 6 (1800 foot radius; extreme cold)), **AE: Ice Shapes** (Create 6), **AE: Ice Slick** (Ranged Burst Area Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Dodge; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Prone), Extra Condition, Limited Degree)); **Ice Armor** (Protection 4); **Immune to Cold** (Immunity 10 (Cold effects))

Skills: Athletics (+9), Close Combat: Unarmed 1 (+5), Expertise: Magic 2 (+2), Insight 2 (+2), Perception 2 (+2), Ranged Combat: Cold Control 4 (+5), Technology 2 (+2)

Offense: Initiative +0, Cold Blat +5 (Ranged, Affliction 6, Fortitude DC 16), Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 5)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 6, Toughness 6, Will 4

Totals: Abilities 24 + Powers 29 + Advantages 0 + Skills 9 + Defenses 14 = 76

Complications: **Motivation – Survival:** Most Ice People are simply looking to survive in a strange and often hostile world. **Weakness:** Ice People takes an extra degree of effect from heat and heat-based attacks.

Still, he knows two things for certain: The Earth is overrun by a barbaric human civilization and it is in the process of destroying whatever slim hope the surviving Ice People have of ever awakening to see their world again. Humans have shown him nothing but duplicity, suspicion, and hatred in Gela-Ziir's view, and they blatantly disregard signs they are polluting and damaging the ecological balance of the world beyond repair.

Since his initial reawakening, Glacier (as he is now called) has sought to stop and reverse the damage caused by humanity, even attempting to create a new ice age through artificial means, and considering eradicating (or at least greatly reducing) the human population. He has also ceaselessly sought any signs of surviving Ice People, hidden in their cold sleep in still-frozen parts of the world. The very small handful he has found thus far could not be successfully revived, and Glacier despairs for the survival of his race, if he cannot succeed.

Glacier looks like a slim but muscular man of indeterminate age, partially because his hair is completely white. He is clean-shaven and his skin is cobalt blue and as hard as super-frozen ice. He tends to dress practically in simple clothes offering freedom of movement but has been

known to go for outlandish costumes and fashions he feels befit a "Prince of the Ice People."

THE ICE PEOPLE

The Ice People found in the Antarctic ruins are similar in some regards to Glacier, although their cryokinetic abilities are nowhere near as developed. They have the same pure white hair and deep blue icy hard skin as Glacier (although, again, not quite as tough).

Reviving Ice People from their cryogenic suspension is a DC 16 challenge sequence (See **Challenges** in **Chapter 8** of the *Hero's Handbook*) requiring two successful Technology, Expertise: Magic, and Treatment checks each before the accumulation of three failures. If the challenge does not succeed, then the Ice People do not survive the revival process.

At the Gamemaster's discretion, the Ice Person template and background could be the basis for the origin of characters other than Glacier. Another ice- or cold-based character might be an Ice Person (either aware of their true nature and heritage or not) and experimentation with Ice Person DNA (either samples taken from Glacier or others) could produce hybrids or altered humans with Ice Person like traits and powers. Ancient interbreeding may even mean there are latent Ice Person genes in some portion of humanity (especially near perpetually cold regions). Trying to "activate" this potential could be part of the scheme to artificially create Ice People, either by Glacier or some other villain or organization.

COLD STORAGE

The eternally frozen tundra and glacial ice of Antarctica make it one of the few places on Earth where truly ancient relics of the bygone past can remain in literal cold storage for centuries, if not millennia or more.

SPACE DEBRIS

Antarctica is home to any number of ancient meteorite impact sites, and more modern space debris that manages to survive the reentry into Earth's atmosphere is likely to embed itself deep into the glacial layer of ice, which reforms from melt water and debris cascading into the impact zone to bury any evidence.

Glacial flow against the mountains and other high elevation parts of the continent can churn up debris embedded in the ice, eventually bringing it to the surface in the foothills of those mountains, where it can be more easily discovered. Researchers often scour the lowlands of the mountains for evidence of these sorts of possible finds.

Exactly what meteorites or other space debris found in Antarctica might be is limited solely to the Gamemaster's imagination. A few of the possibilities include:

- Meteorites composed of or containing unusual extraterrestrial materials or radioactive elements, which

THE ICEBOX

The challenges faced by the Blackstone prison off the coast of Freedom City have led the U.S. authorities to experiment with other means of handling super-powered inmates, including the privately-run Buckner Ridge "Lockdown" facility and the newer and more isolated Deep Six prison submerged off the coast of Emerald City (see: **The United States of America** and the *Emerald City* sourcebook for details). One such experiment is a top-secret facility in Antarctica, code-named "The Icebox".

The facility is similar in design to Blackstone, although with fewer levels at present. See the *Freedom City* sourcebook for details. It is built entirely underground, both for security and secrecy, since the entire project is technically illegal and a violation of the Antarctic Treaty, making the Icebox a "black site," an illegal prison run outside of sovereign U.S. territory, where prisoners can disappear, without contact with the outside world, or any legal recourse.

Although the Icebox is operational, its use is restricted to extremely dangerous inmates and particularly those of questionable legal status, such as aliens, extradimensional beings, and artificial constructs. An influx of alien activity following the Silver Storm in Emerald City and all that followed encouraged the completion and activation of the Icebox project.

It's left up to the Gamemaster who exactly is incarcerated in the Icebox, and whether or not the U.S. authorities choose to entrust the heroes with knowledge of its existence or location. They may simply be informed that unusually dangerous or alien captives are being held at "a secure site" and that any further information is classified. Similarly, what the heroes do if they do learn of the existence of the Icebox is up to them.

can have unusual effects upon interacting with the terrestrial environment or life-forms

- Meteorites carrying alien spores, microorganisms, or other forms of life, kept in suspended animation by being buried in Antarctic ice for who knows how long. Upon a change in their environment, such as surfacing above the ice, or being discovered and brought back to a research station, this life begins to revive and flourish.
- Debris from human artifacts (satellites and such) placed in orbit that decayed and crashed back to Earth's surface. Any surviving material is most likely fused junk, but some especially well-protected things might survive reentry and they're also the most likely to be both secret and valuable.
- The remains of alien technology, perhaps even an entire crashed alien starship, could be hidden beneath the ice, awaiting discovery. The crew of such a vessel (if any) might be long dead, or some of them could still survive in suspended animation within the ship, awaiting discovery or rescue.

(see **Sub-Terra**) created or inhabited by any of the races dwelling there.

Similarly, Antarctica may have been the site of one or more alien outposts, particularly by the ancient Preservers, who tampered with human evolution and development, and left powerful artifacts of their civilization scattered across the galaxy. It can also include the ancient Lor or Grue civilizations or other interstellar species. See the *Cosmic Handbook* for some ideas of alien intervention on Earth.

More terrestrial "ruins" can include abandoned installations and hidden bases similar to Nifelheim, the Icebox, and Project: Defrost which haven't been used for years or even decades, and haven't been found by outsiders yet. An eccentric hero or villain might have maintained an Antarctic fortress, like Centurion's Sanctum (see: **Canada**), now empty and waiting to be found and looted.

Some sites and ruins may not be so empty, in fact, with different inhabitants or creatures found in them. There are ancient survivors in magical or technological suspended animation, or various creatures frozen in antarctic ice, perfectly preserved, until modern science is able to defrost and revive them. Of course, they may not be entirely what they appear, and the freezing or revival process might have unexpected side effects. An isolated zoo, menagerie, or "terrarium" environment in the Antarctic might continue to function, creating a small, isolated "lost world" for heroes to explore.

Isolated artifacts of various sorts may turn up, particularly related to the sites described previously or associated with the barren cold of the Antarctic environment. It's the perfect place where someone might find a lost Preserver device, or something like the mystical "Heart of Winter," a perfect gem of enchanted ice able to cloak the world in snow, for example, or a cursed item banished to "the furthest corner of the world" long ago and left buried in a glacier for centuries.

ANCIENT ARTIFACTS

The frozen continent is also home to any number of artifacts lost and hidden beneath the ice and snow, or in the depths of crevasses, caves, or tunnels through the mountains. Some of the things that can turn up in Antarctica include the following.

Like the Ice People (previously), Antarctica may be home to the ruins of ancient and long past civilizations. This can include any of the various hidden offshoots of humanity found on Earth-Prime, such as the Ultima, the Atlanteans, the Utopians, or the inhabitants of Shambala Vale (see other chapters of this *Atlas* for details). It can also include underground ruins connected to the realm of Sub-Terra

THE LOST WORLD

In a few secluded places around the world there are subterranean passages and portals leading to a lush, secret land in which dinosaurs still live, where the two dominant civilizations are long-lost populations from the Incan and the Roman empires, and where mysteries hide in ancient Atlantean and alien ruins.

The exact location of the Lost World is hard to pinpoint, if that's possible at all, but it seems to exist in a pocket dimension of some sort, although there have been a number of theories put forth by visitors over the years. Whatever the case, the reality of the Lost World is a savage realm where only the strong survive.

LOST WORLD PREMISES

The Lost World is in a dimension of its own, but it isn't a world of its own. Its existence is tied to Earth's and possibly (probably) a number of other worlds. It seems to take bits and pieces from these other worlds haphazardly but, despite its apparent randomness, the Lost World has a look and feel that's distinctive. The Lost World is built on some premises that should be taken into account when it's being used as a setting for adventures. These are not hard and fast rules, but guidelines that help maintain the feel of the setting. If one or more of these premises doesn't mesh with your M&M game, feel free to change it based on the suggestions here, but be careful if you do; some of these premises are central to the character of the Lost World.

IT'S EASIER TO GET TO THAN TO LEAVE..

...and it's not easy to get to! Most people find their way to the Lost World by accident. Usually the trip is short and unexpected. Some people, those who've heard of the Lost World and decide to seek it out, can spend a long time finding a way there. Oftentimes the portals are hidden underground or guarded by primitive tribes, impenetrable wilderness, or guardian spirits linked to the portals. Other times, a portal appears randomly, like in the Bermuda Triangle (see **The Caribbean**). No matter how a person gets there or what they have to overcome to do it, getting there is actually the easy part, leaving, on the other hand, is trickier. The path a character took to get here may not lead back to the same place or the portal may have closed up entirely! Those stable portals that do exist are few and far between. A handful of people in the Lost World know of a stable portal or two (such as Zandar's knowledge of a path back to Freedom City), but depending on whom you meet, it may not be the portal you need.

STRANGE JUXTAPOSITIONS

While the Lost World looks like a savage, jungle world populated by dinosaurs and other prehistoric creatures, in truth it's much more than that. Within its confines is

a strange mixture of people and artifacts from different worlds, times, and races. Primitive humans live alongside dinosaurs, which prey upon bands of Serpent People who search through Atlantean ruins for powerful artifacts. New people arrive at random and either survive and add to the mix or perish, leaving behind artifacts of their own to add to the mystique of the place. At first glance the Lost World wouldn't seem to be a place where you'd find alien technology, magic, primitive tribes, and civilizations from other times, but those things are there and they combine to make Lost World unique.

PRIMITIVE TRUMPS MODERN...USUALLY

Physical strength, raw power, big teeth and claws—these are the things that define the Lost World. Anyone who accepts that will survive; anyone who embraces it will thrive; and anyone who rejects it, will die. The only time being from an "advanced" culture is a good thing is when it makes you stronger—such as knowing how to build traps, create explosives, or use a gun!

EXPLORATION AND THE UNKNOWN

The Lost World hasn't been mapped, not accurately and not completely, anyway. Certainly the people who live there know how to get around and where important landmarks are, but easily usable maps are nonexistent. Perhaps this is simply a matter of the level of technology available, but it's just as likely that there's something about the land itself that *resists* mapping so that a map made one day doesn't actually reflect where things are the next. Regardless, exploration and discovery of what lies around the next bend is an important theme in the Lost World.

HERE BE MONSTERS!

Unlike the modern, civilized world, "monsters" of all stripes exist and are actually the dominant lifeforms in the Lost World. This includes everything from cavemen and pre-historic creatures like dinosaurs and saber-toothed cats to Serpent People and strangely mutated animals. There may even be alien creatures that have found their way here through portals from other worlds or that escaped from an alien ark. These beasts are a threat to everything and a constant danger to anyone in the Lost World.

"MAGIC" SUFFUSES EVERYTHING

In addition to raw strength, some of the creatures and inhabitants of the Lost World have been changed by a power intrinsic to the place. In this case "magic" could mean almost anything from an alien artifact that has unpredictable effects to radioactive crystals, or actual magic. Regardless of the source, this power source (or all of them) changes some of the creatures exposed to it. It's possible



to find a fire-breathing T-rex, a giant ape, some other creature never seen before, or a young woman with the ability to cast spells. All of these draw their abilities from this power source, consciously or not.

ONLY THE STRONG SURVIVE

Finally, the Lost World is a savage land, and survival is a daily struggle. The people here know that and are quick to recognize and separate the strong from the weak. Danger lies around every corner in the form of a raptor just as it lies in the sweet smile of a jungle princess who has ambitions of her own. Everyone in the Lost World can take care of him- or herself and anyone who spends much time here better have their wits about them and be quick on their feet.

HISTORY OF THE LOST WORLD

The peoples of the Lost World each have their own creation myths or ideas about where their world came from. These include everything from the traditional beliefs of the Romans and Incans, to the unfathomable thoughts the Serpent People have about Yig or the Dark Gods that came before. In addition, the tribes native to the land have primitive ideas all their own. It's likely they'll never know the truth of the matter.

THE PRESERVERS

The ancient aliens known as the Preservers actually created the Lost World to serve as a prison. When the Preservers first arrived on Earth they experimented with human life, but cared little for the reptilian Serpent

People, seeing little potential in them. In order to remove them from the equation and ensure that they wouldn't interfere with human progress, the Preservers created a pocket dimension and gathered up many of the Serpent People and imprisoned them there. Along with the Serpent People, they deposited some of the indigenous peoples they hadn't experimented on and re-created a number of creatures that had been native to Earth, but died out due to environmental conditions. They thought it might be worthwhile to have some of the original human stock and other life-forms native to Earth safely stored away just in case something went wrong with their experiment. When they were done with their experiments, they left.

Unfortunately, they underestimated the Serpent People, who used their dark arts to weaken the barriers between the dimensions and "tunnel" back to Earth as well as into a number of parallel dimensions. They quickly reestablished their Empire of Lemuria and came into conflict with the nation of Atlantis, founded by the humans the Preservers had experimented on. The two nations fought, which brought about the Great Cataclysm, signaling the end of both nations. For the Serpent People it was their final defeat. Their civilization was left in ruins, their people spread in small bands throughout the world. They quickly sunk into barbarism. Even their prison wasn't safe during the war. The Atlanteans found it, attacked, and devastated the refugees the Serpent People had set up there, but not without heavy losses on both sides of the conflict. Atlantean and Lemurian artifacts from the time of this conflict still litter parts of the Lost World.

In the time since the Great Cataclysm, the Lost World has changed very little. Life persists and, over time, even more strange creatures and people have found their way

into the Lost World. At some points in the past the barrier between Earth and the Lost World was so permeable that whole portions of Earth were drawn into it, seemingly permanently.

THE LOST WORLD TODAY

In the present day of the Lost World, things are as they've always been—at least from the perspective of the people who live there. Dinosaurs roam the land, the two major civilizations have an unsteady truce, and every now and again strangers from somewhere else arrive to cause trouble. What the people in the Lost World don't know is that the walls between dimensions have slowly strengthened over time. The portals between worlds have become erratic and more difficult to find. Perhaps the barriers established by the Preservers have slowly "healed" the damage inflicted by the Serpent People, or the influence of interdimensional conflicts like the Terminus Invasion, or the discovery of the Preserver Stones, on Earth-Prime have had some effect.

THE TRUE HISTORY

No one in the Lost World actually knows its true history and, depending on how you want the setting to work in your game, the information given here may have to change entirely. Use what's presented here as a jumping off point or feel free to change it. It doesn't really matter since there's no written history of the Lost World, no scientists delving into the secrets of its universe, or anyone who really cares all that much about it. The inhabitants of the Lost World are far more concerned with what's happening in the here and now, and not what may have happened at the dawn of creation.

GEOGRAPHY

The Lost World mirrors Earth's geography at an early stage of its development. It looks something like Earth did during the early Jurassic period. The continents are still mostly linked together, with Antarctica, Australia, India, Africa, South America, and North America clumped together running north-south and Europe and Asia spread out widely running roughly east-west in the far north.

Even in this configuration, many of the major geographical landmarks exist, such as the Andes, Urals, and Rocky Mountains. Vast expanses of plains, forests, and deserts also exist, but their locations aren't necessarily consistent with those of Earth's, simply because of where the continents are located on the surface of the Earth and what the weather is like, given those changes.

Using this configuration gives the Lost World an alien feel, while still being familiar enough for people to grasp. It also allows Gamemasters to change the location of the Lost World without necessarily changing what it looks like. Additionally it is easier to ad-lib the locations of landmarks like rivers, plateaus, small mountains, lakes, and anything else the Gamemaster wants to throw in.

Gamemasters may find the archetypes from **Chapter 3** of the *Gamemaster's Guide* useful, notably the **Animal**, **Cultist**, **Dinosaur**, and **Monster** archetypes.

HUMAN PRIMITIVE

The Lost World is lightly populated compared to Earth-Prime. Most humans belong to scattered and often nomadic tribes that survive however and wherever they can in the wilderness. It is far more common to encounter these tribes

ALTERNATE LOCALES

The Lost World is linked to the Earth-Prime setting, which means super-powered beings pop up there now and again. If you're running a more straight-up "Warriors & Warlocks" fantasy game using *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS*, you may wish to ignore or downplay the Lost World's links to Earth-Prime.

Essentially, the Lost World is located in a pocket dimension connected to Earth via various tunnels and portals. If that doesn't work for your game or you have someplace else you'd rather locate it—move it! There are any number of places the Lost World could be and the right choice is always the one that works best for your game.

Here's a list of other possible locations of the Lost World. Feel free to use or ignore them as you please.

The Lost World is located...

- On a world in another dimension—it could even be another Earth in a parallel universe.
- Inside the Earth (or whichever world you're using)
- On another world light years away from Earth, but everyone *thinks* it's in another dimension.
- At the crossroads between worlds, or near it.
- In a rift between worlds that isn't supposed to exist.
- Inside a pocket dimension used as a power source for an alien or Atlantean craft.
- In the world of dreams.
- Inside a magical gem or some other magic item

Any of these options or something you come up with on your own are perfectly acceptable. The important thing is that the flavor of the setting be maintained.

NOVA ROMA



while they are out hunting and gathering, although explorers may encounter various villages, settlements, cave dwellings, and even small towns in their travels.

The human inhabitants of the Lost World are a hardy lot, as they must be to survive in such savage surroundings. Their sole concern is the safety and continued survival of their band, tribe, or village, and their technical sophistication is barely beyond the Stone Age. Some human shamans have the Artificer and Ritualist advantages.

There are, however, a few cities visitor might find in the Lost World.

NOVA ROMA

Nova Roma is a grand, walled city built and expanded over more than a thousand years. It was founded when General Viridius Sophus and his legion found a passage into the Lost World and claimed the strange new land in the name of Emperor Marcus Aurelius. General Sophus and his men set to work on building a defensible encampment and reporting back to his commanders. Unfortunately all of the messengers either never came back or returned to report they couldn't find the path back. Regardless, Sophus continued to make the attempt for years, as did the Generals who replaced him after he died. Finally, after nearly 100 years they stopped sending messengers and decided to give up on ever seeing or hearing from Rome again.

After the decision was made, the men of the Legion began expanding the city. This had already been necessary, as some had taken local tribeswomen as brides and raised families, but now the command to establish a city had been given and they attacked the problem with typical

HUMAN PRIMITIVE

PL4 • 41 POINTS

STR 2 **STA** 3 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 3 **INT** -1 **AWE** 0 **PRE** 0

Equipment: knife (Damage 1, Crit. 19-20), spear (Damage 3, Crit. 19-20)

Advantages: Equipment 2

Skills: Athletics 4 (+6), Expertise: Survival 6 (+5), Insight 2 (+2), Intimidation 2 (+2), Perception 4 (+4), Ranged Combat: Throwing 2 (+3), Stealth 4 (+6)

Offense: Initiative +2, Spear +3 (Ranged, Damage 5), Knife +3 (Close, Damage 3), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 4, Toughness 3, Will 3

Totals: Abilities 20 + Powers 0 + Advantages 2 + Skills 12 + Defenses 7 = 41

Roman precision and determination. In short order they'd cleared some of the surrounding land, expanded the walls, and built more structures using traditional Roman building techniques as well as new tricks learned from locals. Thanks to the influx of Lost World natives as well as the ever-expanding families of Roman stock, the city has continued to grow. Thousands now populate Nova Roma, all of them living in a city that resembles Rome at the height of the Empire, albeit a tropical Rome with domesticated dinosaurs carrying riders and hauling carts through the cobblestone streets. They are ruled by Praetor-Governor Antoninus Augustus. Even in all this time, no Nova Roman has declared himself Emperor, ostensibly owing allegiance to far off, lost Rome, although some consider the "City of Seven Hills" just as much a myth as Mount Olympus.

Relations between Nova Roma and the surrounding territories are good. The city provides a stable place

ROMAN LEGIONNAIRE

PL4 • 40 POINTS

STR 1 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 4 INT 0 AWE 1 PRE 0

Equipment: armor (Protection 2), spear (Damage 3, Crit. 19-20), sword (Damage 3, Crit. 19-20)**Advantages:** Equipment 2**Skills:** Athletics 2 (+3), Expertise: Soldier 4 (+4), Insight 3 (+4), Intimidation 4 (+4), Perception 2 (+3), Ranged Combat: Throwing 2 (+3), Stealth 3 (+4), Vehicles 2 (+3)**Offense:** Initiative +1, Spear +3 (Ranged, Damage 4), Sword +4 (Close, Damage 4), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 1)**Defense:** Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 4, Toughness 4, Will 3**Totals:** Abilities 20 + Powers 0 + Advantages 2 + Skills 11 + Defenses 7 = 40

UTAHRAPTOR

PL7 • 54 POINTS

STR 7 STA 4 AGL 3 DEX -2 FGT 5 INT -4 AWE 1 PRE 0

Powers: **Bite** (Strength-based Damage 1), **Hide** (Protection 4), **Huge** (Growth 4, Innate, Permanent), **Jumping** (Leaping 1 (15 feet)), **Running** (Speed 2 (8 MPH)), **Senses** (Senses 4 (Acute Olfactory, Low-light Vision, Tracking Olfactory, Ultra-hearing))**Advantages:** Improved Grab, Improved Initiative**Skills:** Perception 4 (+5), Stealth 4 (+3)**Offense:** Initiative +7, Bite +5 (Close, Damage 8)**Defense:** Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 8, Toughness 8, Will 4**Totals:** Abilities 54 + Powers 21 + Advantages 2 + Skills 4 + Defenses 15 = 54

for the tribespeople to trade and has even supplied aid to some of the tribes when needed. The Nova Romans' relationship with Viracochasuyu is uneasy at best. Soon after the Incans' arrival to the Lost World, the Nova Romans tried to conquer them, but the power of Viracocha drove them back. Since then the two city-states have treated each other diplomatically and trade between them has grown. Even so, Praetor-Governor Augustus dislikes the fact that there's a power his Legionnaires can't overcome and he's actively searching for a way to overthrow the Incan "god," should he become a threat to the city.

Nova Roma is a suitable place to include virtually all of the comic book Roman clichés in the depths of the jungles of the Lost World, including gladiatorial games, marble columned temples to the gods, visionary seers, grim and determined legionnaires, and more.

ROMAN LEGIONNAIRE

The Legionnaire archetype can be used for normal foot-soldiers as well as for cavalry riding utahraptor mounts (following). Officers tend to have more ranks in Expertise: Soldier along with Expertise: Tactics and sometimes more interaction skills (especially if they have political aspirations).

UTAHRAPTOR

Senior members of the Nova Roman legions lead patrols mounted on giant, domesticated utahraptors. They're

INCAN WARRIOR

PL4 • 42 POINTS

STR 2 STA 2 AGL 2 DEX 1 FGT 3 INT 0 AWE 0 PRE 0

Equipment: knife (Damage 1, Crit. 19-20), spear (Damage 3, Crit. 19-20)**Advantages:** Equipment 2**Skills:** Athletics 3 (+5), Expertise: Riding 5 (+5), Insight 2 (+2), Intimidation 4 (+4), Perception 4 (+4), Ranged Combat: Throwing 2 (+3), Stealth 2 (+4)**Offense:** Initiative +2, Knife +3 (Close, Damage 3), Spear +3 (Ranged, Damage 5), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 2)**Defense:** Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 4, Toughness 3, Will 3**Totals:** Abilities 22 + Powers 0 + Advantages 2 + Skills 11 + Defenses 7 = 42

also used as mounts for outriders and scouts—admittedly scouts for whom stealth is not overly important. The raptors can also be used riderless as wild animals. Utah-raptors are ten feet tall, twenty feet long, and weigh 1,500 pounds.

VIRACOCHASUYU

Viracochasuyu is a city, but a city in the Incan concept of such things. It has buildings, dwellings, streets, and people, but considering the population of Incans in the area, very few of them actually call Viracochasuyu home. To the Incans, a city is mostly a place of business, trade, and government, so during the days Viracochasuyu is lively and packed with people, but at night its streets are nearly empty, as almost everyone goes home to the villages and townships in the surrounding hills and mountains. Some of these villages and terraced farms are miles from the heart of Viracochasuyu, but even so they're considered part of the city simply because they're within the sphere of influence of their god-king Viracocha.

The Incan Empire was drawn here centuries ago by the power of Viracocha, who'd foreseen the end of the Incan civilization on Earth at the hands of outsiders. Viracocha found the Lost World and, thanks to his power and the weakened dimensional barriers, was able to transplant his mountain empire here. Since then he's stayed with his people and defended them against invaders, natural disasters, and otherworldly threats. The Incan people are thankful for Viracocha's presence and regularly sacrifice people (both Incans and outsiders) to a live volcano in his honor.

The citizens of Viracochasuyu show little fear while within the boundaries of their city, but are cautious when outside their god's domain. Their reliance on Viracocha has made the Incans somewhat overconfident on their own turf, and wary about expanding beyond it, but they still know they have to take care of themselves and most of them are competent warriors, some of whom are trained pteranodon riders. Their terrestrial leader holds the title of *Willaq Umu*, or High Priest. He runs the day-to-day workings of the Empire and often confers with Viracocha on important matters.

MORE CITIES

In the background of the Lost World only Nova Roma and Viracochasuyu are named as being of any significance. That doesn't mean you have to keep it that way. The information in this sidebar includes suggested names for other cities and empires you may want to add to the setting. If you add these cities to your campaign, create backgrounds for them based on unique cultures. Suggestions are given below.

AGHARTA

A metropolitan city made up of tribespeople who have left their towns and villages to create a city all their own. This would make an excellent "capital city" for the Lost World as it incorporates all the various factions found here.

ARYAYARSHA

A city originally founded by Hindu mystics. Unfortunately their association with the Aryan concept brought them to the attention of Nazi occultists who found their way here and wiped out the founders. Now this small Nazi outpost struggles to survive by using tribeswomen as breeding stock while searching for Atlantean artifacts they're certain will give them the power to return home and rejoin the Third Reich.

BELOVODYE

Founded by a nineteenth-century Christian sect from Russia. This is a peaceful city of quiet contemplation. More than a few citizens of Belovodye take it upon themselves to wander the Lost World and spread the Good Word.

HSI TIEN

A Chinese city of artists and warriors who still believe strongly in traditional hierarchy and manners.

JANAIDAR

So named by the Kirghiz people who settled here around 1000 C.E. after finding a path to the Lost World in the Tian Shian Mountains. The original settlers were one of the fabled forty tribes of the Kirghiz. They live a somewhat nomadic life, but built the permanent city of Janaidar for protection. It sits empty much of the time, but during times of trouble it overflows with people.

KALAPA

A Tibetan city settled by monks and servants. They think of the Lost World as the Pure Land of their teachings and call the entire area Olmolungring. Kalapa is an incredibly impressive mountain city with well-guarded paths and buildings that hang off the sides of the mountain. It is a beautiful place almost always shrouded in clouds or covered in snow.

INCAN WARRIOR

Like the Nova Romans, the Incans have good relations with surrounding tribes, although their penchant for human sacrifice keeps most people away. In general the Incans regard the Nova Romans with distrust, but they know they won't do anything while Viracocha lives—and their god is as eternal as the sun.

Incan warriors patrol their mountain empire's borders from the backs of their domesticated pteranodon mounts (see **Chapter 3** of the *Gamemaster's Guide* under **Dinosaurs**).

VIRACOCHA

Viracocha is the avatar of the Incan sun-god who serves as a protector of the empire of Viracochasuyu. He is a PL X character (discussed **Chapter 3** of the *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS Gamemaster's Guide*) and his power is nearly limitless—within the mountains and lands surrounding Viracochasuyu. Beyond that range, however, he has limits, so he doesn't leave the area of the city. Because he's never left Viracochasuyu in living memory it's not clear *how* much power the living god loses when he does, but it must be significant enough to keep him

within Viracochasuyu. Indeed, that Viracocha is limited to the city is itself a closely-guarded secret, known only to his loyal priesthood, although many citizens of Viracochasuyu suspect, as do the canny Nova Romans, who have observed how the Incan city never expands beyond a certain point, and have wheedled some choice hints from careful observation (and bribery) over the years.

THE SHADOW SEA

Since the Lost World is made up of basically one single landmass that stretches across one side of the globe, there's really only one body of water, at least from the Lost World's inhabitants' perspective. They call it the Shadow Sea, not because it is dark, but because they can see the shadows of all the creatures swimming in it—and given how varied and abundant life is in the Lost World, that's a great many shadows. The sea teems with life, from the smallest fish to whales, kraken, and even aquatic dinosaurs like the plesiosaur.

The sea itself doesn't have a single personality; depending on the day, time, location, and weather, it is calm, choppy, threatening, or downright dangerous. Most of the coast-dwelling people of the Lost World know how to read the

THE SLAYER

PL8 - 134 POINTS

STR 4 STA 4 AGL 4 DEX 4 FGT 9 INT 1 AWE 3 PRE 3

Powers: **Jumping** (Leaping 1 (15 feet)), **Jungle Training** (Movement 3 (Sure-footed, Swinging, Trackless (visual)))**Equipment:** heavy pistol (Ranged Damage 4), sword (Damage 3, Crit. 19-20)**Advantages:** Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 3, Evasion, Improved Aim, Improved Initiative, Inspire, Languages 2 (Latin, Quechua, English native), Leadership, Power Attack, Precise Attack (Ranged, Cover), Ranged Attack 3, Takedown, Tracking, Uncanny Dodge**Skills:** Acrobatics 4 (+8), Athletics 4 (+8), Expertise: History 7 (+8), Expertise: Tactics 7 (+8), Insight 5 (+8), Intimidation 5 (+8), Investigation 4 (+5), Perception 5 (+8), Ranged Combat 4 (+8), Sleight of Hand 1 (+5), Technology 2 (+3), Treatment 2 (+3), Vehicles 2 (+6)**Offense:** Initiative +8, Pistol +11 (Ranged, Damage 4), Sword +9 (Close, Damage 7), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 4)**Defense:** Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 9, Toughness 6/4*, Will 7 *Without Defensive Roll**Totals:** Abilities 64 + Powers 7 + Advantages 21 + Skills 26 + Defenses 16 = 134**Complications:** **Motivation—Adventure:** Slater is a daredevil who lives for adventure.

THE SLAYER

sea thanks to a lifetime of exposure to it while fishing, both from the shore and from handmade boats. Only the major civilizations sail the high seas for purposes of trade, but their ships are becoming a common enough sight in some parts of the world that some of the tribes are starting to do the same, albeit on a smaller scale.

HEROES OF THE LOST WORLD

A savage place, the Lost World does have a few heroes of its own, who rise above the tribal conflicts and the politics of the great cities.

THE SLAYER

Professor Michael Morgan Slater was born and raised on modern-day Earth where he attended West Point, served his country during wartime, and eventually went on to become a professor of military history. Slater is an unparalleled outdoorsman and daredevil, so it surprised no one when he decided to make the trek across the Himalayas.

The trip was hard and he likely would have made it across, but unmarked helicopters attacked his team. Everyone but Slater was killed in the first pass, so he ran, pursued by armed men. After a long chase he ducked into a cave complex. He was lowering himself into the caverns with his climbing gear when pursuers cut his ropes and he fell—into another world.

When he woke, he was in the Lost World with no idea how he'd gotten there. Since that time, Slater has befriended the people of Viracochasuyu, where they have taken to calling him "The Slayer," a corruption of his last name. Slater has yet to return to Earth and he's not sure if he wants to. The Lost World may not be as comfortable as home, but it offers challenges and opportunities unlike anywhere else.

Slater is a confident, dignified, and incredibly healthy man in his mid-40s. He's both a competent fighter and leader with a knowledge of tactics and history that he uses to good effect in both roles. He is a powerfully-built man with green eyes, a gray Van Dyke-style mustache and beard, and prematurely gray hair that he wears collar-length. He stands six feet tall and wears ornate golden armor (which is mostly for show) gifted to him by Viracocha. He's armed with both a sword and his trusty sidearm, a magical talisman to the primitive cultures of the Lost World.

ZANDAR THE JUNGLE LORD

Alexander "Zandar" Challenger is a man of two worlds, born and raised in the Lost World as royalty, descended from good English stock of Earth. His ancestor, Professor Challenger, discovered the "lost plateau" in South America that serves as a gateway to the Lost World, initially believing that the whole of the Lost World was contained there. Zandar has visited Earth on several occasions, but considers the Lost World his true home.

ZANDAR THE JUNGLE LORD**PL9 · 147 POINTS****STR 4 STA 4 AGL 9 DEX 4 FGT 9 INT 0 AWE 6 PRE 4****Powers:** **Jumping** (Leaping 1 (15 feet)), **Jungle Training** (Movement 4 (Safe Fall, Sure-footed, Swinging, Trackless (visual)))**Equipment:** knife (Damage 1, Crit. 19-20)**Advantages:** Agile Feint, Animal Empathy, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 1, Evasion, Great Endurance, Improved Hold, Languages 4 (Latin, Quechua, and several tribal languages, English native), Luck, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Takedown, Tracking, Uncanny Dodge (hearing)**Skills:** Athletics 4 (+13), Athletics 6 (+10), Expertise: Survival 10 (+10), Insight 4 (+10), Intimidation 4 (+8), Perception 6 (+12), Ranged Combat: Throwing 4 (+8), Stealth 4 (+13), Treatment 4 (+4)**Offense:** Initiative +9, Knife +9 (Close, Damage 5, Crit. 19–20), Unarmed +9 (Close, Damage 4)**Defense:** Dodge 12, Parry 12, Fortitude 9, Toughness 6/4*, Will 9 *Without Defensive Roll**Totals:** Abilities 80 + Powers 9 + Advantages 19 + Skills 25 + Defenses 14 = 147**Complications:** **Motivation— Responsibility:** Zandar has a legacy of responsibility to the Lost World and its people.

The Jungle Lord is a forceful presence, a necessary survival trait on his home world. He tends to speak to animals much as he would to anyone else, and they respond to him in kind. Zandar is 6'2", powerfully built, and perfectly proportioned. He has brown eyes and shoulder-length black hair and rarely ever wears more than a loincloth, hide boots, and a necklace of dinosaur teeth. Visitors from Earth find him surprisingly articulate, and he speaks perfect English, albeit with a slightly odd, unidentifiable accent.

LOST WORLD ADVENTURES

The Lost World is an exotic setting for change-of-pace adventures where the normally urban superheroes are “fish out of water” in a savage jungle fantasy world. It’s a great opportunity to do something different from the “scheme of the week” supervillains and would-be world conquerors.

The following are some Lost World adventure ideas suitable for an M&M superhero series set primarily on Earth-Prime.

LOST WORLD RESCUE

Someone has gone missing on Earth, accidentally stumbling through a portal into the Lost World. It may be a friend or loved one of the heroes, an important public figure, or the heroes themselves might be the “lost” ones who encounter the portal. The primary challenges of the adventure are to find the missing person(s), survive in the savage Lost World, and figure out a way to get back home.

AGAINST THE OVERLORD

A powerful villain has seized control over one of the cities of the Lost World, or perhaps the entire realm. This is typi-

**ZANDAR**

cally an evil sorcerer (see the archetype in **Chapter 3** of the *Gamemaster's Guide*) but could also be a mad scientist, dimensional conqueror, or a jumped-up nobody who has discovered some ancient artifact (or usurped the power of a character like Viracocha). The heroes are called upon to help the oppressed people overthrow the villain and restore freedom. This may be complicated by the villain's powers rendering all other super-powers useless in the Lost World, perhaps even transforming visitors into more appropriate “native” forms (see the **Super-Powers and the Lost World** sidebar).

LOST WORLD INVASION

Like the previous adventure concept, except the villainous overlord goes on the offensive, opening one or more portals to Earth-Prime and sending forth an army of soldiers, perhaps riding or backed by dinosaurs and savage creatures, and wielding mystic or alien technology, to conquer the Earth! The heroes have to help fend off the

SUPER-POWERS AND THE LOST WORLD

The “weird stories” vibe of the Lost World has just as eclectic a collection of sources as the comic book feel of Earth-Prime, including primitive magic, dinosaurs, jungle adventures, alien ruins, Atlantis, and ancient history. Depending on the type of story you want to tell, the Lost World setting may or may not interfere with the powers of heroes visiting from other worlds. Power interference or nullification might be caused by anything: ancient Atlantean technology, spells woven millennia ago, passage between dimensions, the alignment of the stars and planets of the Lost World, or what have you. What really matters is, if you’re looking to do a “jungle survival” story, then the heroes might need to be deprived of some of their amazing powers, at least for a while. Award the players hero points for the Power Loss complication, and continue right on with the story.

In the same vein, being in the Lost World may *grant* some characters powers, or enhance some existing ones. Certainly, it’s an ideal setting for those with nature-based abilities, especially concerning plants and animals, and being able to talk to or control beasts takes on a whole new dimension when you’re surrounded by dinosaurs! Exposure to the dimensional crossing, or to weird science or magic in the Lost World setting, can also spark latent powers or lead to temporary or even permanent changes to existing ones, which also coincidentally suit the overall theme of the adventure.

The lack of technological infrastructure may “de-power” some characters, even if the group as a whole doesn’t encounter problems. A technopath focused on controlling machines, for example, will find few examples of working technology in the Lost World, and those reliant on radio waves, much less the Internet, are also in for a disappointment. Award the players of these characters hero points for the complication and encourage them to find novel stunts to spend those points on during the game.

invasion, find a way to close the portals, and perhaps carry the fight to the Lost World itself, aiding the resistance in overthrowing the villain and restoring balance.

THE LOST WORLD SERIES

The Lost World has a slightly more realistic flavor than some “fantasy” settings, but it can accommodate a wide range of power levels if need be. At its heart, the Lost World fits the Man vs. Nature concept so the characters’ humanity should be central to the story. Not that the characters should be pedestrian; they can and should be remarkable, but remarkable on a human scale.

Heroic characters may find themselves on the run from a number of challenges they encounter, at least until they can find some way to outmaneuver or outsmart their opponents, especially if it’s one of the larger beasts found in the Lost World. Cinematic characters find surviving a bit easier. They still won’t be able to stare down a T-rex, but they won’t show quite as much concern when they encounter one. These characters walk the edge between normal but highly trained, and nearly superhuman.

The following are broad frameworks for a Lost World series of “swords and sorcery” adventure in the setting, many of them also suitable for inspiring adventures or mini-series for visiting heroes from other worlds (like Earth-Prime).

TO SAIL THE SEAS OF BLOOD

The characters have their own ship and sail the waters of the Shadow Sea, preying on merchants from Nova Roma, villages near the Incan city of Viracochasuyu, and anyone else they happen to find on open waters. They might be true pirates, raiding to make themselves richer, or they may be gold-hearted rebels who only attack ships belonging to their enemies—or belonging to the enemies of whoever they’ve thrown their lot in with.

This framework requires the pirates to have some place they can offload goods, but whether it’s a secret cave, a pirate haven, or one of the larger settlements is left to the players and GM to decide. Their secret haven could even be Freeport (described in the *Freeport: City of Adventure* sourcebook from Green Ronin Publishing), which they reach via a secret sea route out of the Lost World known only to them (and perhaps a few others).

THICK AS THIEVES

There aren’t many large cities in the Lost World, but those few that support a significant population could easily play host to a game focusing on a group of thieves. The characters may operate on their own or work for some form of a Thieves’ Guild if the city is large enough to support such an organization. The players could also be bandits, perhaps in the style of Robin Hood, supporting a small community with their loot. Day by day they eke out a living, waiting for a good time to strike against their oppressors, most likely the Nova Romans. Games like this may even include characters leaving town to find a particularly irresistible piece of treasure somewhere out in the ruins.

SWORDS FOR HIRE

Mercenaries, sell swords, heroes for hire, whatever you want to call them, that’s what the characters are in this series. They’re well trained, well armed, and looking to make some coin. The Incans, safe under the protection of Viracocha, don’t need much protection as long as they don’t stray far from the city, but when they do they may need hired guards to keep them safe. The Nova Romans have their own military, but they’re not above hiring outsiders to go on clearly suicidal missions when needed. It’s inevitable in this sort of game that the characters end up taking on a mission for someone who doesn’t have their best interests at heart, or whose true plans the characters just can’t go along with once they learn of them. Perhaps an Incan priest hires the heroes to guide him to some

ancient ruins that hold an alien crystal that will allow him to overthrow Viracocha and establish a new, darker empire under his control, for example.

BLOOD AND SAND

Whether outsiders or natives, the heroes are all captured and enslaved as gladiators, most likely in the arena of Nova Roma. They must survive bouts against fierce opponents and savage creatures (ranging from lions to dinosaurs), honing their fighting skills and ability to work the crowd while searching for a means of escape, perhaps even leading a full-fledged slave rebellion. This framework often leads into a **Day of the Sword** or **Swords Against the World** series (following).

DAY OF THE SWORD

Revenge is always a good motivation. In this case the heroes are denizens of the Lost World who have lost something (or someone) due to the actions of another. The villain could be anyone from a local warlord flexing his muscles, to a Nova Roman commander gone rogue, or even a shaman or dark mage who has overrun the area with mind-controlled dinosaurs. No matter who it is, reaching the villain should only come only at the end of a long quest for revenge. If you really want to shake things up, perhaps the ultimate villain is a big name in one of the main cities. That way the characters not only have to deal with the person they're after, but they also have to deal with his friends and colleagues in the city—none of whom want to see their friend a head shorter.

JWELED THRONES OF THE EARTH

Most of the Lost World is wild and unclaimed, so it only makes sense that someone might want to carve out a piece of it for themselves. Whether the characters are from the Lost World or some other world like Earth-Prime, they might want to create a place where they feel more comfortable. For characters who don't originate from the Lost World it's not likely they'll feel particularly at home in an Incan or Nova Roman settlement.

A common variant of this framework includes elements of **The Prodigal King** (following), where the characters become involved with one or more supporting cast characters who have a claim to nobility or leadership in the Lost World, helping them to regain their heritage, and perhaps establishing long-term friendships or romantic relationships along the way. This includes the classic "jungle princess" story where a noble woman—often the exiled daughter of a despotic villain—falls in love with one of the heroes (although it can just as easily be a "jungle prince").

THE PRODIGAL KING

This is a particularly good series framework for characters from the Lost World. They could count among their number a young noble or military leader from Nova Roma or one of the chosen of Viracocha, or even royalty from an as yet undiscovered city-state (see the **More Cities** sidebar for some ideas).

As a twist on this concept, perhaps they've been exiled from their place of origin and have to fight their way back to gain their birthright. The characters may be from elsewhere and banished to the Lost World, so that they can't come back and claim their rightful place. This storyline works particularly well with the Lost World's penchant for attracting people from unusual places and times. In this case the characters could have originated from a sword and sorcery world, sent here to die. They have to find their way back to their home world and crush those responsible. This same storyline works well for a modern day series with some changes; the characters fall prey to the machinations of an ambitious senior executive at their parents' company and find themselves kidnapped and deposited in a world they're completely unfamiliar with, while the exec uses their disappearance as an excuse to take the reigns of power at the corporation, for example.

SWORDS AGAINST THE LOST WORLD

The characters are likely a "ragtag" band who've banded together because of their unusual backgrounds and outsider statuses to survive as best they can in the Lost World. They may be an eclectic group of outsiders and exiles from different cities, tribes, and even places beyond the Lost World. This sort of series shares a number of things in common with the **Swords for Hire** framework and its episodic nature may be even more appealing to some players and Gamemasters.

STRANGERS IN A SAVAGE LAND

The heroes are from somewhere other than the Lost World (Earth-Prime, most likely) but find themselves exiled in the strange and savage realm. They have to learn how to survive in their new surroundings (perhaps picking up new skills and abilities along the way) and either quest after a way to return home (which could be the focus of an entire series on its own) or accept that there's no way back and find their place in the world, settling into a different type of series framework. The heroes may benefit from their foreign ways and knowledge, presuming they can get certain things like advanced technology to work in the Lost World (see the **Super-Powers and the Lost World** sidebar).

SUB-TERRA

Throughout history, humanity has believed other lands or even entire other worlds lay hidden beneath the surface of the Earth. From mysterious caverns inhabited by monsters to the realms of the dead and the damned, people have speculated about the world within the Earth.

On Earth-Prime that “world” is called Sub-Terra, and is in many ways far stranger than the civilizations on the surface of the Earth have ever imagined. Even in the modern age, it is a place of monsters, myth, and menaces spawned from both science and sorcery.

THE HISTORY OF SUB-TERRA

The ancient empire of the Serpent People discovered the existence of Sub-Terra long before human civilization arose on Earth. It remains unknown if the Serpent People were involved in engineering or creating aspects of the subterranean world, or if they simply discovered and exploited a natural property of Earth’s mystical and dimensional fields. Both have been proclaimed true at different points, but the Serpent People are both mad and notorious liars.

At least initially, the Serpent People had little use for the subterranean realm, primarily using it as a dumping-ground for some of their various genetic experiments. Occasional escapees amongst the slaves of the Serpent Empire also found their way into the tunnels and chambers of Sub-Terra. Although most did not survive for long, some did, and a few even managed to thrive there for a time.

Most of the Serpent People perished in the sinking of Lemuria, but some escaped into the subterranean tunnels, deep beneath the surface of the Earth, protected from the devastation of the world above. There the survivors set about creating a new slave race to serve their needs. They engineered a breed of human with great physical strength and the ability to operate in near-total darkness.

These new slaves eventually rebelled against their serpent masters. They seized several underground cities for themselves, expelling the Serpent People from them. The former slaves became known as the Morlocks. Legends about the Morlocks may have inspired various human myths of dark elves, dwarves, mole-people, and other underground dwellers, as well as the work of H.G. Wells in his novel *The Time Machine*.

In time, the Serpent People engineered a new servitor race, carefully weeding out individual initiative or any ability to rebel. These new slaves, while controllable, proved no match for the savagery of the Morlocks, whose continued attacks against the Serpent People drove them to abandon many of their subterranean settlements, and their new slaves along with them. Without any real initiative of their own, the servile Sub-Terrans continued maintaining the ancient cities and machines, going about their duties without really knowing (or caring) why they did so.

The conflict between the Morlocks and the Serpent People exhausted both societies and drove them both deeper into barbarism. The Serpent People continued to degenerate, until they lost nearly all vestiges of civilization. Cults worshipping terrible, alien gods and practicing profane rites flourished in both cultures, contributing to their decline.

Some years ago Jerris Trent, a surface world explorer, discovered Sub-Terra and some of its Sub-Terran inhabitants. The servile creatures fixated on Trent as their new master and he established his own underground empire (also known as Sub-Terra), dubbing himself the Terra-King. Using the ancient, abandoned science of the Serpent People and his legions of Sub-Terran slaves, the Terra-King has made several attempts to conquer parts of the surface world, thwarted by heroes like the Atom Family and Dr. Metropolis.

Few other surface people have visited Sub-Terra, but the Atom Family spent some time there, as have a few other heroes and explorers. Dr. Atom reports there are thousands of miles of caves and tunnels winding beneath the North American continent alone.

SUB-TERRAN GEOGRAPHY

How can an underground realm like Sub-Terra even exist? Thousands of miles of tunnels riddling the Earth’s crust? Entire vast caverns containing ancient, ruined cities? Rivers of magma flowing through the basalt fortresses of the Magmin—the whole of it seems not only too fantastic, but scientifically impossible. If the Earth’s crust were truly as shot-through with tunnels and caverns as Sub-Terra suggests that it is, it would be as delicate as lace, unable to withstand the pressures of the planet’s core. That is saying nothing of the apparent disconnect between distances and environmental conditions found in Sub-Terra, where creatures sometimes appear to travel thousands of miles in a fairly brief time underneath the surface of the Earth.

Dr. Atom has speculated some, if not most, of the Sub-Terran tunnels and caverns run through dimensional “faults” like the passages to the Lost World and similar “hidden places” on Earth. Indeed, there is at least one known passageway to the Lost World from Sub-Terra, and vice versa, and other tunnels there could lead to other worlds, places, or even times.

More mystically-minded scholars have pointed out that Sub-Terra’s major tunnels and passages tend to follow the contours of Earth’s network of ley lines, flows of magical energy through the “body” and “aura” of the planet, representing dimensional forces ebbing and flowing much like the movement of the continents themselves, forming “fault lines” and places of dimensional stress and weakness. This lends credence to the theory that much of Sub-Terra is not actually “inside” the Earth, but in an interstitial interdimensional realm of its own, strongly linked

to certain caverns and geological features on Earth. The deeper one goes into Sub-Terra, the stranger and less connected to Earth's reality it seems to become.

Parts of Sub-Terra appear to shift, seemingly at random, or in response to events on the surface world, or changes in the flows of dimensional energy. Among other things, this often means visitors never see quite the same Sub-Terran terrain twice; tunnels appear to move, maps never remain useful for long, and new and unusual places spring up seemingly out of nowhere. These changes don't seem to happen while anyone is observing them, and Dr. Atom speculates that intelligent creatures may "stabilize" parts of Sub-Terra through their presence in a kind of "macro-observer-effect." Nevertheless, the apparent shifting of the Sub-Terran terrain can be disorienting, causing visitors to become lost and trapped, unable to find their way back to the passage linking them to the surface world.

INHABITANTS OF SUB-TERRA

Sub-Terrans, Morlocks, Serpent People, and various creatures descended from ancient Lemurian experiments can be found in Sub-Terra. The Terra-King controls some of these monsters, using them as living weapons.

In the present, the Morlocks and Serpent People are savages, living in small, scattered tribes, and rarely ever visiting the surface world. There remain some civilized Serpent People, mainly priests and sorcerers from ancient Lemuria preserved in a kind of stasis, or genetic "throwbacks" with greater intellect than their brethren. Morlocks also occasionally see mutations with greater intelligence and psionic abilities. Such mutants typically become leaders of small tribes or even successfully weld several tribes together into a larger band. Although the Morlocks tend to be mistrustful of magic, there are secretive cults ruled by priests of demons or alien gods present in both cultures.

FOMORIANS

Early efforts by the Serpent People to breed human slave-races met with mixed results. Arcane techniques infused these early subjects with the primordial forces of chaos, warping their genetics and giving them animalistic, bestial qualities. Some of them turned out quite powerful, while others were pathetic freaks. In either case, they were unsuitable for their masters' use, and were either slain or driven underground into Sub-Terra.

There, in the eternal darkness beneath the Earth, the banished creations survived as best they could, seeking refuge and scratching out a meager existence, breeding and passing on their chaotic genes. Eventually, a psionic Fomor named Balor was born to one tribe, becoming their leader, and guiding them on a long journey through the tunnels and caverns to settle ancient Ireland. These Fomorian fought battles of conquest against the humans of the British Isles, and eventually survivors of the sinking of Atlantis, who became known as the Tuatha De Danann. Both factions passed into myth, and settled other dimensional realms.

FOMORIAN

PL5 · 43 POINTS

STR 5 **STA** 3 **AGL** 0 **DEX** 0 **FGT** 3 **INT** 0 **AWE** 0 **PRE** 0

Powers: Fomorians have 5-15 (1d20-5) points of powers such as Damage, Growth, Immunity, Movement, Protection, or Senses owing to their various mutations

Equipment: Club, knife

Advantages: Equipment 1

Skills: Expertise: Survival 4 (+4), Insight 2 (+2), Intimidation 4 (+4), Perception 4 (+4)

Offense: Initiative +0, Club +3 (Close, Damage 7), Knife +3 (Close, Damage 6), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 3, Parry 3, Fortitude 5, Toughness 3, Will 3

Totals: Abilities 22 + Powers 5 + Advantages 1 + Skills 7 + Defenses 8 = 43

Complications: **Motivation** – **Aggression:** Fomorians savagely fight for dominance. **Chaotic:** Fomorians have a variety of odd mutations, which may cause various disabilities.

Scattered tribes of Fomori remain in Sub-Terra as well. They are as unpredictable as their genetics: A "typical" Fomorian is a contradiction in terms. They are nearly all brutishly strong and tough, as much a result of their lifelong environment as their genetics. Each new generation is another spin of the genetic roulette wheel, producing random mutations. Fomorians often have animalistic traits like horns, hooves, fur, claws, and the like, but multiple limbs, tentacles, gigantism, dwarfism, albinism, and other mutations are common. Most Fomorians are capable of breeding with humans (and other human offshoots like the Atlanteans, Morlocks, Utopians, and Ultima). At times in the past, they have abducted humans to act as breeding stock, sometimes with an eye towards stabilizing their bloodlines, but without success. Such "changelings" may be one source of human mutations many generations later.

Fomorian culture is savage and dominated by its strongest and most cunning members. Their standards of esthetics and "beauty" are virtually nonexistent, although they often make a point of flouting surface-world conventions in those regards.

MORLOCKS

Morlocks are stocky, pale humanoids with white hair and dead-white eyes. They tend to wear simple, dark clothing and carry clubs or similar primitive weapons made of stone. Morlock mutants are taller, thinner, and more refined, but with the same white skin, hair, and eyes (although their eyes may be unusual colors, or glow when they use their mental powers).

MAGMIN

Long ago, a tribe of human or Morlock demon-worshippers in Sub-Terra was transformed into humanoid creatures of molten rock now known as Magmin. They dwell in the deepest depths of Sub-Terra, near natural pockets of magma and lava vents, since they prefer the super-heated environment. Surface drilling and blasting, along with natural eruptions, have occasionally driven Magmin to the

MORLOCKS AND SERPENTMEN CLASH



surface, where they attack anyone not of their own kind before retreating down below the surface once more.

Magmin are stocky, wide creatures with skin like cooling magma: a dark rocky coating over seething hot liquid rock. Their eyes and mouths glow with heat. They're capable of grinding speech, but more often simply grunt or growl. Their terrible heat makes even touching them dangerous. Magmin are immune to heat and can wade unharmed through pools of lava. Indeed, they're quite uncomfortable in cooler environments.

Some Magmin are still demon-worshippers, led by a magic-using priest, while others seem entirely agnostic. Whatever they once were, they appear entirely asexual now, reproducing rarely by infusing life force into pools of magma, from which arise new Magmin, fully-grown and able to take on roles in their society in fairly short order.

There is at least one substantial Magmin settlement in Sub-Terra, the basalt city of Pyros. The Magmin there once raised a giant example of their kind from the magma pools: the Great Volcanon, like an ordinary Magmin, but with 12 ranks of Growth and 5 additional ranks of Damage added to its Heat Aura.

SERPENT PEOPLE

Once, the Serpent People were the supreme rulers of Earth, and they stubbornly refuse to allow anyone to forget it. However, the modern scions of that once-mighty race have fallen far indeed, a long and steady descent into savagery and madness.

Most Serpent People in Sub-Terra are little more than animals; sinuous, scaled humanoids with snake-like heads and long tails. They wear crude, ragged clothing (if any) and attack non-Serpent People on sight, using their clawed hands or poisonous fangs. They instinctively obey the commands of civilized Serpent People, but aren't smart enough to carry out orders more complex than attacking, guarding, fetching, or carrying.

A few rare Serpent People retain a measure of civilized intellect. They look much like their savage cousins, but a cold reptilian intelligence gleams in their dead, golden eyes. Civilized Serpent People are either remnants of their ancient civilization, kept in stasis for uncounted millennia, or the occasional genetic throwback born with both cruel intelligence and racial memories of their ancient ways. Savage Serpent People instinctively defer to and obey them, allowing the sometimes weaker civilized minority to survive and thrive among them.

Civilized Serpent People typically dress in long, hooded robes with wide sleeves, but they're magically able to assume other humanoid forms at will, allowing them to move about undetected. Many civilized Serpent People are also sorcerers of some skill.

SUB-TERRANS

The Sub-Terrans are so lowly a race they even lacked a name for themselves until the Terra-King discovered them, calling them by the same name he gave to their underground realm. They are small, sickly-looking humanoids averaging about four feet tall with pale yellowish skin, but surprising strength for their size. Their bodies

MORLOCK

PL3 • 21 POINTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 0 DEX 0 FGT 3 INT -1 AWE 1 PRE 0

Powers: **Darkvision** (Senses 2 (darkvision)), **Tough** (Protection 1)**Equipment:** Club, knife**Advantages:** Equipment 1**Skills:** Expertise: Survival 4 (+3), Perception 2 (+3)**Offense:** Initiative +0, Club +3 (Close, Damage 4), Knife +3 (Close, Damage 2), Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 1)**Defense:** Dodge 2, Parry 3, Fortitude 3, Toughness 2, Will 1**Totals:** Abilities 10 + Powers 3 + Advantages 1 + Skills 3 + Defenses 4 = 21**Complications: Motivation – Aggression:** Morlocks are driven to threaten creatures foreign to their territory. **Disability:** Morlock eyes are sensitive to light. They are visually impaired in daylight or the equivalent.**Morlock Mutant:** Add 20 power points in any of the following powers (including modifiers): **Affliction** (Resisted by Will), **Communication** (Mental), **Comprehend** (Languages), **Illusion**, **Move Object**, or **Remote Sensing**. See the *Hero's Handbook* and *Power Profiles* for additional mental power ideas.

MAGMIN

PL5 • 63 POINTS

STR 3 STA 3 AGL 0 DEX -1 FGT 3 INT -2 AWE 0 PRE -1

Powers: **Darkvision** (Senses 2 (darkvision)), **Heat Aura** (Reaction Damage 5), **Immunity** 20 (Heat Effects, Life Support), **Tough** (Protection 1)**Skills:** Expertise: Survival 4 (+2), Perception 2 (+2)**Offense:** Initiative +0, Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 3, plus Heat Aura)**Defense:** Dodge 2, Parry 3, Fortitude 5, Toughness 6, Will 1**Totals:** Abilities 10 + Powers 45 + Advantages 0 + Skills 3 + Defenses 5 = 63**Complications: Motivation – Survival:** Magmin are primarily motivated to survive and protect themselves. **Disability:** Magmin are susceptible to low temperatures. They are hindered in cold and paralyzed in freezing temperatures.

are hairless and their solid white eyes are adapted life in near-total darkness, rendering them blind (and usually panicked) in daylight or the equivalent.

Sub-Terrans are innately servile, designed that way by their ancient Serpent People creators. They have virtually no individual initiative or ego, fanatically obeying the commands of whomever they consider their master. In the absence of someone to command them, they continue to faithfully carry out whatever duties they may have, even for generations, as they did before the Terra-King discovered them.

THE TERRA-KING

Jerris Trent's earliest memory is of being buried alive by the earthquake that destroyed his childhood home. He was pulled from the rubble after three days but suffered permanent damage to his eyesight and scarring from injuries that almost crippled him.

His family dead, young Jerris became a ward of the state and spent most of his time in orphanages and foster homes. He was keenly intelligent but withdrawn and taunted

SERPENT PERSON, SAVAGE

PL4 • 26 POINTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 0 DEX 0 FGT 2 INT -2 AWE -1 PRE -1

Powers: **Darkvision** (Senses 2 (darkvision)), **Tough** (Protection 1), **Venom** (Progressive Affliction 5 (Resisted by Toughness, Overcome by Fortitude, Impaired, Disabled, Incapacitated), Quirk: Limited to Awareness and Will)**Advantages:** Improved Initiative**Skills:** Athletics 4 (+5), Expertise: Survival 4 (+2), Stealth 4 (+4)**Offense:** Initiative +4, Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 1, plus Venom)**Defense:** Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fortitude 1, Toughness 2, Will 0**Totals:** Abilities 0 + Powers 16 + Advantages 1 + Skills 6 + Defenses 3 = 26**Complications: Motivation – Survival:** Savage Serpent people are driven to survive and to attack all others not of their kind.

SERPENT PERSON, CIVILIZED

PL4 • 52 POINTS

STR 0 STA 0 AGL 0 DEX 1 FGT 2 INT 1 AWE 0 PRE 1

Powers: **Darkvision** (Senses 2 (darkvision)), **Shapeshifting** (Morph 3, Humanoids), **Tough** (Protection 1), **Venom** (Progressive Affliction 5 (Resisted by Toughness, Overcome by Fortitude, Impaired, Disabled, Incapacitated), Quirk: Limited to Awareness and Will)**Equipment:** Dagger**Advantages:** Equipment, Improved Initiative**Skills:** Expertise: Magic 4 (+5), Perception 2 (+2), Stealth 4 (+4)**Offense:** Initiative +4, Knife +2 (Close, Damage 1), Unarmed +2 (Close, Damage 0, plus Venom)**Defense:** Dodge 2, Parry 2, Fortitude 0, Toughness 1, Will 2**Totals:** Abilities 10 + Powers 31 + Advantages 2 + Skills 5 + Defenses 4 = 52**Complications: Motivation – Power:** Civilized Serpent People are motivated by power and control over others.**Serpent Person Initiate:** Add Ritualist advantage (+1 point).**Serpent Person Sorcerer:** Add Magic 6 and five Alternate Effects (spells) from the Mystic archetype in the *Hero's Handbook*, adjusted to fit the Magic power rank.

SUB-TERRAN

PL1 • 7 POINTS

STR 1 STA 1 AGL 0 DEX 0 FGT 1 INT -2 AWE 0 PRE -1

Powers: **Darkvision** (Senses 2 (darkvision))**Skills:** Expertise: Routine Work 4 (+2), Expertise: Survival 2 (+0)**Offense:** Initiative +0, Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage 1)**Defense:** Dodge 1, Parry 1, Fortitude 2, Toughness 1, Will 0**Totals:** Abilities 0 + Powers 2 + Advantages 0 + Skills 3 + Defenses 2 = 7**Complications: Motivation – Servile:** Sub-Terrans are strongly motivated to serve whomever they perceive as their leader. **Disability:** Sub-Terran eyes are extremely sensitive to light. They are disabled in bright light and blinded in daylight or the equivalent.

by other children for his appearance and his disabilities. He learned to compensate for his near-blindness and he became fascinated with the subject of seismography and the underground. He became a student of the sciences and eventually a seismologist. His studies led him to discover

THE TERRA-KING

PL10 • 194 POINTS

STR 1 STA 3 AGL 1 DEX 2 FGT 5 INT 7 AWE 6 PRE 2

Powers: **Command Scepter** (Easily Removable; Call Kaiju: Summon 8, Broad Type, Multiple Minions)2 four 120-point minions), Self-Powered), **Electrical Blast** (Ranged Damage 8, Accurate 2; **AE: Electrical Strike** (Damage 8, Accurate 2)), **Remote Control** (Radio Communication 3)). **Heightened Senses** (Senses 7 (Accurate Hearing, Auditory Danger Sense, Ranged Touch, Variable Descriptor (can "feel" light)), **Immortal as Stone** (Immortality 5 (1 day), Limited to while underground, Immunity 1 (aging))

Advantages: Benefit 3 (Master of the Sub-Terrans), Defensive Roll 3, Improved Initiative, Language (Sub-Terran, English native), Precise Attack 2 (Concealment, Close and Ranged), Trance

Skills: Athletics 4 (+5), Deception 6 (+8), Expertise: Earth Sciences 12 (+19), Expertise: Survival 3 (+10) Insight 8 (+14), Investigation 7 (+14), Perception 8 (+14), Ranged Combat: Command Scepter 6 (+8), Stealth 4 (+5), Technology 12 (+19)

Offense: Initiative +5, Electrical Blast +12 (Ranged, Damage 8), Electrical Strike +9 (Close, Damage 8), Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 14, Parry 10, Fortitude 7, Toughness 6/3*, Will 11 *Without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 67 + Advantages 11 + Skills 35 + Defenses 27 = 194

Complications: **Motivation – Outcast:** The Terra-King is outcast ruler of his lonely kingdom and seeks to both prove and avenge himself against the world that rejected him. **Disability:** The Terra-King is blind and relies on his other heightened senses.

the existence of vast networks of underground tunnels beneath the surface of the world. His colleagues dismissed his theories, so Dr. Trent set out to prove them.

His quest eventually brought him to Kaiju Island, where Dr. Trent discovered an entrance to the vast underground network he always theorized was there. He also found remnants of ancient technology belonging to the Serpent People and the Preservers as well as the Serpent People's former slave-race, the Sub-Terrans. Trent described himself as "feverish with discovery" upon making these finds, and spent weeks studying the ancient technology. The servile Sub-Terrans fell under his sway, eager for a new master to obey, and assisted in repairing some of the technology. His discoveries may have affected Trent's already unstable mind, since he soon abandoned the surface world and declared himself the Terra-King, Ruler of the Underworld.

The Terra-King and his Sub-Terrans have on occasion launched assaults on the surface world, seeking to conquer or to avenge some wrong done to them. The Terra-King has also come into conflict with the remaining Serpent People and tribes of Morlocks in the underworld, and their conflict has been known to spill out onto the surface world, or involve allies from there, both willing and unwitting. The Terra-King's "dominion" is vast, and may include further artifacts left behind by ancient civilizations. For the time being there is peace between the Sub-Terrans and the surface world, but it remains to be seen if that peace will hold, or if the mercurial Terra-King will strike once more.

The Terra-King is a profoundly lonely and isolated figure, ruler of a dark and dismal kingdom, finding solace in his "royalty" and command over subservient followers. He claims he wants nothing of the surface world, but the truth is that he hungers for acceptance and acknowledgment of his discoveries and his genius. Of course, any suggestion of this is enough to send him flying into a rage. The Terra-King jealously protects his kingdom, and strikes out against any perceived threats, be they polluters who use his domain as a dumping ground, miners who dig too deep, sub-surface fracking or exploration, or governments who perform underground tests.

Terra-King has developed some adaptations to his environment with the aid of advanced technology. Although blind, his other senses are heightened to a considerable degree, allowing him to hear faint sounds, feel light on his skin, and sense movement through minute vibrations in the ground and air around him. These heightened senses allow the Terra-King to maneuver in total darkness, and make him a surprisingly capable combatant, particularly in his native environment, where he often has an advantage over sighted opponents.

The Terra-King has access to advanced technology, including blaster weapons, giant digging machines, sensor devices, and the like, as well as devices capable of keeping superhumans prisoner in his dungeons, at least temporarily. He typically carries his command scepter, a metallic rod packed with hidden circuitry, making it a transmitter capable of summoning



THE TERRA-KING

and controlling some of the creatures on Kaiju Island and elsewhere in Sub-Terra, using them as living weapons against his enemies. The control scepter can also fire blasts of electrical energy or emit a powerful electrical charge when wielded as a close combat weapon.

KAIJU

Like Kaiju Island in the Pacific, Sub-Terra features a number of giant creatures (*kaiju*, Japanese for “giant monster”). Some are prehistoric animals, including dinosaurs, while others are more alien, possibly remnants of genetic experiments by the Serpent People or the Preservers in ancient history. See **East Asia** for details on Kaiju Island and its inhabitants.

Sub-Terra includes all of the **Dinosaur** and **Monster** archetypes from the *Gamemaster’s Guide*, although the Animated Tree is more often a giant animated mushroom or fungus. Animated trees are still found in some of the forested “pockets” or caverns within the Sub-Terran tunnels. Giant Insects nest in some areas, particularly giant spiders, which spin webs filling entire caverns and tunnels. Blobs of various sizes hunt blindly through the passages, scouring up organic debris and small creatures. Some have fewer levels of Growth than listed for the archetype, while a rare few have more, as high as rank 16–18.

GIGANTOSAUR

The origin of the creature known as Gigantosaurus remains a mystery. It first arose from the ocean, where it is known to live. Nuclear tests at sea may have spawned it, or it could be the result of waste-dumping, or some other toxic mutation. Dr. Atom believes Gigantosaurus originated on Kaiju Island, perhaps further mutated by exposure to unknown elements.

Whatever the case, Gigantosaurus has menaced various coastal cities and communities since its first appearance some twenty years ago. On different occasions, the creature has fallen under the influence of rogue Atlantean elements, or Sub-Terrans like the Terra-King or the Serpent People, who have turned it into a living weapon against the surface world.

Gigantosaurus looks much like a gigantic tyrannosaurus rex, some 120 feet tall, with a vivid purple hide capable of resisting even military grade weapons. It swims using its powerful hind legs and sweeps of its massive tail. On land, it stomps most obstacles flat, smashes them with its tail, or crushes them in its powerful jaws.

MOLLECH

The creature the Terra-King calls Mollech may have originally been designed as a living earth-mover and excavator by its creators. It is the Terra-King’s “go-to” monster minion in Sub-Terra and when he is seen on the surface.

Resembling a giant, armored badger or armadillo, Mollech is covered in overlapping silicate scales, giving it a rocky, armored exterior, and it has long carbon-

GIGANTOSAUR

PL14 • 125 POINTS

STR 23 STA 18 AGL 0 DEX –2 FGT 4 INT –4 AWE 0 PRE 0

Powers: **Aquatic** (Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic)), **Gigantic** (Growth 18, Permanent, Innate (Abilities include Growth modifiers)), **Senses** (Senses 3 (Acute Scent, Darkvision)), **Tough** (Immunity 26 (All Environmental Conditions, Disease, Mental Powers, Radiation Effects; Protection 5 (Impervious 10)))

Skills: Expertise: Survival 12 (+8), Intimidation 4 (+13), Perception 4 (+4), Stealth 0 (–18)

Offense: Initiative +0, Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 23)

Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 18, Toughness 23, Will 4

Totals: Abilities 6 + Powers 83 + Advantages 0 + Skills 10 + Defenses 26 = 125

Complications: **Motivation – Survival:** Gigantosaurus is largely motivated by a need to survive, although it is often goaded or driven into rages to attack. **Bestial:** Gigantosaurus has a primitive, animalistic intelligence.

MOLLECH

PL13 • 115 POINTS

STR 16 STA 16 AGL 0 DEX –2 FGT 4 INT –4 AWE 0 PRE 0

Powers: **Armor Plating** (Protection 5 (Impervious 10)), **Digging** (Burrowing 4 (1MPH)), **Gigantic** (Growth 16, Permanent, Innate (Abilities include Growth modifiers)), **Senses** (Sense 3 (Accurate Hearing, Acute Scent, Darkvision, Ultra-hearing)), **Tough** (Immunity 26 (All Environmental Conditions, Disease, Mental Powers, Radiation Effects))

Skills: Expertise: Survival 10 (+6), Intimidation 2 (+10), Perception 4 (+4), Stealth 0 (–16)

Offense: Initiative +0, Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 16)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 16, Toughness 21, Will 3

Totals: Abilities –4 + Powers 86 + Advantages 0 + Skills 8 + Defenses 25 = 115

Complications: **Motivation – Servile:** Mollech exists to serve its master. **Bestial:** Mollech has a primitive, animalistic intelligence.

composite claws on his four limbs, enabling Mollech to tunnel swiftly through even bedrock. This allows the creature to tunnel up beneath targets chosen by the Terra-King, either leaving a tunnel for Sub-Terran minions to follow, or filling-in the passage behind it to discourage pursuit.

SUB-TERRAN LOCATIONS

As mentioned under Sub-Terran Geography, locations within Sub-Terra often seem to shift, making them difficult to find for everyone except native creatures, which seem to have some type of innate sense of direction. This is largely a plot device, although the Gamemaster can make the ability to navigate in Sub-Terra a 1-point Feature, if desired, or something players can spend a hero point to overcome on a case-by-case basis.

Among other things, this means that while there are common entrances and ways of accessing the following locations, they’re not always consistent, and an underground tunnel in, say, Freedom City or Emerald City could well connect up with Agartha, Pyros, or even

Lemuria with relative ease, turning into a mundane passageway or dead-end when the heroes next investigate it.

AGARTHA

Terra-King named the Sub-Terran ruin he claimed as the center of his “kingdom” Agarthia, after the legendary city said to exist at the center of the Earth. Its original name is long since lost, although it was likely originally built by the Serpent People after the sinking of Lemuria and their retreat into Sub-Terra. By the time the Terra-King discovered it, Agarthia was a vast ruin barely maintained by the former Sub-Terran slaves of the Serpent People.



AGARTHA

The majority of the city occupies a single vast cavern, ringed by a high ledge overlooking it. The cavern floor has numerous stone structures, with two broad avenues intersecting at massive stone step-pyramid in the center, which Terra-King claimed as his fortress and throne chamber. A few of the surrounding structures serve as laboratories or storage, while the rest are quarters for the Sub-Terrans or simply left empty, giving the whole of the city a dark, haunted feel. Since neither the Sub-Terrans nor Terra-King require much, if any light, Agarthia remains in darkness most of the time.

Passages up along the ledge overlooking the cavern find their way out into the tunnels of Sub-Terra. A waterfall cascades over the ledge, tumbling down into a small lake in one quarter of the city, known as the Lake of Shadows, which provides water for Agarthia. The depths of the lake flow out into Sub-Terran streams, and serve as a passage for aquatic creatures.

BOCA TIERRA

As detailed in **The United States of America**, the Boca Tierra Caverns in New Mexico are a fairly stable entrance into the tunnels of Sub-Terra, where its inhabitants find their way to the surface, the prime reason why the government research facility there was abandoned. The surface entrance to the caverns is carefully monitored by AEGIS and U.S. authorities on the lookout for any signs of Sub-Terran incursion.

LEMURIA

The island continent of Lemuria once existed in the Pacific Ocean thousands of years ago. It was the center of an ancient empire ruled by the Serpent People. The Serpent Empire of Lemuria was old even before modern humans first appeared, and humanity was little more than a curiosity to the saturnine Serpent People. They kept humans as pets and slaves, occasionally using them in their arcane experiments. Saurian scientists genetically-engineered various sub-species of humanity to serve them.

In time, the decadent Lemurian Serpent People came into conflict with the advanced human empire of Atlantis. They fought a long series of wars, which culminated in their mutual annihilation. Lemuria sank beneath the ocean in a terrible cataclysm, spelling the end for the Serpent Empire.

The ruins of Lemuria lie at the bottom of the Pacific Ocean, largely undisturbed, although occasionally visited by scavengers (human and otherwise) looking for ancient artifacts and secrets left behind by the Serpent Empire. Some scattered tribes of Deep Ones are found amongst the underwater ruins, worshipping some lost idol (see **Atlantis** for details). There are ancient passages from Lemuria to Sub-Terra and some of the aquatic ruins still have breathable pockets of air (likely maintained by some ancient machinery or magic).

Lemuria makes undersea links to Sub-Terra the most common in the Pacific Ocean. Offshore drilling sometimes

IN DUNGEONS DEEP

The interdimensional underworld of Sub-Terra can serve as a kind of “cheap” world-spanning travel for *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* adventures meant to visit other worlds (or even times). In particular, it’s useful for a “dungeon crawl” scenario, especially if a foe or mysterious artifact in Sub-Terra magically transforms the heroes into doughty dungeon delvers, equipped with magical or miraculous powers and medieval technology that approximates their normal capabilities. The Maze is basically a dungeon already: full of deadly traps, the remains of ancient battles, and perhaps various monsters loosed there by its prior inhabitants. Primordia is a dreadful “land” of dangerous, ancient predators, Pyros contains rivers of lava and stoic stone-men (some of whom might be demon-cultists), while other parts of the Sub-Terran world hold ancient ruins and riches, often guarded by monsters.

breaks through into a Sub-Terran pocket, causing floods and terrible damage, and stirring up an attack by creatures like the Magmin or a giant creature.

KAIJU ISLAND

Kaiju Island (detailed in **South Asia**) has underground connections to Sub-Terra, and many of the creatures found on the island may have originated in Sub-Terra or vice versa.

THE MAZE

A vast network of relatively narrow and winding tunnels, the Maze epitomizes the strange nature of Sub-Terra, seemingly home to an infinite variety of oddities. No one knows exactly how far the Maze extends, nor all that it contains. It has been the site of numerous conflicts over the course of millennia, such that its corridors and some of its rooms are filled with various traps and the remains of garrisons or hold-outs belonging to the Serpent People, the Morlocks, the mutant Fomori, and others long since forgotten.

Like other parts of Sub-Terra, sections of the Maze appear to extend into or connect up with different dimensions. At least part of the network lies beneath the cairn-strewn hills of the Blackfell Forest outside a medieval fantasy city known as Freedom’s Reach, which bears a number of striking similarities to Earth-Prime’s Freedom City.

MOUNT ATLAS

The volcanic Mount Atlas near Emerald City (detailed in the *Emerald City* setting sourcebook) features ancient lava tunnels and underground passages connecting to Sub-Terra. Some of the cryptids in the Elysium Forest near Mount Atlas may have originated in or traveled through Sub-Terra to get there.

PRIMORDIA

Sub-Terran tunnels connect to a massive cavern complex surrounding a single, vaulted cave several miles in length. Dubbed “Primordia” by the Atom Family, this cavern may

have been mistaken for the “hollow world” or other versions of the “inner-earth” in myth and legend. It contains a miniature biosphere very much like prehistoric Earth, complete with a tropical jungle covering the floor of the main cavern, populated by dinosaurs and other primeval creatures, and small scattered tribes of primitives, including humans. An artificial “sun” hovers near the center of the peak of the main cavern, ensuring it is always daylight in Primordia.

Dr. Atom speculates that Primordia was the creation of either the ancient Serpent People or, more likely, the alien Preservers, perhaps as a precursor to their creation of the Lost World (see **The Lost World**) and Farside City (see *The Cosmic Handbook*).

PYROS

Pyros is a city of basalt buildings and towers carved and shaped out of volcanic rock by the Magmin, surrounding a central cavern where a lake of molten rock bubbles like an infernal cauldron, rivulets of magma flowing past some of the high towers, into deep ravines and out elsewhere into Sub-Terra.

Pyros is a strange imitation of surface world life, with the lumbering Magmin slowly building and re-building the city to maintain it against the force of occasional tremors and magma bursts. They neither need nor cultivate fields or livestock. They take rest in some of the buildings, and use others for strange rituals—apparently of worship or meditation (or both). Otherwise, it is a largely silent pantomime with no apparent point to it: The Magmin have none of the needs of surface creatures and do not even reproduce. Some speculate their actions are simple lingering programming or conditioning from the creation of their ancestors by the Serpent People, or there could be some larger purpose known only to the Magmin.

Whatever its purpose, Pyros is rarely seen by outsiders, unless they are brought there as prisoners of the Magmin. The inhabitants vigorously defend Pyros from intruders. Given the dangers of the terrain, most of the inhabitants of Sub-Terra are content to leave the Magmin city alone. It is of little use to anyone else, and the Magmin there are not usually aggressive unless provoked.

ATLANTIS

Its existence has been the subject of myth and legend for thousands of years. Even the modern “rise” of the hidden civilization of Atlantis in the past century has revealed little about the mysterious people living beneath the surface of the sea, such that some still consider them nothing more than a myth, but Atlantis and its people are all too real on Earth-Prime, and have been a part of its heroic history and a source of otherworldly threats to the safety of the surface world.

HIDDEN HISTORY

Thousands of years ago in the midst of the Atlantic Ocean, the island continent of Atlantis was the home of humans genetically enhanced by the alien Preservers, devoted to the protection of life throughout the universe. Using samples of technology left behind by the Preservers and their own enhanced intellects, the Atlanteans created an advanced civilization far surpassing anything else on Earth. They were explorers with visions of uniting the world and made contact with other lands as legends of the fabled island-continent and its powers spread far and wide.

In time, the Atlanteans came into conflict with Lemuria and the ancient Empire of the Serpent People, descendants of a previous saurian empire that ruled the Earth millions of years previously (see **Sub-Terra** for more about Lemuria).

Although the Serpent People had become largely degenerate, they were led by cunning and powerful sorcerers and worshipped nameless cosmic entities. The conflict between Atlantis and Lemuria lasted for generations. The Atlanteans were ultimately victorious, but in the end their arrogance became their undoing, as they sought to understand their foes’ alien sorcery and use it against them. In so doing, they triggered a cataclysm that destroyed Atlantis, sinking the entire continent below the waves.

Some Atlanteans survived, either fleeing the sinking island, or living in far-flung outposts which survived the cataclysm. Most blended into local populations of humans, often becoming legendary figures—gods or heroes—and passing along some of their advanced knowledge to their progeny. Larger groups of survivors sought shelter from the savage outside world and to avoid the mistakes of their forebearers, leading to the cre-

ation of hidden enclaves such as the Utopians (see **The Caribbean**).

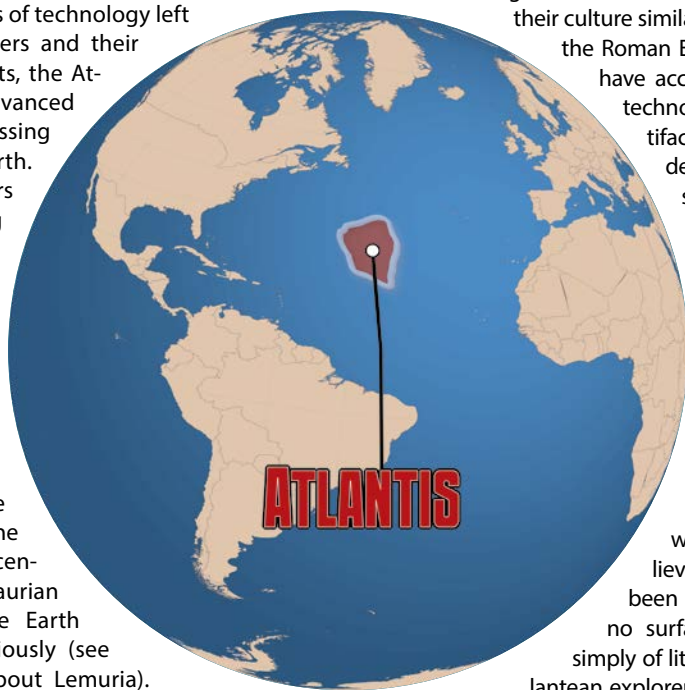
Most of the Atlantean populace died in the Sinking, but a few saved themselves by adapting to their new environment. Some Atlanteans became amphibious water breathers, whether by magic, genetic engineering, or a combination of the two. Most of the water-breathing Atlanteans lived in nomadic tribes; their civilization swiftly regressed to a primitive level struggling to survive in the underwater ruins of their once great civilization. A few of these tribes were corrupted and interbred with Serpent People, taking on reptilian characteristics and worshipping evil, forbidden gods.

Over time, some Atlanteans resettled the ruins of their ancestors’ great cities and became more sophisticated, their culture similar in many ways to that of the Roman Empire at its height. They have access to ancient Atlantean technological and magical artifacts, although their understanding has been somewhat limited until relatively recently, and their ability to manufacture such devices is likewise limited.

The water-breathing Atlanteans, effectively in possession of the majority of the Earth’s surface, lost interest in the world above the waves. Initially, many believed the whole world had been inundated and there was no surface world. Later, it was simply of little interest. A band of Atlantean explorers came into conflict with ancient Athens. When the immortal Daedalus aided the Athenians in defeating them, the Atlanteans retreated even further from the notion of renewing contact with the surface. Their existence faded into legend, hidden from the air-breathing world that went on without them.

By the early part of the 20th Century, the Atlanteans were becoming more acquainted with surface dwellers delving deeper into the oceans and sending out more and more of their surface-skimming craft. They even developed submarine vessels, beginning to encroach on Atlantean territory.

When the royal family made clear their intentions to initiate contact and open diplomatic relations, in accordance with an ancient prophecy, a palace coup displaced them, save for the surviving Prince Thallor, who fled the palace in the company of a small band of loyal supporters. The military junta now in control of Atlantis sought to further



ATLANTEAN TECHNOLOGY

Ancient Atlantis possessed truly advanced technology, including energy weapons, force fields, and aircraft, among other things. However, this technology was made up of a combination of scientific principles, the alien science and technology of the Preservers, and Atlantean understanding and use of magic, including ley-line energies, enchanted crystals, and tapping into various geomantic forces (some of which may have weakened the strata and geological stability of the island-nation).

Some Atlantean technology survived the Sinking and the subsequent millennia immersed in icy salt water, and it has led to significant differences between what Atlanteans and surface people consider “technology”. In particular, while some of their weapons, vehicles, and even household elements may appear “high-tech,” Atlantean technology does not rely upon electronics or electricity (virtually useless underwater unless completely sealed), nor upon combustion or the combination of volatile chemicals, also problematic underwater.

Instead, most Atlantean technology is powered by magical crystals drawing upon geomantic and geothermal energies, recharged in orichalcum-lined sockets linked to ley-lines. So while an Atlantean blaster-weapon may look like a pistol or a rifle, a surface world engineer taking one apart would find it a technological impossibility. The same is largely true of Atlantean vessels and other devices, such as the occasional Atlantean audio-visual projector, actually a tellurian crystalline-based image generator, often with some telepathic components, rather than a video screen or camera.

Atlantean reliance on techno-magical devices makes their technology less mass-produced and ubiquitous compared to the surface world, since each item is hand-crafted, and many are often family heirlooms maintained, repaired, and passed down through the generations. This leads to an apparent mixture of ancient and modern styles and resources in Atlantis and a somewhat “retro-future” quality to their technology, since it generally things like computers and electronics.

TECHNOLOGY SKILL CHECKS

Among other things, the differences in Atlantean technology impose a +20 DC modifier to Technology skill checks dealing with it, unless the character is also trained in Expertise: Magic, in which case the lesser of the two skill ranks may be used without the +20 DC modifier. Surface-world trained technicians can barely make heads or tails out of Atlantean techno-magic.

conceal their existence, although some elements of the military favored allying with the Axis powers, at least offering their covert support.

When a German U-boat sank a luxury liner in the Atlantic, lounge singer Lynn Sidon was among the few survivors. Prince Thallor rescued her and believed she was the focus of the prophecy concerning reunion between Atlantis and the surface world. Thallor took her to an ancient Atlantean sea cave where she was infused with the power of the Sirens. Taking their name as her own, Siren returned to her homeland, becoming a member of the wartime Liberty League.

Similarly, a German mariner unknowingly under a lycanthropic curse aided the Nazi Thule Society in attempts to steal Atlantean artifacts. The power of the corrupt magic of the Deep Ones combined with his curse to transform him into the *übersoldat* known as Sea-Wolf, a foe of Siren during the Second World War.

By 1945, Prince Thallor and his allies overthrew the military usurpers with the aid of a popular uprising in Atlantis, and Thallor was crowned king. He proposed marriage to Siren and the two were wed not long thereafter, Lynn Sidon becoming the first queen of Atlantis not born there in thousands of years.

Although Atlantis’ existence was known to many of the governments of the world, and a handful of superheroes and villains, it remained largely obscure for decades more. The royal family wished to maintain ties with the queen’s homeland, however. So it was that Prince Theseus, Thallor and Lynn’s son, came to the surface world and Freedom City, joining the Freedom League

under the name Sea-King, for he was the rightful heir to the throne of the seas.

Although Sea-King’s Atlantean origins were generally known, many believed they were fanciful or a cover story for something else. Even those who believed Atlantis really existed tended to adopt an “out of sight, out of mind” attitude, at least until the first occasion when an attempted Atlantean coup led to an invasion of the surface world aimed at Freedom City and the Sea-King.

Prince Theseus managed to balance his royal responsibilities and his duties as a member of the Freedom League for some time, learning a great deal about his mother’s world and people, before he decided to return home to Atlantis for good. He eventually wed the dynamic and daring Captain Marta of the Atlantean Guard, a fierce warrior in her own right, and assumed the throne after the tragic death of his father during another attempted coup. Never renowned for his diplomacy, the new King Theseus sometimes came into conflict with his old teammates and their allies over Atlantis’ role in world affairs and its conflicts with the increasing pollution and disregard for the oceans and their inhabitants.

Still, the tradition of exchange between the two worlds remained and, years later, Theseus and Marta’s daughter Thetis became a student at the Claremont Academy in Freedom City to learn the ways of the surface world and to spend some time amongst her grandmother’s people. She became a founding member of the first Next-Gen team at Claremont using the name Neried and forged friendships with her fellow students that have lasted long after they graduated. Thetis also found heartbreak in a

brief romance with the young godling Magni before the differences in their two worlds and callings forced them apart. Thetis returned to Atlantis to follow in her mother's footsteps in the Atlantean Guard and to further train for the day when she will be expected to take the throne. Her younger brother Telemachus is now also a Claremont student, under the code-name Aquarius.

Atlantis' relations with the surface world have not always been peaceful. Atlantean barbarians have been known to attack ships and coastal areas. There have also been occasional coups or secession crises leading to Atlantean invasions of the surface world. Even the most peaceful Atlanteans tend to be disdainful of surface-dwellers and their constant pollution of Earth's oceans. Atlantis currently has a delegation to the United Nations. While recognized as a sovereign nation by most of the surface world, contact is understandably at a minimum. There is also an ongoing debate as to how far Atlantis' "dominion of the oceans" extends, and whether or not King Theseus can truly claim to be "Sovereign of the Seven Seas." Although the king's temper has cooled somewhat over the years, diplomacy between Atlantis and the surface world remains tense.

ATLANTEAN DREADNOUGHT

VEHICLE - 39 PTS

Size: Colossal • **Strength:** 16 • **Speed:** 6 (aquatic) • **Defense** 2 • **Toughness:** 16 • **Features:** Concussion torpedoes (Ranged Damage 10, Burst Area 6)

ATLANTEAN

TEMPLATE - 20 POINTS

Abilities: Strength +5

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (Cold, Drowning, Pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (Low-light Vision), Swimming 4 (8 MPH))

Complications: **Dehydration:** Spending extended time away from water causes Atlanteans to dehydrate and weaken, gaining levels of fatigue.

Totals: Abilities 10 + Powers 10 = 20

ATLANTEAN BARBARIAN

PL6 - 59 POINTS

STR 5 **STA** 4 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 0

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (cold, drowning, pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (low-light vision), Swimming 4 (8 MPH))

Equipment: Spear or sword (+3 damage), sharkskin armor (+1 Toughness)

Advantages: Equipment 1

Skills: Athletics 3 (+8), Intimidation 2 (+2), Perception 3 (+4), Ranged Combat: Throwing 2 (+3)

Offense: Initiative +2, Sword or Spear +4 (Close, Damage 8, Crit. 19-20 for sword, Reach 1 for spear), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 5)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5, Will 5

Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 10 + Advantages 1 + Skills 5 + Defenses 9 = 59

Complications: **Motivation - Survival:** Barbarians struggle to survive, whatever it takes. **Dehydration:** Spending extended time away from water causes Atlanteans to dehydrate and weaken, gaining levels of fatigue.

THE ATLANTEANS

Atlanteans generally look much like surface humans with a mixture of (mostly European) features. They tend toward Roman noses and jaw-lines. Pale eye colors (blues and greens, occasionally amber yellow or violet) and dark hair are most common. Still, a variety of human genetic lineages imported by the Preservers in their initial experiments, and by the Atlanteans in their later exploration and conquests gave the original population of the island nation a diverse range of features even before it sank.

Atlanteans are generally sleek, muscular swimmers, and have denser muscle tissue than humans, giving them super-strength (the average Atlantean can lift around 1,600 lbs.). Some Atlanteans (particularly members of the royal family and some barbarian warlords) have even greater strength.

Atlanteans do not have gills. Instead, the lining of their lungs has adapted to allow them to extract oxygen from water and to withstand considerable water pressure. Atlanteans can also breathe air, although they're most comfortable in an aquatic environment and dehydrate over time when they are not immersed in water. Atlantean eyes are sensitive to light and able to see in dim lighting in the ocean depths, although not in complete darkness.

Atlanteans tend to be longer-lived than humans, with average lifespans of 90 years, and some truly venerable Atlanteans living to be 150 or more.

Atlanteans are interfertile with humans and offspring generally possess Atlantean traits, particularly the ability to breathe underwater. Some human-Atlantean hybrids also possess unusual mutations or abilities, although in the case of the House of Atlan, their enhanced physical abilities and powers are most likely due to the gifts of the Sirens granted to the Queen Mother and the other arcane powers attributed to King Thallor and his studies of ancient Atlantean sorcery.

ATLANTEAN SOLDIER

PL6 - 59 POINTS

STR 5 **STA** 3 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 0 **PRE** 0

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (cold, drowning, pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (low-light vision), Swimming 4 (8 MPH))

Equipment: Blaster pistol (Ranged Damage 5), staff (+2 damage, Reach 1), sharkskin armor (+1 Toughness)

Advantages: Equipment 3

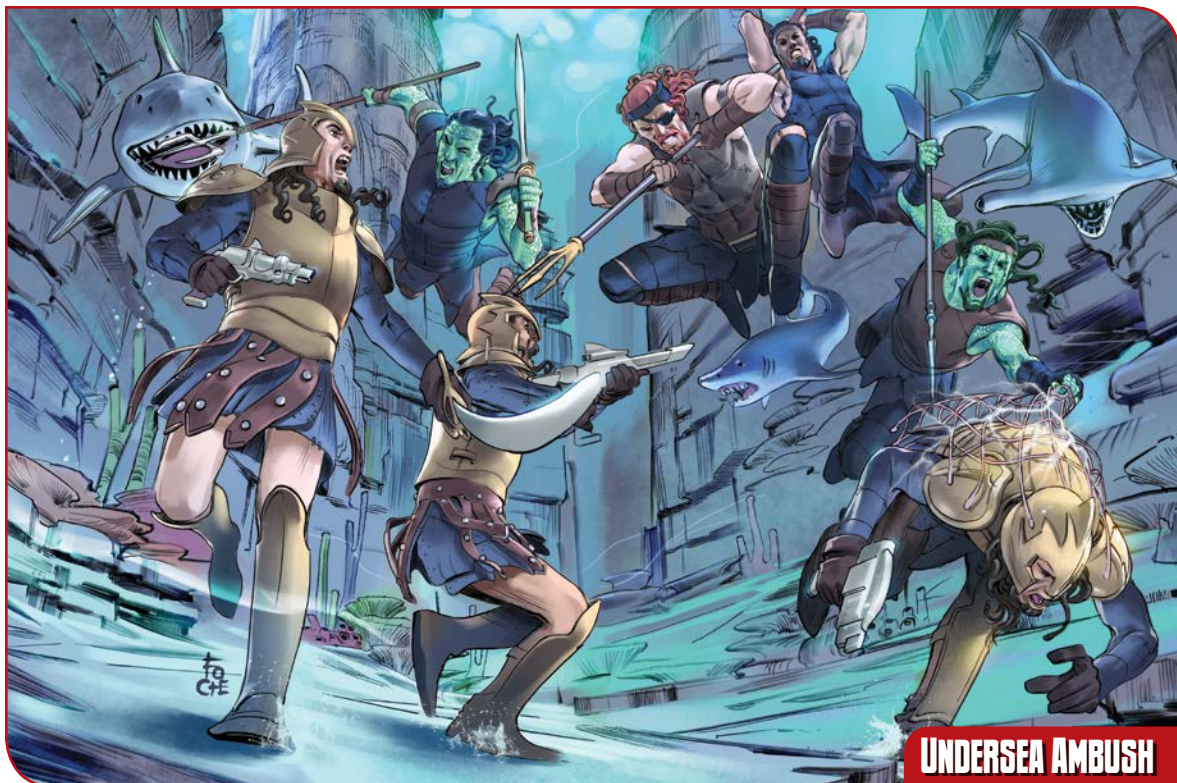
Skills: Athletics 3 (+8), Expertise: Military 2 (+2), Perception 3 (+3), Ranged Combat: Blasters 4 (+5), Vehicles 2 (+3)

Offense: Initiative +2, Blaster +5 (Ranged, Damage 5), Staff +4 (Close, Damage 7), Unarmed +4 (Close, Damage 5)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 4, Toughness 4, Will 4

Totals: Abilities 30 + Powers 10 + Advantages 3 + Skills 7 + Defenses 9 = 59

Complications: **Motivation - Responsibility:** Duty to the throne and people of Atlantis. **Dehydration:** Spending extended time away from water causes Atlanteans to dehydrate and weaken, gaining levels of fatigue.



UNDERSEA AMBUSH

DEEP ONES

Deep Ones—sometimes known as Lemurians—are Atlanteans corrupted by interbreeding with the Serpent People, as well as the influence of the occult power of the Serpent Scepter. They have hairless, green, scaly skin, clawed hands and feet, entirely black eyes (with no iris or pupil visible), pointed ears, and sharp teeth. Their scales provide Deep Ones with some natural armor, and their eyes are adapted to see even in the blackest ocean depths, but they deal poorly with light as bright as daylight on the surface.

THE SERPENT SCEPTER

The source and ultimate treasure of the Deep Ones is the Serpent Scepter, an ancient Lemurian artifact of the Serpent People. It is a rod of greenish stone, similar to jade, except infinitely harder, about two feet long and carved in the shape of a writhing serpent.

The scepter is infused with preternatural power. Among other things, the Serpent Scepter is indestructible to any known force. Over the millennia, guardians aware of the Scepter's power have tried to place it out of the reach of would-be wielders: at the bottom of the sea, in ancient vaults, and even in dimensions beyond this one. Always the Scepter seems to find its way back into the hands of those it can corrupt with its power.

The Serpent Scepter's powers involve the ability to control minds and transform creatures into reptiles. Both Affliction effects work at rank 20, both with the Ranged and Burst Area extras, allowing them to affect a radius of up to 100 feet. The Scepter's power can turn creatures into different

ORICHALCUM

The ancient Atlanteans invented a unique metal alloy called orichalcum, a hybrid creation of advanced metallurgy and alchemy. The secret of its creation was lost in the sinking of Atlantis, and likely would not be practical in an aquatic environment, but samples of the metal still exist, owing to its near-indestructible nature, and Atlantean "cold-forges" can reshape existing orichalcum to a degree.

Orichalcum is a golden metal with Toughness 25 and immunity to damage from temperature extremes. It also holds enchantments well, and many ancient Atlantean artifacts made of the metal have magical powers. Orichalcum weapons, armor, and tools are prized heirlooms among the Atlanteans and Utopians.

sorts of reptiles or restore creatures it has transformed to their normal forms. The Serpent Scepter's power is comparatively limited when dealing with surface world creatures; it is half its normal effectiveness on land-dwellers, including non-Atlantean or Lemurian humanoids.

Anyone who wields the Scepter's power must make a Will resistance check (DC 30) to avoid being corrupted by it. A failed check means the wielder becomes increasingly possessive of the Scepter and willing to use its power. The character becomes paranoid that others want to steal the Scepter away and will do anything to avoid being separated from it. The wielder of the Serpent Scepter is slowly transformed by its power into a Deep One or a Serpent Person.

Various Atlantean warlords and cult leaders have believed they could wield the Serpent Scepter without falling

DEEP ONE

TEMPLATE · 23 POINTS

Abilities: Strength +5

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (Cold, Drowning, Pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (Low-light Vision), Swimming 4 (8 MPH)), **Claws** (Strength-based Damage 1), **Scales** (Protection 2)

Complications: **Disabled** — **Sunlight:** Exposure to light as bright as daylight causes Deep Ones to become visually impaired. **Weakness** — **Dehydration:** Spending extended time away from water causes Deep Ones to dehydrate and weaken.

Totals: Abilities 10 + Powers 13 = 23

DEEP ONE WARRIOR

PL6 · 61 POINTS

STR 5 **STA** 3 **AGL** 2 **DEX** 1 **FGT** 4 **INT** 0 **AWE** 1 **PRE** 0

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (Cold, Drowning, Pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (Low-light Vision), Swimming 4 (8 MPH)), **Claws** (Strength-based Damage 1), **Scales** (Protection 2)

Equipment: Spear or sword (+3 damage)

Advantages: Equipment 1

Skills: Athletics 3 (+8), Intimidation 2 (+2), Perception 3 (+4), Ranged Combat: Throwing 2 (+3)

Offense: Initiative +2, Claws +4 (Close, Damage 6), Sword or Spear +4 (Close, Damage 8, Crit. 19-20 for sword, Reach 1 for spear)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 5, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5, Will 5

Totals: Abilities 32 + Powers 13 + Advantages 1 + Skills 5 + Defenses 10 = 61

Complications: **Motivation** — **Corruption:** Deep Ones are corrupted by the preternatural influence of the Nameless One. **Disabled** — **Sunlight:** Exposure to light as bright as daylight causes Deep Ones to become visually impaired. **Weakness** — **Dehydration:** Spending extended time away from water causes Deep Ones to dehydrate and weaken, gaining levels of fatigue.

under its spell, but they have all proven tragically mistaken. The Scepter ultimately serves only its own ends and the cause of the Nameless One and its cult.

LYONESSEANS

The Lyonesseans (*lee-oh-NESS-ee-ahns*) are an offshoot of the Atlanteans, transformed by ancient magic into a hybrid race of merfolk, with fish-like lower bodies and humanoid upper bodies. They're named for the legendary lost land of Lyonesse near the British Isles, linked with the Atlantean cities of the Tuatha De Dannan, who fled the destruction of Atlantis to settle for a time in ancient Ireland before retiring to the extradimensional realm of Avalon.

Lyonesseans primarily live in small nomadic tribes, only loosely associated with Atlantis, although they have occasionally sought the protection and mediation of the Atlantean crown in the past. A small number of Lyonesseans are found in the city of Atlantis proper. Lyonessean tribes tend to be matriarchal, often lead by a female mystic with some amount of magical skill, able to perform useful rituals or enchant items for the tribe.

LYONESSEAN

TEMPLATE · 21 POINTS

Abilities: Strength +5

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (Cold, Drowning, Pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (Low-light Vision), Swimming 5 (16 MPH))

Complications: **Disability:** Lyonesseans have no lower limbs and limited mobility out of water. **Weakness** — **Dehydration:** Spending extended time away from water causes Atlanteans to dehydrate and weaken, gaining levels of fatigue.

Totals: Abilities 10 + Powers 11 = 21

LYONESSEAN MYSTIC

PL5 · 66 POINTS

STR 5 **STA** 3 **AGL** 3 **DEX** 0 **FGT** 3 **INT** 1 **AWE** 2 **PRE** 1

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (Cold, Drowning, Pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (Low-light Vision), Swimming 5 (16 MPH))

Advantages: Equipment 1, Artificer or Ritualist

Skills: Athletics 3 (+8), Expertise: Magic 4 (+5), Insight 2 (+4), Perception 4 (+6), Persuasion 2 (+3), Treatment 2 (+3)

Offense: Initiative +3, Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 5)

Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 3, Fortitude 4, Toughness 3, Will 6

Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 11 + Advantages 2 + Skills 9 + Defenses 8 = 66

Complications: **Motivation** — **Responsibility:** The mystic is responsible to the needs of her tribe. **Disability:** Lyonesseans have no lower limbs and limited mobility out of water. **Weakness** — **Dehydration:** Spending extended time away from water causes Atlanteans to dehydrate and weaken, gaining levels of fatigue.

THE CITY OF ATLANTIS

Although "Atlantis" refers to both the ancient island-continent and the collective nation of the undersea people descended from it, modern-day Atlantis is the city-state built on and around its ancient ruins on the ocean floor in the mid-Atlantic region.

URBAN AND TRIBAL ATLANTEANS

The largest division between Atlanteans separates urban-dwellers, living in the partially reconstructed ruins of the ancient city of Atlantis itself, and the various tribal bands of Atlanteans dwelling elsewhere in the oceans. Although the city-state of Atlantis claims the whole of the Atlantean people and all the Seven Seas as its sovereign domain, practically speaking, its true reach does not extend much further than a day's swim from the borders of the city itself.

Most tribal Atlanteans want nothing more than to be left in peace to fend for themselves, as their ancestors have done for countless generations. While a few barbaric tribes are aggressive and acquisitive, most have a "live and let live" philosophy. Occasionally a particularly charismatic or feared leader is able to weld disparate Atlantean tribes into a single force, usually with the aim of toppling the throne in Atlantis, invading the surface world, or both.

ATLANTEAN CULTURE

Although the Atlanteans descend from a highly advanced culture, millennia of adaptation to undersea life has transformed their culture, making much of it quite alien to surface world humans. Most Atlanteans remain unaware of this, as their culture is all they know, and retain a certain arrogance about their heritage. Suggesting that the surface world has begun to outstrip ancient Atlantis in many regards (much less present-day Atlantis) is an insult to most Atlanteans, even if it does happen to be largely true.

Atlantis is a non-industrial, largely agrarian society. Their technology (see the **Atlantean Technology** sidebar) is not given to mass-production or industrial processes, but rather relies on the world of specially-trained mystical experts and crafters. A great deal of Atlantean technology is made up of heirlooms from their surface world empire and their ancient ancestors, beyond the capabilities of modern Atlanteans to re-create.

Atlanteans farm undersea beds of kelp, plankton, and similar “crops” as well as pens of fish and crustaceans they raise for food. Cooking as such is largely a matter of preparing and presenting raw foodstuffs, although Atlantis does have a tradition of what they call “dry eating,” which consists of special meals prepared and served in air-filled chambers, allowing for the addition of spices and flavorings other than those of the food itself. This is high-class cuisine, largely reserved for the upper class and special holidays. The Atlantean diet most closely resembles Japanese sushi and sashimi and those are, unsurprisingly, the most popular surface-world cuisines amongst Atlantean who have sampled them.

Techno-magical crystals supply necessary light and heat for the city of Atlantis along with powering Atlantean weapons and other devices, such as hydrokinetic flow regulators for air-locks and emptying or filling water-tight chambers. Memory crystals contain recorded images (including text) and sounds and can project these as holographic-like displays, both for information storage and retrieval and entertainment. The Atlantean archives are largely made up of storehouses of these crystals, as both ordinary books and scrolls and electronics cannot survive immersion in cold salt-water for any length of time.

Crystals also power Atlantean blaster weapons and concussion torpedoes. All able-bodied Atlanteans are expected to undergo essential military training for the defense of the realm, and while Atlantis has a small standing army for defense against barbarian aggressors and sea-creatures, it can muster a much larger force in a very short amount of time.

In their leisure time, Atlanteans are fond of live entertainment, particularly plays and poetic recitals, which strongly resemble such performances given in ancient Greece and other Mediterranean cultures. The ancient Greek concept of catharsis from ritual drama is still held and practiced in Atlantis, and the often passionate Atlanteans derive some sense of peace and comfort from it.

Although they ostensibly still worship the ancient gods of their ancestors—particularly Poseidon, sea-god and

patron of Atlantis, Ata-Helios the sun god, and Selene the moon goddess—they are not especially religious, and temples and the priesthood holds a largely ceremonial role in Atlantean society. More conservative priests and theologians point to this decline in religiosity as a sign of the decadence of Atlantean culture and proclaim that it will lead to punishment from the gods themselves, but few Atlanteans believe in or heed such warnings.

Atlanteans inherited a great deal of magical lore from their ancestors, and some of Atlanteans still study and practice magic, although the ranks of truly capable spell-casters have diminished since the glory days of ancient Atlantis. Students with magical potential study with learned teachers to harness and control their abilities for the greater benefit of Atlantean society, and most skilled magicians hold positions similar to engineers, technicians, and medical or psychiatric doctors on the surface-world.

The life and culture of tribal Atlanteans is even more primitive than that of the city-dwellers. Life is primarily focused around a hunter-gatherer routine of finding enough food to sustain them, harvesting kelp beds and other sessile food sources and hunting or capturing fish and larger sea life. They tend to have primitive weapons and tools, mostly knives, spears, and tridents, along with a few heirloom items of Atlantean technology, and a decent sized tribe might have a priest-magician with some magical abilities at the tribe’s disposal, who serves as technician, healer, advisor, and guide and is responsible for finding and training a replacement, should any of the tribe’s children display some magical potential.

The same is essentially true of nomadic tribes of Lyonesseans and Deep Ones, save that the Lyonesseans are less aggressive and territorial, while the Deep Ones are far more so, and frequently raid other undersea tribes or settlements.

THE HOUSE OF ATLAN

The royal family of Atlantis is known as the House of Atlan, both as a family and clan name and also as the surname of the currently ruling royal family, as occasional breaks in the lineage have occurred over the millennia.

QUEEN MOTHER EVELYNN

Lynn Sidon, like many attractive, talented, young women, came to the Big Apple with big dreams of stardom. Unlike most, she achieved them, at least for a time, her sultry voice and striking looks making her a hit as a singer of torch-songs in the bars and nightclubs of New York City as war was brewing once again in Europe.

Her career blossoming, Miss Sidon was invited on a trans-Atlantic cruise as a guest and headline performer in the ship’s lounge. A German U-boat targeted and torpedoed the ship, which quickly sank. Although many on board managed to reach the lifeboats, Lynn was not among them. She grew numb in the icy waters and sank into darkness. The last thing she saw was a strange light and a handsome face looking curiously at her from the depths.

Although she didn't expect to awaken, Lynn did, on a fine bed in a palatial chamber—underwater. To her shock, she was able to breathe. The handsome stranger of her vision appeared and explained he was Prince Thallor of the lost city of Atlantis. Often curious about the surface world, he observed the ship and heard Lynn's singing, which enchanted him. He rescued her and recognized in her an ancient prophecy about a siren from the surface world. So he took her to a hidden Atlantean temple where the prophecy was fulfilled and the power of the gifts of the Sirens infused her.

Although grateful, Lynn wished to return to the surface world. The Atlantean prince faced difficulties in his own kingdom—a coup and civil war—so they were forced to part. Sidon returned home with a story of a miraculous rescue at sea and began using her newfound powers to fight crime and saboteurs as the sultry Siren. She joined the Liberty League and served with them during the Second World War. Only after the war were Lynn and Thallor reunited. The prince reclaimed his throne and offered to share it with the siren who so enchanted his heart. So Evelynn became the first Queen of Atlantis born above the waves since the Sinking.

Although the blessings of the Sirens have endowed the Queen Mother with long life and vitality, she is still feeling some of the effects of age as she approaches her first century. Regal and proud, some lucky visitors still get a

QUEEN MOTHER EVELYNN (SIREN) PL10 • 146 POINTS

STR 0 STA 1 AGL 3 DEX 1 FGT 6 INT 1 AWE 3 PRE 4

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (cold, drowning, pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation–Aquatic), Senses 1 (low-light vision) Swimming 8 (Alternate Effect: Flight 5 (Gliding)), **Power of the Sirens (Deafening Shriek** (Cone Area Cumulative Affliction 10 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware; Limited to Hearing)), **AE: Hypnotic Song** (Hearing Ranged Cumulative Affliction 7 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled), Concentration, Instant Recovery), **AE: Sonic Blast** (Ranged Damage 10), **AE: Sonic Burst** (Burst Area Damage 10), **AE: Sonic Scream** (Cone Area Damage 10), **AE: Vertigo** (Progressive Ranged Affliction 7 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated), Hearing-Dependent), **Senses 2** (Magical Awareness, Ultrasonic Hearing))

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Benefit 4 (Queen Mother of Atlantis), Defensive Roll 4, Fascinate (Expertise: Singing), Favored Environment: Aquatic, Inspire, Languages (Atlantean, French, English native), Move-by Action, Ranged Attack 5, Ritualist

Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+5), Athletics 4 (+4), Deception 4 (+8), Expertise: Magic 8 (+9), Expertise: Singing 8 (+12), Insight 10 (+13), Intimidation 2 (+6), Perception 6 (+9), Persuasion 6 (+10), Technology 2 (+3), Treatment 4 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +3, Sonic Blast +6 (Ranged, Damage 10), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 5, Toughness 5/1*, Will 8 *Without Defensive Roll

Totals: Abilities 38 + Powers 43 + Advantages 21 + Skills 28 + Defenses 16 = 146

Complications: **Motivation – Responsibility:** Queen Mother of Atlantis, Evelynn understands from experience the responsibility to her adopted nation and people. **Disability:** Although still vital for her age, the Queen Mother is an elderly woman.

glimpse of the sassy dame who dazzled the boys in the Liberty League and on the USO tours. She advises her son as king and dotes on her beloved grandchildren.

KING THESEUS

Theseus of the House of Atlan is the first scion of an Atlantean and a surface-dweller in the modern age. Raised as the child of two worlds with a royal heritage and responsibility, Theseus also inherited certain powers from the combination of his father's royal Atlantean bloodline and his mother's blessings from the Sirens. In particular, he could transform himself bodily into water, while retaining control over his fluid form. He also possessed greater strength, speed, and endurance than an ordinary Atlantean.

As he reached the age of maturity, Theseus travelled to the surface world, to his mother's homeland, to better understand that aspect of his heritage. Things did not go smoothly at first; the prince's sense of royal privilege and lack of legal identity in the United States struck sparks, as did his tendency to confront challenges head-on. Nonetheless, Theseus became an ally of Freedom City's heroes, joining the Freedom League under the name Sea-King. There he first met the embodied loa Siren, successor to his mother's use of that name in the 1940s, and the immortal inventor Daedalus.

For many years, Sea-King split his time between his service with the Freedom League and his duties in Atlantis, too long, according to some, who feared their prince's heart truly lay with his mother's world and not theirs. Theseus's long and frequent absences from Atlantis caused friction and arguments between the fiery-tempered prince and his father, King Thallor, as well as between Theseus and Captain Marta, the equally hot-tempered captain of the Palace Guard, al-

KING THESEUS (SEA-KING) PL11 • 219 POINTS

STR 10 STA 5 AGL 5 DEX 2 FGT 10 INT 0 AWE 2 PRE 3

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (cold, drowning, pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (low-light vision), Swimming 8 (120 MPH), Tough (Protection 4)), **Water Form** (Activation: Move Action, Concealment 4 (all visual senses, Limited to Underwater), Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects), Insubstantial 2, Suffocation (Progressive Affliction 8, Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Incapacitated))

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Benefit 5 (King of Atlantis), Favored Environment: Aquatic, Languages (English, Atlantean native), Move-by Action, Ranged Attack 6

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+13), Athletics 4 (+14), Expertise: Earth Sciences 4 (+4), Expertise: Theology and Philosophy 6 (+6), Insight 6 (+8), Intimidation 4 (+7), Perception 4 (+6), Persuasion 5 (+8), Technology 3 (+3)

Offense: Initiative +5, Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 10)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 11, Fortitude 11, Toughness 9, Will 11

Totals: Abilities 74 + Powers 86 + Advantages 15 + Skills 22 + Defenses 22 = 219

Complications: **Motivation – Responsibility:** "Ruler of the Seas" and King of Atlantis, Sea-King is responsible for the needs of his people and their undersea domain. **Disability:** As an Atlantean, Sea-King is vulnerable to prolonged dehydration, which causes fatigue.



THE HOUSE OF ATLAN

though in the latter case, the disputes also concealed a potent attraction between Marta and the Sea-King.

The rift between king and prince became the focus of a coup attempt by Atlantean barbarians that succeeded for a time in ousting Thallor and Evelynn from the throne, and brought Theseus back to Atlantis (aided by his surface world allies) to deal with the challenge. King Thallor sacrificed himself to defeat the barbarian warlord Orzan, and Sea-King found himself with the role in reality as well as in name when the battle was over and he was proclaimed rightful king of Atlantis. Theseus has never forgotten this harsh lesson in duty—nor entirely forgiven himself for it.

Sea-King wed the brave and brilliant Captain Marta not long after ascending the throne, and has ruled Atlantis as a just and fair monarch since. The king's fiery temper has cooled somewhat over the years, although it has led to conflicts with surface-dwellers and impatience with their short-sightedness and fractious politics. Still, King Theseus's guiding light remains his family and a desire to leave a more peaceful, prosperous, and enlightened Atlantis as a legacy to his children.

QUEEN MARTA

Marta was born and raised in the city of Atlantis, and always proud of her heritage and aware of the responsibility it implied to the city and her people. So she decided early on to become one of Atlantis' guardians, training as a soldier, and eventually swearing her service to King Thallor and Queen Evelynn as one of the Palace Guard to

protect the royal family. In Marta's case, this most often meant dealing with Prince Theseus, the stubborn, strong-headed heir to the throne, who spend so much of his time gallivanting and playing at hero with his surface-dwelling friends, rather than attending to his duties in Atlantis. Although it was perhaps not her place to do so, Captain Marta frequently made her opinions known, even to the prince himself.

Naturally, she bristled at the notion of being assigned the role of Theseus's bodyguard and needing to travel away from Atlantis to nurse-maid him on the surface. The prince (or "Sea-King" as he was known to his surface friends) wasn't overly fond of the idea himself, but who were they to disobey a royal command? Well, Theseus was all too willing to disobey, often driving Marta to distraction by evading her protection and company, such that the two of them nearly came to blows over it.

Mutual respect grew over some narrow scrapes and last-minute rescues on both their parts, and Theseus took pleasure in showing Marta some of the many aspects of his surface heritage he enjoyed. To her surprise, Captain Marta found she enjoyed them as well. According to his teammates in the Freedom League, the only person to realize Sea-King was in love with his brave and beautiful bodyguard after Prince Theseus was Captain Marta herself. It took a near-disaster in Atlantis, and the sacrifice of King Thallor against the barbarian usurpers, to finally bring the two of them together. When he ascended the throne, Theseus courted Marta in earnest, winning her hand in marriage, and crowning her Queen of Atlantis.

QUEEN MARTA

PL11 - 158 POINTS

STR 9 STA 5 AGL 5 DEX 3 FGT 10 INT 0 AWE 3 PRE 3

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (cold, drowning, pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (low-light vision), Swimming 8 (120 MPH), **Tough** (Protection 4)), **Guardian's Staff** (Removable, Indestructible; Feature: Telescoping, Strength-based Damage 2, Reach 1)

Advantages: Benefit 5 (Queen of Atlantis), Defensive Attack, Favored Environment (Aquatic), Improved Critical (Staff), Improved Initiative, Languages (English, Atlantean native), Move-by Action, Ranged Attack 6, Takedown

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+13), Athletics 4 (+13), Expertise: Theology and Philosophy 4 (+4), Insight 6 (+9), Intimidation 6 (+9), Perception 6 (+9), Persuasion 4 (+7), Stealth 4 (+9), Technology 2 (+2), Vehicles 2 (+5)

Offense: Initiative +9, Guardian's Staff +10 (Closed, Reach 5 ft., Damage 11, Crit, 19-20), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 9)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 11, Fortitude 9, Toughness 9, Will 11

Complications: **Motivation** — **Responsibility:** Marta has always placed duty to Atlantis and her family above all else.

Disability: As an Atlantean, Marta is vulnerable to prolonged dehydration, which causes fatigue.

Totals: Abilities 76 + Powers 22 + Advantages 18 + Skills 23 + Defenses 19 = 158

The Atlanteans widely respect their Queen for her patriotism, military prowess, and her unwavering devotion to her family and her people. Marta does not share the fair-haired looks her husband and daughter inherited from the Queen Mother, having instead the classical Atlantean features of black hair, pale and slightly olive-tinged skin, and vividly sea-green eyes. Although many years out of service as a Guardian, she still carries a telescoping orichalcum staff, able to collapse down to a small baton, or extend to over six feet long. While it is primarily ceremonial, Queen Marta remains an expert in wielding it.

PRINCESS THETIS

In keeping with family tradition, the House of Atlan felt that Princess Thetis—the firstborn of King Theseus and Queen Marta—needed an understanding of the surface world and its people if she was to deal with them as Queen of Atlantis one day. So they made arrangements with Duncan Summers for Thetis to attend the new Claremont Academy as a student while also getting some training in the use of her powers. Thetis adopted the code name Nereid, from the mythic spirits of the sea.

Thetis found adapting to life on the surface world both exhilarating and frustrating at times. Raised as royalty in Atlantis, she was used to having things her way. It also took her some time to get used to the customs of surface-folk, although she enjoys much of the culture the surface world has to offer. In addition to her studies at the Academy, Nereid also worked with her grandmother's namesake, Siren, on a number of occasions.

Nereid was a founding member of the first incarnation of the Next-Gen team at Claremont Academy, forging friendships with her classmates that she still maintains. She has known Bowman and Thunderbolt from the Freedom

PRINCESS THETIS (NEREID)

PL8 - 188 POINTS

STR 8 STA 4 AGL 4 DEX 2 FGT 8 INT 0 AWE 2 PRE 3

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (cold, drowning, pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (low-light vision), Swimming 8 (120 MPH), **Tough** (Protection 4)), **Water Form** (Activation: Move Action, Concealment 4 (all visual senses, Limited to Underwater), Immunity 30 (Fortitude effects), Insubstantial 2, Suffocation (Progressive Affliction 8, Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Incapacitated))

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Benefit 4 (Princess of Atlantis), Favored Environment: Aquatic, Languages (English, Atlantean native), Move-by Action, Ranged Attack 4

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+8), Athletics 2 (+10), Expertise: Earth Sciences 4 (+4), Expertise: Theology and Philosophy 4 (+4), Insight 4 (+6), Perception 4 (+6), Persuasion 6 (+9)

Offense: Initiative +4, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 8)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 8, Toughness 8, Will 8

Complications: **Motivation** — **Responsibility:** Thetis understands her responsibility as princess of Atlantis to the throne and her people, as well as to the seas she may one day rule. **Disability:** As an Atlantean, Nereid is vulnerable to prolonged dehydration, which causes fatigue.

Totals: Abilities 62 + Powers 86 + Advantages 12 + Skills 14 + Defenses 14 = 188

League since those school days, as well as Sonic and the sorceress Seven. Nereid later became acquainted with other Claremont students, including the current Raven (see **The United States of America**) when he was a student under the name Elite.

It was a romance with Elite's friend and teammate Magni that taught Nereid her harsh lesson in duty and responsibility, as she and the young demigod from another world came to realize their heritage and responsibilities would not allow them to be together long-term. Their parting was one of the reasons Nereid returned to Atlantis and resumed her duties in the House of Atlan, including training under the guidance of her mother, Queen Marta.

Nereid is of noble blood and it shows in her manner and her actions. She is surprisingly humble and not overly spoiled, thanks to her education and experiences with the Next-Gen. She understands a heavy duty comes with her role as princess of Atlantis, but sometimes wishes she could just be an ordinary young woman. She loved her life on the surface world because it allowed her to forget her duties and responsibilities, if only for a while, and is sometimes wistful about it. Thetis makes friends easily, and never hesitates to offer her opinion (even when no one asks her for it). She was trained to fight and defend herself from a very young age, with further rigorous training with the Atlantean Royal Guard, and she's super-strong even for an Atlantean, so anyone who thinks she's "just a girl" quickly learns otherwise.

PRINCE TELEMACHUS

Prince Telemachus is Princess Thetis's younger brother, following in his sister's footsteps as a student at the Claremont Academy in Freedom City under the code-name "Triton". This gives Telemachus quite a legacy to live up to, as has been the case nearly his entire life.

Whereas his sister Thetis inherited their father's fiery temper and their mother's warrior spirit, Telemachus is a sensitive, artistic soul with a love of singing, ancient Atlantean poetry and sagas, and study. He takes after his mother Marta with his dark hair and vividly sea-green eyes, and has apparently inherited his grandmother's mystical abilities and musical gifts rather than his grandfather's connection with elemental water.

Although a dutiful student of the Atlantean arts of combat as a child and youth, Telemachus has no great love of battle. Initially shy, he is enjoying his time on the surface world at Claremont Academy, particularly collecting and enjoying surface-world music. Telemachus considers karaoke one of humanity's greatest innovations, and wants to find a way to import it to Atlantis, much to the chagrin of his older sister. She is the only one who can get away with calling him "Telly," a childhood nickname he dislikes, and does it solely to bait him at times. Most of his surface-world friends and classmates at Claremont call him Tel or Triton, his code-name.

Although Triton is widely believed to be a shoo-in for membership in the Next-Gen due to his legacy connections, he is not so sure that is what he wants. Triton is not really looking to be a superhero, and he's actually grateful not to be the firstborn of the Atlantean royal family. Still, he understands that he has gifts, potential, and an important heritage and wants to do right by his family and society in general. He has become quite fond of the surface world and his temporary home in Freedom City along with his childhood home of Atlantis. Secretly, Telemachus would like to be a singer and performer, much like his grandmother.

In addition to his Siren-gifted sonic powers, Triton has some budding potential as a sorcerer and is studying magic at Claremont to supplement the Atlantean lore he began studying in childhood. He's no spellcaster (yet) but could be one day.

THREATS FROM THE DEEP

The vast depths of Earth-Prime's oceans are a dangerous, alien world unto themselves, with a variety of threats that surface from time to time to menace the world. The Atlanteans are aware of many of these, although they do not always share this information with the surface-world, and there are mysteries and dangers in the depths unknown even to the inhabitants of Atlantis.

ATLANTEAN DISSIDENTS AND BARBARIANS

Although the House of Atlan is friendly to the surface-world, that opinion is not universal amongst the Atlanteans. Indeed, some believe the royal house is corrupted by the blood of a surface-worlder, Queen Mother Evelyn, leading their loyalties to lie with dry-landers rather than the true heart of Atlantis and its people. While nothing could be further from the truth, such sentiments have been used in the past to stir up dissent and even outright rebellion against the throne.

PRINCE TELEMACHUS (TRITON)

PL7 • 125 POINTS

STR 7 STA 3 AGL 3 DEX 2 FGT 6 INT 1 AWE 2 PRE 1

Powers: **Aquatic** (Immunity 3 (cold, drowning, pressure), Movement 1 (Environmental Adaptation: Aquatic), Senses 1 (low-light vision), Swimming 8 (120 MPH)), **Tough** (Protection 4)), **Power of the Sirens (Deafening Shriek** (Cone Area Cumulative Affliction 7 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware), Limited to Hearing), **AE: Hypnotic Song** (Hearing Ranged Cumulative Affliction 5 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled), Concentration, Instant Recovery), **AE: Sonic Blast** (Ranged Damage 7), **AE: Sonic Burst** (Burst Area Damage 7), **Senses** 1 (Ultrasonic Hearing))

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Benefit 4 (Prince of Atlantis), Favored Environment: Aquatic, Languages (English, Atlantean native), Move-by Action, Ranged Attack 3

Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+7), Athletics 2 (+9), Expertise: Magic 2 (+3), Expertise: Oceanography 1 (+2), Expertise: Theology and Philosophy 1 (+2), Insight 2 (+4), Perception 2 (+4), Persuasion (+5), Technology 2 (+3), Treatment 2 (+3)

Offense: Initiative +3, Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 7)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 7, Toughness 7, Will 7

Complications: **Motivation – Acceptance:** Telemachus wants to move out from the shadow of his family and find where he truly belongs. **Disability:** As an Atlantean, Triton is vulnerable to prolonged dehydration, which causes fatigue.

Totals: Abilities 50 + Powers 39 + Advantages 11 + Skills 11 + Defenses 14 = 125

PRINCESS SETHRA

Self-proclaimed "Sorceress of the Seven Seas," the "Princess" Sethra is an old foe of the Sea-King, daughter of Jura, the military commander who overthrew the king's father, Thallor, sending him temporarily into exile, ironically leading to his encounter with Evelyn and her attainment of the power of the Sirens and position as Queen Mother in Atlantis. For a very brief time in her childhood, Sethra was crown-princess of Atlantis, a role and title she claims to this day, seeking to re-take the throne from the "half-blood usurper" Theseus. She blames the Sea-King and his kin for the ouster and death of her father in battle and her own bitter exile among the barbarian tribes of the seas. She sees King Theseus' unwillingness to execute her for treason against Atlantis as an effort to further taunt and torment her rather than a mercy, and would show far less kindness to her old foe.

Use the Sorcerer archetype from **Chapter 3** of the *Game-master's Guide* for Sethra, reducing her power and attack ranks by 2, removing the Mystic Levitation power, and applying the modifications of the Atlantean template on page 244.

JUROS, WARLORD OF ATLANTIS

Sethra's son, Juros, has taken on the title of "Warlord of Atlantis" in adulthood, and aims to follow in the footsteps of his grandfather, seizing the throne of Atlantis as its rightful heir and a true-blooded scion of untainted Atlantean blood. A vicious brute, Juros is entirely his mother's creature, although a charismatic and effective figurehead for rallying some of the barbarian tribes of the seas under

ADVENTURES IN ATLANTIS

The following are just some possible adventures you can run involving Atlantis in your *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* series set on Earth-Prime.

THE MADNESS OF THE KING

King Theseus makes an unscheduled and unusually confrontational (even for him) appearance at the United Nations, proclaiming Atlantis will no longer tolerate surface world encroachment upon the seas or the poisoning of their waters, storming out and disappearing back into the ocean with his entourage. Not long thereafter, Atlantean military forces strike against coastal cities in North America, shocking the world.

Triton is among the most surprised, as the young scion of Atlantis cannot understand why his father has declared war on the surface world! He suspects something more is going on behind the scenes and needs help to return to Atlantis to find out. In fact, a new advisor to the throne has come into possession of the Serpent Scepter and been corrupted by its influence, using the power of the Scepter to exert control over the House of Atlan and key members of the Atlantean military leadership. Queen Mother Evelyn has resisted the Scepter's influence and been imprisoned to keep her from interfering. If freed, she serves as the heroes' ally in taking Atlantis back and freeing her family from the Scepter's evil influence before it is too late.

RISING FROM THE DEPTHS

A surface world cult like the Brotherhood of the Yellow Sign cooperates with their counterparts among the Deep Ones to find an ancient lost Atlantean temple in the ocean depths, one containing sufficient lingering mystical power for them to breach the barriers between dimensions and call forth one of the powerful servants of the Nameless One.

The Atlanteans take notice of increased activity amongst the Deep Ones while the heroes pick up clues of the cult gathering resources for their plan, including an expedition to locate the temple, which might involve acquiring or co-opting legitimate underwater archeological research.

THE FLOOD

An Atlantean warlord, similar in abilities to Sea-King, gains access to an ancient artifact like the Trident of Poseidon or the Horn of Triton, giving him command over the sea and its creatures. He uses this power and influence to gather an army and plans to invade the surface world. In so doing, he will draw King Theseus into battle and topple him from the throne while at the same time demonstrating his power to humanity and consolidating his claim over all Seven Seas.

The threat first manifests with an unexplained tsunami rushing towards a coastal city or region, forcing the heroes to scramble in order to stop it, followed by strange attacks by sea-life and an eventual invasion by Atlantean warriors. The warlord controls a leviathan-like creature from the deepest recesses of the ocean as his ace-in-the-hole. Use Gigantosaurus from *Atlas of Earth-Prime: Sub-Terra*, or a similar creature.

his banner. He hates the House of Atlan, particularly the current Princess and Prince, and is galled by the fact that Nereid has bested him in single combat in the past.

Use Queen Marta's traits from page 250 for Juros, replacing the Guardian's Staff with a similar orichalcum trident, reducing Awareness to 2, and removing the Expertise: Theology and Philosophy skill.

UNDERSEA RUINS

The ocean floor is littered with ancient ruins from the heights of Atlantean and Lemurian civilization, along with millennia of migration, inhabitation, and abandonment by generations of Atlanteans and other underwater dwellers. The most likely of these ruins to remain intact are fortified locations from the time of the ancient war between Atlantis and Lemuria, protected by advanced scientific sorcery, sometimes sealed against the outside world like time-capsules. These places occasionally contain ancient weapons stockpiles or, worse yet, the results of desperate experimentation and research in the final days of the war, as both sides sought ever more dangerous and risky weapons to unleash against their enemies. Just one such

weapon is the nigh-unstoppable monster Dakuwanga (see the *Threat Report* sourcebook), and there are many other such weapons-vaults buried in the sea floor.

While most sea-dwellers wisely avoid the ruins out of superstition or caution, some daring barbarian warlords or sorcerers—including Sethra and Juros—seek them out in hopes of finding some new super-weapon. Likewise, surface-world raiders sometimes brave the dark depths in an effort to locate and loot the ruins. The aquatic team of Trident, led by a half-breed Lemurian Serpent Person known as Coral Snake, are among the most infamous. (See the *Threat Report* sourcebook for details on Trident, their abilities, and activities.)

The Castle, Hidden Temple, and Island Base lair archetypes from the **Appendix** of the *Gamemaster's Guide* can serve as templates for undersea ruins, shifted to aquatic locales. Sites may be inhabited or guarded by various minion creatures from **Chapter 3** of the *Gamemaster's Guide*, including sharks, giant squids, and whales (often corrupted by ancient magics), cultists with the Atlantean or Deep One templates, animated statues that are the equivalent of medium or large robots, and aquatic skeletons or zombies.



GREETINGS, DIRECTOR MERRIWETHER
YOU ARE CLEARED FOR RED+ ACCESS
THERE ARE 3 ACTIVE ALERTS
CONDITION IS **YELLOW**

ALLIES: GROUPS

SEARCH: UNISON

NEWEST DATABASE ADDITIONS/UPDATES

TAP THE PICTURE BELOW TO ACCESS THE LATEST DATA AND REPORTS



TAP HERE FOR THE MAIN ALLIES DATABASE



UNISON

The United Nations International Superhuman Oversight Network—UNISON—is the world’s front line against supervillains and similar global threats. In the United States, AEGIS may get all of the press, but in other parts of the world, it’s UNISON that takes the risks, putting their lives on the line against supervillains, often without well-stocked arsenals and bases (or even a good medic) at their disposal.

HISTORY

UNISON is an outgrowth of the UN Peacekeeping forces established in 1956 to deal with the Suez Canal crisis. At the same time as the first peacekeeping forces were established, many wondered about forces to battle “extra-national security threats” such as the Killer Kaiser, a madman who threatened Germany in the early 1950s. Though supervillains were less common in those days, they were still a concern to international authorities, and when the first peacekeeping forces were established, a provision was added for the creation of a task force to coordinate and hunt supervillains who traveled across international borders, criminals having little regard for international sovereignty.

The task force was inactive for six years, until 1962, when the Leopard King decided the newly independent nation-states of Africa were ripe for takeover. Establishing an army of “Leopard-Men” (brain-washed members of various local tribes), he launched an attack on several states, including Dakana. At the request of King M’Zale, the United Nations sent a peacekeeping force to intervene. This was the first recorded use of United Nations troops to fight supervillains.

In 1962, the appearance of SHADOW in the first Operation Inundation posed a worldwide threat, and when AEGIS director Jack Simmons called upon his friends in the military community to battle them, one of the first people to receive a phone call was Edmond Stahl, the Danish head of the Dakana task force. Thanks in large part to Stahl’s efforts, many European capitals were spared a SHADOW assault.

INVASION OF THE MALFIDIANS!

In 1965, the United Nations dealt with a new menace: the Malfidians, an expeditionary force from Farside City. They operated out of a small gravel quarry in Central England.

Their mission was to procure certain rare elements and assess the planet for conquest.

Uniforce (as it was then called) learned of the menace, and with the help of a mysterious pair called the Associates—time travelers from the future who could possess the bodies of people in the present and work against threats that originated from outside Earth’s timestream—the Malfidians were defeated, and the Associates exposed the influence of the time tamperer Zeitgeist, who possessed the body of Lady Lunar’s chief advisor. With her Malfidian Guard defeated, Lady Lunar pledged peaceful coexistence with the Earth.

Unfortunately, Lady Lunar had her own ambitions toward Earth that fit entirely within the normal confines of the timestream. Nonetheless, the incident solidified the standing of Uniforce to guard against alien threats.

The Associates made periodic reappearances in England over the years, explaining it sits on a “dimensional fulcrum,” making certain temporal incursions more likely to occur there.

THE THREAT OF MENACE

In the 1960s, a number of terrorist and anarchist groups sprang up around the globe to threaten human freedom and the rule of law. SHADOW is the most infamous of these agencies of evil; however, the original incarnation of MENACE (Mobile European Network

Acquiring Control of Earth) was an organization of European lunatics that stole plans for the Inexistence Gun, a weapon that altered causality. This brought about the creation of Team Alphabet (inspired by an offhand comment by the Associates that “you’d need a special agent for every letter of the alphabet to stop MENACE and their super weapon!”). Team Alphabet was an elite team of 26 super-spies who boasted that if they were given a suicide mission, they could solve it “from beyond the grave.”

After several years of cat-and-mouse in every corner of the world (and beyond), Team Alphabet managed to cut off MENACE’s access to the Arsenal Outside Time, where they had stolen their fantastic weapons, and put an end to their threat.

Although its name often makes eyes roll, the team has always fielded a top-notch contingent. The second-in-command of Team Alphabet, Agent E (Anthony Ellis) is the father of current UNISON chief Colonel Jennifer Ellis.



BUT THE UNITED NATIONS IS...

In certain quarters of the real world, the United Nations has a reputation for ineffectiveness and corruption. There are many good reasons for this; even under the best of conditions, diplomacy moves at a deliberate pace. However, too much cynicism is problematic for a superhero comic book series, particularly those based on Silver Age comics, where the United Nations represents an ideal of unified world government instead of crushing realpolitik; the hope that all people, once they're brought together, can overcome their base nature and solve humanity's problems in a peaceful, equitable manner suits the four-color superhero style. Most comic book-style UN agencies, be it THUNDER, UNCLE, or UNIT, reflect this idealistic philosophy, and UNISON is no different.

Bronze and Iron Age games allow for different (and more realistic) perspectives. Even these perspectives can be used to present good tests of moral character and cleverness: how an agency handles the frustrations of the United Nations bureaucracy—big countries trying to protect their client states, other countries too scared to commit forces to an operation that's either low on their priority list or which they fear will escalate into a major conflict—can be a challenging element in-game.

Just as AEGIS can be played as a stereotype, so can UNISON. But that's not the way they are on Earth-Prime. Like AEGIS, UNISON agents are the good guys. They exist to take down the bad guys and bring justice to the oppressed. Many who work in UN agencies, particularly health and relief agencies, are dedicated professionals interested in helping people. And, that is also true for members of the fictional UNISON agency. Especially since (due to at least two alien invasions over the last fifteen years), international politics of the world of Freedom City are a lot more amenable to cooperation and the need to present a united global front. At one of the chilliest moments of the Cold War in the 1980s, Ronald Reagan speculated an alien invasion could bring the superpowers together almost immediately. In the real world of Freedom City, that cooperation, unknown in our world, is a reality.

During his mercenary days, Jack Wolf spent a year on the squad as "Agent W" (which, until then, had a reputation for being the "unluckiest letter").

CONVERGENCE

Thanks to the wonders of bureaucratic compartmentalization, Uniforce and Team Alphabet were not the only UN agencies investigating superhuman threats. By 1970, the bureaucracy of the United Nations had developed no less than six different agencies to handle matters relating to aliens and superhuman threats. Clearly, a more unified approach was needed to coordinate these agencies into an effective force.

For years, two sub-agencies, the United Nations Science Advisory Council (UNSAC) analyzed alien technology and the United Nations Paranormal Enclave Committee (UNPEC) advised on dealings with places like Atlantis. Enemy agents interested in sowing dissent had infiltrated both agencies. As a result, convergence of all United Nations concerns did not occur for another 25 years, though the other agencies moved closer to cooperation.

In 1993, everything changed. The Terminus Invasion was a clear signal the world needed to organize a response to alien threats on a global scale. Major Jennifer Ellis of Great Britain and Major Jahal Daliwhal of India, both experienced Uniforce operatives, again proposed an umbrella organization. When UNSAC opposed the measure, Team Alphabet went undercover and discovered that UNSAC had been infiltrated by a race of alien parasites. With this threat exposed, there was nothing keeping the proposal from going forward. UNISON, a name meant to signify the single-mindedness of the agency to protect humanity, was formally created in 1994 with Spain's Carlos Santiago as its first director.

Despite being created in a favorable world climate, UNISON is not particularly welcome worldwide. Their standard operating procedure is for all national govern-

ments to approve their mission before entering. UNISON is supposed to share all intelligence with local authorities and national security agencies, and provide them with regular updates. For the most part, they are allowed to enter a country like the United States only when they are on an intelligence-gathering mission to investigate aliens or supervillain threats with a worldwide scope, but they require a special permit to carry weapons.

Fortunately, the fact that Harry Powers and Jennifer Ellis worked together on numerous missions in the past has lowered barriers between AEGIS and UNISON, though their agents often have a more intense rivalry. In Europe and Canada, they have good relations with most law enforcement agencies, and they are more active in the field. In particular, they have a good relationship with Interpol. In much of Africa and parts of South America, UNISON almost acts with impunity. UNISON has never been granted permission to enter the People's Republic of China, except for a few private meetings between Ellis and Chinese officials.

There is also one worldwide threat where even Harry Powers defers to UNISON's expertise: Overthrow.

NEW THREATS

In the late 1980s, a new terrorist threat surfaced to trouble the world in the absence of SHADOW and MENACE: Overthrow, an alliance of European terrorist cells organized into a terrorist super-organization. This misfit collection of anarchists and political extremists began a campaign of bombings and assassination in Germany, which soon spread to France, Spain, Italy, and Greece, and eventually reached Eastern Europe and even America.

Vehemently opposed to globalization and other market forces driving economies together, Overthrow's skill in hiding itself from sight was matched only by the viciousness of their attacks. In 1999, Overthrow assassinated UNISON Director Santiago, and the following year they



UNISON TROOPERS BATTLE THE FORCES OF SHADOW

assassinated his successor, a capable Jamaican named Harry Smith. In 2002, the UK's Jennifer Ellis was appointed director of UNISON, and has managed to avoid Overthrow bombs and assassins' bullets—though not for lack of trying on Overthrow's part.

In addition to the Overthrow threat, UNISON aided in fighting off the Grue invasion of 2003, fielding Uni-Storm, a fleet of ten space-capable heavy fighter craft UNISON commissioned after the Terminus Invasion. The existence of a small independent space fleet came as something of a shock to members of the Security Council and sparked intense debate on UNISON's role in planetary defense. So far, Ellis has managed to defend her organization from attempts to cripple its independent military capacity, thanks in part to close friends of UNISON like King M'Balla of Dakana (who secretly backed the Uni-Storm program), the Atom Family, and the Freedom League.

Atlantis has been a problem for UNISON, as the major world powers realized years ago the Atlanteans would only accept UNISON as an independent monitoring agency. After long and grueling negotiations with the Atlanteans, they finally agreed to allow UNISON to maintain three monitoring stations within 50 kilometers of claimed Atlantean territories. Due to Atlantean technology, these stations have proven nearly useless in tracking Atlantean activities, but this hasn't prevented them from being targeted three times by Atlantis or unaffiliated Atlantean barbarians during recent standoffs with the undersea empire.

Another big test for UNISON came in 2004, when the West African nation of Côte de Liberté attempted to get UNISON involved in controlling its civil war. UNISON went

in as an advance force for UN Peacekeepers and became involved in firefights with a number of rebel groups. However, UNISON refused to press the attack or otherwise become involved in a civil conflict. After the death toll mounted, UNISON was heavily criticized, but behind the scenes, they managed to negotiate a cease-fire that has held to this day. The effective combination of restrained force and diplomacy has been one of the hallmarks of Ellis' term as director, but even she admits that she is only one misstep away from a major disaster.

UNISON TODAY

Today, UNISON has something of a split personality. Because its objectives vary depending on the part of the globe in which they are operating, UNISON is much more aggressive in areas of the world that don't have a strong military presence or central authority. Elsewhere, they are investigators who deal with international threats like Overthrow. Their record is excellent; however, they are under intense scrutiny from nearly every quarter.

Overthrow has proven a major source of frustration. UNISON has broken up numerous small cells and stopped dozens of plots, but they have failed to hit the leadership of the organization or discover the secret behind their funding. Years ago, Jennifer Ellis figured Overthrow had to have a powerful player in the world scene supplying it with goods and intelligence. After a long investigation, Ellis has ruled out major world government backing, but has no evidence, except for the possibility of a connection with Dr. Sin. Defeating Overthrow has almost become an obsession with her, but she is as yet unaware of the greater threat behind Overthrow.

UNISON DIVISIONS

BENEFIT	MILITARY	INVESTIGATOR	COMMAND	AGENCY BONUS
1	Private	Officer	Intern	+0
2	Corporal	Lieutenant	Aide	+1
3	Lieutenant	Constable	Senior Aide	+2
4	Captain	Inspector	Deputy Director	+3
5	Major	Chief Inspector	Director	+4
6	Colonel	(none)	(none)	+5

STRUCTURE

UNISON is based in Geneva, Switzerland, and reports to the Global Special Security (GSS) Sub-committee of the United Nations Security Council. This committee, composed of members of the Security Council, reviews major mission proposals from UNISON staff, approves funding, and reports on UNISON activities to the Security Council and the General Assembly. Because UNISON receives much of their funding from “outside” sources like Daedalus, they have more autonomy than one might think; the Security Council, generally understanding the complexities of UNISON’s task, rarely raises a fuss.

Members of the organization come from two sources: military forces from member states who volunteer for peacekeeping and security duties, and so-called “extrationals,” people who volunteer for UNISON duty in a way not unlike the French Foreign Legion. This “floating force” allows UNISON far more flexibility in mission deployment, but is controversial in the western world. In an effort to help UNISON, Dakana has generously agreed to sponsor these troops so they may avoid the bulk of the controversy, even though Dakana does not permit them to enter their nation unless they remain in the UNISON Earth Defense HQ, the largest UNISON military base in the world, located in Mt. Mgava on the nation’s southeastern border, leading some to question the policy’s legitimacy.

UNISON has three service branches: Military, Investigation, and Command. The Military branch works in conjunction with UN peacekeeping forces to deal with alien or supervillain threats. The Intelligence branch fights terrorist threats and gathers information on “humanity’s common enemies.” The Command branch oversees the bureaucracy and works toward meeting the supply needs of UNISON.

The current Director-General of UNISON’s operations is Colonel Jennifer Ellis (see **Personnel** later in this chapter).

OPERATIONS

UNISON’s duties include peacekeeping in areas where there are active supervillains and the local authorities can’t handle things, preparation for battles against global threats like the Terminus, and controlling dangerous paranormal sites.

ALIEN DIPLOMACY

The United Nations Extraterrestrial Liaison Organization (UNELO) is a UN agency set up to allow communications between extraterrestrials and humanity and protect the rights of law-abiding aliens on Earth. UNISON serves as an enforcement arm of the organization, providing security in first contact situations and performing rescue operations when aliens are endangered by human xenophobia—which, after the last several alien incursions, is a more frequent occurrence than most would like to admit.

BORDER CROSSINGS

UNISON’s most politically delicate tasks are missions involving supervillains who cross over a border, attack a neighboring state, and then retreat back across the border. Most times, it’s up to the supervillain’s home country to capture him and extradite him to justice. However, some nation states don’t have the resources to handle them, and the supervillain becomes a major threat to life and liberty.

In this situation, the home country can admit they aren’t equipped to handle the situation and request UNISON assistance. This is far from a perfect system, as no nation likes to admit they can’t deal with their own problems, and neighbors get understandably angry at being victimized. This is why UNBIT exists, the United Nations Border Intervention Treaty, which allows UNISON freer access to their country. During supervillain incursions, when both nations are UNBIT signatories, the complaining nation may take its case directly to the Security Council and get approval for UNISON forces to deal with the threat.

These missions are often the worst part of UNISON’s job, particularly when the “supervillain” is actually a covert military operative for the bordering nation and has their home country’s backing.

INVESTIGATION

UNISON is far more likely to deploy its forces in an investigative capacity. When they are assigned to investigate an international terrorist agency or “border-crosser,” they contact local authorities and request to be brought into a case on an advisory capacity. When the request is approved, the UNISON agent joins the officer on the case, and is supposed to work as their subordinate, al-

UNISON SPECIAL COMMANDS

Depending on how widespread you want UNISON's structure and influence on your version of Earth-Prime, one or more of the following special commands may exist as part of the organization. These are all optional, and secretive enough for most people to be unaware whether they exist or not. Use them as you see fit in your *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* series.

UNICORN:(United Nations International Coalition Ordering the Reality Nexus) is the successor to Uniforce, a little known agency dedicated to fighting threats from beyond Earth's dimension or from other time periods. For their own protection—since prolonged exposure to forces that alter the timestream frequently causes psychoses—UNICORN agents are conditioned to forget all operations until they are needed, at which time the memories are telepathically reactivated. At all other times, the agents believe they are UN bureaucrats stationed at a routine data analysis office in London.

UNCOT (United Nations Command On Terrorism) is a branch of UNISON specializing in fighting terrorist agencies like Overthrow. Their trained agents are some of the most capable non-superhumans in the world, but their sometimes-glamorous lifestyle—defeating international terror often requires agents to infiltrate networks of wealth and privilege, which is not cheap—and “license to kill” are sources of controversy. UNCOT is primarily made up of British, American, Israeli, and Russian agents who, despite old grudges, work well together.

UNIQUE (United Nations International Quorum of Unaligned Exceptionals) is UNISON's superhuman branch. This is a Special Forces regiment of superhumans and support staff at UNISON's disposal. These brave men and women specialize in handling crises in the Third World, but they sometimes perform bodyguard duty at important UN functions and conferences. If you want UNISON to have its own super-team, then UNIQUE is it. Its membership and relationship with independent groups like the Freedom League and the various international heroes in this book are left for the GM to decide as best suits the series.

lowing the local officer to lead the investigation, coordinate gathering of evidence, conduct interviews, and so forth, while UNISON observes. Other times, the local officer attempts to obstruct the investigation. Frequently, however, the UNISON agent's superior training puts them in charge of the case. At the end of the investigation, the UNISON agent prepares a private report for the Security Council.

ASSASSINATION

The most devastating UNISON secret is the H-Treaty, a pact between members of the Security Council authorizing solos, freelance assassins, to “sanction” enemies. These missions occur only with the unanimous consent of all members of the Council, to deal with threats of a worldwide scope while maintaining plausible deniability. These missions usually target terrorist leaders or dictators who, unsurprisingly, are not supported by any of the major

world powers. Freelance mercenaries and top-secret agents are the usual choice for this assignment.

RESOURCES

Like other UN agencies, UNISON operates largely on the charity of its members. UNISON's private benefactors do give the agency some flexibility and allow it to maintain a few secret bases around the globe; most of its members rely on the host country to provide its needs. As a result, the resources available to a UNISON agent vary from assignment to assignment and the place where they are stationed.

EQUIPMENT

As with other agents, UNISON operatives rely on their equipment allowance to provide them with the tools of the trade. Typical equipment packages include:

UNISON AGENT

Pistol (6 points), cell phone (1 point), digital camera (1 point), notebook computer • 2 *Equipment points*

UNISON TROOPER

Assault Rifle (16 points), body armor (Toughness +2, 2 points), cell phone (1 point), night vision goggles • 1 *Equipment point*

UNISON SOLO

Holdout pistol (4 points), sniper rifle (13 points), sleep gas pellets (12 points), burglar's kit (2 points), disguise kit (1 point), concealed commlink (2 point), binoculars (1 point), concealed flash goggles (2 points), concealed gas mask (2 points), concealed multi-tool (2 points), night vision goggles (1 point), digital camera (1 point), notebook computer (2 points), broom (1 point), GPS (1 point), plus 3 points worth of additional equipment • 50 *Equipment points*

THE UNISON ARSENAL

Unlike AEGIS, UNISON is a grittier, more realistic agency, and that extends to the agency's technology. Comic book technology is rare; instead, UNISON almost exclusively uses real-world tech. Solos and other glamorous operatives, in keeping with the colorful world in which they operate, have access to the more sophisticated “spy-fi” stuff. The run-of-the-mill UNISON agent, however, uses conventional firearms, when they're allowed to carry weapons at all. In places where UNISON assumes a combat role, they may employ heavy military weapons.

Similarly, UNISON uses conventional transportation—fitted with United Nations diplomatic plates—on investigative missions in the United States and Europe, and real world military vehicles when stationed on military missions, though they are mostly limited to armed helicopters and ATVs. With the exception of thirteen heavy space fighters stationed at the UNISON Earth Defense Base in Dakana, UNISON does not have access to its own tanks and fighter jets.



A TYPICAL UNISON BASE

UNISON HEADQUARTERS

As a United Nations agency, UNISON headquarters tend to be small, inconspicuous, and sometimes mobile, or they operate out of other United Nations facilities or, in emergencies, the local Dakanan consulate.

MOBILE MILITARY COMMAND

For those who run into UNISON in the field, this is a typical base for a UNISON military camp. Most of these are currently located in Africa, and are set up as a base of operations for UNBIT Treaty Duty.

MOBILE MILITARY COMMAND

HQ - 14 PTS

Size: Huge • **Toughness:** 5 • **Features:** Communications, Defense System, Garage, Hangar, Holding Cells, Infirmary, Isolated, Laboratory, Living Space, Power System, Workshop

Agent Complement: 1 Commander, 10 Squads (50 UNISON Agents and 50 UNISON Troopers), 2-3 Field Investigators, 2 Communications/Surveillance Specialists, 2-3 Motor Pool Workers, 3 Combat Engineers, 10-20 Support Staff.

Vehicles: 5 Armored Personnel Carriers, 5 Military Helicopters

SECRET UNISON BASE

UNISON also maintains secret bases to serve as command centers for solos and other covert operatives. These offices are centers of UNISON's intelligence network, as data from agents in the field are deposited here for initial analysis.

SECRET UNISON BASE

HQ - 13 PTS

Size: Large • **Toughness:** 5 • **Features:** Communications, Computers, Concealed, Fire Prevention System, Garage, Hangar, Infirmary, Laboratory, Living Space, Security System, Workshop

Agent Complement: 1 Commander, 2 Squads (10 UNISON Agents), 1 Elite Squad (5 UNISON Troopers), 1-4 Lab Geeks, 1-4 Defense Analysts, 4-6 Support Staff.

Vehicles: 1 Disguising Car, 1 Spy Motorcycle, 1 Spy Sports Car, 1 Surveillance Van.

UNISON CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS

UNISON's main headquarter is located in Geneva, Switzerland. This sprawling estate is an 18th Century castle that belonged to a Swiss noble family—and haunted by a few family ghosts, although Director Ellis manages to keep them in line by making them honorary UNISON agents.

UNISON CENTRAL HEADQUARTERS

HQ - 19 PTS

Size: Huge • **Toughness:** 10 • **Features:** Communications, Computers, Concealed, Defense System, Fire Prevention System, Garage, Hangar, Infirmary, Library, Living Space, Power System, Security System, Workshop

Agent Complement: 1 Commander, 20 Squads (100 UNISON Troopers), 1 Elite Squad (5 Commandos), 5-10 Surveillance/Communications Specialists, 5-10 Lab Geeks, 10-20 Defense Analysts, 4 Technicians, 4 Pilots, 30-50 Support Staff.

Vehicles: 1 Disguising Car, 1 Spy Motorcycle, 1 Spy Sports Car, 1 Surveillance Van.

PERSONNEL

UNISON agents come in many shapes and sizes. While heroes are more likely to meet basic agents, those who travel widely encounter a greater variety.

UNISON AGENT

The basic UNISON agent is an investigator, often on detached duty from a national law-enforcement organization, although some work full-time for the agency. These agents are not military peacekeepers or soldiers; use the Soldier archetype from the **Gamemastering** chapter of the *Hero's Handbook* for UNISON military assets.

Individual agents may have additional Expertise skills, particularly in relevant fields of study like criminology, international law, and knowledge of superhumans, and technicians have at least Technology rank 4, often much higher, and may have the Inventor advantage as well.

UNISON SOLO

"Solo" is a euphemism for an assassin. While UNISON does not—officially—call upon their services often, UNISON solos travel to any part of the world to complete their

UNISON AGENT	PL 4 • 52 POINTS
STR 0 STA 1 AGL 1 DEX 1 FGT 3 INT 2 AWE 2 PRE 0	
Equipment: Up to 10 points of equipment in the field	
Advantages: Benefit 1 (UNISON rank), Defensive Roll, Equipment 2, Languages (English; native language varies)	
Skills: Expertise: Agent 4 (+6), Expertise: Streetwise 2 (+4), Insight 2 (+4), Intimidation 4 (+4), Investigation 8 (+10), Perception 4 (+6), Persuasion 4 (+4), Ranged Combat: Guns 2 (+3), Technology 2 (+4), Vehicles 4 (+5)	
Offense: Initiative +1, Unarmed +3 (Close, Damage 0)	
Totals: Abilities 20 + Powers 0 + Advantages 5 + Skills 18 + Defenses 9 = 52	
Defense: Dodge 4, Parry 4, Fortitude 4, Toughness 2/1*, Will 4 *Without Defensive Roll	

UNISON SOLO	PL 6 • 99 POINTS
STR 1 STA 1 AGL 3 DEX 3 FGT 5 INT 2 AWE 1 PRE 3	
Equipment: Up to 50 points of equipment in the field	
Advantages: Benefit 1 (UNISON rank), Contacts, Defensive Roll, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 2, Evasion, Improved Disarm, Luck, Quick Draw, Well-informed	
Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+5), Athletics 2 (+3), Deception 4 (+7), Expertise: Agent 6 (+8), Expertise: Streetwise 4 (+6), Insight 4 (+5), Intimidation 6 (+9), Investigation 4 (+6), Perception 4 (+5), Persuasion 3 (+6), Ranged Combat: Guns 3 (+6), Sleight of Hand 2 (+5), Stealth 2 (+5), Technology 4 (+6), Vehicles 4 (+7)	
Offense: Initiative +3, Unarmed +5 (Close, Damage 1)	
Totals: Abilities 38 + Powers 0 + Advantages 20 + Skills 27 + Defenses 14 = 99	
Defense: Dodge 6, Parry 6, Fortitude 6, Toughness 2/1*, Will 6 *Without Defensive Roll	

mission. They are no-nonsense killers ostensibly on the side of the angels. Equipped with the latest spy-gear, the solo eschews flash and dazzle in favor of subtlety—and getting the job done.

COLONEL JENNIFER ELLIS

The Director-General of UNISON is Colonel Jennifer Ellis, Royal Air Force, on assignment to the United Nations from the United Kingdom. Among her other qualifications for the post is a long stint with the Ministry of Powers in Britain, dealing with various superhumans and experience with agencies like AEGIS. In fact, Jen Ellis worked several times in the field with Harry Powers (now Director of AEGIS) when the two of them were agents.

Colonel Ellis knows full well how close she skirts to the edge of her authority as Director-General in doing things like aiding the Freedom League and running UNISON overwatch operations that tread on national sovereignty. Thus far, she hasn't overstepped her bounds sufficiently for the UN Secretary-General or the Security Council to call her to account, most likely because she gets results. But it may be just a matter of time.

Col. Ellis finds the restrictions on UNISON operations endlessly frustrating, and is glad to assist heroes like the Freedom League, whose hands are not necessarily tied by the same diplomatic and bureaucratic red tape. She would like to see UNISON become a true international law-enforcement and peacekeeping agency for dealing with superhuman threats, but knows there are many barriers keeping that from happening.

A fit woman in her 50s, Director-General Ellis wears her ashen blond hair stylishly short these days, often tucked under a blue UN beret. She wears a UN peacekeeping uniform with the UNISON badge while on-duty, but can pull off high-class diplomatic formal wear just as easily, when there's need.

COLONEL JENNIFER ELLIS	PL 8 • 138 POINTS
STR 1 STA 1 AGL 2 DEX 2 FGT 8 INT 2 AWE 3 PRE 4	
Equipment: Up to 20 points of equipment in the field	
Advantages: Assessment, Benefit 5 (UNISON rank), Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 4, Evasion, Improved Initiative, Leadership, Precise Attack (Ranged, Cover), Quick Draw, Well-informed	
Skills: Acrobatics 4 (+6), Athletics 4 (+5), Deception 8 (+12), Expertise: Agent 8 (+10), Expertise: Civics 8 (+10), Expertise: Streetwise 8 (+10), Insight 9 (+12), Intimidation 8 (+12), Investigation 8 (+10), Perception 8 (+11), Persuasion 8 (+11), Ranged Combat: Guns 6 (+8), Stealth 8 (+10), Technology 4 (+6), Treatment 3 (+5), Vehicles 8 (+10)	
Offense: Initiative +6, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 1)	
Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 7, Toughness 3/1*, Will 9 *Without Defensive Roll	
Totals: Abilities 46 + Powers 0 + Advantages 20 + Skills 55 + Defenses 17 = 138	
Complications: Motivation – Responsibility: Col. Ellis feels a sense of duty to her position and to the world.	

CHALCEDONY JOHNSON**PL 8 • 138 POINTS****STR 5 STA 5 AGL 4 DEX 4 FGT 8 INT 2 AWE 4 PRE 3****Powers:** **Enhanced Immune System** (Immunity 2 (Aging, Disease), Limited to Half Effect), **Mind Shield** (Enhanced Will 2, Limited to Mental Powers)**Equipment:** Up to 20 points in equipment in the field**Advantages:** Assessment, Attractive, Benefit 4 (UNISON rank), Defensive Roll, Equipment 4, Fearless, Improved Grab, Instant Up, Jack-of-all-trades, Move-by Action, Precise Attack (Ranged, Cover), Teamwork, Trance**Skills:** Acrobatics 8 (+12), Athletics 8 (+13), Expertise: Agent 8 (+10), Expertise: Civics 4 (+6), Expertise: Tactics 4 (+6), Insight 4 (+8), Intimidation 6 (+9), Investigation 6 (+8), Perception 4 (+8), Persuasion 4 (+7), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+8), Stealth 6 (+10), Technology 4 (+6), Treatment 2 (+4), Vehicles 4 (+8)**Offense:** Initiative +4, Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 5)**Defense:** Dodge 8, Parry 8, Fortitude 7, Toughness 6/5*, Will 7
*Without Defensive Roll**Totals:** Abilities 70 + Powers 2 + Advantages 19 + Skills 38 + Defenses 9 = 138**Complications: Motivation – Doing Good:**

Chalcedony is an idealist who believes in doing all she can to create a better and safer world.

CHALCEDONY JOHNSON

The head of the UNISON covert operations bureau in Freedom City is Chalcedony Johnson, a seemingly young woman who is older than she looks. She is actually the daughter of Captain Griff Johnson, a WWII US Navy Captain and Auriana, a Utopian. When Johnson's PT Boat was destroyed in a Japanese attack, a Utopian woman boating in the waters found and rescued him. They fell in love, and nature took its course. She kept her true heritage a secret from her husband and daughter, but raised Chalcedony with Utopian ideals.

When Chalcedony grew up, a career in UNISON seemed the best fit for her beliefs. She is an idealist (and sometimes an argumentative one, especially when cynicism is expressed within earshot), but there is no question that she backs up her ideals with dedication. She is troubled by her mother's disappearance; Auriana was forced to return to her people when the Utopians chose to cut off contact with the outside world. Auriana never had time to say goodbye to her husband or daughter.

**MIKOS WEST****PL 6 • 106 POINTS****STR 3 STA 2 AGL 1 DEX 2 FGT 7 INT 4 AWE 2 PRE 2****Equipment:** Up to 20 points in equipment in the field**Advantages:** Benefit 2 (UNISON rank), Defensive Roll 2, Equipment 4, Improvised Tools, Inventor, Jack-of-all-trades, Languages 2 (French, German; English native), Prone Fighting, Ranged Attack 4, Set-up**Skills:** Acrobatics 4 (+5), Athletics 4 (+7), Deception 8 (+10), Insight 6 (+8), Investigation 6 (+10), Perception 4 (+6), Persuasion 4 (+6), Stealth 4 (+5), Technology 8 (+12), Vehicles 6 (+8)**Offense:** Initiative +1, Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 3)**Defense:** Dodge 7, Parry 7, Fortitude 6, Toughness 4/2*, Will 6
*Without Defensive Roll**Totals:** Abilities 46 + Powers 0 + Advantages 19 + Skills 27 + Defenses 14 = 106**Complications: Motivation – Adventure:** The "world's greatest little man of action," Mikos enjoys the adventure afforded by his role with UNISON.

In Freedom City, Chalcedony works out of the Dakanan consulate, located in an adjacent building reserved for UNISON (their unofficial headquarters in Freedom City). She is extremely good at charming people, but has some problems with people ruled by realpolitik.

Chalcedony is a beautiful woman and still looks to be in her late twenties, even though she has just turned 50. Six-foot tall, lithe, and smoothly muscled, she has neck-length dark brown hair, almond colored eyes, and a coppery complexion. On the few occasions when she is out of uniform, she usually wears a T-shirt and blue jeans.

MIKOS WEST

Chalcedony's second in command is an oddity: Mikos West, who, despite suffering from dwarfism (inherited from his mother's side of the family), is both a brilliant inventor and a superb hand-to-hand fighter. Mikos is surprisingly laid-back about his size, jokingly calling himself "the world's greatest little man of action." A more practical person than Chalcedony, Mikos often helps her in situations where her idealism might get her into trouble.

**CHALCEDONY JOHNSON
& MIKOS WEST**

THE UNISON SERIES

There are five main options for a UNISON series set on Earth-Prime:

First, there is a standard action-agents game. Characters should be generated under standard PL5 guidelines, though spy-gear is not allowed in the team equipment allowance. For the purposes of the series, UNISON Agents are permitted to use firearms; however, the agents should be aware they will lose the privilege if they are irresponsible with them.

The second option is a UNISON peacekeeper game, set in a foreign country. Their mission is to uproot a supervillain who has established themselves in the nation, track them to their hidden stronghold, and remove them—and then deal with the political fallout that ensues before they are extracted. This game is also built on PL5 level agent characters, but their equipment can include military ordinance.

The third possibility is a UNICORN game set in London. The heroes are a UNICORN team attached to UNISON, living mundane lives until the Associates show up again with another threat to the nature of space-time and reality, and the team is reactivated. This campaign is built on PL5; as with the Peacekeepers campaign, there is no limit on spy-gear or military ordinance. This series can run at a higher power level with characters restricted to agent-level abilities, although a weird power or two might show up in there.

Fourth is the super-spy series. Characters are glamorous super-spies who jet-set around the globe, battling bizarre criminals in exotic locations. This game should be run at PL6 at a minimum. For equipment, any conventional weapon and any spy-gear is available, and the characters can re-allocate their equipment points each game session.

Finally, there is the UNISON superhero series, with the players taking the roles of members of UNIQUE, the UNISON super-team. This is a standard *MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS* series at power level 10 or higher. The characters are likely recruits from different UN member nations around the world, giving the team and the series an international flavor. You can use many of the heroes from this book as potential members of—or inspiration for—a UN super-team.

GLOBAL THREATS

UNISON has a long list of priorities and threats to the safety and security of the world, and limited resources for dealing with them. Therefore one of the agency's top priorities is information-gathering and monitoring these threats, so they can provide guidance and assistance to local and international heroes—such as the Freedom League and your own heroes—in times of crisis.

As a matter of practice, UNISON tends to deal primarily with the smaller day-to-day threats while keeping an eye on the larger ones and trying to prevent smaller threats from growing into larger ones. When a major crisis erupts,

they serve as a coordinating and organizing force, committing what resources they have to dealing with the threat, but relying on the heroes who come to the fore as well.

ORGANIZED CRIME

Generally, UNISON leaves investigating international criminal syndicates and crimes crossing international borders to agencies like Interpol and local authorities. The primary exception is crimes involving superhumans or things like black market super-technology (see the following), which is increasingly becoming the case for the more successful syndicates.

THE MALAKOV MAFIYA

Events in Emerald City have led to UNISON investigations of the Malakov Mafiya's ties with Russia and the former Soviet Union, particularly any movement of old Soviet secrets or materials concerning superhuman research (see the *Emerald City* sourcebook for details). This is a fairly low-priority, particularly given a lack of cooperation from the Russian and American governments.

THE YAKUZA

Similarly, UNISON has been investigating increased activity on the part of the Yakuza, particularly the aggressive and ambitious Takazumi-gumi and their oyabun, the Steel Samurai (see the *Emerald City* sourcebook). Like other Emerald City syndicates, the Takazumi have taken opportunities to recruit stormers—superhumans created by the Silver Storm event in the city—a matter of concern to UNISON and international authorities.

THE TRIADS & DR. SIN

Director Ellis has a particular interest in investigating the Chinese Triads and the complex web of influence controlled by the infamous Dr. Sin (see the *Threat Report* sourcebook), as she suspects Dr. Sin is somehow involved in providing resources and support for Overthrow. Unfortunately, the Chinese government is not at all forthcoming with information or permission to pursue investigations, and Ellis believes—correctly—that Sin's agents in the bureaucracy are stonewalling any efforts to make progress on that front.

TERRORISM

UNISON tends to leave the investigation and pursuit of terrorist organizations to other agencies and local authorities, except where terrorists have or may acquire "AMDs"—Agents of Mass Destruction—particularly superhumans and related technology.

OVERTHROW

The one notable exception to UNISON's terrorism investigations is Overthrow, the mysterious multinational organization responsible for the assassination of UNI-

THE LABYRINTH

The greatest potential threat to the world remains largely hidden, with even UNISON unaware of its existence or the maze of connections between its many proxies. The Labyrinth is deeply embedded in criminal conspiracies around the world, but organizations like UNISON only see the tip of a vast iceberg in the form of proxies and fronts. In particular, UNISON is aware of the DNAscent Process and treatments on-sale in the underworld, which falls under dealing with black market technologies. For full details on the Labyrinth and its master Taurus, see the *Freedom City* sourcebook.

SON's first two Directors-General, and numerous attempts on Col. Ellis's life. The Director has made it clear that taking down Overthrow's network is a priority one assignment for UNISON agents, and she is willing to bend regulations to the breaking point to follow through on it.

Overthrow has managed to frustrate UNISON and national authorities for years primarily due to the organization's role as a front for SHADOW (see the following and the *Freedom City* sourcebook). Resources provided to them behind the scenes permit Overthrow to survive setbacks that would have otherwise wiped out the organization and SHADOW will continue to prop them up far as long as they are a useful distraction, keeping attention focused elsewhere. If Overthrow also manages in the process to weaken international alliances and eliminate foes like superheroes and the leadership of UNISON, so much the better.

BLACK MARKET TECHNOLOGY

An increasing concern for UNISON is the spread of advanced technology on the black market, particularly the possibility of such technology falling into the hands of terrorists or rogue states. In an effort to minimize such possibilities, UNISON makes every effort to ensure the devices and installations of super-criminals, rogue geniuses, and high-tech organizations are impounded, which occasionally brings them into conflict with local governments, who claim the right to those items. In general, it is UNISON's unwritten policy that it is far better to diplomatically ask forgiveness rather than permission when it comes to acting to contain dangerous technology.

THE FOUNDRY

The first and foremost source of black market technology is the Foundry (see the *Freedom City* sourcebook), which sells robotics, advanced energy weapons, and similar devices to any client able to meet their prices, moving their goods through an advanced teleportal network, making them virtually untracable. Add to this that most of the Foundry's leaders and agents are robots or artificial intelligences created by Talos, and it's clear why UNISON has been unable to entirely put a stop to the organization over the years. Still, Director Ellis knows full well that having a resource to deploy against Talos and the Foundry is one of the prime reasons why Dae-dalus discretely backs UNISON with his own considerable resources, so she is inclined to ensure he "gets his money's worth" in taking down Foundry arms-deals and distribution networks.

GHOSTWORKS

A relative newcomer to the technology black market, Ghostworks is an ambitious, ruthless organization, grown from the remnants of an earlier criminal organization of the same name nearly wiped out by the Foundry some years ago (see the *Emerald City* sourcebook).

After decades of rebuilding and restructuring in the Emerald City underworld, Ghostworks struck out on its own following the Silver Storm and the collapse of the Chamber, the secret supervillain alliance controlling Emerald City behind the scenes. Now Ghostworks is aggressively marketing itself as tech-support for hire for criminal organizations worldwide.

The primary differences between the Foundry and Ghostworks's operations are that Ghostworks is more interested in scientific exploration—without any moral constraints—and in long-term relationships with clients, whereas the Foundry is strictly "cash and carry" sales. Ghostworks's literal human touch is bringing them more and more clients, and therefore more of UNISON's attention.

WORLD-CONQUERORS

UNISON works to at least keep tabs on so-called individual global threats: supervillains with the power and ambition to conquer—or destroy—the world, given the opportunity. They primarily do so in hopes of detecting any new schemes or operations in time to rally a defense. Otherwise UNISON has a "do not engage" policy, since provoking these targets can only lead to devastating conflict.

Subjects on UNISON's watch-list include: Cuauhchuatl, Dominion, Duca Nefando, Tarasque, and Terra-King (from this book); Cerebrus Rex, Dakuwanga, Fallout, King Babylon, Ku Tu the Eternal, and Mastermind (from the *Threat Report* sourcebook); MEDUSA and Scion (from the *Emerald City* sourcebook); Argo, the Crime League, Overshadow, Superior, and Talos (from the *Freedom City* sourcebook). A number of others could be on this list, but aren't due to their unearthly nature; examples include Hades and Omega, both world-class threats, but impossible to monitor outside of tracking signs of their earthly activities.

SHADOW

SHADOW is one of the most concealed global threats, but is at least one UNISON knows about. True to its name, SHADOW has always been a covert and mysterious organization. Although given to grand gestures and plans, SHADOW and its personnel are expert at disappearing for long periods of time as the organization rebuilds and

SHADOW HOSTS A CONCLAVE OF EVIL



restructures, preparing for its next attempt to overthrow law and order and impose its rule upon the world. See the *Freedom City* sourcebook for details about SHADOW and its creator and master, the Overshadow.

SHADOW has bases on every continent and in every major world capital. Each world region has a coordinator, and that coordinator is a member of the Penumbra, SHADOW's ruling council and advisors to the Overshadow.

Western United States and Western Canada: SHADOW's facilities are mostly a few conventional bases, as well as hidden vehicle storage bases in desert or wilderness areas.

Eastern United States and Eastern Canada: SHADOW has bases hidden throughout the eastern seaboard. There are clone storage bases hidden under industrial facilities that went bankrupt in the 1980s and '90s.

Mexico and Central America: There are more clone storage bases as well as munitions plants in Mexico. SHADOW is also involved with supplying weapons and vehicles to Central American drug smugglers.

The Caribbean, Venezuela, and Colombia: SHADOW is a minor player in the region's narcotics trade, but supplies weapons and vehicles and uses smuggler's hideouts as safe havens.

South America: SHADOW has bases in Brazil, Paraguay, and Argentina. SHADOW cells operate in rural areas, and

SHADOW has used folk religions to recruit locals for slave labor, especially in mines. Brazil is a center of SHADOW's genetic research

UK, Netherlands, and Scandinavia: This is where the bulk of SHADOW's European operations take place, and SHADOW is a major player in the British underworld.

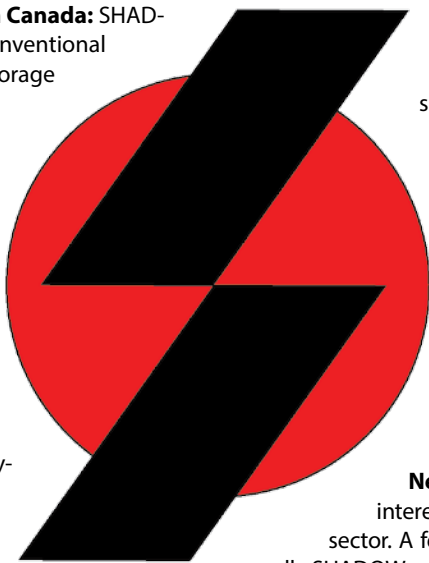
Western Europe: Here, SHADOW takes a back seat to Overthrow. At least one aging German industrial magnate is an old associate of Overshadow, and collaborates by supplying SHADOW with industrial and storage facilities.

Eastern Europe: Overthrow operations take priority here. The Thule Society is actively recruiting sorcerers from small cults in the area.

The Middle East: Here SHADOW's forces are led by an Egyptian high priest of the Cult of Set and closely tied to the Serpent-People.

Near East and India: SHADOW has an interest in India's burgeoning high-tech sector. A few of India's tech support centers are really SHADOW cells, gathering information on multinational corporations.

Russia: As Russia and the former Soviet republics have opened up, SHADOW has worked to infiltrate its criminal networks. They have been largely unsuccessful but they have made progress in plundering some of Russia's mystical treasures.



Southeast Asia and Oceania: The bulk of SHADOW's heavy industry can be found in this area, particularly in Malaysia and Indonesia.

China and Japan: This is Dr. Sin's domain, although SHADOW is active in China's computer industry. They have also siphoned off resources from China's building boom and transferred them to their own building projects.

West Africa: SHADOW is involved in the diamond and precious metal trade, often using slave labor. SHADOW exploits some tribal magical traditions to further their own ends.

East Africa: SHADOW's primary interest in rastery Africa is finding new ways to smuggle daka crystals out of Dakana.

Australia and New Zealand: SHADOW used the Australian outback as a base in the 1970s and early 1980s, but when they tried to seize control of several of the most powerful mystical sites, they were dealt a major defeat by Australia's superheroes and have yet to rebuild there.

ALIEN INVADERS

Earth has been invaded by extraterrestrials and extradimensionals on a number of occasions, and the general public is aware of only a fraction of them, which is just how UNISON tries to maintain it, in order to avoid public panic and fanning the flames of xenophobia towards extraterrestrials—and anyone who might appear to be one. At the same time, UNISON does what it can to prepare for the possibility of an alien invasion on a global scale. Given its limited resources and authority, the organization focuses primarily on information-gathering, surveillance, and sharing its findings with trusted governments, law enforcement, and hero teams.

See the *Cosmic Handbook* for a general overview of Earth's solar system and the various threats in outer space beyond it.

THE TERMINUS

The Terminus Invasion of Freedom City still looms large in the minds of the world's governments. The notion of just how close they came to the end of everything has been enough to encourage international cooperation and support for UNISON and its operations. That said, the Terminus Invasion was over two decades ago, and is history for a great many people. A whole new generation grew up in a world where the Centurion is found only in memorial statues and old news footage posted online.

Thanks to its own intelligence gathering and information from groups like the Freedom League, UNISON is well aware the threat posed by Omega and the Terminus remains, but time has allowed many to forget. The Terminus' last few incursions have been dealt with quickly and cleanly—including one where the events were entirely erased from history, leading some to underestimate any potential danger. Those

in the know, on the other hand, suspect recent events are merely feints and tests of Earth's defenses—and its defenders—in preparation for a more serious attack.

THE STELLAR IMPERIUM

The more current concern for the world community is the potential threat posed by the Stellar Imperium (see the *Cosmic Handbook*). In the wake of destruction left by the cosmic destroyer Collapsar, the Imperium now controls the remnants of the star-spanning Lor Republic, ruled by the warlord Star-Khan, who has threatened Earth in the past. The upheaval sent various alien refugees to Earth, temporarily housed on Star Island near Freedom City before Daedalus moved them to Starhaven on Jupiter's moon Europa. The presence of alien refugees on Earth fleeing an interstellar war drove home the potential dangers out in space as few other things could.

Although there's a general agreement the Stellar Imperium poses a threat and could attack the Earth at any time, that has not pushed the members of the United Nations to cooperate on any sort of united defense. UNISON's request for expansion of Uni-Storm fleet has been generally stalled, and the notion of opening diplomatic negotiations with Star-Khan and his Imperium has been debated around and around with no clear decision as yet. Reports from the Freedom League suggest the Star Knights and other forces at work mean an immediate attack from the Imperium is unlikely, but neither Director Ellis nor the Security Council find that reassuring.

THE GRUE

The most immediate alien threat is also the one the world community knows the least about: the fall of the Lor Republic ended the long standing cold war between the Lor and the shape-shifting alien Grue Unity, leading the Grue to step up their efforts to infiltrate the new Stellar Imperium and allowing them opportunities to further the plans of their Meta-Mind throughout the galaxy.

With their shape-changing and telepathic abilities, the Grue have visited—and attempted to infiltrate and invade—Earth before. The last attempt in 2003 was stopped partially due to UNISON, in fact. Given previous failures, the Grue proceed more carefully where Earth and its defenders are concerned. The Meta-Mind instituted the creation of the Hidden, deep cover Grue agents given false “overlay” personalities to conceal their true nature even from themselves while they infiltrated and unwittingly gathered information for the Unity. There is no telling how many of these Grue agents are on Earth, particularly following the arrival of refugees on Star Island.

Although UNISON does what it can to remain alert for signs of Grue infiltration, it does not know about the Hidden, nor does it have a means of detecting them.

APPENDIX: CHARACTERS BY POWER LEVEL

ATLAS OF EARTH-PRIME CHARACTERS BY PL

Name	PL	Page	Name	PL	Page	Name	PL	Page
Sub-Terran	1	237	Chalcedony Johnson	8	261	Gatekeeper	10	15
Dominion Citizen, Typical	2	27	Colonel Jennifer Ellis	8	260	Hanuman	10	195
Morlock	3	237	European, The	8	128	Iron Wolf	10	134
Holographic Robot (Minion)	4	33	Interdrome	8	192	Labrador Rock	10	20
Human Primitive	4	227	Mir (Horsemen Super-Soldier)	8	177	Lady Mamba	10	9
Incan Warrior	4	228	Mnogo (Horsemen Super-Soldier)	8	177	Llorona, La	10	31
Roman Legionnaire	4	228	Nereid (Princess Thetis)	8	250	Luna	10	20
Serpent Person, Civilized	4	237	Prime Detective	8	164	Maemd Hiw	10	191
Serpent Person, Savage	4	237	Princess Thetis (Nereid)	8	250	Maria Tecum	10	59
UNISON Agent	4	260	Rakshasa, Typical	8	202	Mario Salgado	10	62
Delphi	5	181	Slayer, The	8	230	Miss Canada	10	19
Fomorian	5	235	Untouchable, The	8	199	Nighthaunt	10	211
Lyonessean Mystic	5	247	Zhizn (Horsemen Super-Soldier)	8	177	Ophidian Magus, The	10	190
Magmin	5	237	Albanian Eagle, The	9	91	Orang-Utan	10	193
Robot Raptor (Minion)	5	144	Ashiq	9	137	Queen Mother Evelynn (Siren)	10	248
Robot Viking (Minion)	5	26	Coral	9	42	Rasputin	10	174
Atlantean Barbarian	6	244	Hurican	9	49	Raven, The	10	13
Atlantean Soldier	6	244	Kshatriya	9	199	Siren (Queen Mother Evelynn)	10	248
Deep One	6	246	Maitre Carrefour	9	44	Snowman	10	48
Father Huaman	6	98	Professor Chiron	9	93	Terra-King, The	10	238
Father Lundi	6	97	Vaishya	9	199	Ursa Minor/Ursa Major	10	203
Ice Person Survivor	6	222	Zandar The Jungle Lord	9	231	Viento Negro	10	36
Mikos West	6	261	#Hashtag	10	33	Volkadav	10	180
Sprinter, The	6	186	Ayesha	10	168	Aardebroer	11	170
Thomas Rhymer	6	85	Baroness Natasha von Volkavia	10	126	Australian Spirit	11	208
UNISON Solo	6	260	Big Thunder	10	19	Bolivariano, El	11	76
Angel Ballesteros	7	32	Brodha Renbo	10	57	Britannia	11	89
Countess Carat	7	114	Cadejo Blanco	10	61	Cottonmouth	11	8
Dreckete Partie Cyborg (Minion)	7	116	Cadejo Negro	10	58	Duiyu Lieren	11	196
Horsemen Super-Soldier	7+	177	Chris "The Opportunist" Cage	10	19	Dust Devil	11	14
Pozhiratel	7	169	Churi-Inti	10	74	Hellscreamer	11	165
Prince Telemachus (Triton)	7	251	Counselor Sarlyn (Envoy)	10	51	Iemanja	11	68
Utahraptor	7	218	Cyber-Viking	10	26	King Claw	11	154
Zdorovy (Horsemen Super-Soldier)	7	177	Ellis, The Devil's Own	10	23	King Theseus (Sea-King)	11	248
Al Falkunar	8	144	Envoy (Counselor Sarlyn)	10	51	Mr. Twist	11	155
Brahmin	8	199	Fogareu	10	70	Monoculo, El	11	105
Captain Blood	8	47	Freerunner	10	109	Patriot	11	16
						Piroclasto	11	61
						Queen Marta	11	250

ATLAS OF EARTH-PRIME CHARACTERS BY PL

Name	PL	Page	Name	PL	Page	Name	PL	Page
Red Hyena	11	164	Blue Ensign	12	207	Ajax	13	122
Sea-King (King Theseus)	11	248	Centuratron	12	25	Bogatyr II	13	173
Stella D'Argento	11	95	Dominion	12	28	Manteis	13	84
Terror Bird	11	167	Glacier	12	221	Mollech	13	239
Third Eye	11	203	King Ormorr	12	216	Popogusso	13	23
Vuurbroer	11	170	The Aquarian	12	216	Sugaar	13	103
Wandjina	11	205	MacRoth	12	87	Tarasque	13	112
White Lioness	11	163	Oathkeeper, The	12	201	Baba Yaga	14	175
Yeti	11	185	Oculus	12	179	Cuauhchuatl	14	38
Baron Samedi	12	46	Replica	12	56	Duca Nefando	14	95
Black Anubis	12	148	Skjaldmayjar	12	83	Gigantosaur	14	239

ATLAS OF EARTH-PRIME ARCHETYPE CHARACTERS BY PL

Name	Book	Archetype	PL	Page	Name	Book	Archetype	PL	Page
Capitán Vecino	H	Bystander	0	30	Powellful	G	Jumped-Up Nobody	9	30
Letras por la Verdad	H	Reporter	1	49	Valleverde, Humberto	G	Mad Scientist	9	49
Mayombe Cultist	G	Various Cultist	1-4	4	Zihin Kiz	H	Psychic	9	162
Santa Muerte Agents	G	Various	1-6	32	Aguila de Sangre, El	H	Energy Controller	10	95
Krewe, The	H	Various Underworld	2-4	4	Ankou	H	Construct	10	104
GRADE Guards	H	Government Agent	4	62	Arsenal	H	Gadgeteer	10	103
All-New Baymen	G	Green or Elite Soldier	4-7	48	Atlas	H	Battlesuit	10	131
STAR Squad	G	SWAT Officer	5	8	Baroud	H	Weapon Master	10	103
Speed Reader	H	Psychic	6	190	Baryon	H	Energy Controller (Nuclear)	10	110
Brickbat	H	Powerhouse	8	179	Battle Axe	H	Warrior	10	200
Dragan, Adrian	G	Crime Lord	8	123	Bower Bird	H	Crime Fighter	10	203
Ghostwaker	G	Crime Lord	8	29	Coldiid	H	Weapon Master	10	139
Hayvan Kral	H	Shapeshifter	8	162	Crash	H	Powerhouse	10	190
Liga de Metaluchadores, La	H	Powerhouse	8-10	30	Cro-Magnon the Caveman	H	Powerhouse	10	104
Madam Redback	G	Crime Lord	8	203	CruX	T	Power Corp Battlesuit	10	63
Ojos Rojos	H	Speedster	8	178	Cuatro Mensajeros, Los	G	Savage	10	54
Shimmer	H	Speedster	8	190	Dağ	H	Powerhouse	10	162
Stalking Panther, The	H	Warrior	8	179	Deadeye the Hunstman	H	Weapon Master	10	199
Bak	H	Powerhouse	9	170	Desert Wasp	H	Speedster	10	160
Blue Deva	H	Battlesuit	9	186	Dr. Tzaddik	H	Mystic	10	156
Count Karol Duval	G	Vampire	9	26	Dragonhand	H	Martial Artist	10	142
Crime Model	G	Psycho	9	203	Drop Bear	G	Savage (Bear)	10	201
Nirkana the Night Hunter	H	Weapon Master	9	140					
Noch Ved'm	H	Energy Controller	9	164					

H = Hero's Handbook G = Gamemaster's Guide T = Threat Report

ATLAS OF EARTH-PRIME ARCHETYPE CHARACTERS BY PL

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