

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS

ASTONISHING ADVENTURES



Nether War #0: MASTER OF EARTH

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A HERO HIGH ADVENTURE
FOR 4 HEROES OF PL 8+

ASTONISHING ADVENTURES



NetherWar 0: MASTER OF EARTH

SUGGESTED PL: 8, PLUS SPECIAL

REQUIRED BOOKS: M&M DELUXE HERO'S HANDBOOK,
M&M DELUXE GAMEMASTER'S GUIDE

SUGGESTED BOOKS: FREEDOM CITY, HERO HIGH

Adrian Eldritch, Earth's Master Mage—the guardian of its arcane forces and shepherd to the wild streams of magic—has vanished, and now his young apprentice, Seven, has inherited the title. But Eldritch's disappearance has left so many of his arrangements and spells to untangle, and chief among those is Una, Queen of the Netherworld. The Master Mage once outwitted the interdimensional sovereign and secured a bargain that forbade her from interfering with Earth directly, and this embarrassment has since made Earth the target of her rage and obsession. With Eldritch gone, nothing but an inexperienced junior sorceress stands between the Queen of the Netherworld and her prize. But Una's plans are far grander than to simply add another world to her empire, and to fully realize her potential, she needs Earth's newest Master Mage to choose champions, demand a duel, and ultimately... defeat her!

Master of Earth is a prequel adventure, set a year in the past of the current timeline and describing the confrontations between Seven and Una that established the current arcane status quo of Earth-Prime and the rising tide of dark magic. It is not necessary to play *Master of Earth*

to enjoy the rest of the NetherWar adventure arc, and this adventure likely uses different characters than the ones players will create for the rest of the story, but it provides more background for the events of the arc.

USING YOUR OWN HEROES

Unlike most *Mutants & Masterminds* adventures, *Master of Earth* includes a team of five pre-built heroes. Seven, along with four teenage members of Next-Gen—Blue Bolt, Miss Kitty, NGM, and Catalyst—battle Una in what is essentially a prequel to the upcoming NetherWar adventure arc. If you have access to *Hero High*, feel free to swap in other members of Next-Gen (although Elflight's magic powers will be hampered by many of the same effects that weaken Seven, unless you decide Una has tailored these defenses explicitly to Seven's magic).

You may also use your own PL 8 heroes to assist Seven in this adventure, use Next-Gen to assist your own PL 12 Master Mage, or allow your players to create all the characters from scratch: four PL 8 heroes and one PL 12 magic-using hero. This has some impact on the storyline that plays out on Earth-Prime (particularly if you replace Seven) but doesn't need to impact anything if you set the adventure in your own world or want to swap out Seven's limited role in the rest of NetherWar. Part of what helps Next-Gen feel relevant in this adventure is that they

possess skills Seven does not, such as Technology, Intimidation, and Persuasion; try to encourage a similar diversity of skills and Advantages among your players if they create their own heroes.

Make sure at least one custom hero is a magic-wielder with some reason for Una to target them. *Master of Earth* assumes the most powerful hero is also the one with magical abilities, and as Master Mage, Una must defeat them to claim the Earth for her Netherworld empire. It may be interesting to instead place this title on a PL 8 hero-in-training.

You may opt to set *Master of Earth* even further back in time—perhaps three or four years—and have your players create PL 8 teen-hero versions of their current heroes to help tie the events of this adventure into their own stories.

SECRET ORIGINS

Una was born a peasant in her magic-rich home realm and taken as a slave by the Wizard-King, Archon. She clawed her way up from nothing to become first the Master Mage of her world, then its Dark Lord as her rage and cruelty corrupted it into a Netherworld, and finally the queen of an empire as she broke the Dark Lords of other realms and forced them to bow before her.

But her rise stopped when she came to conquer Earth. Adrian Eldritch challenged her to a duel; if she won, he would surrender the Earth, but if he won, Una would depart the Earth realm and cease meddling with it directly. Una agreed, but discovered mid-battle the Master Mage of Earth had fomented rebellion in her Netherworld, and she abandoned the duel to put down the uprising. Ever since her forfeit, she has been barred from Earth, and the humiliation of defeat has burned in her chest.

Una's ambition knows no bounds, and she began long ago studying how she might ascend to godhood, becoming a dark deity who could spread her influence not only through physical might, but the very substance of magic itself across the metaverse. Her ritual for ascension requires the conquest of a thousand worlds and tying her soul to the magical energy of each. With her humiliation by Eldritch still burning in her chest, she resolved to take Earth as the thousandth world that will complete her transformation. Her plan requires the sacrifice of her mortal body; it must be consumed in the flames of another world's purest magic—the power of a Master Mage.

With Adrian Eldritch gone, Una has designed a plot to trick the Master Mage's young apprentice into destroying her and bringing her plan to fruition. She will stage an invasion, knowing Seven will arise to stop her, and in the pivotal moment of the duel, let the new Master Mage's magic annihilate her body, merging her spirit with Earth's magical essence.

IN THIS EXCITING ISSUE...

The young sorceress Seven has only just inherited the mantle of Master Mage—the final proof that Adrian Eldritch's disappearance must have meant his death—when an army of Fomorians, led by Bres the Beautiful, assault Freedom Hall. With the rest of the Freedom League gone, Seven attempts to summon her former teammates from Next-Gen, only to conjure the younger and more inexperienced current holders of that title. The heroes defeat the invading force, only to discover from Bres that he arrived as a herald for the mighty sorceress Una. Bres also reveals that Una is currently consolidating her power

ASYMMETRICAL ADVENTURES

Master of Earth assumes that the heroes have very different capabilities. As the story opens, Seven has just become the Master Mage of Earth and is PL 12, while the heroes of Next-Gen are all PL 8. This asymmetry of power might make it seem like the less-powerful heroes are redundant and can't hope to keep up with their more powerful colleague, but the adventure assumes all the heroes have important contributions, and takes a few simple steps to equalize the playing field:

- **Combat:** Seven's combat abilities—her offensive and defensive magic—are what make her Power Level 12 (without her Defensive Magic and relying on unarmed combat or simple weapons, she's only PL 7). But four PL 8 heroes are approximately as effective in combat as a single PL 12 hero; Seven has more powerful individual attacks, but Next-Gen act more often, have more varied abilities, and can use the Aid action to assist each other. Most of the combat scenes in this adventure break the opposition into two, roughly equal challenges between which the heroes must divide their attention. It is assumed Seven will square off against more powerful threats, while Next-Gen battle the threat with numbers on its side—with members of Next-Gen able to peel away and assist Seven as their foes' numbers dwindle—but the heroes should be fine either way.
- **Skills:** In terms of skills and other non-combat abilities, Seven is only recently out of high school herself and isn't more capable than any of the members of Next-Gen. Mechanically, she has some special advantages and so most of the skill challenges in the adventure are written for a PL 8 team.
- **Immunity to Magic:** Magic is a common weapon in Una's empire, and several creatures stand out in this landscape by being especially resistant to it with Immunity 10 (Magic), either at full or half effect. Full immunity renders Seven mostly powerless against such foes (though she retains her magic-based Toughness bonus against their attacks), while half-effect immunity reduces Seven's effective rank in most powers to 6 (and her effective PL to 9). While a clever player can circumvent this limitation (such as by using her Elemental Mastery to lift several tons of stone as a Standard action, then slamming it into the opponent as another Standard action), it still slows Seven down in combat and forces her to rely on her peers. Note that while Miss Kitty's powers are magically granted, the damage she inflicts is still physical and is not subject to this limitation.
- **Playing Defense:** Some encounters require skills and powers Seven doesn't possess, or employ opponents immune to her magic powers, and so Seven might serve a better role defending the members of Next-Gen with her Deflect power or readying her Nullify Magic to counter an opponent's powers.

within her Netherworld for an all-out invasion in the next few days. When pressed, he agrees to transport the heroes to Una's Netherworld, where they can bring the fight to her.

The heroes explore this corrupt dimension and aid its miserable occupants. They finally reach Una's citadel, battle her demon guards, and ascend to her sacred sanctuary, the Alloy Adytum, only to discover a trap.

By the time the heroes escape, they discover that Una has launched her invasion from one of the secondary realms she controls, claiming

Earth as her own while its Master Mage was her prisoner, however briefly. The champions return to Earth to find Una's dark heart already corrupting the world, and together help wipe out her magical guardians and defeat the Queen of the Netherworld.

INVOLVING THE HEROES

Master of Earth includes five pre-generated heroes—Seven, Blue Bolt, Miss Kitty, NGM, and Catalyst—as player characters, with their involvement written into the script. If you alter the adventure to use your own characters, or don't like the idea of Seven accidentally summoning the younger heroes, consider one of these possibilities:

- As the newest member of the Freedom League, a lot of community service work falls on Seven. Today, that means giving students from the local hero high school a tour of the Freedom Hall, which overlaps with Bres the Beautiful's attack.
- Located in the City Center, Freedom Hall is within screaming distance of many popular Midtown teen hangouts, including Liberty Park, Millennium Mall, and the Super Museum. Less willingly, teen heroes might also be at the Freedom City Historical Museum or Franklin D. Roosevelt High School. Either way, they are close enough to hear the commotion when the Fomorians begin their attack.
- Teen heroes with any precognitive gifts might receive an impression of "giant troubles emerging in Freedom's center" warning them to a literal attack by giants in the City Center.

SCENE 1

CONFLICT SCENE

A BEAUTIFUL DAY FOR BATTLE

If a player is playing Seven, begin this adventure by reading the following text. If you are portraying Seven as an NPC, you can skip to the next section of this scene, *The Arrival*, to introduce your teenage heroes.

Now that the rain has stopped and the clouds have parted, it's shaping up to be a beautiful day in downtown Freedom City. A perfectly quiet day of blessed solitude as the rest of the Freedom League has left you—their newest member—to mind Freedom Hall as they departed into space to stop a... maybe it was a gravity monster? There's been a lot to catch up on.

But just as you find a quiet place to study, a booming impact makes the entire building shudder. Alarms blare to life and viewscreens display the street outside. Hulking men—maybe 10 feet tall and clad in rough metal armor—have gathered, with more arriving in flashes of lightning. They bow as a final arrival—a devastatingly beautiful man in a kilt—shouts unheard orders to them, then points directly at Freedom Hall.

You're outnumbered, easily a dozen to one. But you have been designing a ritual that will summon your old friends from Next-Gen—your former team from your days at the Claremont Academy—to your side in an emergency. At least... in theory.

The initial impact came from Cleirigh, the first Fomorian to arrive, hurling a car into the side of Freedom Hall in her enthusiasm to begin the assault. The warriors who followed have regrouped to await Bres' ar-

SIDEBAR: PROBLEM POWERS

While not problematic, this adventure assumes that only one character wields magic as a sorcerer or similar concept, and multiple magic-wielding heroes might find themselves at a disadvantage. The adventure also assumes that the heroes can't move through magical dimensions themselves and rely first on Bres' magic and later Una's portal to move to and from the Netherworld. While being able to return to Earth doesn't affect the plot of the adventure, it may remove some sense of urgency.

rival, though, delaying them for a minute. As the read-aloud text mentions, Seven is alone to mind Freedom Hall and handle any local emergencies, with the rest of the Freedom League well beyond her reach. Allow Seven a moment to assess the situation—she is the character in this scene most likely to recognize Bres—but encourage her to use her summoning ritual to bring Next-Gen to assist in the fight.

EXPERTISE: MAGIC

RESULT INFORMATION

- DC 15** The attractive gentleman in the kilt is Bres the Beautiful, a sorcerer who leads a secret nation of deformed mutants called the Fomorians.
- DC 18** The Fomorians are the same mythic people described in Irish folklore and possess a wide variety of abilities. Bres is one of their number, born unusually beautiful and gifted in magic.
- DC 20** The Freedom League fought Bres several months ago and seized a powerful magical artifact from him—the Eye of Balor—which likely has something to do with this attack. If they told you where they kept powerful relics of Celtic folklore during orientation, you weren't paying attention.
- DC 25** Bres and his Fomorians were exiled to another dimension called Annwn. He shouldn't be able to arrive on Earth without help.

THE SUMMONING RITUAL

Seven's ritual to summon Next-Gen is a plot device and is not detailed on her character sheet. It doesn't use the usual ritual rules outlined in the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*—Seven doesn't need to spend a Hero Point to activate it, and it happens in just a few moments rather than an hour or more. Its effects also last longer than this one scene.

Being a plot device, the ritual's effects are entirely out of her control.

The ritual is intended to teleport her allies from Next-Gen to her in an emergency. Given her position as Earth's newest Master Mage, having emergency preparations is sensible. An attack by an extradimensional sorcerer and his army of giants is exactly the occasion for which she began developing this ritual.

THE ARRIVAL

Once Seven casts her ritual to summon her allies, read or paraphrase the following:

Math class is hell, as Mr. Skyler is so eager to prove once again. He started off lecturing about logarithmic functions, and somehow that turned into a rant about wasted potential and it's still half an hour until lunch! But then he looks at you and scowls.

"I believe I have already explicitly stated that there is to be no sparkling in my classroooooo..."

Mr. Skyler and the rest of the classroom quickly fade away, and suddenly you find yourselves—already in your costumes—standing in a wide room decorated with memorabilia and photographs of the Freedom League. Before you stands a woman in a black cloak and hood: The mystic superhero Seven!

You can also read the following to Seven's player:

You complete the invocation and streamers of magic energy intertwine and reach through the cosmos to retrieve your friends. A burst of smoke reveals several figures, but as the air clears you don't see familiar faces like Bowman, Nereid, or Sonic. Instead you see... kids. You vaguely recognize them from your last guest lecture at the Claremont Academy.

These aren't your old Next-Gen teammates... you've accidentally summoned the current members of Next-Gen!

With the ritual still new and untested, Seven has accidentally conjured several current members of Next-Gen. She hasn't had the time to develop a return ritual, either, leaving the teens stuck in Freedom Hall, a dozen miles from school and under siege by hostile Fomorians.

Allow the heroes a few minutes to interact and roleplay, and award Hero Points to anyone who helps keep the adventure on track and encourages the reckless teens to rush outside for an adventure.

When things start to drag or the heroes seem deadlocked in an argument, have the Fomorians finally break the door down and begin their attack.

The front doors explode into flinders as a small sedan tumbles through and comes to rest twenty feet away. Beyond, the giants have already begun striding through the broken frame. The man behind them laughs. "Seems our partner was right. Not a thing guarding our enemies' halls but a slip of a mage and a handful of wee babes. Oi then! We've come for me Eye of Balor, and if'n ye give it over swiftly, I swear ta leave yer children intact!"

ASSAULT ON FREEDOM HALL

Freedom Hall's front foyer is grand by design: 100 feet long and 60 feet wide, with ceilings reaching 30 feet overhead. The walls are lined with portraits, news clippings, publicity photos, fan art, and awards for visitors to peruse while they wait for appointments. Comfortable retro chairs and couches line the walls as well. A reception desk halfway down the hall is normally where the robotic receptionist, Cynthia, waits to greet visitors but can provide emergency cover in a pinch.

Cynthia herself politely greets the approaching giants and, looking completely human, young heroes might feel inclined to save her. Award anyone who does so a Hero Point.

TACTICS

Several months ago, the Freedom League battled Bres the Beautiful and his Fomorians in Ireland, ultimately exiling the invaders back to their prison dimension of Annwn, but not before taking the Eye of Balor. Bres and his warriors want to recover the Eye of Balor—a powerful magical artifact and relic of the fomorians' falled god. Una needed agents to

draw Seven out into a direct confrontation, and approached the humiliated Fomorian shapeshifter. She offered to transport him and his warriors to Earth to reclaim the Eye when the League's guard was down.

Bres normally prefers subterfuge to get what he wants, but Una has given him a very narrow time window and so he resorts to this very direct assault, believing he can easily overpower a single human girl. He plans to simply overwhelm the Hall's token defenders, find the "vault," and retrieve his treasure. He has no idea how large Freedom Hall actually is, nor that the Freedom League also has an orbital satellite headquarters. As a last resort, he plans to take one or more defeated defenders as hostages to trade for the Eye of Balor once more of the League return.

THREAT 1

The Fomorians' forward assault consists of a number of Fomorian warriors equal to the number of Next-Gen heroes plus two. If you use all four teen heroes included with this adventure, that means a total of six Fomorians.

The warriors are tough, but not tactically minded. They rush forward to attack the heroes with their clubs or hurl benches or their knives at enemies beyond their reach. For the first two rounds, one giant each turn attempts to demoralize a hero using their Intimidation skill, but after this they all focus on trading blows.

FOMORIAN WARRIORS					PL 7
See the Cast section. These characters are minions.					
COMBAT				INITIATIVE +0	
Club	+5			Close, Damage 9	
Knife	+5			Close/Ranged, Damage 9	
Unarmed	+5			Close, Damage 7	
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS	
+3	+3	+7	+3	+10/7*	
*without Armor					

THREAT 2

Bres the Beautiful is the most powerful threat but remains back near the Hall's entrance where he uses his Fomorian magic to blast away at opponents, mostly alternating between his Mystic Blast and Grasp of Ghorummaz. He's eager to test his mettle against the new Master Mage—"the wee slip of a girl"—and a part of him even thinks this could be his chance to seize that title for himself.

Two Fomorian warriors remain by Bres' side as bodyguards.

BRES THE BEAUTIFUL					PL 10
See the Cast section.					
COMBAT				INITIATIVE +6	
Grasp of Ghorummaz	+8			Ranged, Affliction 8	
Mystic Blast	+8			Ranged, Damage 8	
Unarmed	+7			Close, Damage 4	
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS	
+12	+10	+8	+12	+8/6*	
*without Defensive Roll					



FOMORIAN WARRIORS (2)

PL 7

See the **Cast** section. These warriors have training as bodyguards and also possess the Interpose Advantage, which they use to intercept attacks against Bres. These characters are minions.

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +0

Club	+5	Close, Damage 9
Knife	+5	Close/Ranged, Damage 9
Unarmed	+5	Close, Damage 7

DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS
+3	+3	+7	+3	+10/7*

*without Armor

WRAP-UP

While his Fomorian warriors are bold to the end, Bres is more practical. If all the warriors in his group fall, he casts the Scarlet Shades of Sirrion spell and shapeshifts into a human in an attempt to escape. If Bres falls, his warriors enter a frenzy of vengeance and continue fighting until they are all defeated or restrained.

If he can't escape, Bres is surprisingly amiable, bordering on charming. War is largely a game for him, and a game he would prefer to play again and again rather than risk his immortal hide. He surrenders if cornered, trusting that his guile and magic will help him escape such simple, young opponents.

SCENE 2

ROLEPLAY SCENE

THE COMING STORM

With the attackers subdued, the heroes can question them to learn more. Bres specifically referenced a "partner" providing them information about Freedom Hall. Bres knows the most information, but any of the subdued giants can provide at least the following information with a successful **DC 13 Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion check**:

- The Freedom League seized the Eye of Balor several months ago when Bres tried using it in a bid to conquer Ireland. If returned, they absolutely intend to keep using it as a weapon.
- Bres struck a deal with a dark sorceress from the Netherworlds to help them escape their dimensional prison, Annwn. That same sorceress told them to attack now, because the "palace" of the Freedom League was mostly undefended.
- If the heroes generate three or more Degrees of Success while interrogating a warrior, one of them recalls hearing the dark sorceress' name: Una.

If the heroes also captured Bres, he is a more stubborn target of interrogation, requiring a successful **DC 22 Deception, Intimidation, or Persuasion check** to convince him to talk. The heroes can use the Aid action to improve their chances of persuading Bres, and if they think to point out that his partner probably set him up or has abandoned him, they gain a +2 circumstance bonus on their check.

- The dark sorceress is a powerful spellcaster named Una.
- Una told Bres in confidence that Seven—the only guardian—was Earth’s new Master Mage, and that he could potentially take that title for himself by defeating her.
- While she didn’t say so, Bres suspects Una was gearing up for her own attack on Earth and gave him this opportunity, because having the Master Mage of Earth owe her a favor would make a conquest much easier.

Heroes with Expertise: Magic can attempt a skill check to recognize the name Una.

EXPERTISE: MAGIC

Result Information

- DC 10** Una is a powerful evil sorceress of legend, who rules a mystical dimension called the Netherworld.
- DC 15** Una is a Dark Lord, an evil Master Mage whose wicked heart has corrupted her entire dimension. She has conquered hundreds of worlds to add to her empire.
- DC 17** Adrian Eldritch fought Una decades ago and tricked her into never returning to Earth.
- DC 25** Una was forbidden from re-entering the Earth realm due to a deal Eldritch tricked her into, and has sworn to conquer the Earth ever since to punish her enemy for this snub. Without Eldritch present, Una is no longer barred from Earth.

UNA’S THREAT

Once the heroes have questioned the Fomorians or otherwise learned as much as they wish to in the wake of the attack, read or paraphrase the following:

Discordant notes echo throughout the hall and the air seems to ripple and squirm before the image of a face—a stern woman with black hair and immaculate makeup—appears, ten times larger than life. She speaks, and you hear the voice reverberating in your skull.

“It seems my vanguard were not the peerless soldiers they claimed to be. It is little matter. Bres was a coward, and his Fomorians were little more than a bee to prick at your ears and warn of my approach.

We have not been formally introduced. I am Una, Dark Queen of the Netherworld, Empress of nine-hundred ninety-nine worlds! Adrian Eldritch may have temporarily barred my ownership of your paltry realm through his ‘wizard’s duel’ and cowardly tricks, but he is dead. And even now, here in my Netherworld—so far beyond your childish grasp—my armies prepare to march across your world.

“Only a Master Mage could hope to stop me, and Adrian so palely filled that role. And you, oh swaddled infant, are no Adrian.”

The image of Una is an illusion; Seven can’t harm it, but she can negate it with her Abjurations of Abriddon spell. Una remains a few minutes longer to trade barbs and mock the young sorcerer. If Seven’s player lets the barbs affect her and succumbs to her Insecurity complication, award her a Hero Point.

ROLEPLAYING UNA

Una’s ultimate goal is to goad Seven into a one-on-one confrontation and let the neophyte Master Mage “destroy” her with magic, but only after an ordeal. She suspects that Seven is too kind-hearted normally to unleash her most powerful spells and potentially kill her, and so her goal at every step is to push Seven to her limit without breaking or killing her, until the young hero can unleash all that frustration and anger out against her and complete Una’s apotheosis.

To that end, Una constantly pokes and prods Seven’s insecurities and makes her feel like a failure, first in comparison to Adrian and then by losing control of Earth. Una is condescending and confident in her interactions, emphasizing Seven’s inexperience and youth, and intimating that she is ultimately helpless to stop the Dark Lord from doing whatever she likes to the Earth.

Keep the following goals in mind before she finally vanishes:

- Una drives home that she is beyond Seven’s reach in her Netherworld.
- Una sees Seven as a laughably poor substitute for the already-incompetent Adrian Eldritch.
- Una doesn’t care about the Eye of Balor or the fate of the Fomorians. If they return to her Netherworld, she’ll kill them herself.
- Una may “accidentally” reveal that the only way to bar her from Earth again is to defeat her in a wizard’s duel between two Master Mages and their selected champions.

REACHING THE NETHERWORLD

Ideally, the heroes resolve to attack Una’s Netherworld themselves. If they don’t, you can have Bres offer the suggestion. Though a coward and a bully, he remains an egomaniac who resents Una’s insults and manipulation, and if he can turn two people he hates against each other, that’s just a smart deal for him. The Fomorian leader already knows a spell for dimensional travel and has visited Una’s Netherworld before—he needed her help to open the gates of Annwn, but now free he can move to mystical dimensions more easily. At first, he offers to send Seven and Next-Gen to the Netherworld in exchange for the Eye of Balor, but with any pushback he’ll agree in exchange for letting him and his warriors go free to return to Annwn.

If Bres escaped earlier, he might remain nearby in hopes of slipping into Freedom Hall in disguise in the chaotic aftermath, placing him close enough to hear Una’s condescension. In this case, he risks approaching the heroes so long as they weren’t unrelentingly violent.

A BEGINNER’S GUIDE TO DIMENSIONAL TRAVEL

How the heroes reach the Netherworld isn’t as important as their decision to go, so be open to creative ideas. Seven can use Extra Effort to use Movement (Dimensional) as part of her Magic array, or a hero with the Ritualist or Inventor Advantage can create an ad-hoc dimensional portal. Heroes might also suggest that the Freedom League might keep a dimensional portal, spell, or other McGuffin as a trophy somewhere in Freedom Hall, using a Hero Point to edit the scene. Be open to suggestions.

WRAP-UP

This scene primarily serves to get the characters to Una's Netherworld, planting the seed of the idea or outright suggesting it if they don't. In the aftermath, they also have time for dramatic roleplaying or for personal scenes to play up any Complications and earn Hero Points. Once they decide to take the fight to Una and finish any preparations they might want to make, you can move on to the next scene.

SCENE 3

CONFLICT SCENE

ARRIVAL AT THE BOTTOM OF THE WORLD

Once the heroes depart for Una's Netherworld, read or paraphrase the following:

The world twists and deforms around you, resettling into a strange new shape. No sun hangs above you; instead the entire sky churns with a dull fire of orange and purple. Ashen grey plants sprout from the rocky ground. You've arrived on a bluff overlooking some sort of riverside factory town below, and in the distance, impossibly tall and slender mountains stretch up disturbingly high.

Below you can see chalk-white figures rounding up villagers, dragging them into a rough circle, overlooked by two figures in black robes and a third in bright red.

The town below is Tarabahva, one of thousands of factory towns spread across the Netherworld. Residents toil in the nearby mines during the spring and summer, then spend the fall and winter in the mill, rendering ore into slag, and finally into finished weapons ranging from spears to rifles. In preparation for her invasion, Una dispatched a lieutenant, the necromancer Kada'vrus, and her undead creations to crack down on the local governor, extract any stockpiles the community had, and press one-quarter of their number into military service. She brought her skeleton soldiers and two more powerful creations: Cayrne and Slymme.

Kada'vrus has gathered the populace in town square while her acolytes and undead monsters search the homes. If the heroes move into town quietly, using stealth or disguises, they can overhear the necromancer as she lectures the residents.

A sneering young woman in a red cloak and skull makeup marches before the cowering villagers, flanked by two hulking figures obscured by their own black cloaks. "Stockpiles of food? Hidden weapon caches? If one didn't have unwavering faith in our Dark Queen, one would almost think you rodents were concerned for your survival under her rule. Or perhaps even contemplating treason! How fortunate for you that Queen Una saw fit to dispatch me to assume control of your little town from this sniveling governor of yours. I have come to save you from yourselves. And all my grace will cost you is one volunteer from every household to join my army of undying glory!" She punctuates her lecture by kicking an older woman in chains beside her.

IF YOUR HEROES DON'T WANT TO LEAVE

If your heroes don't want to leave Earth and decide to instead stay and defend the world with the expectation of a full invasion, you don't need to force the issue. Simply transplant most of the later scenes to Earth to represent a sudden and overwhelming invasion. In this scenario, other heroes across the world have their hands full battling the mystic incursion and aren't any more available to help than they would be if the adventure took place in the Netherworld; and protecting Earth from magical threats still remains Seven's duty.

In this case, Una simply teleports her entire citadel and all the magical armies it contains to Earth, anchoring it deep in Wharton State Forest, west of the city.

Scenes 3 and 4: Kada'vrus and her forces are overseeing the conquest of an industrial facility and transforming it to produce weapons for Una's troops. Any information the heroes might learn about Una's citadel comes from prisoners or soldiers who escaped shortly after Una brought it to Earth.

Scene 5: Shanmai and the citadel guards can still guard the citadel itself, or you might transplant them to be a strike force attacking an important site in the city, such as a hospital, city hall, the Claremont Academy, or something important to one of the heroes.

Scene 6: Una's Alloy Adytum remains a trap inside her throne room. In previous scenes, seed the idea that Una is directing the invasion from there. Afterward, the heroes don't need to worry about finding their way back to Earth.

Scene 7: This scene remains unchanged.

The chained woman is Rada, the town's former governor, who used her position to shield the locals from Una's cruelty as much as she was able while still enforcing extreme production quotas.

The heroes can watch and simply not interfere. Kada'vrus' skeletal soldiers continue looting the homes over the course of the day while the mystic herself begins taking prisoners—one from each family, as she promised—to hold in the factory and begin transforming into new undead forces.

TARABAHVA

Tarabahva resembles a medieval village or the set from a fantasy television show, with cobblestone streets and stone-and-timber buildings capped with slate roofs. A few anachronistic elements set the Netherworld apart from a historical setting, including the ubiquity of magic used for public services, as well as bits of technology akin to Earth's own 19th and early 20th centuries—penicillin, radio, and industrial fabrication all help keep the residents productive and alive, if miserable. Most buildings stand two stories tall.

Most of the walls are made from wood and stucco (Toughness 3), but the town hall, the granary, and other large buildings have stone walls (Toughness 5). The nearby mill itself is as large as the town, with concrete walls (Toughness 8) and filled with a variety of ore-crushing rollers, automated forging hammers, large spinning centrifuges, and crucibles filled with molten iron that heroes could use to their advantage or be knocked into (treat these as Affliction 8, Damage 8, or Move Object 8 hazards, depending on the exact device).

In the wake of Kada'vrus' raid, several homes have been smashed, most of the town's available food, water, and weapons (used as much for barter as defense) sit piled in town square, and the factory has suffered damage to some of its machinery.

Like most settlements in the Netherworld, Tarabahva is an industrial town, built with 30-foot-wide roads to accommodate armies and industrial transports.

TACTICS

If the heroes opt to jump in and save the people of Tarabahva, award them a Hero Point each.

ROLEPLAYING KADA'VRUS

Kada'vrus is young and overcompensating for her tenuous position in Una's military, hoping that brutal efficiency will earn her more respect. She isn't expecting any pushback from the townsfolk and certainly doesn't expect to face anyone with powers. She immediately orders her minions to kill anyone who resists.

Kada'vrus is only loyal to Una out of fear. She begins to panic if she starts losing, becoming increasingly upset as her minions fall or she takes damage. The heroes can try to talk her down, assuring the necromancer they're here to destroy Una, with three or more Degrees of Success on **DC 22 Persuasion checks** made as Standard actions. If convinced, Kada'vrus orders any remaining undead minions to stand down, and agrees to leave Tarabahva and take up hiding in the mines. With five or more Degrees of Success, she can be persuaded to stay and help defend the town. She will not join the heroes in a direct attack on the citadel or Una.

Kada'vrus doesn't think to use governor Rada or any of the scattering townspeople as hostages, but if the necromancer falls before her intelligent agents, Slymme or Cayrne tries to grab a hostage and negotiate for their escape. You can also have a panicked local stumble into the fray to cause complications, especially if a hero is prone to accidents or uncontrolled power fluctuations. Award heroes who take the time to save Rada or a hostage a Hero Point.

ROLEPLAYING RADA

The town governor isn't an especially good person or an especially bad person, but she is a very practical person who wants to keep her town functioning and healthy. Rada is a coward ("nonconfrontational," by her estimation) with no interest in rebellion, but she also has no interest in upsetting these heroes or turning Tarabahva into a warzone. She's simply a long-suffering administrator who wants to be left to run her town in peace.

Rada is a middle-aged human woman, with long brown hair and a sun-kissed complexion. She possesses a "demon eye"—a brilliant yellow eye with a slit pupil—a relatively common birthmark in the Netherworld that provides no special abilities but that the locals generally consider lucky.

THREAT 1

Kada'vrus and her hulking bodyguard Cayrne throw themselves into combat together. The mystic alternates offensive spells with using In-

THE NETHERWORLD

Una's Netherworld is just one of thousands that exist across the multiverse, but her power, reach, and the sheer size of her empire earn her home dimension the status of *the* Netherworld rather than *a* netherworld. It is a world of perpetual twilight, where plants struggle to grow in the dry, rocky soil after eons of over-farming. Much of the industry is turned toward mining and manufacturing for tools of war, which Una uses to oppress the hundreds of mystic dimensions now under her control—and whose still-abundant fields now feed her starving populace. Fluctuations in gravity allow for strange geological features, like impossibly tall mountains and cliffs or floating islands, and many permanent gates between the Netherworld and other dimensions in Una's empire allow foreign cultures, flora, and monsters to trickle in to create a world of extremes.

The people of the Netherworld are generally a miserable but cowed lot. They are human, but centuries of exposure to their realm's corrupted magic marks most with physical abnormalities, such as horns, fangs, skin discolorations, or other monstrous traits. What amusements do exist—some music and games surviving from before Una's reign—are generally contraband and jealously guarded from prying eyes.

The Netherworld is a realm of magic rather than science, and scientific theories and technology don't always function as intended. There is no space or stars above, no core to the world below. All the universe exists in a single, continuous continent pockmarked by rivers, mountains, oceans, and lava fields. Whenever a player rolls a 1 while activating or repairing a piece of technology, have the device backfire in some clearly supernatural way and award that hero a Hero Point.

timidation to Demoralize or Feint, transferring the effects of successful checks to Cayrne thanks to her Set-Up Advantage.

KADA'VRUS

PL 10

See the **Cast** section.

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +1

Aging	+8	Ranged, Affliction 8
Death Grip	+8	Ranged, Affliction 6
Ghostly Grasp	—	Perception, Move Object 6
Necrotic Blast	+8	Ranged, Damage 11
Staff	+4	Close, Damage 2

DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS
+8	+7	+6	+13	+12/0*

*without Mystic Shield

CAYRNE

PL 10

See the **Cast** section.

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +3

Unarmed	+10	Close, Damage 10
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DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS
+9	+9	Immune	9	+11

THREAT 2

Slymme leads a force of skeletal soldiers—two for every Next-Gen hero (eight if you use the included four). The skeletons pair off against opponents, with one using the Aid action to assist its partner. Slymme waits until she faces a physically gifted foe or is grappled before activating her Insubstantial power.

SLYMME		PL 10		
See the Cast section.				
COMBAT		INITIATIVE +3		
Unarmed	+10	Close, Damage 10		
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS
+9	+9	Immune	+9	+11



SKELETAL SOLDIERS PL 4

See the **Cast** section. These characters are minions.

COMBAT		INITIATIVE +5		
Spear	+3	Close, Damage 5		
Unarmed	+3	Close, Damage 2		
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS
+3	+4	Immune	Immune	+4

GOVERNOR RADA PL 3

Use the statistics for a **Cult Adept** on page 146 of the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*. Rada has ranks in Expertise: Current Events rather than Cult Lore.

WRAP-UP

Once Kada'vrus is defeated or surrenders, the people of Tarabahva begin to peek out from the windows and hiding places. If governor Rada survived, she eventually thanks the strangers who saved them, but bemoans that Queen Una will soon send more agents to search the village and learn Kada'vrus' fate.

If the heroes care to ask about Una, Rada is hesitant, but ultimately says that the queen retires to her sacred sanctum, the Alloy Adytum, to rest. This pocket dimension can only be accessed from a large mirror overlooking the throne room in her citadel. None but Una are permitted to enter, and those few who have tried never return.

Rada can point the heroes toward Una's citadel, some 50 miles to the south, but she remains untrusting for now and shares little else.

SCENE 4 CHALLENGE SCENE

MENDING TARABAHVA

Tarabahva is a small community, already pressed to the margins by harsh production quotas and limited food rations. After generations of oppression, its people have little trust for outsiders. The heroes can simply move on, but they also have the option of trying to help the citizens, who are even now beginning to discuss how to deal with another investigator dispatched by Una.

The heroes have twelve hours they can spend in Tarabahva trying to make friends, helping, and learning more about the Netherworld and Una. Keep track of the total number of Degrees of Success and Degrees of Failure the heroes earn over their twelve hours.

Heroes can help in the following ways. Each hero can select what they spend their time doing.

FACTORY REPAIRS

Tarabahva's factory is the town's lifeblood. Part foundry and part forge, it converts the raw ore the citizens mine into useable metal and then provides the tools and facilities to smith the metal into a variety of weapons. Kada'vrus' minions smashed some of the machinery to make a point, and if the town can't repair it and resume work, then Una is increasingly likely to dispatch someone to investigate—or simply wipe them off the map.

Heroes can assist with the repairs with a successful **DC 13 Technology check**. Each check represents six hours of work.

FORMULATE A PLAN

One or more heroes can help Rada come up with a believable explanation for what happened to Kada'vrus (if the heroes persuaded the necromancer to stay and defend the town, they can instead coach her into negotiating with anyone Una sends to investigate).

Strategizing requires a successful **DC 18 Deception or Investigation check** to build a convincing story that integrates real details. Each check represents four hours of work.

HIDE SUPPLIES

The locals need a better hiding place for the food and weapon stockpiles and have resolved to dig a concealed bunker just outside of town. This task is more brute labor than a skilled pursuit.

Digging out the bunker will require a combined of two months' worth of worked hours (Time Rank 20). To determine how long it takes a super-powered character to clear the earth, subtract the digger's Strength (or ranks in earth-moving powers like Move Object) from Time Rank 20. Multiple characters can contribute to the effort, adding +1 to the strongest character's rank for every helper, to a maximum of five; a helper must be within 5 ranks of the strongest character's Strength or effect rank, otherwise their efforts don't meaningfully affect the outcome.

Digging out the bunker automatically earns one Degree of Success. This can only be earned once.

MAKE FRIENDS

The locals are suspicious, but not entirely out of reach. Heroes can try to make friends with a successful **DC 20 Persuasion check**. Allow creative heroes to substitute other skills, such as using Acrobatics to put on a tumbling performance or telling stories to the kids with an appropriate Expertise, but a hero can only use any given skill once, whether they succeed or fail. Each check represents three hours of work.

REPLENISH THE FIELDS

The locals try to grow what food they can to supplement their meager rations, but the soil around the Tarabahva is overtaxed and rocky, and their crops are pitiful. Heroes with plant-related powers can use them to boost the crops while heroes with healing or earth-based powers can replenish the soil. None of Next-Gen have appropriate powers, but characters like NGM or Seven can use Extra Effort to create the appropriate effect with their respective powers.

Replenishing the fields doesn't require a check. Any attempt automatically generates two Degrees of Success. Doing so requires three hours. This can only be earned once.

UNCOVER SPIES

While most in Tarabahva are sick of struggling under Una's thumb, some have earned extra privileges for themselves by reporting any disloyalty they see and hear to officials above Rada's head. Rada mentions this problem and her concern that unknown townsfolk will report what happened to Queen Una's forces. Rada agrees to deal with any traitors the heroes bring her.

AMBROSIA

Before Una transformed her dimension into a netherworld, several species of enchanted flowers could be gathered to brew ambrosia, a nectar filled to brimming with life. The plants are now extinct, and what little ambrosia still exists is secreted away by locals and mostly used to give life to crops during desperate times.

AMBROSIA

11 POINTS

Energizing Healing 5; Stabilize; Limited (every time ambrosia is used, reduce its effect rank permanently by 1; when it is reduced to 0, the last of the ambrosia has been consumed)

The informants are average citizens and gossips, not master criminals. Routing out spies requires a successful **DC 13 Insight or Investigation check**. Each check represents six hours of work.

WRAP-UP

After twelve hours, subtract the total number of Degrees of Failure the heroes earned from their total Degrees of Success.

TOTAL DEGREES OF SUCCESS	RESULT
-1 or less	The heroes have caused more problems than they've helped solve and find themselves ejected from town.
0	While the heroes' efforts don't cause any harm, they're mostly in the way and awkward. They can stay the night, but locals encourage them to move on quickly.
1-4	The heroes have chipped in to help grateful locals and even make a few new friends. Every hero gains one Hero Point.
5-10	The heroes have proven themselves trustworthy as they prepare Tarabahva to weather Una's scrutiny. Every hero gains one Hero Point. Medari, a local who once worked as a cook in Una's citadel, comes forward to tell them about secret servants' corridors within the citadel that allow the heroes to circumvent the guards (Scene 5) and proceed directly to Una's Alloy Adytum (Scene 6).
11+	The heroes have left Tarabahva self-sufficient and well-defended. Every hero gains one Hero Point and Medari comes forward to tell them about the citadel's servant corridors. The heroes also raise some ghost of community spirit within Rada, who pulls them aside and gives the heroes her blessing and a bottle of ambrosia, a magical elixir the town brewed in the days before Una's takeover. See the sidebar for details.

SCENE 5 CHALLENGE/CONFLICT SCENE

CITADEL OF SORROWS

You can read or paraphrase the following as the heroes travel the Netherworld to provide some atmosphere:

The road itself seems to have little connection to the terrain, and at times rises high above it on precariously thin struts, providing a dangerous view of the rolling hills and swamps of the Netherworld. Strange silhouettes flap through the twilight skies on

four wings, while odors of rot and brimstone waft up from the streams and springs you pass. Even the plant life has adapted to the hostile climate, with everything covered in vicious barbs and thorns, or snapping shut with the slightest touch. Here and there, shadows move near the roadside, only to dart away when you draw near.

Eventually, a sprawling metropolis replaces the harsh countryside. Dark clouds loom over the gray city, dropping an ashy rain on every street and surface. Above it all towers a wicked, writhing citadel of black stone and iron spires.

Una's citadel towers high above the surrounding landscape, with her capitol city stretching outward from it for a dozen miles in every direction. A huge variety of strange beings—mutated and magical humans, elves, dwarves, demons, lizard-kin, and stranger—wander the streets, all representatives and traders from the 999 worlds the Queen of the Netherworld has conquered. This amazing diversity means that even unusual-looking heroes can blend into the crowd without drawing attention.

Una's citadel contains hundreds of rooms that house servants and soldiers, with amenities for all, as well as vaults, libraries, and laboratories for Una and her dark magician servitors. Most of the offices and courts for administering her empire are spread throughout the city; the citadel itself is more palace and fortress than government building.

SECURITY FEATURES

Una's citadel is sturdy, with organic-looking walls of magically reinforced stone (Impervious Toughness 8) and windows of transparent cold iron (Toughness 7, Immunity [Magic]). The entire complex is warded to silently alert Una or her guards when magical beings arrive (of the included characters, Seven and Miss Kitty may trigger this alert). Characters who can detect magic can recognize these protections with a successful **DC 15 Perception check**, and temporarily disable it with a **DC 25 Expertise: Magic check**.

If the wards alert security, four **Warrior Demons** (see the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*, page 147) arrive to investigate. If they find nothing, they return to their normal stations. If they find intruders, or fail to report in after a few minutes, Shanmai and his demons arrive to investigate personally (see the **Tactics** section).

BREAKING INTO THE CITADEL

Breaking into the citadel requires stealth, trickery, and the ability to disable magical and technological locks. The process is a challenge sequence, requiring the heroes to accumulate 7 Degrees of Success to finally locate Una's throne room and access to her Alloy Adytum. The heroes can use the following skills: Athletics (DC 16), Deception (DC 15), Expertise: Magic (DC 20), Stealth (DC 20), and Technology (DC 18), and must succeed with at least three different skills. You might allow a hero to make a pow-

er check in place of a specific skill check if they have an appropriate or creative use for one of their powers. Failed checks have increasingly dire results:

- **On the first failure**, the heroes alert a band of four housekeepers (use the Bystander archetype from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*, page 145). The servants can be coaxed or threatened into silence with appropriate skill checks, or incapacitated, but otherwise alert the guards (see the second failure).
- **On the second failure**, a squad of guards arrive to investigate the growing disruptions. Two Warrior Demons (see the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*) arrive for every one hero to search the area. The



demons capture anyone they find for questioning, taking them to the dungeons below the citadel. While the demon guards can't be persuaded to keep quiet, the heroes can still incapacitate them.

- **On the third failure**, the heroes fully alert security to their presence and Shanmai quickly arrives with his most powerful reinforcements (see the **Tactics** section).

If the characters learned of the servants' corridors from their time in Tarabahva, they can bypass this challenge and head straight to the throne room and the Alloy Adytum (see **Scene 6**).

TACTICS

Una's guard commander is a towering yaomo—a demonic being similar to those depicted in Chinese myth—named Shanmai. Her demonic minions are recruited from dozens of different netherworlds and possess a wide variety of features and—at your discretion—powers.

ROLEPLAYING SHANMAI

Shanmai is large and confident, though he has little patience for talk or games. Subordinates (which means everyone except Una) will follow his orders, or he will crush them. If he suspects someone is hiding nearby, he simply begins smashing furniture and walls, knowing it is someone else's job to repair everything once he's done his own work of "securing" the grounds.

Shanmai's vulnerability to the color yellow puts him at a serious disadvantage fighting NGM, and if that teen hero attacks, Shanmai orders one of his demonic guards to respond rather than retaliating directly. Heroes can intuit some significance from this behavior with a successful **DC 20 Insight check**.

THREAT 1

Shanmai is a serious threat on his own, though slow and clumsy compared to most PL 13 foes. He hopes to subdue intruders for questioning and eventual transformation into demons. Shanmai's infernal nature also renders him resistant to magical attacks—though like his impervious hide, this immunity is overcome if the heroes can figure out how to deliver their magical effects with yellow special effects.

SHANMAI		PL 13		
See the Cast section.				
COMBAT		INITIATIVE +1		
Shockwave	—	Close Burst, Affliction 9		
Thunderclap	—	Close Burst, Dazzle 9		
Unarmed	+8	Close, Damage 18		
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS
+8	+8	+17	+9	+17

THREAT 2

Shanmai travels with a group of elite guards, enormous brute demons that serve as the citadel's most fearsome guardians. There is one fewer guard than there are members of Next-Gen (three if you use the four included characters).

ELITE GUARDS

PL 8

See the **Cast** section.

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +1

Unarmed +6 Close, Damage 10

DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS
+6	+6	Immune	+6	+10

WRAP-UP

If the citadel guards defeat the heroes, they take the intruders to the dungeon below the complex and report to Una. With part of Una's plot hinging on Seven battling her personally, she orders Shanmai to leave the prisoners unguarded in hopes that they escape.

If the heroes fail to escape on their own, the queen dispatches Xarqui, a tempter demon (see the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*, page 147), to disguise himself as a sympathetic servant and help the heroes escape. Xarqui points the heroes to the secret servants' corridors, allowing them to reach the throne room without another confrontation with the guards.

The heroes don't necessarily need to fight Shanmai and his guards; they can simply flee. In this case, consider using the rules from **The Chase** scene from **Chapter 6** of the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide* for ideas to make a chase scene more exciting.

Once the heroes reach the throne room, they find it dark and somber—completely empty.

SCENE 6

ROLEPLAY SCENE

THE SEAT OF POWER

Once the heroes reach the throne room, read the following:

Titanic pillars of black marble support this massive throne room near the citadel's summit, while black-flamed candles shed a gloomy ambiance. Sparse decor in gold and red provides some color, drawing your attention to a golden throne of bone and twisted faces. A large mirror behind the throne reflects the room and the dancing flames of the candles... but not any of you.

Una's throne room is currently abandoned. The heroes likely learned that the Queen of the Netherworld retires to her sanctum within the enchanted mirror—the Alloy Adytum—to prepare herself for invasions and other grand events. If they didn't learn this in Tarabahva, mystically aware characters like Seven can still sense the mirror's powerful magic and discern its purpose with a successful **DC 15 Expertise: Magic check**.

Characters can enter the Alloy Adytum by simply stepping through the mirror.

The throne is gold and requires Strength 6 to lift or carry, but is unwieldy, leaving even super-strong characters Vulnerable while carrying it. If the characters were being pursued by guards, they can use the throne to barricade the doors to the throne room. This delays Shanmai by 4 rounds, or just the elite guards by 8 rounds.

INSIDE THE ALLOY ADYTUM

If the heroes step through the mirror, read or paraphrase the following:

The world beyond the mirror looks—at first glance—to be the same as the one you just left, swapped left-for-right. But the candles here shed a soothing golden light rather than a chill gloom, and beyond the great columns of the throne room lie walls lined with shelves. Ancient books, scrolls, and instruments of wood and brass and crystal line the displays.

At the chamber's far end, where grand double-doors should stand, instead lies a pillow-lined chapel. A raven-haired woman in green robes—Una—sits among the pillows, her eyes shut in deep meditation.

The Adytum is a sacred sanctuary created by Una as a repository for her greatest knowledge and treasures. Here she has peace from the stresses of running an empire and safety from would-be spies and assassins. Her strongest spells and wards normally prevent all outsiders from entering the mirror, but in preparation for her confrontation with Seven she has removed these protections to allow anyone to enter... and none to leave.

The documents within are a wealth of spellbooks, histories of magical beings, arcane secrets, biographies, and catalogues of magical dimensions. The heroes can explore these to learn any magical secrets you desire or justify developing new magical spells and powers using power points they have earned. Likewise, you can plant any future plot devices among the magic items here or allow players to spend accumulated power points to gain a magical tool from Una's treasury. Otherwise, the enchantments that allow people stuck inside to escape (see **Escaping the Adytum**) keep all the documents and treasures within the pocket dimension, even if they are being carried by a creature that escapes.

The Una at the far end of the hall is a simulacrum—a mindless puppet made from clay and given the appearance of life via magic. It cannot move or react, and if attacked it falls apart to reveal its true nature.

There is no mirror on this side of the portal, and no doors or windows, implying no way out. Una has her own vile means of escape (see **Escaping the Adytum**), and can depart with a dimensional movement spell if necessary, but she has specifically warded the Adytum against such magic now to transform it into a snare, by which her enemies can enter but not leave.

Once the heroes attack the simulacrum or realize they are trapped, they trigger an illusory threat left behind by Una. Read or paraphrase the following:

The clay simulacrum's face twists and ripples, then its eyes open with malicious glee. "So, the Master Mage skulks into my bedchambers to slay me like a thief in the night. Truly the hero." Though the figure's mouth moves, Una's voice booms from every corner of the room.

"You're too late. While you played in my garden, I strolled into Earth. Without a Master Mage there, it was mine from the moment my feet graced her soil. You failed. Everything Adrian spent his lifetime protecting... you betrayed in... how many days?"

Oh, but you left such a thoughtfully prepared gift for me, how could I not return the favor? My Adytum—my sacred place—only respects

courage and power." The clay melts like snow, revealing a simple iron dagger. "The only way to leave is through sacrifice. If you want to come take your little world back, well... I fear not all of you can make the trip!"

Award Seven a Hero Point for the ordeal Una has revealed at this point. Remember that Una's intention is to infuriate Seven and grind down her humanity, not to kill or contain her.

ESCAPING THE ADYTUM

Una's words are true: on the off chance she ever found herself stripped of magic, she constructed a loophole into her pocket dimension, forcing it to eject everyone if someone dies within it. While she implies this must be a human sacrifice, killing anything will accomplish this. She normally brings small animals—mice, songbirds, or fish—into the chamber with her to allow her exit.

Players should devise their own means of escape, based on what little information Una provided. Let tensions rise and allow the heroes (and players) to discuss what they should do and potentially argue over whose blood to spill, before ultimately finding a better solution. Good roleplaying here may be a hero's last chance to earn Hero Points before finally confronting Una herself.

The following suggestions provide you with some guidelines:

- A hero might surmise that Una also needs to sacrifice something to escape and spend a Hero Point to edit the scene and add a pet (or less morally dubious, a plant) they can sacrifice to escape.
- While Una's disposition equates "sacrifice" with "death," that isn't necessarily true. A hero might sacrifice their pride by admitting a shameful secret or personal insecurity or confessing to some wrong they've done. To make this more of a bonding moment, you might require every character to do this, having characters who have already confessed float into the air and begin to fade away, but getting "stuck" until everyone sacrifices something personal. This option earns each participating hero a Hero Point.
- The heroes might decide to sacrifice something important to Una by destroying her library and/or the collected treasures.
- The heroes might opt to build a ritual or plot device to punch an exit out of the pocket dimension. In that case, turn this into a challenge sequence requiring a variety of skills and impose some consequences for each failed check—the Adytum might create monsters to protect itself or shock the characters with a Damage or Affliction effect (see the **Traps** section in **Chapter 5** of the *Dethber War Gamemaster's Guide* for ideas).
- A hero can sacrifice themselves as a last resort. You might rule that the ambrosia the heroes might have earned in **Scene 4** can restore a recently dead character, if they haven't already used it.

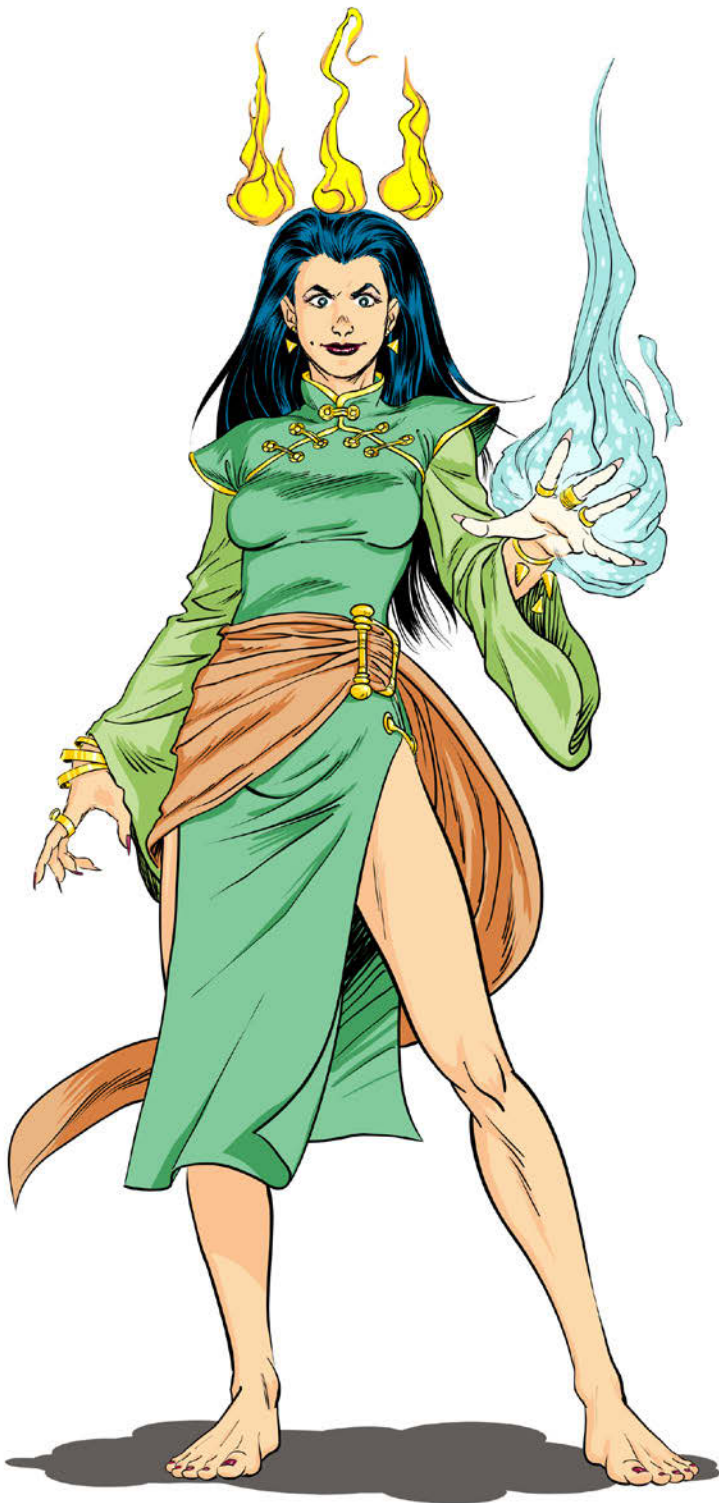
WRAP-UP

Escaping the Alloy Adytum returns the characters to Una's throne room (and possibly to any guards they left behind). Inside the prison, they learned from Una herself that the dark queen has already made her move to conquer Earth.

Returning to Earth, like arriving in the Netherworld, is mostly a matter of scene transition. Seven has to use Extra Effort on a Power Stunt to transport the entire team back to Freedom City, or characters with the

Ritualist or Inventor Advantages can take time to build a system to return to Earth (or spend a Hero Point to quickly jury-rig a solution). Movement 1 (Dimension [Earth]) only costs 2pp, or 4pp with the Portal extra, taking about 20 hours for an invention or 17 hours for a ritual (or half that if they take a -5 penalty to their skill checks). Una's mirror was designed for dimensional magic, and if any heroes think to incorporate it into their ritual or invention, it cuts the time required in half.

If the heroes allied with any local NPCs, you may also have them arrive and provide a *deus ex machina* to return them home. Save this option, however, as heroes usually like to take a shot at solving their own problems before turning to outside help.



SCENE 7

CONFLICT SCENE

MASTERS OF EARTH

Once the heroes return to Earth, read or paraphrase the following:

Your familiar city looks like it has collided with the Netherworld you just left. A storm-cloud of orange and violet light churns overhead. The sites seem distorted, stretched, or twisted—sharper than you ever remember seeing them. A low rumble, like distant thunder, drowns out the normal sounds of urban life.

“Oh, you’ve decided to join us, have you?” Una’s voice echoes across the skyline. “You are here before Adrian. I suppose that means he’s... late. Finally here for our duel, child?”

Seven (or whoever is taking on the role of Master Mage) can feel Una’s presence as an ache in her gut—the magic of the world churning as two separate entities make the claim for Master Mage of Earth-Prime. With this effect, the heroes can easily locate Una, but that benefit works for Una too.

Una has perched herself and some of her forces atop the city’s tallest skyscraper, Pyramid Plaza, but she doesn’t waste any time in approaching Seven now that the young mage has returned. She is happy to trade jibes and aggravate the young heroes as much as possible.

THE PLAZA

Una confronts Seven and her champions in the recessed plaza between the three towers. A 20-foot-wide fountain fills the center of the plaza, while planters, food stands, and coffee kiosks line the sides. A monorail line runs 50 feet overhead.

Despite the obvious state of emergency, intrepid Freedomians are still commuting and the monorail overhead remains functional, with a train running through every few minutes. The first time Una is Dazed in combat or suffers another major setback, a monorail begins to arrive overhead, and the sorceress uses her turn to blast the overhead track. If the train falls, it does line area damage 9 (in addition to injuring dozens of passengers).

Award a Hero Point to any heroes that leap to save the monorail before it crashes.

TACTICS

This final confrontation is fairly straightforward. At PL 15, Una is a dire threat even for the entire assumed team of five heroes, and the adventure offers the heroes many opportunities to generate Hero Points for this exact reason. The dark queen’s greatest weakness is in numbers; the heroes can act five times as often as she can or combine their attacks to create more powerful effects. If your players get frustrated by Una’s apparent power, encourage them to push their powers or combine their powers into team attacks.

Una starts the fight strong, with a full-powered Elemental Blast to demonstrate her power. She is comfortable splitting her dynamic magic array into multiple effects—such as using weather control to maintain a storm over the plaza (Environment 2) and unleash lesser Elemental Blasts (Ranged Damage 10), or splitting her blast into two Damage 8 attacks against two separate targets.

IS THAT REALLY HOW IT ENDS?

Master of Earth is an adventure to showcase events that are already assumed to have happened in Earth-Prime's recent history and create the status quo as it exists in books like the Atlas of Earth-Prime and Freedom City. In these books, Una's defeat and Seven inheriting the Netherworld are assumed to have happened, and so the adventure directs characters and events toward that climax. But playing an adventure with a pre-determined outcome isn't always a lot of fun, so don't feel like you need to force your players to act out this script.

If you're running *Master of Earth* as a standalone adventure, then you can let it have whatever resolution you like. Rather than part of a scheme to merge with Earth's magical energies, Una's invasion may be a genuine attempt to add the world to her empire, and the heroes can defeat her however they like. If you do intend to play through the rest of the **NetherWar** adventure series, the resolution as-written sets up the events later adventures use to explain the growing arcane threat to Earth-Prime, but you can adapt those later adventures to reflect the players' actions in this adventure. If they instead imprison Una, you can decide that her lingering presence is quietly tainting Earth's magic, or that she manipulates Toy Boy and other magical villains via her Astral Projection rather than as a disembodied intellect. If the heroes don't defeat Una, then you can instead decide she falls back to begin a more subtle effort to use Earth's magic to complete her ascension.

Don't feel constrained by the stories just because the books decide this encounter ends one specific way. Your home campaign can and should diverge whenever it makes the players feel more invested in the world, gives everyone a sense of agency, or adds to the fun.

Una begins the confrontation alone, but after failing her first Toughness save she scoffs, insisting that if Seven has brought champions to the fight, then she will bring out her own champions. At this point, she calls down two dragons waiting on the tower roof, hoping they'll distract Seven's "minions" and force the Master Mage to confront her personally.

Remember that Una's ultimate goal is to have Seven "destroy" her, sacrificing her mortal body to merge with Earth-Prime's magic. While she is too proud to completely take a dive, she'll pull her punches, use sub-optimal tactics, and take turns to gloat or demonstrate her power rather than fight if she's doing too well. If she kills Seven, then her ascension to godhood could be delayed by months or years.

For Una's purposes, any result of "Incapacitated" from a failed Toughness save or resistance check against an Affliction is enough to accomplish her needs, but only as part of an attack from Seven (or a team attack in which she participates).

If the combat seems to run on long enough that it grows dull, have Una turn her magic against bystanders instead, threatening to wound or kill innocents, but leaving herself vulnerable to an attack.

ROLEPLAYING UNA

Una is an ancient and powerful sorceress on the verge of godhood, if only she can push an insecure child over the edge. Una needs Seven to lash out at her with magic, and is happy to gloat, threaten innocents, and poke at insecurities to get the reaction she wants. She considers the new Master Mage of Earth a "feeble infant" and makes it clear she doesn't consider the young woman a threat. While she's generally immune to childish barbs and name-calling, she will show genuine rage if the heroes reveal (or claim) they destroyed her library in the Alloy Adytum or coaxed one of her lieutenants to defect.

WRAP-UP

Once Una is defeated, her body disintegrates, leaving nothing but gray dust. Read or paraphrase the following:

The world shudders as Una dissolves into gray dust and the strange mutations her presence caused leech away, leaving only a pleasant early evening.

After a few moments' rest, the air parts and a door between worlds opens. Beyond it, you can see the twisted landscape of the Netherworld. The hulking demon from Una's palace emerges. Then bows. "My queen is dead," he intones with reverence. "By magic law, all that was hers is yours now. The worlds she took. The legacies she left. Without the will of a Dark Lord, our Netherworld and hundreds like it she has claimed will crumble into dust as she has."

The demon opens his massive fist to reveal a silver diadem. "Our world needs a queen."

The demon emissary is Shanmai, chief of Una's palace guard (see **Scene 5**). If the heroes somehow destroyed Shanmai earlier, replace him with another official or powerful being. The message is the same regardless of who delivers it: The netherworlds are too damaged by their Dark Lords' corruption to survive without a powerful, magical will holding them together. With Una's defeat, her destroyer inherits that

UNA, QUEEN OF THE NETHERWORLD

PL 15

See the **Cast** section.

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +1

Elemental Blast	+10	Ranged, Damage 15
Elemental Control	—	Perception, Move Object 15
Iron Hand of Una	+10	Ranged, Affliction 10
Mental Blast	—	Perception, Damage 9
Unarmed	+6	Close, Damage 2

DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS
+11	+9	+10	+19	+19/5*

*without Mystic Shield

DRAGONS (2)

PL 9

See the **Cast** section.

COMBAT

INITIATIVE +0

Bite and Claws	+6	Close, Damage 12
Fiery Breath	+6	Ranged, Damage 12

DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS
+3	+3	+12	+6	+15

magical legacy, but unless Seven is physically present in the Netherworld, its reality will begin to unravel.

There is a silver lining, however: Netherworlds reflect their Dark Lords' will, and so a good soul ruling over one can slowly purge the evil from the realm and return it to normal... provided the world and its dark magic don't corrupt her first.

While Seven can reject this burden, it dooms billions of people to death. Accepting it, however, leaves Earth once again without a Master Mage to protect it... but surely, with Una defeated, Earth will be safe from mystical threats.

EPILOGUE

Seven has some time to say good-bye before she must depart for the Netherworld, but ultimately—history records, at least—she must leave, giving up her title of Master Mage and leaving Earth-Prime without a dedicated magical defender. If your group created custom characters for this adventure, she may pass the title on to a magic-themed teen hero who assisted her in this adventure. Otherwise the title becomes vacant, and players will have a chance to inherit it at the end of the NetherWar adventure series.

REWARDS

Characters who participate in this adventure should gain 2 power points for completing the adventure, and one additional power point if they went out of their way to act heroically. If you are only using the included character sheets, you might consider granting these power points to your players' normal characters instead. Seven herself inherits a great deal of magical power as part of acquiring the title of Dark Lord (see *Freedom City, Third Edition*).

The heroes have managed to stop a dire threat to the world and doing so comes with rewards and notoriety. Teen heroes might be able to spin that into television appearances, or at least some extra credit. If nothing else, their sudden disappearance from Mr. Skyler's math class is excused.

CONTINUING THE ADVENTURE

There are several ways to potentially extend this adventure into a longer adventure or story arc:

- The easiest way to expand on *Master of Earth* is to extend the heroes' stay in the Netherworld and make reaching Una's citadel more of an ordeal. They may have to cross dark forests and sinister swamps, all crawling with monsters, but also deal with the warped inhabitants of the Netherworld, many of whom are loyal to Una and eager to capture outsiders and suspected rebels. The magical nature of the Netherworld means you can borrow tropes and plots from your favorite fantasy adventure games that would normally be inappropriate for a superhero game. They may instead need to spend more time in Una's unnamed capitol, learning about her citadel and how to gain access to it. Finally, the citadel itself is enormous, but mostly glossed over. There's plenty of room for more encounters with guards, prisoners, servants, monsters, and traps within the sprawling complex as the young heroes try to find their way.
- The heroes' adventure with Seven—now Lady Seven—means they have a powerful magical ally they can turn to for advice or

insight. Seven may provide additional assistance in the future or opportunity for future adventures in the many chaotic magical realms now under her control.

- The NetherWar adventure series specifically continues the events of this adventure, showing Una's efforts to use Earth's magical energy to ascend to godhood.

ROLE-CALL

The following are the major characters encountered in *Master of Earth*, including their backgrounds and the relevant game stats.

FOMORIANS

Exiled monsters of Celtic folklore, the Fomorians resent the dominion of humans on Earth and plot to someday invade and seize control of the world. More information on Fomorians can be found in the **Sub-Terra** section of the *Atlas of Earth Prime*.

BRES THE BEAUTIFUL

Born an unusually handsome Fomorian, apparently devoid of their racial mutations, Bres is a shapeshifter and a mystic of some skill who led his people to war with the ancient tribes of Ireland. More information on Bres can be found on page 19 of **Rogue's Gallery**, but this version of him does not include the powers granted by his Eye of Balor.

FOMORIAN WARRIORS

Fomorians possess a wide variety of physical mutations, but for this assault, Bres selected only his largest and most intimidating warriors—giants standing ten to twelve feet tall. They are nearly indestructible, but also weak-willed and easily manipulated.

FOMORIAN WARRIORS							PL 7								
STR	7	STA	7	AGL	0	DEX	0	FGT	3	INT	0	AWE	4	PRE	0
Powers: Growth 4 (Innate; Permanent)															
Equipment: Chain-mail (Protection 3), Club (Damage 2), Knife (Damage 1)															
Advantages: Close Attack 2, Equipment 2															
Skills: Expertise: Survival 4 (+4), Insight 2 (+2), Intimidation 4 (+6), Perception 4 (+4), Ranged Combat: Throw 4 (+4)															
COMBAT										INITIATIVE +0					
Club										+5			Close, Damage 9		
Knife										+5			Close/Ranged, Damage 9		
Unarmed										+5			Close, Damage 7		
DODGE		PARRY		FORTITUDE		WILL		TOUGHNESS							
+3		+3		+7		+3		+10/7*							
*without Armor															
Totals: Abilities 18 + Powers 9 + Advantages 4 + Skills 9 (18 ranks) + Defenses 10 = 50															

KADA'VRUS AND HER FORCES

The necromancer and her undead forces act as Una's enforcers, conscripting resources for her invasion.

KADA'VRUS

Kadamethe Vrusik was born on Naroth, a mystical Netherworld conquered by Una a generation before her birth. A land of perpetual, foggy night where the borders between life and death are thin, many of the dimension's residents can see and hear spirits. Kada was born with this gift and her wealthy family paid mystical tutors to teach her the art of necromancy, and Una soon found a use for such a sorceress in her magical armies.

Kada'vrus is a mean-spirited rich girl, but only now that she serves Una does she realize how tenuous her life is. The Queen of the Netherworld has no patience for failure, and little regard for spellcasters from the dimensions she has conquered. Her experience of not being the most important person in the room is beginning to fan the flames of empathy, making her worry even more about her tenuous position within Una's military.

KADA'VRUS								PL 10
STR 0	STA 0	AGL 1	DEX 3	FGT 4	INT 3	AWE 6	PRE 4	
Powers: Spirit Sight Comprehend 2 (Spirits), Senses 4 (Vision Counters Concealment, Ranged Detect Spirits), Levitation Flight 4 (30 MPH), Mystic Shield Sustained Toughness 12								
Necromancy (Array, 24 points)								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aging Ranged Cumulative Affliction 8 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Transformed [into an elderly version]) • Death Grip Ranged Progressive Affliction 6 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated) • Ghostly Grasp Perception Move Object 6 (3,200 lbs.; Damaging) • Graveturning Burrowing 12 (Alternate; Speed: 250 miles/hour, 0.5 miles/round; Penetrating) • Invisibility Concealment 4 (All Visual Senses) • Necrotic Blast Ranged Damage 11 (Affects Insubstantial) 								
Equipment: Staff (Strength-Based Damage 2)								
Advantages: Artificer, Equipment 1, Ranged Attack 5, Ritualist, Set-up, Startle, Trance								
Skills: Expertise: Magic 7 (+10), Expertise: Religion 7 (+10), Insight 6 (+12), Intimidation 6 (+10), Perception 4 (+10), Sleight of Hand 4 (+7)								
COMBAT					INITIATIVE +1			
Aging	+8			Ranged, Affliction 8				
Death Grip	+8			Ranged, Affliction 6				
Ghostly Grasp	—			Perception, Move Object 6				
Necrotic Blast	+8			Ranged, Damage 11				
Staff	+4			Close, Damage 2				
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS				
+8	+7	+6	+13	+12/0*				
*without Mystic Shield								
Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 57 + Advantages 11 + Skills 17 (34 ranks) + Defenses 23 = 150								
Complications: Duress: Kada'Vrus is an unwilling soldier, but fears Una more than she fears any heroes. Power Loss: Kada'Vrus can only cast spells by using a bone or other human remains, such as her staff.								

CAYRNE AND SLYMME

Cayne and Slymme were two childhood friends of Kada'vrus who were felled in Naroth's latest outbreak of the Gray Plague, and the young sorceress preserved her friends as best she could by infusing them with necromantic energy from different sources—Cayne

from talismans and monuments and Slymme from ectoplasm. The process restored their bodies and memories but left them devoid of emotions and utterly loyal to Kada'vrus—her pets more than her friends nowadays.

Cayne's rocky flesh repairs itself constantly, drawing new stone from the ground to heal almost any damage. Slymme's body is infused with ectoplasm, allowing her to dissolve into a gaseous, white form while still retaining her incredible strength, though the fluid that binds her undead body together is vulnerable to dilution.

CAYRNE AND SLYMME								PL 10
STR 10	STA —	AGL 3	DEX 3	FGT 9	INT 5	AWE 1	PRE 0	
Powers: Undead Hulk Protection 11 (Impervious 6), Immunity 30 (Fortitude Effects)								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cayne: Regeneration 10 • Slymme: Insubstantial 2 (Strength Affects Corporeal) 								
Advantages: All-out Attack, Close Attack, Great Endurance, Ranged Attack 5, Takedown								
Skills: Insight 4 (+5), Perception 6 (+7), Persuasion 4 (+4), Vehicles 2 (+5)								
COMBAT					INITIATIVE +3			
Unarmed				+10		Close, Damage 10		
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS				
+9	+9	Immune	9	+11				
Totals: Abilities 52 + Powers 47+ Advantages 9 + Skills 8 (16 ranks) + Defenses 14 = 130								
Complications: Detachment: Can't benefit from any positive effects based on emotions or encouragement. Power Loss (Cayne only): Cayne loses her regeneration when not in contact with the ground. Vulnerable (Slymme only): Slymme takes damage from ordinary water, even when insubstantial; damage rank ranges from 4-10, depending on how much water is used.								

SKELETAL SOLDIERS

Kada'vrus' preferred minions are powerful soldiers made from animat-ed bone. Most are made from multiple skeletons, and the bones have been carved with wards to render the soldiers resistant to magic.

SKELETAL SOLDIERS								PL 4
STR 2	STA —	AGL 1	DEX 0	FGT 1	INT —	AWE -1	PRE —	
Powers: Undead Immunity 45 (Fortitude Effects, Cold Damage, Half Damage from Slashing and Piercing Damage), Wards Immunity 10 (Magic; Limited to Half Effect)								
Equipment: Spear								
Advantages: Close Attack 2, Equipment 1, Improved Initiative								
Skills: Perception 6 (+5)								
COMBAT					INITIATIVE +5			
Spear				+3		Close, Damage 5		
Unarmed				+3		Close, Damage 2		
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS				
+3	+4	Immune	Immune	+4				
Totals: Abilities -24 + Powers 50 + Advantages 4 + Skills 3 (6 ranks) + Defenses 9 = 42								

THE CITADEL GUARDS

Una has some human guards but relies heavily on ensorcelled demons recruited from other netherworlds and hells she has conquered.

SHANMAI

Shanmai is a yaomo, a demon from a netherworld reminiscent of Diyu, a hell-like afterlife from Taoism and Chinese mysticism. Like many other yaomo, Shanmai's purpose is to break the souls of the dead to purify them before reincarnation, and he ruled the Hell of Shattering Upon Rocks until Una arrived. Shanmai respects the chain of command, and while he misses breaking sinners, he finds pride in breaking and reforming trespassers (or lazy servants) into loyal guards. In addition to his strength and durability, he possesses a unique ability to transform incapacitated creatures into demon servants. This is a plot device but acts as a Cumulative Affliction 5 (resisted by Will; Transformed; Limited to Third Degree). He can only perform this power in his forge.

Shanmai has a mystical aversion to yellow. He cannot cross a yellow line and he saves against yellow weapons with only half his normal Toughness bonus. He deliberately avoids opponents dressed in yellow (such as NGM). Una has used this knowledge to imprison him in the past, and some palace servants trade it as gossip. If the heroes help a servant, they may show their gratitude by revealing this weakness.

Use the **Brute** villain archetype from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*, page 82. Shanmai also has Immunity 10 (Magic Effects; Limited to Half Effect).

SHANMAI								PL 13
STR 18	STA 17	AGL 1	DEX 0	FGT 4	INT -2	AWE 0	PRE -1	
Powers: Big Growth 4 (Innate; Permanent), Strength Tricks Strength Damage Array (18 points): Shockwave Burst Area Affliction 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude: Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated), Thunderclap Close Burst Area Dazzle 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware, Limited: Auditory), Strong Leaping 12 (4 miles), Enhanced Strength 4 (Limited to Lifting), Tough Impervious Toughness 12, Immunity 12 (Cold Damage, Disease, Heat Damage, Poison), Magic Resistance Immunity 10 (Magic Effects; Limited to Half Effect)								
Advantages: Close Attack 2, Great Endurance, Improved Hold								
Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+6), Intimidation 12 (+13), Perception 2 (+2), Ranged Combat: Throwing 8 (+8)								
COMBAT				INITIATIVE +1				
Shockwave				—				Close Burst, Affliction 9
Thunderclap				—				Close Burst, Dazzle 9
Unarmed				+8				Close, Damage 18
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS				
+8	+8	+17	+9	+17				
Totals: Abilities 58 + Powers 51 + Advantages 4 + Skills 12 (24 ranks) + Defenses 24 = 149								

ELITE GUARDS

Shanmai creates most of Una's elite palace guards personally, reformatting the souls and bodies of trespassers, traitors, and disrespectful staff into hulking demonic soldiers in his forge below the citadel.

Use the **Brute Demon** minion archetype from the *Deluxe Gamemaster's Guide*, page 147.

ELITE GUARDS								PL 8
STR 8	STA 8	AGL 7	DEX 3	FGT 8	INT 0	AWE 4	PRE 2	
Powers: Immunity 32 (Critical Hits, Fortitude Effects), Leaping 2 (30 feet), Protection 5 (Impervious)								
Advantages: Diehard, Improved Grab, Power Attack								
Skills: Intimidation 8 (+7)								
COMBAT				INITIATIVE +1				
Unarmed				+6				Close, Damage 10
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS				
+6	+6	Immune	+6	+10				
Totals: Abilities 36 + Powers 44 + Advantages 3 + Skills 4 (8 ranks) + Defenses 13 = 100								

UNA THE UNRELENTING

Una began her life many centuries ago as a peasant girl, and then concubine to a powerful wizard-king. Clever and ambitious, and quickly schooled in the cruelties of palace intrigue, she studied her master's tomes and mastered magic herself in secret. She used her arcane skills to first master her king's courts, then his heart. His sudden death on their wedding night left Una alone to rule. In time, she won the title of Master Mage for her realm, and her ambition and brutality twisted this power until she became a Dark Lord. Her will had won her a kingdom, and then it reshaped all her reality to suit her whims.

Unfettered by the constraints of the cosmos, Una has spread her control across hundreds of worlds, expanding her magical knowledge and armies through intrigue, trickery, and bloody violence. Her first encounter with Earth brought her face-to-face with a relatively powerless Master Mage, Adrian Eldritch, and what should have been another world easily added to her collection instead turned into humiliation when Eldritch tricked her into withdrawing from their duel. In the years since, Una grew increasingly obsessed with the paltry little dimension that escaped her grasp.

Now that she stands on the cusp of ascension, Una has resolved that Earth and only Earth must serve as the lynchpin in her ritual.

UNA'S DRAGONS

The dragons accompanying Una are feral beasts tamed by her magic. They are aggressive and powerful pets, but not especially clever.

DRAGON								PL 9
STR 12	STA 12	AGL 0	DEX 0	FGT 6	INT -2	AWE 1	PRE -1	
Powers: Ranged Damage 12 (Fiery Breath), Flight 6 (120 MPH), Growth 12 (Innate; Permanent), Protection 3								
Skills: Perception 4 (+5), Ranged Combat: Fiery Breath: Damage 12 (+6)								
COMBAT				INITIATIVE +0				
Bite and Claws				+6				Close, Damage 12
Fiery Breath				+6				Ranged, Damage 12
DODGE	PARRY	FORTITUDE	WILL	TOUGHNESS				
+3	+3	+12	+6	+15				

UNA THE UNRELENTING

PL15

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
2	5	1	3	6	3	11	6

POWERS

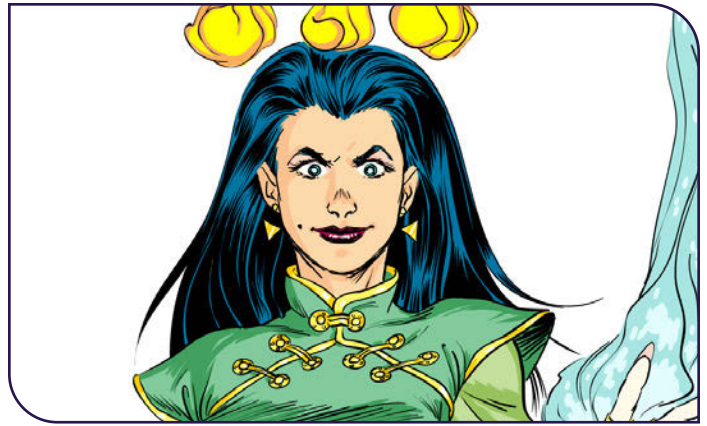
- Air-Walking Flight 3 (16 MPH)** • 6 points
- Astral Form** Remote Sensing 15 (Sight, Hearing, and Touch; 120 miles; Dimensional 2 [mystic dimensions], Subtle; Limited [physical body is defenseless]) • 48 points
- Dark Lord** Comprehend 3 (Read, Speak, and Understand Languages), Immunity 11 (Aging, Life Support) • 17 points
- Mystic Shield** Sustained Protection 14 (Impervious) • 28 points
- Witch Sense** Senses 3 (Acute Analytical Magic Awareness) • 3 points
- Elemental Magic:** Dynamic Array (36 points)
 - **Iron Hand of Una** Ranged Cumulative Affliction 12 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized; Limited Degree) • 36 points
 - **Elemental Blast** Ranged Damage 15 (Affects Insubstantial 2, Split, Variable Descriptor 2 [elemental effects]) • 2 points
 - **Elemental Control** Perception Move Object 15 (Limited to Air, Earth, and Water) • 2 points
 - **Mental Blast** Perception Damage 9 (Alternate Defense: Will) • 2 points
 - **Shadow Control** Shapeable Area Concealment Attack 4 (All Visual Senses) • 2 points
 - **Stepping Disk** Teleport 12 (16; Extended [4,000 miles]) • 2 points
 - **Stepping Gate** Teleport 9 (Extended Only [500 miles], Portal) • 2 points
 - **Weather Control** Environment 6 (Extreme Cold, Impede Movement 2, Visibility [-5]; 900 feet) • 2 points

SKILLS

Deception 4 (+10), Expertise: Magic 18 (+21), Insight 4 (+15), Intimidation 8 (+14), Persuasion 8 (+14), Sleight of Hand 8 (+11)

ADVANTAGES

Benefit 5 (Queen of the Netherworld), Connected, Contacts, Defensive Attack, Ranged Attack 7, Ritualist, Trance, Well-informed



OFFENSE

INITIATIVE +1	
Elemental Blast +10	Ranged, Damage 15, Affects Insubstantial 2
Elemental Control —	Perception, Move Object 15
Iron Hand of Una +10	Ranged, Cumulative Affliction 10
Mental Blast —	Perception Damage 9 (Will)
Unarmed +6	Close, Damage 2

DEFENSE

DODGE	11	FORTITUDE	10
PARRY	9	TOUGHNESS	19/5*
WILL	19	*without Mystic Shield	

POWER POINTS

ABILITIES	74	SKILLS	25
POWERS	152	DEFENSES	26
ADVANTAGES	18	TOTAL	295

COMPLICATIONS

Ego: Una's will is all that matters, and any amount of disrespect is enough for a "lesser being" to earn a lifetime of pain.

Mystic Pacts: As a powerful magical being, Una is bound by the cosmos to honor her promises and bargains.

Motivation—Power: Una doesn't merely want power. She wants to be power!

NOTES

<p>DAMAGE _____</p>	<p>DAZED? <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>One standard action each round</p>
	<p>STAGGERED? <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>One standard action, -1 movement</p>
	<p>INCAPACITATED? <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Defenseless, Stunned, Unaware</p>

SEVEN

Real Name: Serena Vervain
Occupation: Superhero, Master Mage
Base: Freedom Hall, Freedom City

Serena Vervain grew up in the West End of Freedom City, raised by her grandmother Lillian after her parents died in an accident. Her Nana taught Serena about herbs and folk remedies, read her stories and faerie tales, and told her about the little people and the spirits, both good and bad. Serena learned not to talk to other children about these things; they were part of the secret world she shared only with her Nana.

When Serena turned thirteen, she learned the truth. She came from a bloodline of witches that stretched back to the founding days of Freedom City. The gift often skipped generations, as it did with her mother, but Serena showed signs of being the most gifted witch in her family's history and the seventh to wield a witch's true power. As Serena's gifts awakened, she learned her family had enemies, some of them ancient, and she would need protection from them.

Her grandmother enrolled Serena at the Claremont Academy, where she could hone her gifts and benefit from both its protection and its education. There she took the codename "Seven," as seven is a magical number and she was the seventh fully realized witch of her bloodline. Serena proved an exemplary student, and soon began learning from Adrian Eldrich as his personal apprentice and heir apparent.

With Eldrich now dead, Seven has risen to become Earth's new Master Mage, a heavy title with more responsibility than she feel prepared for

PERSONALITY

Serena is a vivacious young woman with a love of life. She's friendly and cares about others, doing her best to make them feel comfortable. In many ways, she's the spiritual heart of Freedom City's supernatural community, helping settle fights and getting everyone to cooperate. While retired from her old team, the Claremont Academy's prestigious Next-Gen, she has earned her new place on the Freedom League.

While she was once the model of balance between her lives as a normal teenage girl and a superhero, her new responsibilities have opened her eyes to the vast array of supernatural problems threatening Freedom City and the Earth and she has begun to worry she isn't ready yet to take on such a heavy burden. She tries to remain positive, keeping her doubts to herself.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Seven is able to cast various spells. Her primary power is control over the elements (air, earth, fire, and water), which she can shape and move with her mind. These same abilities allow her to ride the winds to fly or create wards of elemental force to block incoming attacks against herself and others. Before his death, Eldrich also began tutoring Seven in more formal magic, granting her spells to teleport, shatter magical effects, or bind both mortals and spirits in magical chains. She is also sensitive to mystical forces, and can sense when they are nearby.

Without her magic, Seven remains a clever and resourceful woman with a deep and thorough knowledge of the supernatural and a natural gift for misdirection and disguise.

Note: Seven is created with 160pp rather than the 180pp normally allotted to PL 12 heroes. This reflects her relative inexperience and keeps her non-combat abilities closer to those of Next-Gen.





SEVEN **PL 12**

REAL NAME Serena Vervain **AGE** 19 **HAIR** Black

OCCUPATION Superhero **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Freedom City

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	3	1	1	5	3	4	3
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks

SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Athletics	2	+2
Deception	6	+9
Expertise (History)	4	+7
Expertise (Magic)	7	+10
Insight	5	+9
Perception	5	+9
Ranged Combat (Magic)	10	+11
Stealth	4	+5

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Benefit 4	Status (Master Mage of Earth)
Inspire 2	Spend a Hero Point to grant all allies a +2 bonus
Languages	Speaks Altantean, English (native), Latin, Sanskrit, and Spanish
Ritualist	Use Expertise (Magic) skill to create single-use spells
Trance	Feign death and slow bodily functions

POWERS

Defensive Magic • Array (22 points) • 24 points	Mystic
• Elemental Deflection: Deflect 11 (Reflect) • 22 points	
• Fourth Wheel of Weyan: Burst Area Deflect 11 • 1 point	
• Shining Shield of Sirrion: Sustained Protection 11 (Impervious) • 1 point	
Magic • Array (31 points) • 25 points	Mystic
• Abjuration of Abbridon: Nullify Magic 12 (Broad, Precise) • 25 points	
• Baleful Bindings of Bal'Hemoth: Ranged Affliction 11 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile; Affects Insubstantial, Extra Condition, Limited Degree) • 1 point	
• Crooked Path of Kar'Kradas: Teleport 11 (16 miles; Accurate; Medium [shadows]) • 1 point	
• Elemental Mastery of Ghorummaz: Perception Move Object 12 (100 tons; Limited to Air, Earth, and Water) • 1 point	
• Magic of the Modrossus: Ranged Damage 12 (Affects Insubstantial) • 1 point	
• Second Wheel of Weyan: Remote Sensing 20 (Audio and Visual, 4,000 miles; Feedback, Medium [reflective surfaces]) • 1 point	
• Shining Suns of Sirrion: Ranged Affliction 12 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Vision Impaired, Vision Disabled, Vision Unaware; Limited to Vision) • 1 point	
Mystic Sense • Personal • Permanent • 2 points	Mystic
Senses 2 (Extended Magical Awareness)	
Whirling Winds of Weyan • Personal • Sustained • 8 points	Mystic
Flight 4 (30 MPH)	

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Responsibility: Seven has both a family legacy to uphold as well as that of Master Mage. She feels responsible for the mystic happenings around the world.

Insecurity: Seven is overwhelmed by her new responsibilities and questioning her readiness for the role. She suffers a -5 circumstance penalty on Insight and Will checks to resist taunts, intimidation, and other effects that use this fear.

Power Loss: Seven can't fly or cast spells if she can't speak or move her arms.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	12	3 w/o SHINING SHIELD OF SIRRION
DODGE	10	
PARRY	9	
FORTITUDE	7	
WILL	9	

COMBAT

Damage:	Dazed?	Staggered?	Incapacitated?	INITIATIVE +10
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Bindings of Bal'Hemoth	+11	Dodge	Ranged Affliction 12	DC 22
Elemental Mastery	+11	Dodge	Ranged Move Object 12	DC 27
Magic of the Modrossus	+11	Dodge	Ranged Damage 12	DC 27
Unarmed	+5	Parry	Close Damage 0	DC 15

Abilities 40 + Powers 65 + Advantages 11 + Skills 22 (43 ranks) + Defenses 22 = 160 TOTAL

BLUE BOLT

Real Name: Jae Murphy

Occupation: Student

Base: Claremont Academy, Freedom City

Jae Murphy grew up in Irvine, California, the son of a Korean former model and sometimes actress and a very successful American event planner. There were only two things unusual about Jae's life: one, that he was a jinx when it came to computers, phones, and anything electronic, and, two, that his mother insisted he was the son of an alien she met at a concert on New Year's Eve in 2000. Jae didn't believe her, of course, but she only told him about it and insisted he not mention it



to anyone. She also told him to tell her if he ever felt strange or experienced anything unusual.

On a trip to Los Angeles, Jae was witness to a fight between the Emerald City hero known as Xeno and black-clad agents working for Majestic-20. During the fight, Xeno phased through a wall and the men in black started scanning the surrounding area. When their scanner passed over Jae, they stopped and yelled, "Alien! She must have shapeshifted! Get her!" And with that they came at Jae, sending the crowd scattering. Jae, for his part, freaked out. There was a flash of light just as the men in black raised their guns, and Jae found himself standing on top of a nearby parking lot, a scorch mark at his feet. Feeling exhausted, he dropped to the ground, and when he looked back up a couple minutes later, Xeno was floating nearby. She asked where he was from. When Jae replied "Irvine", Xeno laughed and told him Majestic-20's sensors detected aliens, so there was apparently more to him than he knew.

Xeno got Jae in touch with Duncan Summers, who flew the boy to the Claremont Academy for testing. With a little coaching, he was able to manifest a wide array of electrical powers with a surprising degree of natural control. After that, he was admitted to the school with his parents' permission and has been at the school since.

PERSONALITY

In both his heroic and secret identities, Blue Bolt acts first and thinks later. He likes to have fun and hasn't quite realized that the things he gets involved in might actually be seriously dangerous. He doesn't think of himself as irresponsible—even though everyone tells him he is—but rather that he's fun-loving and spontaneous. Perhaps because of his powers, Blue Bolt is very fidgety.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Due to his alien heritage, Blue Bolt can generate massive amounts of electrical energy and harness it for a number of different effects. He can produce enough energy to fire off blasts of lightning, bright flashes of light, and a field of energy capable of shorting out electronics, but he's also capable of more delicate feats, which allow him to power any device requiring a power source and move small objects around by controlling static electricity. Blue Bolt can perceive the presence of electricity coursing through power lines and circuits. The excess energy in his body interferes with mental powers directed at him, something he's unaware of at this point. Perhaps his most impressive ability is that he can turn himself into electricity for brief moments and arc from one place to another nearly instantly.



BLUE BOLT PL 8

REAL NAME Jae Murphy **AGE** 17 **HAIR** Blue

OCCUPATION Student **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Irvine, California

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
1	4	2	4	2	3	2	1
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks

SKILLS		
Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Expertise: Science	3	+6
Insight	3	+5
Perception	4	+6
Ranged Combat: Powers	3	+7
Technology	3	+6

ADVANTAGES	
Advantage	Details
Improved Initiative 2	+8 Initiative
Second Chance	Re-roll a failed Will defense against mental control

POWERS	
Power Features • Personal • Sustained • 3 points	Alien
Charger Feature (Can power electrical devices when touching them)	
Jump Start Feature (Can jump start or reset constructs by touch)	
Static Electricity: Feature (Can move items in arm's reach of about 1 lb.)	
Electromagnetic Field • Personal • Sustained • 4 points	Alien
Sustained Protection 4	
Electrosense • Personal • Permanent • 3 points	Alien
Senses 3 (Ranged Accute Detect Electricity)	
Electrical Control • Array (18 points) • Instant • 22 points	Alien
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lightning Bolt: Ranged Damage 9 • 18 points Blackout: Burst Area 3 (120 feet) Broad Simultaneous Concentration Nullify Electronics 3, Reduced Range (Close) • 1 point Chain Lightning: Ranged Multiattack Damage 6 • 1 point Lightning Flash: Perception Area Cumulative Affliction 8 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Visually Impaired, Visually Disabled, Visually Unaware), Limited to one sense • 1 point Taser: Ranged Affliction 9 (Resisted & Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated) • 1 point 	
Electrical Resistance • Personal • Permanent • 5 points	Alien
Immunity 10 (Electrical effects), Limited to Half Effect	
Lightning Flight • Personal • Instant • 12 points	Alien
Teleport 3 (250 feet), Accurate, Easy, Extended (8 miles), Limited: Must pass through intervening space in lightning form	
Mental Static • Personal • Sustained • 5 points	Alien
Enhanced Will 4, Enhanced Advantage (Second Chance (Mental control effects))	

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Thrills: The fun and excitement of having super powers is still new and fresh to Blue Bolt. He's in love with the idea of being a hero and gets a kick out of the adventures he has.

Accident: Blue Bolt sometimes loses control of his electrical powers, inadvertently damaging electronics and other sensitive equipment nearby.

Identity: Blue Bolt keeps his identity as Jae Murphy, one of the students at Claremont Academy, a secret from everyone but his teammates.

Disability: When Blue Bolt is immersed in water or has his excess electricity drained from him, he immediately becomes fatigued, then after an hour, he becomes exhausted, and finally, after a few hours, he is incapacitated. He recovers quickly when removed from such situations.

DEFENSES		
TOUGHNESS	8	4 W/O ELECTROMAGNETIC FIELD
DODGE	8	
PARRY	8	
FORTITUDE	6	
WILL	10	6 W/O MENTAL STATIC

COMBAT				INITIATIVE +10
Damage:		Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Chain Lightning	+7	Dodge	Ranged Multiattack Damage 6	DC 21
Lightning Bolt	+7	Dodge	Ranged Damage 9	DC 24
Taser	+7	Dodge	Ranged Affliction 9	DC 19
Unarmed	+2	Parry	Close Damage 1	DC 16

Abilities 38 + Powers 54 + Advantages 2 + Skills 8 (16 ranks) + Defenses 18 = 120 TOTAL

CATALYST

Real Name: Reena Sarin

Occupation: Student

Base: Claremont Academy, Freedom City

Reena is a daughter of Indian immigrants who moved to Boston to attend medical school. Her parents met while at school and ended up marrying, moving to Florida for work, and starting a family. Reena is the youngest of four children. She was a bright, precocious, and willful child, which didn't change much as she aged.

Life changed for Reena when she started going through puberty at 12. Sure, there were all of the normal changes, but she also experienced paralyzing headaches, extended bouts of hyperactivity bordering on mania followed by exhaustion and extended periods of sleep. She had a difficult time concentrating some days, but was super-focused others. Her parents, both doctors, were alarmed by all this and examined



her themselves and took her to specialists to find out what was going on. The only answer seemed to be that her metabolism was out of whack and sent her body all sorts of uncontrolled, conflicting messages. After a couple of years, during which her symptoms disappeared and reappeared seemingly at random, Reena came to believe she'd have to deal with this her entire life.

One day when she was walking home from school, Reena was approached by a very nice, well-dressed woman with a Russian accent who introduced herself as Vila (see Lady Vila & Treker in *Threat Report*). Reena remembers having a nice conversation with Vila, then getting in her car and going to her very nice house. There she was introduced to some other kids about her age and was told this was her new family. Reena thought that sounded like a fine thing.

Reena eventually realized she'd been brainwashed somehow and kidnapped. The few kids Lady Vila had mind controlled chased after her and a running battle ensued, with Reena firing off blasts of energy as she ran for home. Reena was arrested, but news of super-powered kids running wild travels fast and Duncan Summers used his influence to get her released, then spoke to her and her parents about teaching her about her powers at the Claremont Academy. The Sarins agreed it was for the best.

Since arriving at the school, Reena has trained with her powers, but has been frustrated by how tiring and inefficient they are. A few months ago, she got sick of it and spent all of her break creating a control rod to help her store, control, and direct her powers.

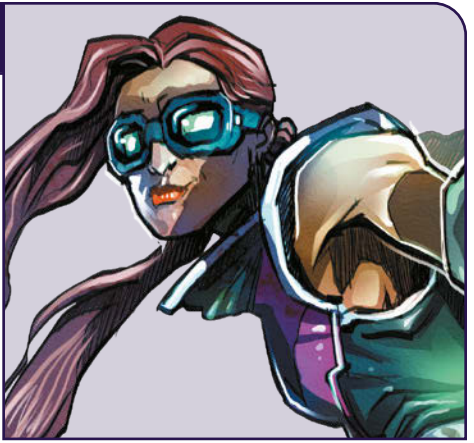
PERSONALITY

Catalyst is, without a doubt, a genius. Unfortunately, she's not very smart. She takes too many chances, doesn't consider the consequences of her actions, and is much too interested in finding out if she *can* do something to think about whether she *should*. She's slowly learning that thinking things through first is a good thing. Because her powers are innately dangerous, she constantly needs to prove herself. She doesn't lack confidence, and she wants to be seen as helpful rather than hurtful (or destructive, in her case). Her catchphrase could be, "I was just trying to help!"

POWERS & ABILITIES

Catalyst is a mutant. She was born with the ability to generate powerful blasts of bio-energy. Without the aid of her control rod, she can loose powerful, uncontrolled blasts that exhaust her and lose power quickly because the energy is so unfocused. With her control rod, Catalyst is able to focus, store, and direct her bio-energy into a number of powerful effects, including a number of attacks, the ability to surround herself in energy, flight, a force field capable of sustaining her life, and the ability to heal people. Unbeknownst to her, the control rod allows her to fly through space—a fact she will likely discover on her own soon. In addition to her energy powers, Catalyst is a genius, capable of inventing things on the fly and in more controlled environments. In fact, she's the one who built her control rod. She's constantly tinkering with it to improve its efficiency.

Catalyst's control rod can't be taken from her while she's conscious due to precautions she took during its construction. For all intents and purposes, it's welded to her body as long as she's conscious and able to channel energy into it.



CATALYST **PL 8**

REAL NAME Reena Sarin **AGE** 16 **HAIR** Brown

OCCUPATION Student **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Tampa, Florida

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	1	2	2	0	6	2	0
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Deception	4	+4
Expertise: Science	2	+8
Insight	0	+2
Intimidation	0	+0
Investigation	1	+7
Perception	3	+5
Persuasion	0	+0
Ranged Combat: Control Rod	4	+6
Stealth	0	+2
Technology	2	+8

Advantage	Details
Eidetic Memory	Total recall, +5 bonus to remember details
Inventor	Use Technology skill to create temporary devices
Languages	Speak English (native) and Hindi
Speed of Thought	Use Intellect to determine Initiative bonus
Well-Informed	Immediate Investigation or Perception check

Powers	Category
Bio-Blast • Ranged • Instant • 5 points Ranged Damage 10, Fades, Tiring	Mutation
Bio-Energy Control Rod • Removable • Array (20 points) • 23 points • Bio-Feedback Aura: Reaction Damage 5 (Contact) • 20 points • Bio-Energy Blast: Buys off Fades and Tiring from the Bio-Blast power • 1 point • Bio-Energy Burst: Ranged Burst Area Damage 6 • 1 point • Healing Energy: Healing 4, Energizing, Persistent, Restorative, Stabilize • 1 point • Bio-Shock Blast: Ranged Cumulative Affliction 6 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated) • 1 point	Technology
Force Field • Personal • Sustained • 16 points Sustained Protection 10, Impervious 6	Mutation
High Speed Flight • Personal • Instant • 19 points Flight 9 (1,000 MPH) AE: Space Flight: Movement 1 (Space Flight 1 (Within solar system))	Mutation
Life Support Field • Personal • Permanent • 10 points Immunity 10 (Life Support)	Mutation

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Acceptance: Catalyst's powers are inherently difficult for her to channel and use effectively. In her early experimentation with them, she caused a lot of unintended damage and injury, and felt terrible about it. She now uses her powers to prove she's not a danger and can actually be very helpful—she hopes.

Accident: Catalyst is both unlucky and accident prone. In addition, her energy blasts often cause unintended scorch marks, fire, or damage.

Identity: Catalyst is careful to keep her identity as Reena Sarin a secret from everyone except her teammates..

DEFENSES	Toughness	Dodge	Parry	Fortitude	Will
	11	5	5	6	10
	1 W/O FORCE FIELD				

COMBAT	Damage:	Dazed?	Staggered?	Incapacitated?	INITIATIVE +6
	<input type="text"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Energy Blast	+6	Dodge	Ranged Damage 10	DC 25	
Energy Burst	—	Dodge	Ranged Burst Area Damage 6	DC 21	
Shock Blast	+8	Dodge	Ranged Cumulative Affliction 6	DC 16	
Unarmed	+0	Parry	Close Damage 0	DC 15	

Abilities 26 + Powers 60 + Advantages 5 + Skills 8 (16 ranks) + Defenses 21 = 120 TOTAL

MISS KITTY

Real Name: Amelia Cero

Occupation: Student

Base: Claremont Academy, Freedom City

Thirteen-year-old Amelia Cero's family founded and owns CeroSoft, a successful software manufacturer based in Chicago, where she grew up. Amelia's maternal grandmother passed away on her 11th birthday, and she received a final, mysterious gift from her grandmother: a beautiful Egyptian cat statuette, supposedly an old family heirloom. That night, in her bedroom, the statuette came to life in the moonlight, becoming Mau, an immortal cat-servant of the god-

dess Bastet. He explained to Amelia that she was the latest in a long line of women in her family chosen as emissaries of the goddess in the world. With that, she transformed into her feline form for the first time.

Calling herself "Miss Kitty," Amelia took it upon herself to use her power for the greater good to help people. Eventually, her parents discovered her secret and—after overcoming the initial desire to forbid her to use her abilities—got in touch with the Claremont Academy. The school was happy to offer Amelia a place in its freshman class, and now Miss Kitty has peers and teammates who understand her unique situation for the first time. She's both excited and a bit intimidated by life at Claremont, and is sometimes homesick, although having Mau with her helps. She sometimes has to remind herself, and her fellow students, that she's had her powers for a couple of years now, longer than most of them.

PERSONALITY

Amelia is an enthusiastic and smart girl who sometimes feels a bit overwhelmed with her new responsibilities and the world they have opened up to her. Still, she's brave and does her best to live up to expectations. She downplays the whole "chosen by a goddess" thing, for the most part, and is fairly humble. In her feline form, Miss Kitty is even more of a go-getter and sometimes leaps into action before there's a chance for much planning or discussion, something her teachers and teammates are trying to help her with.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Blessed with superhuman abilities by the Egyptian cat goddess, Miss Kitty can speak with felines, and they generally recognize and respect her (although they won't necessarily obey her). With a moment of concentration to call upon Bastet, she can transform into a humanoid feline with great strength and agility, coppery claws on her hands, and an agile tail. She moves quickly and easily through crowded environments, becomes nearly impossible to see, hear, or smell, and recovers quickly in darkness or shadows.





MISS KITTY PL 8

REAL NAME Amelia Cero **AGE** 13 **HAIR** Pink

OCCUPATION Student **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Chicago, Illinois

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
5/2	3/1	7/3	3	6/2	1	3/1	2
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks

Note: All Abilities marked with a slash (/) indicate Amelia's Feline Form first, followed by her human form

SKILLS	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	4	+11/+7
Athletics	4	+9/+6
Deception	0	+2
Insight	1	+4/+2
Intimidation	0	+0
Perception	4	+7/+5
Persuasion	0	+0
Stealth	4	+11/+7
Technology	1	+2

ADVANTAGES	Details
Agile Feint	Use Acrobatics skill to feint
Animal Empathy	Use interactions skills normally with animals
Beginner's Luck	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Close Attack 3	+3 to Close Attack checks
Defensive Roll 2	+2 active bonus to Toughness
Improved Grab	Make Grab attacks one-handed
Move-by Acton	Move both before and after a standard action

POWERS	Mystic
Blessing of Bastet • Personal • Permanent • 4 points	Mystic
Enhanced Advantage (Animal Empathy)	
Speak Cat: Comprehend 2 (Animals, Speak, Understand, Understood, Limited to Felines)	
Divine Advisor: Feature 1 (can get hints or guidance, but also lectures)	
Favored by Cats: Feature 1 (cats are always friendly to her)	
Feline Form • Activation (Move Action) • Personal • Sustained • 52 points	Mystic
Cat Senses: Senses 5 (Acute Scent, Darkvision, Tracking (Olfactory), Ultra-hearing)	
Cat-like Abilities: Enhanced Agility 4, Enhanced Awareness 2, Enhanced Fighting 4, Enhanced Stamina 2, Enhanced Strength 3	
Cat-like Agility: Movement 5 (Environmental Adaptation: Urban, Safe Fall, Sure-footed 2, Wall-crawling)	
Claws: Strength-based Damage 2	
Healing Factor: Regeneration 2, Limited to Shadows and Darkness	
Move in Shadows: Concealment 7 (All Aural, All Visual, Smell; Limited to in Shadows and Darkness, Passive)	
Tail: Extra Limbs 1	

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Doing Good: Inheritor of a proud legacy, Miss Kitty is devoted to doing her heritage proud and using her abilities for good.

Divinely Chosen: As the chosen Emissary of Bastet, Miss Kitty has certain mystical responsibilities and duties she is only beginning to learn.

DEFENSES		
TOUGHNESS	5	3 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	11	7 IN HUMAN FORM
PARRY	11	7 IN HUMAN FORM
FORTITUDE	7	5 IN HUMAN FORM
WILL	7	5 IN HUMAN FORM

COMBAT	Damage:	Dazed?	Staggered?	Incapacitated?	INITIATIVE +7/3
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Claws	+9	Parry	Close, Damage 7	DC 22	
Unarmed	+9/+4	Parry	Close, Damage 5/2	DC 20/17	

Abilities 30 + Powers 56 + Advantages 8 + Skills 9 (18 ranks) + Defenses 17 = 120 TOTAL

NGM

Real Name: Martin Conte

Occupation: Student

Base: Claremont Academy, Freedom City

NGM, or Martin, had to get by without a lot of things most of his life: no father, a grandfather in jail, a mother who had to work multiple jobs so had no time for him, and no money to make life easier. Then, his grandfather earned a pardon from the president after the book he wrote was made into a critically acclaimed movie, *Golden Marvel: The True Story of Leroy Conte*, and brought attention to his terrible treatment by the system. Newly freed, with money from the movie and various fundraisers, Martin's grandfather made life almost good, but the two had little in common and Grampy Leroy was always talking about confronting racism and fostering a sense of community between the races—nothing Martin was interested in. His life involved avoiding the cops, hanging out with his friends in the lo-

cal gang, and figuring out where his spending money was going to come from.

Grampy Leroy saw what the boy's life was like and understood what he was going through. The system had failed Martin, just like it had failed him when he was unfairly thrown in prison at Buckner Ridge, better known as Lockdown (see *Atlas of Earth-Prime: USA*), for life. It was in prison Grampy Leroy discovered new ways to manipulate the golden light he used to become the Golden Marvel, the "first black superhero," in the 1960s. So Grampy Leroy decided to change Martin's world and hopefully make it possible for Martin to make an even bigger impact on the world than he had.

Martin called home late one night to ask Grampy Leroy to pick him up from the police station. He'd been caught by the police and beaten because they thought he'd been selling drugs, or knew people selling drugs, or knew what drugs were, but they had nothing to charge him with, so he was free to go. Grampy Leroy picked him up, fixed him a late dinner, and told him what had happened that night wasn't fair, that he had rights just like anyone else, and that he had to stand up for the downtrodden however he could—whether it was for himself or someone else. Martin laughed, telling his grandfather he couldn't do anything, that everything was stacked against him, the system was rigged and not in his favor. With that, Grampy Leroy summoned the golden light he was known for. It filled the house with light and he touched Martin on the chest. The light flowed into Martin, suffusing him with power while simultaneously draining it from his grandfather. When it was done, Grampy Leroy said, "Now you have the power to change things."

Unfortunately it wasn't that simple. Martin loved the new power he had, but had a hard time thinking of himself as a "hero." He was a disadvantaged kid with superpowers, that was all. And there was no way he was going to use a lame name like "the New Golden Marvel," but he was okay with using the initials for his name. Despite Grampy Leroy's attempts to train and educate Martin, he decided the boy would be better off with people who knew what they were doing, so he called up Duncan Summers and got him enrolled in the Academy.

PERSONALITY

NGM presents himself as competent and capable of handling anything thrown his way. Inside, however, he suffers from a lifetime of rejection. To mask his feelings and to protect himself from being rejected by others, he is confrontational, pushy, and a little mean. In his view, it's better to be alone than to let anyone in because they'll eventually leave. NGM feels best about himself when he's recognized for doing something well...not that he can take a compliment. NGM has seen Yuna Tanaka (see **Shadow** in *Hero High*) around school and is interested in her, but hasn't done anything about it yet.

POWERS & ABILITIES

The powers passed on to him by his grandfather allow NGM to manifest a number of different powers. The powers make him incredibly strong and tough. When he wishes, he can also use them to fly, fire blasts of golden light, glow brightly, protect himself, and see in the dark. His powers aren't as powerful as his grandfather's were, but it's not clear if that's because the powers were passed to NGM, because of his lack of maturity, or for some other reason. It's entirely possible his powers will grow stronger as he ages.



NGM PL 8

REAL NAME Martin Conte **AGE** 17 **HAIR** Black

OCCUPATION Student **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Freedom City

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
10	8	4	2	4	0	2	2
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	1	+5
Deception	0	+2
Insight	3	+5
Intimidation	5	+7
Perception	4	+6
Persuasion	3	+5
Ranged Combat: Light Blast	6	+8
Stealth	0	+4

Advantage	Details
Close Attack 2	+2 to Close Attack checks

Powers	Legacy
Flight • Personal • Sustained • 14 points Flight 7 (250 MPH)	Legacy
Force Field • Personal • Sustained • 2 points Sustained Protection 2	Legacy
Gold Vision • Personal • Permanent • 2 points Senses 2 (Darkvision)	Legacy
Golden Light • Array (16 points) • 17 points • Light Blast: Ranged Damage 8 • 16 points • Golden Glow: Environment 3 (120 feet), Light • 1 point	Legacy
Infused with Energy • Personal • Sustained • 28 points Enhanced Stamina 6 Enhanced Strength 8	Legacy

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Recognition: NGM has had a difficult life and has had very little support. He says he's training to be a hero because that's what others expect of him, but really, he's hoping someone pays attention to him and recognizes him for being good at something.

Identity: NGM is the grandson of the disgraced Civil Rights-era hero and ex-con known as the Golden Marvel. In fact, NGM stands for "New Golden Marvel." He keeps his identity as Martin Conte a secret to avoid trouble with his grandfather's enemies, to keep people around him safe, and so his friends at home don't realize who he is and what he's doing.

Overconfident: NGM believes he can handle anything that comes at him. He thinks he's the strongest, toughest, fastest, most powerful member of Next-Gen and he shouts down anyone who says otherwise.

DEFENSES	Toughness	Dodge	Parry	Fortitude	Will
	10	6	6	8	6
	8 w/o Force Field				

COMBAT	Damage:	Dazed?	Staggered?	Incapacitated?	INITIATIVE +4
		<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
	Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
	Light Blast	+8	Dodge	Ranged Damage 8	DC 23
	Unarmed	+6	Parry	Close Damage 10	DC 25

Abilities 36 + Powers 63 + Advantages 2 + Skills 11 (22 ranks) + Defenses 8 = 120 TOTAL

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MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS ASTONISHING ADVENTURES: MASTER OF EARTH

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