

# HIDEOUTS & HOODLUMS



By Scott Casper (after Kuntz & Ward)

Illustrations by the Greats of the Golden Age

## Supplement IV: Captains, Magicians & Incredible Men Pt. I – Ace - Fox



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Hideouts & Hoodlums is a modification of the SWORDS & WIZARDRY: White Box Edition rules, with swords and sorcery elements expunged and replaced with elements of the Golden Age of the superhero genre, circa 1939. Swords & Wizardry, S&W, and Mythmere Games are the trademarks of Matthew J. Finch and this author is not affiliated with Matthew J. Finch, Marv Breig, or Mythmere Games™. This supplement includes material adapted from the core SWORDS & WIZARDRY rules in lieu of White Box Edition.

With thanks to the creators of Superman and Dungeons & Dragons, for all the people who have swiped from them. Also the people who invented interlibrary loan. And the contributors to the Digital Comic Museum.

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## Foreword

Well, here it is – the first part of the last H&H supplement. It’s been a lot of work getting here, but the reward has been that this has been the most fun supplement to write. To bring you a handbook of ready-made characters based on the best of the most obscure characters of the Golden Age of comics, I have had to read a LOT of comic books. What follows will be, whenever possible, comprehensive write-ups based on an in-depth study of primary sources. Thank goodness for free scanned copies online and interlibrary loan!

I cannot say enough good things about the Digital Comics Museum, a wonderful resource that I wish I had known about when I first started this project four years ago! Also worth mentioning here is the Grand Comicbook Database, a wonderful index of the world’s comic books. And for some information, particularly the comic book companies themselves, there was no source better than good ol’ Wikipedia.

There is only some rhyme or reason to the inclusion (and exclusion) of heroes from the Golden Age of Comics. The cut-off point for published characters is the cover date of December 1941. Selection was aided by the fans of the game at the H&H Fan Club Yahoo!Group, but also considered was trying to give a good, although non-comprehensive, coverage of the characters who best represent each publisher up through 1941.

On the pages that follow, you will find characters both familiar and unfamiliar; icons known around the world, but also obscure also-rans who deserve better than obscurity.

There are basically four uses for this supplement. One, as a player of H&H, is the chance to take a pre-made character with published history (maybe one you already recognized because you know a thing or two about Golden Age comics) and play that character in your next H&H game. Many players I have gamed with prefer original characters of their own design and, of course, that is fine as well (the character creation rules were right up front in Book I for just that purpose), but I have also played in many games myself roleplaying published characters and found there are few experiences as satisfying as immersing yourself into the world of comic books in such a fashion.

Two, as an Editor of H&H, here is your chance to fill your campaign with a gala of famous guest-stars! The good guys can turn up any time your Heroes need assistance, or challenge your Heroes when they turn up at cross-purposes. Also included are some villains, for the satisfaction of some celebrity butt-kicking!

Three, players and Editors both can take ideas from these heroes and villains and apply them to new characters. Some characters have trophies not spelled out anywhere in previous game supplements. Some of the Editor's notes at the end of entries suggest ways for tweaking the rules for characters. Make use of these as you will (with your Editor's permission, of course).

Four, the pure enjoyment of reading about these characters. If you already know them, please peruse anyway and see if you glean something new insight. If they are strangers to you, then by all means dive in and learn about how interesting they are. Then go back and read the original stories, like I did! Something else will be apparent when reading this volume: that H&H is, by nature, low-powered and best enjoyed at low levels. Many of the heroes to follow will be "only" 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup> level, which is quite respectable in this game. By level 10, unless your campaign is prepared to take off into high fantasy, it is bound to have lost much of its real world grounding in mobsters and urban crime and it might be time to think about retiring those characters. By level 15+, your Heroes would be the most powerful beings on the planet and should definitely be considering retirement. There are games out there for 40+ level characters, but it would be absurd to try to play them in H&H!

Did I say this is the last H&H Supplement? Well, if you get to the end and still want more, don't despair. This supplement was originally planned to be smaller in scope, but there were too many characters, too many companies, that I just could not bring myself to ignore. Which is why you only have part one of this supplement here. Part two will be available sometime next year with the rest of the companies that published comic books in North America before the end of 1941 covered. Hopefully you will all stick around and wait for it!

*Scott Casper*

Great Scott! Games Publisher  
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**A Note on Hero Record Sheets:** For the majority of Heroes, and some of the villains, stats will be presented on Hero Record sheets, as a player might record them. To try and keep the stats simple, some defaults are implied instead of accounting for every situation. Armor Class, for example, never takes into account a hiding in shadows bonus for dim light. To hit scores all assume the Hero is attacking by whichever means (melee or ranged) that gives him the biggest bonus.

Experience Points are usually number of published pages through Dec. 1941, multiplied by 100. Other stats, like Ability Scores and Hit Points, are more subjective and based on this Editor's reading of the stories.

## **ACE COMICS**

"Ace Comics was the banner under which pulp magazine publisher Aaron A. Wyn and his wife Rose Wyn produced comic books starting in 1940. The Wyns had been publishing pulp fiction under the Periodical House and Magazine Publishers names since 1928. Like many comic book publishers of the day, Ace Comics earlier series included costumed superheroes. Their most successful, and longest-running, superhero title was Super-Mystery Comics featuring Magno the Magnetic Man and his boy partner Davey" – only a moderately impressive feat, since Magno is largely forgotten today.

Ace Comics not only followed the trends of the larger publishers, but allowed some of its writers to steal ideas from the larger publishers. Captain Courageous' plots would often feature elements from other comics, particularly Samson. "Flash" Lightning's name may have been inspired by "Flash" Gordon, but his origin was swiped from Captain Marvel.

## **CAPTAIN COURAGEOUS**

Armor Class: 5 [14]    Level: 3  
Move: 60                    Class: Superhero  
Hit Points: 21              Align: Lawful

First appearance: Banner Comics #3 (September 1941)

Appearances to date: Banner Comics #3-5

Unnamed in his everyday guise, Captain Courageous is a man who, when he sees people (particularly children) in trouble, changes into his costume and displays great acrobatic skill, incredible strength, bulletproof skin, and the ability to fly. He fights Nazis on American soil who are often armed with remarkably advanced weapons.

## **FLAG**

Armor Class: 6 [13]    Level: 4  
Move: 60                    Class: Superhero  
Hit Points: 23              Align: Lawful

First appearance: Our Flag Comics #2 (October 1941)

Appearances to date: Our Flag Comics #2-3

“A little baby with a birthmark shaped like a flag on his chest is left on the door step of a flag-maker on Flag Day,” muses wheelchair-bound flag-maker John Courtney. Normally such a confluence of coincidences amounts to no more than a moment’s introspection, but in this case it means, on the adopted son, Jim’s, 21<sup>st</sup> birthday he has a dream visitation by George Washington, who explains how the “spirit of America” is going to bestow on him “the strength of 100 men, the speed of the wind, and immunity from weapons of man.” He activates his powers, only when needed, by touching the birthmark on his chest.

### “FLASH” LIGHTNING

Armor Class: 7 [12] Level: 5  
Move: 60 Class: Superhero  
Hit Points: 27 Align: Lawful

First appearance: Sure-Fire Comics #1 (June 1940)

Appearances to date: Sure-Fire Comics #1-3, Lightning Comics v. 1 #1-5, v. 2 #1-4, Four Favorites #1-2

Robert Morgan was an orphan, taken in by the ageless Old Man of the Pyramids and taught all of his secrets. After vowing to fight evil in the world, the adult Robert was given the Amulet of Annihilation, a mystic artifact that also doubled as a snap-on armband. The amulet gave him all the typical powers of a superhero, plus the ability to throw fantastically-powerful lightning bolts, but with the proviso that the amulet’s power could only be used for Good.

The name “Flash Lightning” did not last past June of 1941, when he started going by Lash Lightning

**Editor’s Comment:** The name change was to avoid legal action from DC Comics because of their character, The Flash.

### MCKAY, KAY

Armor Class: 9 [10] Level: 2  
Move: 60 Class: Fighter  
Hit Points: 8 Align: Lawful

First Appearance: Our Flag Comics #1 (Aug. 1941)

Appearances to date: Our Flag Comics #1, Banner Comics #3-4

Lots of action heroes have fought off alligators. Few have done so in a skirt and heels. And only Kay McKay has done it, while on the clock as an air hostess (what we would call today a flight attendant) for World-Wide Airlines. Though a commercial airline, World-Wide allows Kay and her pilot friend Ned to work on special missions for the U.S. government. Kay can actually fly better than Ned, carries and can shoot a gun, and outwits every spy or crook unlucky enough to end up on one of her flights.

**Editor’s Comment:** This humble Editor considers Kay McKay to be the best written and drawn feature Ace published.

## MAGNO, THE MAGNETIC MAN

First appearance: Super-Mystery Comics v. 1, #1 (July 1940)

Appearances to date: Super-Mystery Comics v. 1, #1-6, v. 2, #1-5; Four Favorites #1-2

Magno's real name, profession when not a superhero, how he got his magnetic powers, and even what style of clothes he prefers when out of costume are completely unknown, for Magno is only encountered by the reader already an established superhero, and one who is always on the job. He even is seen once hanging around in Davey's apartment, in costume, with nothing better to do than to bring Davey his school lunch.



We know he is based in New York City since he visits the “world’s tallest building” (which at this time was the Empire State Building) as early as his second appearance (Super-Mystery Comics v. 1, #2). We know the police know who Magno really is, because they have his fingerprints on file (the Clown uses Magno’s fingerprints to frame him for a bank robbery in Super-Mystery Comics v. 2, #3). By this time, Magno is already friends with the New York City Chief of Police and every police officer he meets respects him as a friend. By October 1941, even the police in Canada know to listen to Magno. But not everyone recognizes him; even some hoodlums fail to recognize the costume. So Magno

must have some special relationship with law enforcement that is never explained.

Magno’s adventures are memorable for the larger-than-life (though not quite “super”) villains he faces, including the Blue Spark (a mad scientist), the Clown (see below), the Cobra (a saboteur with poisonous claws), and Professor Octopus (a Japanese spy with four arms).

Supporting Cast Members:

Davey, sidekick (see below)

Carole Landis, private investigator

**Editor’s Notes:** Despite all the different things one could do with magnetic powers, Magno spends most of his time duplicating stunts that Superman’s strength might accomplish. Magno’s fantastic leaps, for example, are accomplished by magnetizing himself to some distant metal target. How magnetism grants him extraordinary strength and some degree of resistance to injury is never explained.

**Editor’s Comments:** The light tone of Magno’s adventures, from crooks in inflatable costumes to the fact that Magno wears his costume all the time, could be construed as an early parody of the emerging superhero genre. His villains are laughably cliché, while Magno underestimates them at every turn. However, at its best, the dark tone of the Clown stories contrasts nicely with the light tone of Magno, to amplify the sense of conflict.



## HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD

Hero Name <u>Magno</u>	Alignment <u>Lawful</u>
Real Name <u>?</u>	Armor Class [AAC] <u>7 [12]</u>
Class <u>Superhero</u>	Level/Title <u>5/Fantastic Man</u>
Race <u>Human</u>	Move <u>60</u>
Strength <u>17</u> Saves	Experience Points: <u>18,900</u>
Intelligence <u>12</u> Missiles <u>8</u>	Hit Points: <u>35</u>
Wisdom <u>12</u> Poison <u>8</u>	Money, on hand: <u>variable</u>
Constitution <u>17</u> Plot <u>10</u>	Money, available: <u>\$10,000</u>
Dexterity <u>13</u> Science <u>9</u>	
Charisma <u>15</u> Spells <u>9</u>	
AC [AAC] <u>9 [10]</u> <u>8 [11]</u> <u>7 [12]</u> <u>6 [13]</u> <u>5 [14]</u> <u>4 [15]</u> <u>3 [16]</u> <u>2 [17]</u> <u>1 [18]</u>	
To Hit <u>8</u> <u>9</u> <u>10</u> <u>11</u> <u>12</u> <u>13</u> <u>14</u> <u>15</u> <u>16</u>	

Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)	Special Abilities (racial, class-based)
Costume Iron gauntlets (d6 damage)		Keen senses Hide in shadows Wrecking things (doors – W, machines – W, generators – 4, robots – 7, cars – 10, trucks – 13, tanks – 15, battleships – 17) Powers (2 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1 3 <sup>rd</sup> , Usually Get Tough, Shatter Bonds, Leap II, Super-Tough Skin, and Empower Sidekick)

Special Abilities (cont.): true strength of 29 (+1 to damage), costume armor (AC 7 if save vs. plot failed by attacker).

### **Magno's Sidekick: Davey**

First appearance: Super-Mystery Comics v. 1, #4 (Nov. 1940)

Appearances to date: Super-Mystery Comics v. 1 #4-6, v. 2 #1-5, Four Favorites #1-2

Davey Landis is the kid brother of Carole Landis, one of New York's youngest female private investigator (in one adventure Carole still has not graduated from school, but this seems like it must be a mistake). Davey is tagging along with Carole when their paths cross with Magno on a case in November of 1940 (Super-Mystery Comics v. 1, #4). Davey idolizes Magno and has even had his sister make him a Magno costume. Davey is showing his costume to Magno when Carole is kidnapped. Magno lets Davey tag along to save his own sister and, for his protection, Magno is able to temporarily give Davey magnetic superpowers for one hour by rubbing his arm.

Armor Class: 7 [12] Level: 4  
 Move: 60 Class: Superhero  
 Hit Points: 29 Align: Lawful

S 14, I 11, W 11, C 14, D 14, Ch 12. SA: Keen senses, hide in shadows, wrecking things (doors – W, machines – 4, generators – 7, robots – 10, cars – 13, trucks – 15, tanks – 17), 2 1<sup>st</sup>, 1 2<sup>nd</sup> level powers (usually Quick Change and Trouble Magnet), true strength of 25, AC 7 costume armor. Items: Boy's clothes, costume.

### Magno's Villain: The Clown

First appearance: Super-Mystery Comics v. 1, #5 (Dec. 1940)  
 Appearances to date: Super-Mystery Comics v. 1 #5-6, v. 2 #1-3

<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS VILLAIN RECORD</u>											
Hero Name	Clown					Alignment	Chaotic				
Real Name	Unrevealed					Armor Class [AAC]	6 [13]				
Class	Superhero/Villain/Scientist					Level/Title	2 Shameful Man/2 Bully/				
Race	Human					Move	60 3/Wright				
Strength	16	Saves				Experience Points: 2,300/2,300/9,200					
Intelligence	15	Missiles	11			Hit Points: 15					
Wisdom	11	Poison	11			Money, on hand: variable					
Constitution	17	Plot	13			Money, available: \$32,000					
Dexterity	17	Science	12								
Charisma	12	Spells	12								
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]		
To Hit	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17		
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)							
Dark trenchcoat & wide-brimmed hat	Rapier (chemically demagnetized)			Hide in shadows							
Bright yellow clown costume & domino mask	Wand of Knockout Gas			Keen senses							
Scabbard with skull motif	Grenade-bombs (3d6, 10' rad.)			Wrecking things (doors – 7, machines – 10, generators – 13, robots – 15, cars – 17)							
Chemistry lab (in under-cemetery hideout)	Spraycan of anti-magnetic compound			Powers (1 1 <sup>st</sup> level, usually Leap I)							
Surgical outfit & scalpels (in hideout)	Leather straps treated w/ iron fluid (wreck as machines, in hideout)			True strength of 27							
Luxury steamship	"Nerve gas" that makes people stop caring			25% survival chance							
Abandoned lighthouse				40% disguise chance							
				Inventing things (level 3 in mad science & transportation,							

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The Clown is a chemist who, for no known reason, hates everyone and wants to spread the most harm as possible. He blows up hundreds of people with bombs, brainwashes women to act as his slaves, chains up refugee children, and even wrecks old folks' homes as if making a grand tour of villainous tropes. Why he chooses to dress as a Clown is not explained, though the inspiration of Batman's nemesis, the Joker, cannot be dismissed. On the other hand, perhaps his clown disguise is why Magno always underestimates him so badly.

The Clown is one of the earliest supervillains of the mold to be common later, to both wear a costume and display superpowers of his own. His leaping ability is explained as being the result of chemistry (perhaps a Pill of Leaping, though the stories never specify), but no explanation is ever given for the Clown's extraordinary strength. He can lift a bookshelf loaded with books over his head. He appears, once, to be able to crash through a wall, though it is also possible that he threw a bomb at it first and then simply leaped through the hole. No matter how it is explained, the Clown clearly enjoys wrecking things often.

**Editor's Notes:** The Clown's three classes require some bending of the H&H rules. If played, the Clown would have begun as a Villain, then retired that class and become a Superhero. Instead of earning XP as a Fighter when out of costume, the Clown would have earned his XP as a Scientist.

## BETTER/NEDOR/STANDARD PUBLICATIONS

"Standard Comics was a comic book imprint of American publisher Ned Pines, who also published pulp magazines under a variety of company names that he also used for the comics. Standard in turn was the parent company of two comic-book lines: Better Publications and Nedor Publishing. Collectors and historians sometimes refer to them collectively as 'Standard/Better/Nedor'."

Starting in 1939, Standard slowly began to publish a steady stream of superhero characters, one of the earliest and best known of which was the Black Terror.

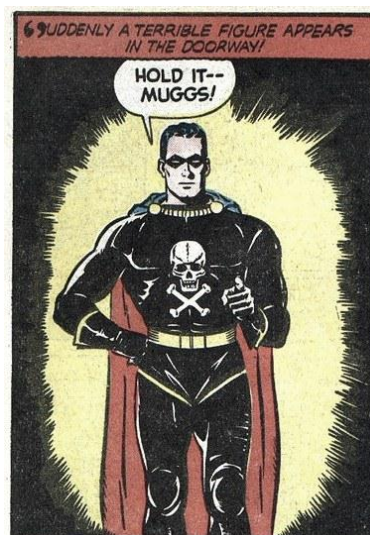
## BLACK TERROR, NEMESIS OF EVIL

First appearance: Exciting Comics #9 (May 1941)

Appearances to date: Exciting Comics #9-15

Bob Benton was a mild-mannered druggist being harassed by racketeers, as was Tim Roland, a street orphan who Bob took pity on and gave a job in his store as an assistant. Though only working on inventing a tonic, Bob and Tim discovered "formic ether" that, when inhaled, granted the inhaler super-strength. Bob sent Tim to buy him a costume so he could fight back against the racketeers in disguise and so the Black Terror was born.

Frequent visitor to the drug store is Jean Starr, the mayor's pretty secretary, but whether or not she is there to visit Bob or just pick up prescriptions is hard to say; Jean often scolds Bob for his



mousiness and parades around City Comptroller Rodney Clark like a boyfriend. Indeed, though Jean quickly develops a crush on the Black Terror, she never seems to regard Bob more than as a friend.

Regardless, his connection to Jean often gives Bob an edge in fighting political corruption and there is much corruption in the unnamed city where the Black Terror's adventures take place. It would not be unfair to estimate that, out of all the civic leaders introduced in the first year of the Black Terror's adventures, half of them are crooked. And one could certainly get an introduction to civics from the Black Terror's adventures, with everyone from the mayor down to the zoo board of directors introduced. Rodney is an interesting exception. Though Rodney is a bit of a bully towards Bob, he is otherwise a good guy unafraid to stand up to a villain (at least when they are unarmed). But he also constantly rubs the Black Terror the wrong way and winds up getting slugged.

<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</u>															
Hero Name	<u>Black Terror</u>					Alignment	<u>Lawful</u>								
Real Name	<u>Bob Benton</u>					Armor Class [AAC]	<u>6 [13]</u>								
Class	<u>Superhero/Scientist</u>					Level/Title	<u>4 Remarkable Man/2 Zworkin</u>								
Race	<u>Human</u>					Move	<u>60</u>								
Strength	<u>17</u>	Saves				Experience Points:	<u>25,350/2,750</u>								
Intelligence	<u>15</u>	Missiles	<u>9</u>			Hit Points:	<u>24</u>								
Wisdom	<u>13</u>	Poison	<u>9</u>			Money, on hand:	<u>variable</u>								
Constitution	<u>16</u>	Plot	<u>11</u>			Money, available:	<u>\$12,000</u>								
Dexterity	<u>15</u>	Science	<u>10</u>			AC [AAC]	<u>9 [10]</u>	<u>8 [11]</u>	<u>7 [12]</u>	<u>6 [13]</u>	<u>5 [14]</u>	<u>4 [15]</u>	<u>3 [16]</u>	<u>2 [17]</u>	<u>1 [18]</u>
Charisma	<u>12</u>	Spells	<u>10</u>			To Hit	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)					Special Abilities (racial, class-based)									
Costume						Keen senses									
Drug store						Hide in shadows									
Chemistry lab						Wrecking things (doors – W, machines – 4, generators – 7, robots – 10, cars – 13, trucks – 15, tanks – 17)									
Green car						2 1 <sup>st</sup> level and 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> level powers (often some combination of Get Tough, Leap I, Nigh-Invulnerable Skin, Outrun Train, Raise Car, and Raise Elephant)									
						True Strength: 30 (+1 to damage)									
						Costume armor (2 pts. or save vs. plot)									

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When with Jean as the Black Terror, Bob openly hints about his feelings towards her, while as Bob he is quieter on the subject to the point that it takes him until Dec. 1941 to ask her out on a date. Towards both Jean and Rodney, then, Bob acts consistently much bolder – if not out of character -- when the Black Terror. While Superman only pretends to be mousy as Clark Kent, Bob Benton really is mousy and the Black Terror seems to be a different persona Bob takes on when he breathes the formic ether. Tim does not seem to undergo such a personality change when he inhales it, though he may be braver.

**Editor's Comments:** The stats below reflect the Black Terror towards the beginning of his long, distinguished career. Studying carefully what super-powered stunts he performs in his earliest appearances, the parallels to Superman's stunts are obvious. Surely his publisher was spared legal action only because of the distinctly different trademark look of the Black Terror.

**Editor's Notes:** The Black Terror should be allowed to climb walls as if a 2nd level Mysteryman (see Supplement I), or given a new power to reflect wall-climbing.

## **CAPTAIN FUTURE**

Armor Class: 8 [11] Level: 5  
Move: 60 Class: Superhero  
Hit Points: 26 Align: Lawful

First appearance: Startling Comics #1 (June 1940)

Appearances to date: Startling Comics #1-11

Dr. Andrew Bryant works for the Pacific Electrical Corporation until he is fired. Desperate to make a breakthrough in his research before he can be removed from his lab, Andrew exposes himself to infrared light "crossed" with gamma radiation and gives himself electrical superpowers. According to Wikipedia, "he then used these powers to fight crime, with the help of his detective girlfriend Grace Adams of the Agatha Detective Agency. While 'powered up', Bryant is super-strong, can fly, and can hurl bolts of energy from his hands." However, "he must frequently use his radiation machine to recharge his powers."

## **DR. STRANGE**

Armor Class: 9 [10] Level: 6  
Move: 60 Class: Superhero  
Hit Points: 32 Align: Lawful

First appearance: Thrilling Comics #1 (February 1940)

Appearances to date: Thrilling Comics #1-23

According to Wikipedia, "Doctor Thomas Hugo Strange" was "a scientist who developed a serum called Alosun, which is described in the comics as a distillate of sun atoms. Ingestion of this serum gives him superhuman strength, the ability to fly, and invulnerability." Also known as Doc Strange, "Doc Strange was assisted by Virginia Thompson, his girlfriend" as he pursued criminals, monsters, and villains like the Faceless Phantom. By Nov. 1940, President Roosevelt has tasked Doc with concentrating on the Bundist menace.

**Editor's Note:** Dr. Strange really stretches the definition of costume. In his earliest appearances, just being shirtless is his costume. Soon, his "costume" would become a bright red shirt, riding pants, and riding boots.

## **CENTAUR PUBLISHING**

"Centaur developed primarily from the Comics Magazine Company, Inc. In September 1937, the Comics Magazine Co. merged with" Ultem Publications, "using Ultem as its brand. By January 1938, Ultem was bought out by Joe Hardie, Fred Gardner, and Raymond Kelly's Centaur Publications, Inc., which had been publishing pulp magazines since at least 1933." The company is perhaps best remembered for Amazing-Man and the Clock.

## **AMAZING-MAN**

Armor Class: 5 [14]    Level: 6  
Move: 60                    Class: Superhero  
Hit Points: 39              Align: Lawful

First appearance: Amazing Man Comics #5 (September 1939)

Appearances to date: Amazing Man Comics #5-25, Stars and Stripes Comics #2-6

According to Wikipedia, "Aman is an orphan from the West, chosen ... to be raised by ... monks in Tibet for the first 25 years of his life. Each member of The Council of Seven, as the monks are known, trained him to a superhuman degree of physical and mental ability." The tests of the Council demonstrated his special abilities: he is as strong as an elephant, has "the speed and precision of a mongoose", can take a knife thrown through his neck without crying out in pain, and knows every language on Earth. He is injected with a chemical that gives "him the ability... to disappear in a cloud of green mist, earning him the secondary title of the Green Mist. After receiving his final tests, he is sent into the world to use his skills and abilities to do Good. Opposing Aman, as he was often known, is his nemesis the Great Question, a disgruntled member of the Council of Seven."

Once out in the world, Aman takes the name "John Aman" as a civilian identity, used when not stripped down to his fighting costume. Starting in May 1940, John is assisted for a time by Zona Henderson, a pretty blonde crime investigator. In August 1941, John adopts a boy named Tommy and trains him to be Tommy the Amazing-Boy.

## **ARROW**

Armor Class: 7 [12]    Level: 4  
Move: 60                    Class: Fighter  
Hit Points: 19              Align: Neutral

First appearance: Funny Pages v. 2 #10 (September 1938)

Appearances to date: Funny Pages v. 2 #10-12, v. 3 #1-10, v. 4 #1, #35-42, Amazing Adventure Funnies #1, Fantoman #2, The Arrow #1-3

Appearing at first as only a mysterious stranger, Ralph Payne is actually an ex-military man court-marshaled for a crime he didn't commit. Ralph "turns to costumed crime fighting,

becoming the Arrow. His primary weapon is his skill with bow and arrow, though he is good at fighting even without his weapons,” as Wikipedia relates.

## CLOCK

First appearance: Funny Pages #6, Funny Picture Stories #1 (Nov. 1936)

Appearances to date: Funny Pages #6-11; Funny Picture Stories #1-2; Detective Picture Stories #2, 5; Keen Detective Stories #8-9; Feature Funnies #3-20; Feature Comics #21-31; Crack Comics #1-19

Brian O’Brien was a district attorney and “great criminologist” in a big city that is never named, but almost surely New York City. He was also an All-American full-back and polo player.

Frustrated with the inability of the law to end crime and corruption, he sets about doing so himself, concealing his identity behind a black mask hanging in front of his face and calling himself the Clock. The name comes from Brian’s love of word play because, just as his calling cards explain, the Clock is “striking” at crime. Brian’s playful nature can also be seen in his teasing rivalry with Police Captain Kane, sending him handwritten letters after solving a case, explaining how he did it. Charity is almost an obsession with him, to the point of being suspicious of people who don’t give to charity, with the Clock turning over all stolen money he finds to various charities. Every few weeks he likes to get away from it all, either taking his plane up in the sky and just get “as far away from Mother Earth and her troubles” as he can, or hunting mountain lions out in the wilderness.



But the Clock has a darker side too, as evidenced by his willingness to turn criminals over to mob violence, or the ease with which he accepts the accidental death of criminals he was after, or the torture chamber in the sub-basement under his home that serves as the Clock’s “sanctuary”. In his sanctuary, the Clock has file cabinets full of records on people, probably culled from police files when he was a D.A. He also keeps a meticulous journal on his war on crime, including how he brings prisoners to his sanctuary and threatens to torture them until he gets the information he wants out of them. The diary of evidence, the handwritten letters, the flimsiness with which Brian conceals his true identity – though it is never spelled out, it all suggests that the Clock wants to someday be caught and punished for his own crimes. It is, after all, only a matter of time.

This balance of playfulness and fatalism bears out in his choice of paraphernalia. Rather than wear a bulletproof vest, he would rather sneak into a hideout first and replace a mobster’s bullets with blank cartridges. Rather than wear a helmet, he would rather wear a foam hat that

looks like a felt fedora. Though he often carries a gun, he is just as likely to attack with his trick cane. If he is to die, he's going out classy.

Although his relationship with Captain Kane started off hostilely, Kane later warms up to the Clock and, by Nov. 1938 (Feature Funnies #14), is even arranging meetings with the Clock via radio. By July 1939, O'Brien and Kane are friends, though Kane does still not recognize O'Brien as the Clock. Though the Clock continued to work alone, in May 1940 he meets Pat "Pug" Brady, a down-on-his luck businessman in shipping turned to picking pockets and recruits him because of their strong physical resemblance.



Pug will often accompany the Clock on adventures from this point on, always wearing a white handkerchief over the lower half of his face. Brian calls him Pug all the time, whether they are in costume or not. When not in costume, Brian employs Pug like a servant, making him do leg work on cases or simply fetching things around the house for him. Pug is handy for dirty work, too, being willing to shoot criminals in cold blood, something not even the Clock would stoop to. Pug has his own apartment, leased under Brian's name, which the Clock uses sometimes as his base of operations. Pug's apartment is equipped with a laboratory.

In June 1940, the Clock has his second encounter (the first published) with Orchid, a mysterious woman who somehow knows the Clock's true identity. This would be the third occasion she has clued him in on a case via scented letters in purple envelopes addressed to Brian O'Brien's home and the second occasion when he sees her. She carries a drugged orchid flower that knocked out anyone who smelled it for 10 minutes (though surely only if they miss a saving throw).

Though typically dealing with ordinary mobsters or corrupt politicians, by mid-1940 the Clock is also dealing with more colorful rogues, like the grotesque Asp, or gimmicky villains, like the Jay Bird, who pretends he can fly (thanks to a wire and harness from a plane).

Good at disguises (as if a 3rd level Villain), the Clock frequently takes the guise of drug-addicted hoodlum "Snowy" Winters to get the straight dope on the underworld from the inside. Whether the Clock actually does drugs as Snowy or simply claims to is never revealed. The Clock is also a skilled ventriloquist, hypnotist, and chemist – the latter good enough to identify poisons in his sanctuary's laboratory, identify natural antidotes, or even invent a paralysis raygun.

Supporting Cast Members:

Captain Kane – 5th level Fighter

Ted Holt – old school chum and ruby collector

Pat "Pug" Brady – 4th level Fighter



Orchid – 2nd level Mysteryman (woman)

Lt. Foxx – 4th level Fighter; a clean cop, but with a grudge against the Clock

### HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD

Hero Name	Clock		Alignment	Chaotic	
Real Name	Brian O'Brien		Armor Class [AAC]	5 [14]	
Class	Mysteryman		Level/Title	6/Secret Man	
Race	Human		Move	60	
Strength	15	Saves	Experience Points: 30,500		
Intelligence	15	Missiles	7		
Wisdom	13	Poison	7	Hit Points: 22	
Constitution	12	Plot	8		
Dexterity	16	Science	8	Money, on hand: variable	
Charisma	12	Spells	9	Money, available: \$25,000	
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14] 4 [15] 3 [16] 2 [17] 1 [18]
To Hit	7	8	9	10	11 12 13 14 15

Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)	Special Abilities (racial, class-based)
Tuxedo	Mask (sticks to face with no visible way how)	Keen senses
Roll of tape		Hide in shadows
.38 semi-automatic pistol	Trick cane w/spring-loaded head	9 in 10 climb
Calling cards ("The Clock struck at ____")		Intimidate 1/hr
Car	Tear gas bladder in shoulder holster, release triggered with diamond stick pin	4 in 10 notice things
Flashlight		+2 signature move (punch)
Pocket watch	Biplane	4 in 10 invisible
3 blank cartridges		8 in 10 urban tracking
Sponge hat (looks like felt Fedora)	Ultra-violet flashlight	3 in 6 pilfer
Bulletproof vest	Paralyzing raygun (10 uses)	Inventing things
Disguise kit		
Can of phosphorescent paint		

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**Editor's Notes:** The Clock is really a jack-of-all-trades in the comic books. He has been shown using Superhero powers (Sleeping Nerve Pinch, Hypnotism), an Aviator stunt (Jump from Plane to Plane), and inventing things like a Scientist. Since he is not treated consistently as any of these other than a mysteryman, this Editor has decided to only give him levels in that class. However, a case could be made for adding a few levels in Superhero or Scientist and at least one in Aviator, if doing so was not so clear a violation of H&H.

**Editor's Comments:** The Clock's creator, George Brenner, seems to have had a streak of jealousy in him. As each new genre in comics began to gain in popularity on the Clock, the Clock would suddenly either subsume the characteristics of that genre or openly mock them.

## CHESLER/DYNAMIC PUBLICATIONS

"Chesler's early publications Star Comics and Star Ranger were produced through his own Chesler Publications, Inc. Chesler's later imprints included Dynamic Publications, Harry 'A' Chesler Jr. Publications, and Harry 'A.' Chesler Feature Jr. Syndicate." Despite the many imprints, Chesler's business was mainly packaging comics for other publishers and produced few characters of note of his own.

## DYNAMIC MAN

First appearance: Dynamic Comics #1 (Oct. 1941)

Appearances to date: Dynamic Comics #1-2

During a rash of disappearances of prominent U.S. scientists, Professor Moore hastens to finish his android. It will have "the strength of steel, the speed of an eagle and the wisdom of the sages," Moore boasts. Moore finishes his creation with his dying breath when attacked by an Oriental warlock. "Death to the dealers of death!" Moore's 'Dynamic Man' first cries upon awakening.

Dynamic Man, besides speaking perfect English, immediately understood Good and Evil, understood technology well enough to reverse the effects of diabolical machines, AND knew the weakness of warlocks, so Moore had clearly programmed his creation with the knowledge from an eclectic group of sources.

Dynamic Man could also fly, through never-explained means, and was bulletproof. It seemed Moore was being literal when he boasted about "the strength of steel, the speed of an eagle." Dynamic Man's strength seems to fluctuate from scene to scene; sometimes he can be overpowered by just two attackers and sometimes he can smash through brick walls.

Dynamic Man has no civilian identity, nor tries to live like an ordinary man. He just swoops down and saves the day when he sees trouble. Despite his scientific origin, Dynamic Man starts out facing mystical opponents.

**Editor's Notes:** Dynamic Man mostly conforms to the android character race, but never burns things. At his level, he should not be bulletproof. If being played in H&H, this Editor would describe each missed hit as bouncing off of him.



## HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD

Hero Name <u>Dynamic Man</u>	Alignment <u>Lawful</u>	
Real Name <u>n/a</u>	Armor Class [AAC] <u>7 [12]</u>	
Class <u>Superhero</u>	Level/Title <u>1/Good Man</u>	
Race <u>Android</u>	Move <u>60</u>	
Strength <u>14</u> Saves	Experience Points: 1,400	
Intelligence <u>14</u> Missiles <u>14</u>		
Wisdom <u>15</u> Poison <u>14</u>	Hit Points: 9	
Constitution <u>18</u> Plot <u>16</u>		
Dexterity <u>14</u> Science <u>15</u>	Money, on hand: variable	
Charisma <u>11</u> Spells <u>15</u>	Money, available: \$200	
<hr/>		
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11] 7 [12] 6 [13] 5 [14] 4 [15] 3 [16] 2 [17] 1 [18]
To Hit	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u> <u>12</u> <u>13</u> <u>14</u> <u>15</u> <u>16</u> <u>17</u> <u>18</u>
<hr/>		
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)	Special Abilities (racial, class-based)
Costume		Melting things (never used) Fiery jet (minus the fire) Too hot to hit (not literal) Technological awareness +2 to save vs. poison gas Wrecking things (vs. doors - 10, vs. machines - 13, vs. generators - 15, vs. robots - 17)

**Editor's Comment:** Timely Comics previously had a character called Dynamic Man, also an android, and according to the authors on comics.org, also created by Chesler's personnel. If Chesler had packaged and sold the earlier Dynamic Man stories to Timely, he may have thought he retained ownership of the name and rebooted it with a slightly different character.

### YANKEE DOODLE JONES

Armor Class: 9 [10] Level: 1  
 Move: 60 Class: Fighter  
 Hit Points: 7 Align: Neutral

First appearance: Yankee Comics #1 (Sept. 1941)

Appearances to date: Yankees Comics #1-2

Jones is a volunteer for a secret military experiment to create a super-soldier with an injected serum that will give him "the strength of an army" and make him "invincible". Nazi Bad guys burst in and shoot the professor right after he injects Jones with the only dose of the serum, but a few drops remain in the syringe and the professor's son, maddened with the need for revenge,

injects himself with them. Jones starts calling the boy “Dandy” right away, but we never learn the boy’s real name, nor his father’s. With his dying breath, the professor dubs Jones “Yankee Doodle Jones”.

Dandy becomes Jones’ ward after that and, sometime later, they are both visited and recruited by Uncle Sam – amazingly, this seems to be the Quality Comics character himself, and not a new interpretation. Uncle Sam does not return to summon them on subsequent adventures, rather they just always seem to be in the right place at the right time.

Dandy has an unusual obsession for chocolate cake. Jones whistles “Yankee Doodle” as their battle cry. Neither seems to care if bad guys accidentally die while they are fighting them.

## **COLUMBIA COMICS CORPORATION**

According to Wikipedia, “Columbia Comics Corporation was a comic book publisher ... formed in 1940 as a partnership between Vin Sullivan and the McNaught Newspaper Syndicate. The idea was to publish comics featuring a mix of McNaught-owned comic strip reprints like Joe Palooka and Charlie Chan as well as original features. The first title published by Columbia was the anthology title Big Shot Comics, the first issue of which introduced Skyman and The Face.”

## **FACE**

Armor Class: 8 [11]    Level: 5  
Move: 60                    Class: Mysteryman  
Hit Points: 20              Align: Neutral

First appearance: Big Shot Comics #1 (May 1940)

Appearances to date: Big Shot Comics #1-20, Skyman #1, Face #1

Tony Trent is both the owner of radio station WBSC and its most popular on-air commentator because of his hard-hitting news reporting. No one, not even his loyal secretary, knows that he gets his scoops while wearing a green rubber fright mask and terrorizing criminals in all levels of society.

## **SKYMAN**

First appearance: Big Shot Comics #1 (May 1940)

Appearances to date: Big Shot Comics #1-20, Skyman #1

Skyman first appeared as a mystery pilot, with no known name or background, though it was clear that Skyman had remarkable resources and an impressive array of trophies! He had an all-plastic and aluminum (no metal parts) robot plane he calls “Wing” that could hover and travel at up to 800 MPH, a special radio that could intercept phone calls, and a stun ray gun he called the “Stasimatic” (it temporarily suspends blood circulation, which somehow has both a lethal and non-lethal setting) – and those were just in his first adventure.

Skyman has an impressive skill set. He can impersonate other people’s voices, climb walls, move silently, and is remarkably strong. He is strong enough to swing from a rope one-handed while holding a grown man under his other arm. He can shrug off two men trying to wrestle him at once. He can pick up and throw a man through a door. He can take enough punishment to



fight in one-on-one hand-to-hand combat after suffering a bullet wound to the shoulder and still win. He can snap ropes binding him just by flexing his muscles. He is fast, too – fast enough that he can charge across a room and attack men already leveling guns at him before they can shoot. He can out-fence a fencing champion. Of course, he is also such a master aviator who can win in 5-to-1 odds in an aerial dogfight.



We also learn that Skyman is a scientist and likely the inventor of all of his own equipment. He can examine a broken invention and, within minutes, guess what purpose it would have served. After hours in his lab, he can identify what scientific invention would be needed to produce any effect. He can identify chemicals by scent alone. He can diagnosis a patient and prescribe the correct medicine. He can break a code in less than an hour. He can find the oscillatory responses of electrically

charged minerals, so that he can make his voice heard through rock crystals located miles away that have the same charge...and other weird science like that.

In September 1940 (Big Shot Comics #5), we finally learn that Skyman lives near New York City and is secretly Allan Turner, "idle" playboy. He toys with the affection of a rich heiress named Fawn Carroll who is also the executive of a detective agency (not until April 1941 is it confirmed that Fawn has men working for her, though we never see them). Perhaps Skyman is just amused by her ironic crush on his costumed identity and her inability to identify them as the same man. Rather than just tell her who he is, he goes through ruses like blindfolding her before taking her to his secret hideout. Though he likes to include her in his adventures, whenever things turn dangerous he tells her things like, "This isn't a woman's job!" Fawn becomes increasingly useful as a sidekick, saving Skyman for the first time in January 1941, but increasingly obsessive as well. "Imagine me, without you! Oh, Skyman, if anything'd happen to you! I'd die!" Not until February does Skyman admit to himself that he likes her. By October, he almost slips several times in Fawn's presence about his dual identity. He must subconsciously want her to know by now, but cannot bring himself to tell her.

Fawn, for her part, has crushes on both Allan and Skyman. She has known Allan since his last year of college and, though he was already pretending to be a loafer to conceal his ambitions, Fawn has always thought she could reform Allan and make him see his true potential someday. She is also quite a capable lady on her own. She can jump from a speeding car into a speeding locomotive. She is also, after Skyman's tutelage, a crack pilot of Wing.

Skyman's has a strong sense of self-sacrifice, saying to himself while alone, "What's a wound and tiredness though – compared to the safety of a hundred million U.S. citizens?" This dedication is explained (when he finally gets an origin story in Skyman #1) by the early death of

his parents in an airplane crash because of faulty parts. It becomes his obsession, then, to use planes to help people.

Skyman likes to turn over prisoners directly to the feds, parachuting them down to federal buildings. He does not stay to take credit. The Army has awarded him medals he has refused to accept. As his girlfriend Fawn says, "So wonderful – and so aloof! He did a great thing for humanity, yet sneaks off to avoid praise and glory!" Skyman, for all his cold aloofness towards Fawn, has an intensely violent streak and a sense of humor to match it. He once jokingly shouts out, "Snap! Crackle! Pop!" as he's breaking a man's ribs (to be fair, the man had tried to kill Skyman three times already). Another time he comes close enough to killing a villain who was trying to blackmail the U.S. with earthquakes that Fawn has to talk him out of becoming a murderer.



Skyman's hideout is apparently on his own property (he can run to it from his house). Called the Skydrome, Skyman's greatest secret might be how he manages to keep a private airfield and aircraft hangar in his backyard a secret. The hangar has a distinctive dome, perhaps for an observatory. There must also be a second building nearby that houses his other vehicles, like the borer.

After rescuing the White House and the President early in 1941, Skyman is known as a "national hero". He never graduates to facing colorful supervillains, though. The mad scientists he faces are lucky to have a big mustache or a hunchback to distinguish them.

Supporting Cast Members:

Fawn Carroll, 3<sup>rd</sup> level Aviator

**Editor's Notes:** Mysteryman, aviator, scientist, fighter, superhero – at a glance, Skyman seems to have far too many classes. Yet it is possible to narrow the field. The Superhero class is only exhibited by Skyman's great strength, but the truly remarkable examples of physical prowess occur seldom enough that can be accounted for by flavor text, non-Superhero wrecking, or the paragon race.

Curiously, for the premier aviator in comics, Skyman performs no aviator's stunts -- the bread-and-butter, if you will, of the aviation genre. Ironically, we see Fawn perform more stunts while flying Wing for Skyman, like power diving on bad guys. The writer is clearly interested in the technology of aviation, but more interested in what Skyman does after jumping out of his plane rather than what he does in it. All that said, it is still very hard to divorce Skyman from the Aviator class because of his name and his means of travel. The write-up here does not include the Aviator class, but if an Editor wishes to use the Aviator class from The Trophy Case #6 and 7, this Editor recommends giving him about 4-6 levels in it and let him have three classes.

It's very clear that Skyman is a Scientist, but is he also a Fighter or a Mysteryman? Yes, he does very well in fights, but that could just be the result of good dice rolls. And he does rely on surprise and sneaking up behind bad guys to achieve these results sometimes. For this Editor, the deciding factor is the time he cracked a safe with his fingers, a function of the Mysteryman's pilfer ability.

Lastly, Skyman's observed inventions are cataloged below, leaving it up to the individual Editor (and/or player) to decide which are one-shot Scientist powers (see The Trophy Case #7) and which are actual trophies.

<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</u>											
Hero Name	Skyman					Alignment	Lawful				
Real Name	Allan Turner					Armor Class [AAC]	7 [12]				
Class	Mysteryman/Scientist					Level/Title	3 Abstruse Man/8 Da Vinci				
Race	Paragon					Move	60				
Strength	18	Saves				Experience Points:	4,400/201,600				
Intelligence	18	Missiles	7			Hit Points:	33				
Wisdom	17	Poison	6			Money, on hand:	variable				
Constitution	17	Plot	7			Money, available:	\$500,000				
Dexterity	16	Science	6								
Charisma	17	Spells	8								
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]		
To Hit	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)							
Nice suits	"Wing" (supersonic prop plane, and see below)			7 in 8 climb							
Tuxedo	Phone call-intercepting radio			Intimidate 1/hr							
Old college team uniforms	"Stasimatic" (stun ray gun, and see below)			2 in 6 notice things							
Costume	Cosmic ray-powered televisi-radio (acts as Crystal Ball)			+1 signature move (vs. mad scientists after researching their invention/s first)							
Skis	Radium-powered Neutronic-beam camera (takes instant pictures 10' below ground or inside structures)			1 in 4 invisible							
Lots of hemp rope				6 in 8 urban tracking							
Binoculars				2 in 6 pilfer							
				Inventing things (level 10 in guns, level 3 in mad science, level 1 in pills, level 1 in robots, level 6 in transports)							
				6 in 10 find/remove traps							
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Special Abilities (cont.): Powers (1 each of levels 1-4); May re-roll any die roll once per day per level; +2 bonus to SCM recruitment rolls; Once per week, can use one 5th level power; Can never have more than 10 trophies; Can never commit a Chaotic act.



Trophies (cont.):

Wing: Wing's top speed is 800 MPH, though its cruising speed is about half that. By locking onto the North and South Poles, Wing can remain motionless in mid-air. It has a magnetic motor control device that locks onto another plane and copies its movements while on auto-pilot, and a cosmic ray-powered auto-gyro that allows it to land on rooftops with pinpoint accuracy. It can reach an altitude in the stratosphere. It has a magnetic radio beam (like a tractor beam) that can pull a plane out of the sky and force it to land. It is coated in electricity-resistant lacquer, protecting its occupants from lightning bolts. Most of this is no more than flavor text, though the radio beam should require a save vs. science to avoid and have a 1,000 ft. range. The protection from lightning bolts should bestow a save vs. science for no damage to avoid half-damage.

Stasimatic: The Stasimatic stuns by reducing blood circulation. It has a 15 ft. range and projects a narrow enough ray to only effect one person at a time (save vs. science to avoid/resist). The effect lasts 1d10 minutes. The ray can be reversed, increasing blood circulation and healing 1d6 points of cold damage.

Rubber suction pad shoes for walking on airplanes.

A liquid that stops glass from reflecting, effectively making it invisible.

Automatic: atomizer raygun, turns up to 1-20 lbs. of non-living matter to dust at 20 ft. range.

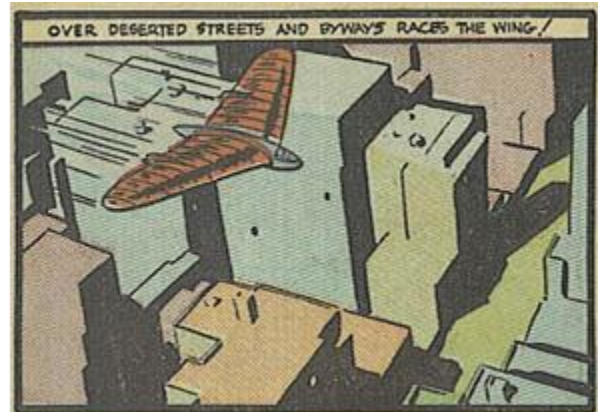
2 mini-atomic bombs – but this was 1940, so atomic energy only increases the temperature by 61-80 degrees in a 1-mile diameter.

Borer: atomic-powered giant truck with a drill on the front end. Underground movement rate: 60 ft.

A whole box of hand grenades.

Detonator Raygun: This weapon projects a cone 60 ft. long and 10 ft. wide at the base that sets off any explosive the ray touches.

Magnetic Beam Generator: A pocket-sized machine that, essentially, can perform Telekinesis on up to 300 lbs. of weight.



## DELL COMICS

According to Wikipedia, "Dell Comics was the comic book publishing arm of Dell Publishing, which got its start in pulp magazines. It published comics from 1929 to 1973. At its peak, it was the most prominent and successful American company in the medium." Best known for licensed properties, one thing Dell was never known for was making long-lasting superhero characters.



## **OWL**

Armor Class: 7 [12] Level: 5  
Move: 60 Class: Mysteryman  
Hit Points: 16 Align: Neutral

First appearance: Crackajack Funnies #25 (July 1940)

Appearances to date: Crackajack Funnies #25-42

Nick Terry is a famous private investigator, but even he can't always help the law touch criminals. That's why, in extreme cases, he dons a black hooded cloak with large phosphorescent eyes on it and brings those criminals to justice as The Owl. Soon, though (perhaps finding the cloak hampers his fighting), he switches to a cape, tight bodysuit, and with a highly-stylized (one might critically call un-owl-like) mask. He is aided by his Asian manservant Soto and, while initially keeping his dual identity a secret from his fiancée and star reporter for the New York Eagle, Belle Wayne, he eventually recruits her to become Owl Girl.

## **PHANTASMO**

Armor Class: 8 [11] Level: 5  
Move: 60 Class: Superhero  
Hit Points: 24 Align: Neutral

First appearance: The Funnies #46 (July 1940)

Appearances to date: The Funnies #45-62, Large Feature Comics #18

According to Comicvine, "After spending 25 years in Tibet, a virtual factory for superheroes in the Golden Age, Phil Anson returned to America having learned all the secrets of the grand high lamas and took up residence in a posh hotel. From there he would leave his body via astral projection to battle evil as Phantasma, the Master of the World.

"Phantasma however was no phantom when outside his body, he was both visible and seemingly very solid, except when his astral form was raised to gigantic proportions at which point he became translucent. His astral self interacted with the world as if solid, while at the same time gaining super strength, the power of flight, the ability to grow to gigantic size, and other abilities. "His one weakness was that while astral projecting his motionless physical body could be harmed, to guard against this Anson hired hotel bellhop / comedy relief Whizzer McGee as a bodyguard."

## **"SCOOP" MASON**

Armor Class: 9 [10] Level: 2  
Move: 60 Class: Fighter  
Hit Points: 8 Align: Neutral

First appearance: War Comics #1 (1940)

Appearances to date: War Comics #1-4

Scoop is an American war correspondent, broadcasting from France. He is aided in finding stories by “Sleepy” Samson, while competing with rival correspondent, Judy Jackson (who at the same time is in love with Scoop).

### **VOICE**

Armor Class: 8 [11] Level: 5  
Move: 60 Class: Mysteryman  
Hit Points: 15 Align: Neutral

First appearance: Popular Comics #51 (May 1940)

Appearances to date: Popular Comics #51-70

Tim Brant is a private detective, shown by his friend Professor Burt Wilson an invisibility ray that can treat clothing. Tim immediately sees their usefulness to his job and borrows a hooded cloak and gloves from the professor, treated with the ray, to help solve mysteries. He is also known as the Invisible Detective. Wilson’s ray originally works for only 5 to 6 hours, but by the fall of 1940 it has been improved to last 24 hours. Tim is often aided by his friend, “Curly” Rand.

**Editor’s Comment:** In the Golden Age, there were actually several characters, all from different companies, all called the Voice.

### **DETECTIVE COMICS**

According to Wikipedia, “Entrepreneur Major Malcolm Wheeler-Nicholson's National Allied Publications debuted with the tabloid-sized New Fun: The Big Comic Magazine #1 in February 1934. The company's second title, New Comics #1 (cover date December 1934), appeared in a size close to what would become comic books' standard during the period fans and historians call the Golden Age of Comic Books, with slightly larger dimensions than today's. That title evolved into Adventure Comics, which continued through issue #503 in 1983, becoming one of the longest-running comic book series.

“Wheeler-Nicholson's third and final title, Detective Comics, advertised with a cover illustration dated December 1936, eventually premiered three months late with a March 1937 cover date. The themed anthology series would become a sensation with the introduction of Batman in issue #27 (May 1939). By then, however, Wheeler-Nicholson had gone. In 1937, in debt to printing-plant owner and magazine distributor Harry Donenfeld — who also published pulp magazines and operated as a principal in the magazine distributorship Independent News — Wheeler-Nicholson was compelled to take Donenfeld on as a partner in order to publish Detective Comics #1. Detective Comics, Inc. was formed, with Wheeler-Nicholson and Jack S. Liebowitz, Donenfeld's accountant, listed as owners. Major Wheeler-Nicholson remained for a year, but cash-flow problems continued, and he was forced out. Shortly afterward, Detective Comics Inc. purchased the remains of National Allied, also known as Nicholson Publishing, at a bankruptcy auction.

“Detective Comics Inc. soon launched a fourth title, Action Comics, and the premiere of which introduced Superman (a character with which Wheeler-Nicholson had no direct involvement; editor Vin Sullivan chose to run the feature after Sheldon Mayer rescued it from the slush pile).

Action Comics #1 (June 1938), the first comic book to feature the new character archetype — soon known as "superheroes" — proved a major sales hit. The company quickly introduced such other popular characters as the Sandman and Batman.”

Though All-American Publications was a separate company only distributed by Detective Comics during the time period discussed in this work, the two companies shared characters freely, particularly in All-American's Justice Society of America (featured in All-Star Comics) where half the original membership consisted of Detective Comics characters (Sandman, Spectre, Hourman, Doctor Fate). All-American characters are thus discussed in this section.

## **BATMAN**

First appearance: Detective Comics #27 (May 1939)

Appearances to date: Detective Comics #27-58, Batman #1-8, New York World's Fair Comics, World's Best Comics #1, World's Finest Comics #2-3

In 1924, Bruce Wayne was just a boy when his parents were murdered in front of his eyes. A heartbroken boy made a solemn vow to spend the rest of his life warring on criminals. He mastered science, athletics, and designed a costume that would strike terror into the hearts of superstitious, cowardly criminals — after being inspired by a bat flying through his open window. Or perhaps he just remembered reading something like that in the pulp novels, as it had occurred in the origin of The Bat, a character from 1934. Regardless, thus was born the Bat-Man. Only as the police and the underworld grew comfortable recognizing the Bat-Man as a person and not a legend would he become known as simply “Batman”.

Batman's home is a metropolis known as Gotham City. It could be New York City, but when the Batman patrols it, the place is so dark and foggy it is hard to tell. Crime runs rampant here. Commissioner Gordon is an honest cop, but he seems to do so much of the criminal investigation himself that his department is either undermanned or too corrupt for him to trust.

It almost always appears to be the night of a full moon in Gotham City. Perhaps it is just a trick of the light, or else explained by some lingering presence of the supernatural. There must be at least one untold story of the Bat-Man and his first encounter with the supernatural, because by the time he encounters werewolves and vampires in 1939, he does not seem fazed by them at all.

By day, Bruce Wayne pretends to be an idle playboy. His associations, though, are either with people useful to Batman — like his friendship with Commissioner Gordon — or useful to his role of a playboy. Actress Julie Madison seems the perfect kind of girl a rich playboy should irresponsibly date, but he takes the deception too far and becomes engaged to her by 1939. When Julie has to leave Bruce to take up roles in Hollywood in the summer of 1940, he is perfectly ready to let her go. Not until the spring of 1941 does Bruce start dating seriously again, this time because rich society playgirl Linda Page has turned serious and become a nurse. Bruce is respectful of her commitment to public service, and at the same time amused that Linda idolizes Batman while she scolds Bruce for being lazy. Again, he cannot commit to her to and share his dark secrets with her. Indeed, he will cozy up to a new girl in a heartbeat if

he feels it will be useful for Batman, like society girl Nora Powell, when he feels she would be useful on a case late in 1941.

Though Batman starts out, like any Mysteryman, with the police hunting him and trying to arrest him, the police of Gotham City warm up to him fairly quickly. By the fall of 1940, only comically out-of-touch officers, like Detective McGonigle, are still trying to arrest him. In November of 1941, Commissioner Gordon cites Batman's many good deeds, including saving Fort Knox from criminals earlier in February, and makes Batman an honorary police officer.

Despite having been active in crime-fighting for less than three years, Batman has one of the most impressive rogues' galleries in the business. After the Joker and the Cat (see below), Batman's most frequent nemesis is the deformed mad scientist, Professor Hugo Strange. Two new additions to the rogues' gallery are the Penguin (named after his predilection for tuxedos, or "penguin suits", and not for the birds) and the Scarecrow (named for his resemblance to Ichabod Crane). Only time will tell if they become significant additions to the gallery.

Batman has some skill as a ventriloquist and at disguise.

Supporting Cast Members:

Commissioner Gordon, 6<sup>th</sup> level Fighter

Julie Madison, ex-fiancee, now actress

Robin (see below)

Linda Page, nurse, girlfriend

**Editor's Notes:** Batman has the disguise skill of at least a 3rd level Villain (see Supplement II for the Villain class and The Trophy Case #7 for the addition of that skill to the Mysteryman class). One could make a case that he has demonstrated both a few of the subtler Superhero powers, like Get Tough, but also the combat machine ability of the Fighter (see The Trophy Case #7 for more suggested expansions of the Mysteryman's special abilities). How high in level Batman should be as a Scientist depends entirely on how much weight one puts on some of the mad science inventions the early Bat-Man is shown to have and – what one can only conjecture about – did he really invent death ray-proof chemicals all by himself. This Editor has decided to err on the side of keeping Batman lower in level as a Scientist, reflecting the post-Robin period more. It is also important, given his unique standing with the police, that Batman be allowed to ignore the Alignment restriction on the Mysteryman class.

**Editor's Comments:** The Bat-Man started out dark, gritty, and a mish-mash of pulp hero clichés. It was not until the introduction of Robin and the development of a smiling, joking, swashbuckling Batman that a unique – until widely copied – persona developed. From 1940 on, Batman's adventures are some of the consistently highest quality of the Golden Age. His enduring legacy and success in every conceivable media need not be cataloged here.

## HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD

Hero Name <u>Batman</u>	Alignment <u>Lawful</u>
Real Name <u>Bruce Wayne</u>	Armor Class [AAC] <u>1 [18]</u>
Class <u>Mysteryman/Scientist</u>	Level/Title <u>8 Mystifying Man/2 Zworkin</u>
Race <u>Human</u>	Move <u>60</u>
Strength <u>18</u> Saves	Experience Points: <u>81,800/4,000</u>
Intelligence <u>17</u> Missiles <u>5</u>	
Wisdom <u>18</u> Poison <u>5</u>	Hit Points: <u>37</u>
Constitution <u>18</u> Plot <u>6</u>	
Dexterity <u>18</u> Science <u>6</u>	Money, on hand: <u>variable</u>
Charisma <u>18</u> Spells <u>7</u>	Money, available: <u>\$200,000</u>
AC [AAC] <u>9 [10] 8 [11] 7 [12] 6 [13] 5 [14] 4 [15] 3 [16] 2 [17] 1 [18]</u>	
To Hit <u>6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14</u>	

Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)	Special Abilities (racial, class-based)
Costume	5 pellets of choking gas (in belt)	Keen senses
Red car	Suction cup gloves & knee pads (-2 bonus to climb rolls)	Hide in shadows
20' of silk rope	Batgyro (coated in death ray-proof chemicals; in secret hangar)	11 in 12 climb
Batarang	Bulletproof Vest +2	Intimidate 1/hr
Browning .45 auto pistol (in hip holster, usually not carried anymore)	Pill of Neutralizing Mustard Gas (in belt)	5 in 10 notice things
Blue, high-powered roadster	Infra-red visor	+3 signature move (makes joke first)
Pipes & fancy clothes (for when he's Bruce)	"Infra-red" flashlight (sees "invisible" paint)	2 in 4 invisible
Wayne Manor	Bucket of "invisible" paint	10 in 12 urban tracking
	Batplane w/machine gun	7 in 12 pilfer
		Inventing things (level 1 in guns, robots, level 2 in pills, transportation, level 3 in mad science)
		3 in 20 find/remove traps

Trophies (cont.): Wayne Manor (contains science lab and an old chest where Batman's paraphernalia is stored during the day), Utility Belt, Infra-red visor, "Infra-red" flashlight (sees "invisible" paint), Bucket of "invisible" paint, Batplane w/front-mounted machine gun, Glass cutter, Fencing sword (for practice, at manor), Supercharged Batmobile, Garage concealed to look like barn (connected to Wayne Manor by secret tunnel), Wireless radio (in boot heel), Wireless telephone (in other boot heel), Vial of acid, Anti-radium transparent rubber spray (no foolin'!).

### **Batman's Sidekick: Robin**

First appearance: Detective Comics #38 (April 1940)

Appearances to date: Detective Comics #38-58, Batman #1-8, New York World's Fair Comics, World's Best Comics #1, World's Finest Comics #2-3

<b>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</b>											
Hero Name	<u>Robin the Boy Wonder</u>					Alignment	<u>Neutral</u>				
Real Name	<u>Dick Grayson</u>					Armor Class [AAC]	<u>5 [14]</u>				
Class	<u>Mysteryman</u>					Level/Title	<u>6/Secret Man</u>				
Race	<u>Human</u>					Move	<u>60</u>				
Strength	<u>14</u>	Saves				Experience Points:	<u>39,800</u>				
Intelligence	<u>12</u>	Missiles		<u>7</u>		Hit Points:	<u>19</u>				
Wisdom	<u>12</u>	Poison		<u>7</u>		Money, on hand:	<u>variable</u>				
Constitution	<u>17</u>	Plot		<u>8</u>		Money, available:	<u>\$600</u>				
Dexterity	<u>18</u>	Science		<u>8</u>							
Charisma	<u>17</u>	Spells		<u>9</u>							
AC [AAC]	<u>9 [10]</u>	<u>8 [11]</u>	<u>7 [12]</u>	<u>6 [13]</u>	<u>5 [14]</u>	<u>4 [15]</u>	<u>3 [16]</u>	<u>2 [17]</u>	<u>1 [18]</u>		
To Hit	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>		
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)							
Sling (in vest) Steel pellet (in pouch) 20' of silk rope	Belt buckle wireless radio Rocket-powered roller skates (120 move)			Keen senses Hide in shadows 9 in 10 climb Intimidate 1/hr 4 in 10 notice things +2 signature move (puns first) 4 in 10 invisible 8 in 10 urban tracking 3 in 6 pilfer							

The honor of only trusted confidante to the Batman goes to a nine-year old trapeze artist named Dick Grayson. When Dick's parents are murdered at the circus in '39, Bruce sees Dick is going through exactly what he went through as a boy. Determined to not make Dick go through it alone, Bruce takes him under his wing – as Batman – and vows to help him get revenge. After making Dick swear they “will fight together against crime and corruption and never swerve from the path of righteousness”, Batman reveals his true identity to Dick and begins his training in boxing and jiu jitsu. By the spring of 1940, Batman is convinced that Dick is ready to start helping him. They design a new costume with a completely different look for Dick, bright and shiny and symbolizing that Dick will not walk down the same dark road Bruce did. They dub him Robin, the Boy Wonder, after Robin Hood (and not the bird).

The experience of working with Robin changes the Bat-Man. Once content to let criminals die, seeing it as a fitting end for their kind, Batman now becomes committed to only bringing them to justice. Furthermore, instead of seeing his crusade as a grim war, Batman is now able to see it as a fun adventure, as Robin does. For the first time, Batman smiles and jokes as he fights criminals.

### **Batman's Villain: Cat**

First appearance: Batman #1 (Spring 1940)

Appearances to date: Batman #1-3

Second in importance in his rogues' gallery is the Cat, later known as the Cat-Woman or Catwoman. While Batman is respectful of good girls like Julie, Linda, and Nora, it is clearly bad girls who turn him on. The feeling seems to be mutual. Catwoman is so named simply because she is a cat burglar, though by the Fall of 1940 she sometimes wears a cat mask while committing crimes, perhaps mistaking Batman's costume for a fetish he has. The three times they have clashed have all been chances to flirt, with Batman often letting her get away so they can meet again.

Armor Class: 7 [12] Level: 2/1

Move: 60 Class: Mysteryman/Villain

Hit Points: 12 Align: Chaotic

S 12, I 12, W 13, C 15, D 16, Ch 15. SA: Keen senses, hide in shadows, 5 in 6 climb, intimidate 1/hr, 2 in 6 notice things, +1 signature move (shoot), 1 in 6 invisible, 4 in 6 urban tracking, 2 in 6 pilfer, 25% survival chance, 40% disguise chance. Items: Disguises, sexy dresses, Colt .45 Semi-Auto Pistol, Flash Powder, handbag, lifelike cat mask.

### **Batman's Villain: Joker**

First appearance: Batman #1 (Spring 1940)

Appearances to date: Batman #1-2, Detective Comics #45, Batman #4, 5, 7

Chief among the rogues' gallery is the Joker, a murderous jewel thief who Batman has encountered no less than seven times already. Little is known of the Joker, other than that he has a long history in crime and has the training of a scientist, probably a chemist. Either by accident or design, his skin is bleached white and his hair is green, and it does not appear to be the result of make-up. Like the character in the Victor Hugo novel, *L'Homme qui rit* and the 1928 silent movie version, *The Man Who Laughs*, his face seems to be disfigured into a near-permanent grin. Indeed, the Joker bears a striking resemblance to the movie's star, Conrad Veidt. Stealing had, at some point, become so easy for the Joker that he now feels compelled to leave clues in advance of his crimes to make it more challenging. Even now, when he is more likely than not to be stopped by Batman, he cannot give up this compulsion. Nor can he resist the urge to steal jewelry, the richer the prize the better. The Joker prefers to murder his victims in subtle, ironic ways using poison, but is not adverse to stabbing or shooting people as well.



## HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS VILLAIN RECORD

Villain Name	Joker		Alignment	Chaotic	
Real Name	Unknown		Armor Class [AAC]	9 [10]	
Class	Villain/Scientist		Level/Title	7 Racketeer/4 Bell	
Race	Human		Move	60	
Strength	17	Saves	Experience Points: 68,200/11,000		
Intelligence	16	Missiles	8		
Wisdom	14	Poison	7	Hit Points: 35	
Constitution	18	Plot	8		
Dexterity	14	Science	7	Money, on hand: variable	
Charisma	9	Spells	9	Money, available: \$180,000	
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14] 4 [15] 3 [16] 2 [17] 1 [18]
To Hit	7	8	9	10	11 12 13 14 15

Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)	Special Abilities (racial, class-based)
Purple suits	Paralyzing gas	Keen senses
Playing cards	"Joker" venom	Hide in shadows
Dart gun	Chemical lab	100% survival chance
2 .45 Colt semi-auto	Explosive chemicals (in 2	90% disguise chance
Pistols	false teeth)	Inventing things (level 1 in
Car	Hideout in a graveyard	guns, robots, transportation,
Disguises (police officers,	crypt	level 2 in mad science, level
clowns, etc.)	Radio broadcasting set	8 in pills)
Knife	Sleeping potion	3 in 10 find/remove traps
	Hideout under a pawn	1 1 <sup>st</sup> level power (usually
	Shop	Spook Good Guys)
	Shatterproof glass dome	
	(in lab)	
	Acetylene torch (in violin	
	case)	

Trophies (cont.): "Haunted" mansion on the edge of town, Motion Picture Projector.

**Editor's Notes:** Extra Scientist special abilities were added to the class in The Trophy Case #7.

### DOCTOR FATE

First appearance: More Fun Comics #55 (May 1940)

Appearances to date: More Fun Comics #55-74, All-Star Comics #3-8

The ancient people of Egypt, Chaldea, Atlantis, and Mu – these people were masters of what was and is called magic, but is actually atomic science. Only a handful of people on Earth still know this lost science and all but one of them practice it with an unnecessary layer of ritual and mysticism – Doctor Fate. The study of "the occult and the weird" is no more than this science, making Doctor Fate both alchemist and physicist.



Which is not to say that not all elements of mysticism are untrue. There really is a River Styx leading to the Underworld, there really is a boatman who may or may not be Charon, and its shores really are inhabited by the Shrouded Dead, or the Legion of the Styx. The Norns of Norse Mythology exist, though they are purple-skinned giant men and not old crones as depicted in myth. Nergal, the Babylonian god of the Underworld, exists, though Doctor Fate calls him "Black Negal". The gods Baal, Moloch, and Set may exist, as may gnomes, dwarves, djinn, and genii (Doctor Fate refers to them as if they do, though they are never seen). The cosmology of Doctor Fate even includes a Stair of Judgment in the Underworld that leads up to the blinding light of Wisdom, "who rules the world", and seems heretically similar to the Christian God. The only beings Doctor Fate fears, though, are the "awful beings" from the "Ethereic universe". Summoning them, or even seeing them, can drive one mad (the Cthulu Mythos allusions are evident in the early issues; Dagon and the Deep Ones are here called Nyarl-Amen and his Fish-Men). Yet even though Doctor Fate is quick to assert "There are more things on Earth undreamed of by the world of men," he is equally sure that some creatures of myth do not exist at all, such as ghouls and (contradicting other comic books by the same publisher) vampires.

Many of Doctor Fate's "spells" occur just by him willing them to, mind over matter. These "spells" seem to be less effective against the undead, because his life force cannot affect them as much. Other spells require material or verbal components (Teleport, for example, requires powder and the words "Nyeth thryalla fyorneth dignalleth"). Some spells require verbal components only. Words of power hurt for non-adepts to hear spoken, as Inza says, "those words burn – sear my mind!"

Who is Doctor Fate? He first appears as a "man of mystery". He speaks of how Inza is useful to him because she "dwells close to the world", suggesting Doctor Fate does not. Another time Doctor Fate is said to dwell "apart from mankind in his ...tower" and another time he says he *must* spend his life in his tower. Yet another time he speaks of aiding mankind as if not a part of it. He tells Johnny Thunder in the winter of 1940 (All-Star Comics #3), "I am not human...I never was a child...I had no youth – the elder gods created me just as I am now..."

It is unclear when or under what circumstances the Justice Society of America was formed. Initially, it was more of a dinner club for eight superheroes – Doctor Fate included -- to sit around and share stories of their adventures four times a year, as first observed late in 1940 (All-Star Comics #3). However, in March of 1941, J. Edgar Hoover asks the Justice Society to tackle the Bund problem in America, which starts a tradition of the rotating chairman of the society choosing a mission for the Society to tackle every other month (All-Star Comics #4). Missions vary widely from waging war on crime (All-Star Comics #5) to prankishly initiating Johnny Thunder into the Society (All-Star Comics #6) to raising money for war orphans alongside honorary members Superman and Batman (All-Star Comics #7). Membership in the Society will continue to rotate, capped at eight by their charter. Doctor Fate, though he will long remain in the Society, will never serve as chairman, either by choice or the undisclosed rules of determining chairmanship.

How long has Doctor Fate been around? Wotan claims that Doctor Fate has been stopping him for years, even though he says it only their second encounter that we see. We are told that

Doctor Fate's deeds are "legion". In January 1941 (More Fun Comics #63), he tells Inza that he was around in 1698 and knew the ancestors of Inza's friends. He claims responsibility for imprisoning Mayoor, the Mayan god of evil, but also claims in another instance that Mayoor was imprisoned "tens of thousands of years ago". Of course, Fate may be referring to two different terms of imprisonment.

And yet, in May of 1941, Doctor Fate throws Inza (and the readers) a curveball by telling her an origin story completely incompatible with what we have known so far. In this version, Doctor Fate was a real human boy in 1920 named Kent Nelson. While investigating the pyramids in Egypt with his archaeologist father, Sven, two important things happened. One was that Kent found and woke a 500,000-year old alien named Nabu, a Shazam-like "wizard" who had learned the secret of "molecular control" on his home planet of Cilia (why he came to Earth and came to live with the Egyptians was unrevealed). The other important event was that a tomb trap killed Sven Nelson, leaving young Kent in Nabu's care to raise and tutor in magic-like science.

It is unclear how to reconcile these two origins. If Doctor Fate is really Kent Nelson, then he lied to Johnny Thunder just months earlier. Many of this "legion of deeds" in the past would now be impossible, unless Doctor Fate was a time traveler, but that has never been shown to be the case. It is possible that Doctor Fate lied to Inza, creating a false origin because he was falling in love with her and wished to appear human and relatable to her. Or perhaps he was previously under a spell that kept him from remembering he was Kent Nelson. It is worth mentioning here that we never meet Nabu, except in the flashback to this suspicious origin story.

There are no limits to what Doctor Fate will do to protect Earth. When space aliens threaten Earth, he destroys their entire planet and every species on it. He is more charitable to supernatural beings if they seem to hail from Earth. For an offense almost as bad, the Norns are only imprisoned in a cave. But this is the "old" Doctor Fate. As of October 1941, Doctor Fate is a changed man. Wearing his helm now with the lower half seemingly sawed off, Doctor Fate becomes a wise-cracking, jaw-punching crimebuster, more interested in bringing crooks to justice than saving the world. Why? Another attempt to make himself seem more down-to-earth for Inza? Whatever the reason, mobsters begin to question Fate's invulnerability and find he has a weakness to gas or choking attacks, because he still has to breathe.

The tower of Doctor Fate stands on a hilltop overlooking Salem, Massachusetts. It stands atop a rocky hill covered in dead trees that bend and twist, yet all face the same way. Believed to have been built by Vikings "before Columbus discovered America", the tower has upper level barred windows, but only a secret door entrance. The tower is likely more spacious inside than out, for the rooms inside appear spacious, albeit spartan, with lecterns, thrones, and braziers the only furnishings seen within its dark, stonework chambers. Doctor Fate's spellbooks are clearly stored in his tower. Perhaps he "must" stay in his tower to guard them? Keeping arcane secrets out of untrustworthy hands seems to be a preoccupation of his, such as when he discovers the Book of Thoth is stolen from its hiding place.

Inza is Doctor Fate's companion. She admits to being terrified sometimes by how Doctor Fate's awesomeness, but is quick to call on him whenever there is trouble. She is an expert on the occult, knowing the composition of the Seven Gates of the Regions of Dead Souls and can

identify Haitian black magic distinct from other black magic. She is not overly attached to material things, as her New York penthouse apartment and her car are both destroyed on separate adventures and she does not seem overly upset either time. That Inza must come from a moneyed family seems evident by her seeming lack of occupation, yet her ability to quickly get a new brand new penthouse apartment in New York. Yet her grandparents are simple farmers. And is Inza really her name? Golden Age Comics scholars as imminent as Roy Thomas have failed to identify the meaning of the name, which seems to have no precedent. Even if seen as a contraction of a first name starting in “In” and a last name starting in “Za” – then what names start with “In”? Perhaps it is just a nickname, the meaning of which will never be known.

<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</u>											
Hero Name	Doctor Fate					Alignment	Chaotic				
Real Name	Kent Nelson					Armor Class [AAC]	0 [19]				
Class	Magic-User/Superhero					Level/Title	10 Wizard/5 Fantastic Man				
Race	Half-Alien					Move	60				
Strength	15	Saves				Experience Points:	640,000/25,350				
Intelligence	18	Missiles	5				Hit Points:	45			
Wisdom	15	Poison	4				Money, on hand:	variable			
Constitution	17	Plot	5				Money, available:	\$90,000			
Dexterity	13	Science	6								
Charisma	12	Spells	4								
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]		
To Hit	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)							
Costume	Spell books			Keen senses							
Nice suits (in tower)	Brazier of Divination (as per Crystal Ball)			Bulletproof skin							
Tower	Crystal Ball (w/ Clair-audience)			Counter-spelling							
	Cloak of Flame (combines Cloak of Protection +3 and Ring of Fire Resistance)			Spells (4 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2 4 <sup>th</sup> , 5 <sup>th</sup> level; typically Charm Person, Cure Wounds I, Detect Evil, Detect Magic, Detect Thoughts, Invisibility I, Knock, Levitate, Dispel Magic, Fly, Lightning Bolt, Charm Monster, Dimension Portal, Commune, Dispel Evil)							
	Rings of Warning (see below)										

Trophies (cont.): Rings of Warning. Made from a magical Crystal Ball, these rings alert each wearer if anyone else wearing an identical ring is in danger and allows the wearer a brief visual image of the wearer who is in danger, seen as if a reflection in the gem set in the ring.

Special Abilities (cont.): Wrecking things (vs. doors –W, machines – W, generators – 4, robots – 7, cars – 10, trucks – 13, tanks – 15, battleships – 17), powers (2 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1 3<sup>rd</sup>; typically Get Tough, Spook Bad Guys, Hypnotism, Super-Tough Skin, Levitate), true strength of 30.

Notable enemies of Doctor Fate include Wotan (see below); Ian Karkull, a mad scientist able to turn men into shadows and becomes a shadow himself; and Mr. Who, a mad scientist who's Z Solution gives him a variety of seemingly magical powers.

Supporting Cast Members:

Inza, occult expert, socialite, and girlfriend

**Editor's Notes:** The two origins of Doctor Fate – that of immortal magical construct and Kent Nelson – are not easily reconciled, as one can read above. For his stats, though, this Editor has chosen a compromise and made Doctor Fate a half-alien. Besides the elegance of the compromise, it also allows Fate to have bulletproof skin and a low AC, necessary for how often he goes unharmed in battle.

The conceit of the Doctor Fate stories, that magic and science are one in the same, makes Doctor Fate even more powerful if this is applied to game mechanics. For example, a Dispel Magic spell would also work to machines inoperable, including robots. Detect Magic would also detect the source of radio waves. It is up to each individual Editor to decide whether this imbalances the Magic-User class.

**Editor's Comments:** The early Doctor Fate tales were masterfully atmospheric, but it all swiftly went downhill with the character's change in direction from "magic-user" to superhero. By the time he gives up mysticism entirely to become an actual physician, the stories are laughably bad.

Inza was given a last name soon after the cut-off date for this supplement. Actually, she was given two, Sanders and then Carmer.

### **Doctor Fate's Villain: Wotan**

First appearance: More Fun Comics #55 (May 1940)

Appearances to date: More Fun Comics #55, 56, 70

Little is known about the man who calls himself Wotan. He seems to have no connection to Odin, from whom the name Wotan is derived, except for having appropriated the name for himself. He has been opposed by Doctor Fate for years before 1940. Like Doctor Fate, Wotan understands that magic is just science by a different name and considers himself a scientist. Indeed, when not in front of an audience of followers, Wotan is quick to throw off the trappings of mysticism and work in what looks more like a science laboratory.

Armor Class: 9 [10] Level: 6

Move: 60 Class: Magic-User

Hit Points: 20 Align: Chaotic

S 13, I 17, W 12, C 15, D 12, Ch 13. SA: Hide in shadows, keen senses; counter-spelling, spells (4 1<sup>st</sup>, 2 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>; typically Charm Person, Fireball, Phantasmal Force). Items: Crystal

Hypnosis Ball, Brazier of Spell Range Extension, ancient tomes of black magic, mountain peak laboratory, world-destroying machine, domed city in the Arctic Circle, "distance-lessener" (combination telescope and television), weather control machine.

## **FLASH**

First appearance: Flash Comics #1 (Jan. 1940)

Appearances to date: Flash Comics #1-24, All-Star Comics #1-6, All-Flash #1-3

Jay Garrick was a lackluster college student, majoring in science but constantly trying at sports in failed efforts to impress his girlfriend, Joan Williams. One day, Jay was experimenting with hard water, but the fumes knocked him out and he inhaled them all night. "Hard water" simply has magnesium in it, a dubiously reactive substance for causing mutations, but these were the days before radiation was much in the public consciousness.

When Jay learns that he has superhuman speed, his first thought is not to use it to fight crime, but to become a star football player. And he does, much to Joan's delight. But Joan's family is beset by four foreign blackmailers, led by the French 'Sieur Satan, and Jay dons a costume to tackle the blackmailers with some degree of anonymity.

The "some degree" is important because Jay not only does not bother to don a mask, but after the blackmailers are beaten he does not even seem to care if anyone knows Flash and Jay are the same person.

Joan Williams does not seem to mind that Jay had become such a football star only through a freak accident (though her obsession with sports never seems to go away completely; she becomes secretary to the Western Athletic Union by June 1940). Rather, Joan stays Jay's friend and partner through all his adventures, sometimes introducing Jay to people in trouble and needing his help, and other times deducing things even before Jay does. Joan has useful contacts everywhere, even in the military, as her father is a retired Army major.

Although it is never specified, significant time seems to have passed between the Flash's first and subsequent adventures. For one thing, Jay is no longer in college by his second appearance. Further, subsequent adventures keep featuring "old friends" of Jay's, suggesting he has been out of school for a while.

In Feb. 1940 only (Flash Comics #2), Jay experiments with leaving little lightning bolts behind as calling cards, but quickly discards the notion, no doubt for it being too impractical.

Jay is unusual for a superhero in how seldom he uses violence. He tricks his adversaries into surrendering, intimidates them by stripping their clothes off at super-fast speed, gathers enough evidence to ensure a conviction, or even convinces the "bad guys" to reform! Of course, it probably helps that the Flash only has to deal with under-whelming hoodlums (an unusual number of bald men, too) most of the time.

What metropolis Jay calls home starts out as a bit of a mystery. His college is referred to by the generic name of Midwestern University (later called Western University). In July 1940, he is driving through Duluth, Minnesota, but it is not clear why he is initially there and how far from home he may be. What *is* clear is that, by September Jay is changed to a New Yorker, as if by



editorial fiat. Stories move quickly away from the big city, with Jay helping out a small town in Canada in September, searching for hoodlums in a lumber camp in October, and saving two different silver mines in January and April 1941.

Although Jay is still a fairly good chemist, he is not a scientist in the sense of being able to invent things. Indeed, when a case requires engineering skills, Jay has to seek outside help from a mechanic.

Two noteworthy things happen in December of 1940. One is that Jay, before content to deal with only hoodlums, goes overseas to aid the country of “Kurtavia” from the invading army of “Nural”.

The other noteworthy thing is Jay’s first appearance at a meeting of the Justice Society of America (All-Star Comics #3). The Flash is one of the eight founding members of this group who, initially, just gather to sit around and share stories of their recent adventures. The Justice Society finds common purpose the next spring, when they are summoned by J. Edgar Hoover and dispatched to fight Bundists (All-Star Comics #4). By late summer/early fall of 1941, though, Flash has dropped out of the Justice Society.

Jay has dropped out of the Justice Society because he’s become busier with solo adventures. However, his biggest adventure occurs in December 1941 when a scientist who has built a rocket ship abducts families and forces them to join him in starting a colony on Mars. Jay stows on board and encounters the Spider-Men of Mars – giant spiders with green human-like heads and hands on two of their forelegs.

While many heroes in the Golden Age were shown smoking pipes when out of costume, Jay Garrick was one of the rare superheroes to smoke cigarettes.

Supporting Cast Members:

Joan Williams, friend, partner, and sometimes girlfriend

**Editor’s Note:** Though the Flash is the primary model for the Speedster character class, note that the Flash almost never hits people. He relies most on his invisibility power.

**Editor’s Comments:** Though the Flash is technically a superhero because of his powers, he is more like a science fiction hero in that he uses his intelligence to outthink his opponents (it is no coincidence that his author, Gardner Fox, was also a science fiction author).

Kurtavia is almost surely Romania, itself invaded by the Germans in October. Though the timing is tight, it might have been possible for a Romania-like name to have been added to the story script before this one went to press.

The metafictional reason behind Flash dropping out of the JSA is because the JSA was only for promoting characters who had not earned their own titles yet and the Flash now appeared in All-Flash.

## HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD

Hero Name	Flash	Alignment	Lawful
Real Name	Jay Garrick	Armor Class [AAC]	2 [17]
Class	Speedster	Level/Title	7/Quick
Race	Human	Move	840
Strength	15	Saves	
Intelligence	14	Missiles	4
Wisdom	15	Poison	6
Constitution	18	Plot	7
Dexterity	18	Science	7
Charisma	16	Spells	8
Experience Points:		93,000	
Hit Points:		37	
Money, on hand:		variable	
Money, available:		\$21,000	
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]
		6 [13]	5 [14]
		4 [15]	3 [16]
		2 [17]	1 [18]
To Hit	7	8	9
		10	11
		12	13
		14	15

Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)	Special Abilities (racial, class-based)
Costume Suits of different colors Old college football uniform Cigarettes Tennis outfit Metal lightning bolts (used as calling cards or shruikens) Chemistry lab Red convertible	Mini-dictaphone	Keen senses Hide in shadows 2 attacks/turn for 2-13 damage 2 in 4 invisible Half or no damage with saves Can catch bullets in mid-air with save vs. missiles 4 secret door/notice things rolls/turn

Equipment (cont.): Radio, pipe.

Special Abilities (cont.): 7 in 10 surprise, mirror image 1/day, gust of wind 1/hour, same move underwater as on land.

### GREEN LANTERN

Armor Class: 8 [11]    Level: 6  
 Move: 60                      Class: Superhero  
 Hit Points: 24                Align: Lawful

First appearance: All-American Comics #16 (July 1940)

Appearances to date: All-American Comics #16-33, All-Star Comics #2-8, Green Lantern #1-2

According to Wikipedia, "Thousands of years ago, a mystical 'green flame' (a meteor) fell to Earth in ancient China. A voice in the flame prophesied that it would act three times: once to bring death (a lamp-maker crafted the green metal of the meteor into a lamp; in fear and as

punishment for what they thought sacrilege, the local villagers killed him, only to be destroyed by a sudden burst of the green flame), once to bring life ... and once to bring power. By 1940, after having already fulfilled the first two-thirds of this prophecy, the lantern fashioned from the meteoric metal fell into the hands of Alan Scott, a young railroad engineer. Following a railroad bridge collapse, the flame instructs Scott in how to fashion a ring from its metal, to give him fantastic powers as the superhero Green Lantern. He adopts a colorful costume (...red, purple, yellow and brown in his outfit, besides the standard green) and becomes a crimefighter. In his first adventure he defeats the crooks who caused the accident, though he also discovers his powers' weakness to wood when he is bludgeoned with a club. Alan was a founding member of the Justice Society of America, and was its second chairman.”

Alan Scott soon quits the railroad and buys himself a radio station. As Alan Scott, he keeps his secret identity a secret from both his girlfriend, Irene Miller, and his comic sidekick, cab driver “Doiby” Dickles.

## **SANDMAN**

Armor Class: 8 [11] Level: 8  
Move: 60 Class: Mysteryman  
Hit Points: 35 Align: Neutral

First appearance: Adventure Comics #40 (July 1939)

Appearances to date: Adventure Comics #40-69, New York World's Fair Comics #1-2, All-Star Comics #1-8

According to Wikipedia, “Attired in a green business suit, fedora, and gas mask [sort of]”... chemical magnate Wesley Dodds “used a gun emitting a sleeping gas to sedate criminals. He was one of the original mystery men to appear in comic books...acquiring sidekick Sandy [the Golden Boy, in December of 1941], “and founding the Justice Society of America.”

## **SPECTRE**

Armor Class: 2 [17] Level: 15  
Move: 75/150 Class: Magic-User  
Hit Points: 66 Align: Neutral

First appearance: More Fun Comics #52 (Feb. 1940)

Appearances to date: More Fun Comics #52-74, All-Star Comics #1-8

According to Wikipedia, “hard-boiled cop Jim Corrigan was murdered by being stuffed into a barrel ... [of] cement and drowned. His spirit was refused entry into the afterlife, however, instead being sent back to Earth to eliminate evil by an entity referred to only as "The Voice". He saw his body when he appeared at the bottom of the waterfront. The Spectre begins by seeking bloody vengeance against Corrigan's murderers in a grim, supernatural fashion. One of them turned to a skeleton upon touching him. The Spectre is eventually awarded charter membership in the first ever superhero team, the Justice Society of America.”

## **STAR-SPANGLED KID**

Armor Class: 7 [12] Level: 4  
Move: 60 Class: Fighter  
Hit Points: 22 Align: Lawful

First appearance: Action Comics #40 (Sept. 1941)

Appearances to date: Action Comics #40, Star-Spangled Comics #1-3, Leading Comics #1

According to Wikipedia, "Sylvester Pemberton ... became the Star-Spangled Kid in order to battle Nazi spies and fifth columnists during World War II. He was unique in that he was a kid superhero who operated with an adult sidekick, Stripesy a.k.a. Pat Dugan. Both he and Dugan were superb acrobats and had sufficient training in hand-to-hand combat. They devised a series of acrobatic maneuvers that allowed them to build upon one another's strengths, the Kid's agility and Dugan's strength. They also built the Star Rocket Racer, a bubble-topped limousine with the functions of a rocket and helicopter. The Kid and Stripesy were members of the Seven Soldiers of Victory."

## **SUPERMAN**

First appearance: Action Comics #1 (June 1938)

Appearances to date: Action Comics #1-43, Superman #1-13, New York World's Fair Comics #1-2, World's Best Comics #1, World's Finest Comics #2-4

"As a distant planet was destroyed by old age, a scientist placed his infant son within a hastily devised space-ship, launching it towards Earth" begins the most famous superhero origin story of them all. It is a science fiction retelling of the story of baby Moses with the additional twist of class inversion. Instead of being adopted by a king and queen, the boy who will be Superman was found and turned over to an orphanage, making him a ward of the state and, literally, a child of the people. A later addition in the retelling (revealed in Superman #1) was that Mr. Kent and his wife Mary both found the baby in the space-ship and later returned to the orphanage to adopt the baby they could not forget. Instilling their foster son, Clark Kent, with good middle class values did not diminish the "working class hero" nature of the hero to come.

No mention is ever made of what happened to the space-ship, which was clearly intact when it landed on Earth, nor of whether Clark was ever told about his alien heritage.

When Clark was still a young man he found he "could hurdle skyscrapers, leap an eighth of a mile, raise tremendous weights, run faster than a streamline train, and nothing less than a bursting shell could penetrate his skin." When his elderly foster parents both died, though, he realized he had been squandering his gifts. He "decided he must turn his titanic strength into channels that would benefit mankind" and remade himself into Superman. But he still had a use for his true identity. He still needed a job, a place to live, and he realized a career in journalism would let him learn about where Superman was needed before news stories saw print. So, sometime around the mid-1930s, Clark applied for work at the Daily Star newspaper in Cleveland, Ohio. In 1936, Clark was briefly a foreign correspondent based in London for the *Daily Star* (referred to in New York World's Fair Comics #2). And, sometime around then, he met Lois Lane.

Clark's relationship to Lois is even more complex than the Clark-Lois-Superman love triangle initially appears. Lois' infatuation with Superman, and ironic dismissal of Clark for being a milksop, is well known. Clark's feelings for Lois, though, are initially feigned as part of his disguise. Like the Scarlet Pimpernel or Zorro, Superman hides his true identity by reinventing himself as a cowardly fop no one would consider capable of amazing deeds. Pining for a girl who doesn't want him is just part of his disguise and he secretly laughs at Lois while playing her (as he does in Action Comics #9). Sometime during the course of pretending to like Lois, his fake feelings seem to become real feelings, but he resists them for quite some time. In June of 1939, Superman tries to frighten off Lois from liking him so much, but only succeeds in turning her on with his super-feats (New York World's Fair Comics #1).

The relationship takes an interesting turn in July 1940 when Superman begins to suspect Lois of having genuine feelings for Clark Kent and Lois begins to suspect that Superman has genuine feelings for her. As if jealous of his own alter ego, Superman calls Clark a "cowardly weakling" (Action Comics #26). Superman denies Lois' suspicions, yet by November of 1940 Clark is clearly jealous when Lois allows another man to flirt with her. Superman can never bring himself to reveal his secret to Lois for some never revealed reason. Has Superman created such a distinctly different persona for himself as Clark that he cannot decide which of his two identities cares about Lois more? Is he aware of his alien heritage and afraid to let Lois know he is not human like her? All possible, but the likeliest reason is revealed by Clark when he rejects a socialite coming onto him while thinking, "I'm afraid I might forget myself and crack her ribs!" (Superman #7). And so Clark keeps deceiving Lois, making her miss clues of his dual identity by various means, including hypnotism and rendering her unconscious with nerve pinches.

Oblivious to her relationship with Clark being built on lies, Lois has warmed to Clark enough by January of 1941 that they have their first date which is not a pity date or an attempt to take advantage of Clark. It apparently goes well enough that Lois and Clark date on and off from then on, though Lois is too quick to anger for the relationship to advance quickly.

Superman needs to hide behind his Clark Kent persona from everyone else because he is no mild-mannered, reactive crusader, but a wildly proactive vigilante, willing to break any law to right wrongs and correct social ills. Whether its breaking into the governor's mansion (Action Comics #1), wrecking down tenement slums that he deems unsuitable for living in (Action Comics #8), or going on the radio and declaring war against reckless drivers (Action Comics #12), Superman's disregard for due process and regulations soon leads to the National Guard being called out against him (in Action Comics #8), followed by the Cleveland Police Force recruiting a specialist from out-of-state (Action Comics #9, in possibly a subtle Dick Tracy parody). As late as the June of 1941, Sgt. Casey still wants to take Superman into custody and is willing to shoot at him (Action Comics #37).

Superman's methods are so unorthodox that he even breaks the formula for the superhero genre (which was created by Superman!) on occasion. While most of the time he discards his regular clothes to fight crime in his costume (inspired by the circus strongman outfits of the 1930s, combined with the capes worn by do-gooders on the covers of pulp fiction magazines), he will sometimes solve problems while disguised as someone else (as in Action Comics #4 and



Superman #2), or he may simply remove Clark Kent's glasses and cowardly demeanor and tackle problems in plainclothes fashion (as in Action Comics #2, 3, 11, and 15).

Superman's reckless disregard for both law and conformity also make him a hit with the general public of Ohio, apparently tired after the long Great Depression with the way things have been run. By November 1938 (Action Comics #6), Superman Gasoline and the Superman Streamline Special, a sleek roadster, are being test-marketed in the Ohio area; a Superman radio program is playing locally (16 months before the real life Superman radio program debuted); and "You're My Superman" is being sung in the nightclubs of Cleveland. And yet, Superman's fame does not seem to precede him out of the Midwest and he remains largely unknown elsewhere. Even after living in "Metropolis" for a year, Superman is still regarded by some as an urban legend there ("Superman? Why, there's no such person, my dear!" spoken in Action Comics #34). Crooks who do recognize Superman often assume reports of his superpowers are exaggerated and are then surprised when bullets bounce off him or he smashes through a wall. By 1941, most people everywhere have now heard of Superman, even if they still think he is just a legend.

It soon becomes apparent that Superman is becoming gradually more powerful. By January 1939, Superman's skin is impervious to all bullets, including "bursting shells". At the same time, he can not only outrun trains, but he can now outrun bullets. By March, his skin is totally impenetrable. The man who was lifting up cars before is now stopping trains with his bare hands. And just in time, too. In July 1939, Superman ran into his first "super-villain" in the form of the Ultra-Humanite. Or was it really coincidence? A 'chicken-or-the-egg' argument could be made here. Could it be the threat of more powerful villains coming first that makes Superman more powerful second? We see this again with the introduction of Luthor in April 1940 (Action Comics #23). Suddenly Superman is capable of leaping into the stratosphere, six miles high (in the same issue). Sometime around then, Superman also picks up the ability to fly (though it is difficult to pin down the first instance when Superman is genuinely flying and not just leaping). Has Superman merely been holding back all this time, or have greater challenges pushed him harder, made him do more than he ever thought possible?

Despite having impenetrable skin, Superman can still be hurt and knocked unconscious by enough force. A bomb blast knocks him unconscious in the fall of 1939 (Superman #2). But Superman's continues to become more invulnerable over time. But is it really Superman's skin that is invulnerable? Bullets bounce off his clothing without harming them, even when he is wearing his ordinary Clark Kent clothes. And Clark Kent's hands are observed to be soft (Action Comics #33), not hard or tough. Could it be a force field close to his skin, but far enough away for several layers of clothing, that protects him?

His Superman costume does not need the protection. Superman invented the fabric of the costume himself, "which is immune to the most powerful forces" (Superman #5). This is the first indication of super-intelligence on Superman's part, though by August 1940 he was also demonstrating photographic memory (Action Comics #27). Superman gradually develops a whole catalog of super-stunts, both physical and mental (though mainly physical). Indeed, displaying super-stunts gradually becomes a comedic *shtick*, where it isn't enough for

Superman to be immune to a hot poker, he has to bite the tip off of it and joke that it's delicious (Action Comics #27).

It only makes sense that a being as powerful as Superman would not want to confine his good deeds to Cleveland, Ohio alone. Indeed, almost from the start Superman is ready to head to any country to fight in their wars. But it also makes sense that Clark Kent and Lois Lane, as adept as they become along the way at being war correspondents (most notably in the conflict between "Galonia" and "Toran"), would soon be courted by a larger paper than the *Daily Star*. As of January 1940, Clark and Lois are both abruptly working for the *Daily Planet*, a newspaper based out of "Metropolis". It appears, for an entire year, that Taylor has followed his star reporters to the *Daily Planet*, until we learn that their new editor is Perry White, a man who only resembles Taylor (Superman #8).

Clark's editor at the *Daily Star*, Taylor, must have been disappointed to lose his two rising stars. Lois had worked for the *Daily Star* for years, gradually working her way up from a lovelorn column to hard-hitting journalism, while Clark had used reporting his own sensational feats to win him a spot on the journalism team. Indeed, Lois' animosity towards Clark is mostly fueled, not by his cowardice, but by anger over how quickly Clark was given the job she had coveted for years. Superman seems to spend a long time trying to make this up to Lois.

For years, Superman will allow Lois to have the scoop on any of his exploits, as long as she was on the right track, without using them to advance his own career. This seems to reverse by the spring of 1941, with Clark exploiting his Superman exploits to scoop Lois. It seems odd, given Clark's feelings for Lois that he would start being less charitable towards her instead of more. It is possible, as Clark has become busier as Superman, he simply does not have the time anymore to pursue serious journalism and has to "cheat".

The *Morning Pictorial* keeps cropping up as a rival to the *Daily Planet*. The antithesis of the *Daily Planet*, the *Morning Pictorial* is staffed by sleazy reporters and actual criminals.

Superman can have a ruthless streak to him. When he accidentally drops a hoodlum to his death, Superman only says, "the fate he received was exactly what he deserved!" (Action Comics #13) He is sometimes willing to stand by and let villains die (Superman #2) or even deliberately cause their deaths if he simply turns their weapons back on themselves (Action Comics #19, Superman #4). He is willing to shoot down planes with a machine gun without being overly concerned about if the pilots managed to eject and land safely or not (Action Comics #23). He punches a goon working for Luthor hard enough to knock him into a chemical vat that had been intended for killing Lois (Superman #4). Superman is willing to let a stick of dynamite bounce off himself and blow up villains as late as July 1941 (Superman #11). His most violent acts seem to occur when Ultra-Humanite or Luthor are involved. Apparently they get under his skin so much that he cannot control his anger around them sometimes. Other times, it is Superman's intense desire for justice that leads to deaths. As Clark, he testifies in court against racketeers so that three of them will die in the electric chair (Superman #2). But it is always important to Superman that he shoulder the responsibility for determining who lives and who dies himself. He will not allow a lynch mob of other like-minded vigilantes to kill a man. Some hint of inner guilt at the decisions he has made may be gleaned from Superman saying in

the summer of 1941, “I happen to understand the depths of the criminal mind” (World’s Finest Comics #2).

In Superman’s world, mostly just hoodlums are black-and-white evil. Superman has a soft spot for reforming people who have done bad things out of ignorance, whether it’s a munitions manufacturer who never realized how terrible war is (Action Comics #2), the rich owner of a badly-maintained mine (Action Comics #3), half-pint street urchins who just need a better role model than criminals (Action Comics #8), or a mayor who never realized how bad traffic casualties had become in Cleveland (Action Comics #12). By 1941, perhaps swept up in patriotism, Superman’s political stance has shifted away from such liberal causes as world peace and safe conditions for workers, to promoting U.S. rearmament.

Lois Lane, though sometimes comically portrayed as a “typical woman” obsessing on clothes, has strong journalistic skills, coupled with a “woman’s intuition” that allows her to sense when even Superman is following her (Superman #9). By May 1941, Lois has demonstrated other skills as well, including picking locks and climbing hand-over-hand under a tightrope. Though she does not act like a Mysteryman, she has somewhere along the way picked up the skills of a novice one. So impossible does it seem that Clark Kent could be anything other than a milquetoast, or so impossible that Superman could be less than he appears to be, that Lois only begins to slowly grow suspicious because Clark is so seldom around when she sees Superman (such as in Superman #11).

Taylor and White are both generic, interchangeable bosses this early in the Superman canon. While both hard-working and incorruptible, White is distinguished as being a heavy smoker as early as July 1941. Sgt. Casey is mostly just a generic cop, though we do learn that he lets Lois and Clark tag along on cases in exchange for favorable mentions in their articles. This becomes more important as Superman’s adventures shift away from social justice to crime investigation and solving mysteries.

It is, perhaps, not so surprising that the police continually greet Superman with suspicion, if not fear. Though the inventions of mad scientists, or the wills of some hypnotists, may challenge him, no one as physically imposing as Superman exists in his world until “the Ghost”, a man mutated by radium into a super-freak with one week to live (Action Comics #39, two months before Superman’s first cameo appearance as an honorary member of the Justice Society of America in All-Star Comics #7).

Supporting Cast Members:

Lois Lane, 1st-level Mysteryman, reporter and love interest

Taylor, editor of the Daily Star

“Scoop” Carter, rival reporter for the Metropolis Morning Pictorial

Sgt. Casey, 2nd-level Fighter of the Metropolis Police Force

Perry White, editor of the Daily Planet

**Editor’s Notes:** The entire list of powers found in H&H Book I are a catalog of the powers demonstrated by Superman from 1938-39. The variant Fly powers were introduced in The Trophy Case #6.

**Editor's Comments:** The defining evidence of when Superman's adventures began is the story in Action Comics #1 and 2 and the war it describes in South America. Although called San Monte, the country is clearly either Bolivia or Paraguay and the war described is the Chaco War of 1928-1935. Since Superman is shown ending the war in the original story, this has to have happened at the end of the Chaco War, and forms the first conclusive date in the chronology. Other early Siegel stories were also topical. A bad mine collapse really happened in Ohio in July 1937, similar to the event in Action Comics #3.

Consistent continuity is a curious problem in the early Superman stories. Clark and Lois move from Cleveland to Metropolis not only occurs without explanation and for a whole year Taylor is still the editor of the Daily Planet in Metropolis, as if they had all been there all along. It is the same with Superman's powers and uncertainty over whether Superman can fly or not. As late as September 1940, Superman has to glide with his cape because he cannot fly, yet he seems to have demonstrated flying on multiple occasions before this.

Just like Batman's "Gotham City", the name "Metropolis" seems to be only a name substitution for New York City. It would not be until years later that DC Comics would flesh out these cities into characters in their own right with their own distinct landmarks and history. Name substitution was a common practice in comic books, such as the substitution of "Galonia" and "Toran" for France and Germany. Of course, either way, it would be interesting to know where Gay City or "Gay City" is, which Superman visits in Superman #7.

The Daily Planet, Perry White, Jimmy Olsen, and the phrases "This looks like a job for Superman!" and "Up, up, and away!" all enter the comic book canon only after being first introduced on the radio program. Neither the continuity of the radio program nor the daily comic strip (except when reprinted in comic book form) were considered for this entry.

There are several factors to consider in order to optimize one's enjoyment of the Golden Age Superman. One is to consider the raw vitality of Joe Shuster's artwork. While crude – sometimes seemingly unfinished – the art gives the impression that the subject matter is so new that no one has figured out how to draw it yet.

The Biblical subtext of Superman – its combination of the stories of Moses and the Golem – is Judaism as interpreted by two young Jewish boys from Cleveland who understood the world of science fiction better than the world of the Old Testament. To understand Superman is to know the science fiction stories of the 1930s and how they were turned on their head by young Jerry Siegel asking "what if...?" What if Philip Wylie's Gladiator, instead of being a dark satire, was a played-straight utopian fantasy? What if Nimir, the villain from A. Merritt's The Face in the Abyss turned out to be, not an awful, alien presence, but a scrawny little redhead (later bald) with limitless ambition?

Jerry Siegel's stories, while sometimes naïve, are some of the most politically ambitious superhero stories for the next decades. While the superhero genre will soon hereafter fall into a rut of protecting the status quo, a rut that the superhero genre will rarely escape from for the rest of its history, Superman begins as a proactive hero ruggedly pursuing a socialist, social justice agenda. The early stories give every indication that Superman's story, instead of

becoming an infinitely open-ended saga, could have been a finite story arc ending with Superman curing all social ills.

<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</u>											
Hero Name	Superman					Alignment	Neutral				
Real Name	Clark Kent					Armor Class [AAC]	-1 [20]				
Class	Superhero					Level/Title	9/Amazing Man				
Race	Alien					Move	330				
Strength	18	Saves				Experience Points:	248,600				
Intelligence	18	Missiles	4			Hit Points:	71				
Wisdom	18	Poison	4			Money, on hand:	variable				
Constitution	18	Plot	6			Money, available:	\$11,000				
Dexterity	18	Science	5								
Charisma	18	Spells	5								
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]		
To Hit	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13		
Equipment (& location)			Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)					
Suits (his apartment, and possibly stashed in various storerooms around town)			Indescribable costume			Run faster					
Makeup kit (apt.)			Glasses			Bulletproof skin					
Rented apartment			Krypto raygun (handheld image projector)			Leap higher (4,608')					
Blue convertible roadster						Wrecking things (doors - D, machines - D, generators - D, robots - W, cars - W, trucks - W, tanks - 4, battleships - 7, dams - 10)					
						Powers (3 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2 4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> , typically Get Tough, Quick Change, Telescopic Vision, Hold Person,					

Special Abilities (cont.): Super-Hearing, Super-Tough Skin, Fly III, Race the Bullet, X-Ray Vision, Dig, Invulnerability, Push Ocean Liner, Fly V), True Strength of 36.

And lastly, though love triangles in the superhero genre would almost immediately become a cliché, the Lois-Clark-Superman love triangle was not only the first, but also one of the most complex and well-executed romances in the Golden Age of Comics.

### Superman's Villain: Ultra-Humanite

First appearance: Action Comics #13

Appearances to date: Action Comics #13, 14, 17, 19-21

Never was there an antagonist for Superman more his opposite. Both men came to prominence in Cleveland, Ohio in the 1930s and hid behind assumed names. But while Superman was a



young, robust man, the Ultra-Humanite was an old man confined to a wheelchair. Superman's greatest feats were accomplished through brawn, while the Ultra-Humanite accomplished things through brains and science. Naturally, these two men would come to despise the other, with Ultra perceiving Superman as a "freak of nature" (Action Comics #19). The growing war between them ended, temporarily, with Ultra's death caused by Superman's cavalier attitude about allowing villains' weapons to rebound and kill the shooters.

<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS VILLAIN RECORD</u>											
Hero Name	Ultra-Humanite					Alignment	Chaotic				
Real Name	Delores Winters					Armor Class [AAC]	9 [10]				
Class	Scientist/Villain					Level/Title	7 Edison/2 Bully				
Race	Human					Move	60				
Strength	4/11	Saves				Experience Points:	88,000/1,500				
Intelligence	18	Missiles	8			Hit Points:	9/15				
Wisdom	14/15	Poison	7			Money, on hand:	variable				
Constitution	3/13	Plot	8			Money, available:	\$66,000				
Dexterity	3/14	Science	7								
Charisma	12/16	Spells	9								
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]		
To Hit	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16		
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)					Special Abilities (racial, class-based)					
Cabin in the woods (w/ electric floor trap, secret door to radio room, sawing table that raises out of floor)	2-prop plane					Keen senses					
Plenty of white lab coats	Underground lair beneath a shed in the Ohio countryside (w/trapdoors, crystallization machine)					Hide in shadows					
Wheelchair	Electric raygun (tripod-mounted)					Inventing things (level 9 guns, level 5 mad science, level 1 pills & robots, level 4 transports)					
Inner city Cleveland tenement (w/chemical lab, telephone line hacking machine, acid gun, transparent metal wall, & image projector)	Hypnosis helmet					2 in 4 find/remove traps					
	Jet aircraft					Powers (1 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> )					
	Yacht					25% survival chance					
	Disappearing/reappearing paper					40% disguise chance					
	Submarine										

Trophies (cont.): lifelike face mask, women's clothes, semi-auto pistol, underwater cavern lair (w/ mind-transfer machine, 7 electric chairs, and torches), cat, autogyro w/ disintegrator raygun, torture ray, receiver-less radio, glass-domed city inside a volcano (w/ 2 robots, trap where walls raise and extend drills, remote-control detonator, disintegrator rifle).

But Ultra was not quite dead after all and survived long enough for his assistants to transfer his mind into a new body. Whether famous actress Delores Winters had the only body they could find compatible with the operation or Ultra was just perverted enough to want to be a gorgeous young woman in his second body was never revealed. In Delores' body, Ultra would grow his

operation outside the Midwest and tangle with Superman a few more times before jumping into a volcano to escape him. Whether or not that was the end of Ultra is never revealed.

Editor's Note: The ability scores below to the left of a slash denote Ultra's original body, while scores to the right of a slash denote when he resided in Delores Winters' body.

### Superman's Villain: Luthor

First appearance: Action Comics #23 (April 1940)

Appearances to date: Action Comics #23, 42; Superman #4, 5, 10, 12, 13

<b>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS VILLAIN RECORD</b>											
Hero Name	Luthor					Alignment	Chaotic				
Real Name	? Luthor					Armor Class [AAC]	9 [10]				
Class	Scientist/Villain					Level/Title	10 Scientist/3 Thief				
Race	Human					Move	60				
Strength	10	Saves				Experience Points: 652,000/3,000					
Intelligence	18	Missiles	6			Hit Points: 30					
Wisdom	15	Poison	5			Money, on hand: variable					
Constitution	13	Plot	6			Money, available: \$95,000					
Dexterity	12	Science	5								
Charisma	14	Spells	7								
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]		
To Hit	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15		
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)							
Semi-auto pistol	Improved image projector			Keen senses							
Rumpled clothes	(create hypnotic pattern or			Hide in shadows							
Zytl disguise	shoot death rays from			Inventing things (level 8 guns,							
The Light disguise	eyes)			level 10 mad science, level 1							
	Giant dirigible with a			pills & robots, level 5							
	palace supported under-			transports)							
	neath (w/ death ray			8/10 find/remove traps							
	cannon)			Powers (3 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 2 <sup>nd</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> )							
	Strength-sapper raygun			40% survival chance							
	Remote control detonator			55% disguise chance							
	Closed-circuit television										
	Crane										
	Weight-nullifier machine										

Trophies (cont.): "super-stratoliner" 1-prop plane (can fly around the world on 1 tank of gas), grenade, cannon, gas mask, poison gas, super knockout gas (-4 to save), laboratory-tower in Satan's Canyon (w/ earthquake raygun); sunken-then-raised island of Pacifo, an assortment of cloned dinosaurs, chemical vat; invisible helicopter (invisibility can be turned on and off),

asbestos suit, lightning gun; Cave of the Winds (w/ fire & electrical traps, secret passage to underground lab); invisible rocketship, flying city, electric compulsion machine.

While Superman was still busy building himself a rep in Cleveland, the man known only as Luthor was working behind the scenes to foment war and control countries in Europe. A small, slight man with a ragged mop of orange-red hair, Luthor certainly does not look like a world conqueror, yet his scientific genius makes him nearly the equal of Superman. Though initially off Luthor's radar, Superman's intervention soon becomes a factor Luthor has to continually plan for. Indeed, Luthor initially welcomes the challenge of proving himself superior to Superman.

The nadir of Luthor's schemes comes in the spring of 1940. Pulling out all the mad scientist stops, Luthor raises an ancient city off the ocean floor, one either already populated with dinosaurs or dinosaurs brought to life by Luthor, and threatens to flood all the adjoining continents.

By May 1941, Luthor is inexplicably bald (Superman #10). Or perhaps he had been bald all along and only wearing a wig. Regardless, he also appears to have been working out.

By November 1941, Luthor begins to take greater precautions to avoid run-ins with Superman, working twice under aliases in rapid succession ("Zytal" and "The Light", in Action Comics #42 and Superman #13 respectively).

## **EASTERN COLOR PRINTING**

From Wikipedia, "The Eastern Color Printing Company was a company which published comic books, beginning in 1933. At first it was only newspaper comic strip reprints, but later on original material was published. Eastern Color Printing was incorporated in 1928, and soon became successful by printing color newspaper sections for several New England and New York papers. Eastern is most notable for its production of Funnies on Parade and Famous Funnies, two publications that gave birth to the American comic book industry."

## **HYDROMAN**

Armor Class: 6 [13] Level: 3

Move: 60 Class: Fighter

Hit Points: 18 Align: Lawful

First appearance: Reg'lar Fellers Heroic Comics #1 (Aug. 1940)

Appearances to date: Reg'lar Fellers Heroic Comics #1-9

According to Wikipedia: "In 1940, a young chemical engineer named Harry Thurston accidentally created a compound that could convert human flesh into water, and he spilled some on his hand. He called out to his friend Bob Blake, who was then accidentally doused with a large amount of the substance and turned completely into "living water." Fortunately, Harry found an antidote and poured it into Bob; restored to human form, Bob soon discovered that he could now transform any part of his body into water and control its form and movement. Deciding to put his new abilities to good use, Bob became a costumed crimefighter and called

himself Hydroman. Originally his outfit was shirtless, but later he wore a see-through [and bulletproof] shirt.”

## **FAWCETT COMICS**

From Wikipedia, “Fawcett Publications began in 1919 with the magazine Captain Billy's Whiz Bang and eventually expanded into a line of periodicals with a combined circulation of ten million a month. Fawcett Comics, a division of Fawcett Publications, was one of several successful comic book publishers during the Golden Age of Comic Books in the 1940s. Its most popular character was Captain Marvel...developed by writer Bill Parker and artist C. C. Beck...”

## **BULLETMAN**

Armor Class: 6 [13] Level: 6  
Move: 60 Class: Superhero  
Hit Points: 35 Align: Lawful

First appearance: Nickel Comics #1 (May 1940)

Appearances to date: Nickel Comics #1-8, Master Comics #7-21, America's Greatest Comics #1, Bulletman #1-2

According to Wikipedia, “Jim Barr was the son of a police officer who was killed and as a result took it upon himself to fight crime. He was rejected from the police for physical reasons, but got a job in ballistics. Like many characters of the time, he used chemistry to develop powers for himself; in his case greater muscle mass and brain power using his 'crime cure'. He also invented a Gravity Regulator Helmet (which was bullet shaped and gave him his name), which allowed him to fly and deflect bullets.

“Shortly after Bulletman began his crime-fighting career, he created a second helmet for his girlfriend and later wife Susan Kent, daughter of policeman Sergeant Kent, who adopted the name Bulletgirl. His formula was shown to make him strong enough to smash a tank. The helmet is shown to be so strong that once when Bulletgirl was run over by a Nazi tank she was only knocked out.

“Bulletman and Bulletgirl were Fawcett Comics' second most popular characters after Captain Marvel and the Marvel Family.”

**Editor's Comments:** Bulletman's powers are probably a combination of Superhero powers and an actual gravity helmet trophy.

## **CAPTAIN MARVEL**

First appearance: Whiz Comics #2 (Feb. 1940)

Appearances to date: Whiz Comics #2-25, Special Edition Comics #1, Captain Marvel Thrill Book, America's Greatest Comics #1, Captain Marvel Adventures #1-5, Master Comics #20, 21

Young Billy Batson was a poor orphan selling newspapers (The Morning Herald) on a street corner, but forced to sleep in subway stations, when a mysterious stranger cloaked in shadow approached him. Though it appears that Billy was answering the stranger honestly about sleeping in the subway station, it is not clear whether Billy was choosing to be honest or was

compelled to answer. After his initial question, the stranger -- referred to from now on as Billy's "phantom companion" -- only talks to Billy in commands. Billy was compelled by either curiosity or magical means to accompany the phantom into a driverless subway train covered in arcane symbols. The train carried them to a weird, subterranean cavern with a row of statues depicting the Seven Deadly Enemies of Man. The Tiki-like statues depicted Pride, Envy, Greed, Hatred, Laziness, Selfishness, and Injustice. At the end of the corridor sat an old man, bearded and robed, in a stone throne under a stone block hanging by a thread. The old man knew Billy by name and identified himself as the wizard Shazam.

For 3,000 years, Shazam claims to have used the wisdom of Solomon, the strength of Hercules, the stamina of Atlas, the power of Zeus, the courage of Achilles, and the speed of Mercury to "battle the forces of evil". If Shazam has been active for 3,000 years, then he predates the Roman names of at least two of the gods who gave him their powers. If true, Shazam has been amazingly good at remaining anonymous while fighting evil over three millennia, though he has likely used aliases.

To demonstrate his omniscience to Billy, Shazam used the Historama, a "super-television screen", to show Billy's greedy, unnamed uncle who took Billy's inheritance and left Billy out in the cold like a Charles Dickens protagonist. More importantly, Shazam had watched every moment of Billy's life in the Historama in order to judge him worthy of becoming Shazam's successor. By speaking the name Shazam, Billy "became" Captain Marvel, a grown man in a military-themed uniform. No sooner did Shazam explain how to change back into Billy by saying "Shazam" again than the stone block, like the Sword of Damocles, fell and crushed Shazam to death. As if a spell was broken, Billy returned to the subway station instantly, thinking it was all just a dream.

This epic origin story would quickly launch into Billy's first encounter with the arch-mad scientist, Sivana, the next day. The article in which Billy first reads about Sivana labels him a "phantom scientist" and "mad wizard," as if directly paralleling Billy's phantom companion and the wizard Shazam. During the course of this adventure, Billy goes to Sterling Morris, head of the Amalgamated Broadcasting Corporation, for help and shrewdly barter Sivana's capture for a radio reporter's job (Billy initially asks to be an announcer), beginning a working relationship with Morris' company that will last through the entire run of Captain Marvel's adventures. The closeness in name to the short-lived Amalgamated Broadcasting System of New York (1933) is the best clue that Billy's never-named hometown is New York City. Sterling Morris is initially skeptical of Billy and mocks him, asking why he did not say the "Phantom" was in "City Hall" or "the Capitol at Washington." Morris' outburst of frustration may have been inspired by the FCC's efforts in 1940 to break-up the broadcasting companies and prevent monopolies. By 1941, Morris is not just Billy's employer, but his "close personal friend" (America's Greatest Comics #1).

Though Billy wastes 15 hours towards Sivana's deadline just trying to figure out a way into the apartment building Sivana is holed up in, once he tries his magic word Captain Marvel crashes in, wrecks Sivana's radio silencer machine, and ties up Sivana's hired goons in record time (Whiz Comics #2). Billy will frequently do this in his adventures, trying to solve problems on his own and only calling on Captain Marvel in emergencies. He will next demonstrate it by waiting



until the last moment to change into Captain Marvel to subdue an army, but then change back into Billy to sneak into the enemy camp and find Sivana (Whiz Comics #3a). One can only conjecture why this is. Perhaps Billy is unable to stay as Captain Marvel for too long, is too proud to rely on Captain Marvel all the time, or just feels uncomfortably not himself when he is Captain Marvel (“Ah, back to myself once more!” Billy exclaims once after changing back from Captain Marvel after a long stretch in Whiz Comics #25).

Billy will only slowly begin to rely on Captain Marvel for tasks he could do himself. In October 1940, he changes to Captain Marvel to reach the roof of a house instead of trying to climb it himself (Whiz Comics #9), but on other occasions he will grab onto a flying airplane as Captain Marvel, then change back to Billy to hitch a ride on the outside of it (Whiz Comics #7).

Upon encountering Sivana for the first time (though not in person yet; Sivana is only on a closed circuit television feed when first seen), Captain Marvel threatens to kill Sivana if he ever shows his face again (Whiz Comics #2). This seems to be a bluff, for though Captain Marvel (like many Golden Age superheroes) is not afraid of indirectly causing deaths, he is quick to administer soft justice on Sivana, like when he ignores the chance to send Sivana to jail and puts him on a rocket to Venus instead (Whiz Comics #4). Yet Marvel can be unmoved by death and even cruel. It is unclear how many people are in Sivana’s fortress when it explodes and are killed. Both Capt. Marvel and Billy seem unconcerned. Hopefully, the fortress is not heavily manned, with most of Sivana’s hirelings surely serving in his army or air force (Whiz Comics #3a). Captain Marvel is not above killing monstrous beings, which he encounters with unusual frequency. While on Venus, he tears off the tentacles of a tentacle tree (which appears to be both animal and vegetable) and burns the tentacles at the base of the tree while joking about it (Special Edition Comics). When shrunk to microscopic size and forced to fight intelligent germs, Marvel has no compulsion against killing their chieftain (Captain Marvel Adventures #2).

By the time we next see Billy, “every day millions of people listen to Billy Batson bringing thrilling news broadcasts direct from the scene”. The three examples of broadcasts that follow are clues to when Captain Marvel’s early adventures take place (see Editor’s Comments). In time, Billy will become such an influential broadcaster that even J. Edgar Hoover, Chief of the FBI, will agree to be interviewed by him (Whiz Comics #5).

An early watershed moment for Captain Marvel is when the President receives a letter from Sivana demanding he be made Emperor of the United States or he will take the country by force. For the first time since WWI, someone has declared war on the U.S., Sivana very likely has no intention of not using his army and only sent the letter to gloat. Sivana has a force of thousands of “super-soldiers” and “the mightiest air fleet in history”. Though invasions of the U.S. will soon become a staple of the superhero genre, this could be the earliest. That the battlefield reaches just a few miles from the nation’s Capital means that this could be the most nearly successful.

Since Sivana’s tanks do not closely resemble any nonfictional tanks, it is difficult to say how heavy they are. However, given their size compared to Captain Marvel standing next to them, it is possible that the heavy tanks weigh as much as 100 tons. Since Captain Marvel seems to be lifting them with difficulty – using both hands, crouching as he lifts, and preferring to tip them

over to tossing them around – this could be the earliest indication of the limits of Captain Marvel's strength (Whiz Comics #3a). The 100-ton limit seems to be confirmed on the following adventure when Captain Marvel is held captive with 2 50-ton weights holding him down (Whiz Comics #3b).

Billy shows no hesitation in changing into Captain Marvel in front of bad guys and repeatedly does so, yet only Sivana will ever take advantage of this knowledge. Indeed, most criminals who are present during the transformation seem entirely mystified as to what has happened (such as in Whiz Comics #5, when Billy transforms into Captain Marvel in the middle of a jewelry store, while a robbery is in progress in front of him). One could conjecture that the magical transformation “clouds” the minds of weak-minded men in the vicinity so they are unable to make the logical connections.

Sivana's mountain fortress is one of the first multi-level hideouts seen in the comic books. An airplane hangar under his castle, accessible by a giant elevator is “far beneath the Earth's surface” and inhabited by giant bats.

Although Captain Marvel clearly does not need a swinging kick to overpower Sivana's general and his two guards, he still chooses to attack them with the dramatic flourish of swinging his feet while hanging from a rafter (Whiz Comics #3a). Billy's influence, or Captain Marvel's character? Marvel will frequently show a childlike sense of whimsy. Another example is Marvel, on foot, chasing Sivana, on a motorcycle, in Whiz Comics #4. Marvel barrels straight through a passing train car with a chicken coop inside it, sending chickens flying everywhere, to whom Marvel pauses to say “Sorry to disturb you girls.” Captain Marvel can have a childlike sense of justice. Cheating, particularly in sports, upsets him so much that he will join teams on the spot in order to win a game if cheating is going on for the other side. He is also not above doling out his own punishments with a sense of whimsy. Upon catching one crook trying to rig a hockey game, instead of sending the crook to jail, Marvel makes the crook clean off the ice with his nose (Whiz Comics #13). Marvel also likes to prank bad guys by changing back and forth between Billy and Marvel just to fool them, or get them in trouble with their bosses.

Like many Golden Age superheroes, gas seems to be an early Achilles heel for the otherwise unbeatable Captain Marvel, though the “deadly” gas only knocks him out (Whiz Comics #3b) and it is soon revealed that Sivana's gas is potent enough to kill 50 men (Whiz Comics #4). That Golden Age comic book artists saw gas as a more fearsome threat than more conventional weapons, like bullets, is perhaps a holdover in the mindset of the times from the use of mustard gas as a horrifically effective weapon in WWI. We also know from this that, unlike some later superheroes with alter egos, Capt. Marvel does not turn back into Billy Batson when he loses consciousness.

Sivana's most ambitious schemes usually involve the planet Venus.

That Billy Batson is not suspicious about being lured out into the countryside to find a rocketship being built should not seem too naïve. The spaceships in H.G. Wells' 1901 First Men on the Moon and C.S. Lewis' 1938 (though not published in the U.S. until after this comic book was published) Out of the Silent Planet are both launched from rural back yards. It seems a

common misconception of the pre-Space Age that once a method was found to travel in space, it would be so easy it could be accomplished by a few people working in secret.

Sivana, disguised as Professor Xerxes Smith, shows considerable cunning in getting Billy Batson aboard the rocket. Rather than force Billy on board, or even ask him to come along, he initially tries to shoo Billy away and appears to only reluctantly let Billy talk him into coming on the trip to Venus. A bonus Sivana could surely not have anticipated is seeing Billy transform into Captain Marvel so that, from this point on, Sivana knows Captain Marvel's secret. Unless he already guessed it somehow. It does seem strange that Sivana wanted Billy on Venus if he did not already know this.

The terrain on the part of Venus where they land seems to be semi-tropical, with fog or mist that comes and goes between panels. The flora includes fern-like trees and other trees that look like palm trees. Some of the trees have red, round fruit that grow in clusters like many tropical fruits do. Some plants appear to just be giant blades of grass. The strangest trees have long stems, no visible branches, and clusters of white leaves that grow several feet apart from each other up the stem. Only some hills seem to be grassy or forested, while others are rocky and barren in the same vicinity.

The fauna of Venus is even stranger. Billy first encounters a yellow or gold dragon. This dragon exhibits no breath weapon, but has a tail with a stinger on it. The dragon also appears to only have one back leg, though the other leg is perhaps somehow concealed by the tail. It appears to be about the size of an elephant.

The next monster Billy (now as Captain Marvel) encounters is said to be a giant eagle, though it looks more like a giant condor or vulture with what appears to be a very long, barbed tail instead of a short and feathery tail. Weirder, instead of lying its eggs in a nest and waiting for them to hatch, this bird drops its eggs from a great height and lets them shatter. Each egg contains roughly eight black tadpole-like larvae with crab-like claws that somehow grow into birds later. The larvae are born able to move about and hunt for food. They are only one foot long, with one-foot tails.

On a return visit to Venus, Captain Marvel finds forested hills inhabited by flying crocosaur ("flying", as in flying squirrels), tentacle trees (with strangely owl-like faces), and giant locusts up to 10 ft. long (Special Edition Comics, though tentacle trees are first seen on the cover of Whiz Comics #4).

The Palace of the Empress of Venus has towers at least five stories high. It is apparently the Venusian Frog-Men who built it. Although the frog-men do not seem to speak, they can be made to understand instructions and perform such complex tasks as knot-tying. Whoever built it, the palace was clearly built for Beautia, the Empress of Venus, who has a not-yet revealed relationship to Sivana.

It is an underutilized use of the Wisdom of Solomon that allows Captain Marvel to reproduce Sivana's rocket ship. Mastering technology is usually seen as a product of intelligence rather than wisdom, but this power seems to be broader than just that. The Wisdom of Solomon

apparently also grants Captain Marvel the ability to speak any ancient language (Whiz Comics #22).

Beautia turns up a week after Billy makes it back to Earth at the “Empress of Beauty” contest, representing Venus. That a “Miss Kentucky” is also in the contest, though, seems to suggest this is actually the Miss America Pageant, which began in 1921. That Beautia is not disqualified from winning by representing another planet is no surprise when the judges are all male. When the narrator says Beautia’s beauty acts as a drug on males, it is likely not just because Beautia resembles movie star Betty Grable; we can assume this is literally true somehow. It is possible that Sivana has chemically altered her to release pheromones that affect men.

A long misunderstood fact about Captain Marvel has always been: is he Billy in the form of a man, or a different being who trades places with Billy? In the first two adventures of Captain Marvel, the latter seemed to be the case, but in this issue Captain Marvel blushes like a boy at Beautia’s note, as well as showing resistance earlier to Beautia’s drug-like beauty. This, then, is the first issue to raise the suspicion of the first theory. Perhaps the real explanation is, Billy and Captain Marvel are either, depending on the whims of the writer (Whiz Comics #3b).

Beautia and Sivana turn up again soon thereafter when Beautia runs for President of the United States as a third party candidate. Sivana’s scheme of making Beautia President so that she can then become queen does not make a lot of sense, but many of Sivana’s plots do not make much sense. The man is smart, but not wise! To further illustrate this, Sivana constantly ignores the much easier option of taking out Billy with a sniper and builds more and more elaborate machines to counter Billy’s transformation power, starting with his “memory mangler ray”. And further, Sivana insists on always following the villain cliché of leaving Billy or Marvel in deathtraps unguarded.

That Beautia is not evil like Sivana is demonstrated when she saves Billy from Sivana’s thugs, then later urges Sivana not to kill Captain Marvel (Whiz Comics #4). Though we do not learn the secret of Beautia’s relationship to Sivana until Sivana’s origin is revealed in Whiz Comics # (see Sivana’s entry below), these origins go a long way in explaining why Beautia does not share Sivana’s wicked nature.

While amnesiac, Billy happens to stumble upon the cavern housing Shazam’s throne through tunnels connected to Sivana’s hideout. It is unlikely that the hideout, by some coincidence, actually connected. Rather, it is more likely that Billy can magically find his way back to the cavern whenever he really needs to, no matter where he is (Whiz Comics #4).

Despite the importance of Captain Marvel’s early adventures, he remains surprisingly unknown, with a police officer unable to recognize him as late as June 1940. The same can be said for Billy who, despite his renown on the radio, goes unrecognized in person “because his picture seldom appears in print” (Whiz Comics #5). And as late as September 1940, Captain Death mistakes Captain Marvel for just “some fool in a red uniform” (Whiz Comics #8). But by December 1940, Captain Marvel is well known enough that “Marvel College” is using a variant of Captain Marvel’s costume as the uniform for their football team (Whiz Comics #11). Billy does not always report Captain Marvel’s involvement in his adventures, attributing his survival sometimes to luck (Whiz Comics #12). In an unusual inversion of the genre, Billy Batson may

actually be more popular – within his fictional world, not necessarily ours – than his superhero alter ego. As of April 1941, Billy Batson has his own fan club, but no fan club for Captain Marvel until November 1941 (Whiz Comics #15, 24).

Sivana's next caper raises some questions. If Sivana is on Earth, who sent the rocket ships from Venus? Does Beautia have the scientific know-how and the rocket ships are on auto pilot? It is true that Beautia is a chemist in her own right (Whiz Comics #13), but apparently not a scientist of Sivana's caliber. Are the frog-men smarter than they initially appeared? The "prehistoric" animals that show up from Venus include a dragon, a mammoth, saber-toothed tigers, "crocosaur", and a "gorillion", but what possibly benefit Sivana could gain from putting them in a zoo is known only to Sivana (Whiz Comics #6).

Despite Captain Marvel's magic origin, most of his adventures tend to have a science fiction bent. Many fantastic beings are explained as being of extraterrestrial origin. Even when not dealing with Sivana, Marvel spends a lot of time fighting mad scientists like Dr. Lake and his hypnotizing machines (Whiz Comics #5) or Rodney Stark and his super-intelligent cavemen at the North Pole (Whiz Comics #7). The supernatural would be rare enough in Billy's world that it might have been three years before he saw his next supernatural being after the wizard Shazam (see Editor's Comments for the explanation of "might have been").

This next encounter occurs when Billy interviews a Dr. Deever who has invented an elixir to bring the dead back to life. Experimenting on the remains of one Bram Thirla, Deever succeeds, but Bram returns changed. "When dead bones come to life, that life is different from what Nature knew," Bram explains. He is now a vampire. Marvel and Thirla find their powers stalemated until Billy reads a book on vampires written by H.P. Lovecraft ("The Vampire Legend") and learns to kill Thirla with a stake cut from a white thorn tree (Captain Marvel Adventures #1).

Vampires, in Billy's world, always have bat wings, even in human form, and can fly, become gaseous, shape-change, merge bodies with other vampires into giant shapes, and drain the life force from living beings to make more vampires. They are repulsed by garlic, sunrise temporarily kills them, and they are permanently killed only by white thorn stakes, but otherwise the traditional weaknesses of vampires (permission to enter, running water) do not seem to hold true.

Though Captain Marvel is initially limited to running and jumping *ala* Superman, he is clearly flying by August 1940 (Whiz Comics #7).

Billy is a capable airplane pilot and is allowed to fly planes owned by the Amalgamated Broadcasting Company, even though his borrowed company planes tend to get destroyed (Whiz Comics #7 and 8). Billy is also a capable detective, solving the mystery of how the "Elban" crown jewels were stolen on his own without needing Captain Marvel's Wisdom of Solomon (Whiz Comics #9). Billy is made of tough stuff, willing to set a gag over his mouth on fire in order to free himself. Billy, however, is terrible at disguises. He relies on dark sunglasses to try to hide his identity from Beautia (Whiz Comics #10) and paints his face black to try to pass himself off as "Rastus Washington Brown from Alabam" (Whiz Comics #12). And he is

absolutely terrible at seeing through disguises on others. Sivana just has to put on a fake mustache or beard and Billy is fooled every time.

Apparently, despite their friendship, Morris has had enough of Billy wrecking planes. The next time he flies courtesy of Amalgamated Broadcasting, it is as a passenger (Whiz Comics #21).

Billy's age is never revealed. He appears to be about 8-12 years old, yet in December 1940 Billy applies to "Marvel College" (in pursuit of a story there) and the dean of the college does not act as if there is anything unusual about this (Whiz Comics #11). Also, Billy never, ever goes to school. It is possible, though still unlikely, that Billy is actually 18, but only drawn to look much younger.

Late in 1940, Billy is shown apparently having his own apartment. His bedroom has a single bed, chair, sports memorabilia on the walls (Billy is either a collector or a fan of boxing and tennis), a window view of (presumably) some neighborhood in Manhattan, and his own private telecaster on a table. He also owns a guitar, though we never learn if Billy is any good at it (Whiz Comics #15). Since Billy is still likely under 18, then someone else has co-signed on his lease, most likely Sterling Morris himself (since Billy has no other supporting cast members at this time)(Special Edition Comics). One can also presume that, at some point, Billy drops out of college, finding he has no time for that, a full-time career, and being Captain Marvel.

Though Captain Marvel's most frequent nemesis is clearly Sivana, he has his share of other "super-villains". "Slaughter" Slade is a heavyweight boxing champ, hypnotist, and also (according to Slade) knows more than all human knowledge. His co-conspirator in a plot to assassinate the entire federal government is Dr. Allirog, apparently a human scientist with the body of a gorilla. Dr. Allirog dies, toppling off the Washington Monument after kidnapping President Roosevelt, and one can assume that Slade is sentenced to death for treason since he never appears again. He did leave behind a pretty nifty secret underground hideout somewhere in New York, though, complete with a giant spider-infested dungeon and a machine capable of "burning" all the facts of human knowledge into someone's head.

In the same case of "Slaughter" Slade, the existence of a Professor Universe is revealed, a "sinister master of all knowledge" who lives in a modest house in the New York countryside. Professor Universe sells books containing all knowledge at reasonable rates, with a book containing all of human knowledge going for only \$200,000. Captain Marvel never meets Professor Universe in the course of the adventure, though, and may be unaware of his existence to this day (Special Edition Comics).

Captain Marvel's next "supervillain" opponent is Z. In March 1941, Sivana tries building his own version of Captain Marvel. Z appears to be a dashing man in a blue jumpsuit with a big letter "Z" on his chest, but is actually an android powerful enough that Marvel has to fight it three times before he can destroy it. Before its destruction, Z believes itself to be a living being and acts politely and respectfully to others, even has it tries to kill anyone Sivana commands it to kill (Captain Marvel Adventures #1).

George D. Tweedle is both a chemist and an insurance salesman. Tweedle creates a lotion that can change him into an ugly, super-strong person (*a la* Jekyll and Hyde) able to create fire.



Calling himself the Arson Fiend, he kills and destroys anywhere people have not bought fire insurance from him (Captain Marvel Adventures #2).

"Muscles" McGinnis is a mob boss who, for unexplained reasons, is superhumanly strong, -- strong enough to break rocks with his fists -- though not as strong as Captain Marvel. After Captain Marvel beats him up, McGinnis has an epiphany in jail about not having to be bad just because you are tough and, upon his release, becomes an honest cop (Captain Marvel Adventures #3).

The Beast-Ruler is a man created by Sivana out of mostly animal parts, which somehow bestows him not only great strength and agility, but also the ability to summon animals and control non-domesticated animals (Captain Marvel Adventures #3).

Billy/Marvel investigates more complex hideouts than the average superhero, such as the haunted Groot Mansion. The mansion has trapdoors, dungeon cells with secret passages, a carriage house with a skeletal horse and skeletal driver arranged around a carriage, a secret door with a fake monster behind it, a tilting floor that can fling someone through a doorway, and an underground chamber full of poison gas. Captain Marvel figures out the clue in Groot's will and recovers \$3 million in gold from under the mansion (Special Edition Comics).

The theme of Beautia's redemption is important in the early stories. By November 1940, Beautia has resurfaced on Earth, but posing as Dot Darling, "America's only newsreel camerawoman". Somehow, no one but Billy can recognize her, despite the fact that Beautia very publicly ran for President just the previous year. Of course, Beautia is acting as a spy for Sivana, who is this time plotting against the U.S. Navy in the Pacific Ocean, where Sivana now has a fortified island hideout and his own battleship. Billy/Marvel is quick to forgive Beautia when she tries to turn on Sivana to warn the Navy; Captain Marvel not only saves her life, but Billy lets her take the credit for saving the Pacific fleet (Whiz Comics #10). Beautia, upon Sivana's capture, always claims to have been an unwilling assistant and promises "to be good" (Whiz Comics #13).

When Billy transforms into Captain Marvel, the change is accompanied by thunder and lightning in the vicinity (or outdoors, if Billy is inside). Billy can raise or lower the volume of the thunder by shouting or whispering his magic word (Whiz Comics #11).

At some point, Billy learns how to use the magic word to summon Captain Marvel without changing into him. As an invisible presence, Billy's "other self" can give Billy advice only he can hear (Whiz Comics #11).

The peculiar relationship between Billy Batson and Sivana sometimes leads to odd stalemates. Sivana, knowing who Billy can become, has no choice but to let Billy sometimes wander into his hideouts and threaten him at his leisure. Billy, for his part, does not want to bring Sivana to justice for fear that Sivana will share Billy's secret identity with the world, so he keeps exiling Sivana back to Venus instead (Special Edition Comics). Sivana will not spend any time in a jail until February 1940 (Whiz Comics #13). Sivana is never executed for treason, but only sentenced to 9,000 years of hard labor.

It is January 1941 before Billy takes any interest in stopping the Nazis, though his initial foray is only concerned with defending Britain from attacks and making sure refugees can come to America safely (Whiz Comics #12). Billy/Marvel does not take an interest in freeing occupied France until the Nazis start forcing the French to build a tunnel “under” the Atlantic to reach the United States in October 1941, which Captain Marvel learns about from a defecting Nazi lieutenant. Though Marvel has been slow to deal with the Nazi menace, he has a special hatred for them. He pays a “social call” on Hitler, telling him, “The biggest mistake you made was to stop being a joke. The world doesn’t laugh at you – it gags at you.” When Hitler begs on his knees not to be killed, Marvel responds, “You’ll have to die at a special time, in a special way, so that the world will profit by your destruction and have peace forever” (Captain Marvel Adventures #4). Captain Marvel never intentionally murders anyone in cold blood until he turns a machine gun on Nazi soldiers. Then Marvel finishes the invasion tunnel himself so the French slave laborers can escape to America, lures the Nazi army into the tunnel, and collapses the tunnel – killing all of them (Captain Marvel Adventures #4). This whole story may be apocryphal, though, given the unlikelihood of being able to build a tunnel 3,000 miles long thousands of feet under the ocean.

In March 1941, Sivana seems to have his ultimate revenge. Having figured out mathematically how to phase through solid matter, Sivana begins a one-man crime wave and begins to accomplish all his old goals. He robs millions from Fort Knox, kills or kidnaps much of the federal government, and imprisons Billy Batson, but is thwarted when Captain Marvel figures out the same mathematical formula in much less time (Whiz Comics #14). Although Beautia is present in Sivana’s lair, this time she is there as his prisoner.

Sivana will periodically betray her again in the future, but father and daughter always wind up forgiving each other. Of course, in Sivana’s case, he likely has an ulterior motive. Perhaps he counts on Beautia’s relationship with Marvel to make Marvel go easier on him. Indeed, Captain Marvel seems to gain a begrudging respect for Sivana. When Sivana appears to have blown himself up, Marvel never doubts Sivana survived. “It’ll take more than a mere blow-up to get old Sivana. He’s probably hiding somewhere at this very moment” (Captain Marvel Adventures #4).

Captain Marvel will use his ability to pass through walls at least one more time before apparently forgetting it (or just finding it more fun to crash through them)(Whiz Comics #16). He will also invent a radio capable of picking up sound from anywhere in the world (Captain Marvel Adventures #3).

Sometimes his own strength gets the better of Captain Marvel. On two occasions he punches ordinary hoodlums hard enough to knock them through walls, an impact likely to kill a normal man (Captain Marvel Adventures #1, 3). In the fight with Muscles McGinnis, Marvel uses a punch hard enough that he almost never has to use it (Captain Marvel Adventures #3). Other times he might just get carried away, like tearing apart a bridge just to dump some mobsters into the river (Captain Marvel Adventures #4).

Apparently also in that same month, Billy takes a vacation to the Mythic West and tangles with rustlers there. When a grown woman named Daisy grabs Captain Marvel and tries to kiss him, he shouts, “Help! Help!” and changes back to Billy to escape her (Captain Marvel Adventures

#1). This experience may, however, have stoked Billy's interest in the opposite sex, as seen in upcoming developments with Beautia.

Billy's portable backpack-radio also doubles as a fax machine (the technology for a fax machine has been around since 1843; it just has not been practical until modern times)(Captain Marvel Adventures #1).

At some point, Captain Marvel seems to have had his adventure in deepest Outer Space yet when Billy intercepts a radio distress call from the planet Saturn. Luckily, Billy/Marvel has saved one of Sivana's rocket ships (somewhere – where is never explained) and uses it to reach Saturn and fight the Dragon Men from "Beyond the Stars" who have enslaved the human-like denizens of Saturn. The Saturnian slaves identify Captain Marvel as the "thunder god" their legends say will free them. The dragon men have death rays and heat rays and paralysis rays, but Marvel still bests them and leads the slaves in revolt. However, unless Marvel has made significant improvements on the Venusian rockets' top speed, it should still take him at least 100 days to reach Saturn (the speed of the rockets is revealed in Whiz Comics #14). It also seems uncharacteristic of Billy to devote so much time and effort to getting involved in a dispute on another planet when he normally allows political disputes on Earth to run their own course, even when war is involved (see above for his limited engagement of the Nazis). This is likely, then, an apocryphal tale and one of the earliest in the superhero genre (Captain Marvel Adventures #1).

In April 1941, a new development occurs in Billy/Marvel's relationship with Beautia when Billy changes into Captain Marvel so he can go out on a date with her. Billy indicates that he is only doing this because he is bored, but the unspoken fact is that, if Billy can change into a man anytime he wants to, he is technically ...equipped to be involved in an adult relationship. Except for one date, the relationship is never explored further. When Sivana returns yet again, Beautia again sides with him against Billy. Perhaps rightly feeling betrayed, Billy not only avoids Beautia's affections for the rest of their adventures together, but becomes embarrassed by any affection from adult women from then on. Billy's next date will be with Princess Katinka of "Mentonia" for strawberry sodas – a girl his own age (Captain Marvel Adventures #5).

In what seemed to have been intended at the time to be Captain Marvel's final battle with Sivana, Marvel briefly encounters Beautia's brother, Magnificus. Magnificus is super-strong, not at Marvel's level, but strong enough to hold his own for a short time in a battle against him. No explanation for Magnificus' strength is ever given and he is never seen again (Whiz Comics #15).

Captain Marvel has one of the first crossovers with another comic book character (albeit one from his own anthology comic book) when the Mask brainwashes Spy Smasher into turning evil and hating the government. Over the course of the next months, Marvel will chase Spy Smasher, a man with no ability to physically challenge Marvel, but with the wiles to outwit him or at least leave enough lives in peril behind to distract him while Spy Smasher gets away. Spy Smasher will also act erratically, stealing a powerful gas from the Army so deadly that even Marvel cannot bear breathing it for long, but then abandons using it to build a giant lawn mower

that he thinks he can mow down an Army base with. In the end, Nazi agents get involved, but Captain Marvel finally captures Spy Smasher and restores him to sanity (Whiz Comics #16-18).

Spy Smasher will observe that Captain Marvel is unusually heavy for his size, estimating he weighs 250 lbs. (though, given the body density required for superhuman strength, that might actually seem light; but then again, Marvel's strength could just be magical and not physiological in nature)(Whiz Comics #16).

Briefly, Captain Marvel adopts the alias of Smith and a suit of ordinary clothes so he can serve *incognito* as Sterling Morris' bodyguard against Spy Smasher. Morris comes under Spy Smasher's attention for being asked by the government to "organize" radio stations to help with civil defense (Whiz Comics #17).

During the course of the Spy Smasher adventure, Captain Marvel learns Spy Smasher's secret identity. How is not revealed, but it is likely that he heard it between scenes from Spy Smasher's girlfriend, Eve Corby.

In the summer of 1941, Sivana has already recovered from his critical injuries in their last battle. While Captain Marvel and Beautia are briefly shrunk down to microscopic size together by Sivana, Beautia admits to being in love with Captain Marvel, but Billy/Marvel does not overhear it. When she refers to Marvel as her boyfriend, Marvel stammers and avoids the subject, but the situation is left unresolved. It is not clear what Beautia does to provide for herself after going straight, but she is revealed in December 1941 to be working with orphans, a situation she can perhaps empathize with because of her own broken family (Captain Marvel Adventures #5). No one has still told Beautia about Captain Marvel and Billy Batson being one and the same.

In the summer of 1941, a fleet of spaceships from the Spider-Men of Mars (which turn out to be large robots, built by yet another race of human-like aliens) supposedly arrives over New York City for an invasion, but in this tale Captain Marvel boasts he can fly to Mars in five minutes, when he never even tried flying to Venus without a rocketship before. This is likely an apocryphal tale as well (Captain Marvel Adventures #2).

Another story from the summer of 1941 suggests that Captain Marvel needs air to breathe, though he has been shown surviving at length in the vacuum of space before (Captain Marvel Adventures #2). Inconsistent use of superpowers is common enough in the Golden Age, though, and does not itself constitute an apocryphal story.

Perhaps feeling the vampire Thirla was just a fluke, and confident that Captain Marvel is the product of white magic, Billy begins a campaign exposing black magic as fakery in July 1941. The Black Magician tries to make Billy pay with a Voodoo doll, but when Billy says "Shazam", the Voodoo doll briefly turns into a living Captain Marvel and defeats the Black Magician. When Marvel destroys the Magician's book of black magic, both the Magician and his apprentice Pip are rendered insane (Whiz Comics #19).

(Note the name of Pip. Besides Billy's poor orphan origins, Dr. Lake and his lieutenants were referred to as "Fagins". Charles Dickens themes and motifs will pop up periodically throughout.)

Exploring loopholes in Shazam's spell soon becomes a recurring motif of the stories. It is a necessary component of the spell that Billy not only say "Shazam", but that it be audible. If Billy's voice is drowned out by louder noise, the transformation does not occur. It is also possible for a reasonable facsimile of Billy's voice, like a parrot imitating him, to turn Billy into Captain Marvel. The Black Magician's Voodoo doll was an early exploration in finding ways to transfer Billy's powers. This loophole is further tested when Billy Batson meets three other boys all named Billy Batson. It turns out that Shazam's spell, either by accident or design, does not empower Billy Batson specifically when he says "Shazam", but anyone whose name is Billy Batson. The three other Billy's – "Tall Billy" from out West, "Fat Billy" from Brooklyn, and "Hill Billy" from down South – form a Billy Batson Club, which impresses "Real Billy" enough that he recklessly reveals his secret identity to them. In their cases, though, instead of transforming into another being like Captain Marvel, each of the boys simply gains Captain Marvel's powers and costume. They have to say "Shazam" at the same time as "Real Billy" in order to be empowered. The three "Lieutenant Marvels" return in October 1941 (Captain Marvel Adventures #4).

Sivana, too, enlists three allies – Captain Death (from Whiz Comics #8, though he looks different now) and two newcomers, the Nazi Herr Geyer and a mob boss called "Biggy" Brix -- and shares Billy's secret with them, but all four seem to die in a plane crash at the end of the adventure (Whiz Comics #21). Sivana, of course, survives.

Billy does not have to wear the same clothes all the time, but he does have to wear something close to what he had on when Shazam first cast his spell on him. If Billy puts on something too different, like a hat or a suit, then Captain Marvel shows up wearing those clothes too.

The 1941 "Adventures of Captain Marvel" movie serial exists in Billy's world; Sivana is angered by billboards for the serial and inspired to build himself a robot suit so he can fight Marvel one-on-one. (Whiz Comics #20). Billy apparently helped film the movie serial, perhaps working on it as a consultant. Though how much of the content in the serial is the same is questionable. "Whitey" Murphy -- a white-haired young man, possibly in his teens – starred in the serial (and was a character played by an actor in the real world version) and befriended Billy then, apparently learning Billy's secret identity during the filming of the serial. In October 1941, Whitey asks Billy to help him find John Malcolm – an explorer also featured in the serial (another character in the real world version, but a real person in Billy's world) – who has become lost in Guatemala (Whiz Comics #22). Upon returning home from Guatemala, Whitey becomes Billy's assistant, working for Amalgamated Broadcasting.

In Guatemala, Billy and Whitey explore a Mayan temple. The first Mayan temple, built onto the side of a mountain, serves as only an entrance to the hollow interior of the mountain. The land inside is guarded by a troop of monkeys and inhabited by Mayan descendants who still speak the ancient language. At the heart of the mountain is a second temple, this one "guarded" by a giant statue that seems to be alive and roaring, but is actually moved by flaming gas jets underneath it.

Captain Marvel comic book stories are also published in Whiz Comics, and probably other comic books, in Billy's world (as referred to in Whiz Comics #21 and Captain Marvel Adventures #5).

Sivana, no longer interested in even trying to hide his hideouts from Captain Marvel, simply sets up a business place called Nefarious Research Inc. in August 1941 (Whiz Comics #20). On more than one occasion, Billy simply walks up to Sivana's door to see what he's up to (again in Captain Marvel Adventures #3).

In November 1941, Sterling Morris' involvement in civil defense has upgraded to work in espionage. Though Sterling Morris dismisses the possibility of Billy even being "in league with" Captain Marvel as late as October 1941 (Captain Marvel Adventures #4), he seems to have deduced Billy is Captain Marvel by now. Captain Marvel is tasked by Sterling Morris (as Billy is often tasked) to help Lulette, daughter of the U.S. Ambassador to Great Britain (the real world ambassador was John Gilbert Winant, but this ambassador is a fatter man), and Sir Roger Fittz-Down Chipley, Lieutenant in His Majesty's Secret Service, deliver a secret code to the British. When the code is discovered *en route*, Captain Marvel writes a new one, but then shares it with his own fan club (Whiz Comics #24).

The last great Captain Marvel saga of 1941 begins in December when Hitler unveils German science's answer to Captain Marvel – Captain Nazi. Charged with assassinating Captain Marvel, Bulletman, Spy Smasher, and Minute Man, Captain Nazi arrives in the U.S. and challenges Bulletman first to stop him. Captain Marvel, somehow sensing the danger of Captain Nazi, arrives to lend a hand and help search the city for him. Captain Nazi test the heroes at first, committing random acts of senseless destruction and letting the heroes find him one at a time and try and stop him. Captain Nazi eludes Bulletman, but Captain Marvel catches up to him and fights him over a lake where young Freddy Freeman and his grandpa are fishing. And these events lead straight into the origin of Captain Marvel Junior (see below). Billy, either compelled by guilt or destiny, carries Freddy to Shazam's throne and, for the first time, Billy is revealed as knowing how to summon back the ghost of Shazam to speak to him. Whether Billy somehow guessed this in the past or magically has this knowledge now when he needs it is not revealed.

Supporting Cast Members:

Shazam, 18<sup>th</sup>-level Magic-User, ghost

Sterling Morris, President of Amalgamated Broadcasting Corporation and part-time spy for the United States

Beautia Sivana, 2<sup>nd</sup>-level Scientist

Spy Smasher (see below)

Eve Corby, Spy Smasher's girlfriend

Whitey Murphy, Billy's assistant

"Tall" Billy Batson, 2<sup>nd</sup>-level Superhero

"Fat" Billy Batson, 2<sup>nd</sup>-level Superhero

"Hill" Billy Batson, 2<sup>nd</sup>-level Superhero

Lulette Winant (?), U.S. ambassador's daughter and part-time spy



Sir Roger Fittz-Down Chipley, Lieutenant in His Majesty's Secret Service, 3<sup>rd</sup>-level Fighter Bulletman (see above)

<b><u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</u></b>										
Hero Name	Captain Marvel				Alignment	Lawful				
Real Name	Billy Batson				Armor Class [AAC]	-1 [20]				
Class	Superhero				Level/Title	9/Amazing Man				
Race	Alien				Move	330				
Strength	18	Saves			Experience Points: 312,000					
Intelligence	18	Missiles	4			Hit Points: 63				
Wisdom	19	Poison	4			Money, on hand: variable				
Constitution	18	Plot	6			Money, available: \$30,000				
Dexterity	18	Science	5							
Charisma	18	Spells	5							
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]	
To Hit	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
<b>Equipment (&amp; location)</b>	<b>Trophies (&amp; location)</b>			<b>Special Abilities (racial, class-based)</b>						
Boys' clothes (lots of red sweaters, in apt.)	Indestructible costume			Run faster						
Men's suit (apt.)	Portable backpack radio & fax machine			Bulletproof skin						
Tennis racket (apt.)	Universal radio			Leap higher (4,608')						
Guitar (apt.)				Wrecking things (doors - D, machines - D, generators - D, robots - W, cars - W, trucks - W, tanks - 4, battleships - 7, dams - 10)						
Trophy for most outstanding radio work of the year, 1941 (apt.)				Powers (3 1 <sup>st</sup> -3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2 4 <sup>th</sup> -5 <sup>th</sup> , typically Detect Evil, Get Tough, Quick Change, Get Tougher, Hypnotism,						
Rented 1-bedroom apt. in New York City										
Private news telecaster (apt.)										

Special Abilities (cont.): Super-Tough Skin, Fly III, Hold Breath, Imperviousness, Dig, Hold Train, Fly V, Push Ocean Liner, True Strength of 37.

Beautia's pageant, if in fact the Miss America Pageant, places the story in Whiz Comics #3b in September. Beautia next runs for President two months before elections, also placing the story in Whiz Comics #4 in September. More telling, an amnesiac Billy wanders back to Shazam's throne that he had last seen "last year", meaning we are still in September of 1939 in Whiz Comics #4. Given this span of time between the early issues, Billy's rocket trip to Venus could have taken anywhere from two weeks to six months.

In addition to the apocryphal stories described above, there are other instances that cannot happen because characters break the “fourth wall”, revealing themselves to be comic book characters. One story has Sivana giving Billy a potion that changes him into someone else who doesn’t remember being Captain Marvel, but new-Billy wanders into a group of kids who know all about Billy being Captain Marvel by saying “Shazam” supposedly from reading comic books. Another story has Captain Marvel showing up on Bulletman’s doorstep to announce that they’ll be teaming up in the next issue.

Much has been written about how Captain Marvel, for a time, outsold Superman and was the most popular superhero of the Golden Age of Comics. Often this is attributed to how Billy Batson is a better vessel for the wish fulfillment fantasies of young readers than Clark Kent. That might well be true. But it is worth mentioning that the Whiz Comics stories by Bill Parker and C.C. Beck are just really, really good. When the Captain Marvel stories in other titles were farmed out to lesser hands – not counting Joe Simon and Jack Kirby’s standout issue – the results are spotty at best despite Billy Batson’s allure. The strong sense of continuity in Whiz Comics and the prevalence of superhuman villains in Captain Marvel Adventures both foreshadow the Silver Age of Comics.

Lastly, Captain Marvel’s detailed, site-based adventures are perfect inspiration for H&H scenarios.

**Editor’s Notes:** Though the comic books never spell it out, Captain Marvel seems to be a magical construct and not a human being. Billy becomes the magical construct when he says the magic word. That Captain Marvel is not a living being seems to be evidenced by his many superhuman abilities, but also by the vampire Thirla’s inability to drain life force from him. In terms of race, a case could be made for labeling Captain Marvel as an android, which is technically closer to a magical construct, but the mechanics of the alien race are a closer match.

Billy and Marvel are such physically different alter egos that they must be started separately.

That Billy is quite the capable scrapper may come as a surprise to the casual reader (in Captain Marvel Adventures #4 he holds his own against three of Sivana’s goons singlehanded without resorting to Captain Marvel). However, by the Superhero rules for H&H, Captain Marvel spends so much time out of costume as Billy Batson that Billy should be earning at least half of Captain Marvel’s Experience Points. So why is Billy not a higher-level Fighter? The answer is: if Billy were being played in H&H, his player would be turning down XP that would advance Billy faster in order to maintain the character at a power level that fits his feel for the character.

The variant Fly powers were introduced in The Trophy Case #6.

**Editor’s Comments:** While many write-ups in this volume assign dates by cover date for the ease of it, a more accurate dating can be done on the early Captain Marvel stories.

In Whiz Comics #3a, we see Billy at a fire, a prison break, and a hurricane. The most recent, in Billy’s time, example of a real-world, disastrous, inner-city fire was possibly the Terminal Hotel Fire in Atlanta, Georgia, in 1938. There were no major prison breaks in Billy’s time, but the movie Prison Break came out in 1938 and could have been the inspiration for the one occurring here. It was still too early in 1940 for hurricane season and 1939, in the real world, had been a

weak hurricane season. The 1938 Hurricane, however, is still the third most intense tropical cyclone to ever strike the United States. All this evidence suggests Captain Marvel's adventures began in the summer of 1938 instead of the cover date of February 1940.

### **Captain Marvel's Alter Ego: Billy Batson**

Armor Class: 7 [12] Level: 3  
Move: 60 Class: Fighter  
Hit Points: 12 Align: Lawful

S 11, I 12, W 15, C 14, D 16, Ch 18. SA: Keen senses, hide in shadows, combat machine.  
Items: Same as Captain Marvel, except for the indestructible costume.

### **Captain Marvel's Villain: Sivana**

First appearance: Whiz Comics #2 (Feb. 1940)  
Appearances to date: Whiz Comics #2-4, 6, 10, 13-15, 20, 21; Special Edition Comics #1, Captain Marvel Adventures #1-5

As Beautia tells Captain Marvel, Thaddeus Bodog Sivana (his full name finally revealed in Whiz Comics #14 and his origin told in Whiz Comics #15) was an idealistic scientist almost 40 years earlier in Europe, but bounced from country to country trying to find backers for his ideas for fantastic inventions. During the course of the years that followed, Thaddeus had two children by an undisclosed mother – Beautia and her brother Magnificus – who Thaddeus for some also undisclosed reason had to raise alone. While the children were still young, a “penniless and outcast” Sivana built a rocketship capable of reaching Venus and took his children there to start a new life for themselves. As Sivana's children grew into adults, Sivana helped them conquer all the dangers of Venus until old age warped his mind and bent it towards revenge against all the people of Earth.

But there are holes in Beautia's story. If Sivana was really penniless, then how did he build a rocketship? And once he did, why did he not simply stay on Earth and sell his invention? It is more likely that Sivana was already warped with bitterness *before* leaving for Venus. And as soon as we have reason to doubt Beautia's narrative, suddenly the whole notion that Sivana was ever an idealistic man becomes suspect. The whole story could well be an invention, as told to Beautia by Sivana himself. That Captain Marvel spares Beautia's feelings and does not point any of this out is his parting gift to her.

The middle name of “Bodog” might be the best clue as to where Sivana is originally from, perhaps Germany or Hungary. Despite his possible origins, Sivana has no loyalty to or affiliation with the Nazis.

It is one of the most brilliant pieces of characterization for Sivana that he not only thinks he deserves to rule the United States, but that he thinks he's being reasonable. His outrage that President Roosevelt is not answering his letters demanding the President cede power to him is a comic master stroke. Another delightful and subtle comic touch is that Sivana needs the hired thugs Joe and Spike only because the valve he built on his paralyzing gas machine is too hard for him to budge himself.

Sivana has a strong sense of entitlement. "We can't afford to be sympathetic, Beautia," Sivana says, "after all, I am the rightful ruler of the universe" (Captain Marvel Adventures #4). But his sense of entitlement is constantly let down. "Everything happens to me!" Sivana moans when his lab gets wrecked (Captain Marvel Adventures #3).

No doubt discouraged by his experience with employing armies, Sivana will usually work alone or with just a few hirelings from now on. This still doesn't stop Sivana's hired thugs from turning on him roughly every other scheme. Sivana clearly does not have the people skills for leadership.

<b>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS VILLAIN RECORD</b>										
Hero Name	Sivana				Alignment	Chaotic				
Real Name	Thaddeus Bodog Sivana				Armor Class [AAC]	8 [11]				
Class	Scientist/Villain				Level/Title	15 Ultra-Scientist/8 Cutthroat				
Race	Human				Move	60				
Strength	9	Saves			Experience Points: 2,150,000/100,000					
Intelligence	19	Missiles	4			Hit Points: 28				
Wisdom	13	Poison	3			Money, on hand: variable				
Constitution	14	Plot	4			Money, available: \$1,500,000				
Dexterity	15	Science	3							
Charisma	7	Spells	5							
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]	
To Hit	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)						
Lab coats of white or green	Mountain fortress in the Appalachians			Keen senses						
Thick glasses	Hundreds of streamlined tanks			Hide in shadows						
Skytower penthouse apt. (w/ closed circuit tv, radio silencer machine)	Tank guns that can shoot 75 miles			Inventing things (level 8 guns, level 11 mad science, level 4 pills, level 5 robots, level 7 transports)						
Binoculars	120 MPH combat trucks			10/10 find/remove traps						
Uniforms & rifles for thousands of soldiers	Fleet of fighter & transport planes			Powers (3 1 <sup>st</sup> -4 <sup>th</sup> )						
Farm in a rural village	Parachutes & gas masks for hundreds of soldiers			100% survival chance						
Fake beard	Hundreds of machine guns			95% disguise chance						
Chemical lab on the 6th floor of an office building	Deadly gas									
Motorcycle										

Equipment/Trophies (cont.): atom smasher; at least six rocket ships capable of transporting cargo from Earth to Venus and back at 7,000 miles per second, Palace of the Empress of Venus, 100 tons in weights and chains, paralyzing gas machine; memory mangler machine, disintegrator pistol (burp gun); an assortment of captured Venusian animals; torpedo-making

factory, battleship, stockpile of aerial torpedoes; potions of polymorph into baby, radio, plenty of gags for Billy, giant humidifier, 2-seat 1-prop plane; cave complex inside a mountain; Dr. Footu Yu disguise, ultra-frequency oscillator, welding equipment, Central American frog-men incubator; World Realty Co. office, various insurance policies, maps of U.S. cities, weather-making machine; Z (8 HD android); Nefarious Research Inc. building, 4 HD robot suit of armor; soda shop, soda jerk disguise, potions of shrinking to microscopic size and the antidote; woman disguise, transparent steel helmet, blimp, Emperor of the Universe costume (high-collared cape, vest); cages of animals in yet another laboratory; secret lab in a cabin in the woods (w/ guillotine trap) in upstate New York (along Rt. 99), cargo plane; a “million tons” of dynamite; “Toughtown” hideout (w/ lab and secret escape tunnel); fake mustache, secret lab in abandoned building, blue suit.

Sivana’s level of resources seems to vary wildly. While sometimes he seems to have the resources of an entire country’s military (Whiz Comics #3a) or otherworldly technology (his fleet of six Venusian rocket ships in Whiz Comics #11), other times he has to steal inventions from others (Whiz Comics #10) or lead a mob armed with only crude weapons (Whiz Comics #13). Though Sivana in theory has the entire planet of Venus to strip mine for resources, the dangers of life on Venus sometimes make this seem less practical than flying back to Earth and robbing a bank.

The story in Whiz Comics #15 is not clear, but either Sivana has been leading a double life for some time -- disguised as Dr. Footu Yu, “legendary ruler of Chinatown” – or is simply disguised as the ruler of Chinatown for this one occurrence.

Though Sivana hates Captain Marvel, he also respects Marvel as his equal, seeing his brawn as equal to his brain. “Curse that big rowdy!” Sivana complains. “Can’t he ever be dignified about our rivalry?” (Whiz Comics #20). If anything, he hates Billy Batson more for being so obviously beneath him (from Sivana’s perspective), yet keeps coming out on top.

## **CAPTAIN MARVEL JUNIOR**

Armor Class: 3 [16]	Level: 1
Move: 90	Class: Superhero
Hit Points: 13	Align: Lawful

First appearance: Whiz Comics #25 (Dec. 1941)

Appearances to date: Whiz Comics #25

According to Wikipedia, “After Fawcett Comics’ success with their first superhero character, Captain Marvel, the company decided to introduce a spin-off character. Although Captain Marvel had been given part-time sidekicks in the form of the look-alike Lieutenant Marvels in Whiz Comics #21 (Sept. 1941), Fawcett Comics editor Ed Herron wanted to introduce a distinctive spin-off character. Captain Marvel transformed from teenage boy to adult superhero with a magic word; Herron decided for his new character to remain a teenager to differentiate him from Captain Marvel. Fawcett staff artist Mac Raboy designed the new character, named Captain Marvel Jr., using a more realistic style parting with C.C. Beck’s more cartoony artwork for the Captain Marvel stories.

“Captain Marvel, Jr's first appearance in Whiz Comics #25 was part of a three-issue crossover between Whiz Comics and another Fawcett publication, Master Comics, in late 1941. The crossover, printed during the height of World War II, found Bulletman and Captain Marvel at odds with Adolf Hitler's superpowered champion, Captain Nazi. During a battle with Captain Nazi in Whiz Comics #25, one of Captain Marvel's punches sends the villain careening into a lake. An elderly man and his teenage grandson happened to be fishing in the lake near the place Nazi has landed, and, not knowing who he is, lift the unconscious man into their boat to prevent him from drowning. Nazi immediately comes to, tosses the old man into the lake, and knocks the boy out of the boat with an oar. The old man immediately dies, but Captain Marvel is able to save the unconscious boy, named Freddy Freeman, and bring him to a hospital.

“Captain Marvel, in his alter ego as young Billy Batson, learns from a nurse that Freddy is not expected to last the night. This leads Billy to take Freddy to the underground throne of the wizard Shazam, who originally granted Captain Marvel his powers. Billy asks the wizard to heal Freddy and save his life, but Shazam cannot, and instead tells Billy that he, as Captain Marvel, can pass along some of his powers so that Freddy can walk again. Shazam disappears and Billy transforms back into Captain Marvel, just as Freddy awakens. Looking up, he exclaims ‘Why...it's Captain Marvel,’ and is instantly transformed into a super-powered version of himself. Freddy, now called Captain Marvel Jr., resembles a younger Captain Marvel, though with a yellow-on-blue costume with a red cape, rather than Marvel Sr.'s yellow-on-red with a white cape.

“Captain Marvel informs Junior that he cannot remain in his super-powered form at all times, but that he must allow his human form to heal as best it can. With that, Freddy once again said his mentor's name and returned to his hospital bed. Freddy remains permanently lame in his left leg and is forced to walk with a crutch (although Captain Marvel Jr. bears no such impediment).”

**Editor's Note:** Since Captain Marvel Junior does not appear to be a separate entity and a magical construct like Captain Marvel, but still has the powers of Captain Marvel, a nice compromise would be making him a half-alien.

## **GOLDEN ARROW**

Armor Class: 5 [14]	Level: 5
Move: 60	Class: Cowboy
Hit Points: 25	Align: Lawful

First appearance: Whiz Comics #2 (Feb. 1940)

Appearances to date: Whiz Comics #2-25

According to Wikipedia, “The hero was originally Roger Parsons, the son of inventor Paul Parsons, who had developed a new type of gas for transportation by balloon. A greedy competitor, Brand Braddock, plotted to stop Mr. Parsons, and did so by shooting down a balloon Parsons was using to test the formula. Mr. Parsons, his wife Gloria, and his son Roger were all aboard the balloon; the two adults died when the balloon crashed in a sparsely-populated area of the Western United States, while the baby miraculously survived.



“An old prospector named Nugget Ned raised the child as his own, teaching him to fend for himself and developing the boy into a skilled archer. On his deathbed, the old man told the now-grown boy of his origins, and the young man, calling himself ‘Golden Arrow’, set out, with the help of his stallion White Wind, to avenge his father and right other wrongs throughout the West.”

Having grown up in the wilderness of the Mythic West without the benefit of civilization (“Nugget” Ned must not be too civilized), Roger grows up to be stronger and faster like the animals he emulates, *ala* Tarzan.

**Editor’s Note:** If an Editor does not wish to use the Cowboy class from Supplement III, then substitute the Fighter class.

The ill-fated balloon ride took place before WWI, which means Roger comes of age around 1930, placing all the early Golden Arrow stories in the 1930s.

## IBIS THE INVINCIBLE

First appearance: Whiz Comics #2 (January 1940)

Appearances to date: Whiz Comics #2-25

In January 1940, Prince Amentep of the 12th dynasty of ancient Egypt awakens after 4,000 years as a mummy. The guards at the museum called him “Old Man Ibis” for the stick his mummy held with the image of an ibis engraved on it. This Ibisstick is the source of Amentep’s -- or Ibis, as he takes now to being called -- powers. The Ibisstick is vastly powerful (see Editor’s Notes below), its only “disadvantage” being that it recognizes Amentep as its true master and can never be used to harm him, even if wielded by another Magic-User.

His first thought is to be reunited with his long-lost love, Princess Taia. But she is not with him in the U.S. museum, nor does he find here where he last saw her in Egypt. The sarcophagus in which she has slept for her 4,000 years was moved to war-torn Europe. So that is where Ibis goes, righting wrongs every time he sees them along the way.

Though Ibis’ first time spent in the U.S. after awakening seems brief, it must have actually been longer than shown. Ibis displays a remarkable understanding of modern technology by the time he reaches Egypt. He is also later shown to have made contacts in the U.S. not previously disclosed.



Once Taia is freed the pair return to Europe to build a new city of Thebes, as it once was. But they are not alone in waking at this exact time. Their pharaoh-king, Senwosri, wakes, but is strangely unable to stay awake long before returning to his suspended animation.

There is never an explanation as to how these Egyptians wound up in their 4,000 year sleep, nor any explanation of what exactly this sleep is, whether it was suspended animation, some magical curse, or something else.

The rebuilding of Thebes and the war in Europe both prove to be no more than distractions for Ibis and Taia. Like a young couple on a honeymoon, they seem to delight in touring the U.S. and seeing the sights. Perhaps, though it is never said, they fear their wakefulness is only temporary, as Senwosri's was, and they must make the most of what time they have.

In August 1940 (Whiz Comics #7), Ibis and Taia are visiting a carnival somewhere in the American Southwest when they have to rescue an orphan boy named Tommy from a drunken performer. They decide, on the spot, to adopt Tommy and the boy comes with them on some of their adventures. But Ibis and Taia, as mercurial as ever, break up their improvised nuclear family in October by shipping Tommy off to a military academy.

Small-time crooks like 'Murder' Malone and the crooked movie producer Carl Brand quickly realize that the only way to threaten Ibis is through those closest to him, leading to frequent kidnappings of Taia or Tommy. Maybe, then, it was for the best that Tommy got sent to the academy. At least they visit him often, every time there is trouble at the academy.

In September 1940, Ibis first meets a sorcerer who might be his match in the Piang, a Chinamen for some unknown reason laired in the American southwest. Piang brings up the question of where the Ibisstick's power comes from. Piang's "wand" is a crystal ball (though, through some enchantment, Piang does not need to be holding his crystal ball as Ibis does his



Ibisstick), but the crystal ball is said to be empowered by an ancient god, Tyalpo. Is the Ibisstick, then, empowered by the god Thoth, whose symbol was the Ibis bird? In April 1941 (Whiz Comics #16), Ibis summons the god Osiris himself to aid him and, the following month, seeks advice from Thoth. Both gods simply help when asked. Any further explanation of the relationship between Ibis and the Egyptian gods remains annoyingly unexplained.

Taia is shown to be a gifted healer, knowing an ancient remedy for poison that she displays when they come across a lawman envenomed by a snake.

Ibis' most frequent foe is Trug, a minor magician and student of the arcane from India who is no match for Ibis, but always seems to come back to bother him anyways.

By April 1941, Ibis and his amazing powers seem to be common knowledge and made him a celebrity, to the point

where Trug can track down where Ibis is by reading about where he's staying in the newspaper.

In May 1941, Ibis and Taia begin visiting fantastic locales – a mountain of demons, a cloud giant's castle in the clouds – where magic either does not operate or, more likely, magic resistances are so high as to render the Ibisstick virtually useless.

In late 1941, the U.S. government recruits Ibis to go on a secret mission to Europe to counter Nazi Magic-Users. A cabal of three or four Magic-Users is led by Half-Man, a German WWI vet who lost an arm, a leg, and half of his face, but learned Black Magic after that and might even be as high as a 9<sup>th</sup> level Magic-User. Ibis starts out in Germany, but ends up in another country leading the defense against the Nazis.

Supporting Cast Members:

Princess Taia, 1<sup>st</sup>-level Magic-User and Ibis' girlfriend.

Tommy, training to be a 1<sup>st</sup>-level Fighter, unofficial ward and military academy student.

<b><u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</u></b>											
<b>Hero Name</b>	<u>Ibis the Invincible</u>					<b>Alignment</b>	<u>Lawful</u>				
<b>Real Name</b>	<u>Prince Amentep</u>					<b>Armor Class [AAC]</b>	<u>9 [10]</u>				
<b>Class</b>	<u>Magic-User</u>					<b>Level/Title</b>	<u>5/Warlock</u>				
<b>Race</b>	<u>Human</u>					<b>Move</b>	<u>60</u>				
<b>Strength</b>	<u>15</u>	<b>Saves</b>				<b>Experience Points: 22,000</b>					
<b>Intelligence</b>	<u>17</u>	<b>Missiles</b>		<u>10</u>							
<b>Wisdom</b>	<u>16</u>	<b>Poison</b>		<u>9</u>		<b>Hit Points: 25</b>					
<b>Constitution</b>	<u>18</u>	<b>Plot</b>		<u>10</u>							
<b>Dexterity</b>	<u>13</u>	<b>Science</b>		<u>9</u>		<b>Money, on hand: variable</b>					
<b>Charisma</b>	<u>16</u>	<b>Spells</b>		<u>11</u>		<b>Money, available: \$15,000</b>					
<b>AC [AAC]</b>	<u>9 [10]</u>	<u>8 [11]</u>	<u>7 [12]</u>	<u>6 [13]</u>	<u>5 [14]</u>	<u>4 [15]</u>	<u>3 [16]</u>	<u>2 [17]</u>	<u>1 [18]</u>		
<b>To Hit</b>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>16</u>		
<b>Equipment (&amp; location)</b>			<b>Trophies (&amp; location)</b>			<b>Special Abilities (racial, class-based)</b>					
Black suit			Ibisstick (as Staff of Wizardry, plus Ibis' personal wand, and cannot be used against him)			Keen senses					
Red turban			Autogyro			Hide in shadows					
Various cars			Ibisship (one-prop magic plane, goes 400 MPH, 3,000 horsepower engine)			Spells (4 1 <sup>st</sup> , 2 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 1 3 <sup>rd</sup> ; usually Charm Person, Detect Evil, Detect Magic, Purify Food and Drink, Find Traps, Invisibility I, Crystal Ball)					
						Counterspell					

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**Ibis' Villain: Trug**

**First appearance:** Whiz Comics #13 (Jan. 1941)

**Appearances to date:** Whiz Comics #13-18, 20

Trug may not be the most powerful foe Ibis ever faced, but Trug at least did his homework first. Trug knew of Ibis, the Ibisstick, and the wand's "weakness" before ever encountering Ibis. There is something, if not admirable, at least sympathetic about how Trug kept coming back for more after each humiliatingly easy defeat at Ibis' hands. In sheer desperation, Trug will murder anyone to acquire a new magic item, or do anything to gain allies against Ibis – even disguising himself as the Devil to trick people into working for him.

Trug is a scruffy, albeit well-dressed, "oriental", in the older, broader sense of the term, and probably hails from India or a neighboring country.

<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS VILLAIN RECORD</u>											
Hero Name	Trug					Alignment	Chaotic				
Real Name	Trug					Armor Class [AAC]	9 [10]				
Class	Magic-User					Level/Title	3/Magician				
Race	Human					Move	60				
Strength	14	Saves				Experience Points:	6,100				
Intelligence	15	Missiles	12			Hit Points:	10				
Wisdom	13	Poison	11			Money, on hand:	variable				
Constitution	14	Plot	12			Money, available:	\$9,000				
Dexterity	12	Science	13								
Charisma	13	Spells	11								
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]		
To Hit	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18		
Equipment (& location)			Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)					
Suit			Bag of Wind (summon			Keen senses					
Turban			(djinn 1/day)			Hide in shadows					
Robes			Crystall ball (his wand)			Spells (3 1 <sup>st</sup> , 1 2 <sup>nd</sup> , typically Detect Magic, Hold Portal, Magic Missile – looks like a bomb instead of an arrow, and Phantasmal Force)					
						Counterspell					

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## **MINUTE-MAN**

Armor Class: 9 [10]                      Level: 5  
Move: 60                                      Class: Fighter  
Hit Points: 27                                Align: Lawful

First appearance: Master Comics #11

Appearances to date: Master Comics #11-21, Minute Man #1-2, America's Greatest Comics #1

According to Wikipedia, "Jack Weston is an army private in prime physical condition who dons a patriotic costume and becomes the Minute-Man, a 'One Man Army' who combats enemy agents. His double identity is known to his superior officer General Milton, who sends the Minute Man on unsanctioned missions behind enemy lines."

Though he's good with his fists, Minute-Man's greatest assets are that he's smart and observant. Minute-Man leaves a calling card behind that says "Compliments of Minute-Man!"

## **SPY SMASHER**

Armor Class: 5 [14]                      Level: 5  
Move: 60                                      Class: Mysteryman  
Hit Points: 22                                Align: Neutral

First appearance: Whiz Comics #2 (Feb. 1940)

Appearances to date: Whiz Comics #2-25, America's Greatest Comics #1, Spy Smasher #1-2

According to Wikipedia, "Spy Smasher (real name Alan Armstrong) is a master detective, equipped with a number of gadgets and a specialized vehicle, the 'Gyrosb', which was a combination airplane, automobile, and submarine. Created by Bill Parker and C. C. Beck ... Spy Smasher became one of the magazine's most popular characters. In Whiz Comics #16-18, he was briefly an opponent of Captain Marvel, as [his arch-enemy] ... the Mask, used a device to brainwash him, but finally Captain Marvel was able to restore his mind."

See the Captain Marvel entry for more.

## **FICTION HOUSE**

According to Wikipedia, "Fiction House began in the 1920s as a pulp-magazine publisher of primarily aviation, Western and sports pulps. By the 1930s, it had expended into detective mysteries. Publisher Thurman T. Scott, whose Fiction House group included the pulp-magazine imprints Glen-Kel and Real Adventures Publishing Co., expanded into comic books in the late 1930s when that emerging medium began to seem a viable adjunct to the fading pulps.

Receptive to a sales call by Eisner & Iger, one of the prominent 'packagers' of that time who produced complete comic books on demand for publishers looking to enter the field, Scott released Jumbo Comics #1 (Sept. 1938).

"Fiction House star Sheena, Queen of the Jungle appeared in that initial issue. Will Eisner and S.M. 'Jerry' Iger had created the leggy, leopard-wearing jungle goddess for the British magazine Wags, under the joint pseudonym 'W. Morgan Thomas'.

"Fiction House's other features in that initial foray included the period adventure 'Hawks of the Seas' (continuing a story from Quality Comics' Feature Funnies #12, after Eisner-Iger and Quality had had a falling out), and several now-obscure strips ('Peter Pupp'; 'ZX-5 Spies in Action'; 'Spencer Steel'; 'Inspector Dayton'). These include three by ... Jack Kirby, representing his first comic-book work following his debut in Wild Boy Magazine: the science fiction feature The Diary of Dr. Hayward ... the modern-West crimefighter strip Wilton of the West ... and ... the ... serialization of Alexandre Dumas' The Count of Monte Cristo...

"Jumbo proved a hit, and Fiction House would go on to publish Jungle Comics; the aviation-themed Wings Comics; the science fiction title Planet Comics; Rangers Comics; and Fight Comics during the early 1940s — most of these series taking their titles and themes from the Fiction House pulps. Fiction House referred to these titles in its regular house ads as 'The Big Six'..." but only three titles had main characters by the end of 1941.

### **KAANGA, LORD OF THE JUNGLE**

Armor Class: 8 [11]                      Level: 4  
Move: 60                                      Class: Explorer  
Hit Points: 24                                Align: Neutral

First appearance: Jungle Comics #1 (Jan. 1940)

Appearances to date: Jungle Comics #1-#24

According to Comic Vine, "His parents killed by wild beasts in the forest the boy who would come to be known as Kaanga was saved from death and raised by a she ape.

"By the time he is grown he is a master of the jungle.

"When a young aviatrix named Ann Mason crashes in his jungle and is taken by slavers Kaanga saves her, and she introduces him, as far as he'll go anyway, to civilization. Together they have your basic jungle lord and his lady type adventures."

Kaanga can also be spelled "Ka'a'nga" or "Kaänga". And he's not Tarzan because he's blonde.

Editor's Notes: The Explorer class is from The Trophy Case #2. If not used, substitute the Fighter class.

### **"SHARK" BRODIE**

Armor Class: 9 [10]                      Level: 4  
Move: 60                                      Class: Fighter  
Hit Points: 18                                Align: Neutral

First appearance: Fight Comics #1 (Jan. 1940)

Appearances to date: Fight Comics #1-16

"Shark" Brodie is "the toughest, two-fisted adventurer in the South Seas." Sailing around in his sloop alone, Brodie has a reputation for finding trouble and...fighting it.

### **SHEENA, QUEEN OF THE JUNGLE**

First appearance: Jumbo Comics #1 (September 1938)

Appearances to date: Jumbo Comics #1-34

According to the site, Public Domain Super Heroes, "Sheena was a child of explorer Cardwell Rivington. However, her father was killed accidentally by a native witch doctor named Koba. Koba then raises Sheena as his own daughter because he feels it's his duty."

Bob Reynolds, explorer, searched the African wilderness (a map in Jumbo Comics #12 suggests northern Kenya) for the mysterious Sheena Rivington. Sheena, now a grown woman, lives with the Latonga tribe and has been made their queen. Royalty holds special significance with the African people, as she ceremoniously outranks all chieftains, while seemingly having no official duties of her own other than protecting people.

Sheena is a remarkably skilled fighter, able to take down a male adult lion with just a knife. She has extraordinary hearing, able to recognize individual jungle animals, by sound, by name (which can't be that hard, as most animals all have the same name; all male lions are called Namu). She can balance a 200-lb. man on her shoulder, jump up, and catch a rope ladder dangling from a moving plane (Jumbo Comics 19). To her already impressive natural fighting skills, Bob teaches Sheena some football moves and basic jiu-jitsu. She is particularly adept at fighting lions and knows where to make a paralyzing nerve strike on one. Modern technology is all unknown to Sheena. She learns of things like guns and planes from Bob. She was young enough when she became lost that she does not even remember nursery rhymes (Jumbo Comics #15).

Bob, for his part, is a crack shot, preferring his .45 revolver, but often also has a rifle on him. He is a good fighter, with remarkable stamina, and has some skill as an engineer (he can teach others how to build a bridge). Once Bob finds Sheena, he will follow her around for the rest of her adventures, at first out of love for adventure, but soon out of love for Sheena. Bob never doubts Sheena's courage or fighting ability, sometimes staying out of fights altogether if he thinks Sheena can handle them. But Bob can be a chauvinist too. Sheena makes a new "dress" for herself by skinning a leopard in front of Bob and putting on a bathing suit-like ensemble made from its skin. Bob only laughs at her and says, "Just proves that though you're a fierce fighter, and have the courage of ten men, you're still a woman..." Sheena looks hurt (Jumbo Comics #10), but Sheena, too will soon emulate Bob's chauvinism. "She talks too much like all women!" Sheena complains of her own gender, parroting Bob's attitude.

Other than Bob, and rather than tribesmen, Sheena's most constant companion is Chim, an incredibly smart, courageous, and agile chimpanzee. Chim can both understand English and communicate with other apes. In an emergency, Chim can summon an entire shrewdness of apes (Jumbo Comics #14). Chim even has his own supporting cast, a lion Chim saved from hunger that will periodically return and repay the favor.

Besides the occasional jungle animal, Sheena finds she has to fight men most of the time. Whether its oil prospectors looking to exploit the jungle, ruthless explorers looking to find a lost city, or friendly folk just passing through on safari, it seems that white people keep finding Sheena's neck of the woods routinely after Bob manages it. And there are rival tribes to fight as well, like the Zulu and Pagona head hunters, the mercenary Wasonzis, and the Ujibi, renowned "giant" fighters (giant here means 7-8 ft. tall).



The Ujibi launch a vicious assault on Sheena's village and utterly destroy it in the December of 1939. Sheena is brought to the Ujibi city and discovers the Ujibi are somewhat more technologically advanced, their language is Egyptian hieroglyphs, and they are culturally somewhat Romanesque; prisoners will be freed if they can defeat enough animals in the arena, which the Ujibi watch for sport. If not for the timely attack of some passing rhinoceroses, Sheena might have become their chieftain's bride and all the others put to death (Jumbo Comics #11).

Word of Sheena's beauty spreads and more men with wicked intentions pursue her. Abu Cred, the Arab slave trader, seeks her out in order to sell her as a bride (Jumbo Comics #12). The loss of her tribe (first to the Ujibi and the rest to the Arab slavers) leaves Sheena with no one but Bob to turn to and that dependency soon turns to lust. From now on they will wander nomadically, throwing themselves into situations as dangerous as possible so they can rescue each other as a sort of foreplay.

Luckily, Sheena is well known as a tribal queen and, even lacking a tribe, is afforded sanctuary by friendly tribes. Each village they stay in becomes "our village" to them, until they leave for another one. A tribe of pygmies, led by their chief Kakomongo, will harbor the couple the longest, but even that seems to be less than three months (Jumbo Comics #13-15).

The fauna of the jungle is wide-ranging, including apes, elephants, lions, zebras, cobras, and crocodiles, but all ordinary animals (even if most of them would rather live in environs other than jungles). Sometimes the fauna is extraordinary in size; in the mountains of Kenya, Sheena and Bob fight giant vultures (Jumbo Comics #21). One of the villages that adopts Sheena has a pet giant (40'!) ape, though Sheena does not learn so until later (Jumbo Comics #22). While on a swim they meet huge, man-eating fish, including the bizarre "octosaur fish" that looks like a giant swordfish with tentacles (Jumbo Comics #31). The flora can get a little weird too, like the huge flesh-eating plant that can swallow a man whole (Jumbo Comics #14). Sheena and Bob encounter a tribe of Neanderthals in April 1940 (Jumbo Comics #15). Sheena will also encounter the supernatural; the Temple of Eyptha is guarded by a mummy (Jumbo Comics #25). While exploring around a volcano in southern Kenya, Sheena and Bob find an underground passage that leads into a lost world populated with mammoth and saber-toothed tigers.

Bob also has an extensive network of old friends they keep running into, fellow explorers/big game hunters like Thad Barker and Kirk Dunton. Sheena has no problems with hunters or hunting, as long as it is male animals being hunted and the hunting is legal. Aiding Sheena and Bob in their adventures, or between adventures, are the medicine men of Africa. The unsung heroes of Sheena's stories, one to three medicine men show up whenever needed to heal Sheena or Bob's arrow wounds or treat them for poison. Summoned by word of mouth, medicine men converge from all over Africa in February 1941 when Sheena is downed by a spitting cobra (Jumbo Comics #24).

Sheena's most determined "foe" is also her most determined admirer, Pasha Kamur of the Arab Town of Karba. Kamur is determined to have Sheena as his bride and keeps hiring slavers to capture her, only to be thwarted – and ultimately killed - by his jealous wife Karen (Jumbo Comics #12, 17, 18).

Sheena and Bob will become more embroiled in French politics as they try settling in new villages in central Africa, likely French Equatorial Africa (as in Jumbo Comics #22). The tireless work of Sheena, Bob, and Chim to bring peace to Africa by throwing down local tribal warlords eventually earns them the respect of the French colonial governments of central Africa, as well as medals of honor for each of them (Jumbo Comics #19). International politics will be a limited role in Sheena's adventures; the "fascists" are not even mentioned until June 1941, when Bob trains the Wasuri Tribe in the use of firearms to fight off the fascist army (whether German or Italian is not specified)(Jumbo Comics #28).

<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</u>											
Hero Name	<u>Sheena, Queen of the Jungle</u>					Alignment	<u>Lawful</u>				
Real Name	<u>Sheena Rivington</u>					Armor Class [AAC]	<u>6 [13]</u>				
Class	<u>Explorer</u>					Level/Title	<u>5/Explorer</u>				
Race	<u>Human</u>					Move	<u>60</u>				
Strength	<u>16</u>	Saves				Experience Points: <u>31,700</u>					
Intelligence	<u>11</u>	Missiles	<u>12</u>								
Wisdom	<u>12</u>	Poison	<u>12</u>					Hit Points: <u>31</u>			
Constitution	<u>17</u>	Plot	<u>11</u>								
Dexterity	<u>17</u>	Science	<u>11</u>					Money, on hand: <u>none</u>			
Charisma	<u>18</u>	Spells	<u>12</u>					Money, available: <u>none</u>			
AC [AAC]	<u>9 [10]</u>	<u>8 [11]</u>	<u>7 [12]</u>	<u>6 [13]</u>	<u>5 [14]</u>	<u>4 [15]</u>	<u>3 [16]</u>	<u>2 [17]</u>	<u>1 [18]</u>		
To Hit	<u>6</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>8</u>	<u>9</u>	<u>10</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>13</u>	<u>14</u>		
Equipment (& location)			Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)					
Leopard skin "dress"			Knife +2			Notice things Hide in shadows Tracking (14 in 20 outdoors, 12 in 20 indoors) Hard to surprise (1 in 6) Hunting (+5 damage vs. animals) Followers (12 savages)					

**Editor's Notes:** The Explorer class was introduced in The Trophy Case #2. If not used, substitute the Fighter class.

**Editor's Comments:** Sheena quickly moved from a 4-page, black-and-white back-up feature to the lead feature, in color, and appearing on a long string of covers. One could hope this had more to do with the gorgeous Bob Powell artwork from mid-1939 to mid-1941, but Sheena held

onto her prime real estate even with the mediocre art of replacement artist Robert Webb. So it really was about the skimpy outfit all along.

### **WAMBI THE JUNGLE BOY**

Armor Class: 9 [10] Level: 4  
Move: 60 Class: Explorer  
Hit Points: 18 Align: Neutral

First appearance: Jungle Comics #1 (Jan. 1940)

Appearances to date: Jungle Comics #1-24

According to Comic Vine, "Wambi was a boy who lived in a jungle that had both lions and tigers, as well as both Indian and African elephants. He could talk to animals, even ones that didn't make sounds. Where he came from, how he learned to talk to animals, or how he came to be living in his jungle is never explained." And he is not Mowgli, because this is Africa.

### **FOX FEATURE**

According to Wikipedia, "Victor S. Fox and business associate Bob Farrell launched Fox Feature Syndicate at 480 Lexington Avenue in New York City in the late 1930s. For content, Fox contracted with comics packager Eisner & Iger, one of a handful of companies creating comic books on demand for publishers entering the field. Writer-artist Will Eisner, at Victor Fox's request for a hero to mimic the newly created hit Superman, created the superhero Wonder Man for Fox's first publication, Wonder Comics #1 (May 1939)... "As one of the earliest companies in the emerging field, it employed or bought the packaged material of a huge number of Golden Age greats, many at the start of their careers. Lou Fine created the superhero The Flame in Wonderworld Comics; Dick Briefer created Rex Dexter of Mars in the eponymous series. George Tuska did his first comics work here with the features 'Zanzibar' (Mystery Men Comics #1, Aug. 1939) and 'Tom Barry' (Wonderworld Comics #4). Fletcher Hanks wrote and drew Stardust the Super Wizard in Fantastic Comics in 1939 and 1940... Future comics legend Jack Kirby, brought on staff here after freelancing for Eisner & Iger, wrote and drew the syndicated newspaper comic strip The Blue Beetle (starting Jan. 1940)... additionally, created and did one story each of the Fox features 'Wing Turner' (Mystery Men #10, May 1940) and 'Cosmic Carson' (Science Comics #4, same month)."

### **BLUE BEETLE**

First appearance: Mystery Men Comics #1 (Aug. 1939)

Appearances to date: Mystery Men Comics #1-29, Blue Beetle #1-10, Big 3 #1-6

The Blue Beetle had no dramatic origin. Ordinary policeman Dan Garret just decided one day that he'd had enough of crime and that he was going to take extra steps outside the law to crush it. His first thought was to imitate the Green Hornet, pretend to be a criminal, and fight crime from the inside. Henceforth, he put on white goggles, a blue suit and hat, and wore a blue scarab on his shirt instead of a tie. He used a figurine of a blue beetle as a calling card to announce himself.

This lasts all of one month before Dan decides it just is not working for him. By the time we see him next, the bad guys all know he is one of the good guys. He has also lost the suit of nice clothes for a suit of chainmail, hooded shirt and hose, all stained blue and with the insignia of a beetle on his chest. All he retains from his first appearance is the habit of leaving the same calling cards. In the coming months, the costume would go through several changes, picking up a domino mask, adding and then subtracting fake antennae, losing the chest insignia, adding a belt with a beetle on the buckle, and adding a beetle to the top of his hood. By the end of his first six months he has settled on the look he will stick with the rest of his career (except for minor adjustments like the color of his gloves).

In his day job, Dan patrols with his partner, an Irish cop named Mike Mannigan. Mike (his last name later spelled Mannigan) has been on the force for 20-25 years (there are two conflicting dates), was once Dan's father's partner, and has never been promoted beyond beat cop. Though friends, Dan secretly competes with Mike as Blue Beetle. Dan is not always successful without police back-up, but his methods are always shown to be more effective than police methods.

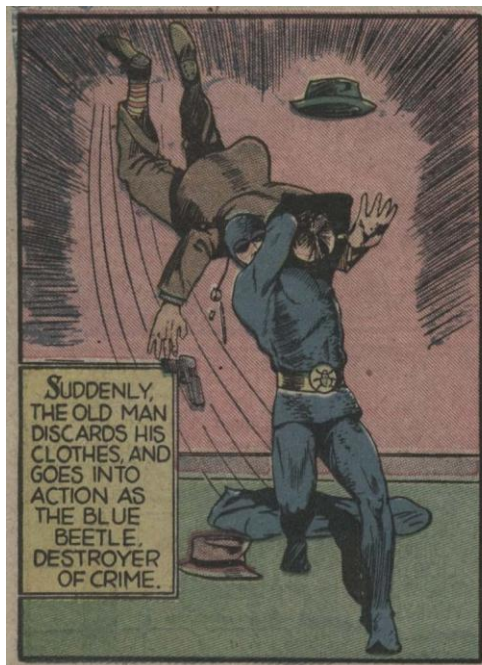


Dan is aided from the start by his friend and confidant, Dr. Abe Franz, a druggist. At the start of his second year in the crimefighting business, it is revealed that Dr. Franz is making Dan stronger with the aid of the vitamin formula, 2-X, though he may have demonstrated this enhanced strength as soon as July 1940 (Mystery Men Comics #12). Vitamin 2X comes in only liquid form at first until November 1940 when Dr. Franz synthesizes it in capsule form (Blue Beetle #4) and later in pill form (Blue Beetle #7).

It is only a matter of time until Blue Beetle finally attracts the attention of reporters, including girl reporter Joan Mason. Joan first shows up in October 1940, but already seems to know both Dan and Mike. Breaking the tradition of a love triangle, Joan and Dan seem to have no feelings for each other, but Joan has a crush on Blue Beetle. Dan and Mike jokingly refer to Joan as "the demon reporter". In November 1941, Joan works for *The Daily Blade*. By August 1941 (Big 3 #5), Mike thinks Joan is Dan's "girl", but Mike also thinks Blue Beetle is still a criminal despite overwhelming evidence to the contrary.



In November 1940, their unnamed city is finally hinted at being New York City when a criminal threatens to destroy the Empire State Building. This is seemingly confirmed in January 1941, when Mike lets slip that there are seven million suspects on a case, with New York City being the only metropolis at the time sporting a population that large. It does seem odd, though, that New York City is never once referred to by name. Perhaps less so after August 1941, when the Mayor turns out to be crooked and working with the Condor.



Dan also lets slip, in early 1941 when a crook burns to death, something more of what motivates him when he smiles and asks, "Isn't justice wonderful?" Behind that ever-present grin lurks a darker personality capable of great violence against criminals. Another time he straps a prisoner into an electric chair and threatens to electrocute him if he does not talk. Another time, he kicks a man from behind hard enough to break his back, and another time bumps a hoodlum's arm to make the man shoot himself in his own head.

Fortunately, the hoodlums Blue Beetle faces are neither particularly bright nor particularly ruthless (except when it came to killing children, which they seem to do with alarming commonness), because Blue Beetle might not have been able to rise to the occasion. He solves cases usually by using Joan as bait to lure the bad guys out into the open and then beating them up. He

escapes death traps, not through ingenuity, but by conveniently waking up at just the right time. Only once is he nearly killed, in the line of duty, in the Fall of 1940 when he is shot without his reversible chain shirt on.

By June 1941, though, Dan seems to have matured into his role and comes to depend on Joan less. As Joan steps out of the picture, Dr. Franz becomes more active in crime-fighting and Mike's ongoing efforts become even more comical. Indeed, Dr. Franz becomes so active in some cases that even Joan figures out the Blue Beetle/Dr. Franz connection by August 1941.

Blue Beetle has no recurring foes until late 1941 when he starts having rematches with mob boss "Porky" Hogg, Countess Belladonna (an old man posing as an old lady and killing with poisoned knitting needles), and the Condor (a modern day pirate). Blue Beetle almost entirely deals with mobsters, except for the occasional spy or Fifth Columnist.

Though remarkably strong thanks to Vitamin 2X, Blue Beetle's strength is barely superhuman by the standard of most Golden Age superheroes. In October 1941, he is pinned to the ground by several tons of metal and cannot escape without help, as well as semi-routinely running into henchmen who seem nearly matched for him in strength (both in Blue Beetle #9).

### **Supporting Cast Members:**

Dr. Abe Franz – 3<sup>rd</sup> level Scientist

Mike Mannigan – 1<sup>st</sup> level Fighter

Joan Mason, reporter

Charley Storm, reporter

Helen Harmon, police commissioner's daughter and one-time love interest of both Dan and Charley

Eli Stone, Charley's (and Joan's?) newspaper editor

<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</u>									
Hero Name	Blue Beetle				Alignment	Lawful			
Real Name	Dan Garret				Armor Class [AAC]	-1 [20]			
Class	Mysteryman/ Fighter				Level/Title	5 Puzzling Man/7 Commander			
Race	Human				Move	60			
Strength	18	Saves		Experience Points:	12,800/68,300				
Intelligence	12	Missiles		8					
Wisdom	12	Poison		8	Hit Points: 49				
Constitution	17	Plot		9					
Dexterity	17	Science		9	Money, on hand: variable				
Charisma	16	Spells		10	Money, available: \$30,000				
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]
To Hit	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)					
Many cars of many colors	Wireless telephone			Hide in shadows					
.38 revolver and hip holster	Gas grenade			Keen senses					
Blue scarabs/calling cards	Supercharged red & yellow car			9 in 10 climb					
Blue suit	Chainmail +3 that reverses into police uniform, light as silk			Intimidate 1/hr					
White goggles	Skeleton keys			4 in 10 notice things					
Attachable fake antennae	Motorcycle			+2 signature move (attacks after announcing presence with a scarab or his flashlight)					
Lots of colored gloves	Vitamin 2X (steady supply)			4 in 10 invisible					
Beat cop uniform				8 in 10 urban tracking					
Flashlight w/blue beetle on lens				4 in 10 pilfer					

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Trophies (cont.): Beetlemobile (color changes, but has the beetle insignia on the doors; infrared headlamps for seeing through smokescreens, twin front-mounted machine guns, bulletproof windshield and made of super-strong metal invented by Dr. Franz), 2 hand grenades, bottle of castor oil, polarized sunglasses.

Special Abilities (cont.): Combat machine



**Editor's Notes:** Because Blue Beetle started out as a Mysteryman before becoming a Fighter, he retains the hostile reaction from police even after the Mayor of New York publicly thanks him in June 1941.

Blue Beetle clearly transitioned in Alignment from Neutral or Chaotic to Lawful when he switched to being a Fighter.

On the surface, Blue Beetle appears to have switched to being a Superhero, especially once he starts taking Vitamin 2-X. Yet, mechanically, there is little evidence of Blue Beetle being a Superhero. His low Armor Class can account for his seeming invulnerability (so long as the flavor text describes bullets bouncing off in addition to missing). Though he appears to "Get Tough" on occasion, this could just be his Combat Machine ability and facing really weak hoodlums. He never wrecks things, except the occasional door – a far cry from the tanks and



battleships he would be able to wreck at his level. He deflects falling boulders with his fists a few times, but this could just be flavor text for when the boulders already missed; other times, he is hit on the head by smaller rocks and knocked out.

What effect, if any, Vitamin 2-X should have in the game then may be left to the Editor's discretion. It is entirely possible that Dr. Franz is not such a gifted chemist after all, giving Dan placebos most of the time and slipping him a Pill of Heroism only when he really needs it.

According to Blue Beetle #3, Vitamin 2-X keeps Dan from needing to sleep, but the Editor can decide whether to treat this as a factual game mechanic or treat it as hyperbole on Dan's part.

Blue Beetle seems to revive from being knocked unconscious with incredible speed, which is not in keeping with the H&H rules. Another possibility, besides another exception or rule change, is that Blue Beetle actually feigns unconsciousness a lot. Maybe he just likes death traps.

**Editor's Comments:** There may not be a more surprising rags to riches story in the Golden Age of Comics than Blue Beetle. Begun as a 4-page strip towards the back of Mystery Men Comics, Blue Beetle quickly moved to the front of the book, his strip soon tripled in length, and won additional berths in other titles. He even had his own radio show and newspaper comic strip. And yet, inexplicably, Blue Beetle was lousy for most of its early run. It was badly drawn, blatantly unoriginal, and every story was bland and formulaic. Though the regular stories were dreadful, the 1940 comic strip (reprinted in the early issues of Blue Beetle) was of superior quality, as were later back-up stories by more talented ghost artists.

The Blue Beetle comic strip followed a different continuity, wherein Blue Beetle had the armor and Vitamin 2-X right from the start. In it, Dan was also something of an inventor himself, perhaps even enough to have one level in Scientist. The conflicting details of this continuity were ignored for the above write-up.

## **EAGLE**

Armor Class: 8[11]                      Level: 5/3  
Move: 60                                      Class: Mysteryman/Scientist  
Hit Points: 16                                Align: Neutral

First appearance: Science Comics #1 (Feb. 1940)

Appearances to date: Science Comics #1-8, Weird Comics #8-19, The Eagle #1-3

According to the Public Domain Super Heroes website, "Wealthy scientist and American patriot Bill Powers fought the Nazis as a spy and then put on a patriotic costume and fought against them as the Eagle. He was assisted by his sidekick, Buddy. At one time, he had wings and could fly. Later, he developed an anti-gravity solution which allowed him to fly which he soaked his cape in before every adventure. He also possessed great strength, being able to easily lift heavily objects. The Eagle battled many foes, including the likes of the Beast" and "the Gimp"... The Eagle was willing to kill his enemies if need be."

## **FLAME**

Armor Class: 5 [14]                      Level: 7  
Move: 60                                      Class: Superhero  
Hit Points: 31                                Align: Lawful

First appearance: Wonderworld Comics #3 (July 1939)

Appearances to date: Wonderworld Comics #3-32, The Flame #1-7, Big 3 #1-6

According to Wikipedia, "The Flame's secret identity is Gary Preston. When Gary was a baby, his father Charteris Preston worked as a missionary in China. The elder Preston was washed away in a flood, but managed to save baby Gary by placing him in a basket. The basket was washed downstream to Tibet, where Gary was rescued by a group of lamas. They raised Gary in the lamasary, where they trained him in their mystical ways. Through this training, Gary gained the ability to control fire and temperature, including his own body temperature. He also gained the ability to travel from place to place by materializing inside of flame (even a match flame). When he reached adulthood, Gary returned to America to fight crime as the Flame. In Wonderworld Comics #30 (October 1941), the Flame was joined by a female sidekick, Flame Girl. Flame Girl was secretly Linda Dale, who was given similar powers as the Flame when Gary Preston was injured.

"Thanks to his training, the Flame has the ability to control fire and heat. He can raise his own body temperature to the point where he can burst into flames, or melt bullets. He can control and direct any flame in his presence. He can also teleport from place to place by appearing inside of any fire source, no matter the size. The Flame's one weakness is water, which can severely weaken him. In order to provide fire whenever he needs it, the Flame carries a small, pistol-sized flamethrower."

The Flame fights an assortment of mobsters, mad scientists, and supernatural menaces, but lacks recurring villains, other than the unfortunately-named Dr. Drool.

## GREEN MASK

Armor Class: 7 [12]

Level: 4/7

Move: 60

Class: Mysteryman/Superhero

Hit Points: 32

Align: Neutral

First appearance: Mystery Men Comics #1 (Aug. 1939)

Appearances to date: Mystery Men Comics #1-29, Weekly Comic Magazine #2, The Green Mask #1-8

According to Wikipedia, "Originally the Green Mask really was a mystery man, the secret identity of this 'modern Robin Hood' kept just that from the readers for many of his earlier appearances and known only to reporter 'News' Doakes (later 'News' Blake) who was the only one who could contact the pulp-style costumed vigilante when needed.

"Eventually though the Green Mask was revealed to be Michael Shelby (or Selby, in some early stories), wealthy private investigator and son of a crusading senator murdered by white-hooded gangsters known as the Grim Circle. He was transformed into a super-powered 'Miracle Man' ... after being exposed to an experimental 'vita-ray' machine created by family friend Professor Lascomb. In Green Mask #1 (1940), he was joined by a young orphan named Don who, after surviving an explosion meant for the Green Mask, was taken in by the hero and became his non-powered, boomerang-throwing sidekick Domino the Miracle Boy and wore a costume almost identical to his own."

## SAMSON

**First appearance:** Fantastic Comics #1 (December 1939)

**Appearances to date:** Fantastic Comics #1-23, Samson #1-6, Big 3 #1-6

This is the story of three Samsons.

The first Samson shows up out of nowhere in the December of 1939, with no origin, no background, with few words, and no lack of conflict. Samson is already in the middle of a war, leading an army against a Mongolian army. Each issue is a new continent and a new dictator. "There's only one way to stop war! Destroy the source!" might as well be Samson's battle cry, for it is his mantra.

Samson's few words are glimpses into what motivates him. "I'm not looking for a reward," Samson says. For saving Europe, Samson is offered any position in any government he wishes, but he turns them down, saying his "place on Earth is where mankind is in distress." Samson's altruism comes up adventure after adventure, as he turns down a variety of rewards.

And there are slight clues into Samson's personal life. He is uncomfortable not using his strength to its fullest, as he accidentally tears a taxi cab door from its hinges. Though he does not seem to work for a living, he has money, being able to pay for the entire taxi out of pocket. And, before meeting Brun, he must travel from continent to continent on his own dime.

Brun is a scientist Samson befriends who proves helpful against the giant robots of Kilgor. Brun's greatest invention is a demoleculing ray (also called a decomposing ray) that can transfer Samson's molecules anywhere near-instantaneously.

In May 1940, Samson foils a subtler economic plan to create a larger market for Mexican agricultural products by wiping out all crops in the U.S. with giant mutated "insects" (though they look more like dog-lizard crossbreeds), but the focus also shifts from saving continents to saving just one farm. This makes no difference to Samson. "There are millions of people I must help before it's too late." "Too late" for what is left unsaid. Does Samson have some foresight of what the future holds if he does not act?



Although little is explained about any connection to the Biblical Samson, in August 1940 (Fantastic Comics #9) Samson starts calling anyone he does not like "son of Satan", suggesting his religion is at least of the Judeo-Christian tradition. And, like an angry Jehovah, Samson can get pretty violent. He is sometimes willing to rip out a soldier's throat with his bare hands. He is as likely to execute a would-be dictator himself by throwing him off a cliff as trying to bring him to justice. When he finds a lost world island full of monsters, he sets off a volcano to kill everything on the island.

Samson often wears nothing but fur underpants, but he sometimes wears ornate sandals as well.

The second Samson debuts in the fall of 1940, but with a different origin. This Samson is really Sam, a young man who just graduated from college in 1940. Only when Sam's mother reveals that he is the descendant of the Biblical Samson does Sam decide to become a superhero. He sheds his clothes for fur underpants and tall blue boots and is seldom seen wearing more clothes again.

Prof. Brun is no longer a friend Samson made on an adventure, but an old college friend of his who invented an "iconoscope" that allows a viewer to see an event taking place anywhere in the world. The demoleculing ray is next seen in April of 1941, but it is unclear if it was just now invented or if Brun has had it all along. Until then, Samson just seems to appear anywhere he is needed.

In September, the new Samson almost immediately recruits David to be his sidekick. David will loyally fight beside Samson for the rest of his career. Samson will occasionally tell David to stay behind and be safe, but he's easily talked out of it and allows David to risk danger with him.

Though the new Samson and David sometimes fight mobsters for a change of pace, most of the time they deal with stopping wars, just like the original Samson. Central and South America, Mexico and Ecuador in particular (though always referred to by fictitious names like Mexito or

Ecuazil), seem to always be suffering from war with their neighbors or the threat of invasion from Axis forces. His adventures will settle into a familiar pattern of learning about the problem in another country, being attacked before he can respond, throwing a house at his attackers, then going to the foreign country and wrecking all the weapons of war he finds there.

But there is something disturbingly different in what motivates the new Samson. When not defeating tyrants, Samson now performs juvenile stunts like pulling up lampposts to amuse David. Samson asks David, "Does this suit you all right?" as he tears down an enemy guard tower, as if seeking David's approval. Though Samson once jokingly refers to himself as David's "uncle", Samson seems to be seeking David's approval like an inverted father-son relationship.

There is a juvenile, immature nature to Samson's violence as well now. He will throw villains off of roofs to their deaths if they threaten David, even though Samson is the one who brought David and put him in danger. And Samson is even more vengeful when he is threatened.

When a Mexican woman offers Samson a poisoned drink, Samson retaliates by wrecking her entire village without even bothering to find out if any villains were in it or not. Samson floods an entire secret city, killing thousands, because they were massing for war, without having even attacked anyone yet. Samson will later change his philosophy, arguing that all countries should be ready to defend themselves. And yet no one seems to notice this shift, or turn frightened as Samson is revealed to be, not just an angry god, but an angry, child-like god. People of authority from various countries still seek him out, ask for his help, then try to shower him with rewards when he has destroyed everything.



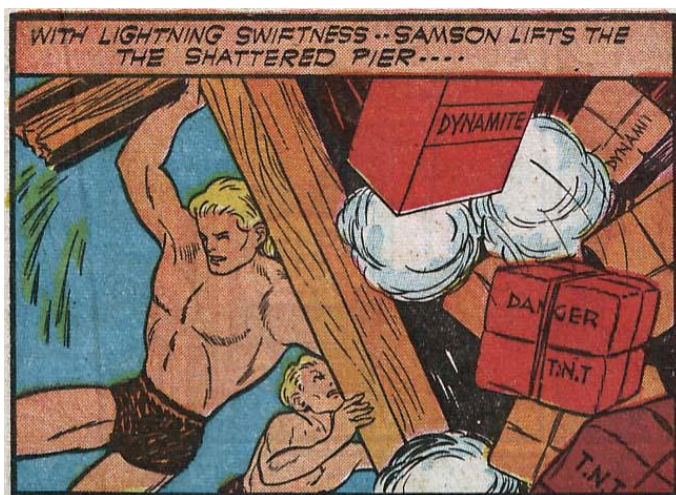
One thing that makes Samson less threatening is that he has an Achilles' heel that anyone can take advantage of. If anyone cuts off the new Samson's hair, he loses his strength. His hair has been sheared off in a creative variety of ways, including being sheared off by shrapnel, torn off by train wheels while the hair is laying on train tracks, or simply snipped off by someone reaching down through a trapdoor with scissors. How long it takes Samson's hair to grow back varies wildly. Sometimes it seems to take less than an hour and other times it takes days. Apparently his powers peak when his hair reaches shoulder length, because he never tries growing it out longer to get more powerful.

It is perhaps no surprise that Samson's superpowers are shown to be identical to Superman's, being able to lift tremendous weights, outrun trains, and leap over tall skyscrapers. Unlike Superman, Samson shows less restraint in using his strength to wreck things, destroying tanks and buildings and even mountains with relish. Samson might even be capable of flight, twice being shown in swooping, un-leaping like poses, though no explanation was given for how he was able to swoop down onto flying airplanes. Samson is clearly invulnerable, able to catch a



grenade and let it explode harmlessly in his hand or walk away from having buildings collapse on top of him without a scratch. He is somewhat more vulnerable to energy attacks, with electricity able to shock him into unconsciousness.

Professor Brun lives in New York City, so it seems Samson lives there too, though his address seems to constantly vary. Sometimes Samson lives with Brun, other times he seems to have a place of his own. He has been shown to have an apartment and a ranch house at different times.



Then, in August of 1941, comes a third Samson. This one possesses a bit more humility, wearing a trench coat when not in action instead of running around in just his loincloth all the time. He is given no new origin story, but he could not be the same man. His powers are in part the inverse of the previous Samson's. A grenade exploding in his hand now stuns him into unconsciousness, but he is able to shrug off enough electricity to electrocute the entire crew of a battleship. Samson also seems to be

less strong as well. While he used to break walls at the slightest excuse, it now slows him down if a villain escapes out a window. No mention is made any longer of him losing his strength along with his hair. And this Samson is smarter too, or is now required to show more intelligence. His adventures become less straightforward, requiring him to seek out clues and even go undercover to ferret out information.

Samson also picks up more supporting cast. Lila Dee is the secretary of the U.S. Secretary of Defense and becomes Samson's friend and confidante. J. Rembrandt Speedball is an effeminate artist, obsessed with painting women, who keeps crossing paths with Samson, sometimes helping and sometimes needing help. He also met his first recurring villains – The Dragon, a Fu Manchu-like character, and the Wasp, a wily, remarkably acrobatic midget.

**Editor's Notes:** Though all Samson stories were credited to "Alex Boon", there were clearly three different artists, each with a unique interpretation of the character. Though Samson is described above as being three different characters, his stats are a combination of all three characters.

For his first nine outings, his Superhero costume is literally his fur underpants. But after the character change, his costume is his long hair. He can only act as a Fighter for 1d12 hours after his hair is cut before his hair grows back.

**Editor's Comments:** The first Samson was gorgeously drawn, possibly by Will Eisner himself, with stories that had a mythic, epic quality. Samson was the first successful Superman clone because Will recognized in Superman an iconic hero older than science fiction. The middle period Samson, however, drawn by Alex Blum (and possibly others), became a dumbed down,



formulaic, wish-fulfillment fantasy. The third Samson, reinvented by an unknown artist, was given more complex plots and engaging stories. The depowering of Samson and the removal of his Achilles' heel anticipates a similar solution tried on Superman in the 1970s. It was too little, too late, though, for Samson. Samson's popularity had waned to the point that he was cut from the last issue of Big 3. Had the publisher, Fox, not gone out of business, perhaps the third incarnation of Samson would have found the resurgence in popularity it deserved.

<b>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</b>											
Hero Name	Samson					Alignment	Lawful				
Real Name	Sam ?					Armor Class [AAC]	8 [11]				
Class	Superhero					Level/Title	7/Mighty Man				
Race	Paragon					Move	60				
Strength	18	Saves				Experience Points: 60,200					
Intelligence	13	Missiles	6			Hit Points: 51					
Wisdom	16	Poison	6			Money, on hand: variable					
Constitution	18	Plot	7			Money, available: \$9,000					
Dexterity	14	Science	7								
Charisma	17	Spells	8								
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]		
To Hit	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
Equipment (& location)			Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)					
Fur loincloth						Wrecking things (vs. doors - D, machines - W, generators - W, robots - W, cars - 4, trucks - 7, tanks - 10, battleships - 13, dams - 15)					
Ornate sandals						Powers (4 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 1 4 <sup>th</sup> - typically Detect Evil, Feather Landing, Nigh-Invulnerable Skin, Outrun Train; No Encumbrance, Raise Elephant, Super-Tough Skin; Imperviousness, Raise Trolley Car, Mass Wrecking)					
Blue boots											
Regular clothes (+ trench coat)											
Rented city apartment											
Ranch house (in the suburbs?)											

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Special Abilities (cont.): True Strength of 34, Costume armor, May re-roll any die roll once per day per level; +2 bonus to SCM recruitment rolls; Once per week can use one 5th level power; Can never have more than 10 trophies; Can never commit a Chaotic act.

### Samson's Sidekick: David

When Samson first encountered the boy he would call David, he was rescuing a girlish-looking boy who was the lone survivor of a plane crash. There was never any indication as to how the boy survived the plane crash without a scratch. It was implied that the boy's parents had died in the crash, though the boy did not seem too upset about this. Samson, instead of turning the boy over to the authorities, or seeking out any living relatives for the boy, simply claimed the boy as his own. He did not even bother to ask what the boy's name was, but just declared that he would call the boy "David" from now on. And the boy seemed fine with all of this, so David his name became.

<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</u>											
Hero Name	David					Alignment	Lawful				
Real Name	?					Armor Class [AAC]	6 [13]				
Class	Fighter/Superhero					Level/Title	5 Captain/1 Good Man				
Race	Human					Move	60				
Strength	17	Saves				Experience Points: 22,750/750					
Intelligence	12	Missiles		10		Hit Points: 26					
Wisdom	14	Poison		10		Money, on hand: variable					
Constitution	16	Plot		11		Money, available: \$200					
Dexterity	16	Science		11							
Charisma	13	Spells		12							
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]		
To Hit	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
Equipment (& location)			Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)					
Sailor suit						Hide in shadows					
Fur underpants						Notice things					
Blue boots						Wrecking things (vs. doors - 10, machines - 13, generators 15, robots - 17)					
25' coil of rope						Combat machine					

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Samson recruits David as his sidekick, figuring David's Boy Scout skills will come in handy. And David does prove skillful and resourceful for a boy who might be as old as 14 despite his youthful appearance (Boy Scouts start at age 11 and David has been the lariat champion of his

troop for 3 years). He can pull a grown man off his feet with a lasso. He can lasso a tree branch and swing out of a building from it. Later on, his lasso skills begin to stretch all credulity – he can lasso a third-story flagpole from the ground or lasso a man by the neck and swing him around in the air over his head.

David becomes an accomplished fighter as well. He knows Jujitsu, though how he learned it is unclear. He claims to have been taught it by Samson in his first appearance, but there was no time for this to have happened. More likely, David learned it from someone else, but was trying to frighten the bad guys he was fighting. By his third appearance, David knows how to fight well enough to defeat two armed, full-grown men in hand-to-hand combat. By the end of 1941, he can rough up three full-grown men without breaking a sweat, or overpower a single gunman with his bare hands.

If tied up near a lit candle, he can stand the heat to burn the ropes binding his hands. Though Samson starts out calling David his “able lieutenant” he is soon jokingly referring to himself as David’s uncle as Samson’s paternal instincts kick in.

Though David spends his first outing fully clothed, by his second appearance he is hanging out in fur underpants just like Samson.

No explanation is ever given for how David survived the plane explosion before Samson first met him, nor is it ever explained why David is living with Samson instead of with relatives.

**Editor’s Notes:** David has been given a level of Superhero to reflect his apprenticeship to Samson. Though he is never shown wrecking, this could just be because Samson does it so much better. David also seems to have amazing hearing, often overhearing plotting villains so he can alert Samson. David should probably have a 3 in 6 chance to hear noise.

## YARKO THE GREAT

First appearance: Wonder Comics #2 (June 1939)

Appearances to date: Wonder Comics #2, Wonderworld Comics #3-32, Blue Beetle #1, Weekly Comic Magazine #2, Samson #4, 5

“I am the servant of justice. I’ll be where ever people need me,” Yarko the Great says.



Well, not entirely. Yarko goes where ever he is summoned – not magically, but by cable, by people who already know him or know of him. He will arrive, not by spell, but by car. And not because he cannot sense when others are in trouble, because he can. He opposes “Fu Chu” (read as Fu Manchu) through mundane means until Fu Chu ups the ante by using magic (Wonderworld Comics #13). Say what you like about Yarko, but he does not like to waste magical energy on being showy. Sometimes

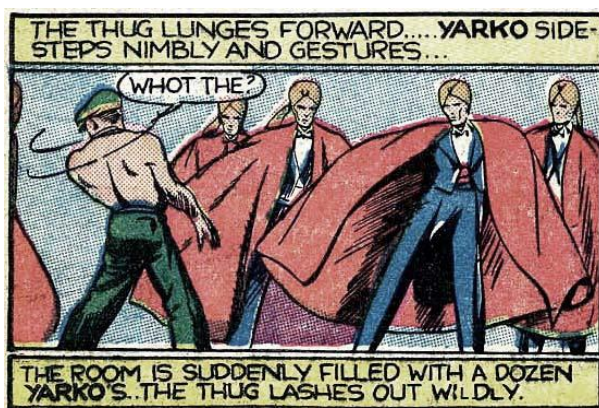


that works against him. People who know of him, but have yet to see him work real magic, have assumed he was a “charlatan” or a “faker”.

Even those who have seen him work spells might not realize it, for spell-casting in Yarko’s world only requires simple gestures. Spell-casting is largely a matter of mental might. Yarko has to be able to see to work magic, though it would make sense that this is so he can target spells. Curiously, as of August 1940, Yarko starts sometimes casting spells by saying words backwards, *ala* Mandrake the Magician, and other times still casts them with simple gestures and mind power.

There is so little to say about who Yarko the Great is or where he comes from. Yarko is a “young” American “who dares explore the magic of the East” until he has become the “mightiest magician of all time.” How long this took, and how young Yarko really is, remains unclear. Yarko has apparently had numerous adventures, and earned many powerful enemies, before we ever encounter him.

With foes like Yarko’s, he will need to be the mightiest magician. The wizard Shaddiba can project himself to the Astral Plane and hurl lightning bolts back and forth against Yarko on the edge of the Chasm of Oblivion (Wonder Comics #2). But that was nothing compared to the Devil and Death Incarnate, both taking mortal form so they can confront and destroy Yarko.



Yarko dispels the Devil easily, but has no power over Death. Of course, we are left to conjecture whether this was indeed the Devil or some minor devil. Death is an interesting, recurring enigma (Wonderworld Comics #3, 8, 14). He wears dark glasses because any man who sees his eyes dies, but he never tries to kill Yarko this way. He seems to want to be present when Yarko dies, but does not want to cause it himself. Others seek to control Death through magic, but this usually plays right into Death’s plans of causing more deaths.

Yarko’s only other recurring foe is Fu Chu (see below).

Yarko is a world traveler and his adventures are a travelogue of interesting places. India, Egypt, Turkestan, England, China, Hindustan, Tanganyika -- every country is or was a real country and not a fictionalized one. Distance does not matter to Yarko if there is an injustice associated with magic somewhere in the world. If it close enough for him to drive there, he will drive there. Otherwise, he might just turn into a cloud and disappear, to reappear where he needs to be.

Outside London, Yarko investigates the castle of Vladim, a dabbler in Voodoo (Wonderworld Comics #5). The castle has a dungeon 100 feet below ground. Vladim keeps a throne with a skull motif and the dungeons are outfitted with sliding doors, fire pits, and bridges over deep chasms.

In Tibet, Yarko travels through the Devil's Pass to reach the Valley of the Moon. The route is guarded by vampires, blizzards, and avalanches. The valley is full of craters filled with molten lava, in which grow lily-like plants called Hoshai that bleed human blood. Five female vampires with bows guard the valley and live in a huge cavern where their queen sits on a flower-motif throne (Wonderworld Comics #6).

Undertaking a quest to the Land of the Dead, Yarko takes a flight of stairs into the clouds, passes through a curtain of mist, and enters the Valley of Death where the River Styx flows. Forcing Charon to give him a boat ride, Yarko is still attacked by demons of burning pain, fear, and horror before reaching the Hall of Time. Each pillar in the hall represents an age. As one passes each age, that person grows younger – but only while remaining in the Land of the Dead (Wonderworld Comics #8). Curiously, the pillars do not affect Yarko at all.

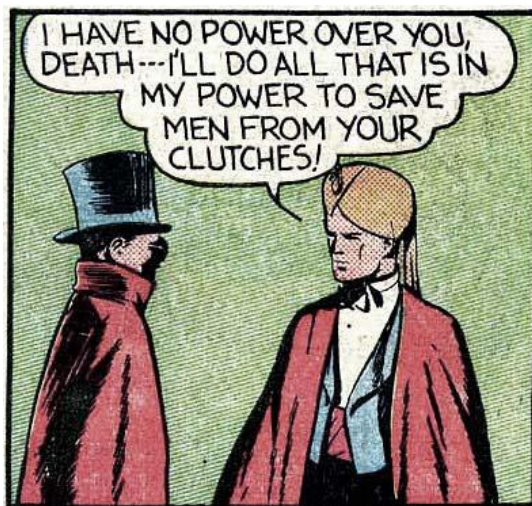
<u>HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS HERO RECORD</u>											
Hero Name	Yarko the Great					Alignment	Lawful				
Real Name	?					Armor Class [AAC]	6 [13]				
Class	Magic-User					Level/Title	9/Senior Wizard				
Race	Human					Move	60				
Strength	15	Saves				Experience Points: 501,200					
Intelligence	18	Missiles	6				Hit Points: 29				
Wisdom	18	Poison	5				Money, on hand: variable				
Constitution	16	Plot	6				Money, available: \$18,000				
Dexterity	14	Science	7								
Charisma	13	Spells	5								
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]		
To Hit	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14		
Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)			Special Abilities (racial, class-based)							
Sleek black car	Crystal Ball			Hide in shadows							
Tuxedo	Magic Jewel of Ada-La-Hoda (wand?)			Notice things							
Cape				Spells (4 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 2 4 <sup>th</sup> , 1 5 <sup>th</sup> ; typically Charm Person, Detect Evil, Protection from Evil, Shield; Hold Person, Invisibility, Phantasmal Force; Crystal Ball, Locate Object, Protection from Normal Missiles; Polymorph, Telekinesis, Teleport)							
Turban				Counterspell							
A house (somewhere in the U.S.?)											
London apartment											

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In Egypt, below the City of Gizah, is a second, subterranean city called Ruxor. Inside a walled compound in Gizah, behind the Sacred Gate of Ruxor, stands a four-story tower which is the only entrance to the underground city. In the huge, pilloried hall of the tower are large statues that can shoot lightning bolts from their eyes. A cult still worshipping Amon-Ra lives in the city (Wonderworld Comics #18).

The jewel on Yarko's turban is called Ada-La-Hoda, one of two jewels that, if combined, bestow great power over life and death. The jewel was given to Yarko to protect and keep from its rightful, but undeserving, heir (Wonderworld Comics #11).

By September 1940, Yarko will spend more of his time, and his most potent magic, on solving mundane crimes. Increasingly, more of his investigations will uncover hoaxes instead of real instances of the supernatural. Seemingly bored with this turn for the mundane, Yarko will start playing silly pranks on mobsters with powerful spells by October 1941.



**Editor's Note:** Magic tends to be subtler in Yarko's world and much of his spellcraft could actually be illusionary in nature. Indeed, if some Magic-User spells were instead ascribed to a magic item (perhaps his jewel), his stats could be written using the Trickster class that appeared in The Trophy Case #4. The same could be said for Wu Chu below.

**Editor's Comments:** Will Eisner imbued this feature with mood, style, and substance. But by May 1940, Eisner is clearly no longer working on Yarko. The quality of the stories drop, the challenges Yarko faces become gradually meeker, and the strip will feature the more pedestrian art of Larry Antoinette until its cancellation.

### **Yarko the Great's Villain: Wu Chu**

**First appearance:** Wonderworld Comics #13 (May 1940)

**Appearances to date:** Wonderworld Comics #13, 16, 21, 25; Samson #4

Fu Chu, the "ageless oriental", has long schemed to take over the world, only to be opposed in recent years by Yarko the Great. Fu Chu is a moderately skillful sorcerer, but it is through technology (he likes to abduct scientists and force them to build weapons for him) and other resources (Fu Chu has a large network of yellow peril hoodlums under him and at least two remote palaces in China, as well as operations as far away as the Yucatan) that he plans to take over the world. Fu Chu likes to bait Yarko into opposing him. Fu Chu refers to Yarko as "old friend", probably sarcastically, but there does seem to be some mutual respect for each other there. Yarko refers to Fu Chu as "that master fiend" and, after smashing Fu Chu's plans, always vows to "take care of Fu Chu later".



**Editor's Comments:** Whether or not Fu Chu is actually Fu Manchu is left to the reader to decide. After the humiliating pranks Yarko plays on Fu Chu in his last appearance, one might hope for them to be separate characters.

### HIDEOUTS AND HOODLUMS VILLAIN RECORD

Hero Name	Fu Chu	Alignment	Chaotic
Real Name	Fu Chu?	Armor Class [AAC]	8 [11]
Class	Magic-User/Villain	Level/Title	7 Sorcerer/2 Bully
Race	Human	Move	60
Strength	12	Saves	
Intelligence	17	Missiles	8
Wisdom	13	Poison	7
Constitution	18	Plot	8
Dexterity	15	Science	9
Charisma	12	Spells	7
Experience Points:		80,000/1,500	
Hit Points:		20	
Money, on hand:		variable	
Money, available:		\$320,000	
AC [AAC]	9 [10]	8 [11]	7 [12]
	6 [13]	5 [14]	4 [15]
	3 [16]	2 [17]	1 [18]
To Hit	8	9	10
	11	12	13
	14	15	16

Equipment (& location)	Trophies (& location)	Special Abilities (racial, class-based)
Old-fashioned oriental clothes	Time bomb pellet	Keen senses
2 palaces in China	Flying rickshaw cab	Hide in shadows
Throwing skull	Gas chamber w/poison gas (in Chinese palace)	Spells (4 1 <sup>st</sup> , 3 2 <sup>nd</sup> , 2 3 <sup>rd</sup> , 1 4 <sup>th</sup> ; typically Charm Person, Hold Portal; Mobster Summoning I, Phantasmal Force; Dimension Portal)
Antique weapons for his followers		Counterspell
Secret lab		25% survival chance
Fake beard		40% disguise chance
Pet giant vulture		

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