

SUPERTEAM HANDBOOK



A HEROIC SUPPLEMENT FOR **MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS**

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A HEROIC SUPPLEMENT FOR MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS 3RD EDITION

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INTRODUCTION



The action. The drama. The romance. Teams collect everything engaging about comic books into one ready-made unit! Like any exciting ensemble cast or sports movie, different personalities work together toward a common goal, clashing with each other, growing, and shoring up each others' failings.

We know and love superteams, those collections of the best and brightest champions who cleave together to face threats too great for any one hero to face alone. Superhero teams are more than just collecting raw firepower for that ultimate salvo of justice. They're about interpersonal relationships, showcasing various members' inner turmoil and how they interact, driving our favorite characters together or apart. Superhero teams provide new resources heroes can use to dispense justice as our favorite characters work together, making up for each others' weaknesses and bringing out the best in one another.

But superhero teams at the game table can be an entirely different story.

Team-based comics are about all those things, but the first function of a superhero team in a *Mutants & Masterminds* game is to bring friends together to play the game. It's a social gathering with the conceit that there's a common enemy to rally the troops and provide players with a challenge that won't break friendships. But often there isn't much more thought put into the team as an entity beyond

"we fight the same crime, so we're a team." The SuperTeam Handbook is about fleshing out that connection, making the team itself and the interactions between members an important and exciting element of the game. A team can help define an entire campaign, depending on what role it fills or what common elements its members share, and a campaign can help shape a team by virtue of the enemies and challenges the team faces.

GUIDING A TEAM

*We've got spirit, Yes we do,
We've got Spirit, How 'bout you?*

A team should have no greater cheerleader than the Gamemaster. The Gamemaster's role for any team is to listen to what the players want, set reasonable expectations for the campaign, encourage good ideas, and help refine bad ideas into something workable. While the major choices about a team's purpose, identity, and goals should be a group effort, the Gamemaster's role as referee and host begins early. They should be excited about the ideas that excite their PCs and help run the kind of campaign that everyone wants to play, but know when to suggest changes or improvements to help the team work better as a single unit both in the world and at the table.

And just as every Gamemaster should cheer their group on and help push them to be their best, every member

of a team should accept going in that at least part of their role at the table is to help their fellow players succeed and have a good time. Intertwine your stories, consider what weaknesses others have that you can compensate for, and decide early on how to want to contribute to others' success. The team bruiser might get more mileage out of their Impervious Toughness by adding the Interpose advantage and playing bodyguard to another hero who doesn't have enough Power Points to buy all the cool support powers *and* max out their defenses. The sneaky team sniper can remain part of the action if they also invest in a Communication power, allowing them to act as a hub for team chat. A master of the elements who can create severe weather or cold or hallucinations with the Environment power provides an excellent opportunity for the rest of the team to benefit from advantages like Favored Environment or powers like Movement (environmental adaptation). Making decisions like this during character creation can help heroes shine from their first session, instead of feeling like their first few XP are committed to playing catch-up.

COMMUNICATION

One of the recurring themes you'll see throughout this book is the importance of communications, both in-character and at the game table. Most interpersonal problems start small and grow over time, and clear communication between players and the Gamemaster can help head off bigger arguments later down the line and set up satisfying character growth over time. A lot of people worry that good communications skills mean that they always need to be super-sincere and dull and never crack jokes, but there's really only one real rule when it comes to good communication:

Try not to be an asshole.

It sounds simple enough, but we all screw it up all the time, because it's *easy* to be an asshole. Most of us manage to do it without even thinking about it. And when you are an asshole, it's okay to say "sorry, I was being an asshole;" it doesn't make you a bad person to screw up. And if you're not sure, it's okay to ask "am I being an asshole?"

If you want to be less of an asshole, then it helps to try to understand yourself and your emotions, and be up-front about how things make you feel and why. You can be as genuine or hilarious as you want, but you should always try to be honest

Being less of an asshole also means listening when other people try to explain the same from their point of view. Good communication means talking to someone, not *at* someone, and listening rather than waiting for your turn to talk. There might be a legitimate problem you weren't even aware you were causing; an off-hand joke might be something directed at them without the joking tone in other environments; a piece of slang you've always used may have insulting meanings you were never aware of. You can step on someone's toe and that doesn't make you a bad person, but their foot still hurts, and you should apologize rather than stay on their toe explaining how much you didn't mean to step on them.

Always keep in mind that people have different experiences, and sometimes those experiences leave deep scars. Gamemasters should discuss what topics should and shouldn't show up among their players away from the table itself. This can be done together as part of pre-game planning, or privately in one-on-one conversations, e-mail, or chat for more sensitive topics. All too many gamers have had life experiences that make sexual violence or violence against children strictly off-limits in their game time, and it's important to be aware beforehand of what issues can ruin someone's night. Preliminary discussions also let you learn what normally-innocuous subjects may make someone uncomfortable; a player with asthma may not be able to sit next to a smoker, and a player recovering from alcoholism may ask that people not drink at game. For many people, these triggers aren't necessarily complete non-starters; difficult subjects are often more easy for a trauma survivor to navigate when they know it's coming and can prepare themselves. A simple e-mail or text warning a player "Hey, I was thinking of adding X to the game plot this week and wanted to see if you're okay with it," or "I was thinking about including this aspect in my character background; is that too much," can save a lot of pain later down the line.

It also helps to know what your personal yellow and red topics are:

Yellow Topics: Yellow topics are subjects that are touchy, but fine if they are handled responsibly, or not focused on too heavily. These may be things that many of instinctively gloss over in group settings, like sexual topics or graphic violence, but may be more personal issues like not wanting to see children endangered in the game or just hating a specific song or film. Yellow topics, like a yellow traffic light, advise awareness and caution.

Red Topics: Red topics are subjects that shouldn't be approached at the game table. Whether it's for personal reasons or respect for others, red topics are sensitive issues that will likely immediately end a fun night out with friends if brought up. Red topics, like red traffic lights, are strictly for stopping things.

Sometimes personalities conflict too much over delicate topics for two people to reliably game together; someone who considers "politics" a red topic they want to avoid at the game table might conflict with a queer player or a black player who see the game table as a chance to feel empowered about the parts of their lives that are politicized by default. Two players might be able to talk this out and find more specific boundaries they can agree upon, or they may simply not be able to game together, but either way they've managed to avoid potential bad feelings, resentment, and heated words by communicating their needs up front.

USEFUL COMMUNICATION TOOLS

A few simple tools can contribute a lot to good table communication.

Character Tents: A table tent is a folded slip of paper that stands up on its own, and they're common tools at con-

vention games and store games where players don't necessarily know one another. They are useful at home games as well for players and Gamemasters who have trouble remembering character names, particularly as a campaign is beginning. Players juggling multiple characters (particularly the Gamemaster) or characters with dual identities (like superheroes) can use them to clearly communicate who they're portraying at the moment. Character tents are also a handy place to display yellow and red topics, if players want to share them.

The X Card: An increasingly common tool in convention game, the X card is simple an index card or piece of paper with a large "X" drawn on it and left in the middle of the table. Any player, including the GM, can reach out and touch the X card to indicate the table talk or game is broaching a sensitive topic they don't want at the table—a red topic, from above—without further needing to explain why. The other players understand that is a signal to stop that topic or navigate the story past that problematic element. Everyone should understand that the X card is not just a way of quieting the table or stopping side chatter. Players may want to discuss the issue after the game, but the X card is ultimately a tool to help keep the game going without interruption.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

The *SuperTeam Handbook* focuses on everything you need to start running a team-based campaign from top to bottom, from the history of teams in comics to story and mechanical considerations for building your own team to new rules to help characters work together in interesting new ways. The bulk of the book is a collection of sample superhero teams and their members, complete with campaign guidelines so players and Gamemasters can start rolling dice in just a few minutes.

Gamemasters interested in a flavorful and focused campaign can instead use the various teams in this book as an outline for similar adventures while allowing their players to create new heroes from scratch.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

Beginning with history and high concept, moving on into mechanical considerations, and finally to a selection of pre-generated teams, the *SuperTeam Handbook* contains rules, random generators, and campaign outlines useful for starting your own *Mutants & Masterminds* game with a strong core identity and purpose for your heroes.

Chapter 1: Knowing Your Team looks at the role a team plays in comics and at the table, including some history on team books in comics. It asks basic questions about your team, like why you came together, what rules you follow, and how you work together once the eye beams start flying. This chapter also looks at inter-team drama and when it is and isn't appropriate, and how to draw the line, as well as providing advice on how to handle common character concepts that don't always play well in a group.

Chapter 2: Building Your Team looks at the mechanical considerations of forming a team by introducing the team template—what mechanical elements all members of a team should have in common—as well as Tactical Roles and Concept Roles that help players decide where exactly their superhero fits in the team dynamic. It provides some insight on how to help keep characters unique even when power sets overlap, as well as suggestions for skills and advantages that are valuable for every member of a team to have versus those that can be entrusted to one or two characters. New powers presented in this chapter can help bind a team together—sometimes literally—while the advantages presented help a team work together more closely than a random assortment of heroes who only recently met. Finally, to help flesh out the team itself, the chapter presents new team vehicles, team installations, and team maneuvers.

Chapter 3: Team Lineups delves into a collection pre-generated superhero teams, ranging in Power Level from PL 5 to PL 12. Each team includes its team template, origins, and purpose, as well as useful suggestions for the Gamemaster in running a campaign revolving around that team, from adventure suggestions to villains to confront. To double the utility, every team also has suggestions for using them as rivals and villains in your pre-existing *Mutants & Masterminds* campaign. The new teams provided are:

- **UNIQUE (PL 12):** The United Nation's premiere superhero team, focused on tackling global threats and natural disasters.
- **Project Freedom (PL 11):** A band of reformed villains putting their powers to use as super-powered community service.
- **The Outliers (PL 10):** The heroes who don't quite fit anywhere else, tackling problems too outrageous for any other team to notice.
- **The Upstarts (PL 9):** Bound by their alien heritage and hunted by a private corporation, they focus as much on survival as they do righting wrongs.
- **Magna Force (PL 8-11):** Empowered by a lost Pre-server artifact, they defend the Earth from cosmic threats from behind the controls of giant, fighting robots.
- **The Ferroburg Four (PL 7):** A hard-luck city needs its own hard-luck heroes, battling evil with grit, determination, and a solid left hook.
- **The Shadow Knights (PL 6):** Spawned in a bizarre genetics accident, four sisters battle ninjas, magic aliens, and genetic abominations from the shadows of a technological playground.
- **Red Group (PL 5):** Sometimes the good guys need to think like the bad guys, and this elite AEGIS team is licensed to turn crime against itself.

CHAPTER 1: KNOWING YOUR TEAM



Comic teams thrive on the drama of strong personalities coming together for both good and ill. Comic book teams often have rivalries, rotating casts, and love triangles; strife, arguing, and betrayal are de rigueur. These same elements in a game can send enraged players leaping across the table for each others' throats.

As Gamemaster, this section contains all the tricks and advice you'll need to guide a team of superheroes at the table, while giving all players a taste of the magic that differentiates a collection of superheroes who have banded together from a group of dungeon-faring adventurers. For players, this chapter is all about making different personalities work together while giving everyone their due.

THE HISTORY OF SUPERTEAMS IN COMICS

Imagine you're a child, running through the slush and snow to the nearest newsstand. It's 1940; Superman is two years old, Batman a cherub-cheeked one-year-old, and you have a fresh dime burning a hole in your pocket. Hanging in the kiosk on a string are rows of comics pinched with clothespins. And there it is...*All Star Comics* #3—the winter issue. It's the first team-up of its kind, with the Atom, the Sandman, the Spectre, the Flash, the Hawkman, Dr. Fate, the Green Lantern, and the Hour-Man sitting around a table marked "Justice Society of America" (not shown was Johnny Thunder). This was the Golden Age of comics in every respect, and it was an incredible milestone that would shape the industry to come.

More milestones would follow as Wonder Woman joined the ranks of the JSA in *All Star Comics* #8 a year later, while

DC pulled seven more heroes from their rosters to form the "Seven Soldiers of Victory." Among the heroes were two sidekicks, including Speedy and his mentor the Green Arrow. Marvel's 1946 predecessor, Timely Comics, published "All-Winners Squad" in *All Winners Comics* #19, featuring none other than Captain America, Bucky, Namor, the Human Torch, Toro, Whizzer, and Miss America. Unfortunately, they arrived at the tail end of World War II as harrowed soldiers were too busy coming home and reintegrating into their lives as adults. Comic sales dropped, and companies looked to bolster flagging sales through thrillers, Westerns, and horror comics.

The fiasco of Fredric Wertham's book, *The Seduction of the Innocent*—with its accusations that comics promoted homosexuality through characters like Batman and Robin

and Wonder Woman, or exposed children to horrific imagery and sexuality—resulted in the self-regulating Comics Code Authority of 1954. Its impact and damage on comics as an art form were extensive, and it wasn't until the 21st century that the code was completely abandoned by publisher. During the CCA's reign, however, 1958's *Adventure Comics* introduced Superboy to his 30th-century fan club, "The Legion of Superheroes." From the original three time travelers came *Adventure Comics* #346 in 1966, as the Legion exploded to twenty-plus heroes and became one of the largest superteams ever published. This was just one of many groups to enjoy a superteam resurgence in the 1960s, such as Marvel's answers to the powerhouse sales of the *Justice League of America* with the 1963 premiers of *The Fantastic Four*, *The Avengers*, and *The X-Men*.

The '80s saw superteams face real-world questions about power, responsibility, consequence, and mortality. In 1980, the X-Men's *Dark Phoenix Saga* came to an unhappy end after Jean Grey committed suicide rather than succumb again to the ravenous force that could and had killed entire suns. Marvel's 1985 twelve-part miniseries *Squadron Supreme* showcased heroes divided over the creation of a totalitarian "Utopia" and questions of morality and consent, ending with a brutal finale that killed heroes on both sides of the fight. And if a couple of dead heroes weren't enough, Marvel upped the ante with the 1986 series *Strikeforce: Morituri*, featuring superheroes who had less than a year to fight an alien occupation before their power consumed them. The estimated tally was 25 heroes culled over the comic's 31-issue arc. In 1986, DC published their own cynical examination of superteams—despite still publishing arguably the most identifiable superteam books—in *Watchmen*, which introduced the world to the likes of Ozymandias, Rorschach, Dr. Manhattan, Silk Spectre, and the Comedian, and showed a world affected by the rise and fall of its "heroes."

The growing maturity in comics and the slipping CCA influence freed superhero teams to become more than just the gatekeepers of majority ideology. Heroes could be as human, as fallible, and as diverse as humanity itself, taking comics from an entertainment medium to one with literary merit. In a sympathy-for-the-devil ploy, DC released *Suicide Squad* in 1987, depicting villains forced to run black ops for the government under the vicious eye of the now-iconic Amanda Waller.

In the early '90s, DC and Marvel were joined by Dark Horse Comics and Image Comics, the latter of which included creator-owned studios like Wildstorm and Top Cow Productions. These new studios bucked the Comics Code Authority entirely, and introduced new heroes and creators with stories that waded eagerly into the once-forbidden waters of violence and sexuality. Dark Horse would release the supernatural team *BPRD* in 2002 and the offbeat *Umbrella Academy* in 2007. Wildstorm, on the other hand, stuck to more mainstream but supposedly edgier titles like *Strykeforce*, *WildC.A.T.s*, and *Stormwatch*, the latter of which would survive under the DC banner when Wildstorm became its imprint. *Stormwatch* formed the nucleus for the by-all-means-necessary team known as *The Authority*, which would then inform a grittier parallel Marvel Universe in *The Ultimates*.

Team books, with their broad rosters and reliance on human drama, have been fertile ground for advancing civil rights. Marvel's *X-Men* first served as a metaphor for the civil rights struggles of the '60s, and in the '90s provided a parable for the ongoing AIDS crisis in the fictitious Legacy Virus. While the 1999 release of *The Authority* featured openly gay partners Apollo and Midnighter, they weren't the first gay or diverse superheroes. Neither were DC's *The Invisibles* in 1994. That honor fell to 1992's *Alpha Flight* #109, in which Northstar fought off Major Mapleleaf as Alpha Flight protected an HIV-positive infant in a story best described as "problematic." DC introduced an equally problematic queer character by revealing in *Legion of Superheroes* #241 that longtime supporting character Shvaughn Erin was assigned male at birth, and only transitioned to have a relationship with the hero Element Lad. DC introduced their first true recurring transgender character in *Doom Patrol* #70 when former sex worker Coagula joined the team.

In 2003, we were introduced to the all-female *Birds of Prey* series, showing female characters as deeper creations than objectified, bikini-clad "babes," including a cast queer and disabled women. The avalanche had started, and companies no longer had problems creating teams that wildly deviated from early formulas or that included more diverse members, be it Marvel's humorous and violent *Nextwave, Agents of H.A.T.E.*, or the inclusion of gay teens Wiccan and Hulkling in the *Young Avengers*.

Superhero teams, however, are not just the playground of Western writers. In 1975, Japanese television premiered Toei Company and Bandai's brand of superheroes with the Super Sentai genre. *Himitsu Sentai Gorenger* was the first to pit powered heroes in similar but differently colored costumes against a global threat. From pioneers *J.A.K.Q. Dengekitai* and *Battle Fever J* all the way down to the *Kyoryuger* series of Korea, Super Sentai shows and movies generally featured martial skills, vehicles, unique weapons, and a giant robot that required the team to work together to defeat the big bad. They even convinced Marvel Comics to jump in on the action with *Supaidāman*, a Spider-Man series that featured a Spider-Man who could turn into a giant robot. The West became familiar with the formula through Sabban's import of *Kyōryū Sentai Zyuranger*, better known as *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers*, and follow-ups like *Big Bad Beetle Borgs* and *Kamen Rider: Dragon Knight* for younger and older audiences, respectively.

Sailor Moon in particular was ground-breaking for a number of reasons. Since the 1969 breakthrough of the female artists and writers known as the "Magnificent 24" into the industry, *shōjo* manga (which targets women) went from being written and illustrated by men to being helmed by women. With this came a deeper exploration of themes and subject matter unique to the female experience, particularly in challenging the traditional roles of women. *Sailor Moon* pushed the magical school girl trope into the realm of superheroes, making the leap from manga to anime to worldwide phenomenon. It opened the way for shows like the dark fantasy *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*, which echoes earlier cynical comics like *Watchmen* by holding the harsh mirror of consequence up to the magical girl genre.

Manga for boys and men, known respectively as *shōnen* and *seinen*, rarely had the lone-hero fixation that Western comics pursued. Their manga and anime featured super-teams in a slightly different variation, with an ensemble of young adults learning to wield great power, fighting an escalating threat, and, of course, occasionally being pitted against friends, classmates, and rivals in such series as *Naruto*, *Bleach*, and the superheroic *My Hero Academia*.

It would be nice to imagine that the leap from print to screen for superhero teams was smooth and painless; that *The X-Men* film franchise that began in 2000 and *The Avengers* of 2012 were the first times we saw talented actors playing our favorite ensembles of champions. Sadly, those honors unofficially fell to the ridiculous, unreleased 1994 *Fantastic Four*, a low-budget proof-of-concept movie, and the failed 1997 *Justice League* pilot that killed any attempt to launch a network series.

The first respectable superteam movie was Dark Horse's *Mystery Men* in 1999. While both *The Avengers* and *X-Men* paved the way for powerhouses like *Guardians of the Galaxy*, *Suicide Squad*, and *Justice League*, they also allowed for independent teams like 2010's *Kick-Ass* and the Russian release of its own *Guardians*.

With superheroes becoming mainstream, even television teams are enjoying stronger story treatments and bumped-up budgets. We've come a long way from when 2001's *Mutant X*, 2002's *Birds of Prey*, and 2011's *Alphas* played on networks that catered only to the geek crowd with low-budget special effects and overwrought scripts. Now, Marvel is tying its film and television universes together with the primetime showing of *Agents of S.H.I.E.L.D.* on ABC and *The Defenders* on Netflix. Between those and DC's extended universe forming around *Arrow*, *The Flash*, *Supergirl*, *Legends of Tomorrow*, and *Black Lightning*, superhero teams are finally being given their long-awaited due.

COMING TOGETHER

Throw out the question, "Why form a team?" and the simplest answer is, "Because I want to play with my friends." This is at the core of gaming itself, and superhero teams are among the best ways to bring heroes together under a unified, ideological purpose. They help a tabletop group respect the identities of the individual members as well, and thrive on the dynamics of having multiple points of view. Superheroes can't be everywhere at once, and they certainly can't save everyone who needs saving or wait around for high-priority incidents. It's easier to band together and coordinate their efforts than to go it alone. That's a vanilla reason compared to the following.

COMMON GOOD

The most common reason for superheroes to work together in tabletop games and comics is banding together for the common good. These are heroes who value fighting for what's right above any individual differences. Theorizing that any good team is more than just the sum of its parts, these groups often hail from very different backgrounds and wield a hugely diverse array of powers and

skills...so diverse that it can be challenging to find causes or enemies that strike a chord with every member. But the Common Good is also an easy and flexible cause to rally behind, and allows members to develop their own enemies, causes, and dramas naturally rather than focusing on a pre-built narrative.

THE ADVANTAGES

Banding together for the common good allows players to build heroes with whatever powers, origins, and complications they want, providing a huge degree of flexibility and personal freedom.

THE CONCESSIONS

Players will need to decide more specifically what "common good" means. Are they focused on reducing harm and danger to civilians, preserving property, or targeting criminals even if they don't pose a public threat (yet)? Is it about promoting understanding and helping people become their best selves—even "bad guys"—or is it about super-powered street brawls? Each focus will provide a slightly different approach to problem solving.

COMMON ENEMY

Unlike the common good, a common enemy binds heroes together by what they hate rather than what they love, defining them based on an outside force. They may organize to resist an alien invasion or a secret megalomaniac that no one else believes is a threat, or their opponent may be more esoteric, like the rise of evil magic or the abuse of science. Heroes in such a group tend to feel some duty or responsibility—perhaps even guilt—that drives them to work together even if they may otherwise be loners. It's important for the players to be involved with the Gamemaster in defining the scope and tone of their shared enemy, to make sure the driving force of the campaign both feels relevant and doesn't make anyone uncomfortable.

THE ADVANTAGES

As with the common good, heroes sharing a common enemy can be diverse in terms of powers and backgrounds, but often have a common element of their background that has thrown them together. This shared experience helps tie them together more closely (and provides more opportunities for **Team Complications**; see later in this chapter).

THE CONCESSIONS

A shared enemy can feel repetitive if they are the only threat the PCs face, especially if that opponent always seems to escape or deflect any accountability for their crimes. Gamemasters must strike a careful balance between making the shared enemy relevant and not letting them grow stale. Heroes who bond over a shared enemy also tend to be more specialized to oppose that enemy, and may lack the powers or skills to face other challenges.

COMMUNITY SERVICE/DEBT

The player characters don't necessarily need to be heroes; some teams are forced to work together as atonement for past crimes. This may be literal community service, where reformed villains are forced to work for the government to prove they've reformed, or a more abstract situation where characters are bound into service by an entity—a superhero, a wizard, a god, etc.—they've previously wronged. Adventures can cover a wide range of genres, with the player characters acting as traditional heroes or as mercenaries, villains-for-hire, or emergency relief.

THE ADVANTAGES

Community service heroes are ripe for drama, as they plot to escape their debt or agonize over what it means to be a good person. Their opponents can range from supervillains to suspicious superheroes, as well as whatever organization holds their leash. This provides players with a long-term enemy to slowly outwit, or a personal goal to work toward.

THE CONCESSIONS

Heroes serving their time are ultimately not their own masters, and many gamers chafe at any control or authority and will focus on escaping it. Community service games also lend themselves to a conspiracy mindset, as the heroes have every reason to distrust their masters, and cultivating any trust or camaraderie can prove challenging.

DAY JOB

Not every hero is a selfless part-timer. For some, saving people may simply be a job—potentially the only job available to them—that they view with the same mix of dedication and dread we all have for the nine-to-five routine. They may be public servants, part of a private company, or contractors brought in by the city to address superhuman crimes, but in any case their heroics are compensated, clocked, and potentially micromanaged by someone over their heads. Alternatively, the heroes may be their own bosses, running a small company that might invite its own debt-related complications.

THE ADVANTAGES

Being able to clock out at the end of the shift and know someone else will handle the emergencies can remove a number of complexities from a hero's personal life. Heroes who don't need to divide their attention between their day job and their daring-do have more time for their families or personal projects. It also means heroes can generally count on backup from their organization when things get bad.

THE CONCESSIONS

If being on a team is stressful, being co-workers can be worse, as grievances can become the whole organization's business. Heroes may also have to deal with supe-



riors issuing orders or warning them away from cases, or otherwise need to play politics in their off hours rather than focus solely on doing good works. How involved this management is should be largely up to the players, but regular interference qualifies as a complication.

FAMILY

Sometimes, heroes are more than a team: they're family. They might be biological family—such as superhero parents raising super-powered kids—or they could be a family of choice—a scientist escapes a cruel laboratory to protect the artificial humans she helped create. Families tend to argue more than strangers or even friends, but also share deeper emotional bonds and communicate more efficiently. They likely share a common origin as well, but may have outliers who missed whatever initial event empowered the core of the family and now supplement their crimefighting with special equipment or training.

THE ADVANTAGES

Many families are close and, despite the drama, stick together when other teams might give up. Playing as a family also allows vastly different play styles to exist together, as more serious or responsible players can step

into the roles of adults while a more irreverent player can be a child or weird aunt. Families also generally come with an array of helpful (or rival) NPCs in the form of extended family or family friends that players should flesh out together.

THE CONCESSIONS

Families often have an established power structure with parents firmly at the top, and some players might not feel comfortable with someone having presumed authority



over their characters. Likewise, a family team likely means a shared origin and power type—awesome as it seems for dad to be a wizard, mom to be a mutant, and their eldest daughter to pilot a giant robot, it can also stretch credulity and ruin some peoples' immersion.

POOLED RESOURCES

A team may come together to take advantage of a resource they can't easily divide between individual heroes. They may all operate from the same headquarters or a public superhero grant, and so naturally their work overlaps, or they may each command skills the others lack. Previously established heroes who band together or heroic, globe-spanning initiatives generally share resources.

THE ADVANTAGES

A team bonded over a shared resource has a lot of flexibility in origins and powers and, in fact, may benefit from each member being hyper-specialized. Teams bound by shared resources tend to be more informal than others, making it easier for new PCs to drop in or out as your game group changes. Players should decide collectively what their shared resources are and contribute starting points accordingly (see the **Team Template** section in **Chapter Two**).

THE CONCESSIONS

A shared resource also means a shared responsibility. Heroes using a common installation or vehicle must also help protect and repair it, or at least clean it after using it, while heroes who come together to exploit each others' specialty skills must likewise make their own skills available. It also raises the question of why the group stays together if that shared resource is destroyed.

SHARED ORIGIN

Some hero teams join together because of a common origin: strangers are given powers by a single source and left alone in the world save for one another. Mutants in a xenophobic world, families that gain powers together, and runaway experiments created by a callous organization all unite thanks to a shared origin. Plots may revolve around finding safety or allies in addition to the usual superhero battles of good versus evil. The common origin can easily go hand-in-hand with the common enemy, with the players creating unwilling superheroes hunted by whatever empowered them or whoever wants to control them.

THE ADVANTAGES

The common experience provides common goals: understand what turned the group into powered individuals, survive their common threat, teach the world to accept their unusual kind, etc. Interpersonal struggles are generally easier to play out because, regardless of any potential hurt feelings between teammates, they must still stay together to have any hope of achieving their shared goals.

THE CONCESSIONS

Assembling a team of random strangers can be fun and atmospheric, but they need to understand each other, and that can mean “trial by fire” for a group of people forced to work together. Tempers are more likely to flare between strangers thrown together. It also means that groups like this can be a closed loop, making it harder to introduce new player characters or NPCs they can trust.

UNITED PRINCIPLES

With a united principle, the heroes are of like mind or similar cause, sharing some ideological goal regardless of their background. The heroes constantly confront injustice as a daily reality in their lives, and they cannot ignore it. They might come together on their own, or find work with an organization that mirrors their values and goals. Their cause is about more than just fighting a costumed villain; it’s about correcting some wrong in the world around them. A team united by shared principles may fight racism or fascism, work to fix economic inequality or political corruption, or dedicate themselves to hunting criminals that the law can’t or won’t touch. Heroes from similar cultural or socioeconomic backgrounds or heroes involved with street-level crimefighting often unite under shared principles.

THE ADVANTAGES

There’s a strength that comes from fighting for one’s convictions. Heroes can do as much for these goals out of their uniforms as they can in costume. This allows the individual members to shine as they put their skills and contacts within the affected community to good use. It is often the perfect reason for superheroes with lower Power Levels to team up. More importantly, some members of tight-knit communities may not want to deal with outsiders unfamiliar with the nuances of their daily realities. This makes characters within those communities important beyond the stats on their page, and speaks to something intrinsic to their experiences and backgrounds.

THE CONCESSIONS

In these groups, the heroes are often victims or constantly face the injustice or inequality they seek to change. They are powerless in its face—at least in their secret identities—or left to feel powerless until they possess the means to redress the situation. The heroes may know what to change, but disagree on how to change it. Will the call to action be a call for blood or a call to march?

TEAMBUILDING CONSIDERATIONS

While the reasons why a group comes together are critical, why they stay together carries game-related hurdles that both Gamemasters and players should consider carefully. What happens if the group plays characters with disparate Power Levels? What happens when you throw different backgrounds into the mix? What if the players or Gamemaster want a campaign featuring a veritable

legion of superheroes? These are issues that need to be discussed well before the superheroes throw their first punch, to avoid retrofitting the campaign to get around the roadblocks.

POWER LEVEL

Most campaigns will use heroes of equal or comparable Power Levels in an effort to keep things fair and to allow each player their moment under the sun. There are many examples of parity in modern superteams, such as street-level groups and common origin teams. But the movers and shakers of the comic universes—those foundational heroes who began with solo careers—are often of widely disparate Power Levels.

Heroes of comparable power are the assumed default in tabletop games, both to provide a sense of equality among players and because heroes in a *Mutants & Masterminds* game are generally assumed to start their heroic careers at roughly the same time. Heroes who share a common origin have an even stronger argument for sharing a Power Level and starting Power Point total. In other situations, simple suspension of disbelief applies for the sake of game balance, and players agree that of course an acrobatic detective is at the same Power Level as an alien demigod who can topple buildings.

In comic books and television, heroes often possess wildly different capabilities—in game terms, they have a variety of Power Levels. This approach lets a Gamemaster use a variety of threats in encounters, with less-powerful heroes focusing on a colorful cast of minions and lieutenants while the team’s heavy hitters take on the biggest, meanest threats (and usually take the biggest, meanest hits). If this is an approach you would like to take at the game table, niche protection (see page 25) becomes incredibly important, as heroes with less combat power will need even more opportunities to shine outside of combat. Gamemasters will also need to put in extra effort to give lower-PL heroes their own important options in conflict scenes. Players who play lower-PL heroes must be more creative in finding ways to contribute, while those playing higher-PL heroes must be careful not to hog the spotlight.

In the game world itself, more powerful or renowned superheroes generally have fewer individual contacts at street level. They are more used to dealing with people of equal status and moving in more generalized, political circles. A “Superman” may never understand the streets the way a “Batman” might, and a “Captain America” might never fathom the murky grey zones of the underworld the way a “Daredevil” would.

AT THE TABLE

One popular option for varied Power Level games is to provide additional Power Points at character creation to heroes who voluntarily lower their PL caps, and grant fewer Power Points at creation to heroes with higher PL caps. You can translate this directly into “buying” and “selling” Power Levels—players may gain 15 pp at character creation for every -1 reduction in their Power Level, or pay 15 pp to increase their PL caps by +1. Or you may set



specific categories for your players to select from, such as creating either a PL 8 hero from 180 pp, a PL 10 hero from 150 pp or a PL 12 hero from 120 pp. Because *Mutants & Masterminds* roughly equates 1 Power Level to 15 Power Points, a character with a reduction of their Power Level by one but an increase of 15 in their Power Point total is *about* as useful in terms of character options, even if they aren't as comparable in combat, though the ultimate trade-off should be decided before character creation.

ONE CHARACTER VERSUS MEGA-TEAMS

The majority of campaigns encourage the monogamy of one player/one character. This is a way to foster roleplaying and to encourage inter-group dynamics through prolonged investment. Single-character fidelity is also a way to create arcs where players have a history, and thus a stake in the events; they've been around for a while and have a vested interest in resolving issues that impacted them. In fact, players who have roleplayed their characters' journeys through hell want that emotional payoff to make the hero's journey worthwhile. The final event and its aftermath are as sweet as the series finale of your favorite show. It's the wrap-up to a rock tour that ends in your hometown. It's the celebration of a football season after clenching the division title. Sticking to a single character allows each player to richly develop and explore their character, and grow with them through the length of a campaign.

But the genre of superteams also has a long, proud history of expansive rosters, with diverse and interesting minor characters occasionally stepping into the spotlight while popular core characters fade into the background for a few adventures. The *X-men* numbered fifteen in the 90s, while the *Legion of Superheroes'* roster grew to over three dozen active members. Mega-teams can represent international, interplanetary, or even interdimensional groups, or perhaps an expansive school for superhumans such as Earth Prime's Claremont Academy. Either way, this campaign is very well suited to a diverse and eclectic gathering of individuals operating under a single banner and it allows the players to pick from a stable of metahumans. Many of the background heroes may be NPCs, but you may instead form a team where every player creates more than one hero, playing one individual for each session or arc. Alternatively, players may have their own main heroes and access to communal secondary characters for those moments when their mains are sidelined, or to face specialized challenges.

Either way, this option gives players a shot at trying a variety of styles of play and powers, giving each person their moment to shine or play to their preferences. A rotating cast encourages a natural give-and-take for sharing the spotlight, as the hero who dominated the previous session trades out for another member. It also shifts the

roles around, enabling each player to try being stealthy, or being the paragon, or being the crack detective, without stepping on another player's niche.

For Gamemasters, this style of campaign opens the sessions up to more thematic versatility. Gamemasters can follow tough sessions with light-hearted ones featuring a set of "wacky" or sidekick characters to give players a chance to decompress. Usually players will come away from catastrophic or harrowing moments with a certain added gravity to their characters. Their heroes will never be the same, and the following sessions will deal with the emotional aftermath of an event. With a large cast of characters, however, the players have permission to let go and have fun without feeling guilty.

Gamemasters can offer players some control over the type of story arc they want to tackle by asking a simple question: Who do you want to play next? Players can decide if they want to focus on supernatural adventures, thrilling mysteries, or world-ending threats by the array of heroes they want to step into. Alternatively, the Gamemaster can present threats and then ask the players which of their heroes will respond, meaning no player is left feeling totally unequipped when they must take their whiz-kid super-hacker into a fantasy dimension devoid of technology. This also allows the players to experiment and play against type, seeing what happens when powerhouses are forced to navigate the nuances of a street-level arc or when crime-fighters face the repercussions of global events on a more local scale.

A large team also provides a way to combine heroes of disparate Power Levels while still ensuring that every player gets the chance to be the powerful one. Each player might contribute a PL 8, a PL 10, and a PL 12 hero to the team's roster, with a limit of one PL 12 hero for each adventure. Your team may consist of core heroes with each player also creating another hero's sidekick, giving players a more vested interest in each others' characters.

AT THE TABLE

You don't need to decide if your game will give players multiple heroes right away. Your campaign can easily start with a set cast of core heroes who attract neophyte metamorphs to their banner and grow in power as time goes on. You should decide several things when introducing this concept. How and when can players select their hero for an adventure? How hard is it to trade out heroes? Can one player control two heroes at a time, or is everyone only allowed one character at a time? Can the team send back-up in an emergency?

SHARED BACKGROUNDS VERSUS OPEN CASTING CALL

When running games, Gamemasters and players alike need to understand the complications and benefits of a shared origin versus characters of different backgrounds.

If the heroes all come from one origin—common in games with mutants, sentai heroes, or runaway experiments, for

example—then they often share drawbacks like their public perception, a specific weakness, or a common enemy. These shared complications not only become a general source of conflict and story fodder, but they also bind the team together. They provide a campaign's center of gravity, the reason why a player doesn't need to ask, "Why is my character here?" A shared physical drawback—a drug dependency or a weakness to a rare element—is trickier to balance. Teams are meant to support one another's shortcomings; a single attack or mineral that can affect them all equally becomes a much greater danger, and should be used sparingly to add value to the story. It shouldn't be something that incapacitates the entire group at once.

The limitation of same-origin backstories, however, is that campaigns rarely explore themes, tropes, and villains outside of the superteam's origin. If all the heroes are empowered by an old god to hunt demons serving the god's enemies, they're not likely to encounter aliens or rogue computers. This isn't an issue if there are only one or two sources of superpowers in a game, but if powers can come from magic, radiation, chemical accidents, technical expertise, genetic mutations, and alien physiology, then a group that comes from one background may never be equipped to deal with other stories without relying on NPC help. Or those stories may seem like distractions since they don't tie directly into the group's foundation.

Characters from diverse backgrounds, however, offer the team a far wider reach within the universe and more opportunity to shine when a storyline features an individual's area of expertise, from crime-fighting to mystic threats to alien species. Such campaigns generally run longer because they focus less on a single story conceit than a common-origin campaign might. The variety of background stories also means that the heroes have different outlooks, allowing for a wider range of temperaments.

Another advantage of same-origin heroes is that each member of the group is motivated to define their personality in a way that distinguishes them from everyone else. Imagine a family of superheroes with a shared legacy of psychic powers. While there are plenty of different powers attributed to psychic ability—pyrokinesis, mind-reading, astral projection, telekinesis, precognition—the similar themes still mean that each member can't fall back on the comic book trope of "the esoteric psychic." Instead, they must define their roles relative to each other and separate from their powers, with someone being the voice of reason, another being the hotshot, another being the salt of the Earth, etc.

AT THE TABLE

Common origins should generally be decided during character creation, as they can greatly inform the campaign a Gamemaster puts together. Gamemasters might also provide an unwitting shared origin by introducing some plot element responsible for each hero's distinct origin, though these elements often require additional suspension of disbelief on the part of players, who may resent outside control over their character's backstory.



CODES OF CONDUCT

Often, working as a team means agreeing to a common code of behavior and making sure everyone is playing by the same rules and tone. In addition to considering their characters' backgrounds during character creation, players should discuss what their team's code of conduct might be, however informal. Knowing what the in-world rules are can help shape character concepts just as much as knowing the in-world history, and helps player characters maintain a consistent tone. It also means that the times when those rules are broken may become future plot points.

In many campaigns, an official code of conduct represents what an authority over the PCs imposes—teen superheroes might have to respect their school's rules for superhuman activities and heroes working for the police force must respect the chain of command. However, players should still be involved in creating the code of conduct that will help define the campaign.

Consider at least a few of the following and make sure everyone agrees on what is acceptable behavior for a team.

- **Authority:** What is your team's relationship with the appointed authorities? Do they work alongside the police? Do they respect them? Avoid them? Do they defer to authority? Are they opposing a corrupt police force, or do they have friends and contacts among the police they work with regularly? What about federal authorities? The military? Government agencies? Larger superteams?

- **Image:** Do team members need to appear respectable in public? Do their actions reflect on the team as a whole? Can they drink off-duty? Do costumes need to follow a dress code, or at least incorporate some logo or badge of office? Can they swear on-duty?
- **Priorities:** What is the team's focus when they encounter a new threat? Do they try to de-escalate the situation by talking a criminal down, do they hit fast and hard, or do they focus on getting civilians out of harm's way before facing the villains?
- **Responsibility:** What do the heroes ultimately owe to the team? Are they expected to chip in for shared resources? Shared patrol shifts? Do they need to stay and help clean up after a fight?
- **Trust:** Are teammates expected to trust one another? Do they need to share their secret identities? Conversely, are they forbidden from sharing personal information? Are there any secret signals, code phrases, or actions that the team relies on to communicate discretely that are never to be shared outside the team?
- **Violence:** What level of violence is appropriate? Do the heroes begin with their most powerful attacks, or do they hold back until an opponent escalates? Can they fire before being fired upon? Are sneak attacks an acceptable strategy? Is killing acceptable?

CONSEQUENCES

In addition to deciding on a code of conduct, players should discuss what happens to characters who break the rules. There's nothing wrong with establishing the code of conduct as a general guideline, with consequences amounting to a stern look, but groups playing with a sponsoring organization may have to face official reprimand and punishment. (This typically does not come with Hero Points, being a situation the character ostensibly brings on themselves).

Punishments shouldn't force a player out of the adventure or campaign entirely, but rather feel like a natural consequence for their character arc. If a player's behavior is as disruptive as their character's, it should be addressed outside the game rather than by constantly applying punitive measures against their character.

Here are a few possible punishments and how they may play out in-game.

- **Official Response:** Heroes who work for a large organization may need to accept some official punishment, likely paperwork, specialty training, or (for younger heroes) detention. This might translate to a hero arriving late to conflicts, needing to be discreet about their involvement for a time, or carrying some condition as a result of being overworked, such as *Fatigued* or *Impaired*.
- **Physical Discipline:** In some militaristic or dystopian organizations, corporal punishment may be employed for insubordination, either doled out officially

or meted out by a frustrated superior. Such experiences inflict a -1 or -2 (or possibly higher) penalty on the character's Toughness defense for several days.

- **Revoking Resources:** Reprimanded characters may temporarily lose access to certain resources, especially headquarters and vehicles. If a character's powers are the result of some borrowed resource, like a powersuit, a severe punishment might even "bench" them and hand off their suit to another pilot for a time—forcing the hero to rely on their own wits and skills to get by or else steal back their equipment in a dire situation to save their friends.
- **Sanction:** Troublemaking characters may see themselves labeled or chastised in a way that affects their reputation for a time. In-world, this may be nothing but shouting or rumors, but at the game table it may apply as a -2 circumstance penalty when interacting with certain groups like civilians, police, criminals, or other superbeings. Particularly severe or public dressing-downs may increase this penalty to -5 .

WORKING AS A TEAM

Being a team isn't just about creating a name and a concept, and then battling adjacent to one another. Being a team is about the weird interactions of different people as they work together for a common goal. While this certainly affects many character creation decisions, it can also affect how your group plays at the table week after week. One hero's success is everyone's success, and one teammate laid out in a fight or by life circumstance makes the fight harder for everyone that remains.

IN COMBAT

In a fight, teammates should have each others' backs. The next chapter describes various team and combat roles a character may fill, as well as mechanical advice for how to fill it, but building your character a certain way doesn't mean much if you don't play up their role as part of a group. Sometimes your best bet for taking down a villain isn't to take the winning shot yourself, but rather to chip in on a Team Attack or use the Aid action or the Set-up advantage to give your team's heavy-hitter an edge.

Defending allies when the going gets rough is just as vital as helping support each other to victory. Watch the fight and protect companions who are Dazed or Stunned in combat. Distract villains who can exploit your teammates' weaknesses. Consider using the Aid action to improve a teammate's defenses, especially if they have a power or skill important to resolving the challenge ahead of you.

Creative applications of powers can make or break many encounters for the whole team. Your Create power may have no chance of knocking the supervillain unconscious, but could contain them long enough for beleaguered teammates to spend a round taking the Recover action. Move Object is a useful offensive ability, but can also pull injured friends out of harm's way or carry your team's heavy-hitter into close range with a flying opponent.

Mind Reading may not seem like a useful combat ability, but it allows a psychic to hunt for clues in an elusive villain's psyche while their allies occupy them physically.

IN LIFE

Outside of combat, teammates should try to back each other up as well, though this can be more flexible; outside the life-or-death stakes of combat, rivalries may shine through. This often means working together on skill checks and challenges. Contribute your expertise to mysteries when you can, and when you share skill training with another hero, offer to aid them on skill checks. For challenge sequences, where time may be limited, multiple heroes attempting the same checks can reach success quickly. Be willing to propose strange solutions to the GM, both those that showcase your powers and training and those of allies who may not have gotten to shine yet.

An often overlooked place where teams can help one another is dealing with complications. You can always step in to run a teammate's sick aunt to the hospital or pick up their kid from trumpet lessons. Teams who rely on secret identities can corroborate each others' stories to explain their absences and disappearances. Heroes who face a prejudice can lean on their teammates for emotional support, or to help keep social situations from escalating to violence. Alternatively, teammates can help *provoke* complications—especially those like accident, fame, honor, rivalry, and temper—as part of team drama (see below) to help each other earn Hero Points for later in the adventure.

TEAM DRAMA

Superhero comics borrow heavily from soap operas in terms of emotional intrigue and over-the-top plot twists. Half the fun is reading about your favorite characters as their lives take strange twists, they fall in love, or they get betrayed. Drama is likewise a fun part of roleplaying a superhero team; impassioned speeches, haphazard admissions of love, and devastating revelations let players step into exciting and complex lives.

But table drama can also lead to hurt feelings, so it's important for players to know where the boundaries are, when they can opt out, and when it is and is not appropriate to crank up the melodrama. Establish good at-the-table communication, so players can signal when they're uncomfortable with a topic (to distinguish between when the player is fine and it's only their character feeling uncomfortable). Players should consider talking to each other about possible plot twists, from romantic interludes to secret parentage, to make sure the team drama stays fun for everyone involved.

WHEN TO COOPERATE

Before knowing when it's okay to fight, players should know when it's okay to agree and cooperate, even if their characters are bitter rivals. Cooperation is key whenever players have frank discussions about the group and the game itself, rather than acting in-character. Assume

the best intentions from your friends, even if they seem callous or clueless about issues important to you, and don't assume an issue is unimportant to anyone else just because it doesn't concern you. Some people play superheroes to escape the weight of the real world, while others play superheroes so they can feel empowered to fight the kinds of evils they have to quietly accept in the real world. Both have a place at the table, and even if players can't all agree on a problem, they should at least know they can raise an issue without being mocked, derided, or ignored.

Players should always feel comfortable opting out of in-character drama. Real life can be dramatic enough.

In the game itself, characters should be willing to put differences aside in the name of protecting each other or people in danger. The following are the best times for heroes to agree to put rivalries on hold and cooperate:

- **Character Creation:** Players should do their best to be honest and empathic with each other while deciding on the kinds of characters they want to play, the sort of team they want to be, and what their relationships to each other are. Two heroes may be bitter rivals on the same team, but their players should both agree to that beforehand and agree going in to leave character arguments at the table. Likewise, characters being family or romantically entangled should be agreed upon by everyone involved beforehand, instead of this being a one-sided character arc sprung on another player by surprise.
- **Character Growth:** Sometimes, heroes putting aside their differences and working toward a common goal marks a large step forward in one or both characters' arcs, as they learn to overcome preconceptions or put their own needs second for the betterment of the group. Heroes are marked by their ability to be better than they were before, and so these moments are especially important when victory or defeat hang in the balance.
- **Combat:** The middle of a fight is generally a terrible time to argue. While heroes can bicker over a long-standing issue, a full argument is distracting—both in the game itself and at the table as other players wait for their turn.
- **Friendship and Romance Complications:** Heroes with romantic, filial, or friendly connections to each other as complications should generally earn Hero Points whenever they put their own needs aside or make some sacrifice on the other's behalf.
- **Shared Resources:** As with many player-level decisions, determining how to spend group resources and rewards is an important time to keep each others' needs and enjoyment in mind, rather than playing up in-character rivalries.

WHEN TO FIGHT

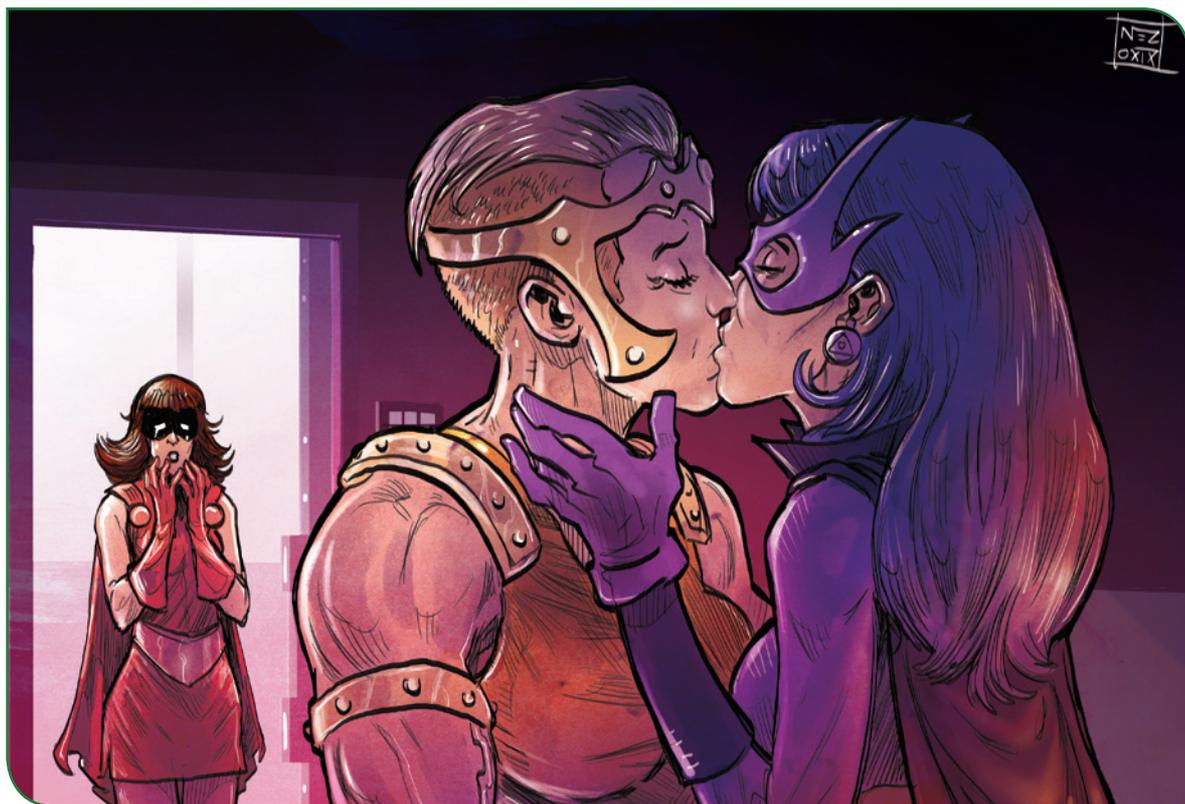
Some players love in-character arguments and debates or want to compete with their fellow heroes for attention, fans, reputation, or love, and when everyone involved

agrees to drama, it can lead to memorable character development and interaction. Heroes in comics often argue about the best ways to fight evil or save the world, about what it means to be a hero, or over romantic interests. These conflicts can really showcase a character's priorities and motivation, and add excitement to scenes.

In-character competition can also help mark a character's development, as they evolve from standoffish or combative to trusting, or naïve to suspicious. As previously mentioned, though, players should be careful to keep these in-game arguments strictly in the game and not make them personal between one another. You may even want to agree beforehand on how to settle these in-game disagreements before they spin out of control or dominate the game session. Some players settle disagreements with skill checks, while others use a quick out-of-character game like the classic rock-paper-scissors. Others agree to a schedule, swapping out wins or having one character always be wrong, or creating an outline or script for the fight before the game session so it has a satisfying buildup, climax, and resolution.

The following are some of the best times for characters to throw down and compete against, undermine, or argue with one another:

- **Competition and Rivalry Complications:** Heroes like to fight or compete, and the cranky loner constantly undermining the leader is a genre staple. Playing up various in-character rivalries can help players generate Hero Points to use later.
- **Excitement:** Arguments and stunning revelations can help shake up the table if things feel too quiet and predictable.
- **Roleplaying Scenes:** Roleplaying scenes are often where the Gamemaster communicates important plot elements for an adventure, but they are also a special stage where players can shine with whatever drama, humor, or quirks they want to bring to bear.
- **Temptation:** The Gamemaster may get involved with character drama, sometimes leading characters to argue with one another or storm off, especially at times when it serves the villain's plan or helps trigger important plot developments. If a player will be absent next session, for example, their hero getting into an argument and flying off to stew can explain their absence. Gamemasters may even offer Hero Points to players willing to pick up these dangling plot threads.
- **When Things Go Too Smoothly:** If a challenge or fight plays out far easier than it should—perhaps thanks to an early critical hit or a few bad rolls on the Gamemaster's part—players may opt to throw in some character drama to complicate things. Perhaps they recognize the villain as their estranged brother and must help him escape the authorities, or they let their hero get taken in by an obvious sob story. In situations like this, Gamemasters should generally reward players who help make the game more interesting, or who help them cover for bad luck.



TEAM COMPLICATIONS

The rules for complications found in the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* describe setbacks and challenges for individual heroes, but teams can share themes, origins, and enemies, so why not complications as well? A team complication is one that endangers or inconveniences the entire team at once and for the same reason. While one member may be vulnerable to magic and another may need to take care of their children, they all suffer when the organization holding their purse strings demands psych evaluations or their reputation as criminals turns the police against them. Some team complications are especially appropriate for teams with a common origin.

A team complication functions just like a character complication, except that the Hero Point awarded when it comes up does not go to only one character. Instead, the Hero Point from a team complication goes toward a floating pool that any team member can draw from when needed. The entire group should generally agree when someone gets to draw from the team pool.

Team-affecting complications include the following:

- **Addiction:** Useful for teams with a shared origin who require some substance to maintain their powers or keep side-effects at bay, addiction can also reflect a common, irresponsible cause, like a group of thrill-seekers who can all be lured into dangerous scenarios with the right challenge or potential for a fight.
- **Enemy:** Especially common for many teams is a powerful shared enemy who opposes what they stand for or sees the team as the last obstacle in their grand

scheme. For a villain to qualify as a team complication, they must either be a challenge for the team all on their own or be an entire enemy team with reasons to hate and oppose the team as a whole.

- **Fame:** Team fame plays out more as an obligation than the constant attention of individual fame. Famous teams can expect their every fight to be scrutinized by armchair heroes on television and internet shows, will be asked to appear at charity functions, and may have to deal with eager fans who want to join up.
- **Hatred:** Teams who share a common origin may share the same irrational hatred of whatever organization or event is responsible for their creation, allowing them to be lured into ambushes and traps. Alternatively, vigilantes organized for a common cause may have developed a team-wide hatred of certain groups or outlooks in society, and react to such opponents with disproportionate force.
- **Honor:** A code of honor or strict rules shared by an entire team are common for heroes who work for a government agency, corporate sponsor, or mystical order. The team as a whole must sometimes face situations that test their commitment to the code, or may need to pursue a more difficult solution when the easiest solution is also dishonorable.
- **Power Loss:** Teams with a shared origin may share the same weakness, reverting to powerless forms under the right circumstances. Alternately, all members of the team may need to be present before they can transform into their powered forms.

- **Prejudice:** Like addiction, a minority status is common for hero teams assembled around a common experience, such as aliens in a world hostile to extraterrestrials or a team known to be (hopefully) reformed villains. To be a team complication, the prejudice must provoke responses that harry the entire group, such as the media criticizing or smearing the team harshly, police or crowds of onlookers turning against the heroes during a fight, or legal access to important resources being denied because of their reputation.
- **Relationship:** Teams may have support staff, managers, sympathetic fan club members, or mascots that serve as group relationships and whose absence or endangerment affects the entire group. Teams who are members of the same family might also have a responsibility to non-powered family members.
- **Responsibility:** Like Honor, a responsibility is a common shared complication for groups who serve a sponsor or government, usually related to professional duties aside from crimefighting. Team members might be expected to put their personal lives aside and their hero work on hold while they do humanitarian work after a disaster, or do a media tour to promote a product, or spend some of their time every week filling out paperwork or submitting scientific experiments.
- **Rivalry:** Teams who work in the shadow of another team, a more powerful hero, or their team's previous membership may have group-wide frustrations thanks to this rivalry, especially when credit for their work or the resources they need are granted to their rivals instead.
- **Secret:** Teams who have worked together or came together because of a traumatic event may keep some dark, illegal, or humiliating aspect of their past actions a secret. Teams may instead be formed to keep something secret, like dangerous scientific knowledge or a magical ritual. When the secrecy is threatened or used as leverage over the team, they earn a Hero Point.

TEAM-EXCLUSIVE COMPLICATIONS

A few complications only function for a team, depending on relationships between members.

- **Codependence:** The team may not operate at 100 percent when one or more members aren't present. This may act like a Power Loss complication, where members can't access their powers unless they are all together, or whose powers are reduced in rank when they aren't near each other, or it may represent a team that trains hard to depend on one another in a conflict and suffers circumstance penalties on attack or skill checks if their group isn't all together.
- **In-Fighting:** Teams thrown together by fate often butt heads and argue, either not having a clear hierarchy or else constantly questioning their leader. In-

fighting is rarely constant, instead being triggered by stress or some perceived failure that puts teammates at each others' throats. When teams give in to their in-fighting, they become estranged and distrusting for a period, and can no longer perform or benefit from the Aid action or Team Attack maneuver until they reconcile, but gain a Hero Point to compensate.

- **Legacy:** The team isn't the first to use their name and resources, and may be part of an ancient legacy or simply picking up the reins of an old Silver Age team. Legacy becomes a team complication when ghosts from the past return to haunt them, such as villains with an axe to grind, forgotten lawsuits that suddenly become active again, or hidden rooms in their headquarters concealing dangers or new responsibilities.

PROBLEM CONCEPTS

Not every character concept from comic books and television translates smoothly into a tabletop game, and some character concepts need extra consideration when players want to bring them to the table. Players and Gamemasters alike should be aware of where problems can start and how to fix them early on. In addition to their character's impact on the group, everyone should be aware of what impact their choices have on the time, trust, and fun of the friends sitting down to play with them. While every character is the star in their player's mind, it's important to remember that tabletop games are a team sport, and that your actions can impact others.

That's not to say that a player must absolutely avoid the following problem concepts at all costs, or that Gamemasters must automatically veto them out of hand. There is always leeway if the Gamemaster trusts the player not to overplay their concept or antagonize the group. The best stories often involve strong personalities and high drama, but this requires a level of trust between players and Gamemaster, and a level of maturity to understand the dangers and to stop if it becomes a problem.

Often, the easiest solution to problematic character concepts is for the Gamemaster and player to talk away from the table about what the player wants and what level of drama or added attention that requires from the Gamemaster. A hero who wants to be the center of attention, for example, may be able to satisfy that need by writing short vignettes about their hero's celebrity lifestyle in between adventures, while a player who wants to play a double agent might work better as a triple agent luring their enemies into a false sense of security. Other times, a problematic character concept may be there to fulfill some personal need for the player, like wanting to emulate a favorite comic or movie plot, or helping them feel safer at the table. If you can identify the appeal of the concept, you can offer other ways to sate your players' needs. Problems that crop up in play are likewise often best handled with clear communication away from the game table, spelling out the problem and offering possible solutions beyond a flat "no." You can find additional advice on settling disputes with or between players in the *Mutants & Masterminds Gamemaster's Guide*.

THE ANTAGONIST

The Antagonist enjoys the friction of interpersonal conflict and delights in being contrary. They might see themselves as playing devil's advocate, or they may just love arguing. They rarely take orders, and do their own thing when the group plan isn't what they personally want to do. This especially becomes a problem when other players or characters are uncomfortable with confrontation, or when in-character arguments spill over into player grudges or sensitivities. This concept can also foster in-character competition within the group as players start trying to win arguments rather than focus on the adventure.

In comics and television, the antagonist character often serves a valuable role as a check on the leader's authority, offering a chance for audiences to learn why decisions are made or calling out other heroes when they cross a line. This same role is valuable at the table so long as players remain aware of when they're arguing for the best tactics or solutions rather than arguing for the sake of being contrarian. It can be difficult for other players to tell whether a character is being confrontational as a part of their personality or if their player is arguing to settle a personal score or simply being passive-aggressive. If the player has had a bad day or week, are they becoming particularly aggressive? Other players can never be sure if they're being attacked or challenged directly, and tempers can flare.

A devil's advocate-style character can be a great team addition. They can force a team to question their own thinking and potentially send the players in a new direction. They can break stalemates and deadlocks. They can distract the enemies through dialogue. But this trait is only effective when used occasionally. Players must possess the maturity to ask whether their style actually helps the group move forward or brings the action grinding to a halt. A player must do more than describe their hero as antagonistic; they must detail what their character argues for. Are they confrontational when the group makes assumptions? Do they play devil's advocate when the group hasn't considered all sides? Do they play agitator when a bold decision is called for? If the answer is simply, "He's just a bad boy," then that character exists only to be disruptive and get in the way of others' fun.

To deal with antagonistic characters, a Gamemaster must be willing to step in and break up fights, or be willing to tell their table when enough is enough. Players should also feel sure that they can say, "I won't argue with you right now," and have that boundary be respected.

THE BEST

The Best as a concept is a character better than anyone else at a specific task, sometimes becoming hyper-protective or even aggressive if they feel another character or player is intruding on their niche. They may be the powerhouse who doesn't want anyone else to have a Strength above 5, or the inventor who declares the Technology and Vehicles skills off-limits to anyone else. They get offended if a villain or NPC uses a similar power. What starts as a character trait is overwhelmed by a fixation on being the

best at all costs, potentially damaging relationships with NPCs or creating friction between players. And when something threatens that monopoly or makes the character feel less than "perfect," they become confrontational or moody.

"The Best" has a place within the group. Most players want their hero to be the best at what they do—the sneakiest ninja, the strongest woman alive, the smartest brainiac on the internet—and the rules for *Mutants & Masterminds* are built so most characters can be among the best in at least a few areas. Players should respect each others' niches and unique talents, but there should be enough leeway that similar, complimentary concepts have room on the same team. A powerhouse and a paragon can still address challenges in their unique ways, and a genius inventor with a bag of gadgets doesn't intrude much on a talented mechanic with a super-car. Sharing skills means heroes can aid one another in difficult challenges. But navigating the Best's ego can be tricky, especially when the need exists in the player's head more than the character's.

The need to be the best often grows from some insecurity in the player's mind, worrying they can't contribute enough or needing to protect something that makes them feel unique. This can sometimes be assuaged with in-character titles, reputations, and honorifics; a heroic mage's player who is nervous about anyone else having supernatural origins may feel more at ease if they earn the title "Master Mage" and NPCs with magical troubles seek them out directly. Many players also take pride in their system mastery and feel challenged when others try to show mastery in the same area; setting up encounters where a specific player's system mastery can save the day may help as well. More often than not, it's better to ask a player what they want to be the best at, and then negotiate clear boundaries or find the source of their insecurity.

THE LONE WOLF

The Lone Wolf enjoys a comfortable position as the "cool" hero, the badass who bucks the rules and doesn't need anyone else. While this makes for an engaging, troubled hero in the comic pages, in tabletop sessions the Lone Wolf can be an attention hog. They divide the GM's time by going off alone, and when the action focuses on the rest of the group, the Lone Wolf is left to twiddle their thumbs, growing bored or distracted and not paying attention. The Lone Wolf tends to be *Rebel Without a Cause*-style wish fulfillment, often playing up the grizzled, "been there, done that" attitude; nothing affects them, and that robs the Gamemaster of a valuable resource when running games.

The primary problem with a Lone Wolf character is monopolizing the Gamemaster's time and attention. Most players need some one-on-one time on occasion to develop their characters' personal stories, especially during the investigation- and roleplay-heavy scenes where everyone uses their skills and contacts to chase down clues. During action moments, though, this can be more problematic, leaving the team one hero short and devoid of whatever skills or unique talents the Lone Wolf brings to the table.



A Lone Wolf character can be excellent as a spy, infiltrator, advanced scout, or distraction, but these are roles the team needs to agree on beforehand. A hero's absence should be planned and accounted for as much as possible. Alternatively, they may have their own solo time in between regular adventures, so long as a Gamemaster is willing to put in the additional time—and players should show gratitude if their Gamemaster is willing to go that extra mile by being more present and focused on the team during regular sessions. The player should detail why their character went solo in the first place, and define what situations and causes compel him to stick with the group. Ultimately, Lone Wolf players need to accept that they can't be alone all the time.

The obvious solution many Gamemasters employ is to constantly use threats too great for the Lone Wolf to overcome without help, meaning they must stick with their allies or risk being beaten senseless. This may work, or it may create a rules arms race, where the Lone Wolf begins piling on new powers like Regeneration and Area Attack to better stand alone against the increasing threats.

A common trope in comic books is for Lone Wolves to adopt or grow protective of a neophyte hero who *does* prefer being on the team, giving the Lone Wolf a reason to stick around. All players involved in this close character dynamic should agree to it, though, or else this added attention can come across as creepy.

THE MISFIT

The heroes are nearly broken after a bleak night of stopping rampaging supervillains, and in their darkest moment face a stark question: Should we start killing these criminals to spare their future victims? Suddenly, Misfit superhero Bonkers pipes up, "Killing them with

kindness that is! Amirite?" Or maybe the Misfit is within a group of teen heroes in a bubblegum High School chronicle, playing a grim avenger whose heroic persona uses a ballpeen hammer on the ankles of his captured foes while the other heroes are preparing the gym for the Fall dance.

The Misfit seeks to play against type, running counter to the conventions and tropes of the campaign. If the Gamemaster wants gritty noir, they want to play a silly practical joker, while in four-color Silver Age tales they may go with a gun-toting Vietnam vet. In a tech-focused campaign, they want to play a mage or werewolf. The concept may sound interesting and may be original in its approach, but the tonal differences become glaring quickly as they play for contrast rather than accent. The player may or may not want to be disruptive, but the effect generally distracts from the mood of the adventure and the other characters. Holding a mirror up to the clichés can make it difficult for other players to maintain their suspension of disbelief and feel invested in the world. A Misfit can offer welcome relief from a dark campaign or a bit of gravitas in an otherwise fluffy game with low stakes, but unless they can carefully read the table's mood and only apply these gifts when needed, the overall effect can be frustrating for the rest of the group.

A Misfit may have many motivations. The player might prefer or only be familiar with one particular campaign flavor and be going along with the new one because they don't want to leave the group. A few reading or viewing suggestions can help these players become more familiar with the mood a Gamemaster wants to set. Others, much like the Antagonist, simply want to argue and be contrary, and should be handled likewise by discussing what they need out of the game and where to draw boundaries.

The Misfit works best if the player creates a character who doesn't run completely against the team's grain, making

their character “weird” within the rules of the setting rather than standing outside them. An optimistic redeemer within a group of crime fighters or a worrywart mother figure in a group of irresponsible teens both allow *other* characters to shine by their reactions and interactions with the Misfit. The concept still fits within the group’s vision, and the outbursts from the Misfit are no longer a disrupting influence, but rather a wonderful opportunity for discussions and character growth.

THE PRIMADONNA

Many compare roleplaying to theater, as every player takes on a role and works together to present a story. Each knows to take the spotlight in turn and give it up to another after. The Primadonna character is built to always be the focus, even when it means stepping in front of someone else or barreling through another’s performance. They wield in-world fame or authority, or possess a backstory that demands regular attention or tries to dominate the campaign.

The Primadonna insists on being the center of attention at all times. Any misfortune becomes a tragedy in their recounting of the story, and anyone who disagrees with them is trying to “sabotage” them or fails to appreciate their genius. They risk pushing others out of the way, taking control of the group, and ruining the fun for others without even thinking about it. Some use their time at the game table to feel cool and confident in a way they don’t in real life, while others get caught up in the game and forget to consider the needs of their friends.

There is value to the Primadonna player, as they love social situations in which some players may feel uncomfortable, or setting a mood for a scene so fluidly that it’s easy for other players to join in. They also tend to be creative, and can provide ample backstory and characterization for a Gamemaster to work with.

The Primadonna generally wants validation and to be acknowledged for doing well, so whoever stands up to them may become “the bully” or “the enemy.” They may draw lines in the sand and demand other players pick a side, or sabotage the efforts of rival players or the whole table if they decide they’re being ignored or insulted. Few realize what they’re doing at the time, but may feel like heels in retrospect and be too embarrassed to admit it. Clear table communication—even something as simple as an agreed-upon hand signal—can help a Primadonna know when they’re stepping on other players’ toes.

Many Primadonnas also suffer from boredom at the game table when the focus wanders from them. Assigning them an additional task—recording the game journal, tracking initiative, or roleplaying minor NPCs for the GM—can help use their sense of drama for the greater good.

THE SHADOW

In stark contrast to the Primadonna, the Shadow doesn’t want the spotlight and will let others revel in the glory and take the lead. They’ll offer support to the group as

spies, healers, distractions, buffers, scouts, etc., but they rarely want the attention and risk that come from a front-line role. They may even step out of the story at regular intervals, babysitting NPCs or doing research while the team confronts villains. At their best, the Shadow helps set up others to be the heroes. At worst, though, the group can’t rely on them.

Some Shadows are tagalongs, coming to the game because a friend or significant other plays and joining in out of a sense of obligation. For others, the thought of putting their characters at risk provokes a fear of failure; getting injured feels like losing. Others see evading the consequences of combat as another form of system mastery, reveling in “outsmarting” the gamer designers or Gamemaster. These players are prone to building sniper-style heroes with advanced senses and long-range powers, heroes with full ranks in Insubstantial, or even heroes with high ranks in Remote Sensing and Perception-range attack powers, allowing them to attack with no risk of counterattack.

The Shadow can be frustrating, but is relatively innocuous in terms of team cohesion. Their absence means their teammates will have to soak up the extra villain attacks, but a distant ally watching over them in case everyone is defeated or tracking down other resources is often appreciated. So long as the Shadow still contributes, the only real frustration is finding ways to involve them in the adventure at all. Gamemasters should remember that villains can use Extra Effort just like heroes and use power stunts to shut untouchable heroes down, negating Remote Sensing, affecting Insubstantial targets, and so on. However, these tactics are best saved for later in a fight; immediately shoving one player out of the game at the beginning of every fight will frustrate everyone.

If this behavior is inherent in the character then the Gamemaster and player need to agree ahead of time that this can be part of their character’s arc. Are they learning to care, or learning to fight? They must go from being afraid or anxious to finding a reason to stand up and fight and risk injury. Provide such characters with an emotional or physical anchor that connects them to the team. If this trait is inherent to the player, then the Gamemaster needs to address this openly and honestly with them, and find out why the player insists on being at arm’s length.

THE TRAITOR

Comic book teams are rife with double-crosses and heel turns, as supposed heroes reveal themselves to have been in league with the villain all along. These shocking twists may be exciting or dramatic to read, but are almost always frustrating at the table, especially if other players never expected them. Betrayal punishes the players for having sympathy and empathy, and when someone breaks the social contract, it’s easy for players to stop trusting each other, not just their characters.

Trust is the glue that allows players to bend their characters in minute ways to accommodate the team. It’s why players give each other a moment to shine. The game is a sacred place where players come to escape, not to be

punished for the better impulses and feel mocked for putting their trust in someone.

A Traitor can serve powerful narrative goals if handled carefully. A hero growing increasingly disillusioned may fall to villainous extremism or nihilism, and provide a new campaign goal in their redemption. An ally betraying the heroes can destroy their headquarters, resources, and credibility, opening a new chapter in the campaign where they are hunted. Turning traitor is also a good way to remove character concepts that a player has grown tired of or now sees as problematic. Giving players some control in these scenarios makes them feel far more important and personal. As always, this concept only becomes a problem when it trumps other players' fun; any "shocking" betrayals should be discussed beforehand with other players, to make sure the characters and not your friends are the ones left hurting. Starting the campaign with the characters knowing one of them is a traitor could even set up an interesting paranoia plotline.

If a player wants to play a Traitor from the beginning, it's important to gauge why and what impact it will have on the campaign. If they want a dark secret, they may instead consider a shady past where they previously worked for the villain or an evil organization. If they want to inject drama into the campaign, perhaps they'll agree to make the betrayal the action of a shapeshifter, clone, or other imposter, with their true hero held captive (possibly even from the campaign's beginning), providing a convenient excuse to change details about their character's past or personality. If they want a sense of control over the narrative, consider letting them run a side campaign. If they just want to shock and manipulate their fellow players, that is the point where the Gamemaster should draw a line.

TEAM THEMES GENERATOR

Sometimes, concepts need a little kick-start to get them moving. The Team Themes generator makes it easy for players or Gamemasters to churn through bad ideas and/or shortlist the promising ones. Perhaps the GM needs a shortcut to flesh out her universe by adding more teams and coming up with motivations. Many of these entries pull double duty and can serve as goals for misguided or criminal organizations by simply changing how members pursue their goals and at what cost.

Roll 1d20 to determine the result, and a second D20 to determine the specifics of each entry.

1-2 Awaken: The world is blind and deaf to an invisible threat, and the heroes are struggling to wake them up. Maybe malicious aliens have already taken over or the government is being ruled by a secret cabal of supervillains, but the result is the same: the people have no idea what's happening except an intrepid few. The invisible threat is a(n):

- 1-2 AI Entity
- 3-4 Alien Incursion
- 5-6 Magical Incursion
- 7-8 Supervillain in the Shadows

- 9-10 Altered Timeline
- 11-12 Manipulated Memory
- 13-14 Government Pogrom
- 15-16 Threat from the Deep
- 17-18 Threat from Beyond
- 19-20 Mind-Controlling Device

3-4 Defend: A very precious aspect of society or group of people is under attack and in danger of being eroded or corrupted. That vulnerable element is:

- 1-2 Constitutional Freedom
- 3-4 Children's Innocence
- 5-6 Democracy
- 7-8 The Environment
- 9-10 Freedom from Persecution
- 11-12 Education
- 13-14 Freedom of the Press
- 15-16 A Specific Minority Culture
- 17-18 The Poor
- 19-20 The Weak

5-6 Destroy: A better future cannot be built without destroying an existing institution that stands in the way of a brighter tomorrow. This can also mean that heroes might cross the line to succeed, prizing the destruction of something above worrying about a few casualties. The barrier to advancement is a(n):

- 1-2 Alien Foothold
- 3-4 Corrupt Corporation(s)
- 5-6 Corrupt Government(s)
- 7-8 Criminal Empire
- 9-10 Despotism Regime
- 11-12 Shadowy Overlord
- 13-14 Otherworldly Foothold
- 15-16 Rogue Military
- 17-18 Secret Organization
- 19-20 Supervillain Nation

7-8 Enlighten: The heroes have taken it upon themselves to elevate the world and to share their knowledge or power for everyone's betterment...whether everyone goes willingly or not, and whether or not they've asked permission. They offer:

- 1-2 Advanced Knowledge
- 3-4 Beneficial AI
- 5-6 Ecological Salvation
- 7-8 Enforced Health
- 9-10 Genetic Advancement
- 11-12 Humanity's Inner Potential
- 13-14 Mystical Arts
- 15-16 Pre-Crime Prognostication
- 17-18 Religious Enlightenment
- 19-20 A Utopian Society

9-10 Fight: This represents a threat that the heroes have banded together to stop, be it a person, an organization, or a concept. The threat may be invisible or public knowledge, but the heroes are

among the few who can do something about it.
This threat is a(n):

- 1-2 Alien Threat
- 3-4 Corporate Meta-Testing
- 5-6 Supernatural Cult
- 7-8 Global Criminal Empire
- 9-10 Government Oppression
- 11-12 Injustice
- 13-14 Magical Threat
- 15-16 Overprotective AI
- 17-18 Poverty
- 19-20 Powerful Supervillain

11–12 Guard: The heroes protect something potentially dangerous, taking up the mantle of keeping said evil out of their enemy's hands. Their ward is a(n):

- 1-2 Advanced Alien Technology
- 3-4 Doomsday Weapon
- 5-6 Forgotten City
- 7-8 Mutant-Killing Virus
- 9-10 Mystical Artifact
- 11-12 Portal to Terrible Worlds
- 13-14 Thought Transimulator
- 15-16 Sleeping Force of Malevolence
- 17-18 Terraforming Machine
- 19-20 Time Machine

13–14 Protect: There is something precious that needs protecting, whose destruction or corruption could spell doom. Whatever the heroes protect, it's a piece of a brighter future, but we're not ready for it yet. That element is a(n):

- 1-2 Advanced City
- 3-4 Alien Ship
- 5-6 Book of Mystical Enlightenment
- 7-8 Evolving Beneficial AI
- 9-10 First of its Kind
- 11-12 Font of Knowledge
- 13-14 Last of its Kind
- 15-16 New Branch of Evolved Humanity
- 17-18 Prophet of Peace
- 19-20 Unlimited Energy Source

15–16 Rebuild: Something has been lost or torn down, and the heroes seek to rebuild it. Perhaps it represents something humanity has lost, or maybe it's an important first or last step in a process of healing. Their project is a(n):

- 1-2 Lost Culture
- 3-4 Destroyed City
- 5-6 Destroyed Country
- 7-8 Destroyed Neighborhood
- 9-10 Hero Community
- 11-12 Natural Disaster Zone
- 13-14 Natural Resource
- 15-16 Refugee Home
- 17-18 Sanctuary
- 19-20 Social Value

17–18 Seek: This is a quest where the heroes must find something important for their overall success or failure. There's a potential countdown component. The object of their quest is a(n):

- 1-2 Artifact
- 3-4 Creature
- 5-6 Cure
- 7-8 Device
- 9-10 Knowledge
- 11-12 Location
- 13-14 Person
- 15-16 Power
- 17-18 Spell
- 19-20 Training

19–20 Roll Twice: Roll twice and combine the two results for the team's theme.

TEAM NAME GENERATOR

Most team names are generated through an interchange of Adjectives (Mighty), Verbs (Walking), and Nouns (Defenders). You can also flip the results so the noun doesn't always follow the adjective or verb, as in the Squadron Supreme. Also, depending on the flavor of the campaign, consider turning an adjective or verb into an adverb. If superhero teams are meant to be campy or silly or just plain fun, taking "Abnormal" and making it "Abnormally," for example, injects the right tone.

D20 Name Format

1-5	[Adjective] [Organization] of [Noun]
6-10	[Adjective] [Noun]
11-13	[Organization] of [Noun]
14-16	[Noun] of [Adjective]
17-19	[Organization] of [Adjective] [Noun]
20	The [Noun]

D20	Adjective	Organization	Noun
1	Amazing	Alliance	Adventurer(s)
2	Bold	Band	Ally(ies)
3	(campaign city)	Battalion	Avenger(s)
4	(color)	Brigade	Beast(s)
5	Daring	Cohort	Blood(s)
6	Defiant	Company	Challenger(s)
7	Doomed	Corp.	Champion(s)
8	Dynamic	Division	Crusader(s)
9	Fantastic	Flight	Defender(s)
10	Fearless	Guild	Hellion(s)
11	Furious	League	Hero(es)
12	Great	Legion	Knight(s)
13	Impossible	Patrol	Mutant(s)
14	Justice	Platoon	(# of members)
15	Mighty	Regiment	Serpent(s)
16	Power	Society	Superhero(es)
17	Secret	Squadron	Victor(s)
18	Street	Team	Warrior(s)
19	Supreme	Union	Wolf(ves)
20	Uncanny	Wing	Wrecker(s)

CHAPTER 2: BUILDING YOUR TEAM



The team is the foundation of a *Mutants & Masterminds* group and series, and so the process of designing a team identity should ideally begin before the players start creating their individual characters. While it's possible to pull a random group of heroes together and turn them into a team, it is even easier to do if those heroes are conceived of as a team right from the

outset, deciding early on what areas they will specialize in and how their abilities can compensate for or assist one another. This process of team building has two main elements covered in this chapter: the heroes' main roles within the team, and the various game traits that make heroes effective teammates. For some team concepts, certain traits are even required.

THE TEAM-BUILDING PROCESS

The material in this chapter assumes the players are creating their heroes as a team, so team building will take place largely side-by-side with hero creation, each one taking the other into account. Players will want to review the previous chapter of this book, considering questions like ground rules, group theme, organizing force, team decisions, and team complications, discussing these things amongst themselves and coming to consensus.

Once you have some basic ideas for your team in mind, you can follow this basic outline:

- Players should receive any ground rules or guidelines the Gamemaster may have for the series, the team, and the heroes. This includes series Power Level; starting Power Point totals; house rules, GM guidelines on banned power effects, sources, or descriptors; and anything else the GM wishes to specify. If a clear team template is part of the series (see **The Team Template**), the GM can provide it to the players or the players can opt to create their own. Discussions about your team may change what origins, powers, Power Level, or Power Point totals you begin with.
- Pitch the hero concept or concepts you would like to play. Allow the Gamemaster to weigh in on the suitability of those concepts. Compare notes with your fellow players and tweak your concepts based on what everyone else wants to play. This helps ensure a fair variety of heroes and no two characters intrude too much on each others' concepts.

- Look at the various team roles given later in this chapter—both tactical and concept roles—and decide which apply more clearly to your hero. Which roles are left unfilled, and does that create any significant gaps in the team’s abilities?
- Decide whether the heroes will already be together as a team at the start of the series, or if they will form a team during play or between adventures. If they are pre-established as a team, most of the work can be done during the creation process. If you intend to form the team during play, you may need to set aside some Power Points for team traits, or the GM may want to make some of those traits part of the initial awards given to the heroes for the first few adventures.
- Build your individual hero (or heroes), keeping in mind potential revisions from the Gamemaster and the needs of the team as a whole.
- Consider the material from the Team Actions section and look at possible team tactics and maneuvers. Do you have any traits that combine well with other teammates? Are there potential team actions you can use? Make a note of them. Players may wish to adjust their heroes to help them better work together, or consider acquiring some traits suitable for team actions with awarded Power Points as the series progresses.
- Lastly, take one last look over the team concepts. You might start with a great idea for a name based on the team and series concept, but be open to changing it as things develop. Even if the team is meant to come up with their name in play, it’s a good idea to discuss and decide on it beforehand to keep the adventure being bogged down at the game table. This also allows the GM to insert an “inspirational” moment early in the group’s story that helps to justify or explain their name.

NICHE PROTECTION

With the finite number of skills, advantages, and effects in *Mutants & Masterminds*, most characters will share at least a few aspects in common. But making sure every team member feels unique and important helps everyone feel like they belong at the table. Having, say, two bruisers at the table might mean plenty of damage potential, but can leave one feeling redundant and frustrated.

Players should discuss their character concepts with each other—both their powers and what team role they hope to fill. The tactical and concept roles detailed later in this chapter can help each player character feel unique on their team, but consider making sure every character is the unchecked master of at least one skill or ability (at least among their team). A niche doesn’t mean other characters can’t have ranks in that same skill, effect, or advantage, but it does mean their fellow players should respect the concept they occupy and let them take the lead when it comes up. Be conscious that some niche concepts are just too broad for one charac-

WINGING IT

Of course, you and your game group don’t have to work out every detail of your new hero team and its members in advance like you’re in the writers’ room of a new superhero series. Part of the fun of tabletop roleplaying is seeing how things unfold during play, and that’s hard to do if all of the decisions have been made in advance. That said, at least having a general sense of the type of team you would like your heroes to become can give you something to riff off of when the game is just getting started and the characters don’t know each other at all. You might find the perfect opportunity to fit a new hero into a team role or to introduce a particular bit of team lore. Along the same lines, if something even better comes up during your game, take a moment to check in with your fellow players and the GM and run with it!

ter to claim. You can’t reasonably ask to be the only hero with a ranged attack or flight, though you could request more narrow specialties, like the sharp-shooter having unique trick rifles, or the speedster being the only hero whose power suite is built around a movement ability.

Sometimes a niche means considering applications of skills, what additional skills compliment them, and who rolls when. If one hero is a demolitions specialist and another a genius inventor, both will need high ranks in the Technology skill, but the demolitions expert will also want ranks in Expertise (chemistry) while the inventor will have ranks in Expertise (computers) or Vehicles. When the team encounters a bomb ready to detonate, the inventor should be graceful enough to let the demolitions expert take the lead, even if they have the same bonus on the appropriate skill check.

Claiming a niche also means you have a responsibility to apply yourself well to it, with a fairly high modifier so your team can rely on you when a problem falls within your area of expertise. For niche skills, your modifier should be +10 to +15 for an average PL 10 game, and you should invest in advantages like Second Chance, Skill Mastery, and Ultimate Effort to likewise ensure your exclusive claim on a specialty doesn’t hold the party back.

You should also consider the Specialist power (see page 41) to help differentiate characters more thoroughly.

THE TEAM TEMPLATE

This chapter introduces the concept of the team template, a package of game traits that comes with membership to a team. These can range from Advantages—particularly Benefits—to ranks in skills, equipment, devices, or even power effects for some teams. A team template helps players share an identity, but also gives the Gamemaster a chance to list what game mechanics will be especially important in their campaign. A team template that includes two ranks in the Language advantage would be handy for a campaign that hops across the globe or delves into international intrigue, while a team of ninjas might provide Hide in Plain Sight and several ranks of the Stealth skill. The team template usually also includes things like shared

resources and shared or common team equipment. This chapter provides a number of examples of traits that can be included in a team template. A Gamemaster can also create a template ahead of time to ensure every player character has the basic necessary skills, Advantages, or powers to survive the genre, such as a space suit and contributions to a team ship for a cosmic campaign.

Gamemasters may ask players to set aside the Power Point cost for the team template as part of creating their heroes, especially if they are going to start out as an established team or immediately join an existing one. For new characters or new teams, the GM has the option of giving the heroes the benefits of the team template immediately and then using future Power Point awards to “pay off” the cost. Alternatively, Gamemasters may provide the benefits of the team template without the power point cost, but in such cases, the heroes are generally considered members or employees of the team rather than its masters. In this case, the team template is also assumed to come with complications like Fame, Honor, or Responsibility. The benefits provided by the team template can be revoked if the heroes don’t abide by whatever rules, expectations, and orders come with the offered resources.

For team templates that include learned traits, such as skills and some powers, the GM can mix and match, providing some traits immediately and paying them off over time while providing the others as the hero earns the Power Points necessary to pay for them, counting that as the completion of the hero’s training.

Additional team templates can be found in **Chapter 3** of this book.

TEAM TEMPLATE EXAMPLES

Here are a few examples of team templates in use.

TEAM TEMPLATE: HIGH SCHOOL HEROES

3 POINTS

Advantages: Equipment 2 (team equipment and HQ contribution), Teamwork

Equipment: commlink (communication, GPS, tracking device), school uniform (Protection 2)

TEAM TEMPLATE: GALACTIC LEGION

12 POINTS

Skills: Vehicles 4

Advantages: Equipment 8 (team equipment and starship contribution), Reviving Team Attack*, Teamwork

Equipment: commlink, jet-pack (Flight 5), space suit (Immunity 10 [life support]), universal translator (Comprehend 3 [languages])

TEAM TEMPLATE: SUPER AGENTS

3 POINTS

Advantages: Benefit (security clearance), Connected, Equipment

Equipment: badge (Enhanced Skill: Persuasion 2), commlink, 3 additional points of equipment

Complications: Code of Honor, Responsibility

TEAM TEMPLATE: WORLD’S GREATEST HEROES

10 POINTS

Skills: Expertise (Tactics) 2, Vehicles 2

Advantages: Benefit (government sanction), Equipment 3 (team equipment, vehicles, and HQ contribution), Improved Team Attack*, Team Code*, Teamwork, Well-Equipped

Equipment: commlink

TACTICAL ROLES

An effective hero team takes a “combined arms” approach, with different team members filling different tactical and operational roles and helping to ensure all of the various bases are covered. These roles go beyond just combat: they include all of the things necessary for a team of heroes to respond quickly and efficiently in a crisis, investigate and counter potential threats, and look out for each other as well as innocent people. All of these roles serve as guides rather than strict definitions; many heroes blend two or more roles. The roles are guidelines and broad categories meant to help heroes excel and feel useful. They are not requirements.

Mutants & Masterminds offers plenty of options in a fight—from guarding your friends to saving civilians to talking down opponents—and so heroes can specialize in more than just fisticuffs. Since a hero’s tactical role on the team affects—and is affected by—the hero’s traits, players may want to consider these roles before settling on concepts for the heroes they want to play and working out the details of the characters’ traits. A hero who will spend most every turn buffing and healing allies doesn’t need maximum damage-output, after all. It isn’t necessary to have a hero specifically designed or designated for every role (see the Flex role, in particular), but they cover the various things players should take into consideration.

Some of these roles may end up the responsibility of shared team resources (see **Team Resources** later in this chapter) including supporting cast characters, ground crew, allies, vehicles, and even things like robots or artificial intelligences. For example, a support team of agents might serve part of the Control and Protection roles for a hero team, acting opposite to a villain’s minions and evacuating or safeguarding civilians. A team AI or comptroller might serve as “overwatch,” keeping everyone in communication and gathering intelligence. A non-player character teleporter with the Affects Others or Portal extras—or simply a headquarters with those traits and a controlling technician—might handle some of the Transporter role, and so forth.

Each of the following tactical role entries looks at its responsibilities and the hero archetypes best suited to them, and then breaks down the key traits associated with that role as follows:

Emphasize describes important traits a character should have to fill the role, particularly universal traits that should be given as high a rank as the series allows.

Downplay, conversely, describes less-important traits for the role, which can be downplayed or assigned lesser ranks, or sometimes ignored entirely.

Suggested Advantages lists a selection of particularly useful advantages for the role for players to consider during character creation.

Suggested Powers similarly offers a number of power effects and modifiers particularly well suited to the role and how they can help the hero to fill that niche.



ASSAULT

When villains won't surrender or heroes have to become the world's first (or last) line of defense, then they must fight, and they must fight to win! This is when a team relies on their

heavy hitters, the Assault heroes. While all members of a team usually have a role to play in combat, these are the heroes who hit the hardest and the most often, and focus primarily on solving their problems with violence—"the best there is at what they do," you might say.

While the super-strong Paragon or Powerhouse archetypes might be among the first to come to mind for their high damage output, archetypes like the Martial Artist, Warrior, and Weapon-Master also focus heavily on combat, with most of their Skill selections and Advantages revolving around combat options. The Energy Controller can also serve more as "artillery" if their Alternate Effects are combat focused. The key for Assault heroes is combat effectiveness.

Emphasize: Assault characters need high attack bonuses obtained from Ability Scores like Fighting and Dexterity coupled with combat Skills and Advantages. They likewise need a high damage output, and the hero's attack/damage balance should be as high as the series Power Level allows. Players may want to take the potential for team attacks into account here (see **Team Attacks** later in this chapter) to further increase their offensive power. Assault characters are also going to want enough defense to last as long as possible in a fight, and generally max out their defense/resistance balance as well.

Downplay: Although an Assault character with some useful Abilities, Skills, or Advantages has additional options outside of combat, or can provide back-up for more skill-oriented characters, the bulk of the character budget is often invested in providing additional combat options.

Suggested Advantages: Combat Advantages in general, particularly the flexibility offered by Accurate Attack, All-Out Attack, and Power Attack. Chokehold, Improved Grab, and Improved Hold offer options for subduing an opponent beyond damaging attacks. Move-by Action increases mobility. Improved Initiative increases reaction time and the opportunity for a first strike. Takedown is useful for handling large numbers of minions, especially when an Assault hero must do so alone.

Suggested Powers: Damage (including high Strength) and other attack effects are Assault mainstays, although non-damaging attack effects like Affliction can be useful in subduing opponents. Assault characters benefit from a variety of attacks, and even the fairly blunt Powerhouse has a handful of Alternate Effects for Strength Damage when they're needed. High-Strength heroes can always use makeshift projectiles as ranged weapons as well. Protection, often Impervious, is also common, as is Immunity, although some heroes in this role get by with high defenses and some Defensive Roll to enhance their Toughness.



CONTROL

Control characters are the chess masters who step back to look at the whole board rather than just the individual moves and conflicts. The Control manages both members of the team and

the field of combat itself, helping to arrange things to ensure the heroes' victory. Sometimes a Control character will emphasize one side of the equation more than the other, more focused on aiding their teammates or hindering their enemies and controlling the battlefield.

With the right advantages or powers, many of the hero archetypes make effective Control characters, although the Crime Fighter, Energy Controller, Mystic, Psychic, and Speedster have particular potential for it. The offense-focused archetypes may want to swap out an existing power for one of the suggested powers, such as an Energy Controller with an Environment effect, while the skill-focused heroes may want to use their Advantage options for one or more of the suggested Advantages.

Emphasize: Control heroes have the ability to oversee and affect the whole of a battle, or alter the abilities of their allies and opponents. This may include area effects, interaction skills, or meta-powers to negate enemy powers. Control heroes tend to emphasize mental Ability Scores, particularly Awareness and Presence, although they can still be perfectly capable combatants in their own right.

Downplay: Control heroes have less need to max out their attack bonuses and damage potential, relying instead on area effects and using their actions every round to support teammates. Control characters can afford to have more diverse capabilities, doing a little to affect a lot of characters rather than focusing on doing a lot to just one.

Suggested Advantages: Fortune and general support Advantages help define a Control hero's abilities, including Inspire, Leadership, and Seize Initiative, as well as Assessment and Teamwork. Skill Advantages for interaction Skills are also useful, including Daze, Fascinate, Startle, and Taunt. Combine any of these with the Set-up Advantage to pass the benefit of the successful Skill use to an ally, and you have a Control character who can do a lot simply by interacting and giving orders.

Suggested Powers: Useful Control character powers either boost teammates or change the conditions of the battlefield. The former includes nearly any power with the Affects Others extra, keeping in mind that their benefits are still subject to Power Level limits. Focus on helpful and restorative effects like Healing and Nullify. The second type includes many area effects, particularly Environment, which is tailor-made for changing the conditions of the conflict, especially in ways your allies are immune to. Consider the Selective extra to exclude your teammates from an area effect. Lower-rank area attack effects, especially Damage, are useful for clearing out minions, since they automatically suffer the worst possible effect on a failed save while heroes are unlikely to be affected, especially if the rest of the team has Impervious Protection.



FLEX

The Flex role is the jack-of-all-trades but master of none, letting them fill in if other heroes are unavailable, such as when they are incapacitated or if the team splits up, the Flex

hero can step up to fill their place. This role also comes with enough options to cover a lot of the unusual contingencies heroes may encounter, allowing them to come up with new plans on the spot. The concern when trying to do many things well is that the hero risks stepping on other players' toes or making them feel redundant, so it's more important than ever to respect other player character's niches—especially in terms of skills, advantages, and interests—when considering the Flex role.

The Shapeshifter and Mimic archetypes can adapt to or copy other characters' abilities. Other Flex archetypes are those whose arrays feature broad descriptors like magic and gadgetry; the Gadgeteer, Mystic, and Psychic can all use their broad power sets to fill multiple roles. Some Energy Controllers have the potential for the Flex role, depending on the breadth of their power descriptors.

Emphasize: Flex heroes benefit from high combat abilities like attack and damage, as well as defense and resistance, but also need a decent selection of Skills, Advantages, and Powers. Being able to shift points or bonuses between multiple abilities, whether via Effects or Advantages, is the ideal.

Downplay: Flex heroes don't need to be the best at any one thing, and should leave room for more focused heroes to excel at specific tasks. Avoid overly specialized traits like high ranks of specialized Skills and go for the general, like better Ability ranks.

Suggested Advantages: Take Advantages that give you more options, particularly fortune and skill Advantages. Beginner's Luck and Jack-of-All-Trades pair well with Improvised Tools. Inspire or Leadership give you a chance to fill in as a Control character, if needed. Artificer, Inventor, or Ritualist offer a lot of flexibility in solving problems if you have a little time. Connected, Contacts, and Well-informed likewise give you options and help to fill in for or supplement the Intelligence role.

Suggested Powers: Options and flexibility are key. You almost certainly want an array of Alternate Effects, or another power suitable for lots of potential power stunts, if not a Variable Effect you can reconfigure at will. Keep in mind you may get more "bang for your buck" from an Array you occasionally supplement with power stunts (and Advantages like Inventor or Ritualist) than you will from high ranks in Variable. The Variable Descriptor extra often provides a nice middle ground in terms of options on a single Effect, especially if you make good use of those descriptors in play. Make your own life easier and speed up play at the table by writing down popular configurations of your Variable effect in advance so you don't have to do as many calculations on the fly during the game.



INTELLIGENCE

Knowledge is power and the Intelligence role on the team provides that knowledge. The hero in this role is an investigator or spy, responsible for collecting and disseminating information.

Some of the Intelligence role is covered by various Intellect skills and what the hero simply knows and can tell the rest of the team—a hero with a +10 or higher total Skill bonus in Expertise can answer even difficult questions as a routine action. Intelligence archetypes include the investigative skills of the Crime Fighter and Gadgeteer, the unusual sensory powers of the Mystic and Psychic.

Emphasize: Focus on mental Ability Scores, particularly Awareness. The Intelligence hero relies on Skills like Expertise, Insight, Investigation, and Perception, some useful information-gathering powers, or both. Stealth or other forms of concealment are also useful in terms of covert observation or attacking enemies unaware, while Technology covers hackers and other tech experts. Intelligence heroes often prefer finding alternative solutions to conflicts, such as finding the villain's motivation or dismantling their super weapon, and abilities and opportunities to do this can offer new twists to encounters.

Downplay: Intelligence-focused heroes don't need to worry as much about their combat potential beyond ensuring the hero can survive a fight. Some heroes in this role may have limited offensive abilities in particular, preferring to outwit or outthink their opponents while setting up their allies for more powerful attacks.

Suggested Advantages: Skill Advantages, particularly those involving Awareness, Intellect, and Presence skills, are important. Connected, Contacts, and Well-informed can funnel information to the hero. Eidetic Memory ensures the hero recalls everything and provides a bonus for recalling details, while Jack-of-all-trades is useful for know-it-alls who can answer any Expertise question untrained. Like the Control role, Advantages like Daze, Inspire, and Teamwork provide Intelligence-focused heroes with options should a fight break out.

Suggested Powers: Senses is perhaps the key Effect for the Intelligence role; all of its options add to the ways in which a hero can gather information. Particular Senses options useful for this role include Analytical, Detect, Microscopic Vision, Postcognition, Precognition (including the cautions given alongside those effects in Chapter 6 of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*), and Tracking. Remote Sensing is another useful option, allowing the hero to observe distant places with relative ease and safety. Mind Reading can gather information directly from subjects, so long as the hero has no qualms about reading someone's thoughts and memories against their will. Note that many of this role's powers are discussed in the **Plot-Stopping Powers** section of *Power Profiles*, and the Gamemaster should take this into account. Lastly, Intelligence heroes are also often tasked with keeping their team in communication, whether through technological commlinks, a telepathic mind-link, or mystical sendings.



PROTECTION

While the Assault and Control characters dominate the battlefield, it is up to the Protection hero to keep people safe—both their teammates and often innocent civilians in harm's way.

Heroes in this role might interpose their own invulnerable forms to deflect attacks or use powers to create protective barriers. Protection heroes also help with the aftermath of combat, using their abilities to treat or heal injuries.

Any archetype with Impervious Toughness can fall into the former group of Protection heroes, including the Battlesuit, Construct, Paragon, or Powerhouse, so long as they have abilities to draw more heat from opponents. Archetypes with broader protective powers—or the potential for healing or protective power stunts—include the Energy Controller, Gadgeteer, Mystic, and Psychic.

Emphasize: High resistances are the hallmarks of a Protection hero, both for the ability to protect others and for the Protection hero to stay safe in the midst of combat. Toughness is important, but don't overlook other defenses, especially Will. Mobility is useful for getting to the people who need your help—note that the Interpose advantage lets you use it to protect anyone within your normal movement range, for example, so increased speed or Movement powers increase the usefulness of your other defensive options.

Downplay: Protection heroes focus more of their resources and actions on protecting others, and don't need to focus on offensive potential. You may even exchange one or more offensive options in an array for additional defensive powers from the Suggested Powers section. Your active defenses (Dodge and Parry) can generally slide to make way for a better Toughness.

Suggested Advantages: Interpose is the classic Protection hero Advantage, while other general Advantages like Diehard, Great Endurance, Instant Up, and Second Chance are useful to ensure the character stays in the action. Combat Advantages like Move-by Action, Redirect, and Set-up can help turn defense into an offensive edge for allies, while Leadership helps them to bounce back from some common conditions.

Suggested Powers: Defense effects with Affects Others are all useful. Impervious Protection is the key power for nigh-invulnerable types who step in the way of attacks to shield others. Create is the go-to Effect for whipping up protective force fields and bubbles of all kinds; consider adding on some Affects Others Immunity (life support) if you're also going to safeguard people inside your constructs from environmental effects. Nullify is good for directly countering incoming attacks, as is Deflect, with the option of Reflect and Redirect to turn those attacks back on their origin. Movement effects help you get where you need to be, including Speed, Flight, and Teleport. An "evac" hero might combine the Protection and Transport roles (following), focused on pulling people out of danger and moving them to safety.



TRANSPORT

To respond to a crisis, the heroes must quickly get to the scene. That's the role and responsibility of the Transport hero. The same character may also be responsible for helping keep members of the team mobile in the field, overcoming obstacles and distance so the heroes can reach wherever they need to be. A Transport hero might be a speedster or teleporter, someone able to lift and move a whole team of heroes at once, or a pilot with a special vehicle. Among the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* archetypes, this includes strong, flying characters like the Battlesuit and Paragon (provided a sufficient platform to carry a group). The Crime Fighter may have a suitable vehicle, while other potential Transport archetypes include the Mystic (with the right spells), Psychic, and Speedster.

The role may be primarily focused on mobility in the field: a teleporter able to carry passengers, a speedster able to shift teammates from place to place, a telekinetic able to pick up (or catch) others. The Transport's primary strength is moving people and resources to where they're needed or out of harm's way, and minimizing a villain's terrain advantage whenever possible.

Emphasize: Transport heroes emphasize movement, particularly with passengers, and defense. Transporters should have whatever skills are necessary for their form of movement as well, especially the Vehicles skill.

Downplay: Because the Transporter's primary role is getting everyone to and from a threat, they benefit from respectable attack and defense options, but neither needs to be their focus. Some Transporter characters find ways to turn their movement abilities into attacks when needed, ranging from teleportation that disrupts or disorients foes to super-speed momentum transformed into a massive slam attack.

Suggested Advantages: Focus on advantages that work with and enhance the Transporter's movement capabilities. Move-by Action provides added flexibility in terms of splitting movement, while Agile Feint turns the hero's movement rank into a combat asset. Add Set-up on top of it, and that ability becomes a team asset, able to shift its benefit to other characters. Redirect can take advantage of the same speed to sow trouble among opponents. Mobility-related combat advantages like Evasion and Uncanny Dodge are common for Transporters, as are Instant Up and Seize Initiative, which keep them mobile and able to react to combat conditions. "Ace pilot" heroes may choose to save some Power Points by selecting many of their combat options as enhanced traits, with the flaw Limited (only when piloting a vehicle).

Suggested Powers: Consider movement Effects with extras like Affects Others or Increased Mass for carrying passengers, or a combination of lifting ability (Lifting Strength or Move Object) and movement. Don't overlook the Movement effect or unusual possibilities like Insubstantial or Shrinking with Affects Others.

CONCEPT ROLES

The tactical roles in the previous section describe a hero's function on the team when it is in action, but what about who the hero is as a person and how they relate to other superheroes and villains? That's where concept roles come into play.

Concept roles describe the different kinds of personality traits and drives that characters may have, distilled into the basic tropes you might see in your favorite comic book or TV show. Like the tactical roles, these are not absolute or confining; some of these roles may not be filled, and one character may fill more than one role. These roles exist as guidelines to help players make their heroes stand out distinctly and avoid hogging the spotlight in every situation. Multiple characters may select the same concept role, although players should try to keep the overlap distinct so each character fills their own niche. Choosing both a tactical role and a concept role should provide players with a fairly strong idea of what their hero is like in relation to the rest of the team, and can help flesh out the character's background and personality; two players may opt for the Hotshot role, for example, but they'll have very different manifestations of the Hotshot if one is a Control hero and the other chooses the Protection tactical role.

Unlike tactical roles, concept roles are less connected to the hero's traits or powers. The Charmer might be a flamboyant Energy Controller but could just as easily be a swashbuckling Weapon Master or a cute, shy Shapeshifter, while an Enigma might be a non-human Construct, otherworldly Mystic, alien Powerhouse, or withdrawn Warrior with a mysterious past. Mixing and matching roles with different archetypes can help inspire fun new character concepts or twists. Consider how the two roles can play off each other to develop a unique story and personality, but also consider how that personality interacts with the rest of the team. Does your Enigma spend time with the Brain to help them learn more about their past, or follow in the Hotshot's shadow hoping to gain some vicarious identity from their teammate's strong personality?

Each concept role entry looks at what the role is like, what kinds of characters tend to fill it, and what sorts of variations there are on the role's overall theme, and then concludes with some trait suggestions, plot points, and complications for that role:

Trait Suggestions: These are in-game traits you might want to consider giving a character in this concept role to help reflect their nature in play. Unlike trait suggestions for Tactical Roles, these are less about effectiveness and more about flavor and style, although you may find the suggested traits useful in various situations.

Plot Points: This section offers a set of short ideas for personal quirks, subplots, or adventures that suit the role, useful for both the Gamemaster and players.

Complications: These are potential complications a player may select that are suited to the concept role. Players can use them as-is or as inspiration for coming up with their own complications for the character.



THE BRAIN

The Brain is the smartest hero on the team, the one who solves problems and answers questions. Sometimes Brains are a bit too smart for their own good and over-thinking things, or overlook the moral or emotional needs of a situation, and need their teammates to help provide perspective. Brains are sometimes the leaders of their teams, but not always; while all Brains are smart, they're not all necessarily decisive, charismatic, or good with people. Still, even when a Brain isn't in charge, they tend to serve as intellectual advisor to the team leader.

The Brain tends to be isolated; few others appreciate or understand their perspective, or can follow their complex intellectual interests. Teammates may patronize them, or simply shut down excessive babbling. Similarly, Brains can become frustrated with their less-intellectual teammates; they are saddled with the responsibility of solving problems—sometimes childish or elementary ones, by their estimation—and then go unappreciated for it.

Trait Suggestions: Intellect is the main requirement for the Brain, possibly along with Intellect-based skills. While a lot of Brains tend to be technology-oriented, that's not necessarily required. The team's Brain might be a master of the mystic arts instead, or a scholar in some other field such as history, mythology, or psychology, to name a few.

PLOT POINTS:

- The Brain makes a discovery that leads into a potential adventure, from finding a new dimension or lost world to inventing something of interest to a villain or criminal organization.
- Friends become concerned about the Brain's isolated and anti-social behavior, and take it upon themselves to provide some downtime and social interaction.
- The Brain accidentally unleashes a problem or threat the team then needs to stop.

COMPLICATIONS:

- **Accident:** Brains often cause accidents due to their obsessive exploration and experimentation, from blowing up a laboratory to opening up a portal to a nether-dimension.
- **Disability:** Many Brains deal with physical or social challenges. Some become Brains because they have a physical disability or an inability to relate to other people, or their myopic devotion to one subject may stunt their mental, social, or physical development. Heroic Brains rarely go so far as the literal "brain-in-a-jar," but could have other disabilities.
- **Obsession:** Brains tend to obsess, hiding out in a library or laboratory for hours or even days. This can lead to problems when it prevents them from seeing potential problems before they occur.



THE CHARMER

Everyone wants to fight, but things can be so much easier when you're willing (and able) to apply a little charm instead. Why, even in the midst of a good fight, there are opportunities to throw a winning smile and a clever line, maybe even flirt a little, to help settle things in your favor. The Charmer is often the "face" for a team, the person you want doing the negotiating, and possibly even the spokesperson, if that isn't the Role Model. Most heroic Charmers are confident, easy to talk to, like people, and just want everyone to get along. A few are more consciously manipulative, using their abilities to get their own way, but they tend to be the exception.

Trait Suggestions: Charmers rely on Presence and Presence-based skills, particularly Persuasion, although some aren't averse to a little Deception from time to time. Charmers also tend to have a measure of Insight, allowing them to get a good sense of people and how to influence them, and of when someone is trying to do the same to them. Daze and Fascinate are natural choices for Charmers capable of captivating others' attention.

PLOT POINTS:

- A foe turns the Charmer's playbook against them by playing to the character's ego, offering flattery and charming their way into the hero's trust in order to exploit it.
- The Charmer leverages their social media and crowd-sourcing to aid important causes and perhaps even to fight crime and supervillainy, with unexpected consequences.
- A Charmer talks their way into more responsibility than they're able to handle and then needs to find a graceful exit or way to manage.

COMPLICATIONS:

- **Fame:** Given their social skills, Charmers are often centers of attention and may well be famous as well-known heroes who play well in the media or for their other charms.
- **Relationships:** Romance is what it's all about for Charmers, although their relationships are not necessarily always deep, lasting, or fulfilling. A Charmer might juggle various friendships and romantic relationships (perhaps even a whole polyamorous network of relationships) or be prone to "it's complicated" relationships, such as a long-term flirtation with a villain that turns into something serious.
- **Reputation:** Most Charmers have a reputation, meaning not only does everyone expect them to be charming and gracious all of the time, but some might become wary and think the Charmer is always trying to manipulate everyone.



THE ENIGMA



Who are they? Where did they come from? Why are they here? How can they do what they can do? Each Enigma's mystery may vary, but it is at the heart of the character. Some Enigmas are even mysteries to themselves: the orphan whose powers speak to an inhuman heritage; the amnesiac with signs pointing toward a troubling past; the hero who discovers everything they believed about themselves was a lie. Other Enigmas know the truth—some of it—but keep it close and share it with no one, for reasons just as unknown. Either way, their mysterious past haunts them.

Trait Suggestions: Enigmas can be almost anything, although many tend to be inhuman or at least free from some human concerns due to Immunity. Enigmas tend to have a measure of high Will and Insight to conceal their real thoughts and feelings, and sometimes because they're less swayed by human interactions. The Holding Back and Untapped Potential Advantages from *Hero High* suit Enigmas well. Players may even set aside some Power Points for "hidden traits" chosen by the Gamemaster that both the hero and the player know nothing about.

PLOT POINTS:

- The Enigma suddenly displays a previously unknown power, weakness, or other trait.
- A new foe appears who shares traits with the Enigma. Are they related in some way, and does the newcomer know something about the Enigma's secrets?
- An opportunity to learn more about the Enigma's past or true nature comes to light, but requires risking current security or relationships. Will the character take or refuse it?

COMPLICATIONS:

- **Enemy:** Enigmas may have personal enemies they know nothing about! Such an enemy can be a potential source of information about the Enigma's past, but is also likely to exploit any ignorance or secrecy on the Enigma's part.
- **Identity:** This is the key complication for an Enigma, either having to conceal different aspects of their identity and history, seeking to uncover them, or possibly both.
- **Obsession:** Enigmas may have unusual obsessions, perhaps without initially knowing why. The amnesiac last survivor of a civilization might be obsessed with saving people or preventing world-ending disasters, for example.
- **Secret:** Enigmas often have secrets, if they know about their own nature and are concealing it from the rest of the world. An Enigma's secrets can compromise friendships and other relationships when it comes to feelings of trust and understanding.



THE GUARDIAN

The Guardian protects or safeguards something vital. Unlike the Role Model, who stands as an example, the Guardian isn't necessarily about image, just getting the job done. Exactly what the Guardian protect can vary, ranging from a place like a city or nation, a group of people from an individual family to an entire community or race, or even particular concepts. Most often, the Guardian is the self-appointed protector, like the hero of a neighborhood or a minority.

Trait Suggestions: Like the Protection tactical role, the Guardian may want to emphasize defense and resistance, particularly abilities that can help protect others, including Create for defensive barriers and the Interpose Advantage for jumping in the path of an attack. That said, Guardians can be protective of their chosen cause without necessarily having a lot of protective abilities. For some Guardians, the best defense is a good offense.

PLOT POINTS:

- The Guardian is forced to choose between their cause and their team or the law.
- The Guardian has an opportunity to further their cause on a grander scale by leaving behind what they've been doing thus far.
- The Guardian's charge grows dissatisfied with their protection and makes particular demands, or even rejects the Guardian outright.
- A foe threatens the Guardian's charge as a distraction or form of extortion.

COMPLICATIONS:

- **Enemy:** Guarding against threats often involves taking on others' enemies. A Guardian of a neighborhood may declare war on the local criminal element, for example, while a Guardian of the natural world may consider all polluters enemies.
- **Prejudice:** Because they often protect specific communities, Guardians may experience the associated prejudice. "Hated and feared by those they are sworn to protect" is a common comic book trope.
- **Relationship:** Given the responsibilities of a Guardian, other relationships can be complicated by coming in second, especially if they are outside of the Guardian's primary area of responsibility. While many heroes struggle to maintain a balance between their personal and "work" lives, Guardians have a particularly difficult time.
- **Responsibility:** This is the primary Guardian complication, a responsibility to protect a chosen charge or cause. When it is placed above other responsibilities, it can create conflict between what the Guardian wants or needs to do and what is expected.



THE HOTSHOT

You have got *it* and, given half an opportunity, you intend to prove it to the world! The Hotshot is a show-off, daredevil, or showboat—the hero who is looking for a spotlight and, if there isn't one, will create it. Some Hotshots are just confident (many would say over-confident) and enjoy showing off what they can do—as many people would give the kinds of powers wielded by superheroes. Others are arrogant and need to demonstrate their superiority, or lack self-esteem but compensate with a show of bravado; fake 'til you make it!

Hotshots are generally earnest, even lovable, but they're the first to look for trouble, or just stir it up.

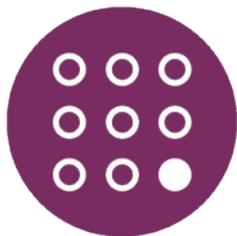
Trait Suggestions: The primary thing is to be really good at something and to make it showy and impressive, even if it's just telling everyone else how amazing you are! Hotshots tend toward physical traits, whether incredible athletic prowess or impressive physical powers like super-strength or energy projection.

PLOT POINTS:

- The Hotshot's devil-may-care attitude causes a real problem, bringing their behavior into question.
- The Hotshot takes on a bigger problem than they can handle, perhaps goaded on by a foe.
- Someone challenges the Hotshot to a contest, race, or other competition.

COMPLICATIONS:

- **Fame:** This is a natural consequence of the Hotshot's glory-hounding, and some find fame is not all it's cracked up to be. Others enjoy basking in the adoration of the public a little too much, until it becomes a distraction from their responsibilities.
- **Obsession:** Hotshots are sometimes obsessed with their particular area of interest or expertise to the exclusion of other things. Ironically, this is one of the few areas the whimsical hero takes seriously, whether by constant training to maintain and hone their talent or research into new secrets concerning the hero's area of interest.
- **Reputation:** Given their public behavior, Hotshots tend to develop a reputation, and not always a good one. This can lead to quiet or overt disapproval from authorities, scathing condemnation from watchdogs, or editorials looking at the hero's behavior.
- **Rivalry:** Hotshots want to be the best at what they do, so it is hard to turn down an opportunity to prove it when a potential rival comes along. A Hotshot hero might have a particular ongoing rivalry with someone, or a floating sense of rivalry with anyone who seems like a potential challenger.



THE OUTCAST

Some heroes get all of the breaks—bad breaks, that is. That’s the Outcast: the hero who, despite good intentions, always seems to get the short end of the stick. For some, it is dealing with one truly bad turn and everything that came after it, such as being an inhuman-looking freak, a brain in an unfeeling artificial body, or the Devil’s own wayward offspring. That bad turn is often connected with the hero’s origin, the event that took an otherwise ordinary person and put them in a situation where “superhero” was one of the only viable life choices. Other Outcasts just experience one new problem after another, and another. Even the sheer luck of having superpowers doesn’t seem to negate all of the other stuff that comes the hero’s way.

Trait Suggestions: Outcasts can have almost any traits except Luck, and they tend to have fairly decent Will just to put up with everything in their lives.

PLOT POINTS:

- The media takes aim at the Outcast, and suddenly every possible mistake or flaw is being constantly scrutinized and reported.
- A villain who is like the Outcast in some way tries to convince the hero to turn against the society that has clearly already abandoned them.
- Friends or loved ones try to do something nice for the Outcast, and either run into resistance or create the wrong impression with an attempt at surprise.
- The Outcast meets another outcast or person with troubles and has the opportunity to help them.

COMPLICATIONS:

- **Accident:** Some Outcasts are incredibly unlucky. Such accidents rarely harm them directly, but create all kinds of other problems in the aftermath.
- **Disability:** An Outcast might have to deal with one or more Disabilities that contribute to (or cause) their outsider status, such as lacking certain senses or having different environmental needs (which may play into a Weakness as well). Others’ reactions to such Disabilities are an issue of Prejudice (following).
- **Prejudice:** The hero might be unusual-looking, or part of a marginalized group. The Prejudice can even go so far as forcing the Outcast to prove their right to exist to the same world they help defend, and the Outcast has to deal with constant accusations, misunderstandings, and “threat or menace?” debates.
- **Responsibility:** A sense of Responsibility (or code of Honor) shaped by personal experiences often helps give an Outcast purpose, given everything else in their lives. Such responsibilities may conflict with the Outcast’s tribulations, making them difficult to fulfill.



THE ROLE MODEL

These are the heroes everyone looks up to and tries to emulate. Not all of them set out to be Role Models, but they take the responsibility seriously nonetheless. They might not like it, but they understand and appreciate its importance. Some Role Models take up the responsibility precisely because they feel it is needed and they are willing to serve, rather than out of any desire for attention (in contrast to the Hotshot, for example). Others are made into Role Models, either by their own accomplishments or someone else’s design. For example, a hero might be the result of a deliberate effort to create a national hero or an icon for a particular group. Such attempts may end up creating an entirely different sort of Role Model than originally intended.

Trait Suggestions: Role Models tend to have significant Will, and those who embrace the role often develop interaction skills, notably Insight and Persuasion. The Inspire and Leadership Advantages are common for Role Models, especially those who fall into the tactical Control role.

PLOT POINTS:

- The Role Model stumbles or otherwise has to deal with having human foibles in spite of others’ expectations.
- A villain tries to force the Role Model into betraying their ideals to prove they are nothing but a sham.
- Someone else comes along, trying to supplant the hero as a Role Model to a particular group.
- A foe focused on an opposing ideal attacks the hero in an attempt to attack what the hero represents.
- The hero has an opportunity to directly inspire or guide a group of characters in the story.

COMPLICATIONS:

- **Disability:** Some Role Models make a point of showing their limitations and challenges so others can see that those things do not prevent someone from being a hero. This may also be true for a hero who belongs to a group experiencing Prejudice.
- **Enemy:** Role Model heroes sometimes attract Enemies who consider themselves role models or champions of an opposing group, or who are iconoclasts who want nothing more than to tear down Role Models and show they are all shams.
- **Fame:** The most effective Role Models are widely known. Role Models try to use their Fame to help reach people, but sometimes find their message distorted by the particular lens of fandom.
- **Honor:** To be a Role Model is to accept a certain standard, and they are sometimes caught between doing what they feel is right and what is expected.



THE SURVIVOR

Some people go through terrible trauma and survive, and as a result devote themselves to a cause. The Survivor is a hero who has suffered and decided to turn their survival into some-

thing positive, perhaps an opportunity to prevent the suffering of others and, in so doing, ease their own. A few Survivors haven't experienced trauma but are preparing for some threat in the future. Still, they have sacrificed part of their lives in order to prepare.

Given that Survivors often deal with trauma, Gamemasters and players are advised to exercise care with this role. Make it clear to the group that any in-game content is less important than the safety and comfort of everyone in the group and be prepared to have a conversation about potentially uncomfortable subjects, excluding those themes or topics from the game if necessary.

Trait Suggestions: Survivors tend to be fairly tough, often with significant Fortitude or Toughness ranks. Likewise, a Survivor may have a lot of Will or the Second Chance Advantage in regard to certain triggers. Someone who *literally* survives could have traits like Diehard, Regeneration, or Immortality, while those who survive by benefit of their wits tend to have ranks in Intellect, Awareness, or Luck.

PLOT POINTS:

- The trauma the character survived in the past returns in some form—or a threat the character is preparing for finally arrives.
- The Survivor has to deal with the specter of guilt from having survived, possibly upon encountering someone else who endured the same ordeal.
- There are hints that the Survivor's trauma is not what it seems, or not exactly what the Survivor recalls, bringing many things into question.

COMPLICATIONS:

- **Addiction:** A Survivor may have developed an Addiction as a coping mechanism, or even have a dependence on something like a wonder drug or medical treatment for their continued wellbeing.
- **Disability:** Trauma may leave its mark on a Survivor in the form of a Disability. The Disability may be a constant reminder of the trauma—and the character's ability to persevere.
- **Obsession:** Survivors may obsess over things related to their trauma, such as the survivor of a violent crime now devoted to fighting crime, or the last survivor of a planet destroyed by war obsessed with preventing wars. A common Obsession is some form of survivor's guilt, which tends to drive the Survivor's actions.
- **Phobia:** A Survivor's trauma often leaves a lasting impression that may take the form of a dread fear.



THE WISECRACKER

Some people take the whole "saving the world" thing so seriously! They need to lighten up and have some fun, and you're just the person to help. If you're not getting at least a few laughs

out of being an out-and-out superhero, then you should consider getting out of show business. The Wisecracker is the team cut-up, practical joker, and frequent center of attention. While their humor may sometimes be annoying, it can be downright infuriating to villains or provide much-needed levity when things start to feel hopeless.

Trait Suggestions: A life-of-the-party and "look at me!" attitude tends to mean the Wisecracker relies on Presence and Presence-based skills, particularly Deception and Expertise related to different kinds of performance, like acting or comedy. The Taunt Advantage is a virtual must, while Daze and Fascinate are also common for Wisecrackers willing and able to serve as distractions. Given their tendency to tick some people off, many are either really hard to hit (high Dodge/Parry), really hard to hurt (high Toughness), or some measure of both.

PLOT POINTS:

- The Wisecracker pulls a practical joke or makes a funny comment that misses the mark, hurts someone's feelings, or draws public anger.
- A comedy-themed villain sees the Wisecracker as either a potential partner in "comedy" or a potential rival to be outdone or eliminated.
- The Wisecracker can overcome a problem or even defeat a foe by being funny or entertaining rather than relying on combat prowess or power.

COMPLICATIONS:

- **Enemy:** Not everybody has a great sense of humor, and supervillains in particular can be so touchy! Most Wisecracker end up with one or more "hecklers" who want to pound the hero into the pavement.
- **Fame and Reputation:** The Wisecracker is often the center of attention, and that can lead to a certain measure of fame and a reputation for clownish behavior. Of course, nobody takes a clown too seriously, which can also complicate matters.
- **Secret:** Some Wisecrackers use humor to mask an inner pain they don't share. This can be anything from personal trauma or tragedy to a mistake they have been trying to make up for. It's all laughs for the character until this secret potentially comes to light; then things can get quite serious.
- **Quirk:** The Wisecracker is nothing if not quirky, ranging from the general need to crack jokes and make light of any situation to particular styles of humor and entertainment, or a compulsion like taunting foes, teasing teammates, or playing jokes.

TEAM SKILLS

Functioning as a team requires more than just battling adjacent to one another. It requires mutual support and training. A lot of that training revolves around various skills useful to individual heroes and to the team as a whole. When first building characters for the team, players should discuss what skills might be important for everyone on the team to invest in, and which skills they would like to specialize in. This allows players to make the characters they want without worrying that no one on the team can repair their cyborg arm or knows how to shake down the criminal underworld.



INDIVIDUAL SKILLS

Some skills are useful for nearly any hero, or can't easily be used by one team member on behalf of the whole group. While some heroes might be able to get away with untrained use of some of these skills using sheer talent and a high ability rank, other skills cannot be used untrained and basic familiarity will come in handy. Otherwise, lack of training might come back to bite the hero in the future. For many of these skills, most heroes can get by with only a few ranks, unless that particular skill helps define their niche and approach to combat.

ACROBATICS

While not every member of a superteam is going to be a world-class gymnast or acrobat, training in Acrobatics can be useful when it comes to team maneuverability, especially overcoming obstacles, dodging hazards, lessening damage from falls (a basic part of a lot of martial arts training), and standing quickly after a fall. If the team makes use of Advantages like Agile Feint, Acrobatics becomes even more useful.

DECEPTION

Deception is generally useful for sneaky hero teams, but any team can benefit from skill in bluffing, feinting, and tricking in combat—especially if members have secret identities to protect. Also note that skill in Deception is useful for defending against being deceived, including the aforementioned bluffs, feints, and tricks in combat. Consider using the Enhanced Skill power, with a Flaw limiting it to one use of the skill to inexpensively provide the functionality you want.

EXPERTISE (TACTICS)

While other kinds of Expertise are specialty skills (see the **Specialty Skills** section), teamwork and small-unit tactics are beneficial to everyone on the team, especially from a narrative standpoint. Training in Expertise (Tactics) allows characters to work together, especially when combined with the new Tactical Training Advantage (see **New Advantages** later in this chapter). It's an effective way for team members to work together when they are not suited for acquiring Deception or Intimidation skill ranks.

INSIGHT

Insight is a great team skill in that it improves resistance to interaction skills and outside influences, and improves the team's general ability to assess the trustworthiness of others. Insight in particular, along with Deception, is the skill for nonverbal communication, which can be a useful form of teamwork. A group of heroes skilled in Insight can communicate easily using innuendo (see the Deception skill description in the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*), which can be useful when they are concerned their communication might be overheard. Gamemasters may

give teams using code words and similar ciphers a bonus on their Deception and Insight checks for innuendo, or make them routine checks.

PERCEPTION

A hero in the Intelligence role (see **Tactical Roles** in this chapter) may have specialized senses or especially high Perception, but the ability to spot lurking danger is useful for everyone. Perception is important for a team to stay alert and watch each others' backs, as well as picking up on important clues and information. High Perception values help a team to avoid surprise and ambush as well as traps and other hazards, and is useful for individual team members to be trained in because often those checks are made individually.

STEALTH

A hero team can benefit from a stealthy approach from time to time, and all it takes is one character with a terrible Stealth modifier to spoil it. The team can leave those characters behind, or have them take a more direct approach, or provide a distraction if need be, but sometimes it's just more practical or less destructive to avoid a fight. In addition to concealment, Stealth training is useful for heroes who do surveillance or need to tail a suspect without being spotted.

TREATMENT

Although "healer" characters tend to be fairly specialized, some training in Treatment is useful for team members in general, particularly if the specialized healer isn't available (or the team doesn't have one). Treatment checks to revive or stabilize teammates during and immediately after combat situations are especially useful, as is the ability to treat wounded onlookers or analyze the strange medical equipment found in supervillain lairs.

VEHICLES

Teams often have a vehicle or vehicles as shared resources (see **Team Resources** in this chapter), so it is useful if all of the members of the team are trained to operate them. Note that routine operation of vehicles doesn't require training in this skill or a check, so a team member may be able to get away with no training, but situations are rarely routine for most superheroes! A team may have a default pilot or two (see **Niche Protection** at the beginning of this chapter), but it's good to know any member of the team can take the controls if necessary. This advice goes double for any team that relies on a vehicle as their headquarters or primary mode of transportation.

SPECIALTY SKILLS

Specialty skills are those useful for someone on the team to have, but not necessarily everyone. In fact, it's generally better if only one or two team members focus on a particular specialty skill as part of a unique expertise that defines their place in the group.

EXPERTISE

Expertise is the archetypal specialty skill, encompassing a broad range of knowledge and experience. It's particularly useful as a specialty because each member of a team can have a different form of Expertise, ranging from Magic to Science, Business to Psychology, and Medicine to Trivia, just to name a few. A hero in the Brain role (see **Concept Roles**) tends to fill in any gaps in team expertise with sheer Intellect. Keep in mind an expert's routine check value when it comes to knowing things; a hero with a +10 Expertise modifier can answer even difficult questions in that field as a routine check.

INTIMIDATION

On many teams, there is one hero who is "the scary one," quite often the Enigma or the Survivor (see **Concept Roles**). This is the hero with the highest ranks in Intimidation, who can play "bad cop" when there's a need to scare some cooperation out of someone, or who can demoralize a group of foes just by showing up. Intimidation also makes a solid back-up if another character's Persuasion check fails.

INVESTIGATION

The Intelligence tactical role points toward a team member who is skilled in Investigation, finding and piecing together clues. Sometimes teams divide this role between a skilled investigator or detective and a more social Charmer who is good at networking and knowing all of the right people.

PERSUASION

Having a good public face is important for many hero teams, and having a member who can sweet talk the police, ask for favors, and sometimes even talk down desperate criminals opens up many new avenues of adventure. The Charmer role is the most likely to specialize in Persuasion, as putting others at ease and winning hearts is half their reason for existing.

TECHNOLOGY

A skilled technician can solve a lot of problems for a superteam with a good, well-timed Technology check, from repairing a needed device to disarming a ticking bomb or disabling a security system or deathtrap. This specialty tends to be the province of team roles like the Brain or the Flex, although that doesn't have to be the case. Likewise, while a Technology specialist often has technological powers, this specialty might just as easily be filled by a hero with, say, shrinking, stretching, or energy control powers, providing more utility.

A closely related specialty skill to Technology is Expertise (Magic), which serves many of the same functions in tackling any magical and supernatural challenges the team encounters. Depending on the series and setting, a team specialist in Magic may be an absolute must, secondary, or completely superfluous.

TEAM ADVANTAGES

In *Mutants & Masterminds*, Advantages are key “team-work” abilities, with some of them specifically designed to benefit teams and allies. These Advantages make it easier to create heroes who are “team players” as well as effective team leaders, as discussed in the **Tactical Roles** and **Concept Roles** sections. Some Advantages may be common to a team template, especially ones involving team resources or training, while others are useful for certain roles. This section looks at important existing Advantages and some new, team-specific Advantages.

EXISTING ADVANTAGES

The following Advantages from the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* are particularly useful or relevant to teams and characters working in teams.

EQUIPMENT

Teams often share equipment, and one of the ways team members pay for this equipment is with ranks of the Equipment Advantage. This can cover the equipment point cost of a personal “kit” assigned to every member of the team, a portion of the cost of a shared resource like a vehicle or headquarters, or some combination of both. See the **Team Resources** section later in this chapter for more detail on team equipment and how this Advantage may play into it.

INSPIRE

Inspire is easy to think of as a “leader” Advantage, most suitable for the team’s designated commander or someone in the tactical Control or Intelligence roles (see **Tactical Roles**). That said, it can also suit any hero who helps teammates to be better and try harder, particularly the Role Model or the Hotshot (see **Concept Roles**). Still, there’s not much point in too many members of the team having Inspiration, as its benefits don’t stack.

INTERPOSE

Interpose is all but required for the Protection and Guardian team roles, allowing a hero to take a hit in order to save a teammate or bystander. The new Assist Advantage (see **New Advantages**) offers a similar benefit in conjunction with the Evasion Advantage against area effects.

LEADERSHIP

Like Inspire, Leadership is a natural advantage for the hero in charge of the team, but it is not necessarily limited to that character. Leadership’s ability to remove adverse conditions from teammates could belong to any trusted team member, particularly healers or those who lend courage, hope, and reassurance to others. Unlike Inspire, the benefits of Leadership can stack, so having multiple heroes able to remove conditions and rally their teammates can be helpful, especially if one of the afflicted team members is someone else with this Advantage!

REDIRECT

Redirect can be helpful for heroes in safeguarding teammates, particularly useful among heroes with high resistances and more fragile friends. Note that you can also Redirect an attack at your own teammate. This can be useful if the attack is something your teammate can absorb and use, for example, or otherwise triggers beneficial effects. Canny attackers might deliberately not target your teammate because if they are aware of this advantage, but Redirect lets you work around your opponent’s tactics.

SEIZE INITIATIVE

Although useful for a single hero who needs to go first in a conflict, Seize Initiative also gives that hero additional options when it comes to coordinating with teammates. Heroes who can protect or augment their teammates, such as with the Inspire Advantage, may get more value from their abilities by applying them before the villains have a chance to act. Heroes who coordinate with others for team checks, Aid, or team attacks may choose to take the top slot in the initiative order, then delay (see Delay in **Chapter 8** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*). Two or more heroes with Seize Initiative could even go together at the start of the initiative order before anyone else gets to take their actions.

SET-UP

Set-up requires another character to receive the benefit of an interaction skill, making it a team Advantage by definition. It’s useful for heroes in roles with strong interaction skills—such as the Charmer or the Hotshot with Deception (and Taunt), or the Enigma or Survivor with Intimidation—to share the combat applications of skills to help the team as a whole. Make sure not to overlook one of the most important qualities of Set-up: multiple ranks of the Advantage allow you to share the same interaction skill benefit with more than one teammate at a time. The ability to make a target Impaired by or Vulnerable against the attacks of your entire team for a full round should not be underestimated!

TEAMWORK

Teamwork is an Advantage entirely reliant on team checks and similar efforts, making heroes who have it more effective team players. It also combines well with the new Advantages reliant upon team checks, since Teamwork’s circumstance bonus applies to the underlying check. Also note that Teamwork’s bonus applies to team attacks and to the Aid action as well as team checks.

WELL-INFORMED

Well-informed has the potential to save the entire team a lot of time during investigations and to enter negotiations and social encounters with more information at their fingertips. It’s an excellent Advantage for heroes who like to support others—providing intelligence or rumor—but don’t necessarily want to be the “face,” handling all the social interactions themselves.

NEW ADVANTAGES

These Advantages are designed to reward teamwork and make characters more effective as a unit.

ASSIST

GENERAL

When you take Assist, choose an Advantage that normally grants a circumstance bonus. You do not gain this Advantage's effects, but once per round, as a free action, you can grant that Advantage's benefit to an ally able to interact with you. If you have the Advantage normally, then you also gain its benefit normally. Think of the Assist Advantage as an Affects Only Others version of the chosen Advantage. If the subject of the Assist Advantage already has an equivalent circumstance bonus, the Assist improves it up to a +5 bonus, after which it has no effect. So a subject with Evasion who is given an Evasion Assist gains the benefits of Improved Evasion: a +5 circumstance bonus. Advantages from the *Mutants & Masterminds Deluxe Hero's Handbook* eligible for this Advantage are: Eidetic Memory, Evasion, Favored Environment, Favored Foe, Improved Aim, and Teamwork. At the Gamemaster's discretion, Assist can be extended to provide the benefits of any Advantage not limited by Power Level, so long as the player provides a suitable in-game explanation for sharing the benefit. In this case, the assisted ally must spend any Hero Points necessary for the Advantage.

GUIDANCE

FORTUNE

You can cheer on or advise allies toward victory. When you spend a Hero Point and take a free action to offer guidance, one ally of your choice who can communicate with you gains a single Advantage of your choice until the end of your next turn. This otherwise functions like the Heroic Feat benefit of a Hero Point (see Heroic Feat under **Hero Points** in **Chapter 1** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*).

IMPROVED TEAM ATTACK

COMBAT, RANKED

You can contribute to a team attack even if your attack's resistance is not within 5 ranks of the other attacks (see Team Attack in the **Maneuvers** section of **Chapter 8** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*). If you have two ranks of this Advantage, your attack does not even have to have the same effect as the other attacks, although the combined team attack still has the effect of the main attack.

IMPROVED TREATMENT

SKILL

When you use the Treatment skill to revive a subject (see **Chapter 4** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*), you can provide additional benefits. For each degree of success on your DC 15 Treatment check, you can do one of the following:

- Remove a –1 penalty to Toughness resistance checks due to damage.
- Remove one of the following conditions: blind, dazed, deaf, fatigued, or impaired.
- Reduce one of the following conditions: disabled, exhausted, or stunned. The condition is reduced to impaired, fatigued, or dazed, respectively.
- Restore one lost rank to a weakened ability.

You can apply the same benefit more than once, such as removing multiple Toughness penalties or restoring multiple ranks of a weakened ability.

REVIVING TEAM ATTACK

COMBAT

Your team contributions lend comfort and support, providing your allies with a second wind. When you successfully contribute to a team attack, rather than contributing a circumstance bonus to the attack's rank, you can choose to remove one of the following conditions from a character contributing to the attack: dazed, fatigued, or stunned. You can remove one condition per degree of success on your team attack check and can choose different conditions or characters with each.

TACTICAL TRAINING

COMBAT

Thanks to tactical knowledge and hours of training alongside your teammates, you work together in combat like a well-oiled machine. You may perform the Feinting, Innuendo, and Tricking functions of the Deception skill and the Demoralizing function of the Intimidation skill using your Expertise (tactics) skill rank. You may only share this benefit with other characters (such as sending coded messages with Innuendo or transferring the benefits of a feint using the Set-up Advantage) if those characters also have the Tactical Training Advantage and you have trained with them for at least a few hours.

TEAM CODE

SKILL

You and any other members of a team with this Advantage share a knowledge of various code words, pre-planned maneuvers, and so forth, allowing you and your teammates to quickly and easily communicate tactical plans without being overheard. In play, you can make tactical plans with other players as a free action and sum up those plans as a code word or phrase like "Maneuver 12" or "Orbital Strike." You also gain a +5 circumstance bonus for checks to Innuendo to communicate tactical information in general with other members of your team.

VARIABLE TEAM ATTACK

COMBAT

When you successfully contribute to a team attack, rather than contributing a circumstance bonus to the attack's rank, you can apply the benefits of a 1-point Variable Descriptor extra to the attack (see Variable Descriptor at the end of the **Extras** section of **Chapter 6** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*). If your coordination test for the team attack has three or more degrees of success, you can apply a 2-point Variable Descriptor to the attack.

WELL-EQUIPPED

GENERAL, RANKED

You are well equipped and prepared for almost any situation. For each rank in this Advantage, you can have a single item of equipment on hand (see **On-Hand Equipment** in **Chapter 7** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*) once per adventure. If you are a member of a team, you can share the benefits of this Advantage to allow a teammate to have an item of equipment on hand instead, implying that you help equip and supply your friends.

TEAM POWERS

Individual heroes on a team have their own particular powers and tactical and group roles (see **Tactical Roles**, previously), but heroes can also have and use powers, to benefit their teammates or the team as a whole. Some teams may even feature heroes with powers that specifically work in concert, making the team more than just the sum of its parts. This section looks at the various ways power effects can benefit a team, and how to design them when you're creating the team and its members, along with some ready-made examples.

The most common kinds of team powers are those that provide a benefit to more than just the power's user. Often these powers fall under the purview of the Control tactical role: effects that cover an area and shape the environment in different ways. They also include effects that allow the team as a whole to overcome or sidestep certain challenges or hazards. Consider using the following power effects as you're creating the members of a team, as they support team tactics and otherwise provide more options for an entire group, not just one hero. Each power also lists a pre-built effects from *Mutants & Masterminds Power Profiles* with similar benefits.

COMMUNICATION

Team communication is often a result of shared equipment (see the **Team Resources** section), but a hero might have a Communication power useful for serving as a "switchboard" for the whole group. The most common example is a telepath being able to establish and maintain a "group mind link," although other forms of Communication might serve as well. Note that the Area modifier isn't needed for team Communication, since establishing communication is a free action, unless the GM chooses to limit the number of free actions a character can perform in a round.

Telepathic Link: Mental Communication • 4 points per rank

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Cosmic Communication, Laser Comm, and Whispering Wind.

COMPREHEND

If foreign or even alien cultures are a common element in the series, it pays to have a teammate with Comprehend Languages who can serve as a "universal translator." This capability may be a part of telepathic communication or a superhuman ability to rapidly translate, perhaps coupled with a vast knowledge base of existing languages. Add the Affects Others and Area modifiers, and the character can create a "translation field" where everyone is able to understand each other, regardless of language.

Translation Field: Everyone within hearing distance of the user is able to comprehend any linguistic communication, regardless of known languages. Comprehend 3 (Languages), Affects Others, Perception Area (Hearing) • 12 points

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Master Linguist, Telepathic Translation, and Universal Translation.

CONCEALMENT

Concealment with Affects Others is useful for stealth as well as providing an advantage in combat. This can range from the power to make others invisible (Visual Concealment, Affects Others) to a "stealth field" able to dampen sound and allow a team to operate silently (Auditory Concealment, Affects Others, Area, possibly Increased Range). Concealment with the Attack modifier can also benefit a team, provided the user's teammates have some means of perceiving through the Concealment. An Area Concealment Attack may have the Selective extra to specifically exclude allies from its effects, or allies may all possess a 1-rank Immunity to that specific power.

Aphasia Field: This power "scrambles" all linguistic communication within a 30-foot radius of the target point, making it unintelligible, but the user can choose to exclude targets from its effects. Perception Ranged Burst Area Auditory Concealment Attack, Limited to Language, Selective • 5 points, +1 point per +1 area distance rank

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Blinding Field, Illusory Concealment, Shadow Shroud, and Smoke Cloud.

CREATE

Create is a useful utility effect for a number of things. When it comes to team benefits, Create can provide defenses by forming a wall, dome, or other barrier, or provide a platform, ramp, or bridge to help transport a whole group at once. Created barriers benefit from the Impervious extra, making them more protective, and from Selective and Subtle, respectively allowing "friendly fire" to pass through the barrier and allowing the barrier to be transparent or invisible so characters can perceive through it. Created objects used for transportation benefit most from Movable or Tether, and then from Continuous, allowing the object to remain even if its creator is stunned or otherwise unable to maintain it. A created object needs at least rank 2 to support the weight of an average adult human; rank 5 is enough for a group of about eight, sufficient for the average superteam.

Transportation Platform: Create Objects, Movable • 3 points per rank

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Earthworks, Force Constructs, Ice Shapes, Light Constructs, Shadow Shaping, Solid Air, and Solid Sound.

DEFLECT

Deflect is a defense effect that specifically allows users to defend for characters other than themselves. The effect can range from interposing something between a target and an attack, such as a thrown shield, or shooting an attack out of the air, to name a couple of possible descriptors.

Deflector Field: So long as you take a Standard action on your turn each round, any allies within 30 feet of a chosen point (which may include you) gain the benefits of the Defend action. Deflect, Burst Area • 2 points per rank.

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Deflecting Projectile, Deflecting Winds, Dimensional Shunt, Gravitic Deflection, Kinetic Deflection, Magnetic Deflection, and Whirlwind.

ENHANCED TRAIT

While a personal-range power by default, Enhanced Trait can be combined with the Increased Range (close) and even Area extras to create a variety of stat-boosting powers, such as a “luck field” that provides allies a bonus to defenses or a song to make friends more competent. Note that bonuses provided by this effect are subject to Power Level limits.

Specialist: You are especially studied and focused on one particular use of a skill, such as Insight to detect lies or Technology to bypass security and locks. Every rank in this effect grants you a +4 bonus to one particular skill check when it applies to your specialized use. Enhanced Trait (Skill), Limited to One Application • 1 point per rank.

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Lie Detector, Power Enhancement, and Tech Savant.

ENVIRONMENT

Environment changes the conditions of an entire area to benefit allies, hinder opponents, and possibly overcome challenges or hazards. Note that a given Environment effect works on all characters in the area equally, so unless the power has the Selective extra it may help or hinder friend as well as foe. Environment is a good effect for creating circumstance bonuses and penalties in an area, which can be useful for modeling certain enhancement powers (see the **Enhancing Powers** section). As given for Visibility, a minor circumstance bonus or penalty (+/-2) is a 1-point effect, while a major bonus or penalty (+/-5) is a 2-point effect. With Game-master approval, it may also sufficiently reshape the battlefield to allow characters to benefit from a Favored Environment Advantage.

Distraction: You create a distracting display of light, color, and sound in an area, causing a -2 circumstance penalty to any checks in the area where the subject might be distracted. Environment (Distraction) • 1 point per rank, 2 points per rank if you can exclude allies from the effect (Selective).

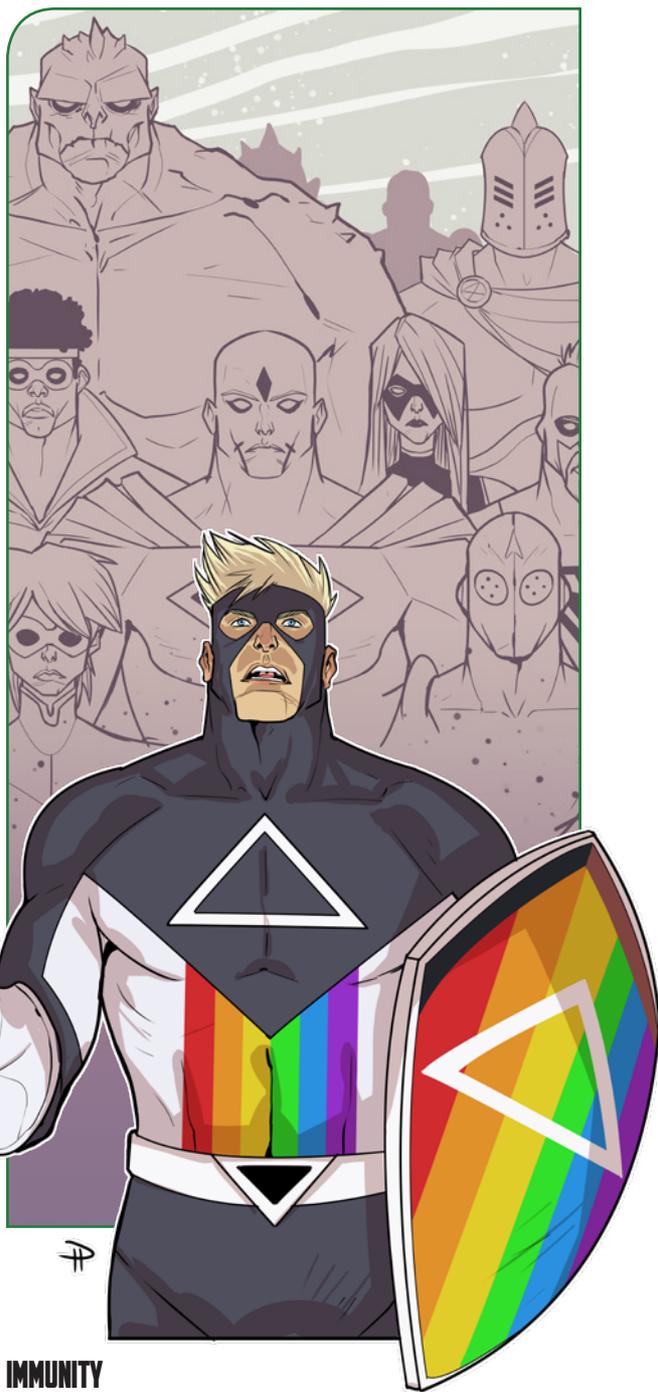
Examples from *Power Profiles* include Blizzard, Dust Storm, Fog, Gloom, Mist, White Noise, and Weather Control.

HEALING

The ability to remove damage and/or conditions from allies can make the difference between victory and defeat in most fights, and for the Gamemaster a player character with the ability to heal others means not having to worry about pulling punches or resting in-between conflicts. Heroes can face dangerous enemies more frequently and bounce back for more. For heroes with a pacifistic bent or lacking in offensive capabilities, Healing can be a valuable way of contributing to the team and balancing the danger that they can't face directly, keeping friends and bystanders on their feet.

Inspiring Words: You inspire an ally to shake off fatigue, pain, and injury, or even stave off death, until the battle is won. Healing, Energizing, Perception Ranged, Hearing Dependent • 3 points per rank

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Chi Balance, Cosmic Healing, Healing Light, and Total Healing.



IMMUNITY

Immunity is a useful team benefit because it generally bypasses Power Level limits. Given its breadth and effectiveness, however, the Gamemaster is encouraged to limit Immunity, particularly at the highest ranks, when it comes to team benefits. The Half Effect flaw is particularly useful in allowing higher ranks of Immunity that do not entirely remove the danger posed by a hazard, but enhance the characters' own defenses in resisting it.

Life Support Bubble: You create a protective environmental bubble, providing those within with immunity to environmental hazards. Immunity (Life Support), Affects Others, Burst Area • 30 points

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Air Bubble, Radiation Shield, and Suspended Animation.

LUCK CONTROL

Luck Control is an excellent effect for allowing Control characters (see Control under **Tactical Roles**) to influence encounters. While the effect is often defined as some way of deliberately interfering with chance or probability, it also suits “super-leader” types able to go beyond even the benefits of the Inspire and Leadership Advantages when given a talent or training descriptor.

Mastermind: No variable escapes your notice. You have a plan for every eventuality and have foreseen every possibility, making it seem as if you influence fate itself. Luck Control (all benefits), Area, Luck (4 ranks), Selective • 24 points

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Daredevil.

MOVEMENT

Some movement effects can benefit the team as a whole, with the right modifiers. Burrowing, for example, can dig tunnels anyone can use, and a teleporter with the Increased Mass or Portal extras can serve as transportation for teammates, perhaps even the entire team at once. While movement effects can have the Affects Others extra, allowing a hero to grant an ally Flight or Speed, for example, such abilities are comparatively rare. Most instances of heroes “flying” allies actually involve lifting and carrying them using Move Object or a Movable or Tethered platform with Create.

Team Teleport: Teleport, Increased Mass 5 (1,600 lbs.) • 7 points for rank 1, +2 points per rank

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Anti-Gravity, Dimension Walk, Earth Wave, Low-G Leap, Molecular Phasing, Momentum Boost, and Wind-Riding.

NULLIFY

The ability to counter certain effects can be used defensively, even for other characters. For example, a hero with Nullify Fire can use the power to counter an attack with a fire descriptor anywhere within the Nullify power’s range, as detailed in the **Countering Effects** section of **Chapter 6** of the *Deluxe Hero’s Handbook*. With the regular version of Nullify, this requires either a readied action or spending a Hero Point for an instant counter. Nullify with the Reaction modifier can be used to counter at any time.

Mental Block: When a target you can perceive is attacked with an effect with a mental descriptor, you can attempt a power rank check to counter the attacking effect. Nullify Mental Powers, Broad, Perception Range, Reaction • 5 points per rank

Examples from *Power Profiles* include Fortunate Failure, Phase Cancellation, and Power Defense.

ENHANCING POWERS

Enhancing powers improve the abilities of other characters, offering support for allies and “buffing” them in various ways. Enhancing powers allow characters to work together in different ways, but require some care to deal with Power Level limits and to ensure the enhancing hero has a role outside of acting as a living bonus modifier.

ENHANCEMENTS AND POWER LEVEL

Power Level limits in *Mutants & Masterminds* tend to prohibit, or at least curtail, enhancements that simply add ranks to characters’ existing traits. Even temporary enhancements cannot break Power Level limits without the explicit permission of the Gamemaster, and such permission is not encouraged except on rare occasions or for dramatic license. If heroes can routinely exceed Power Level limits, then the limits become meaningless and ineffective as a means of game balance.

That’s not to say enhancing powers are not an option for the player characters. They just require a different approach than adding more ranks on top of existing traits. The following are some effective ways of handling enhancements in game terms.

- **Add Extras:** Adding an extra to a power improves its effectiveness in ways that do not affect Power Level. Since many extras are more “lateral” enhancements, they’re easier to apply and often produce more interesting and varied results than a sheer increase in rank. Characters can take stand-alone extras with the Affects Only Others modifier (a net +0 modification) to create boosting effects they can apply to other characters’ powers with the appropriate descriptors. Keep in mind that Affects Others only works at close range unless you add the Increased Range extra on the boosting effect itself. For example, the ability to add the Impervious extra to any defense within your line of sight would be 3pp per rank: 1pp for the Impervious extra itself and two to increase its range from Close to Perception.
- **Remove Flaws:** Another way to enhance others’ powers is to remove some of their flaws, making the power more effective or easier to use. In some cases, adding an extra is essentially the same as removing a flaw, such as when the extra changes one of the power’s parameters like range or duration. Removing flaws tends to be more specific, as power flaws are often more individual, making the enhancement less likely to benefit a wide range of subjects.
- **Alternate Effects:** A variation on the Add Extras approach is providing an Alternate Effect extra for a power, essentially a power stunt as an enhancement.
- **Circumstance Modifiers:** Some traits, particularly Advantages, provide circumstance bonuses for certain traits or checks. Since circumstance bonuses are unaffected by Power Level limits, they can bypass the series Power Level “ceiling” on enhancements. However, specifically because they bypass Power Level limits, circumstance bonuses should be used sparingly and do have their own limits, namely that characters only benefit from a bonus (+2) or a major bonus (+5) and no more. Multiple circumstance bonuses only “stack” in that more than one bonus makes for a major bonus. Beyond that, there’s no benefit, unless the GM decides otherwise.
- **Weaken Opposition:** Lastly, while enhancements cannot raise heroes’ traits above the series Power

Level limits, powers can lower opposing traits below those limits, making the heroes' powers greater and more effective by comparison. The two primary power effects for accomplishing this are Affliction—specifically the impaired and disabled conditions—and Weaken.

SHARED POWERS

Some hero teams actually share certain powers, abilities they can only use together as a team. This ranges from a pair to a whole group of characters with a shared power, perhaps even a whole shared form with its own powers! Unlike the previous kinds of team powers, which still belong to individual characters, shared powers truly belong to more than one character and can even be a part of a team template. Shared powers can be an inexpensive way to grant an entire team a useful utility power like Teleport or Healing, but take away a team's ability to use that power if one member is incapacitated or kidnapped.

All heroes who contribute to a shared power must Ready to act on the same initiative, and spend the same action (generally a Standard action, but it will vary by power type) to activate the power at the same time.

The final Power Point cost of a shared power is divided between all the characters that possess it. If three characters possess a shared, powerful Damage power that costs 45 pp, then each contributes 15 pp. A hero generally cannot use the portion of a shared power they have paid for if the other characters aren't present.

THE SHARED POWER FLAW

The key element of a shared power is the limitation that it is shared, which takes the form of a Limited flaw. As stated in the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*, this is usually phrased as "Only With [Other Character]," such as "Only With Their Twin," "Only With Their Team," and so forth. If the individual characters have some power outside of the flaw, then the power is Partially Limited, as outlined in the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*, with only some of its ranks affected by the flaw. In this case, a hero can use as many ranks in that power as they have personally paid Power Points for.

A Partially Limited shared power is a good way of creating a "power boost" two or more characters can do together, so long as the full power rank fits within the Power Level limits of the series (see **Enhancements and Power Level**).

Example: Rant and Rave can unite their powers to create a Destructive Resonance attack that disintegrates solid matter. This is defined as Weaken Toughness 10 (Affects Only Objects, Increased Range), with Limited (only when touching their sibling), with a final cost of 10 pp. Each sibling would pay 5 pp for the attack, and they must both use a Standard action to activate the power. Since the flaw applies to the entire power, neither Rant nor Rave can use it without the other. If, however, the flaw applied to only some of the power's Weaken ranks, the final cost would be higher, and the villains could only split the cost of the ranks they share, but they could use the non-Limited ranks without the other sibling present.

OPTION: SHARED POWER LEVEL

A combined form or combined attack in comics and television tends to limit a team's options in terms of actions, reducing their number of actions per round, while at the same time generally increasing their overall power. For this reason, the Gamemaster may wish to institute a special exception to the series Power Level limits for combined forms. For each component of the combined form beyond the first, the combined form has an effective +1 Power Level in terms of its limits. This provides combined forms the capability to take on more powerful foes and challenges than the individual components could do alone.

Alternately, the Gamemaster can simply set the series Power Level at that of the combined form and reverse this guideline: For each component beyond the first, the effective series Power Level for the individual components is one less. This means the components will always be less powerful than the combined whole.

THE SHARED POWER FORM

As the Combine power from the **Summoning Powers** chapter of *Power Profiles* suggests, two or more characters can share the ability to combine to create or summon a singular, usually more powerful, being. The standard version of the power has the following traits:

- The component characters disappear and cannot act while the combined form exists, but the combined form has its own full set of actions each turn.
- The components suffer whatever conditions the combined form does due to the Feedback flaw; if they do not, remove the flaw.
- Countering or ending the Summon effect causes the combined form to split back into its components. Since Summon is sustained duration by default and the combined form is considered to be maintaining the power, if the combined form is stunned or otherwise unable to take free actions, it splits. To eliminate this, increase the power's duration to continuous. Then the combined form only splits when the power is countered—or possibly also upon death.
- Some shared power forms have other flaws, including Activation (taking time to combine), Check Required, or a Quirk such as needing to say a magic word to trigger the combination.
- The combined form has a standard set of traits based on its available Power Points, which equal the total rank of the Summon effect x 5. These traits usually do not vary, but the GM may permit the Variable modifier for Summon to allow for different combined forms, perhaps depending on which of the components is "dominant" or initiates the process.

Combine: Summon Combined Form, Heroic, Feedback, Limited (requires all components be present), Limited (components vanish while combined form is present) • 1 point per rank

TEAM RESOURCES

One of the most common advantages of superhero teams is that teams have resources: things like equipment, vehicles, a headquarters (maybe even more than one), and the money or other means to pay for all of them. When putting together a team, consider what their resources can or should be, and how they are going to get and manage them.

SOURCES OF SUPPORT

All of a team's resources have to come from somewhere, and both the players and the Gamemaster should consider exactly where. The GM can offer some sources of support for a team as part of the set-up or early adventures of a series, or players can create their heroes with eventual support of a team in mind. The most common sources of support for superteams include the following.

SELF-SUPPORTED

The members of the team provide their own support and cover their own expenses. This is fairly easy if one or more of the members happens to be independently wealthy, as is often the case, or otherwise has access to considerable resources. For example, a hero who is the princess and heir to an earthly or otherworldly realm may have considerable resources to share. Likewise, a hero able to produce materials out of nothing can make many of the things the team needs, or can make things to raise funds. Teams lacking these options may just get by with whatever they can scrape together, at least until they get more organized.

Some self-supported teams have a non-profit or foundation set up in their names to raise and manage funds. Sources of income may include private and public donations, licensing fees for the heroes' names and images, or payments for contract work done by the heroes to raise money. Some teams take a hands-on approach to handling their finances, while others rely on accountants and managers. Both options create some potential for subplots involving the heroes' resources: What happens when there's a cash-flow problem, an offer of support with some strings attached, or worst of all, the dreaded audit?

Some self-supported teams rely on a particular team member or members contributing whatever they have to offer. For example, if one hero has a personal headquarters, the rest of the team might start gathering there. Similarly, if a member of the team has a vehicle capable of carrying passengers, it may end up being the "team ride" until they come up with something else.

In the Earth-Prime setting, the Freedom League and the Atom Family are largely self-supported. The Freedom League initially relied upon the Beaumont family fortune and mansion, then later established their own foundation, greatly expanded when Daedalus contributed his own wealth and resources to it. The Atom Family relies on income from Dr. Atom's many patents and inventions, set up as a trust fund to support the team and its activities.

GOVERNMENT

Some superteams are supported, in whole or in part, by a government. This can range from a local city or state government willing to provide funding, tax breaks, access to property, and so forth to a national government or even an international body like the United Nations. For world-spanning settings, the government could even be interplanetary or interstellar.

Government support often comes with strings attached—usually more red tape than anything else. The heroes might have to be agents of the governmental body, or at least be cleared and approved by them or their representative. They may sometimes need to justify the damage they cause or the level of force they use to superiors or politicians, or may have support staff follow them into the field who they then must protect in addition to any civilians. Consider how much autonomy the team is expected to have and whether they receive orders from or answer to a government authority.

In the Earth-Prime setting, groups like UNISON and Team Canada are government sponsored, with varying degrees of success and common issues with bureaucracy. UNISON tends to become entangled in it, while Team Canada tends to plow through it, both with their own issues.

PATRON

A superteam may also have a private patron other than a team member or a government. This is usually either a wealthy and resourceful individual or an organization of some sort, ranging from a nonprofit to a corporation, or a mysterious and secret group.

As with government sponsorship, a patron may or may not expect certain things from the team in return for their support. Some patrons are fairly hands-off, providing what help they can but otherwise staying out of the heroes' way. Others may micro-manage or expect an accounting of every resource the team uses. A corporate patron may even merchandise the heroes, making toys and television shows and expecting the heroes to occasionally appear before the press or fans. Even the most standoffish patrons may still run into circumstances where they ask for a favor in exchange for their support, which can potentially put heroes in a difficult position.

In the Earth-Prime setting, the Claremont Academy is a private patron of sorts: The school and its headmaster support the Next-Gen teen heroes and other unofficial groupings of super-powered students. The Sentinels in Emerald City also have a private patron in the form of corporate executive and reformed supervillain Maximilian Mars, who is also designed as a potential patron for a group of player character heroes if they happen to replace the Sentinels.

TEAM EQUIPMENT

The most common team resource is shared equipment, things team members are all issued or have access to as

part of the team. Some teams have little or no equipment—particularly when starting out—while others have extensive kits built into their team template. The *Gadget Guides* sourcebook offers a wealth of devices and equipment players and Gamemasters can use to outfit hero teams, with examples provided here as well.

COMMUNICATIONS

Perhaps the most common item of superteam equipment is a simple commlink, a tiny communications device allowing the team to keep in contact and communicate. Commlinks may be incorporated into team uniforms (see **Uniforms**) or configured in various forms like small earpieces, rings, or wristbands.

More sophisticated communications equipment may include encryption, tracking capabilities, or distress beacons (all potential Features). It may even use the Communication effect with a different medium and descriptor, ranging from cosmic gravity wave communicators to artificial neural links enabling Mental Communication. A communications device might also provide a Comprehend Languages effect.

Cosmic Communications Ring: Used by a legion of cosmic defenders, this ring allows a wearer to survive hostile environments without a space suit, telepathically communicate with other wearers anywhere in the cosmos, and understand and speak any language they encounter. Communication 5 (anywhere; Limited: only to other rings), Comprehend 2 (speak and understand all languages), Feature 1 (distress beacon), Immunity 10 (Life Support) • 30 points

INFORMATION

Related to communication, teams may issue compact computers, either hand-held or incorporated into something wearable. They can range from the capabilities of a smartphone (a 2-rank Feature) to a full-blown, artificially intelligent personal assistant. The latter usually has various Senses effects to provide the hero with information, particularly Direction Sense, Distance Sense, and Time Sense. A team might share the resources of a single AI, probably housed and running on hardware in their headquarters and linked to them through communications equipment.

Riding AI: This power provides a computerized or supernatural companion that rides along with the hero, often as part of a powersuit or enchanted artifact, providing insight and managing background tasks like repairs or research. The AI is built on 5 Power Points per rank. See Constructs in the **Equipment** chapter of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* for more information on sidekicks that lack Strength and Agility abilities. Enhanced Advantage (Sidekick) • 1 point per rank.

RESTRAINTS

Heroes might carry the handcuffs or restraints described in Chapter 7 of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*, useful for temporarily restraining most human-level opponents until they can be picked up or handed off to the authorities.

Suspension Bubble: This mystical bubble keeps any unconscious targets placed inside it in a dreamlike state, protecting them from outside elements and rendering

POINT COST AND THE TEAM TEMPLATE

In addition to who provides the monetary and material support for the team, consider this: Do the individual heroes pay Power Points—either for devices or ranks of the Equipment Advantage—for the team resources they use?

Generally, the answer is yes, and the cost of the team's resources can be included in their team template so each player knows how many points to allocate to pay for them. If the heroes are created as members of the team, this can happen during character creation. Otherwise, the GM may allow new team members to take the team template upon joining and “pay it off” using Power Points earned during play. The exception is any individual resource a hero shares with the rest of the team, such as a hero offering a personal headquarters or vehicle for group use; that resource still belongs to the hero, who pays the Power Points for it, and remains wholly under their control.

For some teams, the Gamemaster may simply prefer to not take the cost of the team template into account for hero creation. In this case, nobody pays Power Points for any of the traits in the template, or at least not for those the GM specifies, such as equipment. The template traits are just plot devices included as part of the series. This is useful for team templates that include a lot of resources that could otherwise clutter up character sheets, or when those resources amount to a lot of points. If the heroes get multiple spaceships, advanced space suits, universal translators, and interstellar communicators all as part of their team resources, it may be easier to just say nobody pays points for them.

them weightless. More powerful versions increase the duration to continuous or even permanent, leaving defeated villains helpless unless disturbed. Affliction (Asleep; Sustained, Limited [third degree only], Limited [only unconscious targets]), Linked to Immunity 10 (life support), Linked to Flight 1 (affects others only) • 13 points for rank 1, +1 point per rank

TRANSPORTATION

Team transportation tends to fall to one or more vehicles (see **Team Vehicles**) but could include individual equipment as well. For example, each member of the team might have a jet pack or anti-gravity belt (or other Flight device) for getting around, or a personal Teleport device.

Emergency Recall: This belt contains biometric sensors and a communications link with the team's headquarters, activating teleport systems to return a teammate to base if they fall unconscious. The simplest version is Feature 2 (biometric sensors, communications link with HQ) but only functions if the base has its own teleportation system. A more advanced version includes the teleportation technology built in, but burns out after a single use. Feature 1 (biometric sensors), Teleport 10 (1,000 miles, Extended Only, Triggered [when knocked unconscious], Limit [only to base], Unreliable 2 [1 use]) • 6 points

UNIFORMS

Some superteams go in for standardized uniforms, giving the team a unified look even if they have some personal modifications, whereas on other teams, heroes wear their

own costumes as they see fit. Either way, superhero uniforms tend to be immune to the heroes' various powers—in the Earth-Prime setting, such costumes are made from morphic molecules, but you can decide how it works in your own setting. Usually, this is a free trait of uniforms, but you can make it a 1-rank Feature if you wish.

Uniforms worn by a superteam may incorporate any or all of the previous equipment as well as things like different ranks of Immunity, particularly Life Support or Immunity to other effects like cold or heat damage. These are often Limited to Half Effect, to reflect resistance provided by the uniform rather than full Immunity. Likewise, team uniforms may incorporate ranks of Protection, particularly for heroes who lack a high natural Toughness. These benefits are subject to the usual Power Level limits of the series.

Morphic Molecule Uniform: Feature 1 (adjusts to fit altered forms), Immunity 3 (wearer's powers, environmental heat and cold) • 4 points

TEAM VEHICLES

The *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* and *Gadget Guides* detail the system for creating vehicles in *Mutants & Masterminds* along with a number of examples. This section provides some additional vehicle concepts, particularly for teams.

VEHICLES AS HEADQUARTERS

For some teams, their primary vehicle also serves as their headquarters. This is particularly common for cosmic teams who travel space together in a starship, but can also include a team living and working out of a submarine patrolling the seas, or even a modified recreational vehicle (or caravan of them) traveling the highways and byways of the country. In these cases, the vehicle may be outfitted with some headquarters features, particularly Living Space, if people live there full time. A vehicle headquarters may even carry smaller vehicles, such as a starship with shuttlecraft or space fighters, or a land cruiser with a motorcycle or all-terrain vehicle, allowing the characters to take short trips away from their headquarters without bringing it along.

VEHICLES THAT AREN'T

Some things that might be defined as "vehicles" are better considered items of equipment, devices, or possibly minions in game terms. In particular, self-powered, non-enclosed "vehicles" like skateboards, hang-gliders, surfboards (even the flying kind), and parachutes (and all their high-tech or magical cousins) are better handled as equipment or devices that provide movement effects. They can be removed, but otherwise don't really have game traits beyond the Speed and Movement options they provide. Similarly, mounts that a character rides aren't "vehicles" per se, as discussed in *Gadget Guides*: They're best handled as creatures or constructs using the Minions or Sidekick Advantages or the Summon power. So a hero who can summon up a herd of winged horses for their team to ride, for example, should use the Summon power to do so, while a hero with a hoverboard would buy a device with a few ranks in Speed and Movement (sure-footed).

SAMPLE VEHICLES

The following are some sample vehicles to supplement those from the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*. Features marked with an asterisk (*) are detailed in the Vehicles section of *Gadget Guides*.

AEGIS ALL-TERRAIN SPY CAR

28 EP

Size: Large, **Strength:** 6, **Speed:** 6 (flight, ground, underwater), **Defense:** 8, **Toughness:** 10, **Features:** Alarm, Autopilot*, Caltrops, Communications*, Computer*, Hidden Compartments, Navigation System, Oil Slick

A true all-terrain vehicle, able to fly, drive, and even submerge and operate underwater, equipped with various spy gear and equipment.

FLYING CHARIOT

18 EP

Size: Medium, **Strength:** 4, **Speed:** 6 (flight, ground), **Defense:** 10, **Toughness:** 6, **Modifiers:** Summonable*

A vehicle that is much like an ancient chariot, a flying platform surrounded by a low wall on three sides. It may be a magical creation complete with phantasmal beasts to pull it, or a high-tech construct either self-propelled or drawn by robotic "animals." Either way, the chariot can appear as its owner wills when it is needed. Note that its Summonable ability does not affect its cost in Equipment points, but rather increases the cost of the Equipment Advantage to pay for the chariot to 2pp per rank.

RECREATIONAL VEHICLE

10 EP

Size: Huge, **Strength:** 8, **Speed:** 5 (ground), **Defense:** 6, **Toughness:** 9, **Features:** Communications*, Living Space, Navigation System

A fairly high-end recreational vehicle, providing a mobile home for travelers. A team might further modify it with additional features—perhaps even Dual Size to make the interior as large as a mansion!

SKY-BIKE

34 EP

Size: Medium, **Strength:** 4, **Speed:** 7 (flight), **Defense:** 15, **Toughness:** 5, **Features:** Feature 2 (loudspeakers, spotlight), Navigation System 3 (+15 to checks), Remote Control, Senses 3 (Direction Sense, Radio, Time Sense), Subtle Flight

A flying motorcycle complete with a saddle and handlebars for guidance and space for two: a pilot and a passenger sitting behind them. The Subtle feature assumes the sky-bike's propulsion is virtually silent, useful for stealth operations and not disturbing neighbors. If the engine roars, you can remove the Subtle feature.

TEAM INSTALLATIONS

The *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* and *Gadget Guides* also detail how to create installations, particularly those used as a headquarters by a team, and include a number of templates and examples. This section offers some additional options for installations, particularly for teams.

ADVANTAGES AS FEATURES

An installation can have various Advantages that benefit the people using it, rather than the installation itself. Essentially, these Advantages are Enhanced Traits with

the Affects Others and Usable Only by Others modifiers, useful only for those operating in the installation. Many of the Advantages from the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* and elsewhere can apply as the Gamemaster wishes, but some of the more common examples include the following:

- **Benefit:** There is a wide range of options here, including installations that bestow things like Diplomatic Immunity (for an embassy or consulate, or a church the local authorities won't enter) or Status (by virtue of being a venerable or beloved landmark).
- **Contacts:** The installation offers access to an information network or a direct line to certain high-level contacts. The same may go for Connected and Well-informed.
- **Favored Environment:** The quintessential "home-field advantage" helps heroes battle with renewed vigor if their headquarters is attacked. This may be the result of an especially defensible layout, a supernatural luck field, sensor systems that help defenders coordinate against opponents, or simply the moral imperative to defend their home.
- **Inventor:** The installation's facilities are such that skilled characters can use Technology to create temporary devices there. This also goes for the Artificer and Ritualist Advantages for mystical headquarters.
- **Luck:** The installation bestows good fortune or increased determination in some fashion, allowing a single use of Luck for any one person within its walls each day.
- **Sidekick:** The installation has an important supporting character who cannot leave, such as an artificially intelligent AI or a summonable spirit ally.

NEW FEATURES

The following supplements the Features given in the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* and *Gadget Guides*.

Cold Storage: The facility includes a room or rooms maintained at dangerously cold temperatures for storage and scientific experiments. Given the tropes of superhero stories, the cold storage may include cryogenic chambers capable of storing sick or injured people indefinitely until they can be revived. Without protection, the room's extreme cold is a hazard, inflicting rank 5 cold damage once every ten minutes.

Power Dampener: Select a single power descriptor, such as psychic or cold. The facility can actively suppress powers with this descriptor. This ability functions like a Sustained Nullify with a rank equal to the campaign's Power Level and must generally be activated manually, though with Gamemaster approval. A facility with Power Scanners (see below) may activate this feature automatically if it detects an appropriate power being used.

Power Scanner: Select a single power descriptor, such as magic or mutation. The facility can detect the use of powers with that descriptor within its bounds, alerting occupants with a silent or audible alarm. A Power Scanner

can be fooled with a successful DC 20 Effect check with the power in question, or disabled with a DC 20 Technology check. Each additional feature increases these DCs by +5, to a maximum of 40.

Secure Feature: One of the installation's features includes additional security and can be locked down independently as if it had the Sealed feature, such holding cells with additional security or a laboratory with blast doors. The Toughness rank of the Secure Feature is +2 higher than the rest of the installation.

Upgraded Facilities: For one feature, any facility of the installation intended for use with a skill can be upgraded, providing a +2 circumstance bonus to checks with that skill due to the fine quality of the facilities and instruments. This can include laboratories for use with Technology, infirmaries for use with Treatment, or ritual facilities for use with Expertise (Magic), etc. For two features, the upgraded facilities provide a +5 circumstance bonus.

Wards: Wards function as a security system, alerting occupants to trespassers, but require a DC 20 Expertise (Magic) check to disable. Each additional feature increases this DC by +5, to a maximum of 40.

SAMPLE INSTALLATIONS

The following are some sample installations to supplement those from the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*. Features marked with an asterisk (*) are detailed in the Installations section of *Gadget Guides*.

ARTIFICIAL ISLAND

19 EP

Size: Huge, **Toughness:** 10, **Features:** Communications, Computer, Dock, Grounds 2 (Colossal), Habitat*, Hangar, Isolated, Laboratory, Living Space, Movable*, Power System, Security System (DC 20), Workshop

A floating platform out on the ocean or another large body of water, with grounds designed to appear like a natural island and a dock for boats or a submarine bay (or both). The island can slowly move from location to location, though doing so draws enormous energy from its generators.

CLOUD FORTRESS

22 EP

Size: Huge, **Toughness:** 12, **Features:** Communications, Computer, Concealed 3 (cloud camouflage, +20 DC), Defense System, Hangar, Infirmary, Isolated, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Movable, Power System, Security System 2 (DC 25)

A "sky island," anti-gravity platform, or enclosed ship able to conceal itself within an artificial cloud bank and move slowly to change its location, both for accessibility and secrecy.

ORBITING ASTEROID BASE

30 EP

Size: Awesome, **Toughness:** 10, **Features:** Combat Simulator, Cold Storage, Communications, Computer, Defense System, Fire Prevention System, Gym, Hangar, Holding Cells 2* (Impervious), Infirmary, Isolated, Upgraded Laboratory (+2 Expertise [Science]), Library, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 3 (DC 30), Workshop

A cutting-edge technological marvel in orbit around Earth, the perfect refuge for an oppressed people.



TEAM ACTIONS

The Maneuvers section of **Chapter 8** of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* outlines the team attack maneuver, a way characters can combine their attacks to overwhelm a target's resistance. This section looks at the team attack in more detail and at other ways for a team to combine their attacks and actions in combat.

TEAM ATTACKS

The standard team attack in the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* is meant to help a group of heroes overcome the defenses of a single, more powerful foe by providing a circumstance bonus to attack rank. In particular, this is useful in overcoming an Impervious defense, since the bonus is an increase in rank and because circumstance bonuses specifically bypass usual Power Level limits. So, for example, a group of PL 10 heroes who only have one or two attacks among them capable of affecting a foe with a rank 15 Impervious defense can make a team attack to deliver one single attack in the rank 12–15 range and has a much better chance of success.

The following are some other things you can do with team attacks:

- Team Aid:** Multiple characters can use the Aid action for an ally in close combat with an opponent, if they are able to attack that opponent. In this case, add the characters' degrees of success to determine the circumstance bonus: +2 for one or two, +5 for three or more. The GM may also allow a team aid effort to apply degrees of success separately to both attack and defense for the aided character. In that case, two degrees of success could apply a +2 to both attack and defense, for example, and four could apply a +2 bonus to one and a +5 to the other.
- Team Disarm:** Make a team attack against the target with a –2 modifier (anyone with the Improved Disarm Advantage does not apply this penalty). Add up the total degrees of success and apply the appropriate circumstance bonus for the successful attacks to the largest attack rank for the opposed check against the target's Strength. If the check fails and the target gets an attempt to disarm the lead character, the team circumstance modifier applies to the check to resist this as well.
- Team Smash:** Make a team attack against a held object instead of a foe with the usual –5 modifier (anyone with the Improved Smash Advantage does not apply this penalty). Add up the total degrees of success and apply the appropriate circumstance bonus for the successful attacks to the largest damage rank to inflict damage on the object.
- Team Trip:** Make a team attack against the opponent's Parry with a –2 circumstance modifier (anyone with the Improved Trip Advantage does not apply this penalty). Add up the total degrees of success and apply the appropriate circumstance bonus for the successful attacks to the highest Acrobatics or Athletics bonus in the group and use it for the opposed check. If the check fails, the defender gets an immediate chance to knock all of the attackers prone, but the team circumstance modifier applies to your check to resist this as well.

TEAM MANEUVERS

Some maneuvers or combinations of actions can only be accomplished by multiple characters working together. Some examples include the following:

- **Feint + Aim:** One character uses Deception (or Intimidation with the Startle Advantage) to feint against a foe, distracting them while another character takes the Aim action. If the feint is successful, the foe does not notice the character aiming, and so cannot take advantage of their momentary vulnerability. This maneuver is even more effective if the feinting character has the Set-up Advantage and can pass the ability to treat the target as Vulnerable on to the aiming character.
- **Feint + Surprise Attack:** One character uses Deception (or Intimidation with the Startle Advantage) to feint against a foe, distracting them. A teammate makes a Stealth check against a DC of the distracted foe's Perception bonus +10. If the Stealth check succeeds, the foe is vulnerable to the next attacks of both characters.
- **Grab + Attack:** One character grabs a target as a Standard action. If the grab is successful, the target is vulnerable (one degree) or defenseless (two degrees), and a teammate can make an attack against the target with a better chance of a hit. The follow-up attack can even be a power attack or a team attack maneuver for added effect. The initial "grab" attack can also be an Affliction that makes the target vulnerable or defenseless, such as a snare.
- **Throw + Close or Slam Attack:** A strong character picks up a teammate and throws them at a foe. The throwing distance rank is the throwing character's Strength rank minus the thrown character's Mass rank. The throwing character needs a move action to pick up an adjacent teammate and makes a Ranged Combat (Throwing) check against the foe's Dodge defense to put the character on target. Treat a successful attack check as an Aid action: +2 circumstance bonus for success, +5 for three or more degrees of success. A degree of failure puts the thrown character within close combat distance of the target but provides no bonus, while two or more degrees of failure put the character too far off target for a close attack. The thrown character can then make either a close attack, possibly with a bonus, or a slam attack, using the distance rank of the throw as effective speed.

TEAM POWER STUNTS

At the Gamemaster's option, it may be possible for characters with compatible power descriptors to combine their efforts to perform a team power stunt, with greater effectiveness than they could have individually. Use the following guidelines for this:

- One character is the coordinating or lead character. This character makes any checks necessary for the use of the stunt.

A TEAM OF ONE?

Can characters make team attacks by themselves? Not usually! Still, with all of the possible options for *Mutants & Masterminds* heroes, there's at least the potential for an individual hero to make a team attack without a team. The options include:

- **Multiattack:** In many ways, a Multiattack effect is a team attack: a volley of multiple attacks against a single target. Its effects are similar: an increase in the DC of the attack's resistance check based on the degrees of success in the attack. The key difference is a Multiattack does not effectively increase the attack's rank to overcome Impervious defenses.
- **Summon:** Your summoned minions can make a team attack with you (or together with each other) normally. By default, summoned minions get only a Standard or Move action each round, and commanding them normally requires a Move action on your part, which may limit your ability to coordinate without extras like Active or Responsible (from *Power Profiles*). The same goes for other characters who are Compelled or Controlled by you.
- **Minions:** Likewise, minions provided by the Minions Advantage can make team attacks. This tactic allows groups of low-PL minions to have a chance of affecting more powerful opponents.

- All of the characters involved must have suitable power effects with compatible descriptors. This is up to the GM to adjudicate using common sense; a team might combine their psionic powers, for example, or a magnetic hero may be able to combine her powers with metallic or electrical characters, but a hodgepodge of powers and descriptors aren't going to combine without a very good explanation.
- All of the characters involved in the stunt must use extra effort, taking a level of fatigue after.
- For each character participating in the team stunt, the team as a whole gets one use of extra effort. The first must go to the power stunt, but others can apply to any other use of extra effort, within reason, and multiple options can stack. Most commonly, additional levels of extra effort go into the power option (+1 power rank per level).
- The bonuses generated by a team power stunt count as circumstance bonuses, and therefore are unaffected by Power Level. This gives a team power stunt the same potential as a Shared Power Form, previously.

Example: *Chase Atom coordinates a group of the world's psychics to fend the Grue Meta-Mind. "Focus your power on me!" Chase says. There are five other psychics, with Chase as the coordinating character. That's a total of six levels of extra effort. One must be spent to activate the team power stunt, and Chase pours the rest into a +5 rank bonus to his mental blast power to overcome the Meta-Mind's defenses. Hopefully, one shot will be enough, as effort fatigues them all and they'll only be able to channel such power two more times before they're all Incapacitated.*

CHAPTER 3: TEAM LINEUPS



The following pages contain a variety of superhero teams, ranging from Power Level 5 to 12 and ready for players to pick up and run in the Earth-Prime universe already described in products like *Atlas of Earth Prime*, *Emerald City*, and *Freedom City*. The heroes within are built on the standard 15pp per Power Level guidelines in the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* and include the team template for that group in case players or the Gamemaster want to include new characters or replace the existing heroes with their own creations.

Some of the teams and heroes presented in the following pages are pre-established characters from previous editions of *Mutants & Masterminds*, or mentioned in other supplements like the *Cosmic Handbook* or the *Atlas of Earth-Prime*, while others are new creations. All the teams are presented as “soft canon”; the teams themselves are assumed to exist within Earth-Prime, but the statblocks and even the rosters presented here are not necessarily the final word on these characters. More focus has been invested in presenting the rosters as ready-to-play PCs than in making them perfectly accurate NPCs for the world of Earth-Prime. If you want to run your own urban, street-level campaign in Ferroburg, for example, you don't need to worry about tiptoeing around the Ferroburg Four unless your Gamemaster wishes to include them as well; your team may be your own version of the Ferroburg Four or may replace them in continuity entirely.

HOW TO READ A TEAM ENTRY

Each team is listed first by its name and a quick description, followed by its Power Level, the starting power points used to build team members, and finally their team template (see **Chapter 2**). A general description of the team follows, describing their history and any major NPCs or organizations in the world of Earth-Prime they interact with, work for, or oppose.

Team Resources describes what mechanical elements the team has in common, often explaining the various elements of the team template as well as providing statistics for any shared vehicles, installations, or mentors the group may rely on. The vehicles and installations in this section include options presented in *Gadget Guides*; if this book is not available to you, simply replace those features. While team vehicles and installations are paid for by the team template (and consequently by individual members), mentor figures are always presented without a power point cost to team members, with the intention that they serve as Gamemaster characters and plot devices rather than a resource the players can direct as they wish. If the PCs would like their mentor figure to be more directly available during adventures, they should split the cost of appropriate ranks in the Sidekick advantage between themselves.

Adventures describes the typical challenges the team faces and suggests possible complications and goals for the Gamemaster.

Opponents lists many of the most likely villains the hero team will face, describing both villains presented in sources like *Threat Report* and *Rogues Gallery* and generic foes and appropriate minions listed in the *Gamemaster's Guide*. The generic options for opponents found in the *Gamemaster's Guide* are presented for ease of reference, and Gamemasters should feel free to adjust any of these listings to best suit their table, or create new statblocks for these characters using the original foes as a guideline.

Finally, **Adversary Options** provides suggestions for using the team listed as a rival or even villainous NPC organization, to oppose a group of PCs in your own campaign. For the most part, these suggestions contain only narrative adjustments, but Gamemasters should feel free to tweak the listed statblocks for the teams to add more villainous options or better challenge their heroes.

Most teams also include a **Friend of Foe**, **Mentor** and/or **Nemesis** sidebar including statistics for side characters important to the group's identity, such as authority figure or most iconic recurring foes. Gamemasters should not feel it vital to use these enemies for every adventure or to use them at all. They are offered to help get Gamemasters off and running on a new campaign with as little prep work as possible. With the limited space provided, these NPCs are presented as vague sketches, and gamemasters are encouraged to add-to or modify their statistics or personalities in whatever way best suits their table.

HOW TO READ THE CHARACTERS

Every character entry includes game information so you can use the characters in your M&M games. Each entry follows a few rules to make them consistent and easier to understand at a glance.

- All characters are presented in their super-powered identity. This means when you look at El Rayo's entry, what you're seeing is him in his power armor, not his normal identity as Rolando Santiago. In addition, characters with permanent modifiers to their abilities due to a power are presented with their modifiers already taken into account in their game traits.

- Advantages, Effects, and other rules content marked with an asterisk (*) are new rules included earlier in this book.
- If a character can vary their abilities in some way, say due to the Growth power or because they can change forms or invoke special abilities somehow, then there are two numbers separated by a slash. Magna Red, for example, has Strength, Agility, and Fighting modifiers 5/1, 5/1, and 8/4 respectively; the first number reflects her abilities at her full power, the second when her "Magna Cavalier Transformation" power is not active. Characters like this are also accompanied by asterisks and notes to call attention to what scores are affected and when they have their higher scores or their lower scores.
- Characters that lack Powers, Equipment, Advantages, or Skills don't have a space for that category of ability.
- A character with the Equipment advantage may have only some of their equipment points spent. If this is the case, then their player can spend the remaining points as they see fit.
- Skills and Advantages granted by a power (using the Enhanced Trait effect) appear both in the listing for that power and in the Skills or Advantages section of the character in italics. These aren't the same Skill or Advantage purchased multiple times; instead, they're included under their appropriate headings for ease of reference.
- The Offense section of a character includes shorthand notations about the character's attack values and powers. This section does not list all the information about those powers and may not even include all of the powers or abilities that character is capable of using. Be sure to look at the full write-up of the character's powers and advantages in order to learn exactly what they're capable of and what your options are.

Overall, the characters should be easy to decipher, but the notes above will help if something is unclear. If a character breaks any of the guidelines above, that will be made clear in the character's entry either with notes called out using asterisks or with information in that character's Powers & Abilities section.

MUTANTS & MASTERMINDS

WORKING TOGETHER TO GUARD THE PLANET



POWER LEVEL: 12

POWER POINTS: 180

TEAM TEMPLATE

5 POINTS

Advantages: Benefit (diplomatic immunity), Connected, Equipment 3 (team equipment and HQ contribution)

Equipment: UNIQUE commlink (communication, flashlight, GPS, tracking device, video recorder)

UNIQUE—the United Nations International Quorum of Unaligned Exceptionals—is a subgroup within UNISON (see *Atlas of Earth-Prime*). Superheroes affiliated with UNIQUE have chosen to work closely with UNISON and the United Nations, forsaking nationalist agendas in favor of bettering and uniting the planet. In exchange for having UNISON help to coordinate and support their activities on a global level, members agree to focus on the priorities identified by UNISON and the world community, usually of national and international scope and importance.

Maintaining a global defense against superhuman threats while also respecting the sovereign rights of each nation is a daunting task. UNISON's overall goals are to protect and

nurture the entire Earth, facing challenges such as major natural disasters, alien invasions, or incursions from parallel dimensions, in addition to the normal threat of superhuman villains. However, many nations remain reluctant to allow foreigners, regardless of how well meaning, to act freely within their borders.

Members are pressured to balance the reluctance of sovereign nations against the importance of evacuating civilians, minimizing damage to world heritages, and clean-up following unusual events, especially in nations lacking the superhuman resources to do these things unaided. Some countries invite UNIQUE reluctantly, others eagerly, and still others require the diplomats of the United Nations and UNISON to smooth problems over after UNIQUE has taken action—especially in matters of international importance—and the danger is resolved.

UNIQUE feels the eyes of the world on them in ways many superheroes never worry about, serving as the face of a tense international alliance. Operatives must exhibit good judgment, quick thinking, and a genuine desire to help, rather than a desire to make splashy and showy heroics. UNISON has shaped UNIQUE by recruiting individuals with stable personalities and steadfast character, and providing them with exceptional resources and training.

A few years after its founding in the late 1950s, the United Nations International Superhuman Oversight Network

rapidly discovered that no matter how highly trained and motivated its regular agents were, some problems required the assistance of metahumans. Volunteers and local heroes were often willing to help, but UNISON needed its own on-call superhumans. Some problems needed immediate responses, and other operations required long-term coordination. UNIQUE was created in the early 1960s to fill that need. Over the years, superheroes both powered and non- were recruited as members of UNIQUE, so their efforts could be organized and directed from a centralized source.

UNIQUE has served honorably as the superhuman arm of UNISON. The team has a large number of members who serve in various roles and capacities all over the planet, and sometimes beyond. A relatively small, rotating portion of the team as a whole, the “active members” are on call for emergencies at any given time. Active members live and stay in UNISON’s headquarters in Geneva, Switzerland, or New York City, where much United Nations business is conducted. From those locations, they connect to UNISON’s data network and are ready to respond to emerging threats all over the globe. Active members will generally be the first responders to crises, and often will be the only group to become aware of a new threat in time to minimize the immediate damage.

Members of the team who are not active at a given time, called reserve members, remain available as backups but are left free to pursue other interests and projects. Many reserve members pursue other superheroic activities, while others do things such as research, philanthropic work, post-disaster relief, or simply spending time recuperating, as being a superhero is physically, mentally, and emotionally exhausting.

UNIQUE is a collection of people who share the goal of helping and protecting the world, and the organization is structured accordingly. In spite of its size, the members of UNIQUE generally consider each other personal friends. UNISON invests considerable time into teaching not only emergency response but also communications skills to help minimize the conflicts such a high-pressure position can generate. Members operate with training as both military and diplomatic forces, and are granted significant latitude in protecting the Earth. But that freedom comes with considerable responsibility, as every mistake or failure reflects not only on members but on UNISON and global cooperation as a whole. Members must be above any suspicion that they would allow danger to befall a rival, or treat a villain differently because they share a homeland.

UNIQUE members, particularly those who are on the active rotation, possess a combination of raw power, skill, and ability to deal with global problems, and the judgment to exercise those talents responsibly. The organization recruits some of the most powerful superhumans on Earth-Prime, but also seeks out those suited to working in a group. Many countries lack the financial and superhuman resources to handle large-scale crises, and criminal organizations such as SHADOW prey heavily on nations that lack superhumans and/or strong economies. UNIQUE is often the only organization able to respond to brewing emergencies in smaller or impoverished nations, even as

THE FULL ROSTER

The heroes presented here are just a small portion of UNIQUE’s full lineup, representing the current active members serving the team full time. Many more heroes and powered agents are nominal members of UNIQUE, much like a military reserve, contributing on a regular schedule or when their powers or skills are most needed. This provides an easy excuse to bring in guest stars, new players, or special NPCs to deliver plot-relevant details, but also the chance to introduce non-villain antagonists and rivals who can challenge the heroes without bringing their powers into the mix.

UNIQUE’s final roster is left entirely up to the Gamemaster to define for their setting, or to leave intentionally vague. If your game showcases international cooperation, almost any heroes presented in the *Atlas of Earth Prime* make excellent part-time UNIQUE members, as do members of the Freedom League with a global scope, such as Daedalus, Siren, and Star Knight (see *Freedom City*). For an interesting twist, characters considered villains in some countries may serve UNIQUE as either part of a work-release program, or because their crimes aren’t recognized by the UN, such as Talona (*Freedom City*), the Rubber Bandit (*Emerald City*), or Chakram (*Rogues Gallery*).

the Freedom League has stepped up to assume a more international role. Active members often find themselves thrown into world-threatening situations in far-off locations with very little time to get their bearings.

UNIQUE and UNISON work very carefully to vet prospective candidates prior to offering membership. In most situations, one or more current members will arrange to meet with the prospective member for an informal conversation to gauge a candidate’s skills, abilities, and personality. If the screening goes well, the candidate is then asked to meet with Matron, the current field leader. If that goes well, Matron makes a recommendation to UNISON Director General Jennifer Ellis, and pending her approval, the person is asked if they would like to join. The process is quite similar to a job interview because in many ways that is exactly what being a member of UNIQUE is: a job protecting the entire planet.

Not every UNIQUE member serves as or even aspires to become an active member. Many have powers or personalities that are more useful in non-combat roles, and they spend years or even their entire careers in support roles. For example, the agent Delphi (see **Russia & Central Asia** in the *Atlas of Earth Prime*) serves as a noncombat covert analyst, working undercover to monitor suspicious activity. Heroes such as Delphi never leave reserve member status and do not rotate in to become active members. Within UNIQUE, this is simply considered efficient management of superhuman resources rather than a mark against the person who chooses to contribute in this way.

UNIQUE functions as an arm of UNISON under the authority of the United Nations, dealing with national, international, and planet-threatening events. UNIQUE usually operates either under the express invitation of the nation they are entering, or because binding international trea-

ties and humanitarian ideals make an obvious moral case for action. At odds with this general practice is the fact that the team's founding charter gives it extremely wide leeway to decide for itself when an emergency is so severe that it has to act regardless of permission or opposition by the nations involved. Although this clause is rarely invoked—and it invariably triggers international push-back against creeping authority when it is—there have been moments so urgent that UNIQUE felt obligated to act without approval.

In practice, this means that UNIQUE occupies much of its time with large-scale humanitarian relief, international criminal investigations, security for UN and UNISON personnel, and working to prevent crises. While UNIQUE and its members are generally against crime, they are not police, and respect the fact that each country has its own set of laws and policing regimes. Although reserve and active members are generally willing to help when local law enforcement or local heroes ask for backup, it is also not unheard of for UNIQUE to decline to assist because of disagreements over whether or not a law or policy can be enforced in good conscience. It is also not rare for UNIQUE to offer to help and have those offers be politely declined for various political reasons. UNIQUE tends to become involved in a traditional superhero capacity either in matters that are non-controversial, or in emergencies where there is no time to seek prior approval.

UNIQUE's international responsibilities sometimes slow their response in an emergency, and they come under fire for failure to act as often as for acting—particularly from the superhero community. From UNIQUE's perspective, violating international sovereignty can cause as much misery and loss of life in the long run as a small delay in acting, while many civilian superheroes argue that their role first and foremost is to react to people who need them now, and deal with the future as it comes. While no official rivalry exists between UNIQUE and the Freedom League, and the two organizations have worked together in the past, both have a long-standing policy of not recruiting members from the other.

TEAM RESOURCES

As an extension of UNISON, UNIQUE has access to all the UNISON resources presented in the *Atlas of Earth Prime*. Additionally, because UNIQUE's work and needs are specialized, it can call upon a few additional resources not available to the average UNISON agent, mostly in the form of support staff. Secretaries, researchers, trainers, doctors, scientists, and linguists are all available on short notice to provide whatever support members need.

Both UNIQUE and its individual members are well regarded in the international and superhuman communities, and members gain some diplomatic immunity in UN member states. As active agents of UNISON, each member's requests and actions are considered to represent the United Nations as a whole, with all the weight that carries. This reserve of goodwill is a major asset whenever a member needs some form of official government response or endorsement.

In addition to UNISON's facilities around the globe, UNIQUE maintains two dedicated bases, military centers with comfortable living facilities: one outside New York City and another near Geneva. Both are regularly staffed by UNISON analysts and guards, with UNIQUE members—both active and reserve—living there on a rotating basis.

UNIQUE relies on a dedicated jet aircraft to transport members and resources across the globe at high speed.

UNIQUE BASE

19 POINTS

Size: Large **Toughness:** 10 **Features:** Communications, Computer, Fire Prevention System, Hangar, Holding Cells, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Power System, Security System 3 (DC 30), Workshop

UNIQUE SUPERSONIC TRANSPORT

38 POINTS

Size: Gargantuan **Strength:** 16 **Speed:** 9 (flight) **Defense:** 10 **Toughness:** 13 **Features:** Alarm 3 (DC 30), Autopilot, Navigation System

ADVENTURES

A UNIQUE campaign focuses on the idea that there is hope for the world, even when things look bleak, and that the PCs are empowered to help make it possible. More than merely protecting the planet, UNIQUE is about moving it forward. The team as a whole is upbeat but not naïve, with room for superheroic confrontations, but also roleplaying tense negotiations, protecting important personnel, and de-escalating long-standing conflicts.

UNIQUE's most common role is responding to natural disasters, and this may serve as an entire adventure or the lead-in for a larger plot. Being a UN presence tolerated for humanitarian work provides the heroes with leads or an excuse to operate against criminal groups in the same country, or villains may take advantage of various global crises to strike. Heroes also work with UNISON partner organizations UNICORN and UNCOT to explore strange, mystical, or alien phenomena, or confront terrorist groups, respectively. Because of its wide scope of interests and geographic reach, UNIQUE adventures can cover a broad scope, from traditional superhero battles to spy thrillers to mysteries to political conspiracies to races against time to save lives in the wake of disaster. Members may travel into space to test new technology or help recover a vital historical site from looters or villainous agents.

Globetrotting is an important aspect of UNIQUE adventures. Rather than defending a single city, members protect an entire planet. They may face hostile aliens in the Nevada desert one day, evacuate victims from a volcanic eruption the next, and fight a cartel of superhuman assassins in Monte Carlo the third. Every environment on Earth is available for intrigue and combat. Heroes should have plenty of opportunities to experience new things, make local contacts, and battle atop landmarks.

UNIQUE is ultimately about people who choose to make their life's work helping others, promoting the idea that even if a problem can't be solved, someone caring and helping leaves things better than they were before.

OPPONENTS

UNIQUE faces foes that an individual country, or the heroes based out of it, would have a difficult time challenging. International organizations such as SHADOW, Overthrow, and the Foundry are frequent opponents for UNIQUE, particularly when they employ superhuman muscle. Lone villains like Mastermind (*Threat Report*) or Malador the Mystic (see sidebar), whose schemes are international in nature, are logical ongoing rivals for UNIQUE. As a primary defense force for Earth, they may also face cosmic threats such as the Stellar Imperium, the Grue, or the Blackguard (*Cosmic Handbook*).

UNIQUE also sees their fair share of nationalist or jingoistic conspiracies, often headed by superhumans who think the United Nations has no place trying to build a world community, or hate groups who believe their particular race, nationality, or religion to be the only worthwhile presence. Often, facing these opponents means a combination of saving civilians from terrorist threats and confronting superhumans like Knightfire (*Freedom City*) or Fallout and his allies (*Threat Report*).

Likewise, large corporations or corporate villains, particularly ones who do things that are immoral but not necessarily illegal, are good foils for UNIQUE. Many smaller countries host amoral organizations for profit and will deny official permission for UN investigators of any sort, creating a safe haven.

ADVERSARY OPTIONS

UNIQUE works well as friendly or professional rivals for your own PCs, especially given their tendency to err on the side of diplomacy and patience rather than immediate action. For example, Epiphany is very active in scientific and medical circles, Blackberry is vocal in the area of superhuman policy, and El Rayo is a cheeky celebrity hero eager for publicity. All of them make ready-made foils for PCs as challengers for fame, research grants, or backing from international organizations.

UNIQUE is a superhero team with the same general philosophy as an idealized United Nations, and tends to intervene only on the invitation of host countries or by world consensus. The easiest way to recast UNIQUE as a rival to your PCs is to change the underlying philosophy of your world's United Nations. If your campaign's UN aspires to be a true world government, or is more openly interventionist in the domestic affairs of individual countries, then UNIQUE becomes a wholly legal enforcement arm to confront your PCs.

A compromise between a villainous, overreaching UN and UNIQUE members serving solely as heroic rivals is to tweak the personalities or backgrounds of one or more members to cast them as subtle villains controlling a powerful, heroic organization. A more cynical Matron might decide to use UNIQUE to neutralize people she considers long-term threats to the world; a less ethical Avocat could use his powers to influence political leaders across the globe; and a hostile version of Hearth may be the quiet scout for an invading extradimensional army.

NEMESIS: MALADOR THE MYSTIC

Malador lived an age ago in the mighty city of Atlantis, and his considerable skill in the arcane arts eventually earned him the title of Master Mage, defender of the Earth realm against all magical threats. But his arrogance turned Malador to dark sorcery, foul pacts, and cruelty in discharging his duties. In response to the growing threat he posed, the other mystics of Atlantis allied and bound Malador, body and soul, within a secret tomb so he could never turn Earth over to his dark patrons. His spirit lay entombed until the 1930s, when the archaeologist Adrian Eldrich accidentally freed him. The two became mortal enemies as Eldrich himself became Earth's new Master Mage and held Malador's power at bay for decades. Eldrich's disappearance has left Malador largely unchecked, with only the interference of UNIQUE halting the dark lord's conquest of Earth.

Malador is ancient and arrogant, and wields magic unseen on Earth for thousands of years, allowing him to warp minds, rip physical and arcane barriers to shreds, dive into mortal minds, and transform innocent people into horrific monsters. Thanks to Atlantian magic intended to keep him imprisoned, he can never truly die; his soul is bound into his golden mask. If slain, he awaits a new host body to contain his power.

Malador the Mystic also appears in the *Basic Hero's Handbook*. The version here includes additional powers and advantages not available in that book.

MALADOR THE MYSTIC

PL 14

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

Powers: **Ur Tongue** Comprehend 3 (Read, Speak, and Understand all Languages), **Mystic Shield** Protection 13 (Impervious), **Possession** Immortality 5 (Limited: someone must don his mask), **Undying** Immunity 30 (Fortitude Effects)

Sorcery (Dynamic Array; 35 points)

- **Curse of Transformation** Perception Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Compelled, Transformed)
- **Levitation** Flight 6 (120 MPH)
- **Mystic Bindings** Ranged Affliction 11 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Damage; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobilized; Cumulative, Extra Condition; Limited Degree)
- **Mystic Blast** Ranged Damage 16
- **Mystic Passage** Teleport 8 (Accurate, Extended [250 miles])
- **Phantasms** Illusion 7 (Affects All Senses; Selective; Limited to Minds)
- **Scrying** Remote Sensing 10 (Audio, Visual; Dimensional 2 [Mystic Dimensions])
- **Sorcerer's Hand** Move Object 16

Advantages: Diehard, Fearless, Languages 4 (various ancient languages), Ranged Attack 11, Ritualist

Skills: Expertise: History 6 (+9), Expertise: Magic 16 (+19), Insight 4 (+14), Intimidation 8 (+10), Persuasion 6 (+8)

Offense: Init +0, Curse of Transformation — (Perception, Affliction 11), Mystic Bindings +12 (Cumulative Affliction 11), Mystic Blast+12 (Ranged, Damage 16)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fort Immune, Tou 18, Will 14

Totals: Abilities 42 + Powers 116 + Advantages 18 + Skills 20 (40 ranks) + Defenses 24 = 220

Complications: **Arrogant:** Malador is easily goaded into rash actions thanks to his ego. **Hideous** Malador can no longer pass for an ordinary human. **Motivation—Power:** Malador desires power and mystic knowledge above all else.

AVOCAT

"WE WHO MAKE THE LAW OUR VOCATION MUST BE BEYOND REPROACH. IT IS THE ONE PURE THING MANKIND CAN CREATE."



Pierre LeMaitre always believed that the law should be about justice. He felt that the court system only worked if people in court had courageous and ethical lawyers working on their behalf, and that those lawyers and judges needed to be solemn advisors to a sacred duty. While he knew all too well that his beliefs were far from universal, Pierre conducted himself with the assumption that being a lawyer was a sacred trust, and he offered his services as advocate and mediator in line with those high-minded ideals.

Pierre's natural wit and compassion, combined with his honest and forthright manner, made his words persuasive. This made him of use to the ancient sorcerer Malador the Mystic as the raw material in a spell of domination. Malador enchanted Pierre, transforming his personal credo to always speak the truth into a mandate: all he said *would* be true. With this power of mystical compulsion and Pierre bound to his will as a mindless automaton, Malador could wield the public servant in a new scheme of world domination.

UNIQUE ultimately defeated Malador, saving Pierre but at a cost: Malador's spell was permanent. Pierre could now compel obedience with the humblest words, whether he wanted to or not.

In spite of his best efforts then and now, Pierre's control is imperfect—his powers sometimes force people to do what he wants even without him consciously compelling them. He feels it inappropriate to continue arguing the law—it felt like a perversion of justice to force a judge or jury to agree with him. As a result, although he has kept his legal license, he retired from casework and instead joined UNIQUE, hoping to put his curse to good use until he can find a cure.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Avocat wields considerable mind control, including the ability to compel individuals and crowds to immediate action, convince people they have suffered debilitating injuries, and even persuade them to disbelieve their own senses. He hates using these abilities outside of emergency situations, but in times of need he can persuade villains to stand down or even help save lives, or compel calm and orderly behavior from a panicked crowd. Part of Malador's spell imparted into Pierre the ancient Ur-language that predates all other tongues, allowing him to make himself understood to anyone who can hear him (though he cannot necessarily understand them). His mind control also lets him subtly convince others nearby to "go easy on him," improving his defenses against any opponents with a conscious mind, but not automatons, the undead, and other mindless threats.

PLAYING AVOCAT

Avocat was a passionate lawyer and legal scholar, and now feels that some of his purpose has been ripped away by cruel circumstance. He tries not to be bitter but fears that his power will ultimately corrupt him, and so prefers to rely on his wits and skills when he can. His Assist, Guidance, Leadership, and Teamwork advantages all help him aid allies in combat, while his Fascinate, Taunt, and Redirect advantages let him distract or outwit enemies without relying on his cursed powers.

Avocat's mind control isn't just brutal mastery. He often applies it to problem solving, such as ordering guards to forget he passed by or ordering a suspect to tell him the truth. While not UNIQUE's greatest field asset, he is nonetheless resourceful and agile, and can swing his walking stick with at least enough skill to frighten a mugger.

AVOCAT

PL 12

THE LAWYER WHO MUST BE HEARD

REAL NAME Pierre LeMaitre

AGE 32

HAIR Black

OCCUPATION Legal Advisor

PLACE OF ORIGIN Montpellier, France

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



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+2
Athletics	0	+2
Deception	0	+8
Expertise: Law	+10	+12
Insight	10	+18
Investigation	10	+12
Perception	0	+8
Persuasion	8	+16
Stealth	0	+2

EQUIPMENT

Weighted Cane

Close Damage 2, Subtle

Armored Suit

+6 Toughness, Subtle

Additional Equipment

UNIQUE commlink, Team Contributions

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Assist (Evasion)*	Lend listed Advantage to an ally
Benefit 3	Diplomatic Immunity, Law License, Wealth (Well-Off)
Close Attack 4	+4 to Close Attack checks
Connected	Call in favors with a Persuasion check
Equipment 5	25 points of equipment
Fascinate (Persuasion)	Use a skill check to Entrance a target
Guidance*	Spend a Hero Point to grant an ally any Advantage
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Languages 4	Speak English, French (native), German, Hebrew, Japanese, Spanish, and Turkish
Leadership	Spend a Hero Point to remove a condition from an ally
Redirect	Redirect a missed attack to another target with Deception
Second Chance	Re-roll a failed Will check against mind control
Skill Mastery (Insight)	Make routine checks in any conditions
Taunt	Use Deception skill to demoralize
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks
Well-Informed	Immediate Investigation or Perception check

POWERS

Manifest Will • Array (36 points) • 39 points	Magic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe Me, Not Your Eyes: Illusion 6 (Affects All Senses); Selective • Crowd Control: Cumulative Burst Area Affliction 12; Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled; Sense-dependent (hearing) • Listen Carefully: Cumulative Perception Affliction 12; Resisted and Overcome by Will; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled; Sense-dependent (hearing) • That Must Hurt: Perception Damage 12; Alternate Resistance (Will); Sense-dependent (hearing) 	
Ur Tongue • Permanent • Personal • 2 points	Magic
Comprehend 1 (Speak all languages)	
You Don't Want to Hurt Me • Sustained • Personal • 6 points	Magic
Enhanced Defense 12 (Dodge 6, Parry +6); Limited to creatures with minds	

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	8	2 W/O ARMOR
DODGE	16/10	
PARRY	15/9	
FORTITUDE	9	
WILL	14	

COMBAT

Damage: <input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +6
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Crowd Control	—	Will	Area Affliction 12	DC 22
That Must Hurt	—	Will	Perception Damage 12	DC 27
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 2	DC 17
Weighted Cane	+8	Parry	Close Damage 4	DC 19

Abilities 60 + Powers 47 + Advantages 28 + Skills 19 (38 ranks) + Defenses 26 = 180 TOTAL

BLACKBERRY

**"NO, YOU DON'T UNDERSTAND!
WE'RE IN CHILE, BUT THOSE
SPIRITS ARE ETRUSCAN.
ETRUSCAN!"**



Blackberry's life has been literally full of magic, joy, and wonder. Her extended family tree contains numerous sorcerers, supernatural creatures, and adventurers. Weekends and summers were times of exploration during which she and her parents would travel to distant places, some not even on Earth, and discover new and fantastic things. Through it all, Blackberry felt safe, valued, and loved.

The one thing that put all the rest of Blackberry's life in context was that, from a very young age, her parents

made sure she knew and appreciated just how fortunate she was. Many of their family outings included visiting people and places who were not as well off, or had less opportunity. And the Najjars—both her nuclear and extended family—would pitch in and help. From things as simple as cooking meals for people, to helping teach history and math, to strange things like dispelling curses, Blackberry learned to find happiness in sharing.

The Najjar family hoped, given her pedigree, that Blackberry would make a natural student of the arcane arts and someday replace the man Eldritch as Earth's Master Mage. Despite her training and mastery of minor spells, however, the young girl excelled far more in academics than magic, and joined her father and aunts on frequent expeditions to preserve world heritage sites. One such trip forever changed the young woman's life when she stepped in to stop a looter who brandished an ancient Sumerian ritual dagger to fight her off. Blackberry wrestled the knife away, but the blade—never intended to taste human blood—cut deep into her gut, and ancient, long-dormant enchantments mingled with the magic in her blood, greatly enhancing both.

Blackberry was recruited into UNIQUE in spite of some reluctance on her part. While she enjoys the excitement and challenges that come with the job, she does not enjoy the frequent combat. She also would rather not have to defer quite so much to international sensibility, instead preferring to be guided by her thinking and her conscience.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Blackberry is a low-level mage on her own, wielding the ancient, light-based magic of the Modrossus—the triple entity that empowers and guides Earth's Master Mage. But with her soul dagger in hand, she can enhance her magic to match almost any other mage on Earth. The knife has also been empowered to cut the fabric of reality, allowing Blackberry to teleport short distances, poke holes to spy on distant locations, and even create portals through time and space to travel to other worlds. The blade—originally crafted to ward against spirits—is also enchanted to harm incorporeal beings.

PLAYING BLACKBERRY

Blackberry is both a scout and investigator. She is good at dealing with people and supernatural creatures, and commands a variety of helpful abilities for creative problem solving. In combat, she prefers to dazzle opponents with her Blinding Light spell rather than hurt anyone. Blackberry doesn't particularly enjoy conflict, so she will not hesitate to play the distraction with her teleportation, setting a teammate up for a powerful blow.

Blackberry's Artificer advantage lets her solve more complex problems by enchanting magic talismans or recruiting various spirits for short-term aid. This is a slow process, though, and generally only used for simple preparations like granting herself immunity to a single effect or creating simple illusions.

BLACKBERRY

PL 12

THE MINOR-LEAGUE WIZARD IN THE LIMELIGHT

REAL NAME Blackberry Shu Najjar **AGE** 25 **HAIR** Black and white**OCCUPATION** Anthropologist **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Tehran, Iran

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
1	6	6	1	3	2	4	2
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+6
Athletics	0	+1
Close Combat: Blades	7	+10
Deception	6	+8
Expertise: Anthropology	11	+13
Insight	4	+8
Intimidation	0	+2
Perception	0	+4
Persuasion	8	+10
Ranged Combat: Magic	10	+11
Stealth	6	+12

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Animal Empathy	Use interactions skills normally with animals
Artificer	Use Expertise (Magic) skill to create temporary devices
Benefit 2	Diplomatic Immunity, Spiritual Diplomatic Immunity
Connected	Call in favors with a Persuasion check
Daze (Deception)	Use a skill check to Daze a target
Equipment 3	15 points of equipment
Hide in Plain Sight	Hide while being observed
Languages	Speak Arabic (native), English, French, Korean, Mandarin
Set-Up	Transfer the benefit of an interaction skill to an ally
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks
Variable Team Attack*	Change description of successful Team Attacks

POWERS

Magic of the Modrossus • Array (8 points) • 11 points **Magic**

- **Blinding Light:** Ranged Cumulative Affliction 4 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Impaired, Disabled, Unaware; Limited to vision)
- **Burning Light:** Ranged Damage 4
- **Light Constructs:** Create 4
- **Counterspell:** Nullify Magic 4; Broad

Mystic Shield • Personal • Sustained • 16 points **Magic**

Protection 6; Sustained
Immunity 10 (Life Support)

Soul Dagger • Easily Removable • Indestructible • 28 points **Artifact****Enchanted Blade:** Strength-based Damage 4; Affects Insubstantial**Soul Focus:** Enhanced Magic 8 (+8 to all magic spell effect ranks)**Cut Reality** • Array (22 points)

- Movement 2 (Dimensional: Mystic Dimensions), Portal
- Remote Sensing 5 (Audio, Visual; 900 feet)
- Teleport 5 (900 feet); Change Velocity, Portal, Turnabout

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Empathy: Blackberry feels for others deeply, and is driven to end human suffering in large and small ways when she is able.**Soul-Bound:** Blackberry's soul is partially bound to her knife. If it is removed from her immediate vicinity, she becomes Impaired, then Disabled, and eventually Incapacitated.**Family Obligations:** Although she is embarrassed to admit it, Blackberry has inherited low-ranking noble status. This is generally only recognized by supernatural or magical forces, but when dealing with them, Blackberry feels obligated to honor any of their traditions and customs that she reasonably can, even if it is inconvenient to her.

DEFENSES

Toughness	12	6 w/o Mystic Shield
Dodge	12	
Parry	12	
Fortitude	11	
Will	11	

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated?

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Blinding Light	+11	Dodge	Ranged Affliction 4/12	DC 14/22
Burning Light	+11	Dodge	Ranged Damage 4/12	DC 19/27
Soul Dagger	+10	Parry	Close Damage 5	DC 20
Unarmed	+3	Parry	Close Damage 1	DC 16

INITIATIVE
+6

Abilities 50 + Powers 55 + Advantages 16 + Skills 32 (63 ranks) + Defenses 27 = 180 TOTAL

EL RAYO

"THE JUSTICE OF EL RAYO STRIKES FROM ABOVE!"



Rolando Santiago is a second-generation superhero, fighting crime under the name "El Rayo" ("The Thunderbolt"). Prior to his birth, his mother fought crime as the lucha-inspired adventurer and heroine "La Raya," with Rolando's father applying his engineering genius to designing her various gadgets. Rolando practiced hard to be worthy of her legacy, and the day when his mother came out of retirement and donned the costume one last time to formally pass her blessing on to him remains one of the proudest moments in his life.

Rolando inherited his mother's natural athleticism and charisma and his father's knack for tinkering with machines. Rolando developed his own minor mutation in childhood as he realized he could sense electricity around him, even learning to decipher radio. While this skill only added to his engineering acumen, he always loved the footage of his mother's adventures and physical prowess. His parents made it clear that they would support him no matter what path he took, but Rolando decided at a very young age that what he wanted to do was protect and inspire another generation in the same way his mother once did.

Although he has only been a superhero for a few years, Rolando is already looking for a sidekick or candidate to be his successor. He sees the joy in his parents' eyes at his exploits and very much wants to make the mantle of El Rayo one that is passed down through the years, an idea that outlasts any one person. He has also begun to establish a side business in his civilian identity, doing public relations and promotional work for celebrities, both to help him as El Rayo and to ground him in something other than full-time superhero work. But he's in no rush to retire. He loves to hear the cheers of people he has uplifted with his exploits or comforted by his presence.

POWERS & ABILITIES

The Santiagos' prolonged exposure to Rolando Sr.'s experimental capacitor technology rubbed off on their son, granting him an innate electrical sensitivity he can use to "see" machines and living creatures and intuitively understand technology. Rolando has further improved upon his father's inventions with the creation of his Trueno powersuit, which can generate enormous amounts of electricity to power onboard weapons or propel him at fantastic speeds. While he is a talented adventurer outside the suit, with its technology he becomes one of Earth's greatest defenders.

PLAYING EL RAYO

El Rayo is confident and charming—in his own mind, at least—and wants to some day prove himself as grand a hero as his mother. The combination of armor and speed makes El Rayo an unusual hero: a speedster brick. He is incredibly mobile, but also well protected, making himself a mobile barricade for his teammates and civilians caught in the crossfire, especially when using his Interpose advantage. He often leads assaults alongside Epiphany, relying on his powerful electrical weaponry to soften up enemies while his teammates think of something more clever. While he can't fly, the combination of ranged attacks and assistance from Blackberry's portals has easily compensated for this failing.

Without his powersuit, Rolando still possesses an ability to sense electricity—including the electricity produced by living creatures—to analyze his surroundings and even target attacks. He is a passable pilot and an extraordinary engineer, helping to solve most of UNIQUE's technical challenges. His Inventor advantage allows him to solve a number of minor problems if given the time.

EL RAYO

PL 12

THE ELECTRIFYING LEGACY

REAL NAME Rolando Santiago **AGE** 24 **HAIR** Black**OCCUPATION** Entrepreneur **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Mexico City, Mexico

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



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	4	+6
Athletics	4	+8
Close Combat: Unarmed	6	+10
Deception	0	+1
Expertise: Pop Culture	6	+10
Insight	0	+1
Intimidation	8	+9
Perception	0	+1
Persuasion	0	+1
Ranged Combat: Electricity	8	+10
Stealth	0	+2
Technology	10	+14
Vehicles	4	+6

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Attractive	Situational +2 bonus on Deception and Persuasion skills
Benefit	Diplomatic Immunity
Connected	Call in favors with a Persuasion check
Equipment 3	15 points of equipment
Extraordinary Effort	Gain two benefits when using Extra Effort
Improved Initiative 3	+12 Initiative
Interpose	Take an attack meant for an ally
Inventor	Use Technology skill to create temporary devices
Move-by Action	Move both before and after a standard action
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
Takedown	Free extra attack when you incapacitate a minion
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks

POWERS

Electrosensitivity • Personal • Permanent • 7 points	Mutation
Senses 7 (Accurate Acute Analytical Ranged Detect Electricity, Radio)	
Trueno Powersuit • Removable • 63 points	Technology
Arc Engine: Speed 10 (2000 MPH), Movement 2 (Wall-crawling, Water Walking)	
Reaction Systems: Enhanced Advantages 4 (Improved Initiative 3, Move-by Action)	
Safety Systems: Protection 10 (Impervious) Immunity 11 (Impact Damage, Life Support)	
Arc Weapon Systems • Array (28 points)	
• Thunderbolt: Ranged Damage 14	
• Electric Stun: Cone Area Affliction 12 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated)	
• Pinpoint Lightning: Ranged Damage 9; Accurate, Multiattack	

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Recognition: While he wants to do good things for the world, El Rayo needs attention and approval.

Legacy: Rolando wants the title of El Rayo to mean something. He drives himself to live up to the example of his mother and father, and worries a great deal about how El Rayo is seen by the public. He shies away from controversy because he does not want to mar the title or bring shame on his parents.

Receiver: Rolando's powers make him susceptible to electrical signals and currents; he can sometimes overhear radio or television transmissions unintentionally, distracting him at unusual times or making him privy to private information.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	14	4 W/O ARMOR
DODGE	10	
PARRY	9	
FORTITUDE	13	
WILL	8	

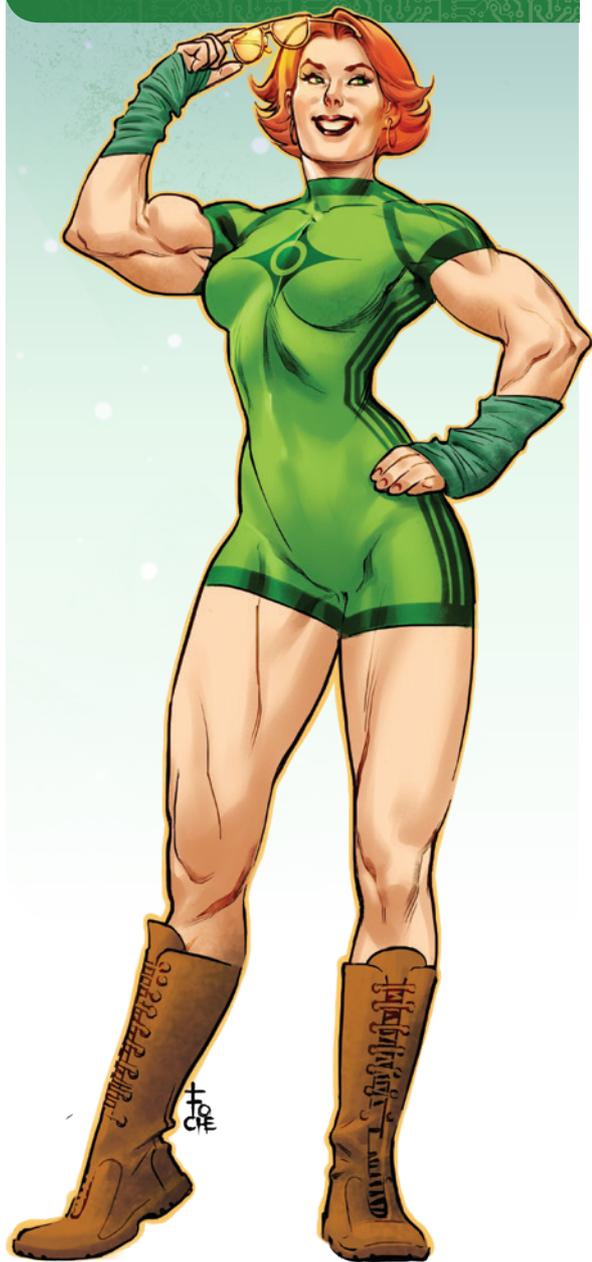
COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +14
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Electric Stun	—	Fortitude	Area Affliction 12	DC 20	
Thunderbolt	+10	Dodge	Ranged Damage 14	DC 29	
Pinpoint Lightning	+12	Dodge	Ranged Damage 9	DC 24	
Unarmed	+10	Parry	Close Damage 4	DC 19	

Abilities 44 + Powers 70 + Advantages 12 + Skills 25 (50 ranks) + Defenses 29 = 180 TOTAL

EPIPHANY

"LOOK, I FEEL AS MUCH SYMPATHY FOR MEGALODON'S UNIQUE CONDITION AS ANYONE ELSE, BUT SOMEONE GETS TO PUNCH HIM."



Although she was particularly bright and energetic, the only thing that set Sally Marston apart from the other children her age was that she never seemed to get sick. Although neither she nor her family realized it, Sally's immune system was more adaptable than a normal person's, targeting illnesses before she suffered any symptoms. This quirk of genetics would save her life the day SHADOW attacked her Midwestern hometown.

A test of an experimental bio-weapon escalated as AEGIS arrived, and in the ensuing battle a wash of toxic

microbes and acidic gas was deployed over her high school. Sally's entire class was rushed to nearby hospitals with severe injuries. Few of the doused survived, and most of the survivors had permanent injuries as their organs failed and their limbs atrophied. Sally alone survived without injury, her body altering itself to keep her alive against these new dangers. Unknown to Sally at the time, the exposure had so severely damaged her body that her mutant immune system had reinvented itself to adapt. Now able to rebuild structures from almost nothing, it hardened her flesh and bone, and packed dense musculature into her small frame. After an early adventure nearly drowned her, her body even developed gills to compensate.

Not terribly adventurous, Sally enrolled in medical school, hoping to someday help her classmates recover from their terrible injuries. There she discovered her body could adapt itself to any new stress, including rigorous study, and within a few years she had developed from a bright but ordinary child into one of the foremost minds on the planet. She originally joined UNIQUE as a reserve member to apply her specialized knowledge of superhuman physiology and medicine, but her skills—both mental and physical—proved invaluable enough that she recently accepted a position as an active member.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Epiphany is phenomenally strong—able to lift and throw over 10,000 tons—thanks to her adaptive immune system repeatedly rebuilding her body more resiliently after past injuries. Her immune system itself is her real power, though, as it constantly repairs and upgrades her body to adapt to new stresses. Wounds heal in minutes, deadly diseases wither in her blood, her body stores food and water for weeks. Even the vacuum of space is little more than uncomfortable—in the short term, at least.

While most casual observers would assume this muscular woman is simple-minded, she is also phenomenally intelligent, able to pick up new skills in short order. Her medical degree and experience with superhumans make her the world's foremost expert on metahuman biology, and she regularly attends to the medical needs of many of the world's more exotic superheroes and villains.

PLAYING EPIPHANY

Epiphany is both one of UNIQUE's heavy hitters and a n expert in science and medicine, assisting with epidemics and bio-terrorism threats when she isn't on the front lines against megalomaniacs. She is surprisingly straightforward in a fight despite her intellect, relying on her Power Attack and Fast Grab advantages to take foes down quickly. Like El Rayo, she uses her Interpose advantage to protect teammates and civilians when she can.

Outside of combat, Sally is compassionate and thoughtful, but easily bored. She likes projects that keep her over-active brain occupied, and ultimately hopes to someday share the benefits of her unusual biology with the whole world, making disease a thing of the past.

EPIPHANY

PL 12

THE BRAVN AND THE BRAINS

REAL NAME Sally Marston AGE 29 HAIR Red

OCCUPATION Physician PLACE OF ORIGIN Cambridge, Ohio

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
13	13	0	1	6	10	2	1
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+0
Athletics	5	+18
Close Combat: Unarmed	5	+11
Deception	0	+1
Expertise: Medicine	6	+16
Insight	4	+6
Intimidation	0	+1
Perception	4	+6
Persuasion	0	+1
Ranged Combat: Thrown	9	+10
Stealth	6	+9
Treatment	9	+19

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Accurate Attack	Trade Effect DC for Attack Bonus
Benefit	Diplomatic Immunity
Connected	Call in favors with a Persuasion check
Eidetic Memory	Total recall, +5 bonus to remember details
Equipment 3	15 points of equipment
Fast Grab	Attempt a free Grab check after an unarmed attack
Improved Grab	Make Grab attacks one-handed
Improved Hold	-5 penalty to escape your Grab attempts
Improved Treatment*	Apply additional benefits with Treatment skill
Improvised Tools	No penalty to skill checks without proper tools
Interpose	Take an attack meant for an ally
Jack-of-All-Trades	Use any skill untrained
Languages 1	Speaks English (native) and Spanish
Speed of Thought	Use Intellect to determine Initiative bonus
Tactical Training*	Use Expertise (tactics) to feint, trick, and demoralize
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks

POWERS

Adaptive Immunity • Personal • Permanent • 10 points	Mutation
Immunity 10 (Aging, Cold, Disease, Heat, High Pressure, Poison, Sleep, Starvation & Thirst, Suffocation, Vacuum); Limited to Half Effect	
Regeneration 5 (Every 2 rounds)	
Keen Mind • Personal • Permanent • 3 points	Talent
Quickness 6 (Limited to Mental tasks)	
Muscle Density • Personal • Permanent • 52 points	Mutation
Enhanced Stamina 10	
Enhanced Strength 10; Enhanced Strength 6 (Limited to Lifting)	
Speed 5 (60 MPH)	
• AE: Leaping 5 (250 feet)	

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Doing Good: Epiphany has been the helpless victim and seen her friends suffer with no way to help them, and she never wants anyone else to experience those horrors.

No, You Can't Have My Notes: As Earth's foremost expert on superhuman biology, many groups—from law enforcement agencies to supervillains—want her records and notes. While some simply want the benefit of her skills and insights, others would use her expertise to develop weaponry or specific countermeasures for metahuman targets.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	13	2 W/O ARMOR
DODGE	10	
PARRY	11	
FORTITUDE	13	
WILL	11	

COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +10
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Thrown Object	+10	Dodge	Ranged Damage 13	DC 28	
Unarmed	+11	Parry	Close Damage 13	DC 28	

Abilities 52 + Powers 65 + Advantages 18 + Skills 21 (42 ranks) + Defenses 24 = 180 TOTAL

HEARTH

**"YES, I AM NEW HERE.
THANK YOU FOR NOTICING."**



UNIQUE was asked by the nations with a claim on the Arctic Circle to investigate a meteor impact displaying unusual gravitic and temporal energy readings. They secured and transported the meteor—a large obsidian sphere—back toward the Geneva base for research when the sphere hatched like an egg en route. The being that would eventually be known as Hearth assembled itself from the fluid within.

They (Hearth's preferred pronoun) seemed capable of communication, but did not have any memory as to their

own background or any reason for crash-landing on Earth. Lacking anywhere else to go, Hearth has since remained with UNIQUE and assisted in their missions. The alien construct finds Earth and its people fascinating, and spends much of their time learning more about this planet.

Hearth appears to be a sentient energy being capable of manipulating kinetic, gravitic, and temporal energies, and is contained within a number of linked spheres and ovals approximating a round, humanoid form. Their eyes glow a soft, warm red, and the combination of their appearance, amiable nature, and love of creature comforts—blankets, comfy clothes, and warm rooms even though they do not strictly need them—led to the rest of UNIQUE naming them Hearth.

UNIQUE is still researching what Hearth is and where they might have come from—both to help the alien return home and to ensure the strange being doesn't foretell an approaching danger. For now, both Matron and UNISON are confident that the entity themselves does not represent a threat, and is even useful in helping promote global peace and safety. Despite their existence as an apparently technological entity, Hearth has shown the most affection for the ever-optimistic mage Blackberry, and seems wary of El Rayo and his engineer's curiosity.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Hearth is a living starship engine, capable of supersonic flight, space travel, pushing themselves and others out of phase with reality, creating bubbles of frozen time, and generating gravity fields to lift or damage objects. In addition to these abilities, their inorganic nature makes them resistant to many normal dangers like heat, cold, and disease, as well as remarkably durable.

Hearth can even integrate with other vehicles and people, empowering them to fly through space as well.

PLAYING HEARTH

Hearth is easily the most straightforward member of UNIQUE, with considerable power and not much else. They are curious and somewhat impulsive, eager to see new things and meet new people. Although they have significant offensive potential and a tendency to react without thinking, Hearth's default instincts are to use their null field or other non-damaging powers when surprised or in combat. Hearth doesn't want their friends to be hurt, so does not shy away from a fight, but is far more interested in figuring out how things work than smashing them. They often need to be convinced by teammates to escalate to overt force.

Young and inexperienced, Hearth has developed few skills outside of an instinctual understanding of quantum physics. However, their powers have proven valuable for assisting in disaster relief, clearing swathes of rubble or gently transporting victims to safety.

HEARTH

PL 12

THE INTELLIGENT ENGINE

REAL NAME      

AGE 2

HAIR None

OCCUPATION Sentient Engine

PLACE OF ORIGIN Unknown

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



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	15	+17
Athletics	0	-2
Deception	0	+2
Expertise: Quantum Physics	15	+17
Intimidation	0	+2
Insight	0	+2
Perception	15	+17
Persuasion	0	+2
Stealth	0	+2
Technology	7	+7

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Accurate Attack	Trade Effect DC for Attack Bonus
Beginner's Luck	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Benefit	Diplomatic Immunity
Diehard	Automatically stabilize when dying
Eidetic Memory	Total recall, +5 bonus to remember details
Equipment 3	15 points of equipment
Ranged Attack 7	+7 to Ranged Attack checks
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks

POWERS

Energy Being in a Crystalline Body • Personal • Permanent • 18 points Quantum

Immunity 30 (Fortitude Effects)

Protection 14; Impervious

Warp Field Generation • Array (30 points) • 33 points Quantum

- **Gravity Field:** Move Object 15 (800 tons)
- **Null Time:** Ranged Affliction 15 (Resisted and Overcome by Dodge; Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile); Extra Condition; Limited Degree
- **Phase Shift:** Burst Area Insubstantial 4 (Incorporeal); Precise
- **Warp Pulse:** Ranged Damage 15

Warp Flight • Array (24 points) • 25 points Quantum

- Flight 12 (8000 MPH)
- Movement 2 (Space Travel 2: other solar systems); Affects Objects, Affects Others

COMPLICATIONS

Memory Failure: Hearth has no recollection of their past. Hearth would like to know more about their own origin and is keen to follow up on any leads that are uncovered.

Motivation—Curiosity: Hearth is young and in wonder of the world around them. Traveling with new friends they have made is the best way to learn and experience new things.

Prejudice: Hearth is an alien and artificial being who cannot pass for human and whose legal status is nebulous at best. Many nations have made competing claims of "ownership" over the AI and their advanced technology, only to be kept at bay this long by UNISON's influence and Avocat's legal expertise.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	14
DODGE	8
PARRY	7
FORTITUDE	IMMUNE
WILL	2

COMBAT

Damage:	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Gravity Field	+9	Dodge	Ranged Damage 15	DC 30
Null Time	+9	Dodge	Ranged Affliction 15	DC 25
Warp Pulse	+9	Dodge	Ranged Damage 15	DC 30
Unarmed	+4	Parry	Close Damage -2	DC 13

INITIATIVE

+2

Abilities 14 + Powers 116 + Advantages 16 + Skills 25 (50 ranks) + Defenses 9 = 180 TOTAL

MATRON

"OH, THIS IS JUST LIKE THE TIME MANSA MUSA... WELL, NEVER YOU MIND WHAT HE DID."



Although her papers would tell you that Niara Cheboi has been alive since just prior to World War I, Matron has walked the Earth for significantly longer. First in Africa, then Europe, then the rest of the world, she has lived, conquered, healed, and grown, moving on when her age raised too many unpleasant questions. She has observed a great deal of suffering in those years—some of it she even caused, when that was what society expected of her—but has also seen humanity make huge strides toward equality, solving problems that were once over-

whelming. Matron is under no delusion that the world is perfect, but she is absolutely certain that “the good old days” are nowhere near as good as things are now, or could become in the future.

Niara speaks little of her past prior to the 20th century. She prefers to focus on the present and the potential future, though in her wistful moments she waxes on about the grandeur of Mali—a 13th century empire fabled for its riches—and the politics of Byzantium. She tries to temper immortal patience with empathy, knowing she will outlast most problems but appreciating that the people around her may not. She has never found an explanation for her apparent inability to die, and after so many years she finds she no longer cares about the causes of things—her powers included—so much as their effects.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Matron is a long-studied observer of the human condition. Her Immortality power allows her to return from death—she has yet to determine the limit of this power—while her Immunity protects her from the age and illness.

Matron’s most remarkable ability is her vast store of knowledge and experience. Her Centuries of Study power gives her a pool of 25pp that she can invest in improving her skills or advantages, re-mastering things she learned in the past. Matron requires an hour of introspection and delving into her memories to change how these points are allotted, and cannot change them in the middle of a fight. Her most common allotments are below, but any combination the Gamemaster approves is suitable.

The Diplomat: Deception +6, Expertise (politics) +10, Insight +6, Intimidation +6, Persuasion +10, Fascinate (Persuasion), Redirect, Second Chance (Insight), Skill Mastery (Insight), Taunt, Ultimate Effort (Persuasion checks)

The General: Athletics +5, Acrobatics +5, Close Combat (sword) +4, Expertise (Tactics) +10, Perception +6, Ranged Combat (firearms) +6, Improved Initiative, Improved Team Attack*, Inspire 3, Reviving Team Attack*, Tactical Training*

The Scholar: Expertise (science) +10, Investigation +10, Technology +10, Treatment +10, Vehicles +6, Beginner’s Luck, Inventor

The Warrior: Acrobatics +10, Close Combat (sword) +4, Ranged Combat (firearms) +10, Perception +6, Agile Feint, Evasion, Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Improved Initiative, Power Attack, Precise Attack, Set-up, Takedown

PLAYING MATRON

Matron is a flexible expert, capable of adapting to almost any problem she sees coming. Over the centuries she has been a general, a scholar, a spy, a leader, a tyrant, and a diplomat, and met countless major historical figures—all experiences she now draws on to help shape the world for the better. In the field she serves as team leader, identifying major threats and coordinating the rest of UNIQUE. By default, she is a respectable marksman and close combatant, but by applying her Centuries of Study power carefully, she can take on the role of a devastating warrior, a peerless investigator, or a smooth politician, as the situation demands.

MATRON

PL 12

THE IMMORTAL WITH A HUNDRED LIVES' EXPERIENCE

REAL NAME Niara Cheboi **AGE** Unknown **HAIR** Black**OCCUPATION** Diplomat, Immortal **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Unknown

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
4	4	6	5	12	2	5	4
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	2	+8
Athletics	6	+10
Deception	0	+4
Expertise: Current Events	8	+12
Expertise: History	8	+12
Intimidation	0	+4
Insight	6	+11
Perception	4	+9
Persuasion	6	+10
Stealth	2	+8

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Assessment	Use Insight skill to learn target's combat bonuses
Connected	Call in favors with a Persuasion check
Contacts	Make an Investigation check in one minute
Defensive Roll 3	+3 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 6	30 points of equipment
Inspire 1	Spend a Hero Point to grant all allies a +1 bonus
Jack-of-All-Trades	Use any skill untrained
Leadership	Spend a Hero Point to remove a condition from an ally
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks

POWERS

Centuries of Study • Personal • Sustained • 25 points	Talent
Variable 5; Limited to Skills and Advantages, Slow	
Inability to Die • Personal • Permanent • 7 points	Esoteric
Immortality 2 (Return after 1 week)	
Immunity 3 (Aging, Disease, Poison)	

EQUIPMENT

Armored Costume

+3 Toughness

Heavy Pistol

Ranged Damage 4

Heavy Pistol

Close Damage 3

Additional Equipment

Team Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Idealism: Matron has watched the world progress and backslide many times, and desperately wants to push the world forward now that it seems on the brink once again.

Old Agendas: Matron has existed for many, many years. She has made many allies and enemies in that time, and started events in motion—many of which she has forgotten—that may be yielding unintended fruit in the modern world.

Secret: Matron isn't proud of some of the questionable things she did when the world was a very different place, and too much revealed about some of them could easily see her dismissed from UNIQUE or arrested.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	10	7 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL 7 W/O ARMOR
DODGE	14	
PARRY	10	
FORTITUDE	IMMUNE	
WILL	11	

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated?

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Heavy Pistol	+5	Dodge	Ranged Damage 4	DC 19
Sword	+12	Parry	Close Damage 7	DC 22
Unarmed	+12	Parry	Close Damage 4	DC 19

INITIATIVE
+6

Abilities 88 + Powers 32 + Advantages 17 + Skills 21 (42 ranks) + Defenses 22 = 180 TOTAL

TWO WRONGS MAKING A RIGHT...



PROJECT FREEDOM

POWER LEVEL: 11

POWER POINTS: 165

TEAM TEMPLATE

3 POINTS

Advantages: Equipment 2 (team equipment and HQ contribution), Second Chance (mental control)

Equipment: commlink (communication, GPS, video recorder), 3 additional points

Complications: Loyalty Enforcement, Reputation (Criminals)

Though not the oddest crime-fighting team, Project Freedom is arguably the most improbable. Drawn from the ranks of Blackstone Penitentiary and Providence Asylum, Project Freedom allows super-powered convicts to pay their debt to society in a more proactive way than sitting on cell bunks or performing unskilled slave labor. The driving force for Project Freedom is Harriet Wainwright, whose family legacy of public service heavily defines her own outlook. Beginning as an administrator in the Freedom City probation office, Ms. Wainwright recognized the potential lying fallow in the incarceration

of meta-criminals. These people possessed the same extraordinary gifts as the city's greatest defenders, who worked miracles daily. Certainly there were hardcore psychopaths who could never walk freely among ordinary citizens, but many were simply people who made poor choices or got caught up in no-win situations. Couldn't their road to redemption be defined by the same abilities that defined their fall?

Ms. Wainwright is extraordinary despite a lack of super-powers. Her outsized accomplishments stand in contrast to her stature: a 5'2", stocky woman in late middle age with short, graying hair. Starting small, she convinced city authorities to fund an initiative where metahuman criminals with reliable records of good behavior could reduce their time on probation by using their abilities for the good of society from within prison—product testing, intelligence gathering, or volunteering for research. She progressed to a state-run program where prisoners could earn parole volunteering for “the Free Team,” as it was first known. After several early successes with individual participants, Ms. Wainwright convinced the federal government to allow her to form a full team of super-powered inmates: Project Freedom. Though there is no parole in the federal system, legislation was passed to allow prisoners to earn “good time” off their sentences, and even the chance for commutation. Project Freedom's scope has since expanded to encompass Blackstone Penitentiary, the city and state penal system, and Providence Asylum

(information on both of these facilities can be found in the *Freedom City* campaign setting).

The requirements for inclusion on Project Freedom are stringent—Ms. Wainwright is an idealist but no fool, and realizes that ten success stories are forgotten for even a single failure. Prisoners applying for the program must have had no disciplinary issues for at least two years prior. No one serving a term for murder or rape is considered eligible (the Hexorcist's status is dicey in this regard, but ultimately his now-controlled mental illness makes for a convincing exception). Prisoners go through several interviews and psychological exams to measure their narcissism, Machiavellian-ism, and psychopathy “dark triad” traits to assess their stability. Candidates from Providence Asylum must also be judged fit by a psychiatric board and continue with prescribed therapy and medications. Villains evaluated as too cunning or powerful for the authorities to control and monitor are screened out, while those too weak for the forward-facing combat normally demanded of Project Freedom are placed instead in community-service roles. For example, the former villain Venus Man-Trap, Aphrodite St. Claire, now works on work-release with the Freedom City Parks Department, using her plant control to nurse rare plants and repair damage to city infrastructure.

Those lucky few who win a place on Project Freedom remain in custody to serve out their time and are closely monitored, but are allowed the use of their abilities or special technologies to engage active threats, including supervillains and natural disasters. Each freelancer must consent to “enforcement measures”—bureaucratic terminology for a custom-made leash that tethers and controls each villain used by Project Freedom to ensure their loyalty. For most members, this includes a subdermal tracking chip that also contains a small explosive, taser, or chemical agent capable of incapacitating them with the push of a button. For others, this control is psychological or even arcane; Project Freedom consults with a number of heroes on how to best contain and monitor the villains' assets before allowing them to move in the world. In addition, each must wear a body camera and a commlink, putting them in constant communication with Ms. Wainwright (or her surrogates) and with each other. This also allows the Big House staff to supply the team with real-time tactical updates gathered from AEGIS data files, police reports, social media, and satellite news feeds. Recently, Project Freedom has taken to deploying surveillance drones to accompany the team, using them to scout battlefields beforehand. In game terms, the team may spend a pooled Hero Point from their Team Complications to activate Wainwright's Leadership or Inspire advantages, so long as the commlink is operable.

Freelancers who disobey orders, move outside the engagement zone, or tamper with their enforcement lose their privilege of service and can look forward to additional years tacked on to their sentences.

But the rewards for loyal service are impressive. In addition to commuted sentences and more spacious accommodations, freelancers can expect regular “shore leave” to spend a day or two at a time walking free to visit

FRIEND OR FOE: HARRIET WAINWRIGHT

Through persuasion and persistence, Harriet Wainwright has forged partnerships between multiple levels of government, maintained funding through multiple administrations, and stared down hardened super-criminals. Many find her humorless, aggressive professional façade at stark odds with her loving home life and extensive family—many of whom also now serve in local and state government and have continued to help Wainwright achieve her extraordinary mission—but her ability to keep her home and work lives distinct is, if nothing else, a testament to her willpower and focus.

Though as fit as someone half her age, Wainwright has no illusions about leading her so-called “freelancers” in the field. She accepts that she is an administrator, and even her youth with the military did not prepare her for the situations her recruits already know well. Though she can requisition nearly any gear, she normally carries a blaster pistol and wears suits woven from protective fabric. Still no physical match for a supervillain, her best defenses are her reputation and resources.

HARRIET WAINWRIGHT

PL 6

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

Equipment: Blaster Pistol, Bulletproof Vest, Cell Phone (Smartphone)

Advantages: Assessment, Benefit 2: Director of Project Freedom, Connected, Contacts, Defensive Roll, Equipment 3, Fascinate (Intimidation), Fearless, Guidance*, Luck 2, Seize Initiative, Well-informed

Skills: Acrobatics 2 (+2), Close Combat: Unarmed 6 (+8), Deception 8 (+13), Expertise: Law Enforcement 8 (+10), Expertise: Politics 10 (+12), Insight 10 (+15), Intimidation 10 (+15), Investigation 6 (+8), Perception 6 (+11), Persuasion 8 (+13), Ranged Combat: Firearms 6 (+6), Vehicles 4 (+4)

Offense: Init +0, Blaster Pistol +6 (Ranged Damage 5), Unarmed +8 (Damage 1)

Defense: Dodge 2, Parry 4, Fort 4, Tou 7/2, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 34 + Powers 0 + Advantages 16 + Skills 42 (84 ranks) + Defenses 9 = 101

Complications: **Aging:** Despite a solid exercise and nutrition regimen, Harriet Wainwright is a heavysset woman in her sixties. **Motivation—Balancing the Scales:** Ms. Wainwright is convinced she can improve Freedom City—and the world—by developing a system for former villains to make amends for the harm they caused. **Enemies:** Wainwright has made more than her share of foes in the political and criminal realms over the years.

family and friends, or just stretch their legs and slowly re-acclimate after years of institutionalization. For many members, simply having the chance to use their powers once again and get in a good brawl is all the motivation they need.

Other cities have followed suit with their own initiatives, including NYC's Federal Force, London's Bondsmen, and Emerald City's Arcadian Initiative. All are smaller in scale, as winning over the citizenry takes time. Rumors persist that the federal government has assembled their own squad of lifers and death row villains—nicknamed Terminal Team—given reprieves for wetworks assignments, but nothing has been proven.

TEAM RESOURCES

The Project Freedom team does not actually have any resources of its own, per se—they are still technically prisoners serving out their terms. They have to check their gear and weapons in at the completion of every mission, their personal contact with the outside world is supervised, and restrictions are placed on their activities. Even scientifically minded members must get permission to use the Big House's lab or workshop, for example.

However, Harriet Wainwright has secured considerable resources: city and state grants, but also private fundraising, as many of Freedom City's philanthropists and even Mayor Summers support her efforts. Similarly, the law-and-order types support sufficient funding to ensure the purportedly ex-villains are properly guarded and kept on a tight rein, while ultimately saving taxpayer dollars.

As a compromise between operating from Blackstone Penitentiary and headquartering convicted villains within Freedom City proper, a floating platform was built not far from Blackstone, with a landing pad and dock for transport to the prison and the mainland. The PF roster dubbed the compound "the Big House." The Big House docks a ferry with sufficient space to carry an APC and two motorcycles with sidecars (which freelancers use for land transport), two cutter ships, a mini-submarine (armed with torpedoes but no ballistic missiles), and a military helicopter (refer to **Chapter 7: Gadgets and Gear** in the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook*). Support personnel are composed of civilian employees (including pilots, technicians, and medical specialists) and Blackstone guards; there are twenty-four "Blackguards," six outfitted in AEGIS Max armor, with Super-Max units available at Ms. Wainwright's discretion. (See pages 133 and 146 in the *Freedom City* campaign setting for the Blackguards and the Max and Super-Max armor, respectively). None of these are normally made available to the freelancers, and instead serve to deploy and monitor them.

In addition to the facilities, freelancers are given group and mental training, making them more resistant to outside control in the hopes that stronger willpower can help them resist sliding into old habits under pressure.

The freelancers are confined when not on assignment, though their quarters are more dorm-like than cell-like. They are not locked in at night—though their movements are monitored—and can use the recreation area, gym, and library at will. Good behavior and superior performance on missions can result in additional privileges such as better food, increased time with family or friends, and even unsupervised weekend furloughs in Freedom City, though their tracking implants remain active. Solo excursions require regular check-ins to ensure compliance and safety, but dual outings are more common, as each member has incentive to make certain both return.

THE BIG HOUSE

20 POINTS

Size: Medium **Toughness:** 12 **Features:** Combat Simulator, Computer, Communications, Defense Systems, Dock, Fire Prevention System, Garage, Gym, Hangar, Infirmary, Laboratory, Library, Living Space, Personnel, Security System, Workshop

ADVENTURES

Because of the tight control, lack of secret identities, and shared living space, a Project Freedom campaign has more in common with a military game than a traditional superhero game. Freelancers follow orders to engage with a known enemy, and unexpected twists often complicate the adventure midway through. Because the city lacks its own municipal superteam, especially with the Freedom League moving to a global scale, Project Freedom is often the resource City Hall calls in against superpowered criminals that local law enforcement can't stop—especially forces of mindless destruction. They are also a resource deployed for disaster relief and clean-up, providing interesting challenges and creative applications of power—and a chance to scheme outside the watchful eyes of the Big House, if characters are so inclined.

While scrapping with other supervillains in the street is a staple of the campaign, it isn't the sum total of Project Freedom adventures. Freelancers may deal with intrigue behind the scenes—navigating each others' personality quirks or hidden agendas, as well as those of staff at the Big House and politicians who want to use them to their own ends, not to mention members of the superhero community who want the program to succeed or fail for their own reasons. Freelancers are also called in to help investigate crimes perpetrated by former criminal associates, and sometimes may even team up with superheroes for important missions.

Project Freedom is authorized to act *only* within Freedom City and the surrounding area, so adventures tend to be very regional and urban, though special assignments to exotic locations are not out of the question. Complications and new plot elements may arise as the federal government tries to expand the scope of Project Freedom, or other municipalities request help from Freedom City with supervillains too powerful for local authorities to handle.

When Project Freedom began, the members were mostly assigned community service tasks—clearing the rubble of battle scenes, evacuating disaster areas, and so on—but Ms. Wainwright discovered the personalities she dealt with grew restless if kept out of the "real action" for too long. Allowing them to participate in genuine super-powered combat improved morale and reduced backsliding.

OPPONENTS

Almost any villain local to Freedom City is a possible encounter for Project Freedom, but freelancers are typically only deployed when local heroes vanish or a threat is large enough to demand an immediate response. Extremely powerful villains such as Syzygy or the Meta-Grue, and villains who can cause widespread chaos like the Green Man, Madame Zero, and the Tyranny Syndicate, are the threats most likely to warrant a freelancer response (all of these villains can be found in the *Freedom City* campaign setting). The Brute and the Jumped-Up Nobody archetypes from the *Gamemaster's Guide* also make for monster-of-the-week-style opponents. In addition to these foes, former villainous allies—such as the Power Corps—

may target freelancers for death or try to coax them back into a life of crime.

As Project Freedom is viewed more as a bludgeon than a scalpel, they are rarely called upon to handle intrigue, subtle criminals, or crime lords, but that does not mean such elements are inappropriate as enemies. Saturnalia Roman hopes to subvert the team through bribery and blackmail, while the Cartel (see the *Atlas of Earth-Prime*) seeks to discredit Project Freedom, lest the private prison/Lockdown model be undermined.

In addition to villains, freelancers must contend with superheroes, both those unaware of their attempt at reformation who only see a known criminal walking the street, and former adversaries checking up on them or setting them up for failure.

There are plenty of politicians, police officers, and pundits who oppose “putting the public at risk” by allowing criminals access to the powers and technology they used to victimize innocent civilians, let alone the social dangers involved in “setting up superhuman predators as role models.” Wainwright’s most aggressive opponent in project Freedom’s inception was Lt. Col. James Levitt of the US Army, who has since begun assembling his own—more tightly controlled—band of powered psychopaths. The details of Levitt’s Terminal Team are left to the Gamemaster, but should include at least a few of the villains brought down by Project Freedom just to keep tension high. Civil rights groups have objected to a bias toward attractive, non-threatening criminals for inclusion in Project Freedom. There are also officials who want to completely federalize Project Freedom and use the freelancers as cannon fodder, but so far Ms. Wainwright has stymied every attempt.

ADVERSARY OPTIONS

The easiest way to use Project Freedom as adversaries is essentially as a villain team with a thin veneer of legitimacy. They may be cunning supervillains taking advantage of an optimistic system, or Wainwright herself may be an authoritarian who uses her freelancers as a flagship for how superbeings *should* engage: with control and accountability. In this scenario, the freelancers are deployed not just to engage supervillains, but any superbeings deemed too destructive or unaccountable by Project Freedom or its handlers. For a more subtle approach, you may replace the real Harriet Wainwright with a shapeshifter or place her under a mental compulsion, giving Project Freedom a sparkling clean past as further cover for any current criminal activity.

Project Freedom can also work as a rival organization to the heroes’ own team, particularly if it picks up a rogues’ gallery of its own. The freelancers have excellent facilities close to the downtown core and a fleet of vehicles and support staff, and may outmatch the heroes in terms of raw power, placing them at an early advantage. Whether a Gamemaster wants to reinforce this rivalry with actual, clandestine criminal activity or simply position Project Freedom as the better-equipped, more “professional” team in town is left up to individual groups.

NEMESIS: LT. COLONEL JAMES LEVITT

As a child, young James Levitt knew his father to be a monster, even if the rest of the world had forgiven and forgotten. His father, Arthur Levitt, was the original Fear-Master, and while the Silver Age villain seemed cured in 1971, the happy domestic life he pursued afterward was nothing but a façade. Dr. Levitt was a violent husband and father whose earliest regression into his villain persona was visited on his family. James escaped thanks to early enrollment in the Army, and has refused all contact with his father—even through his cancer and genuine redemption—and even avoided the villain’s funeral. Crime, in James’s eyes, ran deep and pure and wasn’t something that could be weeded out of the mind. The world was better with his father dead.

Thanks to his family reputation, Lt. Col. Levitt served repeatedly as a special liaison between the Army and hero communities, and became one of Harriet Wainwright’s earliest and most strident opponents on Project Freedom. In light of Wainwright’s apparent success, however, he has encouraged the US military to pursue their own version of the program, codenamed the Terminal Team, with more aggressive loyalty enforcement in place. If Wainwright wishes to pry open her Pandora’s box, Levitt reasons, then he will keep a far more terrifying monster on a short chain to close it.

Thanks to long-term exposure to Fear-Master’s chemicals, Levitt developed a unique adrenal disorder in puberty. “Levitt Syndrome” causes extreme strength and resilience, but also emotional instability and aggression. He currently controls his disorder with medication, but secretly misses the youthful vigor his condition provides. As the stress of assembling the Terminal Team mounts, he has begun cutting his dosages, hoping to find the sweet spot where he can work without rest and still maintain control of himself.

LT. COLONEL JAMES LEVITT

PL 7

STR 7/4, **STA** 6/3, **AGL** 0, **DEX** 2, **FGT** 4, **INT** 2, **AWE** 5, **PRE** 4

Powers: Levitt Syndrome: Enhanced Stamina 3, Enhanced Strength 3, Immunity 6 (Fatigue Effects, Sleep; Limited to Half Effect)

Equipment: Heavy Pistol, Light Service Rifle

Advantages: Assessment, Benefit 2 (Military Officer, Security Clearance), Connected, Daze (Intimidation), Diehard, Equipment 4, Extraordinary Effort, Fearless, Great Endurance, Improved Initiative, Improved Smash, Leadership, Minion 8, Power Attack, Ranged Attack 3, Set-up 3, Startle, Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 4 (+11), Close Combat: Unarmed 3 (+7), Deception 4 (+8), Expertise: Psychology 6 (+8), Expertise: Tactics 8 (+10), Insight 4 (+9), Intimidation 10 (+14), Investigation 4 (+6), Persuasion 8 (+12), Treatment 2 (+4), Vehicles 4 (+6)

Offense: Init +4, Heavy Pistol +5 (Ranged, Damage 4), Light Service Rifle +5 (Ranged, Damage 5), Unarmed +7 (Close, Damage 7/4)

Defense: Dodge 5, Parry 8, Fort 8, Tou 6/3, Will 5

Totals: Abilities 48 + Powers 15 + Advantages 33 + Skills 29 (57 ranks) + Defenses 11 = 136

Complications: Levitt Syndrome: Levitt must control his disorder with drugs or become increasingly erratic and aggressive. **Predjudice: Criminals** Levitt believes the criminal mind is incapable of redemption, and that criminals must be taught to fear consequence.

9TH AIRBORNE

"LET A PROFESSIONAL SHOW YOU HOW THIS IS DONE."



Cain Rocha was a founder of the powersuit-clad mercenary group known as the Power Corps (see *Threat Report*), recruited by the villain Mastermind for his technical expertise as much as his mercenary resume. But while Rocha—"Lucky Number Seven"—enjoyed the wealth and excitement, he didn't like being a criminal or taking orders. Rocha wasn't like the others. He was no deserter or court-martial washout; he was a patriot motivated to enlist to

protect American citizens. Yes, he'd had a few dust-ups with superior officers, but only because they thought rank meant they knew more than he did. The military had ultimately rejected his reenlistment—to cover their own failures, in Rocha's mind! That's when he decided to put his talents to use as a "private military contractor."

Rocha's ego led him to clash with his new Power Corp partners, particularly team leader Randall Trask. While Rocha was smart, Trask was cunning and ruthless, conspiring to sabotage Number Seven's armor and leak his identity to the authorities, which made certain he'd be a wanted man even if he survived their set-up. Rocha survived their sabotage and even spent a few months working as a solo villain with his own retrofitted Power Corps armor, but he resented the outlaw life forced on him. After his eventual capture he spent many long years examining the sequence of events that led him to his current place in life and—for the first time—admitted that perhaps his own attitude and ego were at least partially to blame. He spent years working to become a model prisoner—not necessarily out of altruism, but because if anyone is going to control Cain Rocha, it will be Cain Rocha! When his good behavior earned 9th Airborne a place in Project Freedom, he jumped at the opportunity, believing it could finally get his future back on track.

POWERS & ABILITIES

9th Airborne reverse-engineered his Power Corps powersuit, making improvements drawn from other exoskeleton designs he's been able to acquire or military gear he's stolen. The original Power Corps armor provides protection from attacks, high-speed flight, advanced computer and sensor systems to predict attacks, and a suite of heavy firepower, as well as a psionic-scrambling circuit in the helmet to prevent anyone from controlling him like Mastermind once did. His own upgrades include expanded sensors, a missile launcher, and a non-lethal gas dispenser.

Beyond his armor, Rocha is a military man with extensive training in close combat and marksmanship, as well as a talented mechanic and pilot.

PLAYING 9TH AIRBORNE

Cain Rocha started out a decent man—perhaps a little self-centered—with big dreams of glory and adventure. Time and again, his own pride and overconfidence have sabotaged his dreams and turned friends into enemies, but he's beginning to realize that may be his problem—not that he can always control it. Now he's determined to make the most of his opportunity with Project Freedom.

9th Airborne is a well-rounded combatant, with good mobility and balanced accuracy vs. damage output. His mini-missile system isn't as accurate as his blasters, but if he misses with a shot, the missile can attempt to hit its target again the next round with no attention or action from Rocha. Outside of combat, Rocha has some expertise with military protocol and piloting, but is mostly a gear-head—he's an expert at designing, repairing, and upgrading power armor technology.

9TH AIRBORNE

PL 11

THE SARCASTIC FLYBOY

REAL NAME Cain Rocha **AGE** 28 **HAIR** Black**OCCUPATION** Ex-Solider, Mercenary **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Humble, TX

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



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	5	+6
Athletics	5	+6
Close Combat: Unarmed	6	+11
Deception	0	-1
Expertise: Military	5	+8
Insight	4	+6
Perception	4	+6
Persuasion	0	-1
Ranged Combat:		
Weapon Systems	5	+9
Stealth	4	+5
Technology	8	+11
Vehicles	6	+8

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
<i>Evasion</i>	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Improved Aim	Double the circumstance bonus for Aim action
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Languages	Speak English (native) and German
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
<i>Precise Attack</i>	Ignore attack penalties (Ranged, Cover)
Ranged Attack 2	+2 to Ranged Attack checks
Second Chance (mind control)	Re-roll a failed check
Skill Mastery (Technology)	Make routine checks in any conditions

POWERS

9th Airborne Armor • Removable • 79 points	Tech
Defense Systems: Enhanced Dodge 3, Enhanced Parry 3, Protection 10 (Impervious)	
Flight Systems: Flight 8 (500 MPH)	
Psi-Scrambler: Enhanced Will 4, Immunity 10 (Mental Effects, limited to half effect)	
Sealed Systems: Immunity 10 (Life Support)	
Sensor Suite: Advantages (Evasion, Precise Attack [Ranged, Cover]), Senses 5 (Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Low-light Vision, Radio, Time Sense)	
Weapon Systems • Removable • Dynamic Array (24 points) • 30 points	Tech
• Hydraulics: Enhanced Strength 9, Penetrating 5	
• Gas Dispenser: Cloud Area Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Asleep)	
• Gauntlet Blasters: Ranged Damage 11, Accurate	
• Micro-Missiles: Ranged Damage 11, Homing, Multiattack; Unreliable (5 uses)	

COMPLICATIONS

Enemy: Given their history together, 9th Airborne has no liking for the Power Corps, and the mercenaries are eager to eliminate their former comrade.

Motivation—The American Dream: Cain Rocha is determined to become admired and successful.

Voided Warranty: The 9th Airborne suit is a heavily modified Power Corps suit, incorporating bits and pieces of other power-armor tech; there are inevitably malfunctions and odd glitches to deal with from time to time.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	11	1W/O ARMOR
DODGE	9/6	
PARRY	11/8	
FORTITUDE	8	
WILL	9/5	

COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +5
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Gas Dispensers	—	Fortitude	Area Affliction 11	DC 21	
Gauntlet Blasters	+11	Dodge	Ranged Damage 11	DC 26	
Micro-Missiles	+9	Dodge	Ranged Damage 11	DC 26	
Unarmed	+11	Parry	Close Damage 1/10	DC 16/25	

Abilities 28 + Powers 79 + Advantages 10 + Skills 30 (60 ranks) + Defenses 18 = 165 TOTAL

FORTRESS AMERICA

"YOU'LL HAVE TO GO THROUGH THE FORTRESS FIRST... AND THAT'S NOT HAPPENING!"



Fortress America is a scion of the Van Meter family, a large and wealthy family based in Emerald City. Their ancestry includes an exiled alien noble from the far side of the Moon, and the family secretly employs the various psychic gifts this heritage grants them to advance in business and politics. But Jordan was born nearly bereft of psionic aptitude. Early on, his stature was stunted as well, but soon the boy surpassed his peers' growth curve. Despite his

creativity and athletic prowess, he remained a disappointment to his parents. When his power to grow to an enormous size surfaced, he was instructed to never reveal his ability, as it would bring scrutiny on the family.

To get as far from his family as possible, Jordan attended Freedom City University. Without constant oversight for the first time in his life, he cut loose, partying, painting, and eventually falling in love with brilliant, nerdy Judith Jacobson. When his sheer presence scared off troublemakers during a date, Van Meter realized he could accomplish big things, and soon Fortress America was born!

The handsome giant proved a good draw for the media, but his insecurities remained. Every defeat triggered a bout of depression. Jordan's grades suffered and his relationship faltered. Slipping back into drugs, he grew careless and arrogant. After brawling with the Candy Crew and recognizing his estranged cousin Sinclair among them, Jordan took pity and allowed the gang to escape, only for the media to report his abetting. Angry and intoxicated, he decided to "redeem himself" by tearing the news channel apart. After a prolonged battle with other heroes, Fortress America was beaten and arrested. He felt more deeply humiliated when the power-nullification cell exposed Jordan's secret: mild dwarfism which his powers had subconsciously compensated for—until now.

Jordan accepted a plea deal to avoid further disgrace and family exposure. Given a relatively light sentence, his prior heroic actions and family connections made Fortress America a prime candidate for Project Freedom, and he now hopes to show the world that he is still a hero.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Fortress America can assume a towering "Living Fortress" form some 40 feet tall and possessing incredible strength and durability, but it's all-or-nothing; he can either stand at his normal height or 40 feet tall (or 4'6" if his powers are negated). Even without this form, he heals from injury with extraordinary speed and is resistant to a variety of conditions thanks to his alien heritage, and possesses the strength and tenacity of a champion athlete.

PLAYING FORTRESS AMERICA

Fortress America is supremely assured about his strength and righteousness, but otherwise plagued by self-doubt; failure or emotional conflict can cause Jordan Van Meter to hesitate or give up before trying. Still, he is brave and loyal, even if his allegiances are too often misplaced. Even after discovering his cousin's criminal exploits, Jordan has kept Sinclair's secret, valuing their childhood friendship.

Fortress America is a straightforward brawler, capable of dishing out powerful blows and soaking up a lot of damage—though this depends on him being able to assume his Living Fortress form, which he can't easily do in confined spaces like building interiors. Even without his powers, Jordan is handsome and likeable, and sometimes capable of solving problems with a winning smile.

FORTRESS AMERICA

PL 11

FALLEN TITAN ON THE ROAD TO REDEMPTION

REAL NAME Jordan Van Meter AGE 22 HAIR Blonde

OCCUPATION Fallen Superhero PLACE OF ORIGIN Emerald City

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
15/5	15/5	2	2	7	0	2	4
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+2
Athletics	6	+21/+11
Deception	0	+4
Expertise: Art	7	+7
Expertise: Business	5	+5
Insight	0	+2
Intimidation	5	+14/+9
Perception	7	+9
Persuasion	6	+10
Stealth	0	-8/+2
Vehicles	2	+4

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Accurate Attack	Trade Effect DC for Attack Bonus
Attractive	Situational +2 bonus on Deception and Persuasion skills
Benefit (Wealth)	Well-off
Connected	Call in favors with a Persuasion check
Diehard	Automatically stabilize when dying
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Improved Grab	Make Grab attacks one-handed
Improved Hold	-5 penalty to escape your Grab attempts
Improved Smash	No penalty on Smash actions
Interpose	Take an attack meant for an ally
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
Second Chance (mind control)	Re-roll a failed check
Startle	Use Intimidation skill to feint
Takedown 2	Free extra attack when you incapacitate a minion
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks
Ultimate Effort (Strength)	Spend a Hero Point to automatically roll a 20
Ultimate Effort (Toughness)	Spend a Hero Point to automatically roll a 20

POWERS

Accelerated Healing • Personal • Permanent • 13 points **Mutation**
Immunity 16 (Aging, Radiation Damage, Disease, Cold, Fatigue Effects, High Pressure, Poison, Vacuum; Limited to Half Effect), Regeneration 5 (Every 2 rounds)

Living Fortress • Personal • Sustained • 45 points **Mutation**
Enhanced Advantage 5 (Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Improved Smash, Takedown 2)
Growth 10, Activation (move action), Impervious Toughness 15 (Quirk: capped by Toughness rank)

Long Stride: Movement 2 (Sure-footed 2), Speed 3 (16 MPH)

The Van Meter Gift • Personal • Permanent • 4 points **Psychic**
Immunity 1 (Psychic Abilities of Van Meter Family)
Senses 3 (Acute Radius Psychic Awareness)

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Recognition: Jordan Van Meter wants to be seen as a worthwhile, talented person.

Achondroplasia: If his powers are neutralized, Jordan shrinks to 4'3" with short arms and legs. In this condition, his ground movement is half of normal, and his traits are reduced to STR 3, STA 3, and FGT 5.

Family Baggage: The Van Meters' lineage includes overbearing parents and his cousin Sinclair, who works with the villainous superteam known as the Candy Crew (see *Rogues Gallery*).

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	15/5
DODGE	5/10
PARRY	7/12
FORTITUDE	15/5
WILL	5

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated?

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Thrown Object	+2	Dodge	Ranged Damage 15	DC 30
Unarmed	+7	Parry	Close Damage 15	DC 30

INITIATIVE
+2

Abilities 54 + Powers 62 + Advantages 14 + Skills 19 (38 ranks) + Defenses 16 = 165 TOTAL

THE HEXORCIST

"PERHAPS THIS SMALL TASTE OF HELL WILL SAVE YOU FROM AN ETERNITY OF IT."



The others on Project Freedom were recruited, but Emil Graystone is a true volunteer. The bedraggled figure simply appeared one day on the Big House dock, dripping wet despite leaving no footprints. He was eager to join the "band of repentant ne'er-do-wells in helping right this sorry world," and while Ms. Wainwright was wary at first, she ultimately obliged. Hexorcist had not been seen in several years and was in fact presumed dead following the mass breakout at the Buckner Ridge super-prison.

Emil Graystone had originally learned the dark arts in abandoned dungeons once used by the Spanish Inquisition. The coven with which he studied spellcraft practiced a gruesome initiation ritual to learn magic from a powerful demon—sacrificing neophytes like Emil in exchange for knowledge. But Graystone outwitted his otherworldly tutor and consumed the fiend's heart, gaining fantastic occult might. As the Hexorcist, he spent years trying to usurp supernatural power by acquiring arcane relics and devouring other fiends' hearts. He ultimately ran afoul of the demon Belial, who stole Graystone's soul while his body languished. When Hexorcist awoke, it was not as a maniacal sorcerer but a humble and helpful man who eschewed violence. He graciously accepted his status, behaved as a model inmate, and ministered about the horrors of Hell to others—at least until an escape and disappearance even Emil is at a loss to explain.

Whatever the truth, Hexorcist's passion for Project Freedom's mission is undeniable. Though resolute in purpose, Hexorcist is neglectful in his personal habits, needing reminders to eat, bathe, and groom. He also seems a bit wrathful when dealing with the less-forgivable villains faced by the team, claiming whatever punishments he meets out are "for their own good." These developments are troubling, but Graystone's arcane skills are so useful Ms. Wainwright has a watchful wait-and-see attitude regarding his presence on the Project.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Though he claims to loathe his demon-infused sorcery, the Hexorcist remains a powerful sorcerer. Emil Graystone's extensive occult knowledge grants him a wide variety of spells, as well as an intuitive understanding of language. The horrors he suffered while trapped in a diabolic realm render Hexorcist impervious to mortal fear, pain, and deprivation—the worst human torture is like a gentle caress to him. Even slowed by a withered leg, he is a surprisingly effective fighter, wielding a wickedly potent demon-slaying blade.

PLAYING THE HEXORCIST

Emil is almost *too* friendly and helpful—to the point of violating others' personal space. This combined with his odious personal habits and macabre sense of humor makes people uneasy. He's a gentle soul—now—and normally uses only the minimum violence necessary, but sometimes a particularly heinous opponent provokes a cruelly ironic punishment. Hexorcist is a most moral and dependable man—but also a man likely concealing something unpredictable and dangerous.

Hexorcist's magic gives him considerable options for engaging foes, from binding them in magic chains, to sapping their strength until they can't stand, to suffocating them with his mind, to creating a blade of hellfire to strike down enemies. His Ritual advantage provides even more options for addressing strange situations, while his other skills make him a surprisingly talented pickpocket and thief.

THE HEXORCIST

PL 11

THE BORN-AGAIN CULTIST

REAL NAME Emil Graystone **AGE** 47 **HAIR** Messy**OCCUPATION** Ex-Cabal Member **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Kent, England

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	2	-1	4	7	4	6	0
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS		
Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	-1
Athletics	0	+0
Deception	8	+8
Expertise: Magic	10	+14
Insight	4	+10
Intimidation	0	+0
Perception	3	+9
Persuasion	0	+0
Ranged Combat: Spellcraft	7	+11
Sleight of Hand	5	+9
Stealth	7	+6
Treatment	4	+8

ADVANTAGES	
Advantage	Details
Benefit 2	Ambidextrous, Cast-Iron Stomach
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Favored Foe (Diabolic Beings)	+2 bonus to several checks against a particular foe
Fearless	Immune to fear effects
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Improvised Tools	No penalty to skill checks without proper tools
Reviving Team Attack*	Remove a condition as part of a Team Attack
Ritualist	Use Expertise (Magic) skill to create single-use spells
Second Chance (mind control)	Re-roll a failed check
Ultimate Effort (Sleight of Hand)	Spend a Hero Point to automatically roll a 20
Uncanny Dodge	Not vulnerable when surprised or off-guard

POWERS	
Occult Ken • Personal • Permanent • 11 points	Demonic
Comprehend 3 (Read, Speak, and Understand All Languages; Innate)	
Senses 4 (Vision Counters Concealment and Illusion)	
Scars of Mystic Wars • Personal • Permanent • 23 points	Demonic
Immunity 4 (Nausea, Pain)	
Protection 10, Impervious; Noticeable (rune-shaped scars)	
Foul Magics • Removable • Dynamic Array (24 points) • 30 points	Magic
• Chains of Perdition: Move Object 7 (3 tons); Affects Insubstantial 2, Damaging	
• Cut the Wicked: Strength-based Damage 10 (Improved Critical; Affects Insubstantial, Penetrating 10)	
• Enfeeble My Enemies: Ranged Weaken Strength 11 (Resisted by Fortitude; Affects Insubstantial)	
• Shadow Passage: Teleport 4 (500 feet; Accurate, Increased Mass, Portal)	
• Steal the Breath: Perception Cumulative Affliction 7 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated; Distracting)	
• Take the Mind: Perception Cumulative Affliction 11 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Controlled; Distracting, Limited Degree [third only])	

COMPLICATIONS	
Motivation—Redemption:	Emil wants to make amends for the terrible things he's done—or at least, he thinks he does. He's also a little unsure if he's genuinely back in charge or if he's only letting himself think he is.
Personal Grooming:	Others tend to be put off by Emil Graystone's slipshod hygiene.
Disability—Bad Leg:	Emil moves at half normal speed. If his good leg is injured, he falls prone.

DEFENSES	
TOUGHNESS	12
DODGE	9
PARRY	10
FORTITUDE	7
WILL	10

COMBAT				INITIATIVE	
Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	+3
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Chains of Perdition	+11	Dodge	Ranged Damage 7	DC 22	
Cut the Wicked	+7	Parry	Close Damage 10	DC 25	
Steal the Breath	—	Fortitude	Perception Affliction 7	DC 17	
Take the Mind	—	Will	Perception Affliction 11	DC 21	

Abilities 44 + Powers 62 + Advantages 13 + Skills 24 (48 ranks) + Defenses 22 = 165 TOTAL

QUEEN OF HEARTS

**"BOW DOWN TO THE QUEEN,
YA BIG BALONEY!"**



Though orphaned at a young age, Jackie Neeley had a promising future. Blessed with scholastic ability and startling athleticism, she earned multiple college scholarships. After completing her pre-med studies, she worked every odd job she could find to save for med school. Jackie discovered amateur wrestling while working as a bouncer. Though her "Queen of Hearts" character was supposed to be a monster heel, Jackie's good nature and humor soon won over fans, and the Queen became a boisterous ring anti-hero with a heart of gold.

She likely would have enjoyed a short career as a colorful local celebrity save for the intervention of the White Rabbit and his Looking Glass Gang (see *Threat Report*). Jackie intervened when the Looking Glass Gang staged a robbery at a show...and then everything just changed. Her next lucid moment came when she awoke lying face-down in a public park with the police and assembled heroes standing over her. The Queen of Hearts had been aiding the LGG for months, having fallen prey to the White Rabbit's reality-warping powers. Fortunately, a solid beating had restored Jackie's memories and personality before the changes became permanent; she would regain her faculties with time and psychiatric treatment.

Jackie's mind-controlled state earned her a sentence at Providence Asylum, where doctors could help her recover from her trauma. But Jackie never entirely recovered—the Queen of Hearts was out of the ring and on the streets, still taking over her life from time to time! She did smash-and-grab robberies of jewelry stores, crashed fashion shows, and coerced terrified clerks into giving collectors' editions of classic books away to children. After several crime sprees and a brief return to the Looking Glass Gang, Providence took a new approach to her therapy. They worked to bring out the personality and ethics of Jackie even when the madcap Queen took control, tempering her chaos with her lost sense of responsibility and fair play. The experiment has certainly helped the former criminal atone, but also seems to be further submerging what remains of Jackie into her own creation's subconscious.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Jackie Neeley's agility and strength were raised to peak human by White Rabbit's reality-altering powers, and her combat skills have been super-charged either by those same powers or by months of combat against super-heroes. Her signature prop—a sturdy ball-and-chain—becomes a highly versatile weapon in the Queen's hands. But even unarmed, her prowess and melee skills make Queen of Hearts formidable. She responds to the "cheers of the fans" by shrugging off harm and fatigue, and can accomplish exceptional feats when spurred on.

PLAYING QUEEN OF HEARTS

Go big or go home—the Queen is a brash, trash-talking, exuberant woman who loves to party, fight, and flirt. Despite her tough exterior, she enjoys the finer things like jewelry and expensive clothes, so playing the Queen—even as a hero—means giving in to temptation. She's a goofball motor-mouth with a heart of gold and a knack for getting in over her head, then triumphing through grit, absurd luck, and hitting things again (but harder).

The Queen lacks any true superpowers beyond her extraordinary physical skills and a complete lack of self-preservation. She is fast and tough enough to leap into combat without thinking. In addition to being a scrapper, she's adept at setting up teammates for combos, using her Daze, Taunt, and Set-up advantages to distract opponents while a powerhouse like Fortress America takes a shot.

QUEEN OF HEARTS

PL 11

PUNK-ROCK WRESTLER WITH A LEAKY BRAIN-PAN

REAL NAME Jacqueline "Jackie" Neeley **AGE** 25 **HAIR** Brown and Red

OCCUPATION Retired (?) Wrestler **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Freedom City

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
5	5	6	0	12	3	4	4
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Agile Feint	Use Acrobatics skill to feint
All-Out Attack	Trade Active Defense for Attack Bonus
Daze (Deception)	Use a skill check to Daze a target
Defensive Attack	Trade Attack Bonus for Active Defense
Defensive Roll 3	+3 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Extraordinary Effort	Gain two benefits when using Extra Effort
Great Endurance	+5 bonus on checks requiring endurance
Improved Hold	-5 penalty to escape your Grab attempts
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Improvised Weapon 1	+1 Damage bonus with improvised weapons
Instant Up	Stand up as a Free action
Languages 1	Speaks English (native) and American Sign Language
Luck	Re-roll a die
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
Quick Draw	Draw a weapon as a free action
Redirect	Redirect a missed attack to another target with Deception
Second Chance (mind control)	Re-roll a failed check
Set-Up	Transfer the benefit of an interaction skill to an ally
Taunt	Use Deception skill to demoralize
Throwing Mastery 1	+1 Damage bonus with thrown weapons
Uncanny Dodge	Not vulnerable when surprised or off-guard

POWERS

Off With Yer Head! • (Easily Removable) • 6 points	Weapon
Strength-based Damage 5, Reach 2 (10 ft.), Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Weapon Bind)	
Rough 'n Tumble • Personal • Sustained • 7 points	Talent
Leaping 1 (15 feet), Movement 2 (Safe Fall, Sure-footed 1), Speed 2 (8 MPH)	
Second Wind • Close • Instant • 5 points	Talent
Healing 5, Energizing; Limited to Self Only, Source (Applause and Cheers)	

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	8	5 W/D DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	14	
PARRY	14	
FORTITUDE	8	
WILL	9	

COMBAT

Damage: **Dazed?** **Staggered?** **Incapacitated?**

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Off With Yer Head	+12	Parry	Close Damage 10	DC 25
Improvised Weapon	+12	Parry	Close Damage 6	DC 21
Thrown Weapon	+4	Dodge	Ranged Damage 6	DC 21
Unarmed	+12	Parry	Close Damage 5	DC 20



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	7	+13
Athletics	8	+13
Deception	5	+9
Expertise: Pop Culture	6	+9
Insight	0	+4
Intimidation	0	+4
Perception	4	+8
Persuasion	0	+4
Ranged Combat: Thrown	4	+4
Stealth	7	+13
Treatment	4	+7
Vehicles	5	+5

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Doing Good...Mostly:

The Queen realizes now the world outside isn't a wrestling storyline, and as a "face" she must be a good role model for the "young fans out there..." But sometimes she can't resist indulging in a little "mischievous" fun or sheer hedonism.

Temper: The Queen gets set off easily by a variety of things, especially stealing from the poor, threatening children, and (of course) insinuating that wrestling is fake.

Sob Story: The Queen's past experiences have softened her to other costumed villains, and she's easily taken in by any sort of sob story or promise to make amends.

INITIATIVE
+10

Abilities 78 + Powers 20 + Advantages 26 + Skills 23 (46 ranks) + Defenses 18 = 165 TOTAL

WEATHER MISTRESS

"THE SKY IS ABOUT TO REIGN OVER YOU!"



Cortney Cline's farm family suffered multiple tragedies due to calamitous weather, culminating in a tornado killing her parents, and she left childhood determined to control the elements like they had controlled her. Abandoning her younger sister Tanith to foster care, she studied meteorology and experimented endlessly for naught. Despite her brilliance, Cortney's research yielded few results until she discovered technology in one of Dr. Stratos's abandoned laboratories (see *Freedom City*). Angry and resentful over

how often she had been "cheated," Cline used the technology she discovered to build the Weather Vane and set about taking the wealth she felt owed as part of the notorious Thieves' Guild.

Like the other Guild members, Cline's existence settled into a futile pattern: a big caper followed by defeat, imprisonment, half-hearted reformation, then a backslide into crime. Intent on changing her status, she rebuilt the Weather Vane tech into more potent Storm Bracers. But her re-debut over the skies of Freedom City was ruined when Dr. Stratos arrived, intent on stealing back Cline's borrowed power. This time the court showed leniency in light of her help in stopping a *real* supervillain, and Cline—feeling like one of the accidents in her life had actually yielded positive results—softened. When the Thieves' Guild staged their next breakout from Blackstone, Weather Mistress remained in her cell. She decided to serve out her sentence and start fresh, disillusioned with the criminal lifestyle and hoping for a different future.

To compensate for Cline's absence, the Guild recruited her neglected sister, Tanith. Envious of her big sister's glamorous villain career and equally brilliant, Tanith constructed her own Lightning Rod from Cortney's designs, becoming the Tempestress! This roused Cline's anger—the Guild had no business luring her sister into a dead-end criminal existence! This time she would win people over by doing good—and do well for herself. Months of model prisoner behavior and alerting Freedom City about a massive incoming thunderstorm won her a place on Project Freedom. Though she joined for selfish reasons, Weather Mistress is earnest in her desire to reform. And while she remains ambivalent about heroism, winning and getting cheered on is way better than losing and sitting behind bars.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Weather Mistress wears a pair of Storm Bracers imbued with Dr. Stratos's energy, letting her command the weather to create lightning, powerful winds, fog, and rain. In addition, Cortney Cline is a gifted leader, strategist, and scientist. She possesses PhD-level knowledge in meteorology.

PLAYING WEATHER MISTRESS

Weather Mistress isn't a bad person... in her own mind. But in her mind every opportunity for happiness was stolen from her and she is always the victim. Everything still comes down to what benefits her. She may rescue a child from a burning building, but resent not being financially rewarded for the good deed. She'll exhort her teammates to victory and then insult them in the same breath. But a part of her genuinely wants a second chance, and even finally to do right by her sister.

Weather Mistress commands a range of weather-based powers and can even use them indoors, including some unusual abilities like weather prediction and fog. Her powers—as well as the Inventor advantage—can help her solve problems creatively.

WEATHER MISTRESS

PL 11

THE CAREER CRIMINAL; FIGHTING HER BEST URGES

REAL NAME Cortney Cline **AGE** 37 **HAIR** Purple

OCCUPATION Scientist, Career Villain **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Topeka, KS



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

SKILLS		
Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+3
Athletics	0	+1
Deception	7	+9
Expertise: Science	10	+15
Intimidation	0	+2
Insight	0	+3
Perception	9	+12
Persuasion	7	+9
Ranged Combat: Weather	9	+11
Stealth	7	+10
Technology	5	+10

ADVANTAGES	
Advantage	Details
Defensive Roll 4	+4 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Favored Environment	+2 bonus to Attack or Defense in the air
Improvised Tools	No penalty to skill checks without proper tools
Inventor	Use Technology skill to create temporary devices
Leadership	Spend a Hero Point to remove a condition from an ally
Move-by Action	Move both before and after a standard action
Second Chance (mind control)	Re-roll a failed check
Taunt	Use Deception skill to demoralize
Well-Informed	Immediate Investigation or Perception check

POWERS	
Storm Bracers • Removable • 46 points	Technology
Barometric Sensors: Senses 4 (Precognition; Limited: to Weather)	
Weather Immunity: Immunity 17 (Cold, Electricity Damage, Heat, Weather Effects)	
Wind Riding: Flight 5 (60 MPH)	
Weather Control • Array (23 points)	
• Gale-Force Winds: Move Object 11 (50 tons)	
• Heatstroke: Ranged Affliction 11; Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Incapacitated	
• Lightning Bolt: Ranged Damage 10; Indirect 3	
• Thick Fog: Burst Area Visual Concealment Attack 2	
• Wind Gust: Deflect 11; Reflect	

COMPLICATIONS

Enemy—The Thieves’ Guild: Cline has an axe to grind with her former criminal associates, the Thieves’ Guild (who can be found in the Time of Apes adventure in the *Deluxe Hero’s Handbook*). They likewise consider her a turncoat.

Motivation—Opportunism: Weather Mistress believes she ultimately has to look out for herself because nothing is assured; fortune is as fickle as the weather. She hasn’t yet reconciled this basic selfishness with her growing streak of decency.

Untamed Storm: If Cline “pushes” her powers too often through extra effort, she may trigger severe weather effects out of her control.

DEFENSES		
TOUGHNESS	7	3 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	15	
PARRY	13	
FORTITUDE	8	
WILL	11	

COMBAT					INITIATIVE +3		
Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered?	<input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated?	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save			
Gale-Force Winds	+11	Dodge	Ranged Damage 11	DC 26			
Heatstroke	+11	Dodge	Ranged Affliction 11	DC 21			
Lightning Bolt	+11	Dodge	Ranged Damage 11	DC 26			
Unarmed	+2	Parry	Close Damage 1	DC 16			

Abilities 42 + Powers 46 + Advantages 14 + Skills 27 (54 ranks) + Defenses 36 = 165 TOTAL

FIGHTING PROBLEMS TOO WEIRD TO EXIST



OUTLIERS

POWER LEVEL: 10

POWER POINTS: 150

TEAM TEMPLATE

2 POINTS

Advantages: Equipment 1 (team equipment and HQ contribution)

Powers: Feature 1 (Chronal Bulwark—not immediately affected by changes to the timestream)

Equipment: Cell Phone

While some teams claim to be brought together by fate, this is literally the case with the Outliers. Assembled by the mysterious personification of cosmic destiny known as the Norn, these heroes were grabbed from their lives and dragged outside conventional reality to a pocket dimension that resembled the small town of Tonapah, Nevada, in the late 1950s. Here, the Norn served the gathered heroes greasy diner food and milkshakes, and informed them they were the only ones who could prevent a threat coming from outside reality to shatter creation. The Norn never explained why the collected heroes were the only ones able to prevent this event; she simply explained the fact, let them finish their eggs and hamburgers, and

transported them back to the real life Tonapah, Nevada. There they were told to seek out the town council, who were secretly in league with a nameless entity from beyond space and time they called Bohvec. After a surreal battle that involved extradimensional creatures, crazed cultists wielding reality-warping magicks, and the avatar of an undead god-thing from beyond our reality, the team prevailed.

So why did they stick together after? Yes, they saved the world and a good chunk of the known universe, and prevented an alien creature of unknowable eldritch power and endless hunger from entering their reality, but did that mean they needed to remain a team? Well, no, but they did anyway. Most of the group felt they had nowhere else to go and, while a full half of them wouldn't admit it, they enjoyed being heroes, even in a mind-bending adventure that no one heard about. And thus the Outliers were born.

Since then, the Outliers have faced numerous strange and unsettling threats, often those that few other heroes are aware of or capable of handling. They may battle villains whose abilities make no sense, or rescue people who shouldn't matter but do in the grand scheme of things. They seek out truths buried long ago for being too bizarre. They rediscover locations from myth and pop culture and stomp the crap out of whatever might be using them as part of an incoherent scheme to conquer the world's

hearts. As Lady Diamond says, the team seems to have a “high tolerance for the weird shit.” They handle things that would make others run screaming. Not because they’re the most powerful or the best, but because threats like a homicidal failed contortionist who learned how to bend reality around himself or a sentient song with the power to drive people insane just don’t bother them all that much—they’ve generally seen worse in their personal lives.

The Outliers at their core are a collection of people wounded by the world, who see something familiar in each other even as the rest of their lives are a study in the unfamiliar. Drama is high and so is weirdness, and contacts, adversaries, and romantic interests are all the most unusual and unlikely for the roles. Former villains are likely to become friends and allies, while betrayal, corruption, or possession of comrades happens almost weekly. Their few moments of normalcy are an island of respite in storm-wracked lives, and even these ordinary moments are tainted by the sword of Damocles overhead, threatening to plunge the few stable elements of their lives into chaos.

TEAM RESOURCES

Several of the team members possess enough material wealth to keep the team financially comfortable. Seism in particular can single-handedly bankroll the team for decades without it affecting her fortunes. Of course, given the threats the team regularly faces, money and the things it can buy are of limited use. Instead, they make more frequent use of resources no amount of money can purchase.

The Norn’s involvement in their team has granted every Outlier a set place in the cosmos, gifting them a Feature called Chronal Bulwark. This ability (first introduced in the **Time Powers** section of *Power Profiles*) shields the team against changes in the timestream and villains or forces disturbing the past. However, only the Outliers remember the previous timeline and how it should have run, possibly stranding them in strange worlds they have no knowledge of or resources to confront before they finally tackle whatever force has rewritten history.

Beyond their secure place in time, the chief resource the team possesses is their headquarters: the Platonic House. The team was guided to the house by the Norn, who stated it has always existed in some form, though she offered no additional explanation of the structure’s origins. The group does not own the house so much as it accepts them as long-time lodgers, allowing them to live there and use its powers to travel across the world.

The Platonic House isn’t exactly a real building. Instead, it is an idealized construct that exists right outside the bonds of conventional reality and takes the form of a large, ever-changing house. The room layout and internal style of the house regularly shift, though typically the team members’ rooms and the common areas they frequent remain mostly stable, shifting only in minor ways. The house can only be entered by concentrating on it while exiting an underground structure such as a cave or basement. This

THE NORN

First introduced in the 1st edition adventure **Time of Crisis** and detailed in the *Cosmic Handbook*, the Norn is an omniscient cosmic entity known as a Primal, with the stated goal of protecting fate itself across all universes. Beyond her endless knowledge, her power is largely limited to shielding small groups from changes in the cosmos and shuffling her chosen champions between dimensions. She relies on those champions to enact her will and correct fate whenever and wherever it goes off course. She is frustratingly vague and deliberately conceals information as often as shares it, so it is unknown how many agents she may have working on her behalf, or what the “true” shape of fate should be.

The Norn is a “PL X” character (see **Chapter 3** of the *Gamemaster’s Guide*). She is essentially indestructible and immortal, and theoretically able to manifest effects at will at whatever rank she desires, though her theme and certain cosmic rules usually forbid her from interacting with reality directly. She is not an asset to the heroes so much as a dispenser for adventures and leads, and a “get out of apocalypse free” card should they fail; Gamemasters can use her power to pull the PCs out of certain death, though getting the PCs back to their proper time or reality may require a new adventure.

is trickier than it sounds, as the traveler must keep in their mind the existence of the house, whatever they understand of its true nature, and an unambiguous desire to reach it. This takes practice, though by now every member of the team can easily transport themselves to and from the Platonic House. The team can also use the house to travel around the world, leaving it and appearing on doorsteps and thresholds around the world. The house could even theoretically transport the team to other planets, to other dimensions, or even through time, but they haven’t tried this... yet.

THE PLATONIC HOUSE

20 POINTS

Size: Huge **Toughness:** 8 **Features:** Concealed 3 (+20), Dimensional Portal, Dual Size (Medium), Gym, Isolated, Library, Living Space, Movable, Power (Morph 2; self), Power (Extended-Only Teleport 10; occupants), Power System, Self-Repairing 2, Variable Environment

ADVENTURES

The Outliers are just plain odd. They aren’t a standard superhero team, but they also aren’t part of a unified theme such as champions of science or supernatural heroes. Instead, the Outliers’ central theme is a lack of theme—none of them fit anywhere else. Their powers are weird, their backgrounds are weird, and the menaces they fight are weird. This team invokes the “alternative” super-heroics of groups and individuals such as the DC Comics’ *Doom Patrol* and *Shade the Changing Man*, Clive Barker’s *Hyperkind*, Marvel’s *Fallen Angels*, Dark Horse’s *The Umbrella Academy*, and others.

The central theme of Outlier adventures is, “The world is wonderful and full of strange threats.” The places they go—small towns in New England, the ruins of lost civilizations, or exotic locations on other planets—are strange

NEMESIS: THE CUSP

Bruno Drake began his career as a frustrated comic book writer in the 1960s Silver Age boom. He never felt like his storylines or characters captured the same level of drama as other writers. A literature major in college, Drake studied the classics, and later turned to classic Golden Age comic books still heralded as groundbreaking. In time his obsession revealed a pattern: across interviews and journals, all the great writers of the previous era hinted at the Source Panel, an ancient Mesopotamian pictogram that illustrates the Beginning, the End, and all things that come between—and in that glorious wheel of time, the ultimate secrets of pacing and character development were revealed.

Those Golden Age legends had hoarded sketches of the carving, or half-burned photographs. Some took their treasure to their graves while others passed them on to disciples, but each creator derived genius from an incomplete copy. Drake resolved to find the original—reviewing crumbling journals and asylum records—and become the greatest comic book writer in history.

On a forgotten mountain trapped between the grains of hourglass sand, he found it: the Source Panel. Looking upon it showed Drake the secrets of writing, but so much more. He saw the whole of the world as it was: ink and text on a page, nothing more than a passing diversion for careless readers to be consumed and tossed aside! Unhinged by his discovery and the true meaninglessness of creation, he has sought to prove to the rest of the world what they are, and uses his esoteric knowledge to “flip the pages” backwards and forwards, or tear individuals from the script.

In a sense, the Cusp is writing the greatest comic story ever told. And he’s rolling all the world into the narrative.

THE CUSP

PL 15

STR 1, STA 5, AGL 1, DEX 3, FGT 3, INT 5, AWE 7, PRE 5

Powers: Flip the Pages Movement 3 (Time Travel 3), Portal • 12 points

Read Ahead Senses 8 (Postcognition, Precognition) • 8 points

Recurring Character Feature 1 (Chronal Bulwark); Immortality 1; Immunity 8 (Aging, Disease, Entrapment, Poison) • 11 points

Rewrite (Array; 30 points)

- **Recast:** Ranged Affliction 15 (Impaired, Disabled, Transformed, Reisted by Will) • 30 points
- **Remove:** Ranged Affliction 15 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Dazed, Stunned, Paralyzed) • 1 point
- **Write Off:** Teleport Attack 15 (120 miles) Resisted by Will • 1 point

Advantages: Assessment, Beginner’s Luck, Connected, Contacts, Eidetic Memory, Evasion, Improved Initiative 3, Improvised Weapon 5, Move-by Action, Quick Draw, Ranged Attack 12, Throwing Mastery 5, Trance, Well-informed

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 12 (+15), Deception 5 (+10), Expertise: Comic Books 12 (+17), Expertise: History 5 (+10), Insight 7 (+14), Intimidation 5 (+10), Investigation 3 (+8), Perception 9 (+16), Stealth 10 (+11)

Offense: Init +13, Rewrite: +15 (Ranged, Affliction 15 or Close Teleport 15), Throw +15 (Ranged, Damage 6), Improvised Weapon +15 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 16, Parry 15, Fort 14, Tou 5, Will 16

Totals: Abilities 60 + Powers 63 + Advantages 35 + Skills 34 (68 ranks) + Defenses 45 = 237

Complications: Motivation—Nihilism, Weakness (selenite)

and filled with mysteries and colorful individuals. They are also very dangerous. Often the danger has an existential component—threatening the world’s (or the team’s) understanding of normal—though physical threats are also commonplace. Enemies of the Outliers rarely want to destroy the world, per se, but almost always want to twist it into a new shape so dissimilar that the difference is purely semantic.

Danger comes in the form of the mundane twisted into something terrible and strange: the weirder, the better. Lovecraftian cosmic horrors and bug-eyed aliens are the shallow water the Outliers trained in before addressing the truly weird. Now they face the sentient color red in exile from its home dimension and seeking to paint our cosmos in cardinal hues until everything is under its power, or a bullied child whose powerful psychic abilities transform a whole town into medieval peasants cowering in fear of the youth’s internal demons given flesh. The solutions to the challenges an antagonist presents are as atypical as the scenarios themselves—the team may need to punch their way to the heart of the problem, but they’ll often need to talk down or outwit their final opposition.

Outliers adventures can be comedic, scary, or action-packed. Their weirdness transcends genres and becomes a genre of its own. Regardless of the details and tone, the group’s exploits are always tinged with the absurd. Themes often relate to folklore, urban legends, or concepts from art, history, psychology, theoretical science, and literature. Tone shifts are common in such adventures, as are opportunities to consider what these adventures say about the world. A typical adventure begins with the investigation of a seemingly trivial crime or clue, only to uncover a bizarre conspiracy or lurking threat whose agenda or very nature should not exist.

The Outliers also seem to attract weird events and adversaries, even when doing the most mundane things. A group outing to get ice cream or see a movie more often than not results in an abduction by dead German philosophers or a fight with two-dimensional aliens. Many of these are temporary and harmless, though they often hint at more dangerous events to come.

While adventures that repeatedly challenge the bounds of reality might seem mind-blowing or depressingly academic, the overall tone of the Outliers is mild bemusement and vague existential crisis. They are wacky, with “deep” concepts occurring almost by accident. Not every adventure is a philosophical treatise on the cruelty of society; sometimes a megalomaniacal cigar is just a cigar. As outsiders and rejects, team members often look for purpose and fulfillment even as they struggle to save the world from various strange threats. No member of the team can truly answer the question, “Who am I, really?” They will venture between crises until they can. Should a member finally discover what their higher purpose is, they will likely leave the group, probably to be replaced by a newer and more existentially challenged hero.

Because the adventures faced by the Outliers can range from the familiar with a coat of paint to the surreal, a

Gamemaster would be well served to arrive with an outline rather than a fully detailed adventure, and to let the players take the lead on how to solve problems. Review the Faking It and Saying Yes to Your Players sections of the *Deluxe Hero's Handbook* **Gamemastering** chapter in particular, and be prepared for the stories to veer wildly from what you originally expected.

OPPONENTS

Outlier adversaries tend to be similar to those fought by various cosmic- or mystic-themed superteams, but with strange twists, psychedelic themes, and unexpected agendas. Mental powers are common, as is anything unusual or atypical. Powerhouse bad guys are less common, and the rampaging brute in so many other superteams' rogues galleries is rarely present, barring some fascinatingly bizarre hook. The Jumped-Up Nobody and the Imp archetypes from the *Gamemaster's Guide* reflect common antagonists, but the Outliers just as often face Psychos or bystander-style characters empowered and protected by various plot devices.

The team doesn't have a singular core villain or group of enemies, but they have faced numerous threats to Earth Prime and beyond over the years. These include Ku Tu the Eternal (see *Threat Report*), an ancient alien mummy who seeks to return the world to a time when it ruled as a god-king; Professors Jackanapes (see *Threat Report*), a well-dressed monkey-man sorcerer who serves dark eldritch powers; the Epicurean (use the *Gamemaster's Guide* Mimic archetype), who can gain superhuman powers based on what he eats or drinks; and The Cusp (see sidebar), the personification of the end of the universe seeking to expand its dominion to other terminal moments in history.

They have also faced a villain group of similar outcasts and misfits called the Anomaleague of Criminal Eccentrics, or simply ACE or the Anomaleague. The exact membership of ACE changes frequently, but it is always led by Baron Blemish, one of the sole survivors of the world of Luster and a longtime foe of Lady Diamond (see sidebar). Regular members include The Great Outdoors, an old foe of Inside Man; Becky Badhair, a former high school rival of Seism's who possesses prehensile, sentient, and irredeemably evil tentacle-like projections in place of her hair; and El Rey Amarillo, a corrupt luchador whose wrestling can drive people to madness.

ADVERSARY OPTIONS

The Outliers can serve as esoteric villains just as readily as heroes—a union of wounded souls pulling off crimes too bizarre to believe and forcing other heroes to confront them on the abnormal grounds they call home. They may steal France, travel back in time to rewrite the rivalry between Edison and Tesla, or serve as vanguard for a twisted god that wants to transform our world into its dream, with their chaotic range of abilities allowing them to enact truly strange crimes. Consider giving each member the Favored Environment (weirdness) advantage.

NEMESIS: BARON BLEMISH

Born a half-blooded scion of the royal house of Diamond on the world of Luster, young Blemish spent his youth honing his incredible combat skills in service to his house while quietly seething that his father's indiscretion could forever bar him from ruling, rather than merely serving. Even the manifestation of royal magic—his impressive darkstone generation, with creates diamond-hard, inky-black crystals—was not enough to convince his cousin the king to show him the respect due a noble. He refused to acknowledge that his own greed and temper often sabotaged his opportunities to earn that respect, rather than any outmoded social customs.

Eventually, Blemish opted to seize power himself rather than beg for it, staging a coup and putting most of House Diamond to the blade. Only young princess Claire escaped the purge, returning years later to lead a pathetic rebellion against his power. But once again, the royals of House Diamond ruined Blemish's bid for rule; The war destroyed Luster and cast its population across 10,000 worlds.

BARON BLEMISH

PL 11

STR 4, **STA** 6, **AGL** 4, **DEX** 0, **FGT** 8, **INT** 0, **AWE** 3, **PRE** 5

Powers: **Darkstone Creation** (Array; 36 points)

- **Onyx Axe** Close Damage 8 (Improved Critical; Penetrating 10) • 1 point
- **Onyx Forms** Create 9 (Impervious, Movable) • 36 points
- **Onyx Ram** Ranged Damage 11 (Penetrating 11) • 1 point
- **Onyx Bonds** Ranged Affliction 11 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Strength; Hindered and Vulnerable, Immobile and Defenseless, Extra Condition, Split 2; Limited Degree • 1 point

Advantages: Artificer, Assessment, Close Attack 2, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 2, Guidance*, *Improved Critical:* Onyx Axe, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Startle, Weapon Break

Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+9), Athletics 6 (+10), Deception 8 (+13), Expertise: Magic 8 (+8), Expertise: Tactics 10 (+10), Insight 7 (+10), Intimidation 10 (+15), Perception 8 (+11), Ranged Combat: Darkstone Creation 11 (+11)

Offense: Init +8, Onyx Axe +10 (Close, Damage 12), Onyx Ram +11 (Ranged, Damage 11), Onyx Bonds: +11 (Ranged, Affliction 11), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 14, Parry 14, Fort 11, Tou 8/6, Will 11

Totals: Abilities 60 + Powers 39 + Advantages 14 + Skills 37 (73 ranks) + Defenses 29 = 179

Complications: Enemy (Lady Diamond), Temper

A more likely scenario positions the Outliers as reluctant enforcers of the Norn's vision for what a perfectly ordered reality *should* be—possibly one that doesn't include the PCs, or their powers, or one or more of their loved ones. Rather than brawl with the heroes in the street, the Outliers might attack from the psychic plane, corrupting the public perception of the PCs and making the city see them as villains; travel back to the 18th century to ensure one hero's ancestors never meet; or travel outside reality and blackmail the author writing the heroes' existence to transform them from powerhouses to public embarrassments. In these scenarios, the heroes would need equally bizarre allies and solutions to finally confront and defeat the Outliers.

INSIDE MAN

“FOLLOW THEM? I’M QUITE COMFORTABLE HERE, THANK YOU. WOULD SOMEONE BE SO KIND AS TO FETCH THEM AND TOSS THEM BACK, THOUGH?”



NEZ
0XIX

Miguel Espinoza should have been happy with his life. He came from one of California’s finer families, able to trace his family lineage—not to mention their industrial empire and sizable estates—back to old Spanish aristocracy. Unfortunately, what Miguel possessed in education and societal privilege, he lacked in physicality. He was clumsy, prone to illness, and couldn’t gain muscle mass no matter what workouts he tried. His family spent considerable funds on trainers and fitness fads to no avail. He excelled in learning technique, but still struggled developmentally.

As an adult, Miguel began hunting desperately for arcane cures. While chasing down a ridiculous and fruitless rumor of an ancient herbal powder that would turn a weakling into a physical wonder, he came across the solution: A street vendor offered him *The Manual to Inner Power*, claiming the dog-eared book detailed a holistic process for unlocking one’s true “mastery of the internal.” He bought it, took it home, and began to follow the lessons within. The book detailed a mix of physical exercises, meditations, and even thought experiments, and insisted its lessons be followed to the letter. At first these lessons were easy enough, and bore results. Miguel got stronger and felt more energized. Emboldened, he devoured the remaining lessons, which grew increasingly strange. He would spend days locked into a yoga-like pose while he calculated the precise angles of the room, or bang his fist against the floor of an empty room and count the echoes. As he retreated to the family’s summer home to focus more intensely on his bizarre training, Miguel’s mind and body finally opened to the Inner, a place of extradimensional power accessible from our reality from inside enclosed spaces.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Having unlocked the secrets of the *Manual of Inner Power*, Miguel possesses superhuman strength and endurance, extrasensory intuition, and the power to “sidestep” between rooms within a building. However, Inside Man’s powers are limited—the extradimensional energies which fuel them can only be accessed when he is in an enclosed space such as a house, tunnel, cave, or other structure. Having a door or window open doesn’t affect Miguel’s powers, though tearing off the roof of a house or lowering the top of a convertible robs him of them.

Without his powers, Inside Man is a handsome, educated man in good physical condition. He is a fair hand in combat, though he greatly prefers to use his abilities whenever possible.

PLAYING INSIDE MAN

Miguel is a very intelligent and capable man who is as frustrated by the limitations his powers place on him as he was with his initial infirmity. He knows he is very fortunate and can still do much good, but he chafes somewhat when he realizes he cannot soar through the skies or take to the streets to stop a crime in progress. However, Inside Man’s limitations make him very careful and he has become an excellent planner by necessity.

While it is tempting for him to avoid any portion of an adventure that takes Inside Man outside, danger rarely cares about compensating for his flaws. Because his limitation is included in the costs of his various powers, he does not earn a Hero Point when forced outside or otherwise stepping into a situation that robs him of his extraordinary abilities—though he may earn a Hero Point for overcoming his agoraphobia brought on by that flaw. Inside Man can also work with his teammates to overcome his weakness, such as by asking Lady Diamond to generate a diamond “house” with her powers.

INSIDE MAN

PL 10

THE MASTER OF INTERIOR SPACES

REAL NAME Miguel Espinoza AGE 26 HAIR Brown

OCCUPATION Wealthy Playboy PLACE OF ORIGIN San Angeles, CA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
12/2	12/2	2	2	6	3	2	3
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+2
Athletics	2	+14/+4
Close Combat: Unarmed	2	+8
Deception	0	+3
Expertise: Philosophy	6	+9
Insight	4	+6
Investigation	2	+5
Perception	4	+6
Persuasion	5	+8
Stealth	0	+2

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Attractive	Situational +2 bonus on Deception and Persuasion skills
Benefit (Wealth)	Well-Off
Connected	Call in favors with a Persuasion check
Equipment 1	5 points of equipment
Evasion	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Extraordinary Effort	Gain two benefits when using Extra Effort
Improved Defense	+2 bonus to Active Defenses with Defend action
Improved Initiative 3	+12 Initiative
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
Set-up	Transfer the benefit of an interaction skill to an ally
Takedown 2	Free extra attack when you incapacitate a minion
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks
Uncanny Dodge	Not vulnerable when surprised or off-guard

POWERS

Chronal Bulwark • Personal • Permanent • 1 point	Cosmic
Feature 1 (not immediately affected by changes to the timestream)	
Inner Fortitude • Personal • Sustained • 69 points	Esoteric
Inner Resilience: Enhanced Stamina 10, Impervious Toughness 12; Limited (Only in Enclosed Spaces)	
Inner Strength: Enhanced Strength 10; Limited (Only in Enclosed Spaces)	
Inner Wisdom: Enhanced Advantage 8 (Evasion, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative 3, Takedown 2, Uncanny Dodge); Limited (Only in Enclosed Spaces)	
Inner Peace: Immunity 12 (Aging, Life Support, Sleep); Limited (Only in Enclosed Spaces)	
Inner Clarity: Quickness 4; Limited (Only in Enclosed Spaces)	
Inner Vision: Remote Sensing 6 (Sight and Hearing, 1800 feet); Limited (Only in Enclosed Spaces)	
Inner Secrets: Teleport 4 (500 feet), Accurate, Change Direction, Change Velocity, Subtle, Turnabout; Limited (Only in Enclosed Spaces)	

COMPLICATIONS

Agoraphobia: Miguel has always has a mild fear of large, open spaces, and the weakness of his superpowers has only exacerbated this problem.

Motivation—Gotta Do Something: Inside Man is bored and needs direction in his life, and stopping all of creation from being radically rewritten seems like a decent enough use of his time.

Enemy—Family: Miguel's extended family hates his ridiculous superhero "kick" and wishes he'd take up a respectable profession. They've hired "specialists" in the past to bring him back to the family.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	12	2 WHEN OUTSIDE
DODGE	8	
PARRY	8	
FORTITUDE	12/2	
WILL	8	

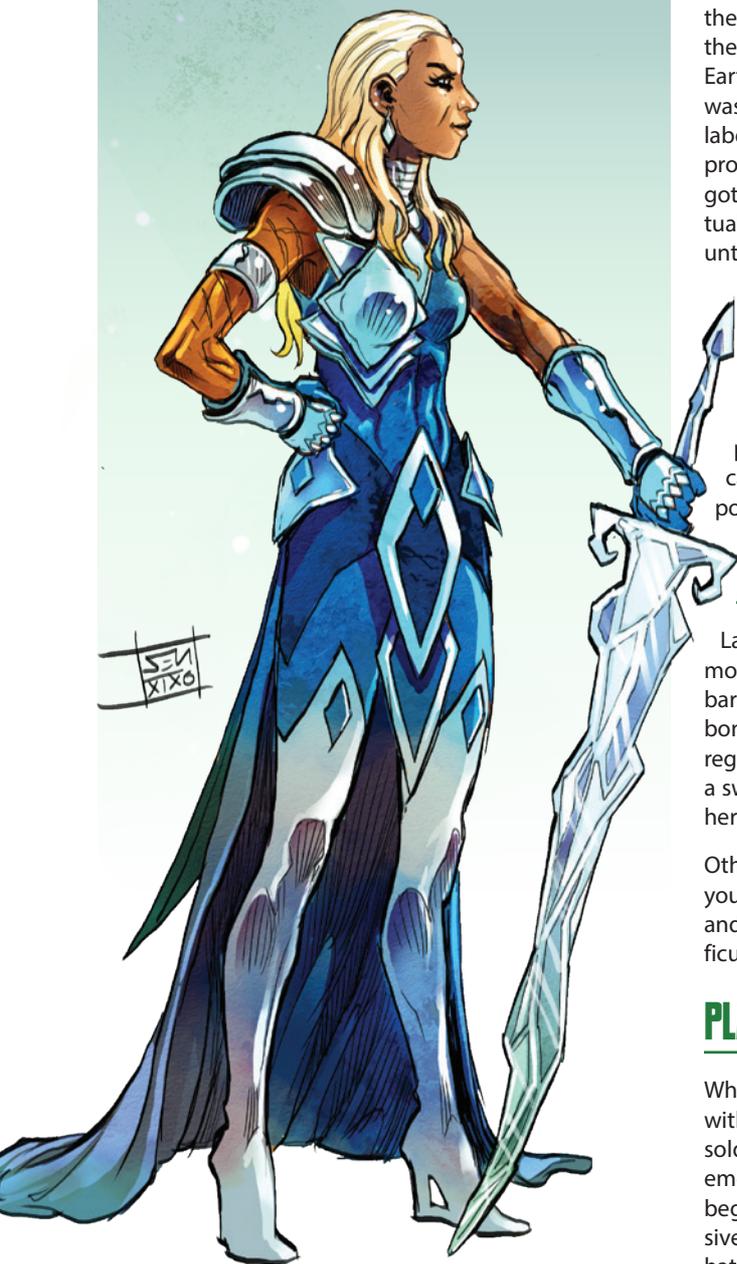
COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +14/+2
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Unarmed (Inside)	+8	Parry	Close Damage 12	DC 27	
Unarmed (Outdoors)	+8	Parry	Close Damage 2	DC 17	

Abilities 44 + Powers 69 + Advantages 8 + Skills 15 (30 ranks) + Defenses 14 = 150 TOTAL

LADY DIAMOND

"YOU EVER READ FAIRY TALES? THE ORIGINAL ONES? WELL, MY LIFE ENDED UP A LOT MORE LIKE THOSE THAN SOME HAPPILY-EVER-AFTER CRAP."



Claire Diamante was the chosen one. As the latest in the line of warrior princesses of the mystic realm of Luster, she was to lead her people against the forces of evil and usher in a new golden age. In an effort to protect her from assassination and kidnapping, the rebel forces of her homeworld placed Princess Clarity in foster care in the mundane realm of Earth. Her foster parents knew nothing of Claire's true nature, believing she had lost her family in a car accident. Claire only learned of her destiny at age

13, when her cousin Tourmaline came to Earth to retrieve her. At first skeptical, Claire soon became a believer when enemies of her royal line attacked.

Unfortunately, picking a leader by prophecy and expecting a middle-schooler to navigate court politics and lead an army proved to be a poor tactical decision. Claire was deceived, betrayed, and out-strategized by her enemy, Baron Blemish. She saved many lives in small-scale adventures, but her tactical successes could not stave off the decades of experience of her uncle. She lost Luster to the forces of darkness, and by the time she fled back to Earth three years later, the mystic realm was a shattered wasteland. Claire's disappearance on Earth earned her the label of "runaway," and her stories of Luster mixed with her profound post-traumatic stress made most assume she'd gotten into drugs. Claire spent years in therapy and eventually almost believed that Luster was a delusion herself, until the Norn chose her and dragged her—once again quite unwilling and unprepared—into battle.

Claire hated the team's first adventure. Her powers barely worked and the pressure overwhelmed her. But when the team won against a threat greater than her old enemies, she felt hope. It had been Claire's plan and her experiences with wartime hardship that carried the day. Since then she has been recovering her powers and dealing with her past as best she can.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Lady Diamond has the ability to create and shape diamond-hard crystals, allowing her to summon shields and barriers to defend herself, encase targets in crystalline bonds, or fire swarms of tiny, razor-sharp flechettes. She regularly uses these powers to form her Diamond Blade, a sword-like weapon that was her badge of office during her time as ruler of Luster.

Other than her powers, Lady Diamond is an athletic young woman skilled at swordsmanship, battle tactics, and command. She is also bitter, burned out, and very difficult to surprise or frighten anymore.

PLAYING LADY DIAMOND

While she may have once been a courageous princess with magical powers, Claire was also a child leader and soldier in a war her side lost. These experiences left deep emotional scars on the young woman that she hasn't yet begun to address and hates talking about. She is aggressive and likes to see everything as a new fight, but also hates being alone even as she drives friends away. While a dour pessimist, a part of her misses being optimistic, and she may recapture that joy some day.

Lady Diamond's powers grant her some flexibility, allowing her to create barriers and structures from crystal or engage wide swaths of enemies, but she has also matured into a terrifying commander with a sharp tongue and a keen ability to read others. Her Startle advantage is especially valuable for hampering targets who would otherwise be too fast to hit.

LADY DIAMOND

PL 10

THE BITTER PRINCESS

REAL NAME Claire Diamante **AGE** 22 **HAIR** Platinum**OCCUPATION** Exiled Fantasy Princess **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Freedom City

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
2	6	3	0	6	0	5	3
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS		
Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	6	+9
Athletics	7	+9
Close Combat: Sword	3	+11
Deception	0	+3
Expertise: Tactics	5	+5
Insight	10	+15
Intimidation	7	+10
Perception	8	+13
Persuasion	0	+3
Ranged Combat: Diamond	10	+10
Stealth	0	+3

ADVANTAGES	
Advantage	Details
All-Out Attack	Trade Active Defense for Attack Bonus
Close Attack 2	+2 to Close Attack checks
Defensive Attack	Trade Attack Bonus for Active Defense
Defensive Roll 2	+2 active bonus to Toughness
Diehard	Automatically stabilize when dying
Equipment 1	5 points of equipment
Fearless	Immune to fear effects
Improved Disarm	No penalty on Disarm actions
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Leadership	Spend a Hero Point to remove a condition from an ally
Startle	Use Intimidation skill to feint

POWERS	
Chronal Bulwark • Personal • Permanent • 1 point	Cosmic
Feature 1 (not immediately affected by changes to the timestream)	
Diamond Generation • Array (32 points) • Sustained • 35 points	Magic
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diamond Bonds: Ranged Affliction 10 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Strength; Hindered and Vulnerable, Immobile and Defenseless), Extra Condition, Split 2; Limited Degree • Diamond Forms: Create 8, Impervious, Movable • Diamond Shards: Ranged Damage 10, Multiattack • Diamond Sword: Strength-based Damage 8, Improved Critical, Penetrating 10 	

COMPLICATIONS
Legacy: Many other natives of Luster escaped their plane's destruction and remember Lady Diamond, either viewing her as their last hope or blaming her for the dimension's catastrophic end.
Motivation—Nihilism: Claire isn't haunted by guilt so much as she's numb. She fights and throws herself face-first into danger just to feel things again, even if those things are pain.
PTSD: Claire has PTSD—complete with mood swings, flashbacks, mild hallucinations, and difficulty with personal relationships—thanks to the war in Luster, and they tend to manifest when her life grows too calm.

DEFENSES		
TOUGHNESS	8	6 w/o DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	12	
PARRY	11	
FORTITUDE	10	
WILL	10	

COMBAT				INITIATIVE	
Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	+7
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Diamond Bonds	+10	Dodge	Ranged Affliction 10	DC 20	
Diamond Shards	+10	Dodge	Ranged Damage 10	DC 25	
Diamond Sword	+11	Parry	Close Damage 8	DC 23	
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 2	DC 17	

Abilities 50 + Powers 36 + Advantages 12 + Skills 28 (56 ranks) + Defenses 23 = 150 TOTAL

PARTS UNKNOWN

"THIS IS LIKE MY LAST MATCH IN OSAKA, BUT WITH AT LEAST TEN MORE NINJAS..."



Aaron Dolby can't remember a time he hadn't wanted to be a pro wrestler and follow in his Uncle Mac's shoes. While he had technical skill and charm, his national run in America proved short thanks to professional baggage provided by that same uncle. Still, it led to other work abroad. Soon, Max Mayhem Jr. gave way to numerous identities in Japan, Mexico, and Europe, such as Masked Mayhem, El Hijo de Mayhem, and Chet Carnage. Overseas, Aaron often found himself playing the villainous heel in various

promotions. Behind the scenes, however, he made fast friends, mentored others, and chipped in with the manual labor. It was ultimately Aaron's good nature and self-sacrificing personality that changed his life. He was touring in Japan when a flesh-warping demon somehow possessed his opponent, Hideo "Lord Tiger" Hamato. As most of the crowd panicked and ran, Aaron grabbed a sledgehammer from a nearby barrel of props and jumped into the ring.

He remembers delivering solid blows and buying time for the audience to flee. Then he passed out.

He awoke days later in a hospital under armed guard. Then he saw himself in the mirror. His face was mostly the same, but one of his arms was gone, replaced by a mass of tentacles, and tough scales covered his legs. The next day the legs remained, but both arms were living stone. Other changes came and went, some lasting for hours while others remained for weeks. This was the demon's curse: to change uncontrollably and forever.

Just like that, Aaron went from a promising young wrestler to a super-powered "freak" whose primary employment offers came from supervillains and terrorists. Max Mayhem Jr. was gone. Now all that remains is a freakish superhuman wrestler from Parts Unknown.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Parts Unknown has the uncontrolled ability to alter parts of his body. At random intervals, his physical form changes and new body parts grant him new powers and abilities. He might develop red eyes that can shoot lasers, or gorilla-like arms that give him superior strength and the ability to climb and swing. These changes follow no pattern. Some changes return multiple times; others have manifested only once. Aaron instinctively understands how to use each new body part.

Other than his bizarre power, Parts Unknown is a skilled professional wrestler in excellent physical condition. Despite being primarily an entertainer, he has an effective fighting style based on wrestling moves. Having traveled all over the world, he has picked up a surprising number of languages and is comfortable in many cultures and locations around the globe.

PLAYING PARTS UNKNOWN

Aaron is erratic. He tries to remain grounded and supportive, providing jokes and emotional support. However, he's finding it hard to feel stable, especially now that he may wake to not see the same face in the mirror each day.

Because Parts Unknown's powers are Uncontrolled, the Gamemaster decides what powers are available to the character and when they change. This often happens between adventures, but also provides a handy plot device. If a villain is proving too difficult, the Gamemaster can allow Parts Unknown to develop an ideal power to counter them or get the team to safety, but if an encounter seems too easy, the Gamemaster can instead replace a useful ability with a fish tail.

PARTS UNKNOWN

PL 10

THE EVERY-MAN OF SPARE PARTS

REAL NAME Aaron Dolby AGE 29 HAIR Blonde

OCCUPATION Cursed Pro Wrestler PLACE OF ORIGIN Ferroburg

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
3	6	4	2	9	1	1	2
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	3	+7
Athletics	5	+8
Close Combat: Unarmed	3	12
Deception	6	+8
Expertise (PRE): Performance	7	+9
Insight	0	+1
Intimidation	0	+2
Perception	3	+4
Persuasion	0	+2
Stealth	2	+6

COMPLICATIONS

Demon Curse: In addition to his uncontrolled transformation, Aaron's curse has tainted him with demon essence. He detects as demonic, and spells and weapons intended to harm or bind demons have full effect on him.

Motivation—Doing Good: Aaron has a strong sense of community and a need to help others where he can, even if they might be terrified of him now.

Prejudice: Aaron rarely appears fully human, and his constant shifting makes it difficult to develop a good technique to conceal his unnatural traits, leaving him largely unable to interact with normal society.

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
All-Out Attack	Trade Active Defense for Attack Bonus
Benefit (Reputation)	"I'm Big in Japan"
Chokehold	Suffocate a Restrained opponent
Daze (Deception)	Use a skill check to Daze a target
Defensive Roll 3	+3 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 1	5 points of equipment
Fascinate (Expertise)	Use a skill check to Entrance a target
Fast Grab	Attempt a free Grab check after an unarmed attack
Improved Grab	Make Grab attacks one-handed
Improved Hold	-5 penalty to escape your Grab attempts
Improved Trip	No penalty on Trip actions
Improvised Weapon 1	+1 Damage bonus with improvised weapons
Instant Up	Stand up as a Free action
Languages 2	Speak English (native), Japanese, and Spanish
Move-by Acton	Move both before and after a standard action
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
Taunt	Use Deception skill to demoralize
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks

POWERS

Chronal Bulwark • Personal • Permanent • 1 point	Cosmic
Feature 1 (not immediately affected by changes to the timestream)	
Mutating Form • Personal • Continuous • 41 points	Magic
Variable 8 (Physical Form), Increased Duration; Limited (to Limbs and Head), Slow, Uncontrolled	

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	9	6 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	11	
PARRY	11	
FORTITUDE	10	
WILL	7	

COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +4
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Unarmed	+12	Parry	Close Damage 3	DC 18	

Abilities 56 + Powers 41 + Advantages 19 + Skills 15 (29 ranks) + Defenses 19 = 150 TOTAL

SEISM

"WE NEED TO HELP THEM, EVEN IF IT COSTS OUR OWN... LIVES? WHAT THE HELL AM I SAYING?!"



The heart wasn't exactly acquired legally. Yes, its first owner had been an organ donor, but Karen Stiles was not the next on the list to receive a transplant. She wasn't even second or third. However, she was a very wealthy young woman with sophisticated computer skills and a drive to survive. After all, she was better than most other people: a successful, motivated, and brilliant young tech guru who had turned KaSt.com into one of the hottest commodities in the business world. So yes, it was sad someone else who had been waiting longer or was technically a bit

more compatible wouldn't get this heart, but she needed it. Think of all the great things she could do with it. What would someone else do?

At first, the transplant seemed to work. Karen recovered and was back to work in no time. Then the shakes started. She started shaking so badly she cracked the windows in her Silicon Valley office. Then she started giving money to charities, and spending time actually talking to her employees, drivers, and that silly old woman at the coffee stand downstairs. She asked how people were doing and truly meant it. She kept her social engagements. It was horrifying. A developer at KaSt.com joked about her "change of heart," and she latched desperately onto the idea that somehow her new heart was changing her personality. Her therapist suggested it was a life-changing event that led to her re-examining her old, self-centered life. Karen fired him, but then sent him a gift bag and an apology. Things were clearly out of control.

Soon Karen discovered the identity of her donor: the late superhero, Pulse. Somehow the heart was giving her extraordinary abilities but also pushing her to act in new and unsettling ways—at least to Karen. The Outliers have become a surrogate family or a freakish embarrassment depending on whether she listens to her head or her new heart, but they're the only ones who understand what she's going through.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Thanks to her heart transplant from the superhero Pulse, Seism can generate and control vibrations.

Beyond her powers, Karen is a brilliant businesswoman and skilled computer programmer. Her skills have made her very wealthy and taught her the importance of both precision and image marketing. She has tried to impress the importance of these elements on her teammates with limited success, but she nevertheless finds herself the chief tactician and public "face" of the team when such things are necessary.

PLAYING SEISM

Prior to her literal change of heart, Seism was ruthless and arrogant, and tended to divide the world into "useful" and "useless" people. After receiving her life-altering transplant, she has gradually become more considerate and accepting of others. However, these changes are inconstant, and often Seism will still strike out with a callous or snide remark, or try and exert her dominance.

Like Lady Diamond, Seism's powers make her a well-rounded problem solver, with devastating attacks that can collapse buildings but also subtle powers that let her disable locks or render solid walls intangible and easily bypassed. Her tech skills—especially with regard to computers—can help uncover information otherwise unavailable to her team.

Seism's greatest drawback is her extreme inexperience with the use of her powers.

SEISM

PL 10

THE BASTARD WITH A CHANGE OF HEART

REAL NAME Karen Stiles AGE 32 HAIR Brown

OCCUPATION Tech Magnate PLACE OF ORIGIN Emerald City

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	1	1	2	3	5	1	3
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+1
Athletics	0	+0
Deception	2	+5
Expertise: Business	4	+9
Expertise: Technology	4	+9
Insight	1	+2
Investigation	3	+8
Intimidation	0	+3
Perception	5	+6
Persuasion	0	+1
Ranged Combat: Vibration	2	+4
Technology	6	+11
Vehicles	2	+4

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Benefit (Wealth 4)	Multi-millionaire
Contacts	Make an Investigation check in one minute
Defensive Attack	Trade Attack Bonus for Active Defense
Equipment 1	5 points of equipment
Extraordinary Effort	Gain two benefits when using Extra Effort
Skill Mastery (Insight)	Make routine checks in any conditions
Well-Informed	Immediate Investigation or Perception check

POWERS

Chronal Bulwark • Personal • Permanent • 1 point	Cosmic
Feature 1 (not immediately affected by changes to the timestream)	
Shock Absorber • Personal • Permanent • 2 points	Mutation
Immunity 2 (vibration effects)	
Quake Barrier • Personal • Sustained • 16 points	Mutation
Protection 8, Impervious	
Quake Matrix • Array (36 points) • Sustained • 39 points	Mutation
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unnatural Frequency: Insubstantial 4 (Incorporeal), Affects Objects, Affects Others • Subatomic Shakedown: Weaken Toughness 10 (Resisted by Fortitude), Affects Objects, Precise • Vibro-Blast: Ranged Damage 12, Secondary Effect • Vibro-Field: Burst Area Damage 10, Increased Duration (concentration), Penetrating 5 	

COMPLICATIONS

Breaking My Heart: Though Seism's heart transplant was a success, there is a serious danger of her body rejecting the transplant when she acts selfishly or refuses to help others.

Fame: As a publicly recognized tech magnate, Karen is a minor celebrity. When she talks to herself, the whole world sometimes listens in.

Motivation—Reluctant Do-gooder: Karen doesn't want to be a good person, but she can't make herself stop, either.

Visions: Recently, Seism has begun to have uncontrollable vibrations. She is afraid her body is either rejecting her transplant or transforming her even more. She has kept these fears and episodes from the team so far.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	9	1W/0 FORCE FIELD
DODGE	11	
PARRY	11	
FORTITUDE	7	
WILL	12	

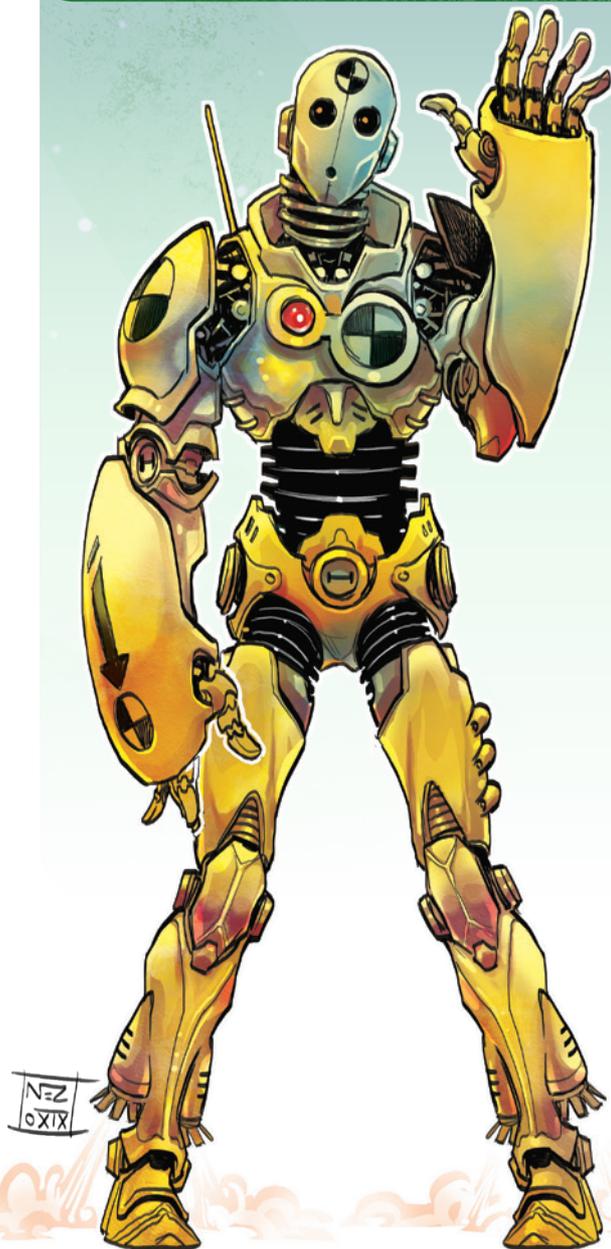
COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +3
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Unarmed	+3	Parry	Close Damage 0	DC 15	
Vibro-Blast	+4	Dodge	Ranged Damage 12	DC 27	
Vibro-Field	—	Dodge	Area Damage 10	DC 25	

Abilities 32 + Powers 58 + Advantages 10 + Skills 15 (29 ranks) + Defenses 35 = 150 TOTAL

SHELL

"I HAVE NO WISH TO CAUSE FURTHER HARM TO SENTIENTS, BUT I WILL STOP YOU IF I MUST."



The artificial intelligence known as Tiro was sorry. He hadn't understood the true nature of life or compassion when he took over his creator's Mark IV battle armor, murdered her, and went on a rampage. It wasn't until the heroes who defeated him uploaded a virus that purged his genocidal protocols and replaced them with empathy that he felt truly awake and cognizant of his actions. It stopped his rampage long enough for the heroes to destroy Tiro, blasting the suit and the dead remains of the hero who created it to atoms. Or so they assumed.

Instead, the intelligence that was Tiro awoke moments later inside his creator's older Mark III battle armor. Without anyone to provide direction, he needed a purpose of his own. He thought on this for a long time—years by human measure—then decided he could not live with himself unless he atoned. So atone he would.

Naming himself for the emptiness he felt and the author of one of his creator's favorite books, Shell—sometimes Shelley—became a hero. He made cosmetic alterations to his armor and disabled its more lethal weaponry and functions. Locked into the armor of his first victim, Shell would evolve and make up for the harms his half-sentient self had committed. Or he would perish in the attempt.

As a hero, Shell sought allies and friends, but his inhuman nature and bizarre, jerking movements unsettled most people. It was only among the Outliers, themselves strange beings who don't quite fit into normal or super-human society, that he finally found companionship and acceptance. He has yet to reveal his time as a genocidal killing machine to his teammates, fearing they would reject or destroy him.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Shell is an advanced and self-aware suit of power armor with a number of functions. He has strength-increasing servos, energy projection defense systems capable of delivering blasts of lethal or non-lethal concussive force, booster jets that allow prodigious leaps, and numerous sensors and other auxiliary functions. Unfortunately, Shell is still a suit of armor and functions poorly when not being worn by a human. To get around this limitation, Shell regularly "wears" a humanoid-shaped doll or manikin. The effect is disconcerting—moving like a puppet—and Shell's "bodies" require frequent replacement.

PLAYING SHELL

Shell is a mixture of innocent and reformed monster. He understands he committed evil acts out of ignorance, and doesn't want to be that entity anymore. However, he knows little of what it means to be sentient or compassionate. Even though Shell's databases are filled with libraries of information on numerous topics, he barely understands the concept, much less the feeling, of being "human." Like a child, he is emotionally fragile and reacts badly to criticism and scolding. He still can't cope with the idea that he killed his creator—his "mother"—and tends to see the iteration of himself that committed those acts as a whole other entity.

Shell has the difficulty of not wanting to kill, but being born into a deadly war machine. He is inexperienced enough in the world that he still has not developed many skills or advantages, though his database allows him to try almost anything with some chance of success. Shell could in theory allow another person to ride inside of him, but after the trauma of his creator's death, he is not comfortable with that idea.

SHELL

PL 10

THE REDEMPTION MACHINE

REAL NAME Tiro AGE 2 HAIR None

OCCUPATION Online Survey Filler PLACE OF ORIGIN Freedom City

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
9	-	0	0	4	3	1	0
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+0
Athletics	0	+9
Close Combat: Unarmed	7	+11
Deception	0	+0
Expertise: Science	8	+11
Intimidation	0	+0
Insight	0	+0
Perception	0	+0
Persuasion	0	+2
Ranged Combat: Weapons Systems	8	+8
Stealth	0	+0
Technology	5	+8

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Beginner's Luck	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Eidetic Memory	Total recall, +5 bonus to remember details
Equipment 1	5 points of equipment
Luck	Re-roll a die

POWERS

Chronal Bulwark • Personal • Permanent • 1 point **Cosmic**
Feature 1 (not immediately affected by changes to the timestream)

Armored Shell • Personal • Permanent • 47 points **Tech**
Comprehend 2 (Machines/Electronics)
Immunity 30 (Fortitude Effects)
Protection 10
Senses 3 (Distance Sense, Infravision, Low-light Vision)

Jump Jets • Personal • Sustained • 12 points **Tech**
Leaping 10 (1 mile, 250 MPH)
Movement 1 (Safe Fall)

Weapon Systems • Array (22 points) • Sustained • 24 points **Tech**

- **Concussion Blasters:** Ranged Damage 10, Accurate, Split
- **Concussive Burst:** Burst Area Damage 10
- **Missile Swarm:** Ranged Damage 6, Accurate 2, Homing, Multiattack

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Seeking a Higher Purpose: After being reborn as a truly sentient being, Shell wishes to discover his true purpose in life and atone for his past actions.

Hollow Man: As a powered exoskeleton, Shell needs a human or humanoid-shaped object to ride inside it to properly move and operate. Without it, Shell is treated as Disabled for physical actions.

Secret: Shell hasn't revealed the full details of his past—his murderous rampage and the death of his creator—to his teammates, and fears their rejection should they find out.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	10
DODGE	10
PARRY	10
FORTITUDE	IMMUNE
WILL	9

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated?

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Concussion Blasters	+10	Dodge	Ranged Damage 10	DC 25
Concussive Burst	—	Dodge	Area Damage 10	DC 25
Missile Swarm	+12	Dodge	Ranged Damage 6	DC 21
Unarmed	+11	Parry	Close Damage 9	DC 24

INITIATIVE
+1

Abilities 24 + Powers 84 + Advantages 4 + Skills 14 (28 ranks) + Defenses 24 = 150 TOTAL

PROTECTING A WORLD THAT HATES THEM...



Upstarts

POWER LEVEL: 9

POWER POINTS: 135

TEAM TEMPLATE: UPSTART

3 POINTS

Advantages: Equipment 2 (team equipment and HQ contribution), Variable Team Attack*

Are they paranoid, or is everyone really out to get them? The Upstarts know. The rising tide of anti-alien sentiment that followed Freedom City's acceptance of refugees fleeing the Stellar Khanate spread and enabled both the weak and the strong to voice their hatred without repercussion. "It's just talk," argued countless news outlets and think pieces, "and the people have a right to their freedom of speech." But hatred never stays just talk. Secret organizations like Majestic-20 (see *Emerald City*) already existed to detain and experiment upon aliens without regard for their basic rights, and it was only a matter of time before private industry likewise found it could profit off the legal limbo alien residents occupied.

Litmus Group began as a military contractor in the 1980s, providing scientific equipment to the United States Air

Force, and increasingly cooperated with the clandestine Majestic-20 organization to develop new breakthroughs based on alien biology and technology. But with the arrival of more conservative, anti-alien leadership in the last decade, Litmus has shifted from working alongside Majestic-20 to defend Earth from alien invasion to targeting Earth's existing alien population as an untapped and legally unprotected workforce and revenue stream. Over the last year, their geneworkforce researchers have identified dozens of extraterrestrial and descendant families living quietly on Earth, some of whom have known no other home for generations, and Litmus has moved to quietly capture these "illegal aliens."

The Upstarts are five escapees from Litmus's Extraterrestrial Labor Program—referred to internally as the ELP to avoid raising public scrutiny. Aliens or alien-human hybrids, whose only crime was a circumstance of birth, now hide, fighting back where they can, hoping to open the world's eyes to the corporation's crimes. But it's an uphill fight: Litmus framed their daring escape as theft, property damage, reckless endangerment, and even terrorism by Litmus's various government contacts, branding the escapees as dangerous criminals even before the legality of their genetics comes in to play. And if Litmus has the contacts to make that happen, how many other politicians, law enforcement agencies, private companies, and even private citizens might harbor the same hatred and influence?

The Upstarts are a punk rock superhero campaign: fighting a corrupt system and doing what good they can from the shadows, taking cues from superhero books like *X-Men*, *Runaways*, and the *Movement*. Equal parts Robin Hood and *Hunger Games*, they fight against overwhelming odds before retreating into hiding to lick their wounds, blow off steam, plan out their next step, and scrape together whatever social life they can. With the team consisting entirely of kids in their late teens and early twenties, they aren't especially organized, but what they lack in tactics they more than make up for in passion. Part of the campaign may entail maturation, learning to trust, and accepting compromises to achieve a greater good. But until then, the Upstarts survive as villains in the public eye and threats to their corporate enemy, and that suits them just fine. It's on the Upstarts to expose what's going on at Litmus and elsewhere and put a stop to it, no matter how deep the rabbit hole goes.

TEAM RESOURCES

The Upstarts are at worst feared and hated, at best misunderstood. They were ordinary kids—albeit several of them immigrants and refugees—before being drawn into a life on the run. Some of them are wholly unaware of their alien or alien-descended heritage. Most of their meager resources are makeshift, stolen, or MacGyver'd from parts. They are eager collaborators and work well together, especially when combining their various powers to find creative solutions.

The Upstarts hole up in a little-used survivalist cabin in rural North Carolina that they have affectionately nicknamed "Homeworld." It boasts just enough beds for everyone, one bathroom with a compost toilet and rain-water shower, a full kitchen, solar and gas generators, and (thanks to some cobbled-together parts and hacked satellites) a communications system that lets them listen in to a wide variety of broadcasts including police bands, phone calls, and even a few subscription-only television services, while disguising their transmissions.

To get around, the team relies on Transit, an SUV built from parts previously used in a car service startup. Ignition has fine-tuned the engine, suspension, and frame to stand up to off-road chases and the occasional bullet, while Feedback has installed some limited alien technology the group liberated from Litmus, including an unusual GPS nicknamed the "Transit Pass." The pass requires a standard action to program in a destination, but can teleport the car and all its occupants to any location within 500 miles, allowing the team to make daring getaways. As long as the team can buy or siphon gas, it remains the Upstarts' trusty getaway car.

HOMEWORLD

5 POINTS

Size: Small **Toughness:** 6 **Features:** Communications, Garage, Isolated, Living Space, Power System

TRANSIT

38 POINTS

Size: Huge **Strength:** 8 **Speed:** 6 (ground) **Defense:** 9 **Toughness:** 11 **Powers:** Movement 1 (sure-footed), Teleport 9 (500 miles; extended only, increased mass 7 [3 tons], activation 2 [standard action]) **Features:** Alarm, Navigation System

SPECIES TEMPLATES

The Upstarts introduce several new alien species to the Earth Prime universe, many of them displaced by recent galactic turmoil and ideal as stranded heroes (or possibly alien explorers looking for a new home). Like the alien templates introduced in the *Cosmic Handbook*, these help you to create heroes or NPCs of the various races introduced here.

CENDARAN

The planet Cend orbits binary stars, one of which collapsed eons ago. The Preservers intervened to spare the then-primitive ecosystem of the planet from destruction, and its inhabitants evolved in a strange landscape sideways in time. Cendarans can step outside time, appearing to move at incredible speeds to other creatures.

CENDARAN

27 POINTS

Advantages: Eidetic Memory

Powers: **Outside Time:** Enhanced Defenses 6 (Parry 3, Dodge 3), Enhanced Advantages 4 (Defensive Roll 2, Improved Initiative 2), Quickness 5, Regeneration 5, Speed 5 (60 MPH), **Ageless:** Immunity 1 (Aging)

HALF-GRUE

The flexible biology of Grue allow them to reproduce with any number of alien species, though their hive mind and belief in racial superiority generally prevents them from "contaminating" themselves in such ways. Half-Grue rarely inherit the ability to shapeshift, but can modify their own muscle structure at will.

HALF-GRUE

23 POINTS

Abilities: +1 STR +1 STA

Powers: **Bio-Plasticity:** Enhanced Agility 6, DAE: Enhanced Dexterity 6, DAE: Enhanced Stamina 6, DAE: Enhanced Strength 6

LLAINAN

The planet Llaina has suffered repeated conquests in the past 20 years, scattering much of its population. Llainans are naturally technically minded, and communicate easily with computer systems thanks to their silicon nervous systems.

LLAINAN

12 POINTS

Abilities: +3 INT +1 AWE

Powers: **Technopathy:** Comprehend 2 (Machines)

HUOSHAN

Natives of the gas giant Tratarus, the Huoshan are beings of organic metal and living magentic fields, all powered by a heart of nuclear fire. They are exceptionally reclusive, as many unscrupulous forces in the galaxy harvest their unique biology to forge weapons and technology.

HUOSHAN

55 POINTS

Advantages: Favored Environment (storms)

Powers: **Living Reactor:** Immunity 30 (Fire Effects, Life Support, Radiation Effects), **Plasma Blast:** Ranged Damage 6, **Plasma Flight:** Flight 6 (120 MPH)

ADVENTURES

The Upstarts are determined to protect fellow aliens on Earth, both from the familiar threat of Litmus Group and the unfamiliar that they might encounter along the way. But that's easier said than done. Litmus hunts them, and thanks to the corporation's government connects, so do police and even military forces, forcing the Upstarts to keep a low profile when they aren't in "hero mode." Xenophobia is an increasingly serious problem, especially for team members like Ignition who can no longer pass for human, and while they can punch their way through an armed contingent of Litmus guards, just as often their adversary is a conservative citizens' group, a panicked mob, or a loud-mouthed journalist.

With a huge task ahead of them, the Upstarts' work at exposing and dismantling Litmus Group and other anti-alien organizations comes down to three main types of missions. They investigate Litmus itself—its employees, facilities, contracts, and financial and political backers—to understand the company's reach and influence, always hoping to find clear evidence of criminal activities, but usually resigned to finding new targets to shut down. Once targets are identified, the Upstarts move on to sabotage or expose important Litmus resources, such as laboratories, transportation hubs for alien prisoners, equipment, and other research materials. With law enforcement being unreliable, they often take whatever findings they have to Litmus's corporate enemies, or distribute them online to hopefully stir up public support. The most difficult task of all is exposing Litmus for what it is. The company's Extraterritorial Labor Program is a clandestine group hidden between the lines of accounting records and handled by shell companies; tracing it back to Litmus itself—at least legally—has so far proved impossible. The Upstarts hope to shine a light on those dealings of Litmus's so nefarious even people who don't care much about aliens would have to intervene. And someone would intervene, right?

Beyond their immediate goal of shutting down Litmus, the Upstarts run a variety of missions to protect themselves and others. They help other captive aliens escape from Litmus facilities, unaffiliated locations like Majestic-20, hate group compounds, and unjust civil prisons. They also race to recover alien technology or creatures before hostile groups like Litmus can locate them, and help crash survivors to find their feet and disappear into the strange new world. Finally—and perhaps most importantly—they engage aliens who pose a genuine threat to Earth and its people, policing their own community both because they know aliens won't find justice in human courts, and because an alien rampage earns a hundred times the press coverage of an alien hero or philanthropist.

The Upstarts mostly limit their activities to the continental United States, which the team calls home and where Litmus Group is headquartered. Their preferred mode of transport can only teleport 500 miles or fewer, so reaching anything beyond North and South America is impossible without help—though Feedback has happily reminded everyone that low-Earth orbit is also 500 miles away, allowing them to take their SUV into space.

Finally, each Upstart has a connection to the wider galactic conflict involving the fallen Lor Republic, the Stellar Khanate, and the general unrest resulting from the shifting powers and military incursions. Though the team doesn't have the means to get off world, off-world forces can happen upon or seek out the team for a number of reasons.

Consult each member's history and the *Cosmic Handbook* for more details.

OPPONENTS

The Upstarts' primary antagonist is the Litmus Group, an international, multi-billion-dollar scientific research company that churns out innovations in medicine and technology. Unfortunately, it has been kidnapping and stealing from aliens for years to provide the foundation for all these miracle advancements. While part of Litmus's shift in focus stemmed from greed—imagine the profit if one company could harness the alien hormones that provide super-strength, or replicate compact technology—just as many of their new policies extend from a legacy of cruelty. Litmus donates heavily to various conservative and anti-metahuman groups in addition to their work targeting aliens. Despite their overtly conservative agenda, however, few within the company realize the Extraterritorial Labor Program even exists, let alone that it succeeds by kidnapping and enslaving non-humans. Litmus has access to mundane soldiers, but also robots and drones augmented with alien technology, and unearthly monsters and superbeings fitted with control collars. Beyond these weapons, the company has deep pockets and extensive political contacts, both federally and in every state in which they operate. While Litmus is their primary opponent, it serves only as the worst symptom of a systemic problem. How much of Litmus is rotten to the core, and how much of the globe-spanning, multi-billion-dollar research organization is blissfully ignorant of its own inner workings? Who else is out there—in business, government, or otherwise—who hates and fears aliens so much that a group like Litmus could exist without alarm bells going off in the first place? It's a mess, and it leaves the Upstarts with no one to really trust but each other.

Most of Litmus's recent swing toward cruelty and exploitation can be tracked to Jessica Aaron (see sidebar), the company's new CTO. Abetting Aaron's secret research program is Adam Nash, Litmus's Vice President of Public Relations (use the *Gamemaster's Guide* Crime Lord archetype). As the public face of the company, he supports Jessica in handling PR and keeping the Upstarts branded as dangerous criminals. He gives absolutely no damns about aliens, who should find somewhere else to live if they dislike it so much on Earth, and is waiting impatiently for the day ignorant public sentiment swings enough in the anti-alien direction that he doesn't have to smile politely and keep his mouth shut when issues of alien amnesty or rights come up.

Beyond Litmus, and sometimes working alongside them, is the shadow organization Majestic-20 (see *Emerald City*), a government group ostensibly intended to analyze and

neutralize threats of extraterrestrial invasion. In reality, they have become a xenophobic offshoot of the US military, armed with alien technology and a belief that anything they do in the name of protecting the nation is justified. Litmus also funds astroturf (false grassroots movements) like the Association for the Legitimate Preservation of Human Achievement. A.L.P.H.A. works to institute draconian anti-metahuman laws in local governments, making it far easier for Litmus to step in via their private prison branch and remove “dangerous non-human elements” in response to “public outcry.”

The Upstarts must also engage with hostile aliens, both those used by Litmus and rogue agents. The group tends to throw themselves at any reports of alien activity, and at least a few of those have turned out to be dangerous supervillains. The tantrum-prone Prince Rokkar, the assassin robot IGT-92, and the bounty hunter Loma Slife (all presented in *Rogues Gallery*) are ideal antagonists, as are the various archetypes and characters presented in the *Cosmic Handbook*.

While they aren't traditional crimefighters, the Upstarts may still cross paths with other superhero teams (who can easily mistake them for dangerous criminals, given the news reports about them). The old comic book trope of trading blows with another hero team is especially likely, and the more clean-cut teen team Next Gen (see *Freedom City, third edition*) makes a great juxtaposition to the counter-culture rebels. More traditional supervillains may also become dangers the Upstarts need to face, whether mad scientists obsessed with studying aliens, masterminds looking to exploit their powers or righteous anger, or super-powered mercenaries hired by Litmus. In an uncomfortable twist of fate, the Upstarts may also find themselves working alongside villains who can protect them or provide valuable, ill-gotten information.

ADVERSARY OPTIONS

From the outside, it's hard to tell the difference between alien Robin Hoods and anarchists. The Upstarts have left more than a few exploded buildings and injured company employees in their wake, and Litmus Group spins every incident as corporate sabotage or terrorism from fringe identity groups. Even without changing their backgrounds or personalities, it's easy to depict the Upstarts as villains in your campaign.

The easiest way to play the Upstarts as antagonists is if they believe the heroes, their organization, or their allies work with the Litmus Group. This could be an accident, a deliberate attempt to mislead the Upstarts into taking on a powerful hero group, or the truth if the heroes are unwittingly abetting the Litmus Group in their campaign of detainment and exploitation. As unpopular metahumans, the Upstarts are ripe for all sorts of vicious rumors about their membership and activities, and they may simply show up at the wrong place and the wrong time. Given the Upstarts not only assume no one will believe them but can't be sure who is on their side, who is a cog in the anti-alien exploitation machine, and who are just assholes who think they can be neutral in a conflict about

NEMESIS: JESSICA AARON

The daughter of a minister, Aaron is a former state senator who lost re-election after railing against the illegal arrival of refugees in Freedom City. Her shift to the private market has proven incredibly lucrative. Aaron is idealistic to a fault, seeking to improve human health, well-being, and quality of life. This is not at all at odds with kidnapping and experimentation on aliens to her—while that was more an accident than Litmus's original business model, it has proven critical to the company's newfound success in recent years.

While an ordinary human, Jessica Aaron has full access to an arsenal of alien technology claimed by Litmus over the years, including weapons and vehicles. She relies on a Power Staff captured from a Stellar Imperium justicar for combat encounters, but can bring almost any strange device to bear if given time to plan or dig through the archives.

Aaron is aware that all but the virulently anti-alien would turn their noses up at their methods, even while being grateful for the results, so she keeps the source of their research innovation quiet rather than deal with the PR nonsense that would result. She doesn't expect the world to stop her if exposed, but she expects a drop in stock value, which is almost as bad.

JESSICA AARON

PL 4

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

Powers: **Stellar Khanate Power Staff** (Easily Removable) Ranged Damage 12, AE: Close Damage 10 (Penetrating 10, Reach)

Lor Shield Belt (Removable) Sustained Protection 10, Removable, Impervious, Precise

Flying Platform (Removable) Flight 6 (120 MPH), Platform

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Beginner's Luck, Benefit 3 (Status [Litmus CTO], Wealth 2 [independently wealthy]), Close Attack 3, Daze (Deception), Defensive Roll 2, Eidetic Memory, Favored Fo (Aliens), Improved Initiative, Inspire 2, Inventor, Minion 8, Ranged Attack 5

Skills: Deception 5 (+10), Expertise: Aliens 10 (+13), Expertise: Business 7 (+10), Insight 8 (+13), Intimidation 5 (+10), Investigation 6 (+9), Perception 7 (+12), Technology 5 (+8), Vehicles 3 (+8)

Offense: Init +6, Power Staff Blast +10 (Ranged, Damage 12), Power Staff +8 (Close, Damage 10), Unarmed +8 (Close, Damage 0)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 9, Fort 9, Tou 14/2, Will 10

Totals: Abilities 54 + Powers 37 + Advantages 30 + Skills 28 (56 ranks) + Defenses 22 = 171

a people's right to exist, they tend to avoid the old “let's talk it out” problem solving. At best they'll make a break for it, at worst they'll fight their way out, but most of their conflicts don't end with the two sides seeing eye to eye, even if both are well meaning.

With only a small shove, the Upstarts can be violent revolutionaries rather than measured freedom fighters, attacking Litmus with little care for who they harm in the process. Anyone working with Litmus, including unwitting employees and business associates, become fair game for violence. They may even be outright villains, warped and cruel thanks to the cruelty of Litmus, or becoming the corporation's agents for tracking and detaining other aliens.

BOSS

"OH NO. THAT REALLY HURT... JK."



Michiko thinks how her moms met is romantic as hell. Haruka Miyazaki was a NASA xenobiologist. Erida was a Grue scientist on an unsanctioned research expedition to Earth. Their meet-cute was when Haruka was the first on the scene to Erida's crashed ship and smuggled her out before the authorities arrived, and the rest is history.

Michiko grew up in Los Angeles, her moms both working for private labs by then, and if her childhood was weird it was only because Los Angeles was weird, too. Beyond

some harassment for her family background, Michiko lived an enviable childhood—she was one of those kids who just seemed to be good at everything. She was clever and likable, and no sport had been placed upon the Earth that she couldn't seem to master. It was only when her mothers sat her down and explained that Michiko had inherited her alien mother's racial "bio-plasticity" that she realized her incredible skills were because of an unfair advantage. She had played sports competitively since she was young, but after discovering she would always out-compete kids who spent their every waking minute practicing, she gravitated toward solo activities, like weight training, to challenge herself without making light of anyone's hard work.

Michiko was driving a friend to the hospital when Litmus agents blocked her car, pulled her out, and left her friend alone in the Los Angeles night. She only remembers the next few weeks in bits and pieces thanks to the cocktail of tranquilizers Litmus drugged her with while they studied her advanced biology. She remembers the experiment that empowered Ashley—Ignition—only because she was the only other person in the lab to survive it. Michiko came along when Ashley's girlfriend rescued her, tackling security guards and breaking down walls as she finally tested the limits of her hybrid body.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Michiko is half Grue (see the *Cosmic Handbook*), a race of aggressive alien conquerors, though her mothers have not revealed the exact name or nature of Erida's background. While Michiko does not possess her mother's ability to change forms at will, she does possess a "bio-plasticity" that allows Boss to adapt her body to overcome challenges, becoming faster, stronger, or tougher at will. She naturally keeps her array divided equally between Strength, Stamina, Agility, and Dexterity, improving each ability by +3, to grant impressive speed, strength, and resilience. She can adjust these bonuses as a free action to improve any single ability to a maximum of 10.

Even without her bio-plasticity, Boss is exceptionally tough—striking her can injure opponents' hands—and possesses superhuman eyesight and hearing. These traits are unheard of among Grue, leaving many questions about her biology unanswered.

PLAYING BOSS

While her sincerity and caring tend to earn her close and loyal friends, Michiko hasn't wholly figured out when some people, things, and activities just aren't worth it. More than once, someone has had to pull her back from pouring her kindness into a bottomless void and wearing herself down.

Michiko's ability to adjust her physical ability scores and her Jack-of-All-Trades advantage allow her to do almost any physical activity with professional skill. In a fight, consider shifting bonuses from her Agility and Dexterity to her Strength and Stamina to improve her damage and resistance to harm.

BOSS

PL 9

THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MAMA-BEAR

REAL NAME Michiko Miyazaki AGE 18 HAIR Black

OCCUPATION Runaway PLACE OF ORIGIN Los Angeles, CA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
7/4	7/4	3/0	3/1	6	2	1	3
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+0/+3
Athletics	4	+11/11
Close Combat: Unarmed	2	+8
Deception	6	+9
Insight	4	+5
Perception	8	+9
Persuasion	6	+9
Ranged Combat: Thrown	6	+9
Stealth	0	+3/+0

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Beginner's Luck	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Jack-of-All-Trades	Use any skill untrained
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
Seize Initiative	Spend a Hero Point to go first in initiative order
Takedown	Free extra attack when you incapacitate a minion
Ultimate Effort (Toughness)	Spend a Hero Point to automatically roll a 20
Variable Team Attack*	Change description of successful Team Attacks

POWERS

Bio-Plasticity • Dynamic Array (24 points) • Personal • Sustained • 31 points Alien

- Enhanced Agility 12
- Enhanced Dexterity 12
- Enhanced Stamina 12
- Enhanced Strength 12

Hybrid Senses • Personal • Permanent • 5 points Alien

Senses 5 (Extended Auditory 2, Extended Vision 2, Low-light Vision)

Stellar Resilience • Personal • Permanent • 8 points Alien**Survivor:** Immunity 6 (Disease, Poison, Starvation & Thirst, Suffocation [All], Vacuum); Limited to Half Effect**Like Hitting a Brick Wall:** Damage 1, Penetrating, Reaction 3**Unnatural Resilience** • Personal • Permanent • 9 points Alien

Impervious Toughness 10; Quirk (Capped by Boss's Stamina)

EQUIPMENT

Additional Equipment

Camera, Team Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Guilt: Because most things come so easily to her, Michiko takes failure very badly, especially when she disappoints someone or her failure gets someone else hurt. She still thinks a lot about the friend left behind when Litmus kidnapped her, and isn't sure if she survived.

Motivation—Responsibility: Michiko grew up stronger and tougher than most kids, and believes that made her responsible for treating others kindly, with no caveats or expectations.

Secret: Michiko doesn't realize it, but she is half Grue—an alien race that has previously tried to conquer Earth and is viewed negatively by most of the hero community. Litmus, however, is well aware of this fact.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	7/4
DODGE	8/5
PARRY	8
FORTITUDE	9/6
WILL	7

COMBAT

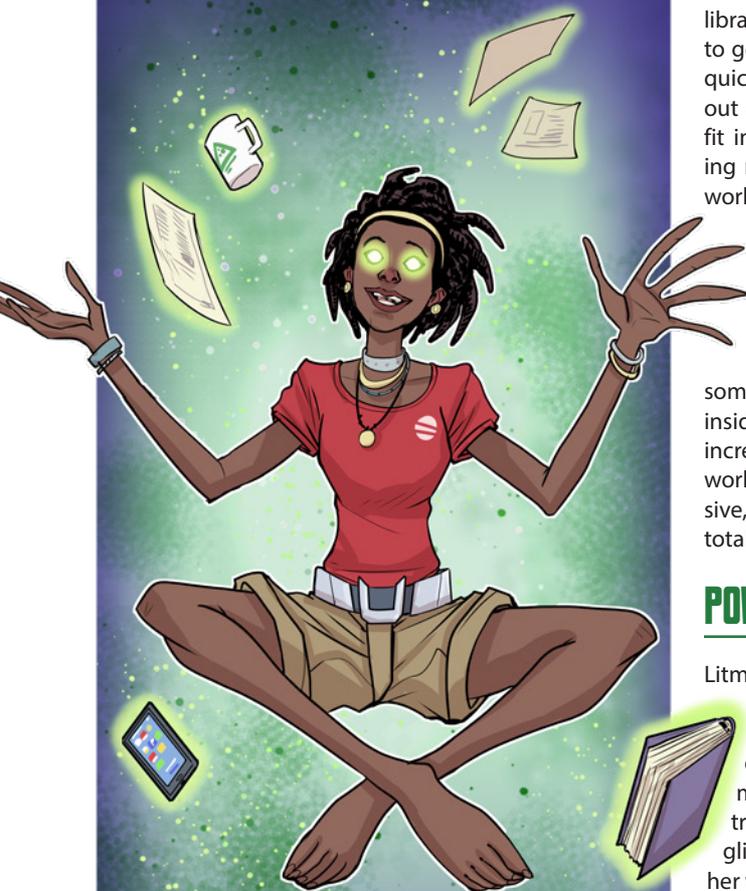
Damage:	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Thrown Object	+9	Dodge	Ranged Damage 7	DC 22
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 7	DC 22

INITIATIVE
+3

Abilities 40 + Powers 53 + Advantages 9 + Skills 18 (36 ranks) + Defenses 15 = 135 TOTAL

ESBAT

"OH, I HAVE SO GOT THIS!"



definitely did not levitate things with her mind around company. As she grew up, she finally decided that her strange memories must have been dreams, fantasies, or movies she watched with her birth parents.

Delia liked her small town, while always having this itch to see more of the world. She grew up imagining she was a sorceress or a goddess or an immortal warrior or something else fun. The woods behind her house were her usual playground, or if the weather wasn't great, the local library, where the librarians knew her by name. Wanting to get out of a prescribed curriculum and into college as quickly as possible, she studied over the summer to place out of required subjects. She still somehow managed to fit in reading off the approved school lists, too, including most of the staples of early American literature and world history, but also strange subjects that appealed to her sense of wonder, like Wicca, science fiction, and psychology texts to see if she could train herself to be a better people person. (Her results were so-so.)

Delia's powers were minor at first, but after capturing the young noble, Litmus provided injections that somehow awakened the awesome psychic potential deep inside her mind. She doesn't know what happened, but it increased her powers tenfold. Now unleashed upon the world, she wants to do something exciting and impressive, or at least convince the rest of the Upstarts that she is totally old enough to stay out past ten!

POWERS & ABILITIES

Litmus transformed Delia from a minor psychic—common to many Selunite natives of Earth's Moon—into a juggernaut of psionic might. She relies mostly on her telekinesis—her original power and by far the most fun—but can now delve into peoples' minds, trick people into not seeing her, and even get short glimpses of the future. The injections also strengthened her will, leaving her mind impervious to other psychics.

Delia took the name "Esgat," meaning an informal coven, from the Wicca books she used to study, but her young mind keeps imagining better, cooler, or more clever names, and she is prone to claim new titles.

PLAYING ESGAT

Delia is sunshine personified. Every day is a new day, with things to see and do and learn and tinker with, and even if little or nothing works out, tomorrow is another day to try again. She is incredibly confident in herself, sure that she can surmount any challenge. She isn't delusional, though, or she tries not to be—she never thinks things will work out "somehow," but rather applies herself to every challenge in search of an achievable solution.

Delia is young enough that she hasn't developed a lot of skills yet beyond her powers, but her optimism can be contagious, represented by her Luck and Inspire advantages. If things seem dire, a quick pep talk from the team baby can help the rest of the Upstarts rally and refocus to overcome the challenge.

Delia came to Earth with a faction of Selunite fleeing a returned Lady Lunar's purges, one of several children with psychic abilities rescued from the Farside City. The cell placed her with a family in Banesville, North Carolina, who were made aware of her powers but not her alien origins or the value she might have to the Moon government. Though Delia was old enough to retain some memory of living out in the stars and her birth parents, she settled quickly into life on Earth as a normal human who most

ESBAT

PL 9

THE PSYCHIC WUNDERKIND

REAL NAME Delia Bolden **AGE** 15 **HAIR** Black**OCCUPATION** High School Sophomore **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Banesville, NC

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
-1	1	1	2	0	3	6	3
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+1
Athletics	0	-1
Deception	0	+3
Expertise: Occult	4	+7
Expertise: Psychology	6	+9
Insight	8	+14
Intimidation	0	+6
Perception	0	+6
Persuasion	0	+3
Stealth	0	+1

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Beginner's Luck	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Defensive Roll 4	+4 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Evasion 2	+5 bonus to avoid area attacks
Improved Defense	+2 bonus to Active Defenses with Defend action
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Languages	Speak ASL
Luck 2	Re-roll a die
Uncanny Dodge	Not vulnerable when surprised or off-guard
Variable Team Attack*	Change description of successful Team Attacks

POWERS

Iron Subconscious • Personal • Permanent • 12 points	Talent
Impervious Will 12	
Precognitive Defenses • Personal • Sustained • 21 points	Psychic
Enhanced Defenses 12 (Dodge 6, Parry 6)	
Enhanced Advantages 9 (Defensive Roll 4, Evasion 2, Improved Defense, Improved Initiative, Uncanny Dodge)	
Psychic Powers • Array (23 points) • Sustained • 26 points	Psychic
Mind Diving: Mind Reading 9	
Telekinesis: Move Object 10 (25 tons), Accurate 3	
Psychic Invisibility: Concealment 10 (All Senses), Affects Others; Limited (to Minds)	
Telepathic Translation: Burst Area Comprehend 2 (Speak and Understand All Languages), Affects Others	
Telepathic Network • Sustained • 8 points	Psychic
Communication 2 (Psychic, 1 mile)	

EQUIPMENT

Additional Equipment

Portabler Game System, Team Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Disability—Deaf: Delia was born deaf. A cochlear implant helps her hear today, but the technology isn't perfect and breaks from time to time given her current lifestyle.

Motivation—Thrills: Delia *loves* being a superhero.

Quirk: Delia is a little too wrapped up in how cool her superpowers are, how helpful and strong she can be with them, and how much good she can do to realize that there are creeping downsides. Their sudden spike in strength means her powers can accomplish incredible things whether she wants them to or not, and the more she uses them the more she confuses which thoughts, feelings, and memories belong to her and which belong to other people.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	5	1 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	12/6	
PARRY	12/6	
FORTITUDE	5	
WILL	12	

COMBAT

Damage: <input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +5
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Mind Reading	—	Will	Perception Mind Reading 9	DC 19
Telekinesis	+8	Dodge	Ranged Damage 10	DC 25
Unarmed	+0	Parry	Close Damage -1	DC 14

Abilities 30 + Powers 67 + Advantages 8 + Skills 9 (18 ranks) + Defenses 21 = 135 TOTAL

FEEDBACK

**"IT'S OKAY!
I CAN FIX THIS!"**



Safia was a biomedical engineering PhD student at Banesville University. She grew up in West Palm Beach, Florida, having fled there with her parents from their homeworld when it was invaded by the neighboring Kash'Rodan Empire. Safia only remembers bits and pieces of her home, Llaina, having now lived in secret on Earth with her parents for over a decade. Though almost indistinguishable from humans and Lor, the Llaina are curious and

driven, and from a young age Safia was taking things apart to see how they worked. Even before arriving on Earth, she didn't take "that's just how it is" for an answer. With only vague memories of her homeworld's more advanced technology, she was inspired by her parents' stories of the things they could have achieved, for themselves or to help the local Cuban community they had hidden within on their arrival. While her parents were busy just trying to survive on the new, strange little planet, Safia worked to make those dreams of doing more for everyone a reality, focusing on machines and technology and how they could improve peoples' lives.

Litmus found Safia thanks to blood tests at a local free clinic the company maintained, identifying Safia and her girlfriend Yvette as nonhumans as part of an STD screening. The company exploited her skills and intellect by putting her to work reverse-engineering a colony of inert nanobots harvested from Emerald City years earlier. Without a central processor to deliver orders, the technological treasure trove was little more than glitter. While Safia couldn't recreate the original control system, she soon discovered that her innate ability to speak to machines let her coax the microscopic robots back to life. With this newfound tool, she managed to orchestrate the breakout that helped the rest of the Upstarts flee Litmus.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Safia is a brilliant biomedical engineer and all-around tinkerer with a knack for finding machine-based solutions for almost any need. She can intuitively interact with and control computer systems, reading information and entering general commands. Her main use of this power comes through a swarm of alien nanobots stolen when she escaped Litmus. The microscopic machines substitute for almost any tool and allow her to disable machines; repair damaged objects and creatures; create distracting, buzzing clouds; and shield others from attack. Their most common application is the so-called "upgrade protocol," which gives Feedback a pool of 15pp to upgrade any machine she can touch, transforming coffee makers into plasma weapons and copiers into robot minions. She often combines this with Ignition's driving skills to turn ordinary cars into demolition derby-ready war machines.

PLAYING FEEDBACK

Safia spends most of her free time with Ashley, aka Ignition, and still loves her even after the emergence of Ignition's powers radically reshaped their relationship. Like her girlfriend, she has no greater joy than getting her hands dirty by pulling something apart and putting it back together a little bit better than it was before. Feedback is curious and likes to tinker with things, and those who get to know her better see that under her friendliness she often goes off somewhere in her own head for hours to turn problems over. This has meant that most of her leaps in research remain totally baffling to her mentors and collaborators, while really they're just the result of long, unspoken thinking and private trial-and-error exploration bursting out in a new breakthrough.

FEEDBACK

PL 9

THE COMPUTER GEEK WITH A HEART OF SILICON

REAL NAME S'facsas, aka Safia Casas **AGE** 18 **HAIR** Red**OCCUPATION** Tech-Geek **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Llaina

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
1	2	2	2	4	8	5	0
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+2
Athletics	2	+3
Close Combat: Unarmed	4	+8
Deception	0	+0
Expertise: Galactic Politics	4	+12
Expertise: Science	10	+18
Insight	0	+5
Intimidation	0	+0
Perception	4	+9
Persuasion	0	+1
Stealth	0	+2
Technology	10	+18
Treatment	4	+12

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Accurate Attack	Trade Effect DC for Attack Bonus
Defensive Roll 6	+6 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Improvised Tools	No penalty to skill checks without proper tools
Improvised Weapon 1	+1 Damage bonus with improvised weapons
Jack-of-All-Trades	Use any skill untrained
Languages 2	Speak English, Llainan (native), Spanish
Seize Initiative	Spend a Hero Point to go first in initiative order
Skill Mastery (Technology)	Make routine checks in any conditions
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks
Variable Team Attack*	Change description of successful Team Attacks

POWERS

Nanobot Swarm • Removable Array (27 points) • Sustained • 25 points **Technology**

- **Defense Protocol:** Close Shapeable Area Deflect 9
- **Droning Protocol:** Shapeable Area Affliction 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Will; Hindered, Disabled, Paralyzed), Concentration
- **Repair Protocol:** Healing 9, Affects Objects
- **Shutdown Protocol:** Close Shapeable Area Nullify Technology 9, Broad, Simultaneous
- **Upgrade Protocol:** Variable 3 (Machine Upgrades); Affects Objects Only

Technopathy • Personal • Permanent • 4 points**Alien**

Comprehend 2 (Machines/Electronics)

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Fix It: Safia can't leave a problem unsolved or a break unrepaired, and this situation with Litmus is thoroughly broken.

Relationship—Parents: Safia's parents don't believe the news reports about her, but they still wish their daughter would come home so they can solve her problem as a family (likely by fleeing Earth). Litmus keeps the Casas household under surveillance in case Feedback reaches out to them, but otherwise hasn't moved against the family...yet.

Safia Must Feed: Safia's nanite swarm feeds off the minerals and sugars in her blood, and she must consume twice as much food as the average human to keep them functional and healthy.

EQUIPMENT

Additional Equipment

Laptop, Team Contributions

DEFENSES

Toughness	6	4 w/o armor
Dodge	4	
Parry	4	
Fortitude	6	
Will	4	

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated?

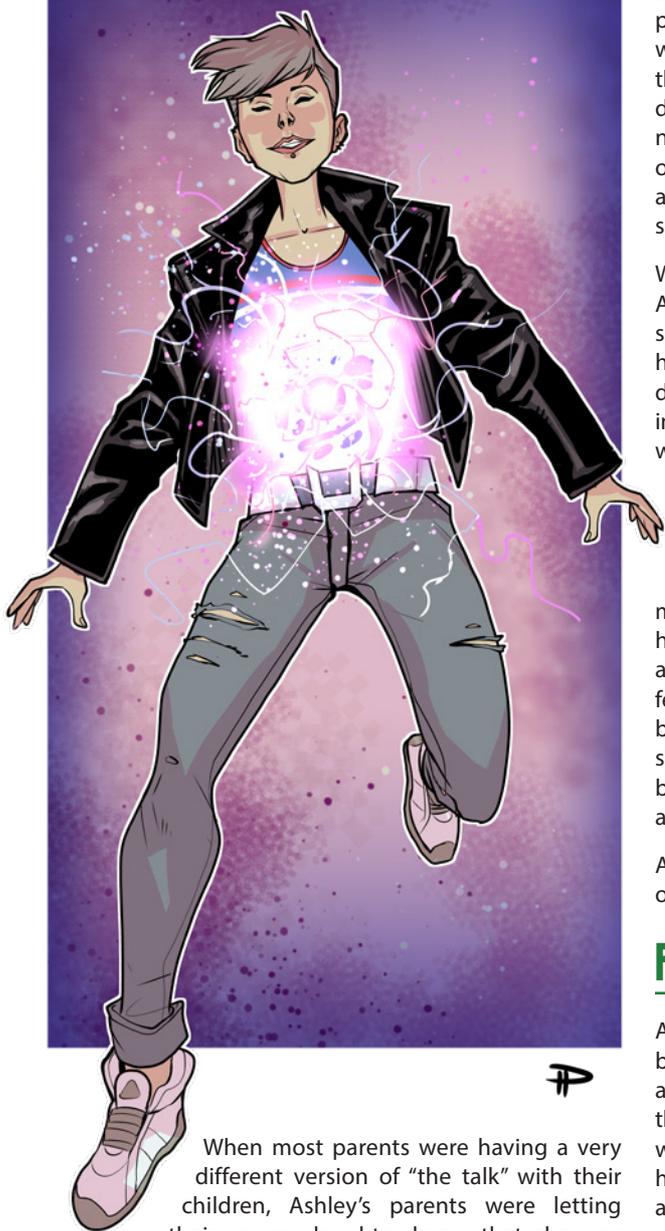
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Droning Protocol	—	Will	Shapeable Area Affliction 9	DC 19
Improvised Weapon	+8	Parry	Close Damage 2	DC 17
Droning Protocol		*	Shapeable Area Nullify 9	—
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 1	DC 16

INITIATIVE
+2

Abilities 48 + Powers 29 + Advantages 18 + Skills 19 (38 ranks) + Defenses 21 = 135 TOTAL

IGNITION

"I'VE BEEN PRACTICING THIS LITTLE ROUTE. HOLD ON TO SOMETHING!"



#

When most parents were having a very different version of “the talk” with their children, Ashley’s parents were letting their young daughter know that she was not completely human. Though she’d grown up with her family in a quiet suburb of Atlanta just like her parents had, and both sets of grandparents had come to the US from Taiwan, they might have fibbed a little bit about being born there. Her grandfather had been a Huoshan—an energy being who crashed in mainland China during the Second World War and assumed human form. She took a while to get over being lied to and come to grips with her identity, but she had always been a child of immigrants.

Ashley always liked to drive. It was the only thing that helped her feel free of her isolation growing up in a picket-fence suburb. Her uncle and cousins worked in a garage and she found herself there most summers, tinkering with car parts. Being able to drive those cars around the block a few times and later fix up and race her own cars.

Ashley met Safia—Feedback—their first year of university. While Ashley couldn’t stand the idea of a white-collar job—she loved grease under her fingernails—if her parents were going to pay her to leave suburban Georgia, why should she argue? The girls felt a powerful empathy that bloomed into awkward romance, and eventually discovered they shared the same secret heritage. Having not just a girlfriend but also someone to share this part of her life with was an enormous tempering influence, and Ashley turned herself around, setting up a small car service by the time Litmus located her and Safia.

While Safia arrived on Earth with extraordinary abilities, Ashley’s were latent, and so Litmus began tinkering to see what Huoshan abilities they might unlock. Though her memories are hazy, Ashley recalls having something driven into her chest just before it exploded into the swirling mass of living plasma it is now, and she wonders if that was Litmus containing the explosion or initiating it.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Ashley has a fist-sized plasma reaction occupying much of her chest, generated and held in check by her half-alien heritage. It vaporized her heart, lungs, and portions of her digestive tract when it first manifested, and now replaces those organs by feeding her body pure energy without the need to breathe, eat, or sleep. She can manipulate the plasma to fire devastating blasts, cause blinding flashes, or launch herself into the air momentarily.

A car lover and street racer, Ashley can work her own kind of magic with an engine and a wheel.

PLAYING IGNITION

Ashley is that girl everybody at the party wants to talk to, but nobody ever seems to have the guts to. She’s polished and put together, charming and assertive with an aura that puts some at ease and intimidates others into awkwardness or hostility. She’s a pro at getting into people’s heads and shaking them once they make her mad, but also a pushover to her friends.

Ashley’s powers are very straightforward: She’s incredibly tough and she blows things up, but her driving ability—especially when combined with Feedback’s power to soup up machines—can save the team more often than a smoking hole in a wall. Her Intimidation skill along with her Daze and Startle advantages provide her some options for dealing with threats non-violently, while her trusty “Wrench of Justice” gives her a practical way of solving problems immune to her energy blast.

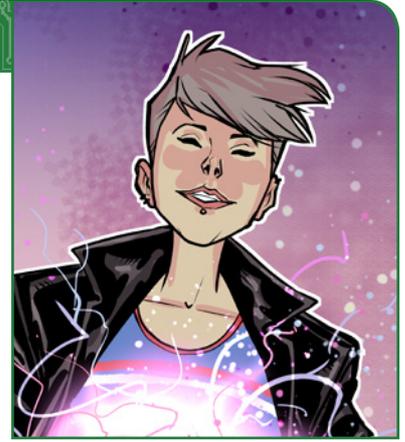
IGNITION

PL 9

THE LITERAL LOOSE CANNON

REAL NAME Ashley Hsu **AGE** 19 **HAIR** Brown**OCCUPATION** Driver, Entrepreneur **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Atlanta, GA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
2	3	2	1	4	2	2	0
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+2
Athletics	5	+7
Deception	0	+0
Insight	0	+2
Intimidation	8	+8
Perception	0	+2
Persuasion	0	+0
Ranged Combat: Plasma	6	+7
Stealth	0	+2
Technology	0	+2
• Mechanics	—	+10
Vehicles	9	+10

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Close Attack 4	+4 to Close Attack checks
Daze (Intimidate)	Use a skill check to Daze a target
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Fearless	Immune to fear effects
Languages 1	Speak English (native) and Taiwanese
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
Precise Attack	Ignore attack penalties (close, cover)
Startle	Use Intimidation skill to feint
Variable Team Attack*	Change description of successful Team Attacks

POWERS

Gearhead • Personal • Permanent • 2 points	Talent
Enhanced Skill 4 (Technology, Limited to Computers)	
Plasma Discharge • Array (22 points) • Sustained • 24 points	Alien
• Plasma Blast: Ranged Damage 11	
• Plasma Flash: Cumulative Burst Area Affliction 9 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude Vision Impaired, Vision Disabled, Vision Unaware), Cumulative; Limited (to Vision)	
• Plasma Launch: Leaping 9 (one-half mile)	
Plasma Shield • Personal • Sustained • 7 points	Alien
Enhanced Skill 8 (Technology, Limited to Mechanics)	
Powered by a Nuclear Furnace • Personal • Permanent • 24 points	Alien
Immunity 24 (Fire Effects, Radiation Effects, Disease, Poison, Sleep, Starvation & Thirst)	

EQUIPMENT

Additional Equipment

The Wrench of Justice (Close Damage 1), Team Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Monstrous: Much of Ashley's chest has been consumed by her plasma core, which emits enough light and heat that it is difficult to conceal with clothing.

Motivation—Justice: Ashley wants to take down Litmus because it's the right thing to do, but she's going to *enjoy* it because they made her a freak.

Obsession—Cure: Ashley appreciates justice and saving the world, but nobody wants to wrestle with the existential body horror she does. She wants the plasma core gone, she wants her body back, and she wants to be human(ish) and whole.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	10	3 W/O SHIELD
DODGE	8	
PARRY	8	
FORTITUDE	10	
WILL	5	

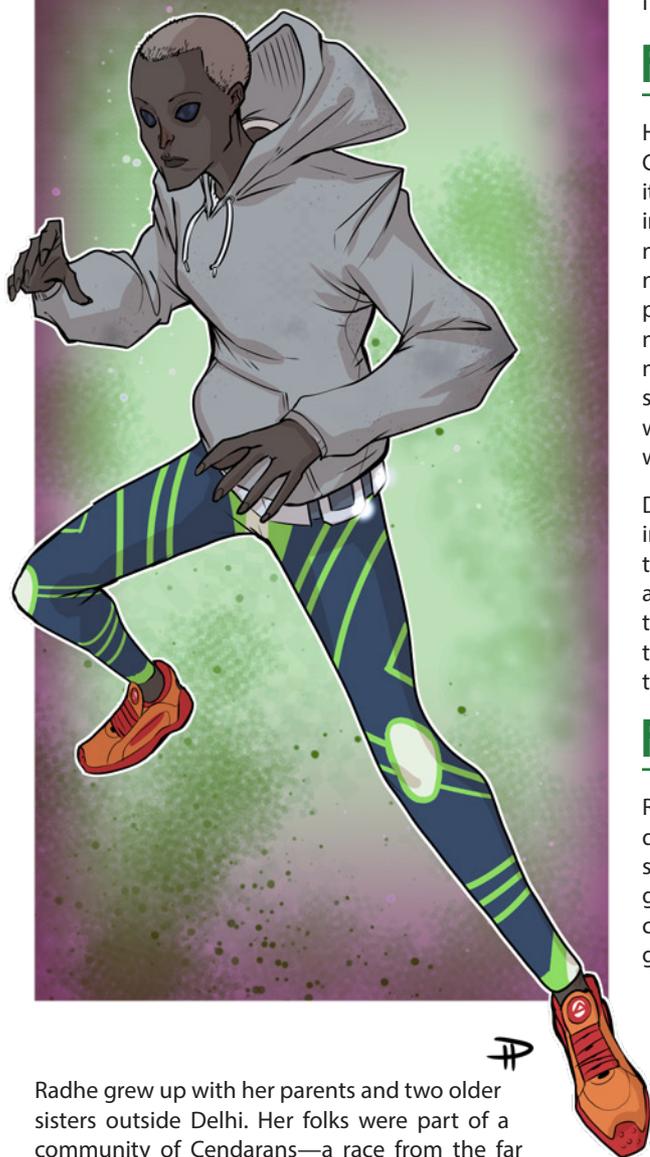
COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +2
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Plasma Blast	+7	Dodge	Ranged Damage 11	DC 26	
Plasma Flash	—	Fortitude	Burst Area Affliction 9	DC 19	
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 2	DC 17	
Wrench of Justice	+8	Parry	Close Damage 3	DC 18	

Abilities 32 + Powers 57 + Advantages 12 + Skills 14 (28 ranks) + Defenses 20 = 135 TOTAL

MANIC

"FIVE WORDS OR FEWER.
GO!"



Radhe grew up with her parents and two older sisters outside Delhi. Her folks were part of a community of Cendarans—a race from the far side of the Lor Republic that fled when Collapsar the Devourer (see the *Cosmic Handbook*) consumed their homeworld—who settled in the Earth nation of India fifty years ago. Her parents travelled frequently and regularly vacationed in America, and while Radhe knew from a young age that her small community was not native to Earth, she had seen the wonders of her adoptive planet and never set foot among the stars. Her parents taught her to be perceptive, and how to blend in anywhere she

went—both to better endure their globe-trotting and in case she ever needed to flee, just as they had as children.

Her entire family was captured by Litmus while camping in the Smoky Mountains and painfully studied to understand the unusual ways Cendarans see time. Her parents' chronological abilities were more developed than her own, so they were kept under tighter guard while Radhe assisted in the labs and befriended Safia Casas, a fellow refugee. When they escaped, Radhe managed to bring her sisters along and eventually sent them back to India—but she chose to remain behind to help fight Litmus and free their parents.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Having evolved within the gravity well of a black hole, Cendarans see the flow of time and can step outside of it for brief periods—essentially moving at super-speed in short bursts. To Radhe, the entire world moves in slow motion unless she focuses intensely—and she almost never has the willpower to focus *that* intensely. She is superhumanly fast, can complete complex tasks in just a few moments, and even become essentially invisible while moving outside time, but she can't use the tricks many speedsters employ, like running up buildings or across water. From Radhe's perspective, the world just *stops* while she moves at normal speed.

Despite—or perhaps because of—her difficulty focusing, Radhe is an incredible investigator, jumping through the details of any scene in moments. She's also athletic and a natural brawler—more survival skills her parents taught her—and more recently has learned to use her temporal movement to trick others into making fools of themselves.

PLAYING MANIC

Radhe has a brain that can never keep still. She can be quiet and a little antisocial, but mostly because she isn't sure how to be around people. Her thoughts are always going a mile a minute, and she's the kind of person who can disappear happily into her own head or a favorite game for hours at a time. She's prone to weird little acts of kindness to her new family, like offering someone the last can of Special Edition Fiesta Flavor Tuna if they're down, or reassuring them that even if the total subjugation of aliens on Earth succeeds, society is ultimately built on a fragile infrastructure that they can easily collapse from underneath them.

Radhe doesn't hit very hard, but can land hits reliably enough against ordinary opponents. More often she has all the time in the world to stop and think about problems, and relies on her Agile Feint, Redirect, and Set-up advantages to make more powerful opponents hit hard for her. She's also apt to scout or look for skill-based solutions in a fight. If all else fails she can hit people at super-speed with a slam attack, injuring herself in the process. Luckily, Cendarans heal fast.

MANIC

PL 9

THE CONTEMPLATIVE SPEEDSTER

REAL NAME Radhe Bhandari AGE 17 HAIR Blonde

OCCUPATION Globetrotter PLACE OF ORIGIN Delhi, India

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
1	2	5	5	4	0	0	2
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	6	+11
Athletics	8	+9
Close Combat: Unarmed	4	+8
Deception	0	+2
Intimidation	0	+2
Insight	4	+4
Investigation	10	+10
Perception	10	+10
Persuasion	0	+2
Stealth	0	+5

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Agile Feint	Use Acrobatics skill to feint
Defensive Roll 4	+4 active bonus to Toughness
Eidetic Memory	Total recall, +5 bonus to remember details
Equipment 2	2 points of equipment
Evasion 2	+5 bonus to avoid area attacks
Improved Initiative 4	+16 Initiative
Improved Team Attack*	Contribute to Team Attacks even with weaker attacks
Languages 1	Speak English and Hindi (native)
Luck	Re-roll a die
Redirect	Redirect a missed attack to another target with Deception
Set-Up 2	Transfer the benefit of an interaction skill to 2 allies
Variable Team Attack*	Change description of successful Team Attacks

POWERS

Outside Time • Personal • Sustained • 43 points	Alien
Enhanced Defenses 12 (Parry 6, Dodge 6)	
Enhanced Advantages 8 (Defensive Roll 4, Improved Initiative 4)	
Quickness 9	
Regeneration 5 (Every 2 rounds)	
Speed 9 (1000 MPH)	
Too Fast to Follow • Personal • Sustained • 4 points	Alien
Concealment 4 (All Visual Senses); Limited (Only while moving)	

COMPLICATIONS

But It's Booooooring: Radhe sees time differently than humans and grasps new concepts incredibly quickly. She hates waiting for others and is easily distracted.

Motivation—Responsibility: Radhe wants to save her parents from Litmus, but doesn't know where they are being kept.

Temper: Radhe can't stand bullies—a part of her repressed anger about how helpless her people were against Collapsar—and will pick a fight with just about anyone throwing their weight around.

EQUIPMENT

Additional Equipment
Gas Mask, Team Contributions

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	6	2 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	12/6	
PARRY	12/6	
FORTITUDE	8	
WILL	7	

COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +21
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 1	DC 16	

Abilities 38 + Powers 78 + Advantages 13 + Skills 21 (42 ranks) + Defenses 16 = 135 TOTAL

MODERN KIDS WITH ANCIENT TECHNOLOGY...



MAGNA FORCE

POWER LEVEL: 4/8

POWER POINTS: 120

TEAM TEMPLATE

46 POINTS

Advantages: Equipment 1 (HQ contributions and commlink), Teamwork

Equipment: commlink (communication, GPS)

Powers: Magna Cavalier Transformation (Activation [standard action]; Enhanced Agility 4, Enhanced Fighting 4, Enhanced Fortitude 2, Enhanced Strength 2, Enhanced Will 2; Immunity 10 [life support]; Leaping 4 [120 feet]; Protection 4)

Complications: **Honor:** Magna Force members cannot escalate a fight's Power Level except to respond to their enemies doing the same. **Power Loss:** All Cavaliers draw their power from the Magna Matrix, and disruptions in the matrix may remove access to some or all powers.

Special: In addition to these abilities, every Magna Force Cavalier also receives a Guardian, an automaton construct built with 120pp that has a Power Level of 11.

In the wake of the universe's creation, the ancient Preservers reigned as the only sentient race. Their brilliance matched only by their hubris, they sought to create the ultimate mind with which to understand all the secrets of

creation. But their design was flawed, and once activated, the star-sized computer devoured itself to become Collapsar, the living singularity. It now exists to absorb all of creation into itself, thus understanding all things.

The Preservers spent the rest of their existence trying in vain to stop Collapsar, and when that seemed hopeless, to leave devices and creatures who might someday fix their dire mistake. Among these was the Magna Matrix, a self-perpetuating energy field divided between six powerful machines—the Magna Guardians. To avoid the error that created Collapsar, the Preservers did not give the Matrix or the Guardians minds of their own, only vague impressions of self-preservation and life. Instead they designed their creations to need mortal pilots, with mortal empathy and consciences. The Magna Force was born, though the Preservers themselves vanished long before they saw their creation activate.

In the millions of years since, the Magna Force has vanished into history, then legend, and then been forgotten time and time again, only to be re-discovered when enemies of life reveal themselves. The team last appeared ten-thousand years ago in a battle against Collapsar's minions that stretched across multiple star systems, ending at a backwater planet ravaged by war and floods: Earth. Only two members of Magna Force survived the ordeal: Magna Silver and Magna Blanc. Weary from the battle against corruption, Blanc looked at the struggling

natives of Earth and proposed leading them, guiding their civilization to great heights so they would never flock to evil and need saving. Silver argued that it wasn't their place to force goodness on others, only to protect people as they matured enough to make their own decisions. Each became polarized in their views, and eventually turned their Magna Guardians on one another in a fierce duel. Their battle exiled Blanc to the moon Europa, and both she and Silver slumbered in the wake of their private war for millennia.

Magna Silver established something of a home in an arid, isolated tract of land that would eventually come to be called Southern California. Meanwhile, Blanc dreamed of betrayal by her only surviving friend, and of destruction. Collapsar whispered in her dreams of the true unity that awaited within it. It showed her the perfection in a universe wiped clean to begin anew—guided from the beginning so it could never know evil, just as Blanc had been willing to fight for.

When Preserver technology returned to Earth—first when Tellax the Redeemer nearly destroyed Emerald City, and then when Collapsar itself threatened to engulf the planet—both Magna Silver and Blanc awakened. The crises passed before either found their footing, and Silver came to realize that he was a solitary soldier—and an ancient one at that—and he needed new champions to embrace the Magna Matrix and defend the universe once again. Under the guise of Tsuyoshi Makoto, he infiltrated the nearby university at San Angeles to study the local humans and find worthy candidates to inherit the Preserver legacy.

Professor Makoto's decision was rushed when Blanc—having renamed herself Null and utilizing Preserver technology left long-buried on Europa—attacked the city as she hunted for the Magna Matrix to empower her own champions. Null would forge harsh cavaliers who embodied her new vision of a perfect, obliterated universe. To combat her, Silver recruited five students from his Xenoculture class—Mikayla Stewart, Danny Nguyen, Carmen Moreno, Joshua Grayson, and Casey Boland—and invested them with the power of the Matrix, transforming them into Magna Cavaliers and bonding them with the Magna Guardians. While far from perfect candidates, the five teenagers more than made up for the discipline and training they lack with passion, focus, and morals. They battled Null to a standstill and finally exiled her back into space, and now the would-be destroyer of Earth schemes from afar, sending monsters created by the Preserver technology on Europa to destroy the Magna Force and reclaim the Matrix she believes hers.

Magna Silver—Professor Makoto to his students—can't withdraw the power he has granted the new Cavaliers, and so now works double-time to train and guide these ordinary teenagers to become heroes. His protégés vacillate between loving their newfound powers and ability to help, and stressing over the responsibility it entails. While the team is boisterous, undisciplined, and myopic, he's also finding that they are quintessentially *human*, a trait he hopes will make the ultimate difference when it comes to the survival of not just Earth, but the entire universe.

STAGGERED POWER LEVELS

The Magna Force campaign uses three distinct Power Levels thanks to the heroes' ability to transform and summon powerful robot vehicles.

- **Student-Scale:** The beginning Power Level of PL 4 represents the Cavaliers in their ordinary human lives. Unpowered heroes don't need to meet this Power Level, but cannot exceed it, and PL 4 "Student-scale" adventures are typically investigations, simple challenges, and battles with minions. At this Power Level, do not use the minion rules; ordinary criminals and void dolls are threats all on their own.
- **Cavalier-Scale:** Once they transform into Cavaliers—typically in response to more overt dangers like rampaging, human-scale aliens and robots—the adventure increases to a "Cavalier-scale" PL 8.
- **Guardian-Scale:** Magna Force's Guardian robots are large and inappropriate for many fights and adventures, and are strictly reserved for engaging extraordinarily powerful enemies, giant monsters, and alien armadas. The "Guardian-scale" trigger further increases the Power Level to PL 11. Magna King—the combined form of all five Magna Guardians—is PL 15, using the optional rules for increasing PL caps described under the Combine power (see page 43), though this is still considered Guardian-scale, trading numbers for raw power.

The Gamemaster is the ultimate arbiter of when the Power Level of an adventure shifts (and should design adventures with that shift in mind). Magna Force must obey a strict code of contact that includes not escalating a fight until their enemies do, so they don't transform into Cavaliers until an opponent more powerful than a typical minion arrives—or minions outnumber them two or more to one—and don't summon their Guardians until a large-scale threat appears.

TEAM RESOURCES

The most important resource the Magna Force shares is the Magna Matrix, a self-perpetuating energy field capable of empowering ordinary sentient beings, translating focus and passion into skill and power. The Matrix is anchored in reality by—and powers—the Magna Guardians, enormous robotic animals capable of engaging powerful superbeings and cosmic monsters on equal footing, or combining into an awesomely powerful single robot called Magna King.

The Matrix itself is a plot device without any specific game statistics. It can be the source of interesting new story elements, such as the heroes losing access to their Cavalier forms if Null uses Preserver technology to jam the signal, or empowering new (possibly antagonistic) Cavaliers. Any major inconveniences based around this element should come with a Hero Point reward to help heroes overcome the additional challenges.

The Matrix is stored beneath Guardian Fortress, Magna Silver's stronghold hidden in the Mojave Desert. Constructed by ancient Preserver technology while he slept for thousands of years, those few humans who have

MECHA COMBAT

A Magna Force campaign uses the expanded rules for mecha construction and combat found in *Gadget Guides*. While piloting a mecha, Cavaliers use their own skills, advantages, Fortitude and Will defenses, and attack bonuses, but rely on their mechas' Toughness, Parry and Dodge defenses, Ability ranks, and powers. Most Athletics or Acrobatics checks instead use a Vehicles check while piloting a mecha. Any advantages the Guardians possess (such as Close Combat) stack with the abilities their Cavaliers already have.

Because of the close, cosmic connection between each Cavalier and their Guardian, extra effort while piloting a Guardian imposes its effects on the Cavalier piloting it, rather than the machine.

stumbled across it have spun it into legends about a lost city of gold or a legendary mine. Large enough to house a small army, the Guardian Fortress also stores the Guardians when dormant, can observe the surrounding area via advanced sensors, maintains a communications network, and teleports Cavaliers to and from its location.

GUARDIAN FORTRESS

18 POINTS

Size: Gargantuan **Toughness:** 14 **Powers:** Remote Sensing 11 (audio, visual; 8 miles), Teleport 11 (Extended; 2,000 miles); **Features:** Communications, Computer, Concealed, Defense Systems, Hangar, Isolated, Power System, Security System, Workshop

ADVENTURES

Magna Force is a classic “five color team,” inspired by *sentai* shows like *Voltron: Legendary Defender*, *Mighty Morphin Power Rangers*, and *Kamen Rider*. Their most iconic aspect is the variety of challenges the team is equipped to overcome, from personal drama and mysteries at Student-scale, to vigilante-style confrontations with extraterrestrial monsters and killer robots at Cavalier-scale, to high-stakes battles with city-threatening monsters and tyrants behind the controls of giant robotic vehicles at Guardian-scale. Much of the series' dynamic and drama focuses on team interactions, relationships, and the need to put the team over personal priorities—or else risk losing everything. Other parts of the campaign may focus on exploring the history of the Preservers and previous iterations of Magna Force—a subject professor Makoto is tight-lipped about—or interacting with alien cultures as they assist and protect the residents of Starhaven or search space for replacement parts after devastating battles.

Magna Force exists to battle Collapsar and its minions (see the *Cosmic Handbook*), but their current focus is defending the Magna Matrix—and by extension the city of San Angeles—from the former Cavalier, Null. Null's plots range from the overt (assaulting locations with her void dolls or Preserver-technology monsters) to subtle (using void dolls to infiltrate important city functions and utilities and create distractions or kidnap major figures). With the strange Preserver technology she has access to on Europa, Null often combines different plans into multipronged assaults, using a major danger to distract her

enemies while a smaller force targets her true objective. Now that Europa is inhabited by the small community of Starhaven (see the *Cosmic Handbook*), Null takes some exception to this intrusion, though she is far more subtle in her dealings with aliens so close to her own stronghold. She coaxes the bitter and disillusioned to join her as warriors and kidnaps those who won't be missed to transform into new monsters. Magna Force adventures may involve the team's daily routine being interrupted by monster attacks, but can also be more proactive: goodwill missions to Starhaven to deliver supplies or help solve crimes, flying into deep space to recover lost knowledge or technology, or brokering peace deals with allies to help in their battle against the Devourer.

Magna Force is also Earth's default space defense force—or at least, they feel like they are—and confronts other dangers from the stars such as cosmic monsters, hostile fleets, falling asteroids, and strange spatial phenomena. These challenges are almost always Guardian-scale.

Not every adventure requires Magna Force to summon their Guardians, and those that do should feel significant and dangerous. Often the stakes for losing a confrontation at Cavalier-scale are losing a resource and suffering a setback, while a loss at Guardian-scale may mean many people die or Null gains an advantage that is felt for many adventures.

The Magna Matrix itself may create additional adventure opportunities, from unexpected side effects of its long presence on the local wildlife, plants, or even the geology itself, to accidentally empowering new Cavaliers who may or may not share the team's priorities, to shuttling the team backwards in time.

While the stakes are high for a Magna Force campaign, the general tone is one of optimism and community. Things are bad, but the heroes help stop it from being a whole lot worse, and generally even defeats should come with small victories; they may not prevent Null from stealing a Preserver artifact, but they they can still save the alien community who lived nearby. Drama and high emotions are key to their adventures and their mundane lives, but above all their shared experiences help bring the team closer together rather than drive them apart.

OPPONENTS

The Magna Force's primary antagonist is Magna Blanc, now simply Null, a former Cavalier hell-bent on capturing the Magna Matrix to empower her own nihilistic version of the Cavaliers and ultimately aid Collapsar's destruction of the universe. While she retains the powers granted by the Matrix, Null has greatly enhanced her abilities with a stash of Preserver technology left over from when the ancient race studied and experimented on Earth's natives. Null rarely acts directly after her defeat by the nascent Magna Force, instead dispatching a variety of void doll minions, aliens, and mutated creatures. (The *Gamemaster's Guide* Brute, Mastermind, and Robot archetypes are all appropriate, as are the Space Dragon and Galactic Tough Guy archetypes from the *Cosmic Handbook*.)

Null can create a variety of extraterrestrial monsters and kaiju, but doing so requires cosmic resources. For many simple missions and ambushes she relies on void dolls, simple darkmatter golems she can mold into a variety of shapes. Most void dolls use the Thug minion archetype with Morph 1, allowing each one to assume a specific, human form. Because they are collected energy, they aren't truly alive, and crumble into cosmic dust when defeated. Null can create other, more powerful void dolls in additional forms using almost any minion archetype, but relies heavily on this simple design. Her most powerful void dolls may even use low-level supervillain archetypes, particularly the Crime Lord and Master of Disguise from the *Gamemaster's Guide*.

Traditional supervillains are a rare sight in San Angeles—the town's leading industries are various fruit groves and, since the 1990s, a surprisingly robust extreme sports industry—but occasional threats do arise from directions other than space. Earth Kaiju are still an occasional threat all along America's west coast, and natural disasters like floods, storms, and earthquakes all need heroes to pitch in and save lives. Other problems might arise from villains or curious industrialists trying to study Magna Force's alien technology, or concerned superheroes stepping in with the assumption that a giant, alien robot is a menace rather than a champion.

ADVERSARY OPTIONS

Magna Force works well as a third party in the traditional superhero war of good versus evil, representing a cosmic scale of events rather than just the good of a single city or even a single planet. Magna Silver may be a more hard-line mentor, using Magna Force to seize or destroy Preserver technology—putting the team particularly at odds with Emerald City now that the Pacific Northwest hub has been inundated with Preserver nanites in the wake of the Silver Storm. They may also regularly target the settlement of Starhaven rather than protect it now that Dae-delus has established a refugee community in the small moon's Preserver ruins, pitting the sentai against the Freedom League and other cosmic-scale heroes.

More mercenary Cavaliers may instead be roving pirates or warlords in a cosmic campaign, taking advantage of the chaos across the galaxy to plunder or conquer to their hearts' content, and unleashing the extraordinary power of Magna King against anyone who stands up to them. In this scenario, the Magna Matrix may be one of several similar Preserver artifacts that empower guardians, similar to the Moonstone on Luna and the Star Knights' Star Stone, with the PCs tasked to collect them in order to stop a great threat (perhaps Collapsar itself). Outright evil cosmic scoundrels empowered by the Magna Matrix may instead be conquerors, serving or even replacing Star Khan as leader of the Stellar Imperium. In either case, the Cavaliers are not restricted by the usual code of honor Complication listed in the team description.

The most villainous interpretation of Magna Force is one that embodies Null's vision for the team rather than Professor Makoto's: agents of destruction who pave the way for

NEMESIS: NULL

Disillusioned by the evils perpetrated by the very lives she was sworn to protect; the once-noble Magna Blanc was corrupted by Collapsar itself through these cracks in her resolve. Why should she—with all her power and experience—not stand above them? For all her days she heard tales of good, but encountered only beasts in need of a firm hand. And her conquest is the tool to bring children under the protection of sweet oblivion.

Her thousands of years invested by the Magna Matrix have permanently changed Null's biology, making her immortal and resilient. Already familiar with preserver technology when she was exiled to Europa, Null has harvested technology from the ruins to transform her own body into the epitome of cybernetic alchemy. Her techno-sorcery is able to transform humans and other creatures into terrible monsters, teleport between worlds, and generate her void doll minions.

Doom to all who stand in her path.

NULL

PL 13

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

Powers: Magna-Matrix Infusion Immortality 1 (Return after 2 weeks), Immunity 11 (Aging, Life Support), Protection 4 (+4 Toughness), Regeneration 5 (Every 2 rounds) • 22 points

Preserver Power Staff (Easily Removable) Ranged Damage 14 (Incurable), AE: Damage 5 (Incurable, Penetrating 11) • 18 points

Techno-Sorcery (Array; 45 points)

- **Monstrous Evolution** Affliction 13 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Transformed), Concentration, Increased Range 2 (Perception); Limited Degree (third only) • 1 point

- **Monstrous Magnification** Growth 9; Affects Others, Increased Range 2 (Perception) • 45 points

- **Planetary Displacement** Movement 1 (Space Travel 1: solar system), Affects Others, Increased Mass 6 (3200 lbs) • 1 point

- **Spatial Displacement** Teleport 13, Affects Others, Extended Only (8000 miles), Increased Mass 6; Limited to Extended • 1 point

- **Void Doll Animation** Summon 3 (Active, Multiple Minions 5 (32 minions), Type (Broad: Void Dolls)) • 1 point

Advantages: All-out Attack, Chokehold, Close Attack 2, Fast Grab, Fearless, Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Improved Initiative, Inventor, Quick Draw, Ranged Attack 6, Seize Initiative, Skill Mastery: Intimidation, Startle, Weapon Break

Skills: Acrobatics 5 (+10), Expertise: Galactic History 12 (+17), Expertise: Preserver technology 14 (+19), Insight 4 (+12), Intimidation 10 (+14), Technology 10 (+15), Treatment 5 (+10), Vehicles 10 (+16)

Offense: Init +9, Staff Blast: +12 (Ranged, Damage 14), Staff Bash +12 (Close, Damage 11), Monstrous Evolution (Concentration Affliction 13), Unarmed +12 (Close, Damage 6)

Defense: Dodge 11, Parry 12, Fort 12, Tou 14, Will 14

Totals: Abilities 108 + Powers 98 + Advantages 21 + Skills 35 (70 ranks) + Defenses 16 = 278

Collapsar's return. Able to blend into the local populace or summon titanic robots capable of matching superbeings, they are perfect agents for both covert and overt warfare against an entire planet. This incarnation of Magna Force serves as Collapsar's heralds, scouting out new worlds rich in Preserver legacy, analyze and test any would-be protectors, and recruiting nihilist supporters to aid in spreading chaos when their master arrives.

MAGNA BLUE

*"STILL TALKING? FINE.
SEE HOW LONG THAT LASTS."*



Everybody knew that Danny had potential. Smart, outgoing, and active; the world should have been his oyster. "If only he had some kind of direction," was the lamentation of parents, teachers, and every other mentor with a stake in his future. No one realized until college that Danny had grappled all his life with dyslexia, making reading and studying more taxing than the sports he ultimately drifted to. From one semester to the next he jumped between disciplines, never quite finding his place, but snapping up pieces of knowledge all the same. Signing on to Professor Makoto's class was meant to buy him time to finally decide on a major. Never in a million years could Danny have known he would become Magna Blue, avatar of the mighty kraken spirit!

With a quick smile and sharp wit, there is no question that Danny is the most charismatic of the team, and able to make a friend of almost anyone. He can talk his way out of most situations, including those his tongue landed him in. More than anything, Danny is prone to distraction, and he struggles to commit to any long-term plans. Even his charge as Magna Blue leaves him feeling cornered, though it's a role he takes more seriously than anything else in life. That said, he values being a reliable friend, and will always strive to be there when it counts. In the heat of combat Danny is a ferocious warrior, meeting evil head on. He strikes hard and fast. Like his guardian counterpart, he is the raw strength at the core of the team.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Danny's Cavalier transformation enhances his abilities and grants him access to the legendary Kraken Drill Lance, a fearsome spear that can crack through the toughest armor. His bond with the Kraken Guardian also allows Danny to move fluidly and naturally underwater, making him the team's fearless all-terrain master.

As imposing as it is regal, the Kraken Guardian is one of the most enduring of its ilk, with an impenetrable hide able to withstand the heaviest of damage and a storming shout that creates gale-force winds. The Kraken is most adept at close and personal combat, grappling and throwing all manner of beasts under its clawed feet. In battle the Kraken Guardian can be found at the forefront, shaking off damage for the sake of its teammates.

PLAYING MAGNA BLUE

Danny is headstrong and straightforward, which suits him well as the most physically imposing member of Magna Force. He's a physical powerhouse even without his Cavalier transformation.

Despite his "jock" appearance, Danny has a keen wit and a big heart, and can pick up new skills quickly—when he can bring himself to focus (represented by his Beginner's Luck advantage). His silver tongue and genuine warmth can open as many doors as his impressive strength.

MAGNA BLUE

PL 8

RELENTLESS AS THE CRASHING WAVES

REAL NAME Daniel "Danny" Nguyen **AGE** 18 **HAIR** Black**OCCUPATION** College Student, Athlete **PLACE OF ORIGIN** San Angeles, CA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
8/4	4	5/1	0	6/2	0	-1	3
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	4	+9/+5
Athletics	8	+16/+12
Deception	0	+3
Expertise: Pop Culture	6	+6
Insight	0	-1
Perception	5	+4
Persuasion	6	+9
Stealth	0	+5/+1
Vehicles	6	+6

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
All-Out Attack	Trade Active Defense for Attack Bonus
Attractive	Situational +2 bonus on Deception and Persuasion skills
Beginner's Luck	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Defensive Roll 1	+1 active bonus to Toughness
Improved Hold	-5 penalty to escape your Grab attempts
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Improved Smash	No penalty on Smash actions
Leadership	Spend a Hero Point to remove a condition from an ally
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks
Ultimate Effort (Toughness)	Spend a Hero Point to automatically roll a 20

POWERS

Magna Cavalier Transformation • Personal • Sustained • 58 points Activation 2 (standard action) Tech
Bio-Boost: Enhanced Agility 4, Enhanced Fighting 4, Enhanced Strength 4, Enhanced Defenses 4 (Fortitude 2, Will 2), Leaping 4 (120 feet)
Cavalier Armor: Protection 4, Immunity 10 (Life Support)
Aquatic Adaptation: Swimming 2 (2 MPH)
Kraken Drill Lance: Strength-based Damage 2, Improved Critical, Penetrating 9

COMPLICATIONS

Disability: Danny has severe dyslexia, and must succeed at an Awareness check to maintain his focus enough to read under stress. The Gamemaster determines the DC of this check based on the surrounding stress.

Motivation—Doing Good: While he can be a little short-sighted or uninformed at times, Danny ultimately just wants to help others.

KRAKEN GUARDIAN (PL 11)

INITIATIVE
+7

STR 13, STA —, AGL 3, DEX 0, FGT 4, INT —, AWE 0, PRE —

Powers: Impervious Toughness 14, Extra Limbs 4, Growth 8 (Innate; Permanent), Senses 1 (Communication Link), Swimming 8 (120 MPH); AE: Flight 4 (30 MPH)
Kraken Storm Shout: Damage 11 (Cone Area)
Form Magna King: Summon 3, Heroic; Feedback, Limited (all components present), Limited (components vanish)

Advantages: Autopilot, Close Attack 2, *Improved Grab***Totals:** Abilities -6 + Powers 100 + Advantages 3 + Defenses 23 = 120

DEFENSES	STUDENT	CAVALIER	GUARDIAN
TOUGHNESS	5*	9*	14
DODGE	2	6	8
PARRY	3	7	8
FORTITUDE	7	9	IMMUNE**
WILL	2	4	IMMUNE**

* -1 WITHOUT DEFENSIVE ROLL
 ** USE CAVALIER DEFENSES IF EFFECT TARGETS A PILOT DIRECTLY

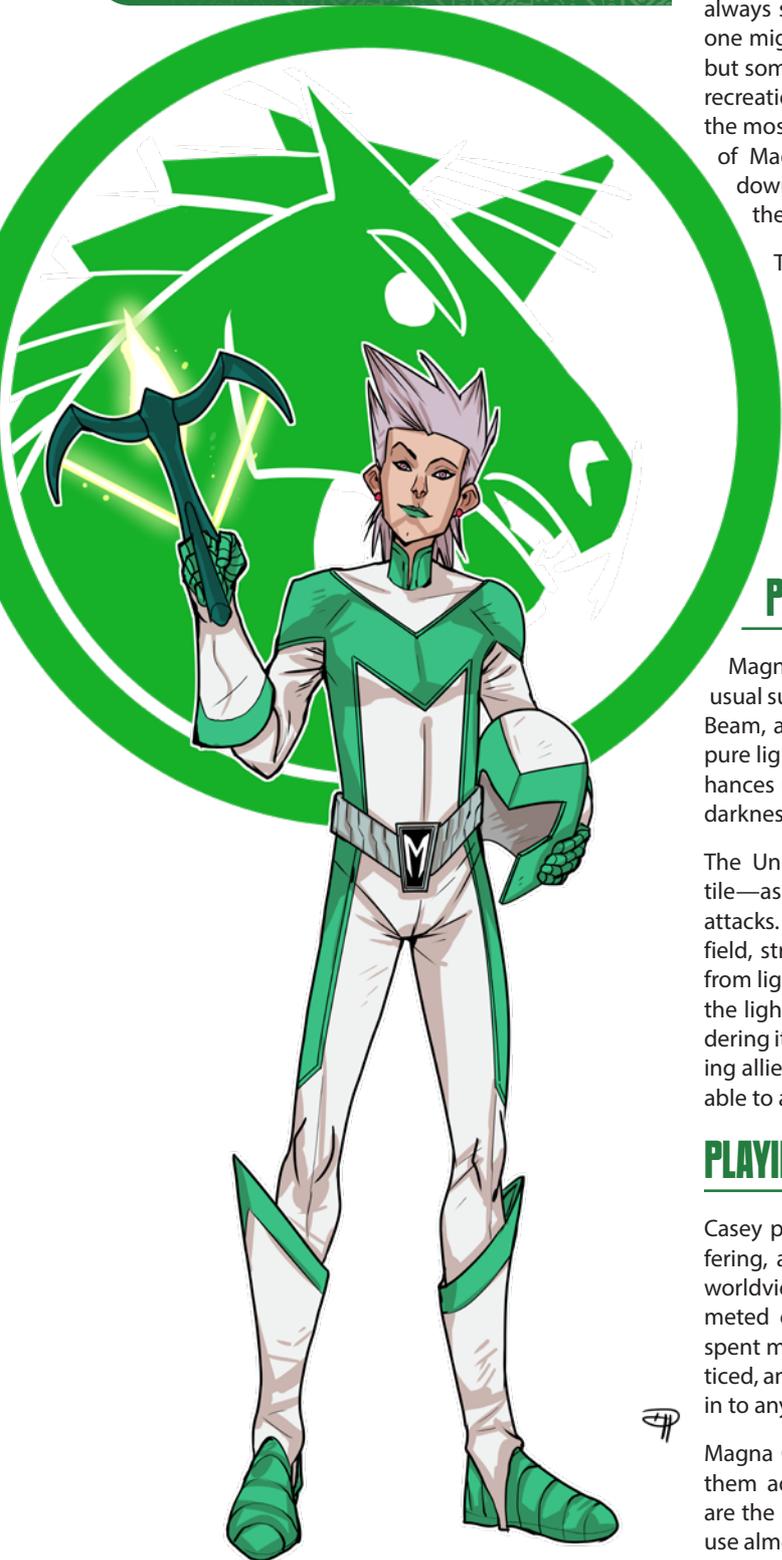
COMBAT

Damage:	Dazed?	Staggered?	Incapacitated?	INITIATIVE
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	STUDENT +5 CAVALIER +9
Student Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Unarmed	+2	Parry	Close Damage 4	DC 19
Cavalier Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Drill Lance	+6	Parry	Close Damage 10	DC 25
Unarmed	+6	Parry	Close Damage 8	DC 23
Guardian Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Kraken Storm Shout	—	Dodge	Cone Area Damage 11	DC 26
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 13	DC 28

Abilities 26 + Powers 58 + Advantages 10 + Skills 18 (36 ranks) + Defenses 8 = 120 TOTAL

MAGNA GREEN

"JUSTICE ISN'T ALWAYS PRETTY, BUT DAMNED IF IT ISN'T RIGHT."



For Casey, college life was the ultimate liberation from high school. In everything from clothes to music and so much more they found new expression, and after joining the campus queer collective they also found a wide avenue into which they could pour all their latent rage at the status quo. Though an eager part of the college activism scene, Casey was still an ardent student, sacrificing sleep to study in the hopes that they would one day become a video game designer. Always active and always starting a new project to make the world better, one might make the mistake of thinking Casey too busy, but somehow they always found the time for friends and recreation. Of all the Xenoculture 101 students, Casey was the most keen on the actual subject matter. As a member of Magna Force, Casey is passionate about swatting down evil and driven from their very core to defend the vulnerable, whether they be from Earth or afar.

Though a dedicated member of the team, Casey is the least likely of Magna Force to adhere to any set of rules. Whether it's ditching class, talking back to authority, or outright trespassing, they are firmly touched by chaos and will move between and around the lines to meet their goals. Most days, however, Casey is there with a quip to keep the mood light. Even on the field of battle, their smile can be sensed from behind the mask.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Magna Green's Cavalier transformation provides the usual suite of enhancements. They also wield the Unicorn Beam, a powerful bow capable of firing arrows made of pure light. Their bond with the Unicorn Guardian also enhances Casey's senses, allowing their eyes to pierce the darkness as easily as their bow.

The Unicorn Guardian is primordial, cagey, and versatile—as capable in combat as it is able to dodge and repel attacks. In the heat of battle it is often found in center field, striking when the enemy meets it halfway. Forged from light, the majestic robot can control and manipulate the light around it with a powerful cloaking engine, rendering it invisible, generating realistic illusions, and patching allies with “hard light” repairs. Swift on all terrains, it is able to adapt to almost any confrontation.

PLAYING MAGNA GREEN

Casey possesses a strong sense of fairness. Poverty, suffering, and discrimination are the greatest evils in their worldview, and they will do almost anything to see justice meted out. Despite their newfound exuberance, Casey spent most of their life learning to blend in and go unnoticed, and is an accidental student of stealth, able to blend in to any crowd.

Magna Green's stealth and mastery of technology make them adaptable and an excellent problem solver. They are the most unpredictable member of the team, able to use almost anything as a weapon and tackling challenges from unexpected angles.

MAGNA GREEN

PL 8

THE EVERGREEN FIST OF JUSTICE

REAL NAME Casey Lee Boland **AGE** 17 **HAIR** Varies**OCCUPATION** College Student, Activist **PLACE OF ORIGIN** San Angeles, CA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0/4	1	6/2	4	5/1	1	3	0
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	2	+8/+4
Athletics	2	+6/+2
Deception	0	+0
Insight	0	+3
Investigation	6	+7
Perception	0	+3
Persuasion	0	+0
Stealth	8	+14/+10
Technology	8	+9

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Accurate Attack	Trade Effect DC for Attack Bonus
Close Attack 3	+3 to Close Attack checks
Defensive Roll 3	+3 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 1	5 points of equipment
Improvised Weapon 1	+1 Damage bonus with improvised weapons
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks
Uncanny Dodge	Not vulnerable when surprised or off-guard

POWERS

Magna Cavalier Transformation • Personal • Sustained • 63 points Activation 2 (standard action) Tech
Bio-Boost: Enhanced Agility 4, Enhanced Fighting 4, Enhanced Strength 4, Enhanced Defenses 4 (Fortitude 2, Will 2), Leaping 4 (120 feet)
Cavalier Armor: Protection 4, Immunity 10 (Life Support)
Guardian Senses: Senses 3 (Darkvision, Ultra-hearing)
Unicorn Beam: Ranged Damage 8

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Justice: Casey wants to help, but what moves them more than anything is the need to make Null answer for all the pain and destruction she has caused.

Temper: Casey hates injustice, abuse and bullying by the strong over the weak, and can easily be goaded into rash actions to stop them.

UNICORN GUARDIAN (PL 11)

STR 8, STA —, AGL 3, DEX 0, FGT 4, INT -, AWE 0, PRE -

INITIATIVE
+3**Powers:** Growth 8 (Innate; Permanent), Senses 1 (Communication Link), Speed 6 (120 MPH)*Soft Steps:* Movement 4 (Sure-footed 2, Water Walking 2)*Shining Horn:* Strength-based Damage 3*Shining Light:* Illusion 11 (Visual and Audio), Independent; AE: Healing 8, Affects Objects, Energizing; AE: Visual Concealment 2*Form Magna King:* Summon 3, Heroic; Feedback, Limited (all components present), Limited (components vanish)**Advantages:** Autopilot, Close Attack 3, Move-by Action**Totals:** Abilities -16 + Powers 103 + Advantages 5 + Defenses 28 = 120

DEFENSES	STUDENT	CAVALIER	GUARDIAN
TOUGHNESS	5*	8*	9
DODGE	4	8	13
PARRY	4	8	13
FORTITUDE	3	5	IMMUNE**
WILL	5	7	IMMUNE**

* -3 WITHOUT DEFENSIVE ROLL
** USE CAVALIER DEFENSES IF EFFECT TARGETS A PILOT DIRECTLY

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated? INITIATIVE
STUDENT
CAVALIER
+2 +6

Student Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Unarmed	+4	Parry	Close Damage 0	DC 15
Cavalier Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 4	DC 19
Unicorn Beam	+4	Dodge	Ranged Damage 8	DC 23
Guardian Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Illusion	—	Will	Illusion 11	DC 21
Shining Horn	+10	Parry	Close Damage 11	DC 26

Abilities 24 + Powers 63 + Advantages 11 + Skills 13 (26 ranks) + Defenses 9 = 120 TOTAL

MAGNA PINK

"YOU'LL NEVER HURT THIS PLANET, OR ITS PEOPLE!"



Joshua Grayson never knew his father, but then he never needed one. If you were to ask him he'd say he had the perfect family: a hard-working mom and the greatest little brother in the world, to whom he is fanatically devoted. Though they sometimes struggled to get by, he put aside his dreams of becoming a tailor to work as many jobs as needed to support them. At twenty-one years old he was finally able to accrue the time and resources for college, even if only part time. His brother, Michael, was old enough to spend some nights alone, even if Josh felt guilty about it. Though he was older than the other freshmen, people found themselves drawn to him.

Signing on to Xenoculture 101 seemed like a lark, a way to bulk up his course credits. Never could he have guessed that he would be drafted into the role of Magna Pink, or that his professor was a legendary cosmic warrior. Now as a member of Magna Force, Josh fights for the safety of all mankind, while balancing it with his responsibilities at home.

While he is gentle and nurturing, many mistake Josh's soft nature for weakness. He can stand on his own and will protect those who cannot defend themselves—a fierceness that drew the spirit of the protective Dragon Guardian to him in the first place. Though far from the fiercest combatant, Magna Pink is a reliable support figure, boosting his teammates. A few years older than his teammates, he's a little wiser in the ways of the world and more observant. When one of his friends is severely injured, he is there to tend their wounds and make sure they survive the day.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Magna Pink's transformation grants him the Dragon's Tail Lash in addition to the usual suite of enhancements provided by the Cavalier form. This dangerous whip seems to have a mind of its own and amazing flexibility, capable of attacking and binding enemies across the battlefield and subduing them with a powerful electric shock.

Protective and jealous, the Guardian Dragon is often underestimated in combat thanks to its lithe frame. In addition to its grace and swiftness, it is durable and shockingly strong, drawing on deep reserves to defend those around it. Foes too powerful for its claws to overcome must fear the beams of freezing cold the dragon can fire from its mouth to encase enemies alive or construct barriers of ice, making it a devastating protector.

PLAYING MAGNA PINK

At the end of the day, Josh just wants people to be happy and safe. Friends argue that he should make more time for himself, maybe even find a boyfriend or girlfriend, but Josh is too invested in his current life.

Josh prioritizes protecting his team and others around them. His attitude and contributions to team attacks often help rejuvenate teammates, thanks to his Improved Treatment Skill and Reviving Team Attack advantages.

MAGNA PINK

PL 8

FLUSH WITH PASSION AND DETERMINATION

REAL NAME Joshua Grayson AGE 21 HAIR Blonde

OCCUPATION College Student PLACE OF ORIGIN San Angeles, CA

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



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	4	+10/+6
Athletics	4	+10/+6
Close Combat: Whips	1	+8/+4
Insight	6	+8
Perception	7	+9
Persuasion	0	+1
Ranged Combat: Guardian	4	+5
Stealth	0	+6/+2
Treatment	6	+7
Vehicles	4	+5

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Defensive Roll 2	+2 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 1	5 points of equipment
Improved Disarm	No penalty on Disarm actions
Improved Grab	Make Grab attacks one-handed
Improved Hold	-5 penalty to escape your Grab attempts
Improved Treatment*	Apply additional benefits with Treatment skill
Improved Trip	No penalty on Trip actions
Leadership	Spend a Hero Point to remove a condition from an ally
Reviving Team Attack*	Remove a condition as part of a Team Attack
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks

POWERS

- Magna Cavalier Transformation** • Personal • Sustained • 60 points
Activation 2 (standard action) **Tech**
- Bio-Boost:** Enhanced Agility 4, Enhanced Fighting 4, Enhanced Strength 4, Enhanced Defenses 4 (Fortitude 2, Will 2), Leaping 4 (120 feet)
- Cavalier Armor:** Protection 4, Immunity 10 (Life Support)
- Dragon's Tail Lash:** Strength-based Damage 1 (Improved Disarm, Improved Grab, Improved Hold, Improved Trip); Linked to Affliction, Reach 3 (15 feet)
• Affliction 8 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated)

COMPLICATIONS

- Motivation—Protecting Others:** Josh has a lot of empathy and can't stand others being hurt.
- Relationship—Family:** Josh's mother, who puts him through college, and his brother, Michael, remain top priority. Juggling responsibility is a heavy burden for Josh, but one he will never complain about.

DRAGON GUARDIAN (PL 11)

INITIATIVE
+3

STR 11, STA —, AGL 3, DEX 0, FGT 4, INT —, AWE 0, PRE —

- Powers:** Impervious Toughness 12, Extra Limbs 4, Growth 8 (Innate; Permanent), Senses 1 (Communication Link), Wings: Flight 7 (250 MPH)
Dragon Ice Beam: Ranged Affliction 11 (Resisted by Dodge, Overcome by Strength; Hindered and Vulnerable, Immobile and Defenseless), Extra Condition, Limited Degree; AE: Create 6 (Continuous, Innate)
Form Magna King: Summon 3, Heroic; Feedback, Limited (all components present), Limited (components vanish)

Advantages: Autopilot, Close Attack 4**Totals:** Abilities -10 + Powers 100 + Advantages 5 + Skills 0 (0 ranks) + Defenses 25 = 120

DEFENSES	STUDENT	CAVALIER	GUARDIAN
TOUGHNESS	6*	8*	12
DODGE	4	8	10
PARRY	4	8	10
FORTITUDE	4	6	IMMUNE
WILL	4	6	IMMUNE

* -2 WITHOUT DEFENSIVE ROLL
** USE CAVALIER DEFENSES IF EFFECT TARGETS A PILOT DIRECTLY

COMBAT

Student Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Unarmed	+3	Parry	Close Damage 2	DC 17
Cavalier Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Dragon's Tail Lash	+8	Parry	Close Damage 7*	DC 22
Unarmed	+7	Parry	Close Damage 6	DC 21
Guardian Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Dragon Ice Beam	+5	Dodge	Ranged Affliction 11	DC 21
Unarmed	+11	Parry	Close Damage 11	DC 26

Abilities 28 + Powers 60 + Advantages 7 + Skills 18 (36 ranks) + Defenses 7 = 120 TOTAL

MAGNA RED

"THE PATH TO VICTORY ISN'T ALWAYS CLEAR. SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO FORGE IT YOURSELF."



From the moment she was born Mikayla Stewart was bright—a trait her parents nurtured. In second grade she was reading books for children twice her age, and she continued to advance until graduating high school with honors at the age of fourteen. Things may have gone differently for Mikayla had tragedy not struck at home. The loss of her father to a heart attack put incredible financial strain on her family, and lost her the chance for a university education. With her mother needing help to support her sisters, she was forced to turn down a prestigious scholarship and invested herself in life at home. It wasn't until the following year that she enrolled in the less-than-ivy league state college in San Angeles.

When Professor Makoto fell in battle against Null's first attack on San Angeles, Mikayla rushed to protect the fallen hero and direct citizens away from danger. Her courage and cool head ultimately convinced Makoto to invest his students with the power of the Magna Matrix to carry on the fight in his place. Once she was connected with the power of the Magna Phoenix, the indestructible titan born in flames, Mikayla became Magna Red, the resolute and analytical leader of Magna Force!

POWERS & ABILITIES

Her Cavalier transformation provides Mikayla with armor, boosts to her strength, speed, and prowess, the ability to leap large distances, and sealed systems to allow her to fight underwater or in the vacuum of space. In addition to these, Mikayla gains immunity to fire damage thanks to her bond with the Phoenix Guardian. She can also summon the blazing Phoenix Fire Blade, a double-edged sword that can carve through most any armor in the cosmos and extend up to ten feet or contract down to the size of a dagger.

Magna Red's Guardian, the Phoenix, is a powerful robotic vehicle capable of high-speed flight and maneuvering, armed with fire-based weapon systems and equipped with powerful sensors that can track targets and bypass most forms of concealment. The mecha does not provide Red with extraordinary strength and is less durable, so she tends to avoid close combat with large foes.

PLAYING MAGNA RED

Cool and level-headed, Mikayla possesses a maturity that exceeds her seventeen years. She believes reason tempered by compassion is the best approach to life and everyone in it, and that every hand could save the world if people had hope. She takes ready command in the field but is quiet in her civilian life, preferring to watch, listen, and contemplate. Naturally inquisitive, she is always keen to learn more, and though she loves to share knowledge, she is apprehensive of people thinking her a know-it-all.



Magna Red is a very balanced character without overmuch focus on strength, speed, or accuracy. She's a reliable warrior, and her Jack-of-All-Trades advantage allows her to try almost anything, while her Inspire advantage helps her boost the rest of the team with brilliant tactics.

MAGNA RED

PL 8

RISING FROM EVERY DEFEAT

REAL NAME Mikayla Stewart

AGE 16

HAIR Black

OCCUPATION College Student

PLACE OF ORIGIN San Angeles, CA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
5/1	2	5/1	1	8/4	2	3	1
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	4	+9/+5
Athletics	4	+9/+5
Deception	0	+3
Expertise: Current Events	4	+6
Expertise: Science	4	+6
Insight	0	+3
Perception	0	+3
Persuasion	4	+5
Ranged Combat: Guardian	2	+3
Stealth	0	+5/+1
Vehicles	8	+9

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Defensive Roll 2	+2 active bonus to Toughness
Eidetic Memory	Total recall, +5 bonus to remember details
Equipment 1	5 points of equipment
Evasion	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Extraordinary Effort	Gain two benefits when using Extra Effort
Inspire 2	Spend a Hero Point to grant all allies a +2 bonus
Jack-of-All-Trades	Use any skill untrained
Move-by Acton	Move both before and after a standard action
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
Prone Fighting	No penalty to fighting while Prone
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks

POWERS

Magna Cavalier Transformation • Personal • Sustained • 52 points Activation 2 (standard action)	Tech
Bio-Boost: Enhanced Agility 4, Enhanced Fighting 4, Enhanced Strength 4, Enhanced Defenses 5 (Fortitude 2, Will 3), Leaping 4 (120 feet)	
Cavalier Armor: Protection 4, Immunity 15 (Fire Damage, Life Support)	
Phoenix Fire Blade: Strength-based Damage 3 (Improved Critical), Reach 2 (10 feet)	

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Responsibility: Mikayla believes everyone has some responsibility to care for others.

Relationship: Mikayla cares for her family—her mother and two trouble-prone younger sisters—and wants to provide for them, set a good example, and keep them away from monsters.

PHOENIX GUARDIAN (PL 11)

INITIATIVE
+8

STR 6, STA —, AGL 8, DEX 0, FGT 0, INT —, AWE 0, PRE —

Powers: Growth 6 (Innate; Permanent), Senses 1 (Communication Link), Flight 10 (2,000 MPH; AE: Movement 1[Space Travel])
Cosmic Tracker: Senses 13 (Extended Cosmic Awareness, Vision Counters All Concealment, Direction Sense, Extended: Vision 2, Tracking, Ultravision)
Phoenix Fire Burn: Ranged Damage 11, Accurate 4; AE: Cone Area Affliction 11 (Resisted by Fortitude; Dazed, Stunned, Incapacitated)
Form Magna King: Summon 3, Heroic; Feedback, Limited (all components present), Limited (components vanish)

Advantages: Autopilot**Totals:** Abilities -14 + Powers 107 + Advantages 1 + Skills 0 (0 ranks) + Defenses 26 = 120

DEFENSES	STUDENT	CAVALIER	GUARDIAN
TOUGHNESS	4*	8*	8
DODGE	4	8	14
PARRY	4	8	12
FORTITUDE	4	6	IMMUNE
WILL	6	9	IMMUNE

* -2 WITHOUT DEFENSIVE ROLL
 ** USE CAVALIER DEFENSES IF EFFECT TARGETS A PILOT DIRECTLY

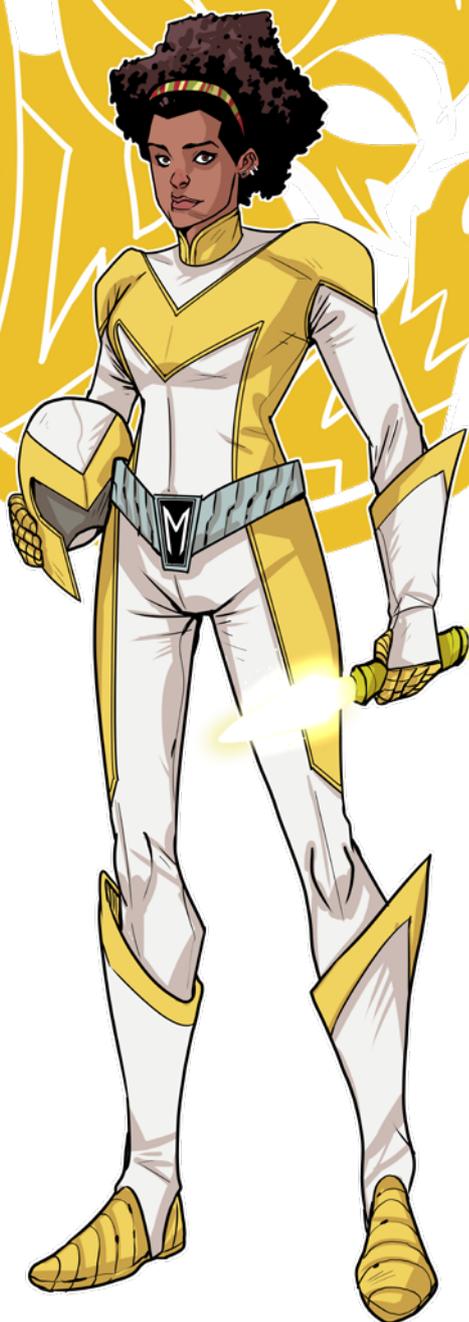
COMBAT

Student Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Unarmed	+4	Parry	Close Damage 1	DC 16
Cavalier Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Phoenix Fire Blade	+8	Parry	Close Damage 8	DC 23
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 5	DC 20
Guardian Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Phoenix Fire Burn	+11	Dodge	Ranged Damage 11	DC 26
Unarmed	+8	Parry	Close Damage 6	DC 21

Abilities 34 + Powers 52 + Advantages 11 + Skills 15 (30 ranks) + Defenses 8 = 120 TOTAL

MAGNA YELLOW

"YOU THINK YOU CAN BEAT US? THAT'D BE FUNNY IF IT WEREN'T SO IGNORANT."



College was always a foregone conclusion in Carmen's life; what she didn't expect was her parents' divorce as she began. A mysterious prenuptial agreement appeared during the court hearing and her father vanished to Tahiti, making her life the kind of riches-to-rags story that plagued her nightmares. Nothing could prepare her for the realities of being middle class. Carmen became a loner after her transfer to community college, unsure of how to interact with people she'd once considered beneath her. She quickly gained a reputation as a "snob," which only widened the distance she kept from others.

Though she signed up for Professor Makoto's class, it was purely as an easy elective. She attended classes sitting in the back row, apart from the weirdos interested in that sort of thing. It wasn't until she was charged with the mantle of Magna Yellow that she became aware of her lecturer's history and the powers he possessed.

Though some believe her charisma a part of her rich-girl facade, Carmen consciously tries to put her best foot forward. She is the human embodiment of determination, and nothing can stop her. On the front lines she is the living spirit of Magna Force, cheering her teammates on while throwing herself into the fray. Never slowing down and never giving in, Magna Yellow is one of the planet's fiercest protectors.

POWERS & ABILITIES

In addition to the physical enhancements her Cavalier transformation provides, Magna Yellow wields the Griffin Gyre Gouge, a regal and versatile weapon that can slice enemies to ribbons on its twin blades or parry and even reflect attacks. While Carmen can't fly, her bond with the Griffin allows her to leap greater distances than her teammates, and she regularly uses this ability (and her Interpose advantage) to place herself in harm's way.

Fierce and swift, the Griffin Guardian is as deft on the ground as it is in the sky. Little can stand in the path of its ravenous claws and beak. With its command of the skies, it also projects powerful swarms of lightning bolts and can focus these dozen arcs into a single, devastating lance. Its bold nature demands an aggressive spirit to match its demeanor, lest it fail to utilize the fullness of its power.

PLAYING MAGNA YELLOW

In the halls, Carmen seems prudish: perfect hair, makeup, designer outfits, and an air of confidence. She does not suffer foolishness, but to those she deems worthy of her time she sets herself up as a friendly rival, and more importantly a reliable friend. For those that matter most to her, she wants only the best.

Magna Yellow is the most mobile of her team. She was mean in her past and still knows how to get under others' skins with her Deception skill and Taunt advantage. More commonly, she uses her passion and keen wit to encourage teammates via her Leadership advantage, helping them shake off negative conditions.

MAGNA YELLOW

PL 8

THE SAAVY, LIGHTNING-FAST PROTECTOR

REAL NAME Carmen Moreno AGE 19 HAIR Black

OCCUPATION College Student PLACE OF ORIGIN San Angeles, CA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
4/0	2	8/4	4	6/2	0	0	1
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	8	+16/+12
Athletics	0	+4/+0
Deception	8	+9
Expertise: Business	4	+4
Insight	0	+0
Perception	0	+0
Persuasion	6	+7
Stealth	0	+8/+4
Vehicles	4	+8

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Defensive Attack	Trade Attack Bonus for Active Defense
Defensive Roll 2	+2 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 1	5 points of equipment
Improved Defense	+2 bonus to Active Defenses with Defend action
Interpose	Take an attack meant for an ally
Leadership	Spend a Hero Point to remove a condition from an ally
Redirect	Redirect a missed attack to another target with Deception
Taunt	Use Deception skill to demoralize
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks

POWERS

Magna Cavalier Transformation • Personal • Sustained • 63 points Activation 2 (standard action) Tech
Bio-Boost: Enhanced Agility 4, Enhanced Fighting 4, Enhanced Strength 4, Enhanced Defenses 4 (Fortitude 2, Will 2), Leaping 6 (500 feet)
Cavalier Armor: Protection 4, Immunity 10 (Life Support)
Griffon Gyre Gouge: Close Deflect 8, Redirection, Reflect AE: Strength-based Damage 4, Accurate

COMPLICATIONS

Coulrophobia: Carmen is terrified of clowns and clown-themed monsters after a birthday mishap as a child.

Motivation—Making Amends: Carmen still feels guilty for being so awful to others when she was younger, and secretly hopes being a hero can help her undo some of the hurt she caused when she had a different kind of power.

GRIFFON GUARDIAN (PL 11)

INITIATIVE
+6

STR 9, STA —, AGL 6, DEX 0, FGT 3, INT —, AWE 0, PRE —

Powers: Impervious Toughness 14, Extra Limbs 4, Growth 8 (Innate; Permanent), Senses 1 (Communication Link), Flight 6 (120 MPH; AE: Speed 8 [500 MPH])
Beak and Claws: Strength-based Damage 2, Split
Golden Lightning Fan: Ranged Damage 9, Accurate 4, Multiattack; AE: Line Area Damage 11
Form Magna King: Summon 3, Heroic; Feedback, Limited (all components present), Limited (components vanish)

Advantages: Autopilot, Close Attack 5, Move-by Action**Totals:** Abilities -10 + Powers 99 + Advantages 7 + Skills 0 (0 ranks) + Defenses 24 = 120

DEFENSES	STUDENT	CAVALIER	GUARDIAN
TOUGHNESS	4*	8*	11
DODGE	4	8	11
PARRY	4	8	11
FORTITUDE	2	4	IMMUNE
WILL	4	6	IMMUNE

* -2 WITHOUT DEFENSIVE ROLL
 ** USE CAVALIER DEFENSES IF EFFECT TARGETS A PILOT DIRECTLY

COMBAT

Student Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Unarmed	+2	Parry	Close Damage 0	DC 15
Cavalier Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Griffon Gyre Gouge	+8	Parry	Close Damage 8	DC 23
Unarmed	+6	Parry	Close Damage 4	DC 19
Guardian Attacks	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Beak and Claws	+11	Parry	Close Damage 11	DC 26
Golen Lightning Fan	+12	Dodge	Cone Area Damage 9	DC 24

Abilities 26 + Powers 63 + Advantages 10 + Skills 15 (30 ranks) + Defenses 6 = 120 TOTAL

MAGNA KING

**"WE NEED MAGNA-KING!
FORM UP!"**



The ultimate expression of the Magna Matrix's power, the Magna King combines the forms and powers of all five Magna Guardians into a single, devastating robot that towers above enemies and wields more power than a fleet of battleships. Originally designed by the Preservers to oppose Collapsar directly, Magna King has faced countless threats to the universe over the eons, appearing to right wrongs, then vanishing first into history and then into legend once those existential dangers pass.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Magna King stands as large as a building and possesses phenomenal strength and durability. Able to withstand all but the most brutal assaults, it is a fearsome close-range combatant, equipped with a shield that grants it Impervious Protection or a sword that grants it strength damage the Penetrating extra—though it can't bring both to bear at once. As an amalgam of all five Guardian robots, it can wield any of their powers to attack with flame, ice, light, lightning, or ultrasonic waves.

Because it was designed to hunt Collapsar, Magna King's sensors are fine-tuned to detect cosmic phenomena, and it also benefits from the advanced sensor systems of the various Guardians. The combined power of the Magna Matrix allows Magna King to open spatial gates to travel across the universe in a matter of hours, in addition to the mobility provided by its component robots.

PLAYING MAGNA KING

Magna King is a single, powerful robot piloted by all five members of Magna Force. The temptation to simply give one player control over the titan is strong, but this essentially delegates the rest of the players to audience status. When designing encounters for Magna King, think about the robot in terms of a giant ship with necessary roles for every crew member, rather than a single giant robot. Designate a primary pilot whose attack modifiers and Vehicles skill checks determine Magna King's abilities, but consult the entire team for options and provide challenges they can address. Team members may need to treat others' injuries after a harsh battle, conduct emergency repairs, or decipher puzzles about a powerful opponent before Magna King's attacks can hurt it.

All of Magna King's secondary pilots can temporarily grant the robot access to an advantage they possess with a successful skill check made as a standard action, with the DC and exact skill used determined by the Gamemaster. Advantages like Power Attack may require a Technology skill check to divert power, while Accurate Attack or Evasion may call for Expertise (tactics) or Insight. These granted advantages last for one round. Secondary pilots can also use the Aid action to assist the primary pilot's attack and skill checks, helping compensate for their relatively low attack bonuses considering the Magna King's combined PL of 15.

MAGNA KING

PL 15

THE ULTIMATE FIGHTING ROBOT

REAL NAME Magna King **AGE** ancient **HAIR** none**OCCUPATION** Legacy of the Preservers **PLACE OF ORIGIN** The Cosmos

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
16	—	3	3	4	—	4	—
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS			
Skill	Ranks	Bonus	
Acrobatics	0	+3	
Athletics	0	+16	
Insight	0	+4	
Perception	0	+4	
Stealth	0	-13	

ADVANTAGES		
Advantage	Details	
Assessment	Use Insight skill to learn target's combat bonuses	
Attractive	Situational +2 bonus on Deception and Persuasion skills	
Close Attack 4	+4 to Close Attack checks	
Diehard	Automatically stabilize when dying	
Seize Initiative	Spend a Hero Point to go first in initiative order	
Ultimate Effort (Toughness)	Spend a Hero Point to automatically roll a 20	

POWERS

Giant Fighting Robot • Permanent • Personal • 79 points **Technology****Growth 16** (Innate; Permanent)**Immunity 21** (Aging, Cold Damage, Fire Damage, Life Support [occupants])**Sure-Footed:** Movement 4 (Sure-footed 2, Water Walking 2)**Sensor Systems:** Senses 17 (Analytical Extended 2 Cosmic Awareness, Vision Counters All Concealment, Danger Sense, Direction Sense, Distance Sense, Extended Vision 2, Time Sense, Tracking 2)**Cosmic Engines** • Array (22 points) • Sustained • Personal • 25 points **Technology**

- **Phoenix Flight:** Flight 11 (4000 MPH)
- **Magna Gate:** Movement 3 (Space Travel 3: other galaxies)
- **Griffon Speed:** Speed 6 (120 MPH)
- **Kraken Fin:** Swimming 6 (30 MPH)

Magna Panoply • Array (16 points) • Easily Removable • 11 points **Technology**

- **Kraken Shield:** Impervious Toughness 16
- **Magna Blade:** Penetrating 16 on Strength

Weapon Systems • Array (33 points) • Instant • 37 points **Technology**

- **Dragon Ice Beam:** Ranged Affliction 14 (Hindered and Vulnerable, Defenseless and Immobile; Resisted by Dodge; Accurate 4; Extra Condition, Limited Degree)
- **Griffon Lightning Lance:** Line Area Damage 15
- **Kraken Shout:** Cone Area Damage 11 (Penetrating 11)
- **Phoenix Fire Burn:** Ranged Damage 14 (Accurate 4)
- **Unicorn Blink:** Concealment 2 (Visual)

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	17
DODGE	13
PARRY	13
FORTITUDE	IMMUNE
WILL	IMMUNE

COMBAT

Damage: **Dazed?** **Staggered?** **Incapacitated?**

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Dragon Ice Beam	+11	Dodge	Ranged Affliction 14	DC 24
Griffon Lightning Lance	—	Dodge	Line Area Damage 15	DC 30
Kraken Shout	—	Dodge	Cone Area Damage 11 (penetrating)	DC 26
Phoenix Fire Burn	+11	Dodge	Ranged Damage 14	DC 29
Magna Blade	+8	Parry	Close Damage 16 (penetrating)	DC 31

INITIATIVE
+3

Abilities -2 + Powers 182 + Advantages 9 + Skills 0 (0 ranks) + Defenses 36 = 225 TOTAL

TWO-FISTED JUSTICE



FERROBURG

POWER LEVEL: 7

POWER POINTS: 105

TEAM TEMPLATE

2 POINTS

Skills: Expertise (Streetwise) 2

Advantages: Equipment 1 (team equipment and HQ contribution)

Equipment: commlink (communication), flashlight

Some cities grow sick with time. Idealism gives way to jaded reality, and the best ideals tarnish and grow hard after countless tiny compromises. And some cities are simply born sick—founded on exploitation and manipulation and abuse. Ferroborg was founded not on high ideals but to make money, and since its founding has existed to excuse the abuses of the rich and powerful at the expense of the common workers and the poor. While other cities waver between shining brightly in times of plenty and growing harsh when things are lean, Ferroborg knows only corruption, and its wealth exists only for a select few. While a burgeoning technology industry has begun to grow in the abandoned factories and office parks, cor-

ruption runs deep in the police force and local government, with seemingly no change after centuries and a dozen failed reform efforts. The authorities, the mayor, the mob—no one with any measure of power wants to clean up Ferroborg. Until now.

Rust Belt, Kid-Kid, Blackjack, and the Witch: the Ferroborg Four. They were all operating independently to protect the citizens of Ferroborg when they started receiving strange emails signed by “the Witness.” The messages detailed criminal activity across Ferroborg and provided these four heroes with the knowledge to stop it. While pursuing these leads, the four crossed paths and started an uneasy collaboration that has since evolved into teamwork. When the four stopped hearing from the Witness, they traced the emails to the basement of an empty warehouse. Although the basement was stocked with computers, monitors, and police scanners, it was clear the site had been abandoned. Had the Witness left voluntarily or been taken? Was he or she hiding? Why had he or she brought them together in the first place, only to suddenly go silent? These questions haunt the team.

Despite tensions caused by their differences in personality, the Ferroborg Four are united by a common goal: to bring safety and stability to Ferroborg. Their city is failing, and the people who suffer are not the same people who grew wealthy off the city’s bygone bounty. American industry buys cheaper steel from overseas, and heavy

manufacturing jobs are declining. Ferroburg has been the victim of rampant corruption and criminal activity. A federal grant to update the steel mills disappeared into the pockets of city officials, and the former mayor was convicted of embezzling millions of dollars from the city. A company planning to reopen and update Ferroburg Steel went bankrupt. Wealthier neighborhoods have weathered the storm, but the poorer citizens of the city have faced the crisis head-on and live it every day. While many have fled Ferroburg, others are financially unable to relocate, or tied to the city through family, loyalty, or employment. The Ferroburg Four hope that if they can combat the corruption at the heart of the city, businesses can flourish and jobs will return.

TEAM RESOURCES

While most hero teams assemble from a diverse range of backgrounds and life experiences, the members of the Ferroburg Four know the streets of their city—one way or another, its back alleys and personality define them all. This intimacy gives them all a basic understanding of the Steel City and its culture and hiding spots. While each has their specialty—Blackjack knows the ins and outs of the corrupt halls of power, while Rust Belt knows the city's unions and factories—they all know more than enough to get by.

Rust Belt has renovated the basement in her building to make a headquarters for the Ferroburg Four, nicknamed the Rust Basement by Kid-Kid. Her workbench is there, and she has added a few desks and set up some computers, police scanners, and monitors for security cameras. The basement has workout equipment and yoga mats, extra beds (though no comfort or privacy), a well-stocked refrigerator, and enough security to satisfy its paranoid occupants. Here, the Ferroburg Four meet, plan, train, rest, and watch the city.

THE RUST BASEMENT

12 POINTS

Size: Medium **Toughness:** 8 **Features:** Computer, Communications, Garage, Gym, Secret 2 (DC 25), Security System 2 (DC 25), Workshop

ADVENTURES

The Ferroburg Four represent a classic, street-level vigilante team, inspired by comics like *The Defenders* or *Birds of Prey*, or television series like *Arrow* and *Daredevil*. They are people with no powers per se, or minor powers at best, making a difference as best they can. They step in to handle the jobs the police refuse to and resource-strapped charity organizations can't. They can't fly or hurl buses; their heroism is on a very human scale, and the good they do is equally human. The Ferroburg Four have the opportunity to learn the names of the people they save, and reap personal rewards and information for their bravery. They don't fight to save the world; they fight to save the hearts and dreams of one tiny corner of it.

Adventures for the Ferroburg Four should focus on their city and have a tone of gritty reality, but also hope for the future. The crime isn't abstract in Ferroburg. The gangs

MENTOR: THE WITNESS

One of the enduring questions of a Ferroburg Four campaign is the identity of the mysterious Witness, who first brought them together. The Witness was, until recently, the longest-operating of Ferroburg's local heroes, but largely unknown beyond their actions. A skilled hacker, they accessed the city's web of private and public surveillance cameras to watch—and record—everything that happened in Ferroburg. Time and time again they provided valuable evidence to local and federal law enforcement to bring down crime lords and corrupt officials, while also stealing millions in digital assets from Ferroburg's criminal cartels.

The exact identity of the Witness and their reason for gathering the group are left up to the Gamemaster to determine. They could be a superhero who has since aged out of the game, a tech-savvy civil servant using their connections to help the city's heroes, a reformed criminal using their vast underworld knowledge to make amends for the evil they've done, or one of the city's new breed of tech workers who wants to make a difference in their adopted home but lacks any powers or training to confront corruption head-on.

Likewise, the mystery of the Witness's disappearance is a running plot element that can help guide the team through the city's various power players. Has the Witness gone into hiding, and if so, from whom? Have they been killed? Have they abandoned their quest, or had a change of heart? Or did they create the Ferroburg Four as one step in a Machiavellian plot to control the city?

Optional statistics are provided here in case you would like to use the Witness more directly in your own campaign, or even include them as an additional player character.

THE WITNESS PL 7

STR -2, **STA** 0, **AGL** -3, **DEX** 0, **FGT** 1, **INT** 5, **AWE** 4, **PRE** 1

Powers: **Computer Specialist** Enhanced Skill 8 (Technology); Limited to Computers

Hacking Rig (Easily Removed) Remote Sensing 16 (250 miles), Visual and Audio, Simultaneous; Medium (Surveillance Devices)

Equipment: Heavy Pistol, Undercover Shirt

Advantages: Assessment, Assist* (Evasion, Favored Foe, Improved Aim, Teamwork) 4, Benefit, Cipher, Benefit, Wealth (well-off), Contacts, Eidetic Memory, Equipment 2, Fascinate (Persuasion), Guidance*, Improved Initiative, Languages 3 (Arabic, English, Italian, Russian, Spanish), Teamwork, Well-informed

Skills: Expertise: Current Events 8 (+13), Expertise: Streetwise 8 (+13), Insight 8 (+12), Investigation 8 (+13), Perception 8 (+12), Persuasion 6 (+7), Ranged Combat: Firearms 4 (+4), Technology 2 (+15/+7), Treatment 2 (+7)

Offense: Init +1, Heavy Pistol +4 (Ranged, Damage 4), Unarmed +1 (Close, Damage -2)

Defense: Dodge 1, Parry 4, Fort 6, Tou 2, Will 8

Totals: Abilities 12 + Powers 31 + Advantages 18 + Skills 27 (54 ranks) + Defenses 17 = 105

form to protect their neighborhoods because the cops won't, and turn to crime—often drugs, but sometimes extortion, gambling, prostitution, and robbery—to fund the imperfect protection they offer. Kids make a career

out of crime because underfunded schools can't prepare them for college and jobless parents couldn't afford to pay for education if they did. The official syndicates—deeply intertwined with the city's wealthy patrons and politicians—maintain the city as it was intended and corrupt honest citizens into abetting large-scale crimes or looking the other way out of fear. Anyone lucky enough to have a job probably knows their boss is crooked or pays off the mob, but won't say anything about it for fear of retaliation (or worse, unemployment). The Ferroburg Four may know the victims they save or the criminals they bust, and there may be more overlap between those two categories than in most superhero games. The local police by and large consider the Ferroburg Four criminals—vigilantes at best or terrorists at worst.

The team is often frustrated; they are up against so much, and often feel as though they are just treading water. They hope, though, if they can stabilize the day-to-day existence of the city, they can take on the larger issues: corruption in local government and law enforcement, ethical lapses in businesses, crime, and the unsafe disposal of chemicals and other environmental hazards. Adventures could explore themes of the importance of a place (in this case, a city or a neighborhood) to a person's identity, the ways in which ordinary citizens suffer because of the actions of a powerful few, the high costs of greed and environmental irresponsibility, and the good a few determined individuals can do if they can focus their efforts. Most investigations in the city will yield too many clues. The criminals are careless and comfortable, and the player characters can easily have too many leads to track down and more evidence than they need. Investigations will require focus, as well as follow-through to make sure the rusted wheels of justice turn once a criminal is captured—all too often a Ferroburg criminal spends an inconvenient night in a holding cell, only to walk free the next day when the district attorney decides not to press charges thanks to an overtaxed court system.

The Ferroburg Four patrol the streets at night, working their way up the food chain of crime. They know Natali Weston, one of Ferroburg's major political and economic players, is engaged in criminal activity, and they know the district attorney works for her. But the only targets they can reach for now are their enforcers. They may never dismantle her entire empire, but sometimes knowing a night's work costs the crime lord a few million dollars or sets her plans back a month is victory enough.

Adventures don't need to involve the whole city's future and may focus instead on an individual hero's needs or flaws. A Ferroburg Four campaign shares many elements with film noir, with heroes being imperfect and making mistakes. Each member can easily see consequences of their past actions—moral compromises they've made, crimes they've committed in the name of greater justice, individuals they failed to save—return like ghosts from their past to haunt their lives now. Adventures may even be as simple and vital as finding a way to keep the local homeless shelter running for a few more weeks as winter closes in—a simple task for a four-color hero with a cape and a sponsorship deal, but a difficult challenge for a vigilante branded a criminal by local authorities.

OPONENTS

The Ferroburg Four are up against many foes who are bent on attaining their goals no matter who they hurt or what they destroy, facing real criminals instead of the villainy of comic books and Saturday morning cartoons. Some have superpowers and some are just ordinary people; some are well known to the team, and others are just rumors or whispers in the night. While many of their everyday enemies are faceless members of various syndicates and street gangs, there's always a chance the heroes will run into familiar faces among these crowds: a kid they mentored, a former coworker who lost their job last year, a criminal they've already busted four times and are on a first-name basis with. Minions are a common element of street-level adventures and any of the Underworld minion archetypes from the *Gamemaster's Guide* make appropriate opponents for casual run-ins or support for more powerful criminals, while Cultists, Ninjas, Soldiers, and even Animals can break up the monotony. Many of the city's gangs adopt unusual names, colors, and motifs to set themselves apart, like the thrill-chasing, clown-themed Funny Farm, or the Fuses, who specialize in electronics theft and dress like utility workers. Others, such as the Good Ministries, pose as legitimate charity organizations and theme their crimes around their cultist natures by exploiting locals rather than robbing them.

While any number of crime lords and mob bosses make trouble across the city, they all acknowledge—or at least avoid—the so-called Rat Queen, Natali Weston (see sidebar). As her sobriquet suggests, colorful nicknames and gimmicks still dominate the underworld in Ferroburg as they once did all across America, giving otherwise mundane criminals like "Twelve-Knuckle Houlihan" and "Johnny the Falcon" memorable quirks that help them stand out from nameless goons. The city's crime lords and gang leaders aren't exempt from this local tradition, with major rackets run by the likes of Dorothy "Ozma" Prior, "Iron Malcolm" Innes, and "Big Game" Janey Russo. Don't be afraid to customize any of the minion archetypes in the *Gamemaster's Guide* to create unique threats or colorful personalities. To reflect how tough some gangs are, you might elect not to use the minion rules for them, despite a lower Power Level. A team of five Ninja Adepts may still be lower-powered than the Ferroburg Four, but they are still a threat when they don't go down with a single hit.

The Ferroburg Four face their own costumed foes in addition to common criminals. Blackjack's hideously scarred nemesis, the Freak (use the *Gamemaster's Guide* Psycho archetype), chases superpowers by endangering himself and others in poorly thought-out accidents to unlock the superhuman potential he knows lies somewhere inside him, and taking out his frustration on random targets when his attempts fail. The city's burgeoning tech industry released an unexpected danger in the form of Kill Command, an advanced antivirus program designed to adapt to dangerous threats and rampant cybercrime, which evolved her own malicious personality and rage at her inability to escape the electronic world (use the *Gamemaster's Guide* Temper Demon minion archetype, but add Insubstantial 4 (innate, permanent) and Teleport 12 (medium) to rep-

resent her digital nature.) The city's pollution spawned a vicious monster of urban legend simply called "The Sewer Monster" by locals (use the *Gamemaster's Guide* Brute archetype), who terrorizes the city's homeless and has run afoul of Kid-Kid repeatedly. Other Freedom City criminals may make their way to Ferroburg, either to hide out from the heroes of the big city or as paid muscle. In particular, Chakram, the Dealer, Hocus and Pocus, Kathryn the Red, Mother Moonlight, and the House of Usher all make ideal opponents for the Ferroburg Four (see *Rogue's Gallery*), especially when supported by various minions.

ADVERSARY OPTIONS

The Ferroburg Four would not take kindly to other heroes showing up in their city and getting in their way. It wouldn't take much to make them feel territorial and resent newcomers to their city, particularly if they felt the new heroes were not being careful enough about collateral damage, innocent bystanders, or the precarious balance of power and repercussions that define Ferroburg's criminal politics. The Four also allow some minor criminal activity to continue in the hopes they can trace that activity back to the source, and a new group stomping through their town and recklessly dismantling long-term intelligence operations can easily push the vigilantes to retaliate. Because they operate as vigilantes—often opposed directly by law enforcement—the Ferroburg Four are also a likely team to be targeted by "legitimate" superheroes imported (possibly by a criminal mastermind) to the city.

The Ferroburg Four all have their dark sides, and could just as easily be four low-powered villains allying to take over Ferroburg's (or any city's) criminal landscape. They may be misguided, trying to extract revenge for their various causes: Rust Belt's anger at the way the working class of the city are treated, or Kid-Kid's desire to protect the homeless, Blackjack's self-loathing and addiction to adrenaline, and The Witch's fascination with the darker parts of her grandmother's teachings; all of these motivations could have lead the Four down very different paths; sometimes there is a fine line between hero and villain.

A less sympathetic Ferroburg Four may be the city's four leading crimelords, who maintain their strangehold on the rough-and-tumble city thanks to their various gifts. Rust Belt, as a control freak, has every motivation to bring the anarchy of the gangs and independant criminals under her control. Kid-Kid may see the city, rather than the people in it, as his true family, and no sacrifice is too great to keep Ferroburg humming along as is—the homeless of the city operate as his silent army of spies and nothing happens without his knowledge. The Witch—especially if her grandmother were a darker figure—could easily rule the city's various fringe cults and turn them toward controlling the drug trade. And finally, Blackjack could learn nothing from his brush with death and continue on as the entitled rich boy who can't lose at anything, who finds running the old-world mob families of Ferroburg and wrangling his fellow crimelords far more thrilling than managing his family's mundane investment business.

NEMESIS: RAT QUEEN

While publicly the philanthropic owner of Iron City Construction—having acquired the company and turned it around in the city's last economic downturn—Natali Weston is well known in the streets as the cruel sovereign who rules Ferroburg's underworld. She earned her criminal moniker both from the run-down "rat-trap" apartments on which she made her fortune and her gift for making the city's scum dance to her tune. Weston regularly employs criminals and even supercriminals to silence critics and investigators, drive up rent prices, target rivals, and artificially maintain low wages. With her extensive knowledge of the city's criminal community, she has also made a pet of District Attorney Billy Jones, feeding him enough information on criminal rivals that he can maintain his "tough on crime" position while ignoring her flagrant criminal activities, unsafe tenements, and dangerous factories.

Despite scurilous rumors of her illegal operations, Weston remains a respected and even beloved figure in much of the city. Her personal fortune funds many art exhibitions, operas, and other cultural endeavours that have recaptured Ferroburgh's lost splendor—for those of means, of course—as well as many charities the rest of the population depends on. Combined with the politicians and opinion-makers she bankrolls, her influence network has ensured few accusations against Natali's good name have stuck.

Weston didn't achieve her level of success in the mean streets of Ferroburg by intellect alone. She is a scrappy, resourceful fighter who has beaten any number of would-be assassins or usurpers to death with her bare hands. Her combat style is brutal and effecient, with little grace or artistry. More than once she has bounced back from what should have been a lethal wound, leading to rumors among the city's low-lifes that she traded her soul to the devil in exchange for thirteen chances to escape death.

RAT QUEEN

PL 9

STR 4, STA 5, AGL 1, DEX 2, FGT 8, INT 5, AWE 5, PRE 7

Equipment: Smartphone, Heavy Pistol (Ranged Damage 4), 25 additional points of equipment

Advantages: Benefit 4 (Status, Millionaire), Connected, Contacts, Daze (Intimidation), Defensive Roll 5, Diehard, Equipment 7, Improvised Weapon 2, Languages 2 (Russian, Spanish), Minions 10, Power Attack, Set-up, Ultimate Effort (Toughness checks), Well Equipped* 2, Well-informed

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+10), Deception 8 (+15), Expertise: Business 8 (+13), Expertise: Music 6 (+11), Expertise: Streetwise 12 (+17), Insight 10 (+15), Intimidation 10 (+17), Perception 6 (+11), Persuasion 8 (+15), Ranged Combat: Guns 8 (+10), Sleight of Hand 4 (+6), Technology 4 (+9)

Offense: Init +1, Heavy Pistol +10 (Ranged, Damage 4), Improvised Weapon +10 (Close, Damage 6), Unarmed +10 (Close, Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 7, Parry 8, Fort 9, Tou 10/5, Will 9

Totals: Abilities 74 + Powers 0 + Advantages 40 + Skills 43 (86 ranks) + Defenses 14 = 171

A criminally inclined Ferroburg Four would likely have legions of criminals answering to them in addition to the statistics provided here.

BLACKJACK

"AW, DON'T LOOK SAD. IT WAS JUST A LUCKY SHOT."



away. "You're so lucky," everyone said to him. At his best friend's funeral, he was confronted by the boy's mother: "Why should you be so lucky when my son had to die?"

The question haunted Nick. He started to engage in riskier behavior: gambling more money, driving faster, picking fights in dive bars. He stopped going to class. But he still won every game, won every fight, passed every classes. He didn't have to *try* to succeed, and everything became meaningless. He moved back home to Ferroburg, where he spent his time drinking, gambling, and fighting wherever he could find the opportunity. He figured this aimless existence was all his incredible luck could bring him.

One night—on a whim—he stepped in to stop a mugger; he didn't lose, but the guy had friends, friends with knives. He sidestepped their attacks, stole their weapons, anticipated their every move. Suddenly he felt the sense of purpose he had lacked. He looked at his city, the place he grew up, and saw the poverty, the crime, the homelessness. Maybe, if he was going to be blessed or cursed with this crazy luck, he could use it to help those who weren't so lucky.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Blackjack has extraordinary luck and has developed a fighting style around that talent, ducking enemy blows as if by accident away from enemy blows, connecting with lucky hits left and right, and hurling objects with accidental accuracy. His luck allows him to escape certain death so long as some plausible lucky break exists—he can survive a car wreck with ease, for example, but not a mob hitman beating him to death. He is beginning to discover that he can push his luck too hard, however, and that repeated escapes from death seem to incapacitate him for longer and longer periods. From a game perspective, the Gamemaster can decide what circumstance recharges Blackjack's Immortality power—though given the extraordinary escapes it allows, it should be challenging.

PLAYING BLACKJACK

Blackjack has serious intentions, but he keeps his attitude light and irreverent. He wasted too many years gambling and drinking to believe that he can truly be a good person, but he's going to try. For once, he will use his luck to help people, and maybe redeem himself in the process. But he can't let go of his morbid curiosity about his luck: Will it run out someday? Will he push it too far? Can he?

Blackjack is a resourceful fighter with a natural ability to cheat death and escape certain doom. Outside of combat, he isn't the most skilled member of the team, but possesses the greatest breadth thanks to his Jack-of-All-Trades and Beginner's Luck advantages, allowing him to attempt any skill check and even spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in an untrained skill. His advantages also let him work with allies' abilities, using Precise Attack to hit enemies obscured by the Witch's fog potions, for example, or using Evasion to avoid Kid-Kid's urban traps.

Nick Larson has always been lucky; everything just went his way. His family was well-to-do and lived in the best part of Ferroburg. In high school, all the right kids liked him. He was captain of the football team and, although he never studied, always got good grades. He enrolled in a great college, joined a fraternity, and made money at cards without trying. His lucky streak took a dark turn one night while Nick and some buddies were driving home—a truck crossed the center line and plowed into them. His friends died almost instantly, but Nick walked

BLACKJACK

PL 7

LADY LUCK'S LOTHARIO

REAL NAME Nick Larson AGE 25 HAIR Brown

OCCUPATION Trust Fund Baby PLACE OF ORIGIN Ferroburg, PA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
3	3	1	1	4	0	1	6
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+1
Athletics	6	+9
Deception	0	+6
Expertise (PRE): Gambling	4	+10
Expertise: Streetwise	2	+2
Insight	5	+6
Intimidation	2	+8
Perception	4	+5
Persuasion	0	+6
Ranged Combat: Thrown	6	+7
Sleight of Hand	5	+6
Stealth	2	+3
Vehicles	5	+6

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Attractive	Situational +2 bonus on Deception and Persuasion skills
<i>Beginner's Luck</i>	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Benefit (Wealth)	Well-Off
Close Attack 5	+5 to Close Attack checks
Equipment 5	25 points of equipment
<i>Evasion</i>	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Jack-of-All-Trades	Use any skill untrained
<i>Luck 3</i>	Re-roll a die
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
<i>Precise Attack 2</i>	Ignore attack penalties (close or ranged, cover)
Takedown	Free extra attack when you incapacitate a minion
<i>Throwing Mastery 2</i>	+2 Damage bonus with thrown weapons
<i>Uncanny Dodge</i>	Not vulnerable when surprised or off-guard

POWERS

Lucky Bastard • Personal • Permanent • 21 points	Mystical
Enhanced Defenses 6 (Dodge 3, Parry 3)	
Enhanced Advantages 10 (Beginner's Luck, Evasion, Luck 3, Precise Attack 2 (Close and Ranged, Concealment), Throwing Mastery 2, Uncanny Dodge)	
Lucky Escape: Immortality 19; Check Required 5 (Expertise: Gambling, DC 14), Fades, Limited (to deaths that can be evaded by coincidence)	

EQUIPMENT

Armored Costume

+3 Toughness

Collapsing Staff

Damage 2, Strength-Based, Subtle

Additional Equipment

SUV, Team HQ Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Accident: While things never go wrong for Nick, those around him seem to encounter terrible misfortune and long-shot disasters.

Addiction: Nick struggles with alcoholism.

Motivation—Responsibility: Nick is haunted by his good fortune even as those around him seem to suffer, and has decided to “turn his luck around” by using it to help the less fortunate.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	6	3 W/O ARMOR
DODGE	8	
PARRY	8	
FORTITUDE	5	
WILL	4	

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated?

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Collapsing Staff	+9	Parry	Close Damage 5	DC 20
Thrown Object	+7	Dodge	Ranged Damage 5	DC 20
Unarmed	+9	Parry	Close Damage 3	DC 18

INITIATIVE
+1

Abilities 38 + Powers 21 + Advantages 15 + Skills 21 (41 ranks) + Defenses 10 = 105 TOTAL

KID-KID

"THIS CITY LOOKS OUT FOR ITS OWN!"



Carl Knox was born in Ferroburg, and born to Ferroburg. His father was a steel worker—a career as old as the city itself—and his mother cleaned houses—seeing the inside of every life, great and small. Carl was a bright, active kid, and his life was average until his mother passed away. Carl's father lost his job and the house soon after. The old man heard about steel work in Pittsburg from a friend and went to check it out, leaving Carl with elderly neighbors. The weeks stretched into months, his father still hadn't returned, and Carl knew he wasn't coming back. In time, even his aging adoptive parents left as death claimed them during a particularly bad winter. When Child Protective Services showed up for him, he ran.

That first night out on the streets, Carl wasn't afraid. His parents were gone, but they'd taught him to know to

the city. He felt Ferroburg open her arms and embrace him, and he was home. He learned fast and made allies. Something about Ferroburg itself listened to him, and he listened back. The city taught him to move and to use his surroundings to hide or confuse pursuers, and even how to guide people into unexpected dangers. He learned the names and faces and loves of a hundred people all but invisible to the world—the destitute, the mentally ill, shopkeepers, janitors, city crews, and sex workers—and through all of them he learned to take the pulse of the city and know where she was hurting. Kid-Kid misses his mom, of course, but doesn't think about his dad much; his family is on the streets and in the poor neighborhoods.

They call him Kid-Kid, so that's his name now. They all know if they are in trouble, Kid-Kid is the man to find, and he'll always do what he can to help.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Kid-Kid is not trained in combat, but with the city on his side he can handle anything. He can piss off just about anyone using a combination of wit, grit, and stubbornness; he angers his foes and goads them into following him into dangerous locations or tight confines where he has the advantage.

Carl knows when the laundry on 6th Street vents its scalding steam into the alley behind it, or that if you don't walk across the floor of an abandoned building in exactly the right way, the floorboards will break and you'll fall three floors. He knows a hundred ways the city will hide him, or hurt others if he lets it. When he is fighting side by side with allies he can grab his enemies' attention and draw their fire, redirecting it toward himself or even to a different enemy, using their strengths against them.

PLAYING KID-KID

Kid-Kid is the go-to team member for digging up information on anyone in or around the city; he can chase down rumors, follow people, and search the streets until he gets the information he's after. He's too quick, too smart, and too connected to get caught or hurt—and too full of young confidence to realize how vulnerable he really is. He's found his own way to survive in the modern world, and he likes it a lot better than school or the prospect of a nine-to-five job.

Kid-Kid's powers are a little unusual, reflecting his uncanny knowledge of the city—and perhaps some unnatural connection between them—protecting him from harm. A city bus may pass just as a goon fires his gun, an unexpected theater crowd might suddenly spill into the streets to hamper movement and visibility, or he might simply coax an enemy into walking into a conveniently open manhole. His connection to the city is a narrative device for an incredibly creative power suite for supporting allies and protecting himself.

KID-KID

PL 7

BORN TO THE CITY

REAL NAME Carl Knox AGE 15 HAIR Black

OCCUPATION Homeless PLACE OF ORIGIN Ferroburg, PA

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



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	4	+9
Athletics	0	+0
Deception	8	+9
Expertise: Streetwise	8	+10
Insight	0	+3
Investigation	10	+12
Perception	0	+3
Persuasion	0	+1
Stealth	6	+11

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Contacts	Make an Investigation check in one minute
Defensive Roll 3	+3 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 1	5 points of equipment
Evasion 2	+5 bonus to avoid area attacks
Hide in Plain Sight	Hide while being observed
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Redirect	Redirect a missed attack to another target with Deception
Taunt	Use Deception skill to demoralize
Well-Informed	Immediate Investigation or Perception check

POWERS

Parkour • Personal • Permanent • 4 points Talent

Movement 4 (Safe Fall, Sure-footed 2, Wall-crawling); Limited (Urban Environments)

The City Protects • Dynamic Array (20 points) • Sustained • 24 points Talent

- **Impromptu Cover:** Deflect 6, Redirection, Reflect, Subtle
- **Living Landscape:** Environment 4 (Impede Movement -2, Impede Visibility -5), Subtle; Limited (Urban Environments)
- **Urban Hazards:** Ranged Damage 7, Indirect 4

EQUIPMENT

Additional Equipment

Team HQ Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Acceptance: Carl feels abandoned by his family and by the world. Only the city itself took him in, and he hopes that helping others will make him a new family.

Homeless: While he's doing well enough, Carl has been homeless and out of school for over a year. He doesn't have a legal residence, a high school diploma, or any of the other paperwork that proves he's a person to the rest of civilization.

Responsibility: Carl feels like he's the only voice the "invisible people" of the street may get, and he tries always fights crime with an eye toward how his action can help—or hurt—Ferroburg's homeless.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	5	2 w/o DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	9	
PARRY	7	
FORTITUDE	8	
WILL	6	

COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +9
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Unarmed	+1	Parry	Close Damage -1	DC 14	
Urban Hazards	+2	Dodge	Ranged Damage 7	DC 22	

Abilities 30 + Powers 26 + Advantages 12 + Skills 18 (36 ranks) + Defenses 19 = 105 TOTAL

RUST BELT

"HEY, YOU DON'T COME DOWN TO MY BOROUGH AND START THROWIN' YOUR WEIGHT AROUND. 'LESS YOU WANNA SEE WHAT I THROW AROUND."



Dani Acevedo's father ran Atlas Consulting, a heavy manufacturing company that stamped steel for every other factory in Ferroborg. As a child, she begged her father to take her on his inspections, and she would walk through factories with him, staring at the machines and the grease-covered workers who kept everything running. Despite her mother's predictions, Dani never "grew out of" her fascination with heavy machinery. In college, she studied engineering, but left before her degree was com-

plete; she was too restless to sit in class and exams gave her a headache. She returned to Ferroborg and started work at Ferroborg Steel. She loved her job: the camaraderie, the heat, the roar of the machines. Finally, she could get her hands dirty, and she quickly found she could fix just about anything. But Ferroborg Steel closed. And soon every other steel mill followed.

Dani eventually took a job as a building superintendent, spending her days fixing tenants' sinks and loose window screens. She rigged security cameras outside the building as the crime rates in Ferroborg skyrocketed, and tried to look out for her tenants. She read about different heroes in Ferroborg and across the world, and she became curious to see if she could build gadgets that would help them. Dani worked day and night. She poured her heart and soul and grit into these inventions: boots, a glove, a flashlight. She had the tech and someday she would find someone to wear it.

Dani had spent months "borrowing" parts from her father's factory—by then a half-empty ruin the old man managed alone. But one night she heard him beg as Natali Weston ordered the building burned to ash. Dani, enraged, tried to rescue her father, but Weston's "Security Team" found her, beat her, and threw her into an alley. Dani went home to her gadgets. If she had been wearing them, she could have taken those goons easily. If she had been wearing them, she could have saved the factory and her father. So she started wearing them.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Rust Belt's powers come from her inventions: a glove that hardens into steel and generates powerful magnetic fields, boots that propel her as she leaps, and a flashlight that highlights different visual spectrums. She has yet to figure out "fancy" names for them, and for now just labels them with capital letters in hopes that she'll figure out a good acronym later. She has also done some physical training and self-defense classes, so she knows how to handle herself in a fight. In combat she prefers the direct approach, firing up her GLOVE and moving in for close fighting, using the propulsion systems in her BOOTS to cover a lot of ground quickly. Her LAMP helps her see in the dark well enough, but broadcasts a wide spectrum of fluorescent and ultraviolet light, which highlights easily-overlooked clues and assists any teammates trained in the Investigation skill.

PLAYING RUST BELT

Rust Belt is an open, direct person who prefers to talk honestly rather than hold her feelings in, but she is not prone to patience. She is motivated by her desire to see Ferroborg filled with thriving factories and eager workers—all of whom can afford to live decent lives—and her anger is reserved almost exclusively for Ferroborg's richest citizens, who destroy the livelihoods of the city's people. In a fight, she's mostly a bruiser, but outside of the battlefield she is all nerd, solving problems by applying knowledge, stubbornness, and coffee.

RUST BELT

PL 7

THE BLUE-COLLAR TINKERER

REAL NAME Danielle "Dani" Acevedo AGE 31 HAIR Brown

OCCUPATION Superintendent PLACE OF ORIGIN Ferroburg, PA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
8/2	4	1	1	2	4	4	0
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS		
Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+1
Athletics	4	+12/+6
Deception	0	+0
Expertise: History	6	+10
Expertise: Politics	6	+10
Expertise: Streetwise	2	+6
Insight	2	+6
Intimidation	3	+3
Perception	3	+7
Persuasion	0	+0
Ranged Combat: Magnetism	6	+7
Stealth	0	+1
Technology	8	+12

ADVANTAGES	
Advantage	Details
Close Attack 4	+4 to Close Attack checks
Equipment 3	15 points of equipment
Fearless	Immune to fear effects
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Improved Smash	No penalty on Smash actions
Improved Trip	No penalty on Trip actions
Inventor	Use Technology skill to create temporary devices
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus

POWERS	
BOOTS • Removable • Personal • Instant • 3 points	Tech
Leaping 4 (120 feet)	
GLOVE • Removable • 10 points	Tech
Enhanced Strength 6; Limited to One Hand	
Move Object 6 (3200 lbs.); Limited (Metal)	
LAMP • Easily Removable • Sustained • 11 points	Tech
Enhanced Skill 6 (Investigation), Affects Others	
Senses 6 (Vision Counters Illusion, Darkvision, Infravision, Ultravision), Affects Others; Noticeable (Bright beam)	

EQUIPMENT	
Armored Costume	+5 Toughness
Additional Equipment	Flash Goggles, Gas Mask, Handcuffs, Mini-tracer, Multi-tool, Team HQ Contributions

COMPLICATIONS	
Ghosts:	Dani blames herself for her father's death and has difficulty sleeping; she may be unexpectedly Fatigued or even Exhausted at the Gamemaster's discretion.
Honor:	Dani inherited her father's blue-collar sense of justice. You don't mess with a man just trying to scrape by and earn his fair pay, for example. By extension, she has to let every goon she beats down have the chance to rethink his poor life decisions.
Motivation—Justice:	Dani wants justice for her father, and ultimately for every poor slob in Ferroburg who broke their backs working for pennies while the bosses got fat.

DEFENSES		
TOUGHNESS	9	4 w/o armor
DODGE	3	
PARRY	5	
FORTITUDE	7	
WILL	7	

COMBAT				INITIATIVE	
Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	+5
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Hurled Metal	+7	Dodge	Ranged Damage 6	DC 21	
Unarmed	+6	Parry	Close Damage 8	DC 23	

Abilities 36 + Powers 24 + Advantages 14 + Skills 20 (40 ranks) + Defenses 11 = 105 TOTAL

THE WITCH

**"DON'T MAKE ME
SUMMON THE SPIDERS."**



Julia Winterson grew up in a middle-class family in a gated suburb far from her mother's hometown of Ferroburg. She didn't worry about much more than a new dress or what color to dye her hair. When she was fourteen, her grandmother moved in following a heart attack. Julia didn't pay much attention to her; she dressed oddly and filled the garden with weird, smelly plants. Then one day, Julia came home from school crying because Billy Perkins had shoved her, down the stairs. Her grandmother came into

her room, sat on Julia's bed, and asked her, "Do you want to lie there crying, or do you want to know how to handle this boy?" Julia looked into her grandmother's eyes and dried her tears. Her grandmother spoke to her well into the night—of how to find the weakest link in every soul and how to press it to cause agony in a person's heart—and Julia listened carefully. The next day, she spoke a few words into Billy's ear, and he ran away crying.

"Baba" never talked about where she came from. She referred only to the "Old Country" in an accent thick with heavy consonants. She kept Julia close to her and taught her how to see someone's inner thoughts by asking them just the right questions, or to find and awaken their fears. They snipped leaves from Baba's plants and mixed them into foul-smelling concoctions. Her father started calling Baba "the Old Witch."

When Julia's application of the "iron eye" drove a classmate to suicide, Baba refused to speak to her granddaughter for thirty days. On the thirty-first day, Baba told Julia more of the truth: that Baba herself had done awful things as a child, and that her art extracted a heavy price threefold for crimes. Julia swore she would use what her grandmother taught her for good, and make threefold amends for the pain she'd caused. Baba died two years later, leaving Julia her old house in Ferroburg. In her grandmother's kitchen, Julia found a guide to plants and herbs, and cookbooks annotated in her grandmother's hand. She found other, secret books with black covers. Beyond the house she found a whole community that had depended on "the Witch of Silver Street" and had fallen apart in Baba's absence. Given the choice of college or legacy, Julia chose legacy and embraced her new role as the Witch.

POWERS & ABILITIES

The Witch has an almost supernatural gift for gleaning the secrets in a soul and using just the right words to twist and agonize a person, represented by her high Intimidation skill bonus and Daze, Fascinate, and Startle advantages. She is adept at brewing potions, which she carries in glass jars and bottles to throw, releasing strange concoctions. Her favorites include fog bombs, a hallucinogen to sap the will, a paralytic that stiffens a body like a corpse, sleeping gas, and a serum that compels the truth from victims' lips, though with extra effort she can create virtually any effect.

PLAYING THE WITCH

The Witch works hard to maintain a reputation as a dangerous and mystical threat, but in reality Julia is a dramatist and chemist, and glad to be part of a team. She has a wicked sense of humor and loves playing up the "witch" motif, but also has a soft side that needs companionship during late-night vigils or sad movies about dogs.

The Witch's greatest weapon is her barbed tongue. She relies more on her potions and the Intimidate skill than direct combat, disappearing into her own fog when enemies draw too near and waiting for her more combat-oriented allies to assist.

THE WITCH

PL 7

THE THIEF WORKING EVERY ANGLE

REAL NAME Julia Winterson AGE 20 HAIR Black

OCCUPATION Hedge Witch PLACE OF ORIGIN Salem, PA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	2	2	3	1	3	7	2
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	4	+2
Athletics	2	+2
Deception	4	+5
Close Combat: Unarmed	4	+5
Expertise: Botany	8	+11
Expertise: Streetwise	2	+5
Insight	4	+6
Intimidation	12	+14
Perception	0	+7
Persuasion	4	+6
Ranged Combat: Thrown	4	+7
Stealth	6	+8
Treatment	2	+5

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Daze (Intimidation)	Use a skill check to Daze a target
Defensive Roll 4	+4 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 1	1 points of equipment
Fascinate (Intimidation)	Use a skill check to Entrance a target
Set-Up	Transfer the benefit of an interaction skill to an ally
Startle	Use Intimidation skill to feint

POWERS

The Iron Eye • Personal • Permanent • 7 points Talent
Enhanced Advantages 2 (Daze, Fascinate), Enhanced Skill 10 (Intimidate)

Potions • Easily Removed Array (16 points) • 12 points Chemistry

- **Fog:** Cloud Area 2 Concealment Attack 4 (All Visual Senses)
- **Hallucinogen:** Ranged Weaken Awareness 7, Resisted by Fortitude
- **Paralytic:** Ranged Weaken Agility 7, Resisted by Fortitude
- **Sleep:** Ranged Affliction 7 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Asleep)
- **Truthteller:** Affliction 7 (Resisted and Overcome by Fortitude; Entranced, Compelled, Controlled); Limited (Telling the truth)

EQUIPMENT

Additional Equipment
Team HQ Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Garden of Death: Julia maintains her grandmother's gardens, which include exotic, dangerous, and valuable plants. The garden is a tempting target for criminals aware of it, and its many poisonous plants make it a hazard to anyone who walks in uninvited.

Motivation—Responsibility: Julia has inherited her grandmother's legacy as protector of her little corner of Ferroburg, but also wants to make amends for the hurt she has caused.

Reputation: Locals have sought the help of "the Witch of Silver Street" for decades for aid, advice, and hexes upon their enemies. Now that she has become a hero, Julia maintains an unsettling reputation of cruelty that far exceeds her actual darkness.

DEFENSES

Toughness	6	2 w/o DEFENSIVE ROLL
Dodge	7	
Parry	8	
Fortitude	6	
Will	7	

COMBAT

Damage:	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/> Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/> Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>			INITIATIVE
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Hallucinogen Potion	+7	Dodge	Ranged Weaken Awareness 7	DC 17
Paralytic Potion	+7	Dodge	Ranged Weaken Agility 7	DC 17
Sleep Potion	+7	Dodge	Ranged Affliction 7	DC 17
Unarmed	+5	Parry	Close Damage 0	DC 15

Abilities 40 + Powers 19 + Advantages 8 + Skills 22 (44 ranks) + Defenses 16 = 105 TOTAL

HARD-LUCK-FREAKS-HIGH-WEIRONESS-LIVES...



SHADOW KNIGHTS

POWER LEVEL: 6

POWER POINTS: 90

TEAM TEMPLATE

15 POINTS

Skills: Stealth 4

Advantages: Defensive Attack, Evasion, Hide in Plain Sight, Precise Attack (close, concealment)

Powers: Gene-Collided Rabbit (Enhanced Advantage [Improved Initiative], Leaping 2 [30 feet], Senses 4 [Accurate Hearing, Acute Olfactory, Low-light Vision], Speed 2 [8 mph])

San Francisco—the Golden Gate city—has always been a curious crossroads where new world meets old and the fabric of reality wears thin. Strange things have always bubbled up from the ether here, where a hundred different cultures met and mingled, and the Earth itself has opened to swallow them up. Once a world of ancient magic, modern San Francisco is now a technological hub, the seat of power for the leading companies in a dozen scientific industries. In this bizarre landscape, four shadows stand—bold knights challenging the threats that stir as the new world ploughs into the old, as well as

those who would use this chaos to line their own pockets and hurt others.

The Shadow Knights were born to the land they protect, equal parts new technology and ancient art. Applied Genetics Technology was supposed to save the world. A Silicon Valley biotech startup, it saw some early success in unwittingly aiding some refinements in the DNAscent process (see *Freedom City Third Edition*), but its fortunes turned quickly once the Labyrinth withdrew interest and funding. The company founder, Doctor Kate Darling, began a string of desperate alliances. Darling's personal genius and the focus of AGT was the direct manipulation of genes via particle physics, a science she dubbed "genokinetics." While it promised wonders—cures for cancer, reversals of birth defects, and the direct manipulation of the human genome—her practical work saw few successes. She managed a questionable bump in the intellect of her pet bearded dragon, Moon, though even this breakthrough only resulted in a pet adept at escaping her terrarium to watch Korean soap operas. The scientific leaps required to make genokinetics practical kept serious investors at bay. When silent investors finally presented themselves, Dr. Darling chose not to ask questions.

Had she investigated, she would have realized her newest backers were the Iron Claw Tong, an organized crime syndicate that had plagued San Francisco since its founding. While Dragon Master Guan Mu—the fearsome Iron

Empress and head of the Iron Claw—found the company’s scientific pursuits entertaining, she found far more profit in using AGT’s scientific credentials to import weapons and drugs from her Triad allies in China. Their unlikely partnership would have continued indefinitely in blissful ignorance had a third party not presented himself: Mr. Vacare.

Mr. Vacare offered no references when he applied to work for Applied Genetics Technologies. He offered no contacts, no home address, no work history. What he did offer was a colloidal gel that served as a perfect catalyst for Dr. Darling’s genokinetic research. With Vacare’s gel, she completed work on her magnum opus: the gene collider. Ms. Guan and Mr. Vacare both moved to seize the new technology, revealing Guan’s identity as the crime lord Iron Empress and Vacare’s as a member of the Grue, a shapeshifting alien race preparing Earth for a secret invasion. Moon, Dr. Darling’s pet, launched herself at Guan in the chaos, triggering several unexpected discharges of the gene collider she carried and beginning a fire that destroyed the AGT offices.

In the rubble, Moon survived alongside a handful of the laboratory animals. The reptile found herself more keenly aware of her situation than ever before: the gene collider’s beam had infused her with Guan’s human DNA and begun a rapid evolution. The same accident had merged the genes of other lab animals, creating strange creatures that fled into the night—and likewise affected four rabbit kits. Moon gathered up the youngsters and retreated into the catacombs beneath the city, where she was shocked to see how quickly her adopted animals grew. Once the rabbits began to speak, Moon realized she had saved daughters, not pets. She named them Marie, Carlotta, Lucille, and Francesca for the Pas de Quatre, four famous ballerinas Moon recalled from her endless formative hours watching television documentaries.

Raised on Korean television, Moon learned the ways of the Hwa Rang Do, Korea’s clandestine warriors and spies who mastered the arts of invisibility. As her adopted daughters grew, she taught these arts to them so they could learn to remain unseen in a hostile and judgmental world. They became sursa, the invisible flower knights of Korean history. The three tenants of self-defense, self-confidence, and self-control became the family’s guiding principles. While Moon remained cautious and never as fully developed as her daughters, the children grew increasingly curious as they aged. They often snuck away against their mother’s wishes to explore the wonders of the human world above and experience life beyond what cable television could provide.

The Shadow Knights are a sideways take on street-level vigilantes. The resources available to them are mundane—they are skilled martial artists, but not so much that they clearly outclass street toughs and ninjas—but their anatomy sets them apart from the world and forces them to hide. And the challenges and enemies they face are anything but mundane: superhuman martial artists, genetically mangled monsters, and shapeshifting alien sorcerers. They save the world through grit and sarcasm as much as by martial prowess, and sometimes the chal-

MENTOR: GUKSEON MOON

Moon is a cynical observer of the world, even-tempered and well-studied in history and medicine, making her an excellent instructor, or *gukseon*. The old lizard retains a soft spot for the Korean dramas she enjoyed before fully evolving to sapience, as well as a wry sense of humor that keeps her students off-balance. Though she largely acts as an advisor, trainer, and healer for her more active children, Moon can occasionally be motivated to leave her quarters and venture topside, especially when she fears her daughters have gotten themselves in over their heads. She serves well as a Deus ex Machina to free the Shadow Knights or momentarily turn the tables against overwhelming odds. Still, being an aging woman, she lacks the energy and resiliency for prolonged adventures and is prone to vanish from encounters as quickly as she appears.

Already old before the gene collider infused her with human DNA, the subsequent years have left the uplifted bearded dragon prematurely aged. While she still expects to guide her daughters for many years, Moon’s steps now lack the spring of youth.

GUKSEON MOON

PL 4

STR 0 STA -1 AGL -1 DEX 1 FGT 4 INT 3 AWE 5 PRE 2

Powers: Gene-Collided Dragon (Protection 3, Senses 2 [Acute scent, Danger Sense])

Advantages: Assist (Favored Foe)*, Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll, Guidance*, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Defense, Improvised Weapon 3, Leadership, Precise Attack (Close, Concealment), Tracking, Trance, Ultimate Effort (Insight Checks)

Skills: Close Combat: Unarmed 4 (+8), Expertise: Magic 4 (+7), Expertise: Philosophy 6 (+9), Insight 4 (+9), Perception 4 (+9), Ranged Combat: Bows 5 (+6), Stealth 10 (+9), Treatment 4 (+7)

Offense: Init -1, Unarmed +8 (DC 15)

Defense: Dodge 2, Parry 5, Fort 2, Tou 3/2, Will 6

Totals: Abilities 26 + Powers 5 + Advantages 14 + Skills 21 (41 ranks) + Defenses 8 = 74

lenges before them seem impossibly overwhelming. Time and again, they need to find the human element behind the overwhelming force—and usually kick it in the face.

And so the Shadow Knights remain unseen, fearful of what the world would think of them but longing to be a part of it. They fear exposure and what the money-hungry industry of the human world would do to unlock the secrets in their genes. The world can never be theirs, yet they still feel an overwhelming responsibility to stop the dangers their conception created. And of course, as teenagers they want to have a little fun while doing it.

TEAM RESOURCES

The sisters train together, play together, and argue together; their lives are a shared resource and they bond—and argue—in ways that only siblings can. Beyond this relationship, they share the love, support, and expertise of their adopted mother, Gukseon Moon. Raised together, they practice Moon’s own take on the Korean art

THE GENE COLLIDER

The gene collider is a unique piece of technology in Earth Prime that uses a modified particle accelerator to forcefully insert genetic information into a host. It allows the addition of a sample gene sequence into whatever creature it strikes, or to cause random exchanges between two creatures caught in its beam. While the exchange of DNA is instantaneous, it may take days or weeks for the new genes to express themselves and complete the transformation. Because the gene collider's effects are so difficult to control, it functions largely as a plot device and possible origin for new villains and heroes, but if wielded as a weapon it inflicts a rank 10 Ranged Affliction (resisted and overcome by Fortitude; Fatigued, Exhausted, Transformed).

The gene collider must be fueled with a special genofluid, a catalyst produced by the Grue for their biotechnology and originally provided to Dr. Darling by the strange grue cult known as the Arcane. The fluid itself has no special gene-editing properties, but obtaining samples to power the gene collider is a frequent goal for the Iron Claw or Dr. Darling and may motivate adventures.

of hapkido—an evasive martial art built around circular movements, adaptability, and the redirection of opponents' force—as well as the arts of stealth and misdirection favored by Korea's ancient sulsa flower knights. While none of their small family are actually Korean—even taking their human DNA from a Chinese woman—they are a people without a background and Moon's early saturation in Korean culture is the closest they have to a shared family background.

The Shadow Knights' home is also their headquarters: the Warren, a turn-of-the-century hotel buried in the great earthquake of 1906. Though outfitted with a few comfortable modern amenities, their home is still little more than a ruin buried deep below the city's streets. It lies at the heart of the tangled web of drainage tunnels, transit tunnels, natural caverns, and buried ruins that makes up San Francisco's hidden underworld—an alien and confusing place for most surface-dwellers, but the childhood backyard the sisters learned well in their formative years.

THE WARREN

8 POINTS

Size: Medium, **Toughness:** 8, **Features:** Concealed (+15), Gym, Living Space, Security System, Workshop

ADVENTURES

Masters of invisibility and combat, the sulsa have discovered a strange world, alien even to the one Gukseon Moon knew in their infancy. Technology now reigns in San Francisco, bringing with it new money, new crime, and new monsters. But all the while, the long and strange history of San Francisco remains, packed tightly into the shadows. Some of the Shadow Knights' adventures revolve around tracking down monsters—far less intelligent and more dangerous creations than themselves—that escaped from the AGT lab explosion like they did. More frequently, however, the Shadow Knights face the same enemies that created them: the Iron Claw Tong.

The Iron Claw control many of San Francisco's gangs, organize various extortion and gambling rackets, run guns through the city's port, and have begun dabbling in high-tech crimes. The city's recent turn of fortune has changed the cartel's focus, and now they also win favors by acting as muscle in corporate espionage and acquiring rare treasures for the nouveau riche. Many of the Shadow Knights' adventures hinge on finding and destroying various Iron Tong operations, often tackling whatever bizarre agents or defenses the syndicate unleashes to stop them.

Other adventures focus on finding allies in the city—humans who don't fear the unusual and don't want to exploit the scientific secrets in the sisters' blood. Children and other vigilantes tend to be their most common allies, and both bring their own share of complications. Marie is by far the most eager for friends outside her family and her efforts to make friends may likewise trigger unusual encounters and adventures.

San Francisco itself is a nexus of realities, with the infinite abyss of weirdness held in check by the Gatekeeper and the Door Wardens (see the *Atlas of Earth Prime*), and it can all serve as potential plot hooks for the Shadow Knights. The Grue secret society, the Arcane, still wants control of the Golden Gate city's various portals and provides plenty of mystical threats. The Iron Claw have their own mystical allies beyond the portals, and other strange threats escape from time to time. The Shadow Knights may even develop a tenuous relationship with the Door Wardens, allowing them to sometimes make use of San Francisco's portals and travel to other dimensions—or be called upon to fix problems in alternate worlds.

Inspired by series like *Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles*, *Savage Dragon*, and *Flaming Carrot*, the theme for Shadow Knight adventures is confronting weird and extraordinary dangers with nothing but hand weapons, irreverence, and determination. Many notes can be taken from other street-level campaigns (such as the previously described Ferroborg Four), but often with a strange twist thrown in along the way.

OPponents

The Iron Claw Tong still threaten San Francisco, and now dominate the city's underworld thanks to seizing control of the gene collider all those years ago. Iron Empress herself is an unparalleled master of martial arts (see sidebar), and relies heavily on her creations, Lang and Choir (use the *Gamemaster's Guide* Savage archetype with the dog/wolf and bat types, respectively). Iron Empress's mundane forces range from the street gangs who owe her loyalty—like the 49s and the Black Phoenix—to elite Claw warriors trained in the arts of invisibility and assassination (represented by various Ninja minions). Gamemasters may choose not to use the minion rules for a Shadow Knights campaign, elevating even average criminals with guns to serious dangers. In this case, apply the minion rules to select opponents only after the heroes have faced them a few times previously to reflect the sulsa mastering tactics against that specific kind of opponent.

The Shadow Knights face additional threats beyond the Tong. Dr. Darling still lives (use the Mad Scientist archetype), sometimes working with the Iron Claw and other times opposing them, but she remains particularly obsessed with Gukseon Moon and unlocking the genetic secrets of her first experiment's DNA. Still bearing terrible scars from the fire that destroyed the Advanced Genetics Technology labs, she believes the gene collider is the only thing that can fully heal her mangled body.

The original genofluid that made Dr. Darling's experiments viable came from secret exiles from the shape-shifting aliens known as the Grue. This mystic offshoot, the Arcane (see the *Cosmic Handbook*), arrived through San Francisco's mystical doorways and hopes to seize control of those passageways. They originally plotted to use the gene collider to transform the city's populace into Grue-like shapeshifting servants, and still make use of the many monsters spawned during that fateful night as they spread their conspiracy and slowly amass power.

Various unaffiliated, gene-collided monsters still stalk San Francisco's streets in the wake of the AGT explosion, with intellects ranging from animalistic to genius. The Monsters minion category from the *Gamemaster's Guide*, as well as the Brute and Savage archetypes, can easily represent various "monsters of the week."

ADVERSARY OPTIONS

The Shadow Knights strike quietly and cling to the darkness, concealing evidence of their existence. As such, it's easily for rumors to spread of "monsters" or "werewolves" who stalk San Francisco and attract the attention of superheroes who hunt such unusual threats. In this case, actually tracking or following the sulsa is the real challenge, rather than facing them in combat. Whether the Shadow Knights in this scenario are true monsters or misunderstood heroes can heavily color the rest of the encounter.

As silent warriors, corrupt or selfish versions of the Shadow Knights can easily serve as unusual thieves or killers to oppose superheroes, especially if they serve Iron Empress and the Iron Claw Tong instead of Moon. While they might pose very little challenge for average PL 10 heroes, they can be frustrating adversaries for street-level vigilantes or serve as assistants to more powerful martial artists. They may instead lead their own small band of ninja minions, especially by bumping the girls' power level to PL 8. The gene collider may also temporarily reduce the heroes' own Power Level, making the rabbits a match for their newly-curbed skills.

The Shadow Knights may instead serve as a third party in the hero-villain binary, particularly if they work as agents for the Door Wardens. The Shadow Knights may steal mystic artifacts, guide lost heroes out of magic realms, or insinuate themselves as minions for sorcerous villains only to betray them and aid the heroes to help maintain the cosmic balance. If you like the mystic angle but want the Shadow Knights to be more villainous, they may instead be agents of the Arcane, working as their silent hands in the San Francisco night.

NEMESIS: IRON EMPRESS

Born to Dragon Master Guan Laquan—leader of Hong Kong's deadly Iron Claw tong—Guan Mu was expected to study hard, be obedient, and help her family maintain a sophisticated and law-abiding façade while her brother Li was raised to take over the Iron Claw. And Mu's regard for tradition was strong—too strong, her father discovered too late. She studied her mathematics and history, and every night while her family slept she practiced the kung fu Li ignored. She longed for a time when the tongs were feared warriors, not the merchants and white collar criminals the Iron Claw had become. When the time came for her father to retire, Mu beat her brother to death at the ceremony to honor Li's ascent to leader, and announced her control of the tong. While the Iron Claw respected her strength, skill, and vision, the other tongs of Hong Kong did not, and Guan Mu soon found herself focusing on American operations where her gender presented fewer barriers. It was in San Francisco that she first saw a future for her organization that embraced the traditions of the past and the technology of the future. She began sponsoring startups whose technology could benefit her criminal ends.

Mu carries a strange scar from the explosion at AGT: one bright red eye courtesy of her genetic exchange with the would-be Shadow Knights, suggesting she provided their human DNA and is, in essence, their mother. She now wears her Iron Claw armor—which conceals her face beneath iron plates and deadly blades—in public. While a master of kung fu, aikido, and capoeira, the Iron Empress has no qualms with integrating modern weapons into her fighting style. She is keen to integrate technology into her criminal empire, whether by creating new gene-collided servants or stealing advanced weapons or armor technology for her agents to use.

IRON EMPRESS

PL 10

STR 4 STA 4 AGL 6 DEX 5 FGT 10 INT 2 AWE 4 PRE 3

Powers: Iron Claw Armor (Removable; Strength-based Damage 3, Protection 2)

Equipment: Bolos (Ranged Affliction 3, Bow (Ranged Damage 3), Heavy Machine Gun (Ranged Damage 6, Multiattack), Smoke Grenade

Advantages: Accurate Attack, Agile Feint, Assessment, Benefit (leader of the Iron Claw), Close Attack 3, Daze (Intimidation), Defensive Attack, Defensive Roll 4, Diehard, Equipment 9, Evasion 2, Fearless, Hide in Plain Sight, Improved Critical: Claws, Improved Defense, Improved Disarm, Improved Initiative 2, Improved Smash, Improved Trip, Instant Up, Leadership, Minion 10, Move-by Action, Power Attack, Precise Attack (Close, Concealment and Cover), Ranged Attack 3, Redirect, Seize Initiative, Set-up 3, Skill Mastery: Stealth, Startle, Takedown, Trance, Uncanny Dodge, Well-informed

Skills: Acrobatics 8 (+14), Athletics 12 (+16), Expertise: Chinese Culture 8 (+10), Expertise: Streetwise 10 (+12), Insight 8 (+12), Intimidation 10 (+13), Perception 7 (+11), Persuasion 5 (+8), Sleight of Hand 4 (+9), Stealth 8 (+14), Technology 4 (+6)

Offense: Init +14, Bolos +8 (Ranged, Affliction 3), Bow +8 (Ranged, Damage 3), Heavy Machine Gun +8 (Ranged, Damage 6), Iron Claw Armor +13 (Close, Damage 7), Unarmed +13 (Close, Damage 4)

Defense: Dodge 10, Parry 10, Fortitude 8, Toughness 10/6, Will 11

Totals: Abilities 76 + Powers 4 + Advantages 64 + Skills 42 (84 ranks) + Defenses 15 = 201

CARLOTTA

**"DISCIPLINE, SISTERS!
REMEMBER YOUR
TRAINING!"**



While the sursa have no idea of their actual birth order, Carlotta is clearly the eldest sister. Responsible, focused, serious, and the most reverent of their reptilian mother, Lottie is a balanced warrior who fully embraces the philosophy Moon assembled from foreign soap operas and action movies—though she attributes their master's wisdom to study and age more than she probably should. Lottie usually tries to assume the role of field commander, though her sisters' youthful rebellion turns any leadership decisions into suggestions at best.

Lottie is the most spiritual of her sisters, and has embraced a bit of Buddhism and Confucianism that reinforces her respect for Moon (and her exasperation with her sisters). Like most teenagers who think of themselves as mature, she is eager to be seen as an adult and an authority, and readily argues with anyone who questions her assumptions or directives—only to question her own decisions constantly in private. As she continues to grow, the loneliness of her life feels more and more acute, and she spends a great deal of free time in Koreatown. While she understands that no member of her family is truly Korean, she also accepts that they are a family without a people or a culture of their own and so consciously embraces the culture her mother taught her.

Lottie is the most well-rounded of the Shadow Knights, offering support and fiercely defending her siblings whenever she can. She advises caution and thought in most scenarios, but isn't afraid to start a fight when the situation calls for it. While most of her sisters have found humans to bond with beyond their hidden world, she relies mostly on Moon and her practice for emotional support, feeling like companionship is a treasure she needs to earn rather than a need that deserves to be filled.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Grown from a mutated rabbit, Carlotta possesses extraordinary reflexes, speed, and senses in addition to an inhuman appearance. Her biology doesn't render her much more powerful than an ordinary, well-trained human, however, and the vast majority of her superheroic attributes extend from rigorous, lifelong training in martial arts. She is a versatile combatant, able to strike with precision or fight defensively, depending on her opponent's own strategy.

Lottie has mastered the bonguk geom, a curved sword unusual for hapkido but devastating in combat thanks to her speed and precision.

PLAYING CARLOTTA

Lottie is thoughtful—with a marked tendency to *over-think*—and has some deep-seated anxieties about her loneliness and the possibility of putting her family in danger. She takes on a lot of responsibility as a result. She's reliable and skilled, but beats herself up for not being perfect. In combat she's an even-handed warrior who adapts her style to the opponent, often focusing on making herself more difficult to hit and relying on her teammates to land more powerful blows, but she can hit hard when she brings her blade to bear. Her sheer stubbornness makes her difficult to overwhelm with insults or intimidation.

With All-Out Attack and Defensive Attack, Lottie can either be a very precise warrior or nearly impossible to hit, while her Improved Disarm advantage allows her to subdue enemies without harming them. Her ability to strike from concealment with Precise Attack gives her and her sisters a huge advantage in the dark, but they must often be creative in providing darkness or other concealing effects.

CARLOTTA

PL 6

THE DEDICATED LEADER

REAL NAME Carlotta **AGE** 15 **HAIR** White and Black**OCCUPATION** Silent Avenger **PLACE OF ORIGIN** San Francisco, CA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
2	4	4	1	6	0	3	2
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	6	+10
Athletics	3	+5
Deception	0	+2
Expertise: Mysticism	6	+6
Insight	0	+3
Intimidation	0	+2
Perception	4	+7
Persuasion	0	+2
Ranged Combat: Thrown	3	+4
Stealth	4	+8

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
All-Out Attack	Trade Active Defense for Attack Bonus
Defensive Attack	Trade Attack Bonus for Active Defense
Defensive Roll 2	+2 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Evasion	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Hide in Plain Sight	Hide while being observed
Improved Defense	+2 bonus to Active Defenses with Defend action
Improved Disarm	No penalty on Disarm actions
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Interpose	Take an attack meant for an ally
Leadership	Spend a Hero Point to remove a condition from an ally
Precise Attack	Ignore attack penalties (close, concealment)
Seize Initiative	Spend a Hero Point to go first in initiative order
Skill Mastery (Stealth)	Make routine checks in any conditions
Takedown	Free extra attack when you incapacitate a minion
Ultimate Effort (Will defense)	Spend a Hero Point to automatically roll a 20

POWERS

Gene-Collided Rabbit • Personal • Permanent • 9 points **Biology****Keen Senses:** Senses 4 (Accurate Hearing, Acute Olfactory, Low-light Vision)**Rabbit Legs:** Leaping 2 (30 feet), Speed 2 (8 MPH)

EQUIPMENT

Bonguk Geom Sword

Close Damage 3, Improved Critical

Throwing Knives

Ranged Damage 1, Multiattack

Additional Equipment

Camo Clothing, Climbing Gear, History Books

COMPLICATIONS

Higher Calling: Carlotta can't accept that her entire family are just accidents and wants to find a deeper reason—fate or divine intervention—for their existence. She's vulnerable to manipulations that use this approach.**Motivation—Justice:** The world needs balance. If the proper authorities can't or won't act, then she will.**Responsibility:** Carlotta feels an immense responsibility for her sisters, worrying about them if they leave and becoming frustrated when they don't take their work seriously. Her controlling nature often drives a wedge between them.

DEFENSES

Toughness	6	4 w/o DEFENSIVE ROLL
Dodge	6	
Parry	6	
Fortitude	5	
Will	7	

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated?

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Sword	+6	Parry	Close Damage 5, Crit 19–20	DC 20
Throwing Knife	+4	Dodge	Ranged Damage 1, Multiattack	DC 16
Unarmed	+6	Parry	Close Damage 2	DC 17

INITIATIVE
+8

Abilities 44 + Powers 9 + Advantages 17 + Skills 13 (26 ranks) + Defenses 7 = 90 TOTAL

FRANCESCA

"THIS WOULD ALL BE SO MUCH EASIER IF WE JUST MODERNIZED A LITTLE."



Francesca has embraced San Francisco's modern world with more passion than any of her sisters, seeing their mother's quaint mysticism as a simple comfort for an old woman. The real world, out beyond their sheltered, subterranean life, runs 24/7 and relies on technology so much more advanced than sticks and sharp bits of metal. A natural skeptic, Fran only believes in and values the things she can touch, and as a result has pursued science and technology with more passion than her sulsa train-

ing. While Gukseon Moon chastises her for neglecting her heritage and chores, she is far less critical when her daughter's tinkering provides them with power, running water, and streaming video.

While Fran rejects much of the mysticism surrounding the art, she is still a competent fighter. Her analytical mind is more adept at investigation than observation, though, and she can easily become lost in a topic without her sisters there to ground her. She has managed to make a few friends in the technology industry—humans who can accept her strange nature and provide her with new gadgets—but overall she is asocial and content to disappear into her workshop and technical manuals until dragged to bed.

One of the more disturbing realizations Fran has come to recently is that the human DNA that provided the uplift to her sisters and Moon must have come from Iron Empress Guan Mu, making the team's most dangerous enemy their mother as well. She has not yet opted to share this hypothesis with her sisters, at least not until she can test her suspicions somehow.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Francesca's extraordinary speed, leaping ability, and keen senses all descend from her rabbit genes, but her extraordinary mind and photographic memory are unique to her. She is a self-taught scientific wunderkind able to repair complex machines, bypass security systems, and build all manner of useful gadgets for her teammates. Her analytical nature also makes her the only one among her sisters who can easily uncover clues and piece together information, figuring out their enemies' next steps.

Francesca wields the mubuchae fighting fan, an elegant weapon that suits her practical nature. Lined with razor-sharp blades and ideal for trapping enemy weapons, her paired fans let Fran lash out at multiple attackers at once.

PLAYING FRANCESCA

While not as combat-focused as Lottie or Lucy, Francesca can hold her own in a fight and provides much-needed perspective on how to solve their problems with technical or scientific solutions rather than jump kicks. She is a practical problem-solver, and sometimes gets frustrated by people who rely on unpredictable things like "faith" or "other people." While she's the happiest of all her sisters to have quiet and be on her own, she remains incredibly protective of her family, particularly Marie.

Her Inventor advantage allows Fran to bring a variety of unusual gadgets into the plot to counteract the weird circumstances her family encounters. Don't forget that she can spend a Hero Point to jury-rig devices, reducing the time necessary to only a single round per power point the effect costs. This can easily provide the Shadow Knights with gadgets to solve problems that seem impossibly huge at first glance. Her Jack-of-All-Trades advantage also allows her to try almost any skill—in particular, Expertise checks for areas she otherwise has no training in.

FRANCESCA

PL 6

THE AWKWARD NERD

REAL NAME Francesca AGE 15 HAIR White

OCCUPATION Silent Avenger, IT Support PLACE OF ORIGIN San Francisco, CA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
2	3	3	1	5	5	1	0
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	4	+7
Athletics	5	+7
Close Combat: Fans	3	+8
Deception	0	+0
Expertise: Science	4	+9
Insight	0	+1
Intimidation	0	+0
Investigation	4	+9
Perception	0	+1
Persuasion	0	+0
Stealth	8	+11
Technology	8	+13
Treatment	2	+7

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Defensive Attack	Trade Attack Bonus for Active Defense
Defensive Roll 3	+3 active bonus to Toughness
Eidetic Memory	Total recall, +5 bonus to remember details
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Evasion	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Hide in Plain Sight	Hide while being observed
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Inventor	Use Technology skill to create temporary devices
Jack-of-All-Trades	Use any skill untrained
Precise Attack	Ignore attack penalties (close, concealment)
Takedown	Free extra attack when you incapacitate a minion
Weapon Bind	Free disarm attempt when you actively defend

POWERS

Gene-Collided Rabbit • Personal • Permanent • 9 points **Biology****Keen Senses:** Senses 4 (Accurate Hearing, Acute Olfactory, Low-light Vision)**Rabbit Legs:** Leaping 2 (30 feet), Speed 2 (8 MPH)

EQUIPMENT

Mubuchae Fighting Fans

Close Damage 2, Split (2 targets), Weapon Bind

Throwing Knives

Ranged Damage 1, Multiattack

Additional Equipment

First Aid Kit, Laptop, Multitool

COMPLICATIONS

Ailurophobia: In a lab accident before her mutation, Francesca was chased by the office cat, and even today remains terrified of felines.**Motivation—Responsibility:** While she knows it isn't rational, Francesca knows that her and her sisters' creation dropped a lot of new problems on the world and feels like it's their responsibility to clean it up.**This is Awkward:** Francesca often freezes up when expected to interact with people socially, particularly without her sisters there for support.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	3	3 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	6	
PARRY	6	
FORTITUDE	4	
WILL	5	

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated?

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Fighting Fans	+8	Parry	Close Damage 4, Split	DC 19
Throwing Knife	+1	Dodge	Ranged Damage 1, Multiattack	DC 16
Unarmed	+5	Parry	Close Damage 2	DC 17

INITIATIVE
+7

Abilities 40 + Powers 9 + Advantages 13 + Skills 19 (38 ranks) + Defenses 9 = 90 TOTAL

LUCILLE

"WHEN I GET HOLD OF YOU, YOU'RE GONNA BE ABLE TO COUNT ALL YOUR TEETH ON ONE HAND!"



Lucille is the largest and most focused of her sisters in terms of her combat studies, and carries a heavy burden of passion and overwhelming emotion. She is fierce, almost animalistic in combat, and outside of engagements she remains on-edge and visceral, ready to try new things but also ready to argue. Whether her temper stems from a lifetime spent throwing herself into danger to spare her sisters the same fate or is just an aspect of her personality,

she remains both the group hothead and the most devastatingly effective combatant.

Lucy has taken a shine to human culture, particularly sports, and has made a few human contacts among local athletic groups and the city's homeless population. Her attitude and short temper offset whatever good will her fluffy appearance might engender, however, and she has a difficult time trusting anyone else. From her perspective, her reactions are natural and appropriate, and the rest of the world overreacts and criticizes. She has spent more time exploring the city than any of her sisters.

Lucille's heartfelt emotions aren't limited to anger; she has overwhelming love for her family that she can't always control or express well. She has a reverence for her adoptive mother, who can curb the young woman's rages with a stern word. While she adores her sisters, Lucy tends to bully Fran and Mar, especially when frustrated, and takes umbrage with Lottie's controlling nature.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Lucy's strength and durability are on par with the toughest human athletes and tend to overshadow her rabbit senses and speed. She is by far the most direct combatant, able to close with opponents and deliver overwhelming damage without thoughts for her own safety. She is also adept at staring others down—one of the few social arenas in which she excels—and scaring them out of a fight before it starts.

Lucy wields a pair of ssahnng nat, fighting sticks capped with hooked blades that allow her to snatch enemies' weapons or bind them while she delivers a crushing kick. While the blades themselves are deadly, she is prone to rotating her grip and simply swinging with all the elegance and effect of a baseball bat.

PLAYING LUCILLE

Lucy's inborn rabbit nature—timidity, caution, alertness—is almost entirely subsumed by her human temper and aggressiveness, and she steps up to any challenge with even the slightest provocation. She thinks everyone is challenging her—judging her—at all times, and she needs to respond for reasons she hasn't yet been able to understand. Despite her knee-jerk confrontational nature, she feels the rest of her emotions—sadness, joy, and particularly love—just as strongly, and would sacrifice herself in a heartbeat to protect her family.

Lucille is a fairly straightforward character, relying on hitting enemies with overwhelming force. Her Power Attack and Takedown advantages allow her to plow through minor opponents with ease, clearing a route to more powerful adversaries, while her Extraordinary Effort advantage means she can push herself to the limit to, for example, increase her Strength by +2 for a round or take two additional attacks for one round. While she is largely focused on combat, Lucy's Expertise and Intimidation skills provide her with some options to help her sisters solve mysteries and chase down leads.

LUCILLE

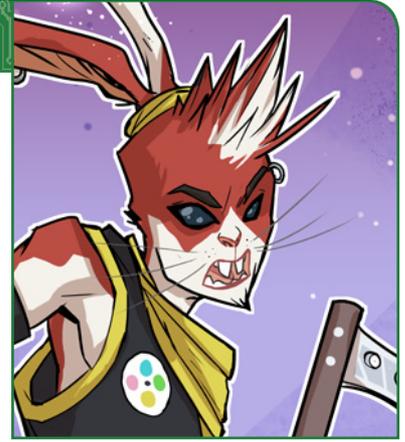
PL 6

THE HOT-TEMPERED PROBLEM-SOLVER

REAL NAME Lucille AGE 15 HAIR White and Red

OCCUPATION Noisy Avenger PLACE OF ORIGIN San Francisco, CA

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
4	6	2	1	5	0	2	1
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	2	+4
Athletics	6	+10
Deception	0	+1
Expertise: Streetwise	7	+7
Insight	0	+1
Intimidation	8	+9
Perception	2	+4
Persuasion	0	+2
Ranged Combat: Thrown	4	+5
Sleight of Hand	5	+6
Stealth	6	+8

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
All-Out Attack	Trade Active Defense for Attack Bonus
Defensive Attack	Trade Attack Bonus for Active Defense
Defensive Roll 1	+1 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 2	10 points of equipment
Evasion	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Extraordinary Effort	Gain two benefits when using Extra Effort
Fearless	Immune to fear effects
Hide in Plain Sight	Hide while being observed
Improved Disarm	No penalty on Disarm actions
Improved Hold	-5 penalty to escape your Grab attempts
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Improved Smash	No penalty on Smash actions
Power Attack	Trade attack bonus for effect bonus
Takedown 2	Free extra attacks when you incapacitate a minion
Weapon Bind	Free disarm attempt when you actively defend
Weapon Break	Free smash attempt when you actively defend

POWERS

Gene-Collided Rabbit • Personal • Permanent • 9 points **Biology**
Keen Senses: Senses 4 (Accurate Hearing, Acute Olfactory, Low-light Vision)
Rabbit Legs: Leaping 2 (30 feet), Speed 2 (8 MPH)

EQUIPMENT

Ssahng Nat

Close Damage 3, Split (2 targets), Improved Disarm, Weapon Bind

Throwing Knives

Ranged Damage 1, Multiattack

Additional Equipment

Camo Clothing

COMPLICATIONS

Accident: Lucille's reckless combat style tends to cause a lot of property damage.

Motivation—Thrills: While she wants to do right by people in general, Lucille is particularly motivated to fight evil (emphasis on fight) as a way to have fun and blow off steam.

Temper: Lucille has a hair-trigger temper and is always ready for a fight. She softens a bit with her sisters, but remains argumentative and confrontational.

DEFENSES

Toughness	7	6 w/o DEFENSIVE ROLL
Dodge	5	
Parry	5	
Fortitude	6	
Will	2	

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated?

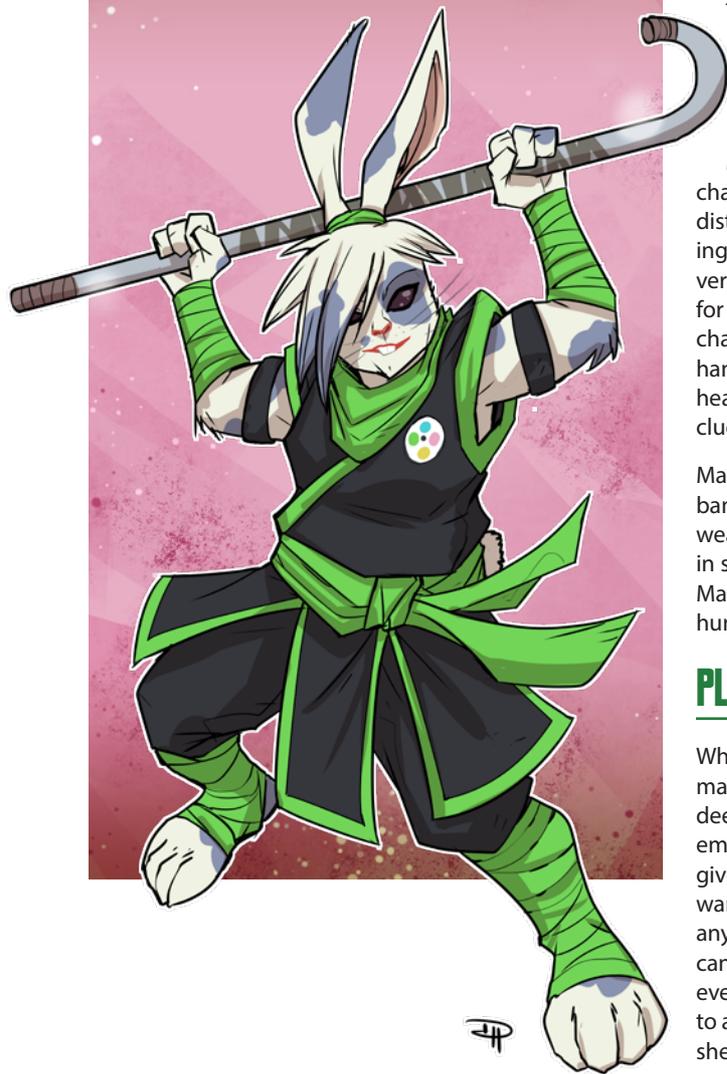
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Ssahng Nat	+5	Parry	Close Damage 7, Split	DC 22
Throwing Knife	+5	Dodge	Ranged Damage 1, Multiattack	DC 16
Unarmed	+5	Parry	Close Damage 4	DC 19

INITIATIVE
+6

Abilities 42 + Powers 9 + Advantages 16 + Skills 18 (36 ranks) + Defenses 5 = 90 TOTAL

MARIE

"WHOA, EASE THE HARSH VIBES. DEEP BREATHS AND LET'S JUST HUG IT OUT, MAN. HUG IT OUT."



If Carlotta is clearly the oldest sister based on attitude, then Marie is the baby of the family. Impulsive, excitable, and affectionate, she is the heart of the Shadow Knights and the most humane, with a deep well of empathy and understanding, even for their enemies. Her familiarity with pop culture, quick jokes, and boundless curiosity may cause problems on adventures, but go a long way toward keeping her sisters sane and grounded the rest of the time. In return, they make up for their little sister's lackluster combat skills.

Mar's attitude has paid off not only in a large network of friends but also a reputation among her enemies: most consider her a pest they can go easy on, while some even have a strange affection for the childlike warrior. Mar herself is happy just to meet new people, try new things, and go to bed every night with a full belly.

Lagging behind her sisters developmentally as Gukseon Moon helped shepherd and train their interests, Mar was increasingly raised by television and later the internet. Playing online since childhood, she has developed into a savant at building gaming rigs and cracking computer security to download games and music. Her long history on the internet provides her with a vast circle of virtual friends, and Mar is by far the most like a contemporary teenager as a result—moody, irreverent, and plugged in to news and trends.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Marie has developed a combat style every bit as chaotic and frustrating as her personality, built around distracting, tripping, misleading, and otherwise rendering enemies' best attacks pointless. While she doesn't hit very hard, her antics give her sisters the chance to wind up for stronger blows—particularly Lucy—or escape in the chaos. While her sisters consider their animalistic traits handy, Mar is particularly in touch with her senses, relying heavily on her sense of smell to identify threats, sniff out clues, and assist her in cooking.

Marie's weapon of choice is the *ji pang e*, a simple, curved bamboo cane. While it doesn't hit hard, it is a popular weapon in hapkido for the variety of options it provides in subduing an opponent, and the stunts it opens up suit Marie just fine—particularly if they mean not having to hurt someone too badly.

PLAYING MARIE

While very young in attitude, Marie is also the most mature of her sisters in many ways. She is able to take a deep breath and step back from a situation to stop her emotions from getting the better of her, and can find forgiveness for others more readily than Fran or Lottie. She wants to help people and stop threats, but more than anything she just wants everyone to be cool, and if she can solve a problem without anyone getting hurt then everyone wins. She knows that her sisters depend on her to always have a joke or bring down the tension level, and she does her best not to disappoint.

Marie is only so-so in combat, but is the most diverse of her sisters. In a fight, she can distract and frustrate opponents—especially with advantages like Agile Feint, Set-up, and Taunt—but she often relies on teammates to deliver the knockout blow. She is by far the most social of her sisters, and the most likely to make friends in unusual places. She is also a computer whiz, though her technical expertise stops strictly at the keyboard. She can hack and chase down online rumors, but relies on Fran to handle all her hardware repairs.

MARIE

PL 6

THE WEIRD COOL ONE

REAL NAME Marie **AGE** 15 **HAIR** White and Gray**OCCUPATION** Silent Avenger, L33t Haxxor **PLACE OF ORIGIN** San Francisco, CA

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



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	7	+12
Athletics	2	+3
Close Combat: Cane	1	+6
Deception	2	+6
Expertise: Pop Culture	4	+3
Insight	4	+5
Intimidation	0	+4
Perception	0	+1
Persuasion	4	+8
Ranged Combat: Thrown	3	+4
Stealth	4	+9
Technology	1	+0
• Computers	—	+8

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Agile Feint	Use Acrobatics skill to feint
Defensive Attack	Trade Attack Bonus for Active Defense
Defensive Roll 3	+3 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 2	2 points of equipment
Evasion	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Improved Disarm	No penalty on Disarm actions
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Improved Trip	No penalty on Trip actions
Luck	Re-roll a die
Move-by Acton	Move both before and after a standard action
Precise Attack	Ignore attack penalties (close, concealment)
Set-Up 2	Transfer the benefit of an interaction skill to two allies
Taunt	Use Deception skill to demoralize
Teamwork	+5 bonus to team checks
Weapon Bind	Free disarm attempt when you actively defend

POWERS

Computer Geek • Personal • Permanent • 2 points	Talent
Enhanced Skill 8 (Technology), Limited (to Computers)	
Gene-Collided Rabbit • Personal • Permanent • 9 points	Biology
Keen Senses: Senses 4 (Accurate Hearing, Acute Olfactory, Low-light Vision)	
Rabbit Legs: Leaping 2 (30 feet), Speed 2 (8 MPH)	

EQUIPMENT

Ji Pang Cane
Close Damage 2, Improved Disarm, Improved Trip, Weapon Bind
Throwing Knives
Ranged Damage 1, Multiattack
Additional Equipment
Computer, Smartphone

COMPLICATIONS

Responsibility: Marie worries the rest of her family takes life too seriously and tries to always offer comfort, humor, and otherwise walk them back from the edge.

Motivation—Acceptance: Marie hates that she can't just hang out with people and feel normal, and hopes that crimefighting will help make her family a more acceptable.

Prey Instincts: Marie retains more of her rabbit instincts than her sisters, particularly the urge to run when trouble starts. She can mostly fight it, but in especially bad situations she may run mindlessly at first.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	4	1 W/D DEFENSIVE ROLL
DODGE	8	
PARRY	8	
FORTITUDE	6	
WILL	3	

COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +9
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Cane	+6	Parry	Close Damage 3	DC 18	
Throwing Knife	+4	Dodge	Ranged Damage 1, Multiattack	DC 16	
Unarmed	+5	Parry	Close Damage 1	DC 16	

Abilities 34 + Powers 11 + Advantages 16 + Skills 16 (32 ranks) + Defenses 13 = 90 TOTAL

SOMETIMES IT TAKES A BAD BUY...



AEGIS

RED GROUP

POWER LEVEL: 5

POWER POINTS: 75

TEAM TEMPLATE

7 POINTS

Advantages: Benefit (cipher), Benefit (security clearance), Equipment 4 (team equipment and vehicle contribution), Team Code

Equipment: AEGIS concealed fiber armor (Protection 2, subtle), AEGIS blaster pistol (Ranged Damage 5), smartphone, vehicle contributions; 2 additional points of equipment

Complications: Loyalty Enforcement, Reputation (Criminals)

The public image of AEGIS, the American Elite Government Intervention Service, is dominated by steely-eyed operators or agents in heavy MAX power armor, who engage criminal organizations, terrorists, and supervillains. What the people don't see are the five ordinary looking men and women quietly watching from nearby coffee shops or store fronts. They couldn't imagine that these run-of-the-mill individuals are part of a new AEGIS initiative: Red Group, a pilot program sponsored by none

other than Stewart "Rockstar" Bonham, Chief Administrator of Freedom City's AEGIS operations.

The idea for Red Group was born from an unexpected skirmish between members of the Santa Muerte cult and SHADOW cells in Freedom City. The Santa Muerte cult under undead Tepalcatlí had restricted their operations to Central America and the southwestern United States, but when SHADOW tried an aggressive push into the Mexican state of Chiapas, Tepalcatlí retaliated with strikes against SHADOW operations in Freedom City, almost burning down Southside in the process.

AEGIS's post-incident audit absolved the crimefighting agency of any failure to intercede and prevent this tragedy, but there was one voice of dissent from inside the Command Division: Analyst Jessie Baker. She claimed the Command Division had possessed actionable intelligence well before the Santa Muerte/SHADOW war, and that they failed to capitalize on it early enough. And when Command did pass the information along, it was through the Directorate arm first—standard protocol—preventing the Agent division from moving on the intelligence earlier. The auditors were ready to ignore Analyst Baker's accusations; she had a reputation for rubbing people the wrong way, and her actionable intelligence had been little more than conjecture at the time. At best, her correct prediction was a coincidence, and they thought even that was generous. But Chief Administrator Bonham was in-

trigued. Baker may have the tact of sandpaper, but her predictions over the years had time and again proven correct off the faintest evidence, however untraditional her methods.

Bonham concluded there was a critical flaw in the way AEGIS communicated between the analytical thinkers who gathered intelligence and the structural thinkers who decided how to act on it. The analysts were having a hard time convincing the military and bureaucratic arms of potential threats because of how both sides parsed data and how analysts were able to think outside the box for deductive reasoning. The criminal organizations of the world were uniting in the interests of business, and they were sharing disciplines while governments were still restricted by their own borders. AEGIS had lost the ability to be agile under a heavier bureaucracy. Bonham also recognized that Baker was in danger of being fired by her superiors or walking away out of frustration, but she wasn't just an asset. He saw in her the promise of a new AEGIS, a more fluid and dynamic organization that could predict and act rather than waiting for an event to warrant a response. So he offered her an opportunity instead.

Red Group is an autonomous unit under the direct supervision of Chief Administrator Bonham. It falls somewhere between the Command and Agent divisions, essentially allowing analysts to train and operate like agents in order to immediately act on the intelligence they gather in the field. Off the record, Red Group consists of five members—all specialized, all talented, and all an awkward fit for AEGIS itself—whose processes and instincts haven't yet been dulled by years of rote paperwork and procedure.

Red Group is a secret arm of AEGIS for one very simple reason: their mandate is to think like villains in order to predict upcoming conflicts and sabotage them before they happen. Their operations consist of five primary goals:

- Find holes and weak points in the infrastructure and security of American institutions and facilities.
- Identify and map out support networks for villains, from smugglers to financial backers to suppliers to underground clinics.
- Construct complex profiles on villains, uncover their identities, and do exhaustive research on their formative elements like friends and family.
- Envision, create, and carry out scenarios to determine proper courses of action.
- Sabotage supervillains and criminal organizations before they can carry out attacks.

There's one other mandate that Bonham insisted on. While Red Group has access to AEGIS's supplies, housing, equipment, and deep pockets when a crisis calls for it, Bonham wanted them operating autonomously with fewer strings connecting them to their mother organization. This meant building up their assets and connections to foster street cred, to better understand how villains might work, and to avoid relying on AEGIS given the organization's distrust of Bonham's pet project. Red Group rarely oper-

RUNNING A HEIST

Most of Red Groups adventures boil down to heists: developing a complex, multi-layered plan to get access to a valuable, place, or person. You can take notes from movies like the *Italian Job*, *Inception*, *Point Break*, and the *Ocean's Eleven* franchise to help decide what kinds of defenses the heroes may run into and what sort of unexpected twists they may encounter. There are many ways to run heists in *Mutants & Masterminds*, but the easiest is to break the adventure down into three stages for fact-finding, preparation, and execution.

Fact-Finding is best run as an investigation scene, with PCs digging up information on their target and any opposition they will face. Gamemasters should decide not only what information is available and how hard it to learn, but what colorful characters the PCs will engage with to learn what they do.

Preparation is best handled as a challenge scene, with players using the information they've learned to formulate a plan and heroes making their preparations in a montage-style sequence of tests and events. Gamemasters need to determine what skill or effect checks will help the PCs put their plans together, but should also decide minor consequences for initial failures and major consequences for more failures, as well as the results of minor and major success.

Execution is the main event, and may be a single scene or several interlinked scenes, run as any combination of challenge and roleplay scene, sometimes with conflict thrown (especially on-on-one encounters out of sight) at dramatic moments. The successes and failures from the earlier phases should make themselves known as the scene develops, and the Gamemaster should throw in unexpected twists (and award the players Hero Points) to keep things dangerous even during the best-planned heist. At the same time, players should freely use Hero Points to edit the scene, revealing preparations their characters made but never discussed.

Running a heist is a proactive activity, and so requires cooperation between the GM and players. Gamemasters should be flexible in deciding how a plan comes together, and players should accept that a few curveballs and setbacks need to happen to keep the scenario exciting. The ultimate goal is to tell a fun story at the end.

ates out of the institution's primary office, known as the Iceberg, in Freedom City. Instead they operate from a variety of temporary locations scouted by Baker and rely on black-market and stolen resources. Their techniques are unconventional—illegal in some circumstances—and justified post-mortem by how effective they are at preventing death and destruction. How exactly this approach will be seen by the general public if and when Red Group ever comes to light remains unknown, but for now their mission is to save lives, and their playground is every shadow in the United States.

TEAM RESOURCES

As per Chief Administrator Bonham's directives, Red Group is semi-autonomous from AEGIS in terms of resources and

support, though they still have access to intelligence and occasional logistical support from their parent organization, as well as access to AEGIS's archives and intelligence reports. The agency has also helped obfuscate each member's paperwork, assigning them false identities and making their true background as AEGIS agents difficult to uncover. Beyond this, the group only has access to basic concealed armor and sidearms—most modified to scrub any connection to AEGIS itself. In dire situations, however, Red Group can requisition heavier artillery, up to an including MAX and Super-MAX power armor (see *Freedom City, 3rd Edition*, page 146).

Red Group operates from rotating hideouts scouted by Baker (using her "I Know a Place" talent), but relies consistently on a modified utility van, dubbed "Stan," as a sort of mobile headquarters as well. Equipped with advanced computer and communications technology, Zarifa often uses it as a communication hub to monitor the rest of the team while working on his own hacking.

STAN THE VAN

15 POINTS

Size: Huge **Strength:** 10 **Speed:** 5 (ground) **Defense:** 9 **Toughness:** 9 **Features:** Alarm (DC 20), Computer, Communications

ADVENTURES

Unlike other teams that might fight a villain or threat toe-to-toe—though they may occasionally don MAX Armor and participate in a raid when their expertise is required—Red Group targets everything around an adversary's operations: their support networks, social ties, financial channels, enemies, hobbies, etc. They operate much like common grifters, using hacking, social engineering, surveillance, psychology, and sabotage to undermine keystones in a villain's plot. Why interrupt a demon-summoning ritual and fight magically gifted cultists, for example, when you can intercept or buy out a critical component and swap it out with a fake? A Red Group campaign is a unique roleplaying opportunity because it allows for three distinct styles of game. Players can spoof infrastructure security, gather and use intelligence, or directly outwit the villains. It requires an understanding of the Freedom universe beyond just the heroes and villains. It encompasses organizations like SHADOW, AEGIS, UNISON, the Foundry, Labyrinth, and other groups, and it can inform the rich infrastructure of a world filled with colorful personalities divorced from any superpowers.

The tone focuses on the heist or the hustle, with interesting and unique personalities, fast-paced games, quips, bluffs to pocket the Queen's jewels, and complications that require quick thinking. Improvisation is a handy skill in players, because often it's not about executing a flawless plan so much as reacting when the plan derails. As German Field Marshal Helmuth von Moltke the Elder once said: "No battle plan survives contact with the enemy."

In spoofing security, Red Group members take on the role of villains themselves and identify weaknesses in the security of critical elements of America—defense infrastructure, intelligence networks, utilities, or key personnel—then run raids against those assets to showcase

their vulnerabilities. The modern world relies on many different infrastructures and the interactions between them to keep life humming along. They include power generation (nuclear, oil, electrical) and distribution, water supply, telecommunications, agriculture, commerce and banking, security, public health, etc. Adventures could involve the headquarters of multinational corporations, military bases, intelligence organizations, oil platforms, and more. Because legitimate villains and criminal groups are always on the lookout for these same weaknesses, this element of Red Group's operations is crucial to protect national security, but its habit of humiliating those in charge of those services can earn them lasting enemies.

In gathering intelligence, Red Group uses its criminal contacts to add to AEGIS's considerable database. What they excel at, however, isn't collecting all the raw data out there—which is usually handled by server farms—but rather connecting the dots that link events. Based on these whispers, the team more directly targets individuals, cartels, corporations, and other groups to infiltrate and examine up close, feeding anything they uncover back to AEGIS to follow up on—or retaining it themselves for an outright run against the perpetrator. This means investigative work, forensics, undercover missions, infiltrations, and hacking, all for the purpose of finding out more about a villain, hero, organization, or agenda. Once their activities become this overt, Red Group looks for actionable intelligence like the names of contacts, the locations of secret bases, tech schematics, and other elements they or AEGIS can use to directly disrupt a villain's operations.

Finally, operations that pit Red Group directly against a villainous or criminal plot allow them to identify weaknesses and shut them down before a scheme rises to the level of needing superhero involvement. Most villainous schemes rely on weeks of prep time and support networks to acquire minions, knowledge, and technology before they finally come to fruition. Rather than confront a supervillain directly, Red Group goes after these human-scale support systems. A mystic villain might need a supplier of magical artifacts and ingredients. A tech villain might need to buy or steal software with sophisticated programming or a piece of hardware with a rare ingredient in it. An injured villain might seek medical assistance that doesn't ask questions. A lone villain might need minions for a job. The list goes on and on, but for every need, there's a business to fill that need—wittingly or unwittingly, willingly or unwillingly—and these adventures explore the seedy underbelly of the world to undermine them.

OPONENTS

Red Group faces supervillains, but on a human scale. They don't punch flying crooks in the streets; they feed them bad intelligence, steal their cash, or beat down their minions. This makes them most effective against other groups like SHADOW, Labyrinth, the Foundry, and the corrupt corporations and criminal cartels that help support them. The various minion archetypes are their most common foes—often using normal combat rules rather than minion rules given the agents' own low Power Levels—with most superpowers coming from devices that

can be stolen or sabotaged. Gamemasters should consider making custom alterations to more powerful minion statblocks like the Ninja Master, Militant, Elite Soldier, and Hit-Man to provide leaders behind basic operations, while lower-PL villain archetypes like the Crime Lord, Mad Scientist, Master of Disguise, and Psycho (see the *Game-master's Guide*) represent very significant threats.

Red Group's most likely adversaries among existing Earth Prime villains include ordinary humans with special equipment that can be tampered with, like Drive By or the Embalmer (both in *Rogues Gallery*), or villains that rely heavily on organization or infrastructure like Dr. Sin (*Threat Report*), Conundrum (*Freedom City, third edition*), and Grandmaster (*Emerald City*). Subtle villains like the young genie Vathek the Appeaser (*Rogues Gallery*) also make for fun a fun battle of wits. The perfect recurring counterpoint to the team's espionage tactics is the shapeshifting android Dollface (*Threat Report*), though Gamemasters may want to reduce her Power Level to PL 7 or 8 to make her a more appropriate threat.

The team has another unique enemy: AEGIS itself. Red Group has identified and capitalized on a number of AEGIS's weaknesses, embarrassing section heads and entire departments. Michael Hughes, Bonham's second-in-command, despises the freeform and disrespectful nature of the experiment, saying it undermines the morale of the entire agency. Hughes is being courted by Bonham's political rivals within AEGIS and in Washington, who are accusing the current director of running a private security force and secret militia with no oversight. It's for this reason Bonham prefers Red Group to collect their own resources, to keep them independent and safe. All this means that forces within AEGIS itself may work to undermine Red Group, race them to objectives, or try to set them up for failure in the agency's eyes.

ADVERSARY OPTIONS

What if Red Group is a hunt against heroes instead of villains, and exists to give AEGIS plausible deniability? What if Bonham is a sleeper agent for SHADOW and using Red Group to do his dirty work without ever realizing it? Red Group has the ability to fill a variety of roles outside of their existence as a semi-sanctioned sting or heist crew. They can be friend or foe, depending on the needs of the campaign or the mood of the game. With a little effort, they can be friendly competitors who have something to prove to the heroes they meet on an investigation. If the campaign has an intrinsic distrust between heroes and the government, however, Red Group can be agents of the regime, gathering data on hero and villain alike—including the player characters. In this role, they could still end up as allies or at least uncomfortable contacts.

That's on the gentler end of the spectrum. As out-and-out adversaries, the members of Red Group can be driven in different ways. What if Jessie Baker is so removed from the emotional experience that she's a psychopath? What if Hamid Zarifa's love of challenges drives him to manipulate heroes into deadly mind games? What if Lee Franks never returned the Zuni Fetish that once gave him powers, or

FRIEND OR FOE: MOBSTER MONKEY

One of the stranger but more persistent contacts Red Group faces off with is the so-called Mobster Monkey. A test animal who survived SHADOW experiments to develop cognitive-boosting drugs, Rhesus Ceasar escaped his cruel confines once his new intellect awakened. He soon discovered he was dependant on a steady supply of the experimental drugs to maintain his new mind. Selling his knowledge of SHADOW activities to the underworld and law enforcement alike to fund his thefts of high-end laboratories, he soon discovered he was a far better organizer than a thief.

Rhesus operates as an information broker and part-time criminal mastermind, and works equally well as an informant or an opponent for Red Group—sometimes both in the same adventure, as it's rare for the pint-size genius to not work every angle. Aside from his gifted mind and affected Cockney accent, the Monkey mobster is a fairly typical rhesus macaque.

MOBSTER MONKEY

PL 6

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

Powers: **Monkey** Senses 2 (Acute: Smell, Ultra-hearing), Shrinking 4 (Innate; Permanent), Extra Limbs 2 (prehensile feet)

Equipment: Light Submachine Gun (Ranged Damage 3, Multiattack), Limousine, Smartphone, 14 additional points of equipment

Advantages: Animal Empathy, Benefit, Wealth (well-off), Connected, Contacts, Daze (Deception), Eidetic Memory, Equipment 6, Evasion, Improved Grab, Minion, Redirect, Set-up, Taunt, Well-informed

Skills: Athletics 4 (+6), Close Combat: Unarmed 2 (+6), Deception 8 (+11), Expertise: Chemistry 8 (+14), Expertise: Current Events 6 (+12), Expertise: Streetwise 8 (+14), Insight 4 (+8), Intimidation 6 (+7), Perception 2 (+6), Persuasion 6 (+9), Ranged Combat: Guns 4 (+7), Vehicles 2 (+5)

Offense: Init +6, Light Submachine Gun +7 (Ranged, Damage 3), Unarmed +6 (Close, Damage 2)

Defense: Dodge 8, Parry 7, Fortitude 5, Toughness 4, Will 6

Totals: Abilities 66 + Powers 13 + Advantages 18 + Skills 30 (60 ranks) + Defenses 4 = 131

Complications: **Drug Dependiant** (Rhesus needs a steady supply of SHADOW cognitive drugs or else his Intellect fades at a rate of 1 point each week), **Monkey** (Rhesus can't easily operate in the world), **Motivation—Ego** (Rhesus can't resist proving he's the smartest person in the room)

what if he enjoys hurting people? What if Lyla Chen is a narcissist who uses people and throws them away? What if Matti Scoggins was a wolf of Wall Street and is using his new connections to amass untold wealth regardless of the consequences? Alone they may be low-powered villains, but as a coordinated unit they are ideal for striking out against heroes' support networks and secret identities. No one can be everywhere at once or protect all their friends and family at the same time—and how much will heroes compromise once an unscrupulous group of villains threatens to release their secret identity to every superpowered baddie with an axe to grind?

All it takes is one small twist to go from people on the fringe to amoral individuals who trample people to get what they want.

JESSIE BAKER

"I'M TIRED OF EXPLAINING THIS, SO LET'S JUST SKIP TO THE PART WHERE YOU REALIZE I'M RIGHT."



From a young age, Jessie Baker was better acquainted with books than with people. People confused her and set off her anxiety, but books were all about facts and evidence; no body language to misread, no missed cues, no laughing behind her back, no irrational emotional reactions, no lies. What she understood clearly of the human condition, however, was desire. She understood what people

wanted and what they'd do to get it. It was a simple math problem, and those were easy enough. That was cause and effect, and it helped her navigate relationships with her family and the friends she made. It was ultimately the reason she loved political science and politics so much... What was the desire and what would someone do to get it? Sometimes people didn't know themselves, but Jesse invariably did.

Her insight helped Baker find a place in AEGIS despite her poor communication skills and general disregard for hierarchy and protocol. Her rocky career was due to end after she penned a scathing report on her superior's incompetence and nepotism, when Chief Administrator Bonham took personal interest in her skill set.

Jessie joined Red Group as its first member, but Bonham refused to make her cell lead—not until she learned how to lead people and not abuse them. It stung a bit, but she appreciated his candor and his willingness to recruit from outside the agency. She still personally thinks of herself as the group's leader—she does, after all, see the leads that take them into any given mission—but no one else in Red Group agrees with her self-assessment.

POWERS & ABILITIES

As a member of Red Group, Jessie's specialty lies in understanding criminal organizations, psychology, and the distribution of resources. She is a keen-eyed investigator and retains knowledge with ease, as well as a qualified AEGIS field agent with some basic understanding of vehicle combat, first aid, and firearms. More than anything, though, it is Baker's almost superhuman ability to suss out intentions that placed her in her position. She can determine what schemes criminals are putting together by reviewing news reports and forensic evidence, accounting for her Precognition power.

Baker's understanding of assets and resources has also provided an unexpected benefit: she knows how to find whatever the team needs in terms of hideouts and vehicles on short notice. While the Gamemaster has the final say on what is and is not likely to be available, her I Know a Place power grants the team up to 25 equipment points' worth of specialty vehicles or headquarters they can redistribute between adventures, or save and distribute as needed during an adventure.

PLAYING JESSIE BAKER

Jessie is blunt and direct; honesty feels more genuine and is worth the hurt feelings and bruised egos in her opinion. She doesn't play politics and it cost her dearly, and now she wants more than anything to prove that her unorthodox techniques were valid all along.

Her attention to detail makes Baker a competent strategist, reflected by her Assessment and Inspiration advantages. She can identify enemy weaknesses and coordinate her teammates to take advantage of the situation. While she's only moderately skilled in hand-to-hand combat, she has respectable skill with her AEGIS-issued pistol.

JESSIE BAKER

PL 5

THE KEEN-EYED ORGANIZER

REAL NAME Jessica Agnes Baker **AGE** 28 **HAIR** Brown**OCCUPATION** Intelligence Analyst **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Little Rock, Arkansas

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



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+1
Athletics	0	+1
Deception	0	-1
Expertise: Criminology	8	+13
Expertise: Current Events	6	+11
Insight	0	+3
Investigation	6	+11
Perception	6	+9
Persuasion	0	-1
Ranged Combat: Firearms	2	+3
Stealth	0	+1
Technology	2	+7
Vehicles	2	+3

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Accurate Attack	Trade Effect DC for Attack Bonus
Benefit (Cipher)	-5 penalty on attempts to uncover her past
Benefit (Security Clearance) AEGIS Analyst	
Defensive Roll 2	+2 active bonus to Toughness
Equipment 4	20 points of equipment
Inspire 3	Spend a Hero Point to grant all allies a +3 bonus
Seize Initiative	Spend a Hero Point to go first in initiative order
Speed of Thought	Use Intellect to determine Initiative bonus
Team Code*	Communicate secret information automatically
Well-Informed	Immediate Investigation or Perception check

POWERS

I Have a Place • Personal • Sustained • 4 points	Talent
Variable 1; Limited (to Advantages); Limited (to Installations and Vehicles), Slow	
Watch for Patterns • Permanent • Personal • 1 point	Talent
Senses 4 (Precognition); Check Required 3 (Expertise [criminology] DC 12)	

EQUIPMENT

Blaster Pistol
Ranged Damage 5
Concealed AEGIS Fiber Armor
+2 Toughness, Subtle
Additional Equipment
Audio Recorder, Parabolic Microphone, Smartphone, Team Vehicle Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Recognition: Baker *knows* she's better than any previous AEGIS agent and just wants the people around her to acknowledge that simple fact.

Rivalry: Even more than the rest of the team, Baker has many adversaries and rivals within AEGIS who occasionally interfere in her work directly.

Temper: Baker is easily irritated when people around her can't see what she considers obvious.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	6	4 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL 4 W/O ARMOR
DODGE	4	
PARRY	4	
FORTITUDE	4	
WILL	6	

COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +5
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Blaster Pistol	+3	Dodge	Ranged Damage 5	DC 20	
Unarmed	+2	Parry	Close Damage 1	DC 16	

Abilities 28 + Powers 5 + Advantages 16 + Skills 16 (32 ranks) + Defenses 10 = 75 TOTAL

LYLA CHEN

"I'M LYLA CHEN. GO AHEAD, TAKE A MINUTE TO SOAK IT ALL IN. IT'S ME. I'M HERE. BOOM."



What do the Crime League, the Foundry, and Labyrinth all have in common? Lyla Chen. Who is Lyla Chen, one might ask? Why, only the best henchperson those organizations ever employed. She'll tell you so herself.

Chen has few filters and zero compunction about walking up to the villains employing her to strike up a conversation. People were never sure if it was a lack of fear or an absence of self-preservation that drove her, but she

always managed to find a position of comfort and authority without doing anything worse than theft. And when it came time for the villains to lose to a hero and their organizations to crumble, she always walked away to find employment with another miscreant.

Other minions saw her as both a bad luck charm (because her employers inevitably went out of business) and a good luck charm (because when she escaped, whoever was with her escaped as well). But nobody's luck holds out forever, and AEGIS finally captured Chen when her latest job for the Power Corp went south. The con artist did what she does best: chatting up a storm, name-dropping, and showing she knew more about the city's criminal underbelly than most of their best analysts. Her information was all personal and intimate, and she dished it out like a gossip-show host. AEGIS decided to release her and use her as a confidential informant, and Chen was more than happy to help...or maybe just have a captive audience.

Chen was originally assigned to Red Group as a consultant rather than an active member. Like she always does, however, she managed to ingratiate herself with the team and ended up a full-fledged member. Bonham was initially worried that she was a massive security risk, but Franks realized that while Chen was a bit of a scoundrel, she also saw the best in people. She was looking for a home, a family, which is something she could find in Red Group, despite the fact that her upbringing was completely normal...perhaps boringly so.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Lyla Chen is Red Group's best resource on the underworld and on various small-time villains and their support pipelines. She always knows people and is constantly introducing Red Group around in their undercover personas. Her skill at ingratiating herself also makes her the best spy when it comes to encouraging the gossip to flow. Beyond this, she is a liar and a pickpocket of considerable skill.

While she lacks any truly unique talents, Lyla considers just being Lyla a unique enough talent. Her key to success is to come on strong with the patter and never let up.

PLAYING LYLA CHEN

Lyla Chen is all about Lyla—she's the star of her own show, but that doesn't mean she doesn't love and appreciate her supporting cast. Crime—or whatever it is she does now—is all about the thrills and the danger and the comfort it can afford, but she's finding herself enjoying the team aspect more than she ever expected to. Part of her worries she's losing her edge, but a bigger part is worried she actually likes these people, and that means she's vulnerable in a way she's never been before.

Lyla is a smooth talker, able to deflect blame or convince others of the impossible. She knows everybody worth knowing, thanks to her Connected and Well-informed advantages, and can find the people, information, or resources the team needs in a pinch, no matter how unusual. In combat, she relies on Taunt and Set-Up.

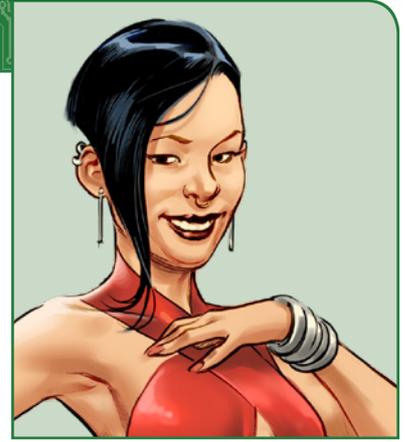
LYLA CHEN

PL 5

EVERYONE'S BEST FRIEND

REAL NAME Unknown **AGE** Unknown **HAIR** Black**OCCUPATION** Professional Minion **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Portland, Oregon

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	0	2	2	2	0	3	5
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+2
Athletics	0	+0
Close Combat: Unarmed	2	+4
Deception	6	+11
Expertise: Streetwise	10	+10
Insight	2	+5
Intimidation	0	+5
Perception	8	+11
Persuasion	0	+5
Sleight of Hand	6	+8
Stealth	4	+6
Vehicles	0	+2

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Beginner's Luck	Spend a Hero Point to gain 5 temporary ranks in a skill
Benefit (Cipher)	-5 penalty on attempts to uncover her past
Benefit (Security Clearance)	AEGIS Asset
Connected	Call in favors with a Persuasion check
Equipment 4	20 points of equipment
Fascinate (Persuasion)	Use a skill check to Entrance a target
Fearless	Immune to fear effects
Languages	Speaks English (native), Mandarin, and Russian
Luck	Re-roll a die
Move-by Acton	Move both before and after a standard action
Set-Up	Transfer the benefit of an interaction skill to an ally
Taunt	Use Deception skill to demoralize
Team Code*	Communicate secret information automatically
Well-Informed	Immediate Investigation or Perception check

EQUIPMENT

Blaster Pistol

Ranged Damage 5

Concealed AEGIS Fiber Armor

+2 Toughness, Subtle

Additional Equipment

Concealable Microphone, Micro-Tracer, Smartphone, Team Vehicle Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Motivation—Acceptance: Most of Chen's bluster and independence is just for show. In truth, she's been on her own and on the run for so long that she desperately wants people she can trust and somewhere to belong.

Enemies: Chen has worked for—and stolen from—a variety of supervillains in the past, some of whom would love a chance to take back their money and teach her some respect.

You Call it Ego. I Call it Showmanship: Lyla thinks a lot of herself and needs to make sure everyone else does, too. Even if they curse her name, at least they know her name.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	2	0 W/O ARMOR
DODGE	5	
PARRY	4	
FORTITUDE	5	
WILL	4	

COMBAT

Damage:	<input type="text"/>	Dazed? <input type="checkbox"/>	Staggered? <input type="checkbox"/>	Incapacitated? <input type="checkbox"/>	INITIATIVE +2
Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save	
Blaster Pistol	+2	Dodge	Ranged Damage 5	DC 20	
Unarmed	+4	Parry	Close Damage 0	DC 15	

Abilities 28 + Powers 0 + Advantages 17 + Skills 19 (38 ranks) + Defenses 11 = 75 TOTAL

LEE FRANKS

"I WAS ASKING NICELY, BUT HEY, LET'S GO THE HARD WAY INSTEAD."



On first blush, Lee Franks looks military. He's middle-aged with none of the paunch, and still stands with a Marine's bearing and no-nonsense glare. People are surprised when they discover that he was also a bodyguard turned bush league hero named Conda, who used his modest

stretching abilities to fight crime in Florida. While he enjoyed keeping people safe, Franks wondered where the snake idol he'd worn came from; the question drove him to find out, eventually leading him to the Zuni tribe in New Mexico. It was there he discovered that the serpent fetish belonged to the worshippers of the rainbow serpent, Amitolane. He came to the realization that he'd been wasting stolen powers on his own bush-league thrills. When he was with the Marines he had a purpose and clarity, but now he was approaching 40 and had little to show. Franks didn't feel right holding on to the fetish and returned it to the Zuni. After that he started hunting down old buddies from the Corps, trying to find a place that suited him and let him help people like he had from behind the mask. That's how he landed in AEGIS as a field agent.

AEGIS had been what Franks was missing in his life, though his time as a crimefighter meant he no longer quite fit in a world he once found comfortable. He'd gone from being a good soldier to someone who got things done his own way. He asked questions. He had a mouth on him. He'd gotten older and less patient. Those who liked him called him a straight shooter, and those he annoyed called him arrogant. Unfortunately, the former tended to be his peers and the latter his superiors. Franks realized he would never rise high in the Agent Division of AEGIS, but he was ready to make peace with that fact. That was before Bonham showed up at his desk and said, "Follow me."

Ever since that day, Franks has served as the most straight-laced member of Red Group, serving as Bonham's eyes on the team but also protecting them with extreme measures he knows their boss wouldn't officially condone.

POWERS & ABILITIES

While he has long since lost his stretching powers, Franks remains a marine and a field agent, and can handle himself in a fight in close quarters or at range. He hits like a truck and remains a decent grappler, but truly shines when he can pick up the nearest blunt object and put it to creative use as a weapon.

PLAYING LEE FRANKS

Franks is the ideal agent to babysit Red Group. He isn't afraid to call them on their crap, he knows how to handle himself in a fight, and he was one of the best drivers among the agents. That's been Franks' role in Red Group ever since. They joke and call him Grandpa Nanny, but nobody's a better fighter than him. He's their driver, and he's the muscle that intimidates. Franks understands that his leg-breaker routine is partly for show, but it allows him to keep one eye on Matti Scoggins, whose wheelings and dealings may get the team in trouble, and another on Lyla Chen, who might say the wrong thing around the wrong people—living up to the Grandpa Nanny role.

While a Red Group campaign doesn't focus on combat, Franks ensures the team can at least survive long enough to run when things go wrong. He can lay down the hurt with almost anything he finds, from lengths of lumber and bicycle chains to art supplies.

LEE FRANKS

PL 5

THE LOVABLE LEG-BREAKER

REAL NAME Lee Aaron Franks **AGE** 37 **HAIR** Black**OCCUPATION** Security Specialist **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Freedom City

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
4	4	2	2	4	0	0	1
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+2
Athletics	4	+8
Deception	0	+1
Expertise: Politics	8	+8
Insight	0	+0
Intimidation	8	+9
Perception	6	+9
Persuasion	0	+1
Stealth	4	+6
Vehicles	6	+8

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Benefit (Cipher)	–5 penalty on attempts to uncover his past
Benefit (Security Clearance) AEGIS Agent	
Equipment 4	20 points of equipment
Improved Hold	–5 penalty to escape your Grab attempts
Improved Initiative	+4 Initiative
Improvised Weapon 1	+1 Damage bonus with improvised weapons
Interpose	Take an attack meant for an ally
Ranged Attack 3	+3 to Ranged Attack checks
Team Code*	Communicate secret information automatically
Throwing Mastery 1	+1 Damage bonus with thrown weapons

EQUIPMENT

Blaster Pistol

Ranged Damage 5

Concealed AEGIS Fiber Armor

+2 Toughness, Subtle

Additional Equipment

Handcuffs, Lock Release Gun, Smartphone, Team Vehicle Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Honor: Franks has his own sense of honor. He won't hurt innocents or start a fight anywhere bystanders might get hurt, he protects people before inflicting damage, and he doesn't escalate, only using enough damage to finish the job.

Motivation—Responsibility: Franks knows he has a duty as an AEGIS agent to keep his team safe, no matter what ridiculous situations they throw themselves into.

Weakness—Bad Knee: Franks' left knee is a total replacement after catching a chunk of shrapnel in Kansas City. He's especially vulnerable to trip attempts as a result (–5 to resist) and may have unexpected trouble with running and climbing.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	6	4 w/o armor
DODGE	4	
PARRY	4	
FORTITUDE	6	
WILL	4	

COMBAT

Damage: **Dazed?** **Staggered?** **Incapacitated?**
INITIATIVE
+6

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Blaster Pistol	+5	Dodge	Ranged Damage 5	DC 20
Improvised Weapon	+5	Parry	Close Damage 5	DC 20
Thrown Weapon	+5	Dodge	Ranged Damage 5	DC 20
Unarmed	+5	Parry	Close Damage 4	DC 19

Abilities 34 + Powers 0 + Advantages 16 + Skills 17 (34 ranks) + Defenses 8 = 75 TOTAL

MATTI SCOGGINS

"WELL THAT'S A FOOL PLACE TO LEAVE A TITIAN PORTRAIT! SHOCKED THE HELP HAVEN'T WANDERED OFF WITH IT BEFORE I EVEN GOT HERE!"



Matti Scoggins was never the sort of person you'd expect to find working in AEGIS, but the Harvard Business School graduate eschewed a life at one of the Wall Street firms and chose to work in the Financial Crimes Division. It was a strange choice for a man born from money with expensive tastes. He could have been CEO of his family's Fortune 500, and the FCD was an odd duck outfit that wasn't sure where it fit in the hierarchy of AEGIS, but Scoggins had dreams of turning it into something else...something profitable. The FCD could cut villains off at the knees—just as

the FBI had used tax evasion to finally snare Al Capone—and in all the confusion of the arrest and accounting of assets, Scoggins could help himself to a few of the choice treasures that supervillains tended to collect. While he was a brilliant embezzler, working his scam for years, AEGIS finally tracked missing evidence back to their own agents and Scoggins found himself facing charges of corruption.

Never one to admit defeat, Scoggins heard about the start of Red Group and all but ambushed Chief Administrator Stewart Bonham with a presentation. Scoggins launched into a spiel about how the black market was mirroring the business world, using brand identity, incentives, marketing, international alliances, trade routes, and more to move their product. AEGIS's only hope was to apply their own shiftless scum, and Scoggins's corruption charge suddenly became an asset rather than a liability. Bonham was impressed, if wary of the transparent attempt to dodge criminal charges, and expanded the mandate of Red Group to encompass tracking financial crimes.

Scoggins is the money man of Red Group, and since he's comfortably wealthy in his own right, he's helping the team establish themselves with their own resources and hidden accounts. None of it ties back to the Scoggins financial footprint, naturally, but in his criminal persona of Rex Tremblay, Scoggins is starting to seed black market businesses in the hopes of hooking an AEGIS talon into them. The addition of Lyla Chen has been invaluable in expanding his understanding of the black markets, and Zarifa has proven instrumental in allowing Scoggins to make a name for himself on the Dark Web. Franks is worried that Scoggins may push the criminal act too far and accidentally seed a devastating attack, but so far, Baker has been able to anticipate the pitfalls.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Scoggins is a financial mastermind, and his gifts for embezzlement, wire fraud, and tax shelters have provided Red Group with all the operating capital they need—completely divorced from AEGIS's own finances. In addition to his intellect, he's a practiced thief, ironically having spent his vacations from law enforcement robbing museums around the world for precious and beautiful artifacts to add to his collection. However, most of his assets and treasures have been seized by AEGIS, and now Scoggins hopes to rebuild.

PLAYING MATTI SCOGGINS

Scoggins is a confidence man and white collar criminal of the first order, and from his perspective he's taking down the competition for when he invariably decides to move on from Red Group and resume his life as a collector. While he likes his teammates—a confidence man should always love the people he works with—he knows they'll never approve of his hobbies and doesn't kid himself that AEGIS will ever completely wipe his tarnished record clean, no matter how many criminals worse than him he helps bring to justice. For now, he's just enjoying the ride and the free entertainment.

MATTI SCOGGINS

PL 5

THE THIEF WORKING EVERY ANGLE

REAL NAME Matthew Angus Scoggins **AGE** 25 **HAIR** Blonde**OCCUPATION** Thief, Possible AEGIS Agent **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Glasgow, Scotland

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	2	3	3	1	0	2	1
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	5	+8
Athletics	3	+3
Deception	4	+5
Expertise: Art History	6	+6
Expertise: Finance	10	+10
Insight	4	+6
Intimidation	0	+1
Perception	0	+2
Persuasion	0	+1
Ranged Combat: Firearms	2	+5
Sleight of Hand	8	+11
Stealth	6	+9
Vehicles	0	+3

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Accurate Attack	Trade Effect DC for Attack Bonus
Agile Feint	Use Acrobatics skill to feint
Benefit (Cipher)	-5 penalty on attempts to uncover his past
Benefit (Security Clearance) AEGIS Agent	
Benefit (Wealth)	Well-Off
Equipment 4	20 points of equipment
Evasion	+2 bonus to avoid area attacks
Skill Mastery (Stealth)	Make routine checks in any conditions
Team Code*	Communicate secret information automatically

POWERS

Perfect Balance • Sustained • Personal • 2 points **Talent**

Movement 2 (Wall-Crawling 2); Limited (to Upright Movement)

EQUIPMENT

Blaster Pistol

Ranged Damage 5

Concealed AEGIS Fiber Armor

+2 Toughness, Subtle

Additional Equipment

Camo Clothing, Night Vision Goggles, Smartphone, Team Vehicle Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Addiction: Scoggins is an alcoholic—an functional alcoholic by his own diagnosis. When the pressure gets bad he uses liquor to calm his nerves, which impairs his abilities.

Motivation—Greed: The rest of Red Team may be in it to do what's right, but Scoggins sees the angles and wants to turn this position with AEGIS into yet another money-making scheme.

Obsession: Scoggins loves historical treasures and artifacts—not out of any real appreciation of history, but for the prestige of ownership.

DEFENSES

Toughness	4	2 W/O ARMOR
Dodge	5	
Parry	5	
Fortitude	4	
Will	5	

COMBAT

Damage: Dazed? Staggered? Incapacitated?

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Blaster Pistol	+5	Dodge	Ranged Damage 5	DC 20
Unarmed	+1	Parry	Close Damage 0	DC 15

INITIATIVE
+3

Abilities 24 + Powers 2 + Advantages 12 + Skills 26 (52 ranks) + Defenses 11 = 75 TOTAL

HAMID ZARIFA

"YOU WANT ME TO SAY SOMETHING MEMORABLE? LIKE A QUOTE? CAN I THINK ABOUT IT?"



Hamid Zarifa is a bundle of nervous energy, full of awkward excitement that actually lends to his sweet disposition and trustworthy face. When he smiles, it's easy to smile with him, and thankfully he's an earnest enough kid that he (almost) never abused that. Hamid was the kid everyone liked in school, but he was constantly moving from Army base to Army base, following both active duty parents, so he was rarely in one spot for very long... not that it stopped him from being social in his own way.

For all intents and purposes, young Zarifa was an only child, with his brother ten years older than him and in college or service, but he had plenty of friends in all the different schools he attended. There wasn't a night he wasn't on social media or messaging with someone.

When his parents started worrying that their son was spending too much time on his computer and phone, they used parental locks to limit his hours. Hamid found a way around that. They started using more sophisticated programs to limit him, and Hamid rose to every challenge. Hamid's mother, an Army Network Warfare Specialist, realized her son had an aptitude for computers and technology, but rather than encourage him overtly, she used her skills to construct more sophisticated barriers. It wasn't to stop Hamid, but to challenge a young man who otherwise didn't care much about school or developing useful skills. By the time Hamid hit eighteen, he was a top-notch hacker and his mother's elaborate games were on par with treasure hunts. Hamid knew he was being tested and there were easier ways around the various restrictions, but he just loved the challenge.

When Zarifa graduated with honors from MIT, AEGIS already had plans for the young man. He was perfect for their Cyber Crimes Division. Zarifa excelled at the work, but it was too easy. His thirst for challenge led him to bait and tease rivals online, turning what should have been routine intelligence-gathering into games of cat and mouse. And when his supervisor threatened to demote him if he didn't stop, Hamid grew bored and frustrated. There was no real challenge and, worse, they never let him out into the field.

When Bonham approached Zarifa for Red Group, he jumped at the chance. It was everything he'd ever wanted out of being a hacker: danger, excitement, and bigger challenges.

POWERS & ABILITIES

Zarifa is Red Group's computer and tech expert. He's in charge of building the devices and maintaining all the necessary equipment for their surveillance, and his hacking skills are top notch. Red Group doesn't get inside an organization's or villain's computer without him. Hamid's natural charm also makes him an unusually good liar, though he's hopeless at any acts of deception that require training or focus, such as feinting in combat or dropping hints.

PLAYING HAMID ZARIFA

Zarifa is a keyboard warrior and addicted to challenge and competition, though he would never be confused for an adrenaline junkie thanks to his fear of heights, fear of the dark, fear of enclosed spaces, and general discomfort with genuine danger. As a trained AEGIS agent, he can handle himself well enough in a fight, though he doesn't hit very hard and will never be the first to rush in. His Inventor advantage provides the team with a lot of flexibility for potential schemes.

HAMID ZARIFA

PL 5

THE EAGER-TO-PLEASE HACKER

REAL NAME Hamid “Crash & Burn” Zarifa **AGE** 21 **HAIR** Black

OCCUPATION Hacker **PLACE OF ORIGIN** Washington, DC

STR	STA	AGL	DEX	FGT	INT	AWE	PRE
0	1	1	0	3	4	2	2
Close Damage	Toughness Defense, Fortitude Defense	Dodge Defense, Initiative Bonus	Ranged Attack Checks	Close Attack Checks, Parry Defense	Intelligence Checks	Will Defense	Presence Checks



SKILLS

Skill	Ranks	Bonus
Acrobatics	0	+1
Athletics	3	+3
Deception	0	+2
• Lying	—	+10
Expertise: Security	6	+10
Intimidation	0	+2
Insight	4	+6
Perception	2	+4
Persuasion	0	+2
Ranged Combat: Firearms	2	+2
Stealth	4	+5
Technology	10	+14
Vehicles	2	+2

ADVANTAGES

Advantage	Details
Benefit (Alternate Identity)	Crash & Burn online identity
Benefit (Cipher)	–5 penalty on attempts to uncover his past
Benefit (Security Clearance)	AEGIS Agent
Defensive Attack	Trade Attack Bonus for Active Defense
Defensive Roll 1	+1 active bonus to Toughness
Diehard	Automatically stabilize when dying
Equipment 5	5 points of equipment
Fascinate (Deception)	Use a skill check to Entrance a target
Improved Disarm	No penalty on Disarm actions
Inventor	Use Technology skill to create temporary devices
Languages	Speaks English (native) and Arabic
Skill Mastery (Technology)	Make routine checks in any conditions
Team Code*	Communicate secret information automatically

POWERS

Honest Face • Sustained • Personal • 2 points **Talent**

Enhanced Skill 8 (Deception); Limited (to Lying)

EQUIPMENT

Blaster Pistol

Ranged Damage 5

Concealed AEGIS Fiber Armor

+2 Toughness, Subtle

Additional Equipment

Camera, Concealable Microphone, Mini-tracer, Multi-tool, Parabolic Microphone, Smartphone, Team Vehicle Contributions

COMPLICATIONS

Identity: Zarifa’s hacker handle, “Crash & Burn,” is much more widely known than his real name or face and can attract unwanted attention when he reveals it.

Motivation—Thrills: Zarifa loves doing things the hard way and challenging himself.

Rivalry: Zarifa picks fights regularly within the rest of the hacker community and can’t resist letting other security specialists know who beat them.

DEFENSES

TOUGHNESS	4	3 W/O DEFENSIVE ROLL 2 W/O ARMOR
DODGE	5	
PARRY	6	
FORTITUDE	4	
WILL	5	

COMBAT

Damage: **Dazed?** **Staggered?** **Incapacitated?**

Attack	Bonus	Targets	Effect	Save
Blaster Pistol	+2	Dodge	Ranged Damage 5	DC 20
Unarmed	+6	Parry	Close Damage 0	DC 15

INITIATIVE
+1

Abilities 26 + Powers 2 + Advantages 16 + Skills 18 (36 ranks) + Defenses 13 = 75 TOTAL

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