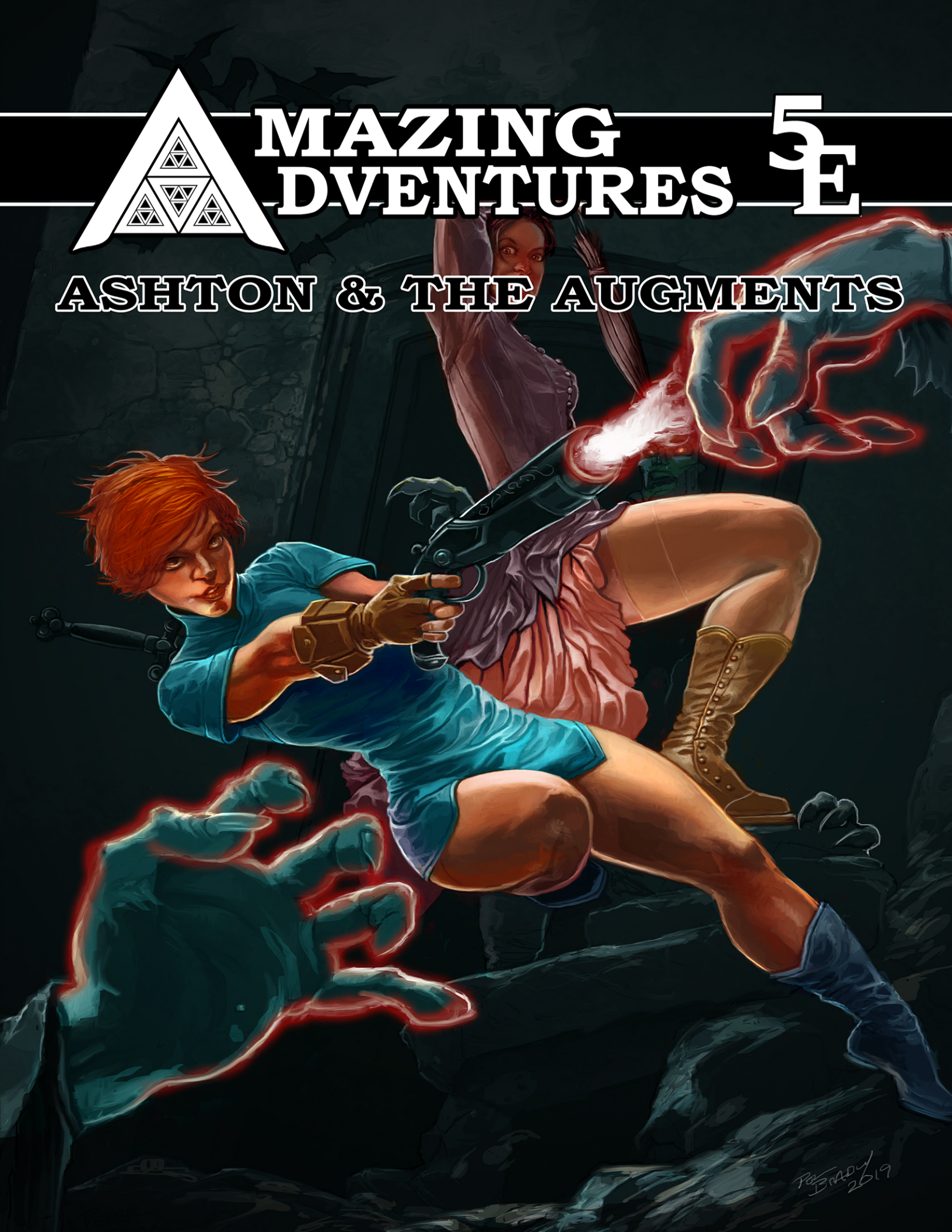
AMAZING ADVENTURES 5E

ASHTON & THE AUGMENTS



AMAZING ADVENTURES 5E

ASHTON AND THE AUGMENTS

BY: JASON VEY

EDITOR: Ross Thompson

5TH EDITION RULES EDITING: Jason Vey

FRONT COVER: Peter Bradley

INTERIOR ART: Peter Bradley

TROLL LORD GAMES

1818 North Taylor, #143, Little Rock, AR, 72207

email: troll@trolllord.com

website: www.trolllord.com or

www.castlesandcrusades.com

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INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the latest adventure for the **Amazing Adventures** roleplaying game! Our previous adventures have taken characters from an ancient lost city in the Middle East to face down a Lovecraftian horror, to aliens in a pulp science fiction scenario, into an ancient jungle tomb to recover the bible of a lost death cult from an ancient vampire.

In this adventure, super science comes to the fore as they face down mutant monsters cooked up by a conspiracy of mad scientists looking to eventually create super soldiers, a technology that will be sold to the highest bidder if they are not stopped. It will take all of the heroes' cunning and ingenuity to win the day.

RUNNING THE ADVENTURE

This adventure makes use of a secret cabal of scientists and businessmen called Chimera. At the end of this scenario, we have included complete background information on the Chimera secret society, to allow you to get up and running with a minimum of trouble.

Chimera, in the world of **Amazing Adventures**, is a relatively new secret society (or, at least, has just recently come to light in the eyes of the law and our heroes), but the mysterious figure at its head has been operating for millennia and will not be denied his goals. If the PCs become too much of a thorn in his side, this group could become a recurring adversary for your campaign. You can use this adventure as the kickoff for a much larger campaign, or can extend it out so that the final confrontation at the zoo takes place months down the line after many games of cat and mouse with these nefarious villains.

The adventure begins in media res, with the characters chasing down a murderess after finding a colleague dead in his lab. Beginning the story in such a way is very much in keeping with many pulp adventures, which kick off the story right in the middle of the action. However, some players and GMs may not prefer this approach.

If the GM desires, this adventure could be expanded using the background information provided to play through Dr. Stevenson (and the femme fatale Angela) contacting the PCs to create a web of intrigue, lies and deception in true Noir style, which lead up to Dr. Stevenson's death. This would create an interesting shift in the nature of the adventure, starting off in a gritty, Sam Spade-style casefile, and turning into the over-the-top super science fiasco that this module presents. The shift could create a fun, exciting and adrenaline-fueled caper that will leave your players wanting more.

These "prologue" events, however, are beyond the scope of this adventure module and are left to you, the GM, to cook up if you so desire. There should be enough tidbits and hooks in the introductory boxed text to allow you to expand the module so that your players have more detailed information leading into the action. Angela, for example, is after Stevenson's research, while Stevenson, a former member of Chimera, was looking to get out of the organization and has the potential to expose and sell them out, on some level. How might Angela play on the PCs sympathies? Which of the PCs knows Stevenson, and how? By the time Stevenson is murdered, the heroes should not know who to trust and should be in a high state of suspicion and paranoia. If you can generate that, you've got it right!

Once this adventure module actually begins with the chase through the streets, it's important to keep up a good mix of pulse-pounding action, investigation, role playing and threats. Keep your PCs guessing so they never know what's going to happen next.

HOW TO READ THE STAT BLOCKS

Each of the monsters and foes you will encounter in this scenario is given a block of quick statistics containing all you need to use them in game. Each block of statistics, or "Stat Block" breaks down as follows; we will break down the stat block for a street thug as an example.

1. **Character or creature name/type** (Example: Thug)
2. **Alignment, Size, Creature Type** (Example: NE medium humans)
3. **Vital stats including hit dice, hit points, armor class, movement per round**. These are fairly self-explanatory. (Example: vital stats HD 1d10 (5 hp each), AC 13, move 30 ft.)
4. **Attributes, Senses and Skills.**
5. **Attack types.** This is the section that defines any weapon or natural attack damage the characters may have. (Example: Luger Pistols +4 (1d10) For the most part it's assumed that you know bullets do piercing damage, swords slashing, etc. If special damage is inflicted, like lightning, psychic, or whatever, it will be listed.
6. **Special abilities.** If the monster or villain has any abilities outside the norm, this is where they would be listed. Include things like spells, psionic powers, class abilities, special vision, etc. (Example: sneak attack as first level Hooligans).

The final stat block, then, would appear as follows:

> **STREET THUG** *(NE humans): HP 9 (HD 2d8), AC 12, Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 12 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Deception +2, Religion +2, Stealth +4. Dagger +3 (1d4+1) or pistol +3 (1d8+1/double tap). SA Sneak attack (1d6), Foolish bravado (Advantage vs. charm/frightened).*

BACKGROUND

Victor Ashton is a wealthy businessman with a dark secret—he's a part of a cult of vicious scientists who believe wholeheartedly in the idea of eugenics and genetic manipulation. This cabal calls itself "Chimera," and is dedicated to

the creation of more powerful species, both animals and human beings.

While not a scientist himself, Ashton is one of a group of shady millionaires who are funding the project to their own nefarious ends of power and money. Their plan is to unleash a plague of vicious mutants on the City, and then play both sides of the fence, selling their services and resources to help the City clean up the mess, while selling the secret of creating mutant monsters to the highest bidder.

The end goal of Chimera's research is to use an Augment Serum to create through science the Übermensch of whom Frederich Neitzsche wrote. Animals, Chimera believes, are a perfect test bed for the serum, but Chimera has a stable of fanatical and willing human test subjects just waiting for the opportunity.

Our heroes, of course, will never let that happen.

IN MEDIA RES

The story begins in the middle of the action, with the heroes chasing a woman through the streets of the City, which can be Chicago, Detroit, Manhattan, Pittsburgh, or any city you desire.

Read or paraphrase the following to the players—if you wish, attribute the dialogue to specific PCs in your group to help "personalize" the opening sequence.

Horns blare and tires squeal as cars screech to a halt on the rainy, mist-filled streets. A woman named Angela Morris runs full-tilt through the maze of streets, alleys, and vehicles, despite being clad in spiked heels and a crimson dress slit to her thigh. She glances over her shoulder, her auburn hair and dark eyes glittering in the street lamps. Her full, red lips turn upward into a brief sneer before she spins and continues her flight. She trips, turns an ankle, almost falls, but catches herself and keeps going.

"There!" one of you shouts, pointing at her as she turns a corner and dashes between two oncoming vehicles. "She's going for the sewers!"

Indeed, Angela stops in the middle of the road, bends, and with a massive surge of adrenaline manages to pull free a manhole cover, and descend into the labyrinthine sewer systems beneath the streets of the city.

"Quick!" another of you cries, "Before we lose her!"

You dash towards the sewer entrance, dodging vehicles as you go, but determined not to lose the femme fatale who hired you to investigate strange goings-on at the science department of the local University, and then betrayed you to the death of your longtime friend and associate, Dr. Lewis Stevenson.

You still have no idea what she wanted, or why she wanted Stevenson dead, but if she escapes you may never get your answers. All you know at this point is that she showed up with dizzying perfume, a gaze that could melt an ice truck, and gams like you'd never seen. Her husky voice melted your heart and even as you knew this dame was trouble, you found yourselves taking the case.

Your investigations into the University's science department turned up nothing, and you knew Stevenson couldn't be involved in any sort of shady dealings – it wasn't in his character. You were appalled, but not exactly surprised, when earlier this evening you entered his lab to find him dead and Angela standing over him, his notebook clutched in one of her slender hands, and a bloody dagger in the other.

She fled through the back door, and you gave chase in a mad dash through the filthy streets of the city's rotten underbelly, leaving it to the police to sort out the crime scene without knowing of your involvement.

Her athletics were impressive – how she managed to scale fences in a dress and heels is something you'll never grasp, but she did so, still clutching the notebook, with you in hot pursuit.

So it is you descend into the darkness of the sewer system below the city streets….

ACT ONE

Our heroes pursue Angela into the maze-like sewer system under the streets of the City. After a mad chase, they find themselves under siege by gigantic mutant horrors, and recover important information, though Angela slips their grasp.

HUNTING ANGELA

Cat and Mouse Tracking

If there are gumshoes in the party, this is a prime opportunity to use their Cat and Mouse ability, to track her path through the muck and mire. Perhaps a shred of fabric here, a discarded shoe there, or other sign of passage. Alternately, a PC with proficiency in Wisdom (survival) could also make similar checks, though these should be at a somewhat higher DC.

If you have no PCs with appropriate abilities, simply fall back on Wisdom checks to catch signs of passage, and describe the chase in fast-paced detail, keeping it moving forward. Perhaps she's rigged quick traps—old barrels ready to collapse on anyone who runs past or similar. Such tricks may make the PCs wonder how she's had time to do these things. Let them speculate and keep the mystery going.

The Chase

If and when the PCs finally spot her, move to Dexterity-based checks to run the chase. Roll a d6—this indicates the amount of consecutive victories on a Dex check that one side or the other needs to end the chase one way or another. Angela begins with a bonus equal to the D6 roll, representing her head start. With each check won by any of the PCs, Angela's bonus vs. that PC lessens by one. If a character has a fast movement ability (like pugilists), they gain advantage on chase checks. With each check Angela wins, her bonus increases by one, but can never be higher than +5 (at which point she gains advantage on checks instead of a flat bonus, until the bonus is reduced to +4 or less).

For example, if you roll a 4, this means the PCs must win four Dexterity checks in a row to catch up with Angela,

while Angela needs to win four checks in a row to escape. Angela begins the chase with a +4 bonus to her roll, representing her head start. If the PCs beat her Dexterity check, the bonus lessens to +3.

Let's presume this to be the case. Now you make a second Dexterity check for the PCs and Angela. This time she checks at +3. Angela wins. Her check now goes back to +4. If she wins the next round of checks, it goes to +5 and she instead gains advantage on all checks; another victory would net no bonus as this is the maximum bonus she can have. After all, the PCs need to have some chance at catching her! If the PCs then win a check, she no longer has advantage and her bonus drops to +4.

BATTLE IN THE SEWERS

The chase will end in one of two ways—either the PCs will (apparently) corner Angela, or she'll escape. The outcome of the encounter will be similar, either way—Angela has prepared one last trap for the PCs, which she will either leave behind, or use to cover her escape. The PCs will, at the end of this scene, find themselves under siege from giant, mutant sewer rats and giant alligators.

If Angela is cornered, she will sneer and boast about having used the PCs to further the ends of her employer, who she views as utterly brilliant and "evolved far above common humans"; she will not, however, reveal who exactly this employer is, only that Stevenson was the one man who could have stood in his way. She will then reveal her trap—the giant, mutated animals, and make good her escape, using Inspiration Points if need be. For details on Inspiration Points, see the Amazing Adventures core rulebook.

If Angela makes her escape without the PCs catching up to her, that's fine; they'll still be under siege by mutants, and she could have dropped the notebook in her flight.

In the end, after facing the animals, the PCs will be able to recover Stevenson's notebook, which Angela has dropped in the sewer muck. While the book is largely ruined, the ink run beyond reading, the PCs will be able to garner a few clues from the book: there are references to a person or organization (it's hard to decipher which) called "Chimera," and a name that will eventually lead the group to Victor Ashton, the wealthy and respected industrialist and philanthropist (see sidebar).

ANGELA MORRIS *(CE Human Socialite) HP 26 (HD 4d8), AC 15 (17 mage armor), Spd . Str 9 Dex 15 Con 11 Int 13 Wis 14 Cha 18. Perception 12(+2). Deception +7, Insight +5, Persuade +7, Religion +5, Science +4. Sv: Wis +5, Cha +7. Dagger +4 (1d4), Derringer +4 (1d8; 2 shots then reload). SA Force of Personality (Exalt, Demoralize); Connected. Inspiration Points: 3.*

GIANT MUTANT SEWER GATOR *(Unaligned huge beast) HP 85 (HD 9d12+27), AC 14, Spd 30ft, swim 50ft. Str 21 Dex 9 Con 17 Int 2 Wis 10 Cha 7. Perception 10 (0). Stealth +5. Bite +8 (3d10+5) and target grappled and restrained (Escape DC 16); Tail +8 (2d8+5 and DC 16 Strength or prone). SA Multiattack (bite and tail), Hold breath for 30 minutes.*

GIANT MUTANT SEWER RATS *(Unaligned Small Beast) HP 7 (HD 2d6), AC 12, Spd 30 ft. Str 7 Dex 15 Con 11 Int 2 Wis 10 Cha 4. Perception 10 (0). Bite +4 (1d4+2). SA Darkvision 60ft, Keen smell (advantage on Wis checks using smell); pack tactics (advantage on attacks if ally is within 5 ft).*

What exactly is in the notebook?

What clues exactly the players can glean from the notebook is really left to the discretion of the GM, who will decide how drawn out she wishes to make this adventure. There could be wildly incomplete (due to water damage) formulae pointing to the mutagenic serum used to create the monsters. There could be journal entries about his relationship with Angela, and how he fears her to be a part of a conspiracy of unethical scientists, and fears for his life. There could be a list of names, partially washed out. Any number of clues could be inserted here, depending on how the GM wishes the adventure to play out.

If there is a Gumshoe in the party, this would be a perfect opportunity to use the Cat and Mouse class ability of that character—perhaps the notebook is almost entirely ruined, but with a successful Cat and Mouse roll, a slip of paper falls out that leads the party to a bar or club where a second check reveals a contact—a former scientist who was drummed out of the scientific community when he got too close to the truth about . A series of further checks lead the PCs through a string of scientists, criminals, bootleggers, and shady businessmen until finally they find themselves at the home of Victor Ashton, and Act Two commences. They will at some point hear the name "Chimera," but will find precious little about who or what Chimera is.

Alternately, the notebook can simply contain a few references to something called "Chimera," and Ashton's name and address, and the PCs can find them-

selves heading to question an upstanding, well-known businessman and philanthropist without being exactly sure what his connection to all of this is. In the end, what is important is that when the PCs approach Ashton, while they may have some suspicions, they should have nothing concrete to connect him to Angela and her crimes whatsoever.

Connections to Earlier Adventures: Angela as Alice Diamond

If you've been running Amazing Adventures for awhile before jumping into this scenario, it's fully possible that "Angela" could be yet another disguise or identity for Alice Diamond, who features as the villain in the original "Heart of Yhtill" adventure in the Core Rulebook, and who appears again in its sequel, "Day of the Worm." If this is the case, swap out Angela's stats for Alice's/Amanda Seymour's, adding a few hit dice and levels of class abilities to account for her own growing experience alongside the cast's. By this point, it may be a good idea to give her a disguise ability to complement her magical appearance-altering abilities (in "Day of the Worm," she has gained the mask of many faces invocation).

ACT TWO

The PCs, through their investigations, arrive at the home of Victor Ashton, a wealthy and respected businessman, industrialist, and philanthropist who owns a successful chemical company in the industrial district of the City which produces everything from medicines to chemical alloys for building materials. This is a man who has donated hundreds of thousands of dollars to humanitarian causes, helping to clean up slums, injecting redevelopment funding into Skid Row, and creating free libraries and other resources for the economically disadvantaged. By rights, they should be wondering exactly what his involvement is in this "Chimera" mess, and how he got mixed up in it, in the first place.

Ashton lives in a brownstone building in the Uptown neighborhood. He owns the entire building, which is decorated in palatial style. He has a butler, maid, chauffeur, full kitchen staff, and a small army of private security guards, all fanatically devoted to their employer, who treats them very well.

Ashton, for his part, welcomes the heroes into his home and appears happy to answer any questions. He will, obviously, deny any knowledge of anything called "Chimera," let alone involvement in it, and will insist he has no idea why Stevenson would mention him.

If there is a Socialite or other Charisma-based PC in the group, they may think it wise to try and "charm" or intimidate information out of Ashton. Such efforts will fail out of hand (though you should probably keep up appearances by making a roll behind the screen). Ashton is brilliant and canny and he knows what the PCs are trying to do. He won't under any circumstances reveal his involvement in Chimera, but as soon as he gets to the point where he feels threatened, he will make good his exit from the situation, leaving behind a deadly trap. His personal security will delay the characters long enough for him to escape—even if he has to spend Fate Points to do so.

Ashton's men, standard gangster-types at first, each have on their persons a hypo full of the augment serum, and at the first sign of real trouble will inject themselves, leading to an horrific transformation. This includes even his kitchen staff and butler.

This also means that it may be possible for the PCs to get hold of a quantity of the serum, which could be used to synthesize an antidote, though such would take time and research and is certainly not an instant or magical solution to the heroes' woes.

VICTOR ASHTON *(CE Human Socialite/Mentalist) HP 26 (HD 4d8), AC 15 (17 mage armor), Spd . Str 9 Dex 15 Con 11 Int 13 Wis 14 Cha 18. Perception 12(+2). Deception +7, Insight +5, Persuade +7, Psionics +4, Religion +5. Sv: Wis +5, Cha +7. Dagger +4 (1d4), Walther PPK +4 (1d8). SA Connected; Psionic Insight (2d8), Psychic Senses (detect spells as spell-like abilities or advantage on perception; 1/long rest); Mental resistance (proficiency with int saves); Psionic powers (Save DC 12): Mesmerism, Mental Stun. Inspiration Points: 5*

ASHTON'S SECURITY *(unaugmented) (NE humans): HP 9 (HD 2d8), AC 12, Spd 30ft. Str 11 Dex 12 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 11 Cha 10. Perception 10(+0). Deception +2, Religion +2, Stealth +4. Dagger +3 (1d4+1) or pistol +3 (1d8+1/double tap). SA Blind Devotion (Advantage vs. charm/frightened).*

ASHTON'S STAFF *(unaugmented) (N humans): HP 2 (HD 1d4), AC 10, Spd 30ft, Str 10 Dex 10 Con 10 Int 10 Wis 10 Cha 10. Perception 12 (+2). Attack by weapon (+0); SA: none*

The players may quickly find themselves in over their heads with the augmented security (see sidebar) and decide that discretion is the better part of valor, or they may quickly overcome the augments and rush to chase Ashton. This will lead to a wild car chase through the streets of The City, using the vehicle combat rules found in Amazing Adventures on page 167. The chase will end with Ashton's escape—if the PCs manage to catch the car they believe contains their adversary, they will discover it to hold a decoy.

One of two things will happen to lead the heroes to the next act. The first possibility is that they will catch up to the decoy vehicle and a fierce battle will occur, at the end of which the decoy car's radio will broadcast instructions to the driver, punctuated with bursts of static, to rendezvous at Ashton's offices downtown, to expedite the next stage of the plan.

The second possibility is that the chase goes on into the industrial section of the city, and eventually changes from

a car chase to a footrace, leading the PCs into a darkened warehouse or lab complex belonging to one of Ashton's subsidiaries, where Ashton springs yet another trap on the heroes, in the form of Angela, who is waiting for them.

The Augment Serum

When used on humans, the augment serum doubles the hit dice of the user, increases AC by 1d6, and adds 2 (1d4) natural attacks, be they claws, horns, spiky protrusions or a bite. Natural weapons deal anywhere from 1d8 to 2d6 damage (GM's discretion) and the augments are proficient. Augmented Humans gain proficiency on Strength, Dexterity, and Constitution saves and both Dexterity and Strength become 18.

For animals, the serum increases the size of the animal by one category or to Large (whichever is greater), increases hit dice by one die type, increases AC by +2, and improves natural attacks by one die type. After initial adjustments are made, the GM can make further adjustments to taste.

In general, this template increases the Challenge of a given creature by +1.

Augmented humans have a hideous, animalistic appearance and are vicious and unreasoning—true monsters. The serum is incomplete and essentially de-evolves humans into bestial, proto-human forms. There is no cure for the augment serum, which instantly and painfully rewrites the DNA of the user. If a Player Character injects himself with the serum, he is lost unless he makes a DC 18 Constitution Save every hour until some sort of antidote can be synthesized. Since the serum relies on adrenaline to act, rendering a character unconscious will slow the change to a crawl, requiring a save once per day (at advantage) so long as the character is kept unconscious. Inducing a coma is probably the best bet for these poor souls.

However, this serum is an early version. The ideal is to grant extraordinary abilities to human beings and create super soldiers. A perfected version of the serum could provide a pool of points allowing those injected to purchase powers a la the Powered Hero gadgeteer archetype. Alternately, characters could gain psionic abilities as a Mentalist. The sky is the limit, really, as to what could happen if this serum is somehow perfected!

ACT THREE

The heroes track their quarry, one way or the other, to an old warehouse and laboratory complex in the industrial district of the City. This district, situated near the docks along the banks of the river that cuts through or along the city, is filthy, grimy, and dark—the kind of place that during the day is populated by a strange conglomeration of gruff warehouse and factory workers, research technicians and scientists, but at night is the domain of organized crime syndicates who usher bootleg shipments into the city under cover of darkness.

This is where Ashton maintains his secret lair, and where the heroes will, if they are lucky, put all the pieces together and pursue Ashton to his final plan.

How exactly this scene plays out is entirely up to the GM, but as the heroes infiltrate Ashton's lab complex there are several dangers awaiting, with even greater rewards.

The lab is populated by thugs, scientists, and animals both domestic and experimental. Any or all of these could be injected with the augment serum, so once the action gets rolling, they could find themselves faced with augmented apes, guard dogs, and human augments. The GM can make this as difficult or easy a challenge as he likes for the heroes. Remember, however, that this is the point in the adventure where the adventurers gain both a major revelation and find themselves in a seemingly hopeless trap.

THE REVELATION

The revelation here is, of course, that of Ashton's connection to the Nazis, and their plan to unleash armies of augments all over the world. Hidden somewhere in this complex is a detailed dossier concerning his dealings with Hitler's top Eugenics man, Dr. Josef Mengele, as well as Heimlich Himmler. The dossier details the plans to create an army of augments, both human and animal, to overrun the world, as well as the plans to create a sort of timer in the serum which will destroy every last augment when their purpose is served. It lists the members of the Chimera organization, a network of wealthy businessmen and scientists, and details the plan to sell the serum to the highest bidder when it is perfected. Chimera, it seems, doesn't care whether the Axis or Allies wind up with the serum, only that they will have the money, power and control when it all goes down.

Also within the complex are detailed notes on the serum itself, how it is synthesized, and everything needed to engineer both the augment serum and possibly, an antidote. It is likely that the dossier will be in a safe in the main office, and the serum notes will be scattered throughout several labs. The information the characters gather here could be used not only to treat those who are unwittingly exposed to the chemical cocktail. If the players can obtain these notes, they will have a much easier time proving that Ashton, a well-respected philanthropist, is in fact a secretive criminal

mastermind. This could go a long way towards deflecting the blame when everything comes down.

Perhaps the biggest, most important piece of information here is that the next phase of the plan is to unleash the serum at the City Zoo, mutating animals to rampage throughout the place, so that the scientists can measure the process and the specific reactions of the people so they know what to expect when the serum is released on population centers throughout the world.

THE TRAP

The trap in this section could take any number of forms. Ashton has sent Angela to take care of the evidence once he knows the heroes are on to him. Her preferred plan is to secret out the dossier and serum notes, either to deliver them to Ashton, or to take them for herself, and hopefully set herself up as a power in the coming order. This, of course, is shortsighted as the Nazis will simply view Ashton's defeat as a failure and write off or attempt to kill Angela; however, should she abscond with the serum notes, she could wind up being a great threat in the future.

Whatever trap is laid for the heroes, Angela should be a part of it. As the adventure began in the midst of the action, this could be an excellent time for her to spew a villainous soliloquy about her intentions to overthrow Ashton, become a queen, or whatever you like, just before she makes good her escape (using Fate Points if necessary) and springs the trap.

This scenario includes a lot of combat, so it's probably best not to have the trap itself consist of an overwhelming assault by augments. It could, however, include being trapped in a laboratory as explosives set throughout the complex are about to detonate. This would give a character like a gadgeteer a chance to shine as they jury-rig a way to stop the bombs and escape the lab. If you want to keep augments in the picture, perhaps the augments drive the characters through the complex, heading them into a lab, where the door slams shut, and Angela gloats about the fate of the characters before leaving with a flourish.

Of course, you should also make sure that you leave an out for the PCs somewhere—it wouldn't do to simply kill them off here. The idea is to make things look hopeless, then allow them to extricate themselves with their abilities and ingenuity.

Finally, the characters have to gain access to some sort of information leading them to the zoo, and providing evidence about Chimera's dastardly schemes. Perhaps Angela is unable to get the dossier because it's caught in the lab with the characters, or perhaps there is a copy or a series of notebooks that when put together provide similar information. In any case, it's essential to get this information into the hands of the PCs. Once they escape, it's on to the City Zoo for the final confrontation!

ACT FOUR

As the heroes escape the lab complex (which, preferably, should be in flames with the sounds of sirens in the distance), things look fairly hopeless—Angela and Ashton have a huge head start on the characters, and their target is the City Zoo. Who knows what horrors will result if they manage to infect all of the animals there? Creatures like tigers, cheetahs and wolves are bad enough, but what about augmented elephants or rhinoceri?

Up till now the heroes have seen the serum injected into its victims, but the notes they acquire at the laboratory indicate that the next phase of trials will involve exposure through the skin or ingestion of the chemical. The details will be sketchy, but with enough research the characters may suss out the probable truth. A Gumshoe's Cat and Mouse ability would be ideal for this, as would the Raider's Legend Lore ability.

The truth is, the plan is to use a series of bombs to blow the chemical into the air of the zoo at key points, so that a maximum number of potentially deadly animals will be affected, and an acceptable number of humans as well. Scientists vaccinated against the serum will be placed at key points around the zoo to monitor what happens.

Whether or not the heroes arrive before the bombs go off and have a chance to stop the tragedy, have to fight a zoo full of maddened augments, or somewhere in between, is up to the the GM. In the end, however, they should have an opportunity to corner and capture Ashton and/or Angela and stop the catastrophe from breaching the boundaries of the zoo itself. Keep this scene breakneck and action-packed. Hand out Fate Points if necessary to keep your players moving, and use Fate Points to keep the bad guys one step ahead until the very end.

Of course, either one of the two will escape to cause trouble in the future, or some sort of cloud will fall upon the heads of the heroes at the end. Perhaps the bill for the damage to the zoo somehow comes to them? It's a thankless job, being a hero.

Using the Amazing Adventures core rulebook, the Systems Reference Document, and your choice of 5th edition you should be able to cook up statistics for any mutant animals you like, using the Augment Serum sidebar, the statistics for Alligators and Sewer Rats presented earlier as examples, the Systems Reference Document, and your own imagination. Just give them hit dice and hit points, an AC rating, natural weapons, and any special abilities you think might be appropriate.

Here are a couple more augmented animals to use in game or as examples.

AUGMENTED ELEPHANT *(Unaligned Gargantuan Beast) HP 108 (HD 8d20+24), AC 14, Spd 40ft. Str 22 Dex 9 Con 17 Int 3 Wis 11 Cha 6. Perception 10 (0). Gore +8 (3d10+6) or*

Stomp +8 (3d12+6). SA Trampling Charge (20ft move, then gore, Str Save or prone. Stomp attack prone target as bonus action).

AUGMENTED RHONOCEROS *(Unaligned huge beast) HP 51 (HD 6d12+12), AC 13, Spd 40ft. Str 21 Dex 8 Con 15 Int 2 Wis 12 Cha 6. Perception 11 (+1). Gore +7 (2d10+5). SA Charge (20ft move, then gore, extra 2d10 bludgeoning plus Str Save or prone).*

AUGMENTED TIGER *(Unaligned huge beast) HP 43 (HD 5d12+10), AC 14, Spd 40ft . Str 17 Dex 15 Con 14 Int 3 Wis 12 Cha 8. Perception 13 (+3). Stealth +6. Bite +5 (1d12+3) or claw +5 (1d10+3). SA Keen smell (advantage on Wis (perception) relying on smell); Pounce (20ft move and hits with claw attack, Str Save or prone. Bite attack prone target as bonus action).*

DENOUEMENT

At the end of this adventure, the heroes may have established contacts with the local law enforcement or even the military, who will understandably be alarmed at United States citizens being in league with the Nazis. If you have already been playing Amazing Adventures, this adventure could be another connected scenario in the characters' battle against the Thule Society, which was begun in the core rulebook and continued through Day of the Worm and Rise of the Red God. Regardless, whether this is the PCs first foray into the world of supernatural and super-science espionage beneath the surface of the burgeoning World War, or the next in a series of adventures. It's certain that there's an exciting road ahead!

APPENDIX: CHIMERA

Founded in the ashes of World War I as an offshoot of the Eugenics movement, Chimera is an international secret conglomerate of scientists dedicated to the pursuit of the biological sciences just for the sake of science. They are completely amoral and more than willing to sell their creations to the highest bidder to fund further research.

The refreshing thing about Chimera is that they are not the typical Nazi menace of 1930s and 40s pulp. They are North American in origin and are exceptionally capitalist and (unethically) scholarly in their pursuits. As a newer organization, they do not yet have the kind of clout needed to be invulnerable to PC intervention and could make for either a story arc or campaign-long villain.

OUTLINE

Goals and Intent: Chimera is a scholarly society dedicated to the furthering of scientific knowledge at all costs. The group is completely amoral, believing that ethics and morality serve only to hold back scientific advancement. It will engage in highly unethical and even evil activities, so long as the end result is some small advancement in scientific knowledge. The adage "The end justifies the means" has never been truer than with Chimera.

Reach and Resources: Nominally, Chimera has international reach. The cabal of scientists who form the society hail from all over the United States, Canada, and Europe. However, their lines of communication are not as efficient as they would like, and as a newer society they do not quite have the reach and control they'd prefer. Currently they are funded through selling their discoveries to world powers and by a group of wealthy industrialists who have a vested interest in exploiting new discoveries.

They recruit much as any scholarly society would—by taking note of promising young scientists who seem to have the right degree of moral flexibility. Such young men and women are gradually introduced to the organization, their research perhaps being exploited by Chimera, and they are slowly corrupted as they gain further research grants as a reward for pushing their work to extreme levels.

There are no true "levels of membership" in Chimera—at least, not in terms of circles, titles and rank. Those scientists who have been in the group the longest, as well as those who have had the greatest success, are the ones with the most clout and authority.

There is no leaving Chimera. Like most secret societies, the members of this organization have too much to lose from someone spilling their secrets and they are not above using hired muscle and underworld contracts to end the lives of those they see as a danger.

Chimera keeps its operations and existence as secret as they can manage. With their clout relegated to the mon-

ey funneled through dummy corporations and the rich men at the funding levels, it relies upon bribery, research grants and intimidation to keep things quiet.

Members are expected to remain loyal to the group's goals, to not waver in the face of the disturbing actions they must take to keep the society going, and to advance the cause of the biological sciences ahead of and above all other concerns.

Membership Benefits and Drawbacks: members of the society tend to live the good life. These brilliant scholars have fat bank accounts and all the research grants they can shake a stick at. In return, they are expected to obey and advance the objectives of Chimera without conscience or regret. In game terms, members gain +4 to their Wealth score and access to high-end scientific facilities almost anywhere they go. On the down side, they suffer disadvantage on Charisma saves, saving throws against fear effects, and on Sanity checks.

Operations and Activities: The society is largely a research-based organization working out of University, medical and industrial research facilities. Many of the experiments, since they are unethical, are carried out after hours and in secret. When a breakthrough occurs, the businessmen step in to broker sales to those who may find the research useful.

Much of the work is compartmentalized, so that several different facilities may be working on different parts of a whole and never be aware of it until they see the results of their work combined with others to sometimes horrific ends. The lowest levels of the organization consist of criminal contacts and connections to organized crime. This means that if anyone decides to rat on the group, they are targeted for extinction with extreme prejudice.

Hierarchy: As of this point, the group is rather democratic, though the industrialists who fund the research tend to have more power than the scientists who rely on money to fund their pursuits.

There is a shadowy leader who is known only as "The Other." This wealthy businessman issues general directives and goals for the society, and leaves it to the conglomerate of industrialists and scientists to work out exactly how the group's goals are pursued, so long as they stay on task. It is said that failure to keep the end game in sight results in a rather grisly death as a research subject.

In fact, The Other is an immortal who has been around since the days of the Roman Empire. His true name, Lucius Sophus, is known only to him. His true goal, the one thing he wants from the society, is to find a way to die. He does not know how he became immortal, but he is tired after thousands of years of life and cares nothing for humanity. Science, he believes, is finally at a stage where he might be able to find his solution and he will bring the world to an end if it means he can finally die.

Ironically, The Other goes to great lengths to stay completely out of view because his greatest fear is that someone will use him as an experimental subject to find the secret of immortality. He does all his dirty work through others and never reveals his presence or identity.

Interior Mobility: Given the informal nature of Chimera, mobility is a factor of respect. The greater success a scholar has in their pursuits, the more clout they have. The more successful a businessman is, the more of a voice he will have. Success is the only way to climb the ranks.

Degree of Secrecy: Near-Absolute. The group keeps its membership and work utterly secret, going so far as to assassinate those who are a danger to them. However, they allow the name to slip on occasion, building a degree of threatening mystery around it. People who hear about Chimera are intimidated by the name alone, and this is useful to an organization that wants to cow investigators into leaving them alone, or wants an edge in shady dealings.

History:

- ~500 B.C.E. Lucius Sophus is born to a wealthy merchant family in Rome.
- ~475 B.C.E. Lucius stops aging.
- ~450 B.C. E. Lucius realizes that he has gained immortality and cannot die.
- ~270 C.E. Lucius spends several years scouring the Library of Alexandria for solutions and, finding none, eventually burns the place to the ground in a fit of rage, using an attack by the Emperor Aurelian as cover for his act.
- ~500 C.E. Lucius searches the Far East for solutions to no avail.

- ~1,200 C.E. Lucius, after fighting in well over a millennia of wars and conquests, constantly wandering the world and re-inventing himself, has become an expert at hiding his identity and begins to seek ways to die.
- ~1,600 C.E. By the Renaissance, Lucius has searched libraries and resources the world over, and has failed to find a mystical solution to his problem. With the enlightenment approaching, he turns to science.
- ~1800 C.E. Lucius begins actively recruiting scientists to explore biological causes and solutions to his immortality. Frankenstein's Monster is one of the resulting failures.
- ~1818 C.E. Former Frankenstein associate Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley publishes Frankenstein; or, The Modern Prometheus. Lucius realizes that he has grown overconfident and that failure to take care in his efforts could expose him.
- 1839 C.E. Lucius secures a position as Shelley's personal physician and begins a gradual process of poisoning the woman.
- 1845 C.E. Lucius arranges blackmail and smear campaigns against Shelley to further weaken her.
- 1851 C.E. Mary Shelley dies. The suspected cause of death was a brain tumor.
- 1918 C.E. World War I ends. The atrocities committed also resulted in amazing scientific advances. Lucius sees the value of using war to advance science. He begins shadowy recruitment of businessmen and promising scientists to build an organization dedicated to the advancement of the biological sciences. Those he recruits know him only as "The Other" and never see his face.
- 1920s C.E. Lucius turns his scientists towards the study of eugenics and names his society "Chimera," after the ancient mythological monster that was an amalgam of many different animals.
- Early 1930s C.E. Lucius becomes interested in the policies of Nazi Germany. He quietly works to discredit Eugenics publicly while secretly encouraging its furthering. He now believes that if he can create a superman, he may discover how he became immortal, and in so doing find a way to undo his curse.
- Mid 1930s C.E. Lucius realizes the need for muscle to secure his organization and begins securing ties with underworld and organized crime families. Chimera makes several breakthroughs in bioscience and several of The Other's agents steal important Nazi discoveries.
- 1939 C.E. Events of "Ashton and the Augments": A group of heroes with ties to an assassinated former Chimera researcher foils a Chimera effort to create mutant human and animal "soldiers" to unleash on the battlefields of Europe, but fails to delve too deeply into the organization itself. Chimera covers its tracks and fades back into the shadows…

NAME: CHIMERA

EXPANDED BACKGROUND

The story of Chimera comes from rather humble beginnings. A young man named Lucius Sophus was born to a wealthy merchant house in Rome. The boy had a normal childhood for the times, with an average and loving family. Things changed around Lucius' 25th year of age, when he somehow ceased aging. By the time he was fifty, Lucius had suffered enough injuries and accidents (some deliberate) to realize that he was somehow incapable of dying.

At first, the immortality seemed a gift; he was un-aging, healed very fast, was immune to poisons and disease. Even situations where damage was massive or death was inevitable would result in unconsciousness for varying amounts of time based on the amount of damage done. Lucius would never have to face the fear of the unknown that comes with death.

Such gifts have a way of turning to curses, however, and after watching several generations of his family grow old and die, Lucius had become coldly distanced from humanity. He had quickly grown weary and unwilling to feel for anyone lest he have to suffer the inevitable pain of their death. He threw himself into hedonism and debauchery, reveling in his self-pity, before realizing after a few more decades that it was not filling the hole inside him.

Eventually, the man suffered accusations of demon-worship and witchcraft, and was hung, drowned and burned several times before he learned to move from place to place, hiding his curse and changing his identity as needed. He began a frantic and desperate search for an answer to his problem…for a way he could die. Nothing worked—even getting himself beheaded resulted in his head somehow being inexorably drawn back to his body, re-attaching, and his awakening as good as new.

Eventually, Lucius came to the Library of Alexandria, the greatest repository of knowledge in the ancient world, and spent a full five years going through every tome in the building. Finding nothing, his rage boiled over and he decided that if this place could not solve one simple problem, it did not deserve to exist. Using an attack by the Roman Emperor Aurelian as a cover and excuse, he burned the library to the ground and left Egypt behind, also walking away from Rome forever.

He spent the next several centuries first searching the Far East for esoteric answers to his problems, then throwing himself into the life of a warrior throughout the Middle Ages, sating his rage in bloodlust. It was during this time that he first began to study how the human body worked, as an agent for the Inquisition.

With the dawn of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, Lucius came to believe that since magic had failed him, science must be the answer. He worked with many of the most famous men of the High Middle Ages through the Enlightenment, including occultists John Dee and Roger Bacon and noted scholars such as Leonardo Da Vinci and Nostradamus.

By the 1800s he had made strides in his understanding of the workings of the human body and recruited an eccentric scientist with similar drives to understand death to help him. This scientist, Victor Frankenstein, managed to create life from stitching together the parts of a dead man, but was unable to duplicate the experience and Frankenstein's creation destroyed the scientist, only to be later destroyed in turn by Lucius.

A near-"fatal" (such as it is) mistake occurred when Lucius had a brief dalliance with a young woman named Mary Shelley, who was married to a bohemian poet. Shelley was a young, attractive and deeply lonely woman, and Lucius found in her a kindred spirit, detached and alone in the world. He made the mistake of telling her his story, and she hit upon the story of Frankenstein, later publishing it as a book.

Realizing how careless he had grown, and stung by Shelley's betrayal, Lucius put his quest aside and set about ruining the woman. Having himself installed as her physician, he set about poisoning her with certain chemical compounds he knew to result in the growth of tumors, and arranging blackmail and smear campaigns to weaken her emotional health. His plan succeeded, and Shelley passed away before she became a further threat.

When World War I broke out, Lucius saw the results of scientific advancements due to war on a massive scale. He got involved in the war, serving in the British medical corps and managed to experiment on many bodies during the four-year tenure of the conflict.

When the war ended, he journeyed to Germany, taking great interest in the Eugenics research being done there. Eventually, he noted the danger of the emergent Nazi regime and left for the United States, where he began to recruit the best and brightest scientific minds and the wealthiest and canniest industrialists under an umbrella organization he called "Chimera." His quest now had an infrastructure and it was not long before breakthroughs began to happen.

Being intelligent enough to take care, he kept projects split among widely disprate scientists so that few were aware of the true nature of the research being done. He also began to recruit muscle from amongst organized crime, using old family connections to cement associations with the Italian Mafia. Seeking to completely obfuscate his identity, Lucius was now known only as The Other amongst those in his employ, and he used a small cabal of scientists and businessmen as middle management to carry out his directives.

His first success nearly turned into a disastrous failure when an experimental serum designed to create physically superior but violent mutants for use as disposable troops in warfare was developed. One of his scientists developed a conscience and was set to unveil the secrets of Chimera. The scientist was assassinated and the testing phase of the serum moved forward, but it was foiled by a group of small-time adventuring heroes. The plan was ruined and Chimera took a huge financial loss, but The Other managed to fade his organization into the shadows once more.

Research is still ongoing…

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